

The Islamic State in Bible prophecy

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Introduction

An “Islamic State”, formally known as ISIS, has been declared in the territory which once formed the Assyrian empire. Black uniformed Islamist are storming to victory and becoming the best armed, best funded Islamist force of recent history. What are we to make of this? The underpinning conviction of radical Islam is that Israel must be destroyed and the holy city of Jerusalem placed fully in Moslem hands. What’s significant about this is that the Bible repeatedly predicts a final invasion of Israel at the hands of a reborn Assyrian empire; and that invasion will be resolved by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to save Israel and establish God’s Kingdom upon earth. Never before has the stage seem set for His return. Of course, I may be wrong. Or it may be that the entity now known as “the Islamic State” is the prelude to a similar entity which is yet to arise, structured in the same way. Before 1948 there was no state of Israel to invade, no Zionist entity against which to announce a *jihad*. The Arab tribes inhabiting the Middle East were uncoordinated and far from any possibility of launching a major military enterprise such as is envisioned by the Biblical prophecies. But that has all changed; the stage really does seem set.

The purpose of this presentation is to review the general thrust of Bible prophecy regarding the last days before Christ’s return; then we’ll look in more detail at the predictions of a latter day Assyria invading Israel. Our next step will be to compare the current situation with those Biblical predictions- and it will be over to you to decide the degree of congruence. We’ll then conclude by looking at the repeated Biblical hints that the latter day entity which invades and persecutes Israel will be headed up by a specific individual, the anti-Christ; and speculate as to which leader of the “Islamic State” may fit that picture. For truly, *an* Islamic State in the territory of the land promised to Abraham is required by Bible

prophecy; whether that equates with the entity now known as the Islamic State, formerly ISIS, is yet to be seen. But the IS certainly tick many boxes in the prophetic requirements.

And so what, if I prove my point- that the current geopolitical situation matches the Biblical picture of the time of the end, and therefore the return of Christ is imminent? The day of the Lord shall come- but so what? Those who identify with Him shall live eternally in His eternal Kingdom on earth; that's the point. And there is a time of trouble such as never was coming on this earth, out of which only God's true people shall be saved. And if you come to know the Lord Jesus as your friend and Saviour, then His personal return to you becomes the final focal point of all existence.

Chapter 1: Al Sham

The entity now known as the Islamic State was earlier known as ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham. The concept of Al-Sham is crucial to understanding the significance of what's going on in jihadist thinking. This area includes the historical Assyrian empire, the land promised to Abraham [which is the focus of Bible prophecy]... including the land of Israel.

What's Happening in Syria

There's a complex civil war going on in Syria, as various factions seek to overthrow the Assad regime. It must be viewed in the wider context of the 'Arab Spring' throughout the Arab world, whereby established regimes were overthrown and replaced with populist leadership. But in every case, from Tunisia to Egypt, the new leadership was more radically Islamic and more determined than the previous regimes to exterminate Israel. Israel is now more than ever before surrounded by an Arab world united by one common theme- to overthrow Israel and establish an Islamic state in Palestine. And that's where the whole scene becomes so significant in terms of Bible prophecy, which predicts an invasion of Israel from her neighbours which will lead to a minority turning to Jesus Christ in repentance- and then, He will return. At no other time since the feet of the Lord Jesus were upon this earth has His return looked more imminent. Because there was no previous time in the last 2000 years when Israel existed as a nation and was surrounded by such well armed and capable enemies.

The West clearly doesn't know what to do about Syria. They can't support the undemocratic and abusive Assad regime. But the opposition is radically Islamic. If they support them, then they will make the same fool of themselves as they did when they backed, armed and trained the mujahideen groups in Afghanistan against

the USSR in the 1980s- and now those same groups have morphed into Al Qaeda and now the IS, and become the West's greatest enemies. Clearly, the Assad regime will not hold out much longer. A new king must arise in Syria, known in Daniel 11 as "the king of the north". And Syria has powerful weapons, located right on Israel's northern border.

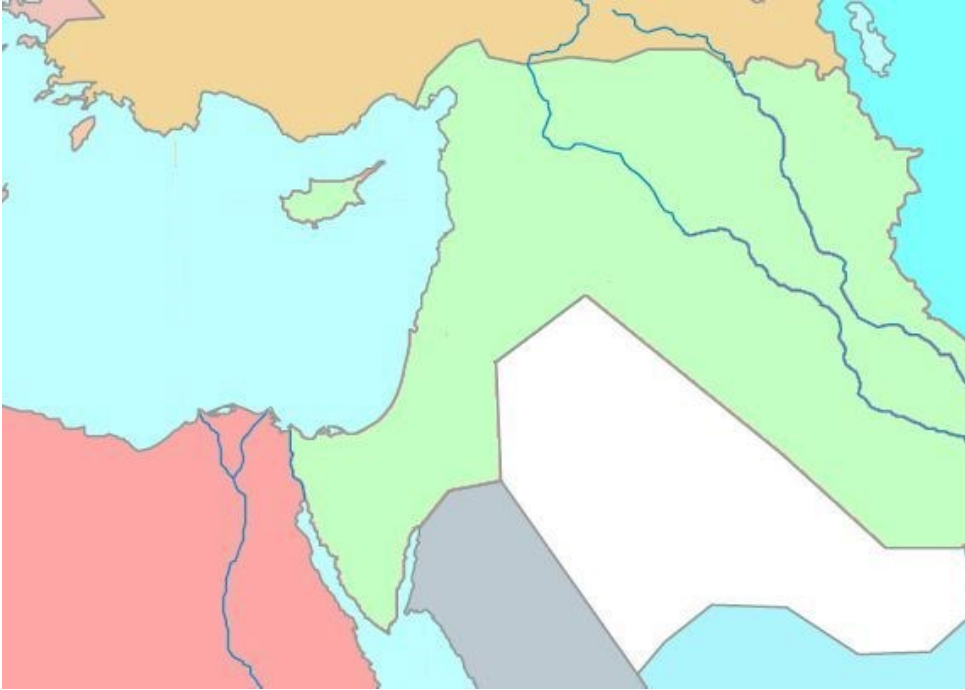
One feature of the civil war is the bitter disparity between the various Islamic groups opposed to Assad. And the same is true in much of the Arab world. The *only* factor which can unite them is their joint hatred of Israel and desire to destroy her. The bitter disunity between the Arab factions is great indeed- tens of thousands of deaths in Syria bear witness to it. They are aware of their problem- and the classical resolution of such a situation is to focus upon an agreed external enemy and unite in a military endeavour based around religious and ideological principles that all factions are totally agreed upon. And there is indeed such a solution, right on their doorstep- an invasion of Israel.

Al-Sham- Greater Syria

The significance of what's happening in Syria is that this solution is becoming the more obvious. And further, there is much talk amongst the opposition groups about the concept of *Al-Sham*, the formation of a 'greater Syria', incorporating not only Syria but the territories formerly in the Assyrian empire- including Israel. This is not a new idea; it is one of the tenets of faith of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), who were the largest opposition party to the ruling Ba'ath party even before the current civil war broke out. The Wikipedia article about this party gives a good overview of their vision of a 'Greater Syria'. In continuity with this, one major body of factions fighting against Assad in Syria have given themselves the official title of **العراق في الإسلامية الدولة والشام** - "The Islamic state of Iraq and Greater Syria". Or to quote the aims of another group: "On the goal of Katibat al-Muhājirīn the spokesman is quite frank: the defeat of the al-Assad regime and the

establishment of an Islamic state in the Levant (Greater Syria; the medieval *Bilād as-Shām*)” [source: <http://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/category/syria/>]. Further, “On January 31st 2013, Syrian Islamist groups announced they would unite in one single group; known as Harakat Ahrar **al-Sham** al-Islamiyya (*The Islamic Movement of Freeman of Greater Syria*)” [Source: <http://pietervanostaeyen.wordpress.com/2013/02/02/ahrar-al-sham-the-greater-islamist-union-in-syria/>]. From the same source we read: “We thank Allah for the affection between the believers ...Here are your brothers from the Islamic Groups, who are fighting the criminal Nasiri [‘Alawi] regime to overthrow and remove it from our beloved Levant and to form a Muslim society under Shari’a Law... [we] were united completely under the name of Harakat Ahrar **al-Sham**. [This organization] belongs to the same group in obedience to Allah’s order to the believers to unite and reject to be divided. As Allah says “hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves” and “obey Allah and His Messenger; and do not fall into dispute, lest ye lose heart and your power depart”. Your brothers of Harakat Ahrar **al-Sham** al-Islamiyya want to announce to all the Muslims in Levant their unity. [They] give them the glad tidings (that will please them) and will establish the moral strength of the believers’. In its first audio address, Ahrar **al-Sham** stated its goal to replace the Assad regime with an Islamic state governed by the Shari’a”.

Al-Sham, ‘Greater Syria’, ‘the Levant’, refers to an area including Syria, Iraq, Israel and Lebanon. Here’s how it’s envisaged:



This map is taken from Wikipedia, and as of April 2013 the comment is attached: “Antun Saadeh's and the SSNP's vision of a unified "natural Syria", corresponding closely to the maximum extent of the Neo-Assyrian Empire”. Notice in the declaration from *Harakat Ahrar al-Sham* the rhetoric of unity amongst the disparate, the religious appeal, and the intention to unite Iraq into this ‘greater Syria’. Syria and Assyria, despite their similarity as words, referred to different entities in Bible times. Syria was part of Assyria, but was then better known as Aram. But what is envisaged within the new *Al-Sham* is the creation of a latter day Assyria. Compare the map of the envisaged *Al-Sham* with this map of the Assyrian empire in Biblical times:



What's happening before our eyes is the preparation of a restored Biblical Assyria- even if the significance is lost to Western observers because they generally don't know Arabic or appreciate the significance of the *Al-Sham* rhetoric.

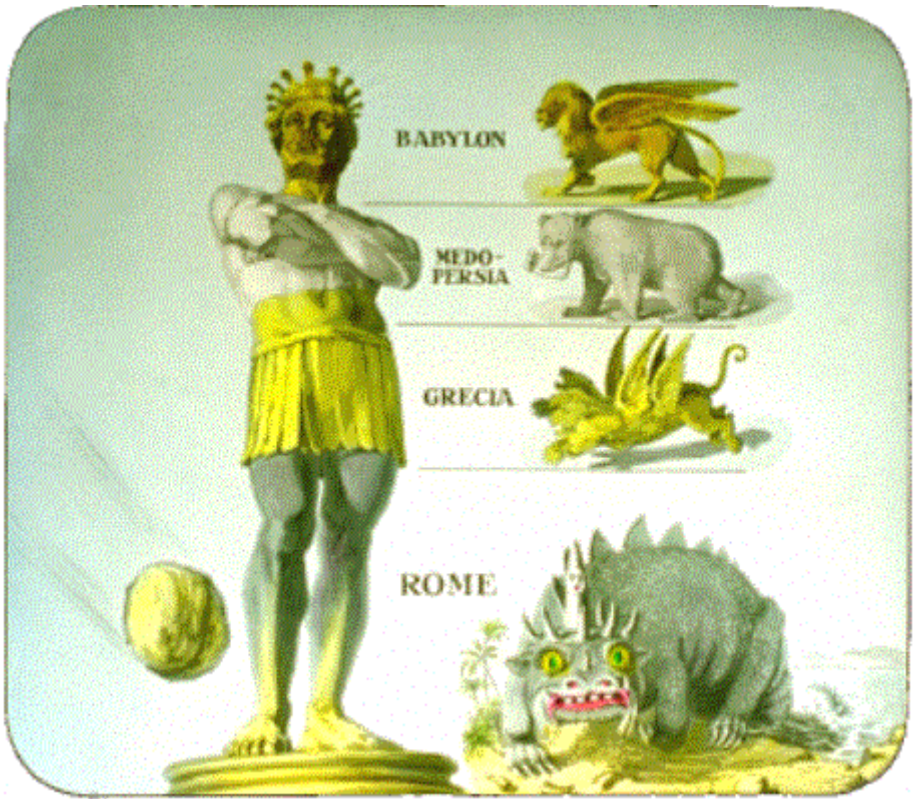
Shaun Waterman in the *Washington Times* of April 9th 2013 in his article, "Al-Nusra comments: "the Syrian extremist militia Jabhat al-Nusra admitted to being a branch force of al-Qaeda's coalition in Iraq – and has been all along! This was acknowledged by the Islamic State (*not the Democratic State*) of Iraq early in April. No less a personage than the Emir of the Iraqi coalition group, Abu Bakr al-Hussayni al-Qurayshi al-Baghdadi, issued an audio message avowing this heretofore hidden fact: "It's now time to declare in front of the people of the Levant and world that Jabhat

al-Nusrah is but an extension of the Islamic State of Iraq and part of it... Iraqi intelligence officials... [said] that the border between Iraq and Syria is not even a real thing" (Quoted in Harold Lafferty, *Present Day Events* April 2013).

The Biblical Perspective

Daniel 2

Daniel chapter 2 contains an outline of the powers who were to dominate the people of Israel within the land of Israel. It begins with a head of gold (Babylon), then breast and arms of silver (Persia), thighs of brass (Greece), two legs of iron (the two halves of the Roman empire) and then feet part of iron, part of clay. Each part of the image corresponds in proportion to how long each empire dominated the land of Israel and the Jewish people- thus the legs were longest because the Romans dominated the land for longest. After AD70, the Jewish state ceased to be a nation. But now, it is once again, for the first time in nearly 2000 years. The final part of the image therefore represents a group of nations (perhaps divided into two groups, symbolized by the two feet) who will dominate Israel in the last days. A stone cut out of a mountain without hands (representing the Lord Jesus Christ) then hits the image on its feet, growing into a mountain which fills the earth. The interpretation is given, and it clearly refers to the second coming of Christ to destroy the kingdoms of men who have dominated His land and His people, and to establish God's Kingdom on earth: "In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people; it shall crush to powder and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).



Arab Unity and Disunity

Who, then, are these nations who were represented by the feet partly of iron and partly of clay? Some will be strong, others weak. “Then you saw the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, that shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, because you saw the iron mixed with miry clay. As the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. Whereas you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cling to one another, even as iron does not mingle with clay” (Dan. 2:41-43). One only has to look at the various groups currently fighting Assad in Syria to see how deeply divided is the Islamist group. Most of the names of the factions would be unfamiliar to Western readers, but the following

at least are almost general knowledge to any who read Middle East news:

Palestine Liberation Front
Palestinian Islamic Jihad
The Muslim Brotherhood
 Hamas
 Hezbollah
 Democratic Front for the Liberation of
 Palestine
 Fatah
 Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades
 Abu Nidal

The situation in Syria could actually lead to a fragmentation of the country into a group of smaller states, all united under the *Al-Sham* concept and a desire to drive Jews out of Israel. The same is true for Iraq and other Moslem states bordering Israel. Writing on the *Al Jazeera* website in May 2013, Murtaza Hussain wrote a penetrating article "Iraq, Syria and the death of the modern Middle East" (at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/05/2013567200437919.html>). The following sounds exactly like the ten toes of Daniel's image, formed out of larger powers but now weak and yet united against Israel:

"The countries of Syria and Iraq, formerly unified Arab states formed after the defeat of their former Ottoman rulers, exist today only in name. In their place what appears most likely to come into existence - after the bloodshed subsides - are small, ethnically and religiously homogenous statelets: weak and easily manipulated, where their progenitors at their peaks were robustly independent powers".

We of course are reading the Bible through translation. But take a closer look at the original Hebrew and Chaldee translated "they shall *mingle* themselves" (Dan. 2:43). They were to be a mingled people- and that's exactly who Syria and the nations of 'Greater Syria' are. The original word translated 'mingle' is *arab*. One easy way to check that is to use an online concordance to poke under the surface of Dan. 2:43. And you will see it- Strong's number H6151. *Arab*. Surely there is a reference here to the Arab peoples! Here's what you see in Strong's concordance:

H6151

ערב

ʿārab

ar-ab'

(Chaldee); corresponding to H6148; to *commingle*: - mingle (self), mix.

The ‘feet and toes’ section of the image is proportionally not a very long part of the body. The domination of Israel by this group will not be for long- perhaps the three and a half year period which occurs in several latter day prophecies.

Psalm 83

The way the Islamists will seek to bind together their divided state is made clear in Psalm 83, where we have ten Arab nations, mostly in *Al-Sham*, Greater Syria, who unite themselves with a common aim of capturing the holy places in Jerusalem and blotting out the name of Israel:

“They conspire with cunning against Your people, they plot against Your cherished ones. Come, they say, and let’s destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more. For they have conspired together with one mind, they form an alliance against You. The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab, and the Hagrites; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also is joined with them” (Ps. 83:3-8). Note that ‘Philistine’ and ‘Palestinian’ are the same word...

This ‘conspiring together with one mind’ and ‘forming an alliance’ is exactly what we see coming out of the uniting of the disparate Islamist factions in Syria and elsewhere. “Form an alliance” translates a Hebrew phrase more commonly translated ‘to cut a covenant’ (Ps. 83:5). The Palestinian Covenant unites these

groups, and that covenant emphasizes the aim of overrunning Israel. Psalm 83 mentions ten nations- perhaps corresponding with the ten toes of Daniel's image, and the ten horns on the beast which will dominate God's people in the last days (Daniel 7, Revelation 13). Joel 3:9 is another prophecy of the invasion which happens just before Christ's return, and it speaks of how the invaders will make a 'proclamation' to "sanctify war"- a *jihad*, a holy war. And that is exactly the rhetoric of the groups now calling for Islamist unity based around a *jihad* against Israel in order to establish *Al-Sham*.

Syria, then known as Aram, frequently invaded Israel in Bible times. The invasions under the Syrian king Rezin were a result of 'taking evil counsel against' Israel (Is. 7:5), just as Assyria and her Arab supporters are to do in Ps. 83:3: "They have taken crafty counsel against Your people". The double emphasis on "Damascus" as being the nerve centre of Rezin's operations (Is. 7:8), may also be significant in that this very city is now a centre for Arab terrorism against Israel.

I've written more about Psalm 83 and the Palestinian Covenant in *Unrest In The Arab World: The Perspective of Biblical Prophecy* [an appendix to chapter 8 of *The Last Days*]; and in the same book, Digression 7: The Palestinian Movement In Bible Prophecy. You can get a free PDF from www.heaster.org/ld.pdf .

Ezekiel 38

Ezekiel 37 and 38 predict that when the Jews have returned to their land, then there will be a ten nation invasion by a group of surrounding nations, headed up by 'Gog'- which is to be destroyed by the direct intervention of God to establish His Kingdom. This invasion is to be after the Jews have returned to their land, and will begin with an incursion onto "the mountains of Israel"- which are bordering Syria, the Golan heights:

“In the latter years you shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out of many peoples, on the mountains of Israel, which have been a continual waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations” (Ez. 38:8).

Only since 1948 and the uprising of serious Arab powers around Israel could this prophecy come true. All we're waiting for is the Arab confederacy to push into the Golan Heights. And we could view the news on the internet or turn on the telly- and find it's happening. Any moment now. And the next step will be the actual return of Christ to earth.

At-Sham- A Reborn Assyria

Zechariah 9 is clearly a prophecy of the return of Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom (see Zech. 9:1,9-11 especially). But this worldwide Kingdom will be established after judgments are executed upon Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon, Ekron, Ashdod and Gaza- a collection of peoples likened to a beast with a mouth and teeth which have enclosed Israel (9:7). These areas are geographically exactly where the 'greater Syria' is envisaged as being. They surround present day Israel, from the Gaza Strip to Lebanon. And they are likened to some latter day beast descending upon Israel, which must be destroyed before God's Kingdom can be established. This encourages us to see the beast of Daniel and Revelation as referring in its final form to Israel's Islamist neighbours who now surround her. Is. 9:12 uses 'beast' imagery when it speaks of the Syrians and Philistines [same word as 'Palestinians'] as being the mouth of a huge beast, closing around Israel: "The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth". This image of an Arab beast devouring Israel is repeated in Joel 1:6 concerning the later Assyrian invader.

The great invasions of Israel by the Assyrians are prototypes of the latter day invasion. Micah 5 is specific that the Lord Jesus will appear to save Israel when "the Assyrian" invades them in the last

days. Balaam's prophecy about Israel's final destiny speaks of how finally both Assyria and Eber ['the other side', a similar meaning as the words 'Syria' and 'Aram' in Hebrew, and effectively referring to Syria] will be judged for their abuse of Israel in the last days. They are mentioned together because they will be operating together - and now we see that they actually are coming together (Num. 24:24). Whilst we must remember that Syria and Assyria were historically different, the current talk of a 'Greater Syria' and 'The Islamic state of Iraq and Greater Syria' is nothing less than Biblical 'Assyria' born again. Assyria invaded Israel in waves, initially just attacking the Northern part of Israel (2 Kings 15:29), commented upon in Is. 9:1 as a 'light affliction' compared to the fury of the main invasion. And it is the northern part of Israel which borders with modern day Syria. This is where any land invasion from Syria would naturally begin.

At least four waves of Assyrian invasions are recorded:

- under Menahem (2 Kings 15:19) - bought off
- under Pekah (2 Kings 15:29) - northern Israel affected
- under Hoshea (2 Kings 17:3) - Israel carried captive
- under Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:9) - took fenced cities of Judah

and destroyed by God's direct intervention.

The gap between the third and fourth invasions was around six months. The third invasion took three years: "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years" (2 Kings 17:5). This three-year period of domination followed by six months rings bells with the three and a half years of the (latter-day?) Elijah ministry, and the same period spoken of in the 1,260 days, the 42 months and "a time, times, and an half" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 11:2,3; 12:6).

The final Assyrian invasion is the seedbed from which the language of Gog in Ezekiel 38 is taken. Look up these Bible passages at your leisure:

Ezekiel 38 / Gog	Assyria (Isaiah)
:4	37:29
:7	8:7
:8	8:8
:9	28:2; 8:9,21; the Assyrian “strong one” of Is. 28:2 is the ‘Gog’ figure
:11	37:24
:12	10:6
:19	30:27
:22	29:6 RV; 30:30
:19,20	29:6; 30:25
39:10	33:1

The Assyrian is to be “broken in pieces” (Is. 30:31 RV), just as the whole image of Daniel 2 is to be. That image symbolizes a latter day confederacy of nations under the leadership of Babylon / Assyria, which will dominate the land / earth of Israel in the last days.

And so I repeat my basic point: The historical Assyrian invasions of Israel form the prototypes of the latter day invasions which the Bible prophesies, and which will immediately precipitate the return of Christ to the earth. The re-formation of ‘Assyria’ which is being called for by the groups coming to power in Syria today, along with the clear demand for a *jihad* to destroy Israel and Islamize Palestine, means that the Bible prophecies of the last days are being fulfilled before our eyes. It would seem that the return of Christ will be soon. Jerusalem is truly “compassed with armies”, exactly as the Lord Jesus said it would be just prior to His return in glory has this in mind when He predicted that Jerusalem would again be like this in the last days:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation is at hand... For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled... Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles [three and a half years of Gentile domination?] be fulfilled... And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. But when these things begin to happen, look up, lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Lk. 21:20-28).

For most of the last 2000 years, Jerusalem has been surrounded by Bedouin tribes- not nations with armies and oil wealth behind them. Only in our times has the whole jigsaw started to come together.

The Faithful Remnant

Isaiah opens his prophecy by stating that once all Israel has fallen to the Assyrian invaders, only Jerusalem will be left- and will only be saved because of a "remnant" within the city (Is. 1:7-9). But the rest of Isaiah chapter 1 goes on to state that Jerusalem as a whole is as sinful and far from the true God as the rest of Judah. The size of this faithful remnant may have been very small indeed. They were " I (Isaiah) and the children (prophets - Is. 8:16) whom the Lord has given me" (Is. 8:18); and this is quoted in Heb. 2:13 as referring to Christian believers. That small group centered around Isaiah perhaps point forward to a small remnant of faithful Jewish believers in Jerusalem, for whose sake the whole race is not destroyed completely. And it seems that this part of the latter day jigsaw is already in place, thanks to a number of baptisms there recently.

We'll now look in more detail at the emergence of Assyria *redivivus*.

Chapter 2 Assyria Revived

Assyria was one of the great historical enemies of Israel. Their brutal takeover of the lands within *the* land, the land promised to Abraham, forms the basis of many prophecies of the latter day invasion of Israel. Just as Assyria conquered the lands around Israel, so the latter day Assyrian will do. Assyria took the ten tribes into captivity, and then came to take Jerusalem. Due to Judah's last minute repentance before their God, Jerusalem did not then fall. But out of Assyria came Babylon (Is. 23:13 "Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it"). And Babylon did come and destroy Jerusalem and take the Jews [the remaining two and a half tribes of Israel known as 'Judah'] into captivity. This is why Assyria and Babylon are at times used interchangeably in the Old Testament.

Our expectation of a revived latter day Assyria is being realized before our eyes. The Islamic State are led by theologians, deeply aware of the historical context in which they stand, seeking to be the reincarnation of such historical forces who have dominated the land promised to Abraham, or Al-Sham as they call it. Staring at maps of ancient empires and current nations, we can get the impression that all states and empires have clearly defined boundaries. But the ancient empires weren't really like that. When you enter the European Union, there's a sign up which says 'Welcome in the European Union', and a flag next to it. But the Assyrian empire wasn't like that. And neither is the Islamic State which is developing. The nature of boundaries in our global village have changed. It's who your friends are on Facebook, which chat groups you frequent, which news portal you read... which defines who you are, rather than which geographical area you live in. And so it is with the entity known as the IS. The entity is defined by

ideology and common enemies, rather than hard lines drawn in the literal sand with entry posts. The Islamic State have internet sites and ample media channels through which to explain to us their intentions. One of the battle songs of the IS fighters goes like this [when translated into English]:

Oh soldiers of Truth, let's go.

Repeat the tune of endurance.

A light has illuminated Shaam [the Levant, the Assyrian empire, the land promised to Abraham],
so rally all the soldiers.

The Islamic state has been established,
so wipe out all the borders.

Break the crosses [of the Christians] and destroy the lineage of the grandsons of monkeys [the Jews].

The state of monotheism will remain in spite of the lies of the hateful people.

[Commentary is mine].

You can see it being sung in Arabic at <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/4296.htm> , with English transcript at http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/4296.htm . Notice: “The Islamic state has been established, so wipe out all the borders”. This feature of the IS has struck commentators. Ben Hubbard writing in the New York Times, August 22, 2014 (‘Progress of ISIS puts Obama to test’) is an example: “The brutality of ISIS... has seized the world’s attention... ISIS has erased borders and upended alliances across the region... its vision of a stateless Middle East under the black flag of jihad terrifies the region’s governments... ISIS is one creature with two heads that can see here and see there”. Note the Biblical language of a beast with heads. Indeed, media reports and official statements about the IS often use Biblical and apocalyptic language.

Under its vision of an Islamic Middle East "the land of Israel would be incorporated as part of Greater Syria," as it once was considered during its time under Muslim occupation. And the IS has been very open about its final intentions; in areas under its control, the group has erected billboards saying 'our eyes are on Al Quds (Jerusalem)' [as reported at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/180622#.U7gANrHAA5s> accessed August 2014].

Consider another battle song of the IS jihadist fighters, publicized by the group's media officer, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who believes that the current fighting of the IS is towards the final struggle "in the battle on the day of resurrection with al-Dajjal" ("the false Messiah," roughly in the role of the Anti-Christ of Christian eschatology):

"So rush O Muslims and gather around your khalīfah [Caliph], so that you may return as you once were for ages, **kings of the earth** and knights of war.

soldiers that do not see
hardship as being difficult,

And **lions** [frequent symbols of Assyria] that are thirsty in battle,

Having greedily drunk the blood of *kufir* [apostates]".

The Bible uses the word *eretz* in the Old Testament to refer either to the entire planet, or specifically to the land / earth promised to Abraham, from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. The "kings of the earth" therefore refer to the kings or 'knights' within the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham, making them "kings of the earth (land)". This term is used in the Bible to describe those who will finally come up against Jerusalem, to be destroyed by the second coming of Christ (Ps. 2:2; 76:12; Is. 24:21; Jer. 50:41 kings from the borders of the earth / land- which fits the IS; Lam. 4:12 the nations who assisted Babylon take Jerusalem;

Dan. 7:17 the beasts represent the kings of the earth; Rev. 16:14; 17:2,18; 18:3,9; 19:19). So we cannot but be excited when an Islamic state acts like Assyria and calls its fighters “the kings of the earth”!

The spiteful, aggressive attitude of the latter day Assyrian matches the behaviour of the IS. And there are stern prophecies predicting their end:

“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 I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations... Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: “O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did” (Is. 10:5-7,24).

“And He (the Lord Jesus) will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. This One will be our peace when the Assyrian invades our land, when he tramples on our citadels... And He will deliver us from the Assyrian when he attacks our land and when he tramples our territory” (Mic. 5:4-6). The visible manifestation of Israel’s Messiah is thus associated with ‘the Assyrian’ invading the land of Israel.

Geographically, Assyria was located in what is now parts of modern Iran and Iraq, although in reality both Assyria and Babylon coerced, or operated in tandem with, a number of the other smaller powers around Israel (Is. 29:7,8; 30:28; 33:3; 34:1,2; 2 Chron. 22:22; Ps. 83). Thus Herodotus called Sennacharib “king of the

Arabians and the Assyrians". We are seeing this scenario develop as various smaller powers are either coerced by or willingly cooperate with the IS.

The Assyrian is to be "broken in pieces" (Is. 30:31 RV), just as the whole image of Daniel 2 is to be, by the return of Christ as the little stone. The Assyrian confederacy which came against Jerusalem is described as being the foes of Israel who will be swept away as chaff (Is. 29:5 RV). This was fulfilled in Sennacherib's destruction outside Jerusalem. And yet the language of being swept away as chaff refers without doubt to the image of Dan. 2 being swept away as chaff. The conclusion surely is that the Assyrian attack against Jerusalem, comprised as it was of a confederacy of local nations from within the land promised to Abraham, is typical of the final destruction of a similar confederacy by the Lord's return.

Assyria took power over what is now known as Syria. And in the last days, "the riches of Damascus... shall be taken away before (by) the king of Assyria" (Is. 8:4). We can see Syria being either taken over by or forced into submission to the IS. Is. 9:12 speaks of the Syrians and Philistines [Palestinians] as being the mouth of a huge beast, closing around Israel: "The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth". In this lies the connection between the growing intifada against Israel on one side, and the uprise of the latter day Assyria, the IS, on Israel's other side. This image of an Arab beast devouring Israel is repeated in Joel 1:6 concerning the later day Assyrian invader.

The Assyrian Style Revived

Assyria was renowned for taking captives and abusing and selling them into captivity. Such a fate is predicted for latter day Israel: "You shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and

bondwomen, and no man shall buy you" (Dt. 28:68). Until recently there was no entity likely to do this to Israel. But now, with the emergence of the IS, there is. Here's a picture of Yezidi girls captured by the IS being sold for \$10 each:



The ISIS Magazine *Dabiq* No. 4 makes this explicit threat against Jews and Christians: “If we do not reach that time, then our children and grandchildren will reach it, and they will sell your sons as slaves at the slave markets” (p. 8)..

Assyria and Babylon had a policy of taking away local conquered people into exile, and using people from other parts of the conquered territories to then govern or police the conquered areas. One IS defector said it was a deliberate ISIS strategy to use outsiders to police the towns it took over: "The Islamic State have brought in people from other countries, different nationalities who are quite young in age so that they can brainwash or indoctrinate them with their Isis ideology... And so they control the areas, not through the local people but with their own forces and their own

men whom they prepare for this task"- quotes from Paul Wood, **‘Isis defector speaks of life inside brutal jihadist group’, first published at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28269596>**

Beheadings

The IS will be a strictly religious entity, keen to take the predictions and commands of the Koran and Hadith as literally as possible. Their crucifixions of their enemies are in strict obedience to passages like Sura 5:36: “The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified... Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom”. And the IS likewise are careful to obey the commands to behead enemies: “When you encounter the unbelievers on the battlefield, strike off their heads until you have crushed them completely; then bind the prisoners tightly,” (Sura 47). The world today is indeed shocked at reports of ISIS' gruesome sweep into northern Iraq. The UK *Daily Mail* reported of ISIS: “They lined the streets with the decapitated heads of police and soldiers”. Beheading is now a well-known method used by the IS, popularized by their YouTube videos of beheading Western hostages. We note that it is the fate of those who do not worship the beast or accept his mark in Rev. 20:4. Apologists claim that the Koran doesn't support these beheadings; but it does. *Sura* 8:12 says that beheading can be used in order to psychologically terrify the non-Moslems: "I will cast dread into the hearts of the unbelievers. Strike off their heads, then, and strike off all of their fingertips". *Sura* 47:3 is similar: "When you encounter the unbelievers on the battlefield, strike off their heads". Beheading is justified in some of the hadith on the basis that Muhammad ordered the beheading of 700 Jews in Medina for allegedly plotting against him. It is therefore to be used specifically against God's people. Until recently, it seemed impossible that such a method of death

would be literally used- but it is now becoming known worldwide that it is indeed being practiced and gloried in within the entity that is taking over the land promised to Abraham. It must be noted that Islam is the only major world religion today that legitimizes beheadings.

Rev. 20:4 says that there will be a special blessing for those who were beheaded for the sake of Jesus, and this involved them in not worshipping the beast or receiving his mark. The short term fulfilment of this was in the beast as the Roman empire. But the Roman Empire only beheaded *citizens* (e.g. Paul); non-citizens were killed in other ways, e.g. by crucifixion, throwing to wild beasts. Mentioning beheading was therefore purposeful. The text could more easily have said ‘martyred’ or ‘killed’. The blessing in view was therefore particularly for Roman citizens who refused to accept the faith of their own empire, for the sake of Christ. The climax of all Bible prophecy, however, is not in history; it is in the literal coming of Christ to earth. In the last days, therefore, Rev. 20:4 must have its final and ultimate fulfilment. But the incipient fulfilment in the days of Rome guides us towards understanding that final fulfilment. I suggest therefore that this class of latter day martyrs refers specifically to those who are citizens within the area controlled by the latter day entity known as the beast. Those who do not submit to its rulership will be beheaded. And we are already seeing that happening in the IS, with roads lined with heads. And we see the IS forcing Christians and Yezidis to convert to Islam, or to face the sword- quite literally, in beheading, They stated themselves in July 2014: “We offer them three choices: Islam; the *dhimma* contract—involving payment of *jizya*; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword”. The blessing of Rev. 20:4 is for those who endure this for the sake of Christ.

Here are pictures from IS media of the forced conversion of Yezidi men to Islam; those who refused were beheaded:







Wealth

The IS has seized billions of dollars worth of gold kept in the banks in the cities they have overrun, especially in Mosul; again in keeping with Assyria seizing gold and precious stones from its occupied territories. That certainly sounds like the behaviour of the aggressive King of the North during his invasion of *eretz* Israel in Dan. 11:43: "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things".

The Religious Dimension

The religious dimension of the invasion is also to be found in Dan. 11:44, albeit masked by translation. The King of the North will invade *eretz* Israel "to destroy and utterly to make away many" (AV). The Hebrew word *charam* translated 'to utterly make away' specifically means to consecrate, to make something over to another, specifically their god or religion. And this is the stated motive of the IS and other jihadist groups- to sanctify Israel as a spoil of war to Allah and the Prophet. This is the predicted call

found in Joel 2, to sanctify war against Israel- the very language of jihad, holy war. The King of Assyria “came up” throughout the land promised to Abraham (2 Kings 17:5). The Hebrew word used is *alah*, meaning to ascend up- and this is the very battle cry of the Islamic State, *Allah ahbar*. The Assyrians were persuaded that the one true God, Yahweh, had sent them against Israel (2 Kings 18:25)- just as the Islamic State are today. “Hear [*shama*] the word of the great King, the King of Assyria” (2 Kings 18:28) is a conscious imitation of the *shema* to Israel from their King, Yahweh. “The great king” is a title of Yahweh. The king of Assyria was parodying the giving of the Law to Israel, implying his commandments were a new Torah for Israel; and the leadership of the Islamic State has spoken of producing a new Torah, making him the one mentioned in Daniel as changing laws.

The historical Assyria ‘destroyed utterly’ the nations around Israel (2 Kings 19:11); but the Hebrew word used specifically means to consecrate or dedicate. It has a distinctly religious sense. And this is precisely the idea of *jihad*- taking land in a holy war in order to dedicate that land to Allah. In practice, the Assyrians did this by ‘destroying’ or ‘drying up’ these lands. *Charab*, ‘to dry up’, is used about their scorched earth policies (2 Kings 19:17), and Assyria threatened to ‘dry up’ Judah (2 Chron. 32:11), just as he boasted “with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places” (2 Kings 19:24); and the metaphor continues with the idea of Assyria being like a river gushing forth over the land they had dried up (Is. 8:7). This is why God’s answer to the Assyrian threat to Judah is expressed in terms of His reminding Judah that it is *He* who has ultimate power to dry up rivers and nations (Is. 44:27; 50:2; 51:10- every time, the same Hebrew word *charab* is used).

2.1 Ezekiel 38: Gog as Assyria

This chapter speaks of an invasion of Israel at some point after the Jews have returned to their land (Ezekiel 37) and before the

establishment of God's kingdom on earth (Ezekiel 39,40). This latter day invader will be destroyed by Divine intervention. The language is clearly based upon the historical Assyrian:

Ez. 38 / Gog

Assyria (Isaiah)

:4 I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and will bring you out with all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords; :4 I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and will bring you out with all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords; 37:29 Because of your raging against Me, because your arrogance has come up into My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came.

:7 Be prepared, yes, prepare yourself, you, and all your companies who are assembled to you, and be a guard to them. 8:7

:8 After many days you shall *be visited*. In the latter years you shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out of many peoples, on the mountains of Israel, which have been a continual waste; but it is brought forth out of the peoples, and they shall 8:8; 10:3 "the day of visitation" upon Assyria.

dwell securely all of
 them.

:9 You shall ascend, 28:2; 8:9,21; the
 you shall come like a Assyrian “strong one” of
 storm, you shall be like a Is. 28:2 is the ‘Gog’
 cloud to cover the land, figure “Behold, the Lord
 you, and all your hordes, has a mighty and strong
 and many peoples with one; like a storm of hail,
 you.

a destroying storm, and
 like a storm of mighty
 waters overflowing, He
 will cast them down to
 the earth with His hand”.
 The Assyrian invasion
 was a “storm” covering
 the land (10:3).

:10 You shall Is. 10:7
 consider / it will
 come into your
 mind

:11 You shall say, I 37:24 With the
 will go up to the land of multitude of my chariots
 unwallled villages; I will I have come up to the
 go to those who are at height of the mountains,
 rest, who dwell securely, to the innermost parts of
 all of them dwelling Lebanon. I will cut down
 without walls and having its tall cedars and its
 neither bars nor gates; choice fir trees. I will
 enter into its farthest
 height, the forest of its
 fruitful field.

:12 to take the spoil **Is. 10:6** I will send
 and to take the wealth; to him against a profane

turn your hand against nation, and against the
the waste places that are people who anger Me
now inhabited, and will I give him a
against the people who command to take the
are gathered out of the spoil and to take the
nations, who have gotten prey, and to tread them
livestock and goods, who down like the mire of the
dwell in the middle of the streets". Prey and spoil
land. are mentioned repeatedly
as being taken from
Judah by Assyria (Is. 8:4;
10:6; 33:4).

:19 For in My anger 30:27 Behold, the
and in the fire of My name of Yahweh comes
wrath have I spoken, from far away, burning
Surely in that day there with His anger, and in
shall be a great shaking thick rising smoke. His
in the land of Israel; lips are full of
indignation, and His
tongue is as a devouring
fire.

:22 With pestilence 29:6 RV; 30:30
and with blood will I Yahweh will cause His
enter into judgment with glorious voice to be
him; and I will rain on heard, and will show the
him and on his hordes descent of His arm, with
and on the many peoples the indignation of His
who are with him, an anger, and the flame of a
overflowing shower, and devouring fire, with a
great hailstones, fire, and blast, storm, and
sulphur. hailstones... She will be
visited by Yahweh of
Armies with thunder,
with earthquake, with

great noise, with
whirlwind and storm, and
with the flame of a
devouring fire.

:19,20 For in My 29:6; 30:25 There
anger and in the fire of shall be brooks and
My wrath have I spoken, streams of water on
Surely in that day there every lofty mountain and
shall be a great shaking on every high hill in the
in the land of Israel; day of the great

Eze 38:20 so that slaughter, when the
the fish of the sea, the towers fall.

birds of the sky, the
animals of the field and
all creeping things which
creep on the earth, and
all the men who are on
the surface of the earth,
shall shake at My
presence. The mountains
shall be thrown down,
the steep places shall fall
and every wall shall fall
to the ground.

:23 I will
magnify Myself
[against Gog]

10:15 I will
magnify Myself
[against Assyria]

39:10 They shall 33:1 Woe to you
take no wood out of the who destroy, but you
field, neither cut down weren't destroyed; and
any out of the forests; for who betray, but nobody
they shall make fires of betrayed you. When you

the weapons; and they have finished destroying, shall plunder those who you will be destroyed; plundered them, and rob and when you have made those who robbed them, an end of betrayal, you says the Lord Yahweh. will be betrayed.

Ez. 39:3 stresses how Gog will rely on his archery to terrorize Israel in the last days: "I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand". Assyrian bas-reliefs frequently show them posing with their bows. This is another Assyrian allusion. Ez. 38:17 says that this invader was repeatedly spoken of by the prophets- it can't refer therefore to Russia but to Assyria / Babylon, of whom the prophets repeatedly speak. And yet the invasion is clearly in the last days. Assyria, therefore, must be revived in some way.

Ez. 38:9 says that Gog comes as a storm to cover the land. This is the very language and Hebrew word *shoa* used of the Assyrian invasion in Is. 10:3. And of course the *shoa* is the term used by Jews today to describe the Nazi holocaust. That is to come again- but in "the land" promised to Abraham.

Hooks in the Jaws

Gog is manipulated with hooks in his jaws (Ez. 38:4-6). This alludes to how the Assyrians presented themselves in steles and other art forms as putting hooks in the mouths of those they conquered. The Zincirli Stele pictures Esarhaddon holding Egypt and Tyre by hooks in their jaws; Assyria "took Manasseh captive in hooks" (2 Chron. 33:11 Heb.). The point is, that what Assyria did to others is effectively being done to the latter day Assyrian by God. This is the very picture of Rev. 13:10- the beast who led God's people into captivity shall be taken into captivity by God at the last day, and hooks being put in the jaw is the very picture of captivity. Gog and his entity is the beast of Revelation. Indeed, the whole language of putting hooks in the jaws is based upon God's word to

Assyria, that He would put hooks in their jaws and a bridle in their mouth (Is. 37:29)- as if they were an aggressive beast.

The idea is found far back in Gen. 27:40, where Jacob made a promise about the relationship between Jacob (Israel) and Esau (forefather of many of the nations living in the land promised to Abraham). Jacob predicted that although Esau would be beneath Jacob, there would come a time “when you shall have dominion [Heb. ‘to trample down’, which will happen when Israel and Jerusalem are trodden down by Esau’s invasion of the last days, and will rule or have dominion over Jacob]; and you [Esau] shall break his [Jacob’s] yoke from off your neck”. This suggests that the families of Esau are again presented as a beast that must be controlled. Jacob’s words have so far had no significant fulfilment; but they will do, however briefly, when the beast of Esau takes over Israel and dominates the Jews.

Rev. 20:8 defines “the nations which are in the four quarters of the land” as being “Gog and Magog”; clearly the Ezekiel 38 Gog is being defined as the epitome of the nations along the borders of Israel, who both historically and currently are Israel’s main enemies.

2.1.1 Gog as the Antichrist

Gog is a personal name, he will be the *rosh* or prince / caliph of the invading group of nations. The only Biblical Gog was an Israelite who went away from the core of Israelite worship and lived on the East of Jordan, and later assimilated into the Assyrian territories and lived on the banks of the Euphrates (1 Chron. 5:4-9,25,26). The Biblical Gog is therefore from the far northern boundary of the land promised to Abraham, the ends of the *eretz* / earth. Gog is described as coming from his homeland in the uttermost parts of the north (Ez. 38:15). His origin will be on the northern edge of the land promised to Abraham- which is the Euphrates River. This, then, is the location of Magog; which would explain why there are no cuneiform inscriptions bearing this name. It is

simply the land of Gog, and its exact location is irrelevant- it's simply presented as a territory on the far northern border of the land promised to Abraham. And this is the birthplace of the current leader of the IS. We can look for the latter day Gog to be born somewhere along the Euphrates River.

The usage of the term Gog suggests that this invasion is being made and led by a false Israel. And we find that idea continued when the invaders are described as “a great company” (Ez. 38:4,7,13,15); yet the *qahal* is a term usually used about the congregation of Israel (Ps. 22:26; 35:18; 40:10,11; Ezra 10:1). Gog is “the chief prince” (Ez. 38:2), but this term is elsewhere used only of the chief princes of the tribes of Israel (Num. 10:4; 36:1). The invaders “come to a land”, Israel (Ez. 38:8)- using the very expression used of how *Israel* were to “come to a land”, that of Israel (Lev. 14:34; Num. 15:2; 34:2; Dt. 8:7; 17:14; 18:9; 26:1; 32:52). Likewise the beast / whore in Revelation is described in terms of Solomon's Kingdom, trading in the same goods, and associated with the number 666 as Solomon was (1 Kings 10:14). The point may be that the beast / whore system is a fake Israel, a mock Kingdom of God. Which fits ISIS and Islam. The anti-Christ doesn't mean so much 'against Christ' as 'that which appears as Christ', in the place of Christ. And likewise there is a fake Kingdom of God, a pseudo-Israel... which is what Islam created when Mohammed in the Quran twisted the Genesis record to make the Arab peoples 'Isaac' and the Jews from Jacob as 'Ishmael'. And this would explain why the codename for the leader of the invasion is Gog, an apostate Israelite who likewise lived on the Euphrates.

Other References to Gog

It's worth noting that some versions of the LXX in the apocryphal book of Sirach 48:17 speak of Gog coming to Jerusalem at the time of the Assyrian invasion at Hezekiah's time. This would definitely associate Gog with the leader of an Assyrian invasion. It's also interesting that the LXX of Dt. 3:1,13; 4:47 speaks of “Og king of Bashan” as “Gog”. Bashan refers to the area of the Golan Heights- the northern entrance to

Israel, on the border with Syria. This is exactly where the IS are building up their forces and this would be the logical invasion point into Israel.

Haman “the Agagite” is surely another prototype for Gog; Agag and Gog are very similar original words. The similarity is not simply in the similarity of the names. The “wicked device” or plan of Haman to destroy the Jews (Esther 8:3,5; 9:25) is described with the very same word used of how Gog thinks up an evil plan against Israel (Ez. 38:10).

We should note that “Gog” occurs in another place in the LXX, but not in the Masoretic Text: “Thus has the Lord God shewed me; and, behold, a swarm of locusts coming from the east; and, behold, one caterpillar, king Gog” (Am. 7:1). Israel’s enemies are typically described as coming from the north, because armies from Babylon and Assyria [to the East of Israel] would follow the transport routes along the Euphrates and then come down from the north into Israel- rather than marching across the trackless desert. But Gog is described as coming “from the east”. This makes sense if Gog is a person, rather than a nation or army. His origin was to the east of Israel. The “locusts” whom he leads connect with the Assyrians being called locusts (Is. 33:4), and the locusts of Rev. 9:3,7 being paralleled with thousands of horsemen coming against Israel from the Euphrates. Before dismissing the LXX too quickly, remember that the vast majority of Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are from the LXX, and that version is often preferred over the Hebrew [Masoretic] Text.

2.1.2 The Nations of Ezekiel 38

Assyrian Horsemen

Rev. 9:14-18 describes how 200,000,000 horsemen came from just beyond the Euphrates (exactly where the IS hordes are now massed, i.e. historical Babylon/Assyria), using "fire and smoke and brimstone" to punish God's apostate people. This was John in the first century struggling under ‘the tyranny of words’ to describe

21st century warfare. "By these three was the third part of men killed", suggesting that this invading army has three aspects to its work. The huge number of horsemen must allude to the "great company" of horsemen of Ez. 38:4, which we have shown to be rooted in the Assyrian invasion. The 200,000,000 horsemen of Rev. 9:16 may correspond to the fact that history records the strength of the Assyrian army which came against Jerusalem as being 200,000 men. The jihadist culture is full of allusion to horsemen, seeing themselves as the revival of previous horse-mounted Islamic warriors. The motif is common in IS promotional videos:





Jerusalem was truly “compassed with armies” by the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, and perhaps the Lord has this in mind when He predicted that Jerusalem would again be like this in the last days.

The Context of Ezekiel 38

Ezekiel 38 must be understood within its context. Ezekiel was a captive in Babylon, and the book bearing his name records series of prophecies which he gave. Ez. 33:21 – 39:29 is a complete section within the book. I understand Ez. 33:21,22 to mean that Ezekiel opened his mouth and gave the six prophetic utterances in this section on the night before the exiles received the news that Jerusalem had fallen. It was on the fifth day of the tenth month of the 12th year of the exile (Ez. 33:21). Ezekiel’s mouth was opened by Divine inspiration that evening, and he gave these messages through the night until the messenger arrived in the morning with the news that Jerusalem had fallen. Each of the six messages begin with the rubric “Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying...”. The message has been that Judah shall enter a new covenant, although there will be terrible times of trouble and judgment for

both her and her enemies. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, and so it is understandable that the invasion described in chapter 38 alludes to the Babylonian invasion, but climaxing in the good news that Messiah's coming will save Judah and all Israel. The message was that the tragedy of losing Jerusalem was to be repeated again, on an even grander scale, in the last days- and yet it was to be but a prelude to Messiah's triumphal coming and the permanent establishment of God's Kingdom based in Israel. The various nations listed in Ez. 38 may well have been those who were confederate with Babylon in the historical invasion of Judah- this would have been their relevance to Ezekiel's initial audience of captives in Babylon. Ten nations from within the land are listed in total, plus Persia- and Revelation speaks of an entity, a "beast", dominated by Babylon but having ten horns, or powers, associated with it. These would correspond to the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2. The significance of the nations listed is that they are from every point of the compass around Jerusalem: Gomer and Togarmah from the North, Persia from the East, Cush from the South and Put / Tarshish from the West. The common description of the invasion of Judah by 'all the nations round about' thus comes to term in the prophecy of Ez. 38.

The Nations of Ezekiel 38

We naturally want to know who precisely the specific nations refer to. But readers of Ezekiel will have been struck by the fact that a number of the nations listed have already been mentioned in Ezekiel- in prophecies which predict or describe their destruction. Tyre (Tarshish), Meshech and Tubal have all been described as having come to their end (Ez. 27:13; 32:5,26,27; . The impression, therefore, is that there will be a latter day *revival* of these nations. And that is what we are seeing happening in the lands around Israel, whose peoples and geographical areas were dormant and insignificant for centuries- until their revival in recent times. And now the IS includes many of those territories or ethnic groups.

They have arisen out of the barren deserts of the Middle East to become a major player in the geopolitical situation of today. And their intention is clearly and ultimately to invade Israel and destroy the Jews. Indeed, they have already taken much of the *eretz* / land promised to Abraham. Indeed, Ez. 38:4 opens the prophecy by saying that God will 'return' Gog [AV "turn thee back"], and the Hebraism is well translated elsewhere as 'restore the fortunes of...'. A revived Gog means a revived Assyria / Babylon. The question is, why does Ezekiel not specifically mention Assyria / Babylon as the leader of this group of nations? Why refer obliquely to them as 'Gog'? The answer may be that because Ezekiel was a captive in Babylon at the time, he referred to them under this code name. Peter does the same in referring to Rome under the code name of Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13). It may be that some of the other nations mentioned in Ez. 38 are likewise code names- because it is very hard to conclusively demonstrate that some of the nations or peoples bearing exactly those same names existed in Ezekiel's time. The description of Gog's destruction in Ez. 39 is likewise hard to take literally, and this may mesh well with 'Gog' being used as a codename. See the later notes on Ezekiel 39.

Sheba, Dedan and the merchants of Tyre / Tarshish (Ez. 38:13) are the nations of the extreme East and West of the land promised to Abraham. The picture is of Israel's enemies coming at her like a whirlwind from all points of the compass. There may not, therefore, be undue significance in the actual names of the nations- rather is the picture being created of all the surrounding nations, from every point of the compass, coming against Israel under the leadership of Gog. The "young lions" of Tyre could refer to "all her kings" [as in the Jewish Targum on this phrase], "all her traders" or "all her villages". The idea that these three nations will join in with the invasion, rather than challenge it, is the implication of the Hebrew. See Jacob Milgrom and Daniel Israel Block, *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38-48* (Wipf & Stock, 2012) p.

12. The nations with Gog are defined in Ez. 39:18 as “the princes / kings of the earth”- the leaders of the peoples within the earth / *eretz* promised to Abraham. These are the same “kings of the earth / land” which are so often mentioned in Revelation as coming against God’s people as part of the beast entity (Rev. 6:15; 16:14; 17:2,18; 18:3,9). This alludes to the kings of the earth who are raised up from the borders of the earth / land and come with Babylon to invade Israel (Jer. 50:41). The very idea of ‘the borders of the earth’ suggests that ‘the earth’ doesn’t refer to a sphere like the globe, but rather to a specifically defined territory. That territory is the land promised to Abraham. When we read that all “the kings of the earth” came from the very ends of the earth to hear Solomon’s wisdom, we likewise are to understand “the earth” as the land promised to Abraham. The Queen of Sheba was at the end of that earth / land; but the kings of New Zealand or Hawaii didn’t come.

The manner of Gog’s destruction also hints at the origin of Gog and those with him. They will be destroyed by every man’s sword turning against his brother (Ez. 38:21). But this is the very language of the curse upon Ishmael, the forefather of so many of the Moslem people who now live in the territory of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 16:12).

The Desire for Spoil

Ezekiel 38 describes the desire of the invaders to take the wealth and houses of the land of Israel. This is precisely the language used in the Koran regarding how Moslems have a duty to take these things from the disobedient children of Israel: "Allah brought those of the People of the Scripture... down from their strongholds, and cast panic into their hearts. Some ye slew, and ye made captive some. And Allah caused you to inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and land ye have not trodden. Allah is ever able to

do all things" (Sura 33.26,27). The jihadists are carefully observant of the Koran and Hadith, which so often are garbled versions of the Bible, doubtless because Mohammad first heard the Bible in an oral form or by rumour passed on by travelers. But by their careful observance of their holy books, the jihadists will in fact fulfil Bible prophecy exactly.

The Koran teaches that Moslems who go to battle with the Jews will not only win but will be rewarded with much spoil: "And much booty that they will capture. Allah is ever Mighty, Wise. Allah promiseth you much booty that ye will capture... that it may be a token for the believers" (Sura 48.19,20). The enthusiasm of the Ezekiel 38 invaders for "spoil" and "prey" is therefore appropriate for Islamic jihadist invaders.

The Number of Nations

I have explained elsewhere that the latter day beast with ten horns is to dominate the *eretz* / land of Israel, the area promised to Abraham from Egypt to the Euphrates. The ten toes of Daniel's image are rooted in the earth / land, and these are the basis for the ten horns in the later development of that vision in Daniel 7 and Revelation. This entity is dominated by a charismatic leader, the little horn; also expressed in Revelation as the whore riding the beast. In Ezekiel 38, we have ten nations plus Persia, led by an individual called Gog [reading *rosh* not as a nation but as "chief prince", as it is always elsewhere translated]. Those ten nations are all from within the land promised to Abraham, because they are extracted from the list of nations in the land in Genesis 10. The picture presented is of ten nations or leaders [horns, toes] from within the land promised to Abraham- perhaps to be fulfilled in an Islamic State dominating that area, with ten leaders or factions or peoples under its control. *Plus* Persia- Iran. It's unthinkable given current geopolitics that such an invasion would happen and Iran would not get involved. They will- according to Ezekiel 38. It's also worth noting that Sheba, Dedan and Tarshish appear to join in

the invasion as a separate entity. We are left wondering whether this has relevance to the three horns mentioned separately in Dan. 7:8,20,24.

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10

Another approach is suggested by the way that nearly all of the nations mentioned occur in the table of nations in Genesis 10. Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Cush [AV “Ethiopia”], Put [AV “Libya”], Gomer, Togarmah, Dedan, Tarshish and Sheba are all mentioned there- in fact, all of them apart from Persia (Iran is beyond the land promised to Abraham). The connection between Ezekiel 38 and the Genesis 10 table of nations must therefore be highly significant. That table of nations served as an explanation to ancient Israel of the origins of the nations in the *eretz* / land promised to Abraham. They wondered why they were attacked and opposed by the peoples of the land- and Moses was given Genesis to explain to them the context of geography and history in which they were situated. Genesis and the Pentateuch are God’s version of history, geography and geopolitics for His people. Given this relevance to the situation in the land promised to Abraham, it is foolhardy to speculate that Shem, Ham or Japheth refer to Africans, Europeans etc. Ham refers specifically to “Canaan”, and his servitude under Shem [Israel]; the predicted tension between Shem and Ham refers to the Jew-Arab tension, and not any other tension such as between black people and white European colonialists. This is just wishful thinking, and reflects the cavalier, opportunistic usage of Bible verses for which 19th century Western European theologians have become famous.

The names of the peoples mentioned are solely relevant to the land promised to Abraham. Thus when we read that Togarmah comes from “the north border [AV “quarters”]” (Ez. 38:6), this refers to the northern limit of the land / *eretz* promised to Abraham. The allusion to the Genesis 10 list of nations in Ez. 38 would therefore be to signal that the peoples of the land, the kings of the land, would come up against Israel in the last days- and the only outside nation who joins in is Persia / Iran. And that is absolutely

imaginable today! The numerical value in the Hebrew for the term *Gog and Magog* is seventy- and there are 70 peoples listed in the table of nations in Gen. 10. There is no need to become fixated by issues of historical geography in trying to locate where these peoples may have once lived- they are all within the land promised to Abraham. Any reference to Russia, Turkey, Europe etc. is thereby made inappropriate.

Rev. 20:8 parallels all the nations in the earth / land with Gog: “To deceive the nations which are in the four quarters / borders of the land / earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle”. The language of deceit is also picking up that of Ezekiel 38 about Gog. "I will drive you forward" (Ez. 39:2, AV "leave the sixth part of thee") appears to be a Hebraism meaning 'I will deceive you' ; see See Jacob Milgrom and Daniel Israel Block, *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38-48* (Wipf & Stock, 2012) p. 20. Gog is led into the conflict by God, and the entire showdown is not so much between Gog and Israel as between God and Gog. The events in the Middle East are not, therefore, running out of control. All is carefully planned and executed by God, just as the historical Assyrian was a rod in Yahweh's hand, manipulated by Him.

Focus on Jerusalem

The invasion comes against "the navel of the land" (Ez. 38:12). This could be a reference to the ultimate 'high place', Jerusalem. Both the Bible and Judaism speak of ‘going up’ to Jerusalem or ‘coming down’ from there. The Greeks wrote of their sanctuaries at Dydimas, Miletus and Delphi as being 'the navel of the land'; so there could be a reference to the temple mount. Or it could allude to how the land currently inhabited by Israel is the highest point in the land promised to Abraham, from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. Just as Assyria’s focus was upon Jerusalem, so the latter day Assyrian will have the same interest. And that fits an Islamic

Assyrian, for Jerusalem is the burning issue for Islam. The many allusions to the Assyrian invasion which we find in Ezekiel 38 are specifically alluding to how Assyria came up against *Jerusalem*. Gog ‘ascends’ against the once wasted mountains [an intensive plural for *the* great mountain- Zion?], he ‘comes up’ against the land (Ez. 38:9,11,16; 39:2- quite some emphasis). The language of ‘ascent’ is relevant specifically to ‘going up’ to Jerusalem specifically. And Rev. 20:9 has Gog’s armies specifically coming up against Jerusalem. The ISIS Magazine *Dabiq* number 4 (October 2014) is clear that whatever battles are going on in Iraq and Syria, their focus ultimately is Jerusalem: “We perform jihād here while our eyes are upon al-Quds” (p.4).

2.1.3 Israel Dwelling in Peace and Safely

I should sidetrack to explain that Israel dwelling in ‘peace and safety’ in Ez. 38 could refer to the conditions of the Messianic Kingdom; or it could refer to a sense of security which arises in literally the very last days before the Lord’s return, as a result of some peace agreement being reached. Whenever the invasion happens chronologically is not our immediate concern; what is significant is the preparation of the geopolitical situation to enable such a situation. And that is what we are seeing now developing. Further, I calculate ten nations in Ez. 38 on the basis that *rosh* is a proper noun meaning ‘chief prince’ and doesn’t refer to any nation bearing the name *rosh*. There was no such nation. All attempts to force this word into equivalence with the Kievan *rus*, from whence ‘Russia’, are opportunistic and cavalier in the extreme. Because two words contain two identical letters when transliterated doesn’t mean they are one and the same word. Further, I understand “Are you come to take a spoil?” in Ez. 38:13 to not be a challenge, but rather said with the implication ‘Are you going to spoil them? We will come too!’.

The destruction of the Ezekiel 38 invasion is described in Ezekiel 39:17-20 in terms of a great supper, and the language is the basis for the description of the final destruction of "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" at the 'bird supper' in Rev. 19:17,18. The nations listed in Ez. 38 are therefore the kings of the earth / land. They cannot, therefore, refer to nations outside of the land promised to Abraham (e.g. England and Russia). The emphasis upon horses in Ez. 38:4-7,9,15,22; 39:4,11 and the destruction / 'eating' of their flesh is matched by the horse mounted nations of Rev. 19:15-21 being destroyed and their flesh likewise 'eaten'. The calling for a sword against Gog is matched by the sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth in Rev. 19. It isn't therefore incidental that Revelation 20:8 goes on to use the terms Gog and Magog in describing the final enemies of God. The nations with Gog and Magog come from "the four corners of the earth / land" (Rev. 20:8), and this is alluding to how the nations with Gog in Ez. 38 are from the four compass points around Israel. This is incidental proof that the ten nations of Ez. 38 are all with Gog; "Are you come to take a spoil?" of Ez. 38:13 is therefore not a protest but rather a joining in with the group spoiling of Israel. The destruction of the Gog invasion by fire (Rev. 20:9) is exactly as in Ez. 38:22; 39:6. I would go with Harry Whittaker's suggestion that this invasion of Rev. 20:8 is when the 1000 year reign is established [not "expired" as in AV]; this would fit with the beast / Gog coming against Christ once He has returned and Israel are dwelling confidently and safely. The beast is destroyed at Christ's return, and yet has a revival. This is very much the theme of the various prophecies about the beast receiving a deadly wound but reviving. Yet the chronological issues should not overly concern us. I have elsewhere explained that Bible prophecy is conditional, and therefore there are various possible outcomes and sequences of events. And further, it seems likely that the nature of time will be compressed or changed around the time of the Lord's return.

The invasion occurs when Israel dwell safely, without bars and gates. This is indeed the language of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the idea of Israel dwelling safely has been used in Ezekiel to describe the situation for Israel after they have repented and accepted Christ (Ez. 34:25,27,28). Note however that the AV and LXX of Ez. 39:26 suggest that the peace and safety period is *before* the invasion and return of Messiah: "After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid". It could be that the invasion happens after Christ has returned and the little stone has begun to establish Kingdom conditions in the land of Israel. This would then fit with Psalm 2, which describes the kings of the earth [a term used by the IS about themselves] attacking Jerusalem with Christ enthroned there. But this need not make us think that therefore Ezekiel 38 is irrelevant to present conditions. Because Christ could return today and establish His Kingdom in Jerusalem. But the enemies of Israel, Gog and his followers, would have been moved into a position whereby they could immediately then attack Him. Or it could be that in line with predictions in Daniel 8 and 11, Israel make a covenant with their enemies which appears successful, and then when all are saying "peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes". But the very same words are used about Hazor's confident state just before the Babylonian invasion: "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has made a plan against you and formed a purpose against you. Rise up, advance against a nation at ease, that dwells securely, declares the LORD, that has no gates or bars, that dwells alone. Their camels shall become plunder, their herds of livestock a spoil" (Jer. 49:30,31). As Babylon invaded Hazor, so the latter day Gog, as a revived Babylon-Assyria, will invade Israel. Hazor was not then in the Kingdom of God; the language rather speaks of self confidence and assurance. This is indeed how the Hebrew word translated "safely" in Ez. 38:14 is elsewhere used (Jud. 8:11; 18:7 "they lived carelessly"; Job 11:18; Prov. 3:29; Is. 32:17 "assuredness"; Is. 47:8 "carelessly"; Ez. 28:26 "with confidence"; 30:9 "careless"; 39:6

"carelessly"; Mic. 2:8 "securely"). Such a position could be brought about by an Israeli military victory against her enemies, or by a peace agreement which appears to hold.

It could be argued that because Ezekiel 38 doesn't specifically describe any success of the invasion or suffering of Israel, that it therefore describes a futile attack on the Lord Jesus once He is established in Jerusalem. However, the absence of such language doesn't mean that the invasion will not be successful. It could be that the focus of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is upon the final destruction of the invader, and therefore the suffering of Israel is not mentioned- because that is not the burden of these oracles about Gog. The perspective is not so much upon Gog's conflict with Israel, but rather upon Gog's conflict with God. The prophecy is elevating the issue far higher- Gog is to have a showdown with God through making this invasion. Gog comes to take spoil (Ez. 38:12,13). But Zech. 14:1 uses the same word in predicting that Jerusalem will indeed be captured by the final invaders, the women raped, and "your spoil shall be divided in the midst of you". We must also give due weight to Ez. 39:22: "The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward". It is their salvation from Gog and the process of Gog's destruction which persuades Israel that Yahweh is their God "from that day forward". That reads very awkwardly if they have already repented and are sitting happily in God's Kingdom when the Ezekiel 38 invasion happens.

Ezekiel 39

The punishment of Gog will include the punishment of those living in "the coastal lands" of the land (Ez. 39:6). This is surely the Gaza Strip. The latter day Assyrian will therefore have connection with the Palestinians in Gaza- which is exactly what we are seeing in the connection between the IS and the Palestinians. We can note that they are described as living peaceably, like Israel in Ez. 38; this

might support the suggestion that the peace and safety in the land is brought about by an Israeli-Arab peace accord that appears to last.

Understandable concern has been raised concerning the seven months of burning Gog's corpses, and the rather unreal feel of the punishments of Gog and the cleansing of the land in Ezekiel 39. Notice the usage of the number seven. There are seven enemies of Israel listed in the opening part of Ezekiel 38, joined in later by another three. The enemies have seven weapons (Ez. 39:9), seven years' worth of fuel is provided by burning them (Ez. 39:9), and it takes seven months to burn the corpses (Ez. 39:12). One wonders whether we are intended to read the 'sevens' literally, or whether this is a device to indicate completeness. If indeed the language here is figurative, then we are the more encouraged to read 'Gog' as a codename rather than seek for a literal historico-geographical reference for him.

A Final Comfort

"And My holy Name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let My holy Name be profaned anymore" (Ez. 39:7) surely alludes to the similar language used in Lev. 22:31,32 about the sanctification of God's Name in Israel as a result of their obedience to Him. We can therefore see in this a hint that the invasion leads to Israel's repentance.

2.2 Daniel 11

Daniel 11 speaks of an invasion of Israel by "the king of the north" which results in a time of trouble for Israel such as never was, and the standing up of 'Michael' and the resurrection of the dead. The period of history between Dan. 11:39 and :40 is not described because it is irrelevant to the Jews in Israel, just as there is a gap in fulfilment between the iron legs and the feet in the

historical outworking of the image in Daniel 2. The section speaking of the last days begins by saying that the king of the north hears "tidings" (Dan. 11:44). The same word is used of Assyria at the time of her invasion of Israel and siege of Jerusalem: "I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land" (2 Kings 19:7). Thus at the very time of Assyria's destruction by God, her previous allies turned against her, exemplifying how Arab in-fighting will be one of the means which God will use to finally destroy them (Zech. 14:13, etc.). "A blast" (Heb. 'ruach', a spirit/angel?) being sent upon Sennacherib is the same term used about Pharaoh's destruction (Ex. 15:8) and that of Babylon (Jer. 51:1), both of which are typical of the final Islamic defeat. Babylon also hears 'rumours' at the time of her destruction (Jer. 51:46). It is to these 'rumours' of wars within the land / earth promised to Abraham which Christ may allude in Mt. 24:6, speaking of "rumours of wars" in the very last days. The smaller nations associated with Babylon/Assyria also hear "tidings" (same word translated "rumour") in Jer. 49:23, showing that they meet the same judgment as 'Assyria' to some extent.

Close analysis of Dan. 11:40-44 reveals that it is couched in terms of the Ez. 38 invasion, which is based upon that of Assyria. However, it is also full of direct allusions to the Assyrian invasion:

"The king of the north" (Dan. 11:40) - Assyria (cp. Zeph.2:13).

"Shall come against him like a whirlwind" (Dan. 11:40), as God will against the invaders in response to this (Zech. 9:14; Is. 28:2). God comes up "like a storm... a cloud to cover the land" in a similar way (Ez. 38:9). A whirlwind attacks from all sides. The combined typology of the previous invasions has shown them coming from all points of the compass. The final combined 'Assyrian' invasion will also have this feature, as it did in Hezekiah's time.

"With chariots, and with horsemen" (Dan. 11:40), for which the Assyrians were famous, and Gog likewise (Ez. 38:4).

"He shall enter into the countries" (Dan. 11:40) as Assyria did *en route* to Israel; "and shall overflow and pass over" (Dan. 11:40), as Assyria under Sennacherib (Is. 8:8; 43:2) and Babylon (Jer. 47:2) are said to have done. The Hebrew root for "overflow" means "to cleanse", occurring in Ez. 16:19 concerning God 'thoroughly washing away' Israel's sins in the last days, as a result of their final tribulations. Thus the 'Assyrian' 'overflowing' of the land in the last days will result in Israel's spiritual cleansing. "The consumption decreed (the final invasion) shall overflow in righteousness" (Is. 10:22). "He shall enter also into the land of delight" (Dan 11:41 A.V. mg.). At the time of Sennacherib's destruction, God termed the land 'delight' (Is. 62:4).

This could indicate that this invasion comes after the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom. The ambiguity is because of the 'variable' timing of Christ's return, seeing this is related to Israel's spiritual reformation - at least it appears this is how God wishes us to see it.

"Many countries shall be overthrown" (Dan. 11:41). 2 Kings 18:34 lists these countries in the Sennacherib context. This confirms that there will be conflict throughout the land / earth immediately prior to the final 'Assyrian' attack on Israel. We are seeing this before our eyes.

"But these shall escape out of his *hand*, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief ('*rosh*') of the children of Ammon (Dan. 11:41). These areas were not meddled with by Sennacherib. There is a triple emphasis on how the other nations fell into his "hand" in 2 Kings 18:33-35.

"He shall stretch forth *his hand* also upon the countries" continues this "hand" connection, "and the land of Egypt shall not escape" (Dan. 11:42). There is a possible allusion here to Moses stretching out his hand upon Egypt (Ex. 9:15), which would show that the latter-day "king of the North" will claim that he has received Divine guidance to judge Israel. Assyria's invasion of Egypt was associated with that of Israel, further demonstrating that

the invasion of Dan. 11:40-43 is alluding to Sennacherib's battle plan.

"He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver" (Dan. 11:43). We are seeing the IS fulfil this by taking over oil wealth as well as billions of dollars of gold reserves.

"The Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps" (Dan. 11:43) may appear to contradict Ethiopia suddenly becoming opposed to Assyria during the final attack on Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:9). This can be reconciled by realizing that Dan. 11 speaks of two phases in this final invasion. Ethiopia is with Assyria during the blitzkrieg towards and through Israel, but is not necessarily with her in the final 'going forth with great fury' against Jerusalem (Dan. 11:44).

There were these same two phases in the Assyrian prototype - the "great fury" of the king of the north is modelled upon Sennacherib's rage of 2 Kings 19:27,28. The fact that Ethiopia is described as being with Gog in the Ezek. 38 invasion may be an indication that this prophecy is not concerning the final push on Jerusalem, but rather the Assyrian/Arab pillaging of the land for "a spoil and a prey... cattle and goods" (Ez. 38:12) after the pattern of the neighbouring peoples raiding the land in the Judges period. Ethiopia being mentioned in tandem with Libya in both Ez. 38:5 and Dan. 11:43 could suggest that the North African Arabs break ranks with those of 'Assyria' during the attack on Jerusalem, as evidently occurred in Hezekiah's time (2 Kings 19:9).

"He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace... in the glorious holy mountain" of Zion (Dan. 11:45) is the language of Is. 14:13,14 concerning both Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar desiring to take Jerusalem. Thus Dan. 11:45 is saying that the latter-day Assyria/Babylon will do this, seeing that Jerusalem will be taken by their final invasion (Zech. 14:2). Dan. 12:1 says that it is at this time of the latter-day Assyrian/ "king of the north" being in Jerusalem, that Israel will suffer "a time of trouble such as never was", out of which the righteous remnant will be delivered ("every

one that shall be found written in the book") by God's intervention, which will be associated with the resurrection (Dan. 12:2).

2.3 Micah 5

Micah 5 speaks of how “the Assyrian” will be in conflict with the Lord Jesus, the one born in Bethlehem who will become “great unto the ends of the earth” at His return to earth when His brethren ‘return’ to Him (Mic. 5:1-4). The establishment of the Kingdom on earth and repentance of Israel will occur “when the Assyrian shall come into our land” and the Lord Jesus saves them from the invasion. This latter day Assyrian will “tread down our palaces” (Mic. 5:5). This is likely an intensive plural for the great palace of Israel, the temple. The Lord Jesus uses this language in predicting that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until “the times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled (Lk. 21:24). These times of Gentile treading down of Jerusalem likely refer to the 1260 days / three and a half years of the final tribulation. The treading down of Jerusalem will therefore be by “the Assyrian”, and capturing Jerusalem is the great goal of militant Islam and the Islamic State. This is the treading down of God’s people to be done by the little horn of Dan. 8:10. The little horn is therefore “the Assyrian”; and a charismatic leader of the Islamic State would fit the job description exactly.

Chapter 3 The Black Flags

I have made the point earlier that the latter day invasion of the *eretz* / land / earth of Israel will be distinctly religiously motivated. There will be a conscious attempt to fulfil the words of the Koran and Hadith. Islamic prophetic tradition in the Hadith predicts:

“Armies carrying black flags will come from Khurasan (This could refer to Afghanistan, the home of Al-Qaeda; or to Kurdistan-the area where the Islamic State currently is developing). No power will be able to stop them and they will finally reach Eela (Baitul Maqdas in Jerusalem) where they will erect their flags.” Baitul Maqdas or “the holy house” is referring to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Source:

<http://musliminsuffer.wordpress.com/2008/10/14/victorious-army-of-black-banners> . Abdul Rahman al-Wahabi in *The Day of Wrath* states:

“The final battle will be waged by Muslim faithful coming on the backs of horses... carrying black banners. They will stand on the East side of the Jordan River and will wage war that the earth has never seen before. The true Messiah who is the Islamic Mahdi will defeat Europe, will lead this army of Seljuks [Turks]. He will preside over the world from Jerusalem because Mecca would have been destroyed”. Other parts of the Hadith claim:

“The black flags will come from the East, led by mighty men, with long hair and beards, their surnames are taken from the names of their home towns (i.e. Khosti or from Khost etc.) and their first names are from a “Kunya” (*Asmal Masalik Lieyyam Mahdiyy Maliki Li Kull-id Dunya Biemrillah-il Malik, Qalda bin Zayd*) . We note that the Islamic State is insisting that all men must grow beards in the areas they occupy.

“If you see the Black Banners coming from Khurasan go to them immediately, even if you must crawl over ice, because indeed

amongst them is the Caliph, Al Mahdi.” [Narrated on authority of Ibn Majah, Al-Hakim, Ahmad]. All the talk of following the Caliph, the leader of the IS, fits in with the Biblical picture of a specific antiChrist figure developing in the last days. There has been no Caliph in the Moslem world since 1924- until Al-Baghdadi, leader of the IS, was declared Caliph in 2014.

“Surely Black Flags will appear from the Khorasan until the people (under the leadership of this flag) will tie their horses with the Olive Trees between Bait-e-Lahya and Harasta. We asked are there any Olive trees between these places. He said, ‘If there isn’t then soon it will grow so that those people(of Khorasan) will come and tie their horses there’”. Beit Lahia is a town under Palestinian Authority of about 40,000 people in the northern Gaza Strip. Harasta, also known as Harasta al-Basal, is a Syrian city administratively belonging to Rif Dimashq. This is the situation foretold in Is. 9:12 “The Syrians before and the Philistines behind ... shall devour Israel with open mouth”. Beit Lahia is a center of Hamas terrorist activity against Israel, and has frequently been the focus of Israeli raids and bombardment-
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28290018> . The uprising in the Gaza Strip is clearly orchestrated and funded by ISIS.

“If you see the black (meaning war) flags coming from Khurasan (Afghanistan), join that army, even if you have to crawl over ice, for this is the army of the Caliph, the Mahdi and no one can stop that army until it reaches Jerusalem.”

“They will defeat the companions of The Sufyaani until he comes to the House of Jerusalem where he will establish his power for the Mahdi, and he will be supplied with three hundred (men) from Syria after his arrival and the matter will be settled for the Mahdi. The eminent saints (Al-Abdal) of Syria and the best people of Iraq will come to him and swear allegiance to him

he will send an army to Iraq and kill a hundred thousand in Az-Zawra. So join him in Mecca — he is the Mahdi!” Then, Hudhayfah asked: ‘O Messenger of Allah, how shall we know him?’ He replied: “He is a man from my children, he looks like the men from the children of Israel, upon him are two white cloaks with frayed edges”. His face is like a colourful, glittering star”.

“The Prophet said: “The Mahdi is a man from my children. His face is like a glittering star, his skin is the colour of an Arab, and his body is like that of Israel. He will fill the earth with justice just as it will have been filled by injustice, and the dwellers of Heaven and Earth will be pleased with his Caliphate”.

There is a conscious attempt by the IS to fulfil these predictions. They arose from Afghanistan- it was the American war against Al Qaeda there which led to Islamic extremism flooding Westwards from Afghanistan into Iran and Iraq. And it was Al Qaeda who spawned the IS. The black flag has been observed amidst the protests and riots in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Indonesia, India, Turkey, Jerusalem, Gaza and even Germany, Australia and England. Across the world, Muslims of every race, tribe and nation are marching under the same black banner. Another name for the flag in Arabic is al-Ûqāb, and is sometimes referred to as “the Eagle”; just as the British flag is called ‘The Union Jack’ and the American flag ‘The stars and stripes’. And the eagle is a symbol of Israel’s historical enemies.

IS Aims for Jerusalem

“Armies carrying black flags will come from Khurasan. No power will be able to stop them and they will finally reach Eela, (Baitul Maqdas, “The Holy House” in Jerusalem) where they will erect their flags”.

Without doubt, the taking of Jerusalem is high on the agenda of the Islamic State. It is also high on the agenda of the Palestinians within the land of Israel. The Hamas Covenant again refers to the idea of the black flags. Article 6 states of their movement: “It strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine”. This is the significance of the black flags of the Islamic State being raised over the surrounding territories. The intended next placement for them is clearly in Israel. They also see the assault on Israel and the Jews as hastening the last day. Article 7 of the Hamas Covenant states: “The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said: "The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him””. In their desire for the last day to come, they will surely invade Israel and try to kill the Jews there. The theological basis of the Islamic State is likewise that the last day will be hastened by armed conflict with the Jews. Such an invasion of Israel is required by Bible prophecy before the return of Christ and the day of judgment. The Moslems will seek to bring this about by invading Israel and killing as many Jews as they can; this is the basis of their invasion of Israel.

Chapter 4 The Significance of the Euphrates

The drying up of the Euphrates spoken of in Rev. 16:12 is what enables the seventh trumpet and seventh seal to come to pass and they refer to the coming of Christ. It cannot be insignificant that the Islamic State are battling for control of the dams on the Euphrates. The control of rivers, dams, and water installations is a major weapon in the ISIS tactical armoury. This was indeed how it was in the time of Saddam Hussein. For more information on this, see Vidal, John (*The Guardian* 2 July 2014). ["Water supply key to outcome of conflicts in Iraq and Syria, experts warn"](#).

The waters of a river are symbolic of nations (Is. 23:10), specifically the Assyrians in Is. 8:7, Zech. 10:11 and Jer. 2:18- it could be that the reference is to the drying up or destruction [as the metaphor of ‘drying up’ means] of the nations and tribes of the fertile crescent. And these are the very areas where the Islamic State is so active. The Assyrian armies were those “beyond the river [Euphrates]” which were unleashed by God upon Judah (Is. 7:20). This is the basis for the language of Rev. 9:14, where four Angels are bound by the river Euphrates and unleashed in the sense that a huge army is let loose from beyond that river in order to judge an impenitent Israel. We recall that it was an Angel which stood upon the river in Dan. 12:6. We note that Greece likewise was likened to a ram held back by a river, which it jumped over (Dan. 8:3). The latter day power restrained by the Euphrates is therefore to be based upon the historical Assyria and Greece. Again we see how the image of Daniel 2 stands complete in the last days, because the final entity which dominates Israel will incorporate elements of the previous dominators, such as Assyria and Greece.

Euphrates was the boundary of the land promised to Abraham. Israel were thrown out of their land by being taken 'beyond the river [Euphrates]', just as Adam was cast out of Eden, which appears to have been bounded by the Euphrates. The 200,000 (or RV "twice ten thousand times ten thousand") horsemen were bound at [RV; Gk. *epi*] the Euphrates (Rev. 9:14), which is the northern border of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Dt. 1:7; Josh. 1:4; 2 Sam. 8:3). When Judah were taken to Babylon to be punished, this is described as their being punished in the border of Israel (Ez. 11:10,11). Babylon was located on the border of the land promised to Abraham. The idea is clearly that these hordes will come from that northern border, the Euphrates, and invade Israel. The Islamic State is already using pictures of horsemen as symbolic of their mission. The Greek text speaks of "twice ten thousand times ten thousand", recalling the way that the image of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7 will be destroyed when "ten thousand times ten thousand" stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Dan. 7:10). Once the Euphrates is no longer allowed to restrain these hordes, they will race towards Israel- and judgment by the returned Lord Jesus. Hence the huge significance of the fact that the IS now controls the Euphrates river and is looking towards Israel. Note too the language of Mic. 5:6- the latter day Assyrian will "tread within our borders" and then be destroyed by Christ's return. Revelation is putting this another way, in saying that the hordes of invaders will come from beyond the Euphrates, the border of Israel.

The significance of "*twice* ten thousand times ten thousand" may be in that the latter day dominators of Israel are split into two broad camps, represented by the two feet of the image of Daniel. It may be a reference to the Sunni - Shia division within Islam, or to the two centers of domination of Israel which will appear based in Gaza and the West Bank. Dan. 7:10 contrasts these "ten thousand times ten thousand" who are to be judged with the thousands who minister unto the judge, the Lord Jesus; the thousands of the Lord

Jesus will stand in opposition to the thousands of the latter day invaders, just as the true Christ will face off against the anti-Christ.

The Restraint Lifted

"The river" was Biblically the language of Euphrates; the Assyrian invasion is described as the River [i.e. Euphrates] bursting upon Israel (Is. 8:5-8). This invasion is described as the loosing of four Angels (Rev. 9:15,16). It could be that four Angels are involved in the work of arranging this geopolitical situation; or it could be that each Angel represents a particular subdivision of the IS. Note how "the Angel of the bottomless pit" refers both to a Heavenly Angel and to a human leader on earth, in that the princes of the earth have their Angelic representative in the court of Heaven. These are surely the same four Angels of Rev. 7:1,2 who had been holding the winds from blowing on the land of Israel; restraining the nations around Israel from destroying it from 1948 onwards. But they will no longer hold back the winds; they will loose the horsemen previously restrained by the Euphrates. This may happen in practice by the restraining power of America and the West being no longer permitted to operate by the four Angels. At the time of writing, it's highly significant that most of the cities, towns and areas now controlled by the IS are on the East bank of the Euphrates; the river is as it were holding back IS from advancing Westwards into the land promised to Israel. But that restraint is now being lifted. This idea of a restraint in place is to be found in 2 Thess. 2:7,8. It could be argued that the Roman Empire was the restraining force written about by Paul there, and there will be another restraining power likewise in the last days. In practice, not only has the West been the power broker restraining Israel's enemies, but Israel's nuclear and technological edge have been. This may be removed, in whatever way, so that this is no longer a restraining item.

The trumpets, seals and vials do not have to be chronologically consecutive events. They are different takes and angles on the same

events. The sixth Angel loosing the hordes bound at the Euphrates is matched by the fifth Angel coming down to the land and unlocking the bottomless pit with a key (Rev. 9:1,2; this surely refers to a Divine Angel, as it would make no sense for 'satan' to be given the key to his own prison). This released the aggressive locusts to swarm over the earth / land [of Israel] and kill and persecute those in the land promised to Abraham who haven't taken the Father's Name into their foreheads- for all their hypocritical wearing of phylacteries. Again we have the metaphor of restraint being lifted, and swarms of enemies pouring into the earth / land of Israel. The seventh trumpet begins with the news that there will be no more delay (Rev. 10:6)- the idea is again of an imposed delay / restraint being now lifted. Locusts are symbolic of Israel's neighbouring enemies (Dt. 28:38; Jud. 6:5; 7:12; Jer. 46:23; Joel 1:4; 2:25). Especially significant is the reference in Am. 7:1 LXX, which we noted in chapter 2.1 :“Thus has the Lord God shewed me; and, behold, a swarm of locusts coming from the east; and, behold, one caterpillar, king Gog”. The locusts from the east, headed by Gog, released by the fifth Angel, compares with the kings from the east who are released by the sixth Angel. The locusts arise out of the bottomless pit, just as the beast arises out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7; 17:8). The beast is therefore another image for the locusts; they all speak of the enemies of Israel coming from the east and swarming the land. This is exactly the situation being developed by the IS at the moment. The locusts are described as having long hair, and striking as scorpions (Rev. 9:5,8)- all very reminiscent of jihadist fighters. We note that the locusts have an Angel-King over them, called Abaddon / Apollyon (Rev. 9:11)- the destroyer. The idea is that their leader has an Angel representative in Heaven. Again, emphasis is placed upon their having a specific leader, the antichrist. 'The destroyer' was the Angel who destroyed the unfaithful Israelites (1 Cor. 10:10), and the charge of the locusts and their leader is against the same group, within the land promised to Abraham.

The invading hordes come out of the bottomless pit- both the locusts and the beast arise from here (Rev. 9:1; 11:7; 17:8). They come up out of the "bottomless pit", the abyss, the "great furnace" (Rev. 9:2). But the beast arises out of *the land* [promised to Abraham] in Rev. 13:2. We can therefore understand the bottomless pit and great furnace as being within the land promised to Abraham. The release of the locusts and smoke from the abyss means that the sun is darkened (Rev. 9:2), which is the very figure used for the latter day suffering of Israel at the hands of her invaders (Joel 3:15; Mt. 24:29). The locusts of Joel 2:3 are pictured as coming upon Israel as if it is the garden of Eden, and leaving it as a desolate wilderness. This could connect with the revival of the land of Israel since 1948 as the garden of Eden (Ez. 36:35); or it could be that Eden is the same as the land promised to Abraham. Is. 31:9 speaks of Jerusalem surrounded by the Assyrians as a furnace. Judah's captivity in Babylon was as it were in a furnace of affliction (Is. 48:10; Ez. 22:18,20,22). The deliverance of the faithful Jews from the furnace in Dan. 3:6,11 was an acted parable of Judah's deliverance from captivity in Babylon / Persia and her empire-throughout the land promised to Abraham. And yet in Rev. 20:3, the beast is again cast into the bottomless pit, clearly representing condemnation and judgment. So it would seem that the judgment upon the beast / locusts occurs several times- they are condemned / judged and put in the bottomless pit, and then released, and then placed there again. This probably speaks of various stages in the judgment upon them. But it would be foolhardy to try to work out an exact chronology ahead of time. The locusts / scorpions judge the people in the land for five months (Rev. 9:5)- part of the three and a half year tribulation period. When it happens, it will all be clear enough. But for now, the point is that these locust / scorpion hordes, the beast, are restrained and yet then released, to come and destroy the unbelievers in the land / earth promised to Abraham. It is this restraint which we are now seeing released, as the hordes develop and begin to gush forth from the Euphrates.

The similarities between Revelation 9 and Joel are striking, and without question Joel is speaking of the neighbour nations pouring into the land of Israel: “The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devours the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array... They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march everyone on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks... They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining” (Joel 2:4-10).



The four Angels holding winds in Rev. 9:16 surely alludes to the Angels gathering the elect from the four winds (Mt. 24:31; Mk. 13:27). The process of gathering the elect at the last day is part of the same process as gathering the nations to judgment. It could be that the final gathering of the nations against Israel therefore occurs at the same time as the gathering of the believers to judgment. It

would seem that now all is in place for such a gathering of the nations from beyond the Euphrates- and therefore the Lord's coming could be really very near. The whole scene surely consciously recalls that of Daniel 12, where Daniel sees Angels standing on the banks of "the river", announcing that there must be a time of terrible trouble for Israel lasting "time, times and a half" (three and a half years?) and then the whole suffering of Israel would be "finished" by the return of Messiah and establishment of the Kingdom of God (Dan. 12:5-10). "The river" is not defined, but the term is usually used in the prophets for the Euphrates; at the very least it must refer to one of the rivers in the Tigris-Euphrates basin. Note the significance of the river Ulai, a tributary of the Euphrates, in Daniel 8. Revelation expands upon this by saying that the Angels cease restraining the jihadist hordes and then release them in the last days, when the Euphrates dries up. Biblically, the drying up of water is so that armies can pass over (we think of the Red Sea and Jordan being dried up for this intent). The final time of trouble is brought about by Angels standing upon "the river"- and the fact the Euphrates is now in the hands of the IS is therefore highly significant.

It is also surely no coincidence that there are four nations located to the East of the Euphrates, bound by her- Turkey, Syria, Iraq and what is now effectively the nation of Kurdistan. Kurdish independence and the development of a *de facto* state of Kurdistan is something we can expect to develop. It could just about be argued that Iran is also effectively held back from the promised land by the Euphrates, but Iran doesn't in fact border the river. It could be argued that the part of Turkey which is bound by the Euphrates is Kurdish territory, and may form part of a future state of Kurdistan if it is declared. In this case, the four nations could be Kurdistan, Syria, Iraq and Iran- or perhaps the IS. These four nations would be under the control of the four Angels bound at the Euphrates, who then release them when the restraint is lifted.

Let's be encouraged by the fact that the sixth Angel releases the hordes from behind the Euphrates because of "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (Rev. 9:13).

This is the incense altar, and earlier in the scene we have seen the prayers of the faithful ascending from that altar, eliciting Divine action from Heaven upon the earth (Rev. 8:3-5). The releasing of the peoples beyond the Euphrates which we are seeing before our eyes *is actually a response to our prayers*. We pray and pray for the second coming, and it seems as if nothing very concrete is happening. But it is. The IS were raised up and given control of the Euphrates and are being propelled on their mission to fulfil end time prophecies, so that the culmination may come in the return of the Lord Jesus to earth. In this context we can note that the language of loosing the bound was used by the Lord in His teaching that we can bind and loose things in Heaven (Mt. 16:19; 18:18)- in this case, the Angels. This is the huge significance of human prayer and action for God.

A Literal Drying Up of the Euphrates?

The drying up of the Euphrates in Rev. 16:12 is parallel with the four Angels being released. Angels can represent nations, as we find in Daniel- in that each nation has a representative Angel in the court of Heaven. The Euphrates is literally drying up- waterflows are at their lowest ever in recorded history, and it may be that the predicted water crisis in the Tigris-Euphrates ecoregion is what drives the peoples of that area to look westwards towards Israel, and to seek to resolve their problems by a united *jihad* against Israel. The problem of water is acute in the region: "There are thousands of new "water refugees" in Southern Iraq: people displaced by the changes to their natural environment. "Many villages are depopulated because of that. It has a terrible economic impact upon the population"" (Bakhtiar Amin, Human Rights Minister of Iraq from 2004 to 2005, as quoted at <http://thoughtfulwander.blogspot.co.uk/2014/07/marsh-arabs.html>).

Historically, the literal drying up, or diversion, of the Euphrates was what led to the fall of Babylon. It may well be that we are intended to make this connection when we read in Rev. 16:12 of the drying up of the Euphrates. The logical deduction is: 'So Babylon is about to fall'. And the fall of Babylon is spoken of in Revelation as coming about at the return of Christ to earth.

But it may not be simply that the Euphrates dries up of its own accord. Now that the key dams are in the hands of the IS, it could be that they like Saddam Hussein before them, dry up the river in order to exert their power over others. And this will bring about the required fulfilment of the prophecy. We recall how the King of Assyria, another prototype of the latter day invader of Israel, boasted that he had dried up rivers and manipulated water sources, and therefore Jerusalem too would fall into his hands: "I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers" (2 Kings 19:24).

The drying up of the Euphrates leads to unclean spirits like frogs going out to deceive the nations and gather them to Armageddon (Rev. 16:13). No particularly convincing explanation of the figure of frogs has yet been come up with. The suggestion that it refers to the spirit of the French revolution is desperate; the passage clearly demands a latter day fulfilment, and it would be hard to demonstrate that liberty, equality and fraternity came from dragon, beast and false prophet. It would be impossible to argue that e.g. the spirit of liberty came from the dragon, equality from the beast, etc. The idea is surely that as a frog jumps, so the spirit or teaching / influence of these entities spreads in leaps and bounds. But the appropriacy of the symbol becomes apparent when we realize that the Euphrates is fed by tributaries which feed into the Euphrates through vast marshes. The marshes around the Euphrates are so vast that they have given rise to the description of the locals there as 'the marsh Arabs'. Saddam Hussein drained some of these marsh areas and cut off water to others in his attempt to persecute

the very groups which later fought against him and radicalized into the Islamic State. In a literal sense, the hordes pouring forth against Israel are the result of the Euphrates being literally dried up. Wikipedia claims that "According to the United Nations Environmental Program and the AMAR Charitable Foundation, between 84% and 90% of the marshes have been destroyed since the 1970s. In 1994, 60 percent of the wetlands were destroyed by Hussein's regime – drained to permit military access and greater political control of the native Marsh Arabs... After the 1991 Gulf War, Shia Muslims in southern Iraq rebelled against Saddam Hussein who in turned crushed the rebellion and further accelerated the draining of the Central and Hammar marshes in order to evict Shias that have taken refuge in the marshes" [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tigris%E2%80%93Euphrates_river_system and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamian_Marshes accessed 12.08.2014].

These huge marshlands are full of frogs! The drying up of the Euphrates would be bad news for the frogs, who will have to leap and bound further afield in desperation. And so the idea seems to be that the Angel dries up the Euphrates, the hordes burst forth over that border towards the earth / land promised to Abraham; and the teaching of *jihad* against Israel, anti-semitism in its final term, is spread by leaps and bounds out of the Euphrates basin, leading people from throughout the region and indeed the whole world, to come up against Israel. We note that there are even jihadist fighters from Australia fighting for the IS at the moment. Joel 3:9 speaks of huge multitudes of people being 'awoken' and going up to Jerusalem. The postmodern daze in which many people now live has created a desire for reality, for action, for escape from the virtual world into something truly exciting and passionate. And this is why well heeled young white Australians are getting caught up in Islamic extremism and heading off to fight for the IS. Young unemployed males are now seeing the opportunity to play their violent online games in reality... they are awaking from the

postmodernist haze of indifference. But sadly to the wrong reality. This awakening is likely to continue and become ever more attractive, likely fuelled by the media's hatred of Israel and desire to portray her as a situation needing radical resolution.

The Way to Armageddon

The sixth trumpet in Rev. 9:14 and the sixth vial in Rev. 16:12,13 both refer to the Euphrates and are therefore referring to the same events. We needn't get too fazed by issues of chronological sequence in fulfilment. The trumpets and vials aren't necessarily events which follow each other chronologically. This is the assumption of a Greek-Latin mindset; but in the Hebrew thought which underpins the New Testament, events can be described without attention to sequence. The Old Testament prophecies therefore often appear to 'jump around' in fulfilment, with no clear sequence in mind. Each vial or trumpet can be a description of events which happen around the time of the Lord's coming, but not necessarily in sequence chronologically. The 'continuous historic' school of interpretation is driven by this insistence upon chronological sequence, but this results in seeking unrealistic fulfilments of the earlier phases of the sequence. These suggested fulfilments often do not hold true to actual history, and are out of context with the main thrust of the prophecies, which concern the situation in the land of Israel in the last days. The masses of aggressive horsemen in Rev. 9 are the "kings of the east" of Rev. 16:12- rulers who come from the East of Israel. This would easily refer to the way in which the IS and its fighters originated in Afghanistan, have now controlled and breached the Euphrates, and are marching towards Israel. The allusion is to how God allowed Cyrus to dry up [or divert] the Euphrates, and Babylon fell as the Medes and Persians under Cyrus approached from the East. The kings of the East are therefore not believers, but the unbelieving enemies of Israel. I have elsewhere pointed out that the IS see themselves as warriors coming from the East to destroy Israel:

“The final battle will be waged by Muslim faithful coming on the backs of horses...carrying black banners. They will stand on the East side of the Jordan River and will wage war that the earth has never seen before... The black flags will come from the East, led by mighty men, with long hair and beards". These "kings of the east" who are released from the Euphrates are matched in Rev. 9:17-19 by John's description in first century language of the most terrifying technology and aggression of the hordes of horsemen who will be released upon Israel from the Euphrates: "They wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound". The killing of a third of those in the earth / land surely connects with the prediction of Zech. 13:8 that when Jerusalem briefly falls, two thirds of the Jews will be killed. Presumably the other third are killed by other methods- there is repeated teaching in Rev. 8 of how the 'thirds' of those in the land will suffer in the final tribulation.

Dan. 11:40 speaks of the latter day "king of the north" coming with horsemen and entering into the *eretz*, the land, like a restrained mighty river that is now gushing and overflowing its banks. This is absolutely the picture of Revelation 16: hordes of horsemen surging from the Euphrates river towards Israel. For the "king of the north" [historically this was Babylon or Assyria] to enter into the *eretz*, the land promised to Abraham, he would have to cross the boundary of that land at the Euphrates anyway. He firstly enters the general *eretz* and then enters specifically the *eretz* of glory (Dan. 11:41)- the land inhabited by the Jews. This is described in Ez. 20:6 using the same Hebrew words- "a land... flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all the *eretz*". The land flowing with milk and honey hardly referred to the entire

land promised to Abraham up to the Euphrates, much of which is barren desert. The glory of the *eretz* was and is Canaan. We can see the process starting- the IS is taking over the wider *eretz*, and will then proceed to focus upon entering into the glory of the *eretz*, the current territory of Israel.

Focus on Jerusalem

The unclean spirits or teachings released from the Euphrates gather the nations together to Armageddon. “Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16) is from the Hebrew *har-magedon*. *Har* means ‘mountain’. The assumption has been made that *magedon* is the same as ‘Megiddo’; but the problem is, Megiddo is a plain and there is no mountain there. Also, the word *magedon* would be spelt slightly differently if it were simply the place name Megiddo. The suggestion has been made and well argued that *magedon* is a form of the Hebrew *mo’ed*, and would literally mean “the mount of assembly / gathering”- the title of Jerusalem in Is. 14:13 [see Meredith Kline, ‘Har Magedon’, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39/2 (June 1996) pp. 207-222, available online. He explains the presence of the ‘g’ on the basis that the Hebrew consonant *ayin* is often represented by the Greek *gamma*]. Rev. 16 says that all nations are gathered to Armageddon, but elsewhere we read of all nations being gathered to Jerusalem. The two localities are surely identical, quite apart from the linguistic arguments. We can expect, therefore, far more focus specifically upon Jerusalem. For this is to be the center to which all are gathered. This makes perfect sense if we see *magedon* as a Greek rendering of the Hebrew *mo’ed*- the nations are gathered to the mount of gathering. The king of Babylon / Assyria so wished to come to the “mount of assembly / gathering” (Is. 14:13), and it was that desire, and executing it, which was effectively his gathering to judgment. And so it will be with the Islamist obsession with Jerusalem- their gathering there will effectively be their gathering to judgment.

The Leader of the Locusts

The locusts have a specific leader- an Angel called Abaddon or Apollyon. Angels as in the Divine beings do not sin, as I've demonstrated in chapter 2 of *The Real Devil*. But Daniel 10 and other passages are clear that situations, nations and individual leaders on earth have an Angelic representative in Heaven, before the court of God. The antichrist figure on earth therefore has a representative Angel in Heaven, just as the prince of Persia did in Daniel 10. 'Abaddon' means 'the destroyer', and the term is used of the destroying Angel of Passover, the same Angel who destroyed the unbelieving Jews in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:10)- and it is also used of the Babylonian invader (2 Chron. 36:19; Is. 14:20; Jer. 4:7; 15:3; 22:7 "I will prepare destroyers against you"; 36:29), the Midianite invasion of Israel (Jud. 6:4), the Philistines / Palestinians (1 Sam. 13:17; 14:15), the Assyrian invader (1 Kings 18:25) and the Syrian invasion (2 Chron. 24:23). All these nations and incidents were from the territory of the IS, and prefigure the latter day invasion of Israel. The point is, there is a specific, singular leader- and this fits well with the Biblical requirements for an antichrist figure to lead the enemies of Israel in the final jihad against her. The destruction, wanton and conscious, wrought by the IS surely justifies the leader of the entity being called 'the destroyer'.

The Islamic world has always been divided, and the neighbours of Israel have likewise been characterized by their historical divisions. What is going to be remarkable, therefore, is their temporary unity against Israel. This is the picture presented of the iron and clay not cleaving to each other, but standing together, however fragile, in brief domination of the land promised to Abraham on the eve of Christ's return. This unity will be under one strong leader, the antichrist. The metaphor in Rev. 9 makes this point, by saying that the invading hordes will be as locusts who have a king over them, called Abaddon (Rev. 9:11). Locusts do not have much centralized structure in their movement, and Prov. 30:27 specifically states that

locusts have no king over them. But these latter day locusts will have such a king- for a brief period. Muslim tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Mohammed, bearing on their wings this inscription - ‘We are the army of the Great God.’”

There can be little doubt that Revelation 9 speaks of the very last days. The smoke and resultant darkening of sun and moon is obviously alluding to the Old Testament prophecies about these things happening in the context of an invasion of the land of Israel in the immediate prelude to Christ’s coming: “Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. (Is. 13:9,10). “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD” (Joel 2:30,31).

Specific Moslem Application of Revelation 9

Albert Barnes makes the following commentary upon the statement that the locusts would be commanded to not harm the grass: “The often-quoted order of the Caliph Aboubekir, the father-in-law and successor of Muhammed, issued to the Saracen hordes on their invasion of Syria, shows what was understood to be the spirit of their religion: “Remember that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment, and the hope of paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression; consult with your brethren, and study to preserve the love and confidence of your troops. When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not the victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of grain. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and

be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God in that way; let them alone, and neither kill them ('and to them it was given that they should not kill them,' ver 5), nor destroy their monasteries," etc. (Gibbon, iii. 417, 418).

So Mr. Gibbon notices this precept of the Koran: "In the siege of Tayaf," says he, "sixty miles from Mecca, Muhammed violated his own laws by the extirpation of the fruit-trees," ii. 392. The same order existed among the Hebrews, and it is not improbable that Muhammed derived his precept from the command of Moses [Deu 20:19](#), though what was mercy among the Hebrews was probably mere policy with him. This precept is the more remarkable because it has been the usual custom in war, and particularly among barbarians and semi-barbarians, to destroy grain and fruit, and especially to cut down fruit-trees, in order to do greater injury to an enemy".

And the IS has been likened to locusts:

"Like locusts, ISIS minions then spread out throughout Syria" - www.manchesterjournal.com/oped/ci_26429290/financing-isis *The Manchester Journal*, July 2014

The Sun Jul 27, 2014 - Gaza conflict pales compared to terror of the Isis locusts.

The Nature of Prophecy in Revelation

We are mistaken if we think that Revelation is code language which must be correctly cracked in order to yield predictions of literal events. That's not how the prophetic word has functioned previously; the intention has not been to write history ahead of time. Rather are Biblical images of previous historical situations [e.g. the plagues upon Egypt, the Babylonian and Assyrian invasions] superimposed upon fresh and new words of God. These newly created and fashioned images will be found strikingly relevant to the immediate situation of the faithful who read or hear about them. This has been true throughout history- e.g. the book of Revelation had obvious relevance to the power and persecution of

pagan Rome in the first and second centuries. The images likewise would have had their relevance to Protestants suffering from Catholic persecution in later centuries. But there is little point in analysing those interpretations as if they are the only true interpretation of the book. The period just before Christ's second coming will be the time when all the prophetic images have their final, fullest and ultimate fulfilment in the situation immediately surrounding the people of God. Thus will come about "the climax of prophecy", to use Richard Bauckham's phrase.

Chapter 5 The Mark of the Beast

The black flags carried by ISIS have a roughly drawn circle with a brief summary of the Moslem creed: 'There is none other God than Allah and Mohammed is His messenger'. The circle is roughly drawn because it is a replica of Mohammed's seal which he attached to his decrees and communications. To receive the mark of the beast may well refer to receiving such a stamp or carrying such an insignia, perhaps literally on the forehead. Because pictures of ISIS fighters show them with this symbol on their foreheads. The seal of Muhammad was held to have magic qualities, and the loss of the seal amounted to the loss of the caliphate and the loss of unity among Muslims. Now, the IS are popularizing the seal again, announcing a caliphate and urging Moslem unity- a unity which will ultimately be focused against Israel. The false prophet and beast are Biblically associated with false miracles, so something to look for would be the claims of false miracles or magic, as was once associated with the seal- see Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Muhammad: Seal of the Prophets*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980 (chapter 12). The IS flag has a name, just as the British flag is called 'the Union Jack', the Canadian flag 'the maple leaf', the French flag is called the tricolore and the American flag 'the stars and stripes'. It is called The Black Banner or Black Standard, also known as راية العقاب *rāyat al-`uqāb* "the banner of the eagle". The final enemies of Israel are described as coming upon her "as swift as the eagle flies" (Dt. 28:49). Babylon is spoken of as an eagle in Jer. 48:40; Dan. 7:4; Hab. 1:8 and Ez. 17:3,12, as is Assyria (Hos. 8:1) and as are the Ammonites (Jer. 49:16) and Edom (Obadiah 4). The IS flying the banner of the eagle therefore associates them with being a reincarnation of Israel's historical enemies.









The mark of the beast is to be worn on the hand, yet the Greek word for "hand" is the same as for "arm". Jihadist fighters are wearing the IS symbol, the seal of Mohammed, on rings and armbands- and we can expect this to become what the IS demands of their subject peoples too. Here's a ring with the insignia on it; and we could expect the coinage and banknotes of any IS to include it too, so that literally one could not buy or sell without it, in the earth / land under their control:



The mark of the beast in the forehead is clearly intended to be understood as the inverse of the “seal of God” which is in the forehead of the believers (Rev. 9:4). The word *sphragis* used there definitely means a seal, and it is matched by the “mark” of the beast. That mark can be understood, therefore, also as a seal- and what more likely than the seal of Mohammed? It may be that signet rings are used to stamp documents, or it forms part of an insignia without which no business can be done in the land- e.g. on the coins and gold of the Islamic State. The Koran itself speaks of how true Moslems will have the mark of Mohammad on their foreheads as a sign that they worship: “Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. Thou [O Muhammad] seest them bowing and falling prostrate [in worship], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] acceptance. The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration” (Surah 48.29). In Revelation 14:9,11, having the mark of the beast is connected with worshipping him. The Islamic jihadist movement set to take over Israel is a highly religious movement, seeking to strictly obey the Koran. They are highly conscious of these verses.

The Biblical data concerning the mark of the beast suggests that this will be used by "the beast" and will be enforced upon those who "dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 13:14,17). "The earth" Biblically refers to either the whole planet, or the land- the land promised to

Abraham, from the Nile to the Euphrates. This promised land is the focus of the Bible. The beast of Revelation is another take on the beast of Daniel 7, which in turn is an amplification of the fourth empire of the image of Daniel 2. The empires or kings of Daniel 2 all refer to those entities who reigned over "the whole earth / land"- of Israel, as discussed further in my exposition of Daniel 2. The same earth / land is in view here in Revelation. The IS can therefore be expected to gain control over that territory and to enforce the acceptance of Islam there. The mark is specifically the mark of a man (Rev. 13:18)- and that man is clearly Mohammed, seeing that the ensign of the IS is the seal of Mohammed. And according to some usages of gematria [whereby each letter in the Hebrew or Arabic alphabet has a numerical value], Mohammed in Greek, Mahomet, (Μαομετις) has a value of 666:

Mu	Alpha	Omicron	Mu	Epsilon	Tau	Iota	Sigma
40	1	70	40	5	300	10	200
TOTAL: 666							

Don't dismiss gematria too quickly. The Bible itself uses it here in Rev. 13:18. There, the number 666 is not written as it would normally have been, as a number, but rather as three Greek letters, *chi xi stigma*; which between them add up to 666 by gematria. So it would seem that we are being invited to work out the riddle through the use of gematria. There are some connections in form between the letters of the Greek and Arabic alphabets, just as there are between the letters of the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets (e.g. 'R' in the Latin alphabet is the inverse of 'Я' in the Cyrillic). When those three Greek letters are turned on their side, they read exactly as the Arabic letters which spell Bis'm Allah- "In the name of Allah", which is the credo of Islam and the jihadists. This appears to be another connection between Islam and the mark of the beast.

We note too from Rev. 13:14 that the beast system does apparent 'miracles'; and the seal of Mohammed was historically supposed to be able to perform miracles. We could expect such false claims to be made within the IS also. The IS has already demonstrated how they deal with areas they conquer- all economic life is controlled by them and people are forced into submission to the new system. Nobody will be able to buy and sell in the territory of the earth / land promised to Abraham without displaying the mark of loyalty to the IS- the seal of Mohammed.

The book of Revelation, like all Bible prophecy, will have particular and acute relevance to those who live in the very last days before Christ comes. There is a particular blessing repeated for those who refuse to accept the mark of the beast. That brave and tiny minority will be comprised of those Jews who refuse to convert, and instead convert to Jesus Christ in their desperation. And for them, the book of Revelation holds out particular blessing (Rev. 14:9-11; 15:2; 20:4).

Postscript: Islamic State Coinage

I suggested above that the mark of the beast within the land promised to Abraham may refer to the seal of Mohammed, and the inability to buy or sell without may refer to Islamic State coinage which bears the mark of the beast. I am no prophet, and have so often been proven wrong in my ideas about Bible prophecy. But you can imagine my interest when the Islamic State announced their own coinage- and the proposed coinage would indeed have the “the seal of Mohammed” on it.



“There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is His prophet” is in the middle of the coins, and around it "Surely, this is the fraternity [Ummah] of your Faith, a single Faith, and I am your Lord; so worship Me" from Surah 21:92 of the Koran. The coins clearly reflect the seal of Muhammad, the corporate identity of the Islamic State. On other coins, the bottom says "[Then there will be] a Caliphate on the model of the prophet," quoting a supposed prophecy of Muhammad that the world will be ruled by a Muslim state at the end of times. This is why one of the coins has a map of the world on it. What’s significant is that one of the coins features the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem- rather than Mecca, as might have been expected from an Islamic State. But the theology of ISIL is increasingly focusing upon Jerusalem and not Mecca as the capital of the caliphate. And that theological de-emphasis upon Mecca is rather required- because Saudi Arabia (where Mecca is located) joined the alliance to destroy the ISIS.

Another coin shows seven ears of corn, with reference to the idea of blessing for generosity: "The example of those who spend in the way of Allah is just like a grain that produced seven ears, each ear having a hundred grains, and Allah multiplies (the reward) for whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing" (Surah

2:261). One speculates about how the seven ears of corn featured in Pharaoh's dream, and how the outcome of the time of prosperity was the repentance of Jacob's sons and their acceptance of Joseph-Jesus as the Saviour.

One of the silver coins shows a sword and a shield in a reference to holy war, or jihad. The copper coins carry the symbol of the crescent moon and three palm trees. What's very significant is that this ISIS currency appears to be based on Israeli coinage- because the message is that their aim is to take over Israel; therefore not Mecca but the al-Aqsa mosque features on the coin set. The palm trees on the copper 20 fils coin are surely intended to mimic those on the Israeli 10 agorot coin:



Likewise the ears of corn appear to be a mimic of Israeli coinage; the three central ears have the same angle:



The proposed gold coins of ISIS are literally worth their weight in gold as they are made of gold- so just one gold coin would be worth around \$650. This opens new dimensions for understanding prophecies concerning the latter day King of the North in Dan. 11:43: “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”. Latter day Babylon in Rev. 18:12 is famed for her “merchandise of gold and silver”.

Chapter 6: The Image of Daniel 2

Understanding Daniel 2 is programmatic to making sense of Bible prophecy about the last days. The beasts of Daniel 7 are clearly an extension and development of the four metals of the Daniel 2 image, and those beasts morph into the beasts of Revelation, where we find them presented with various aspects and with additional details. As to why the beasts morph over time, I would suggest that this is because Bible prophecy is conditional (see the Appendix ‘Conditional Prophecy in Daniel’). What could have come true e.g. in Daniel’s time, did not- because of the indolence of God’s people and the lack of repentance amongst the Gentiles. And so the prophecies morphed into another form, and then another, meaning that the essence of God’s prophetic word will still come true, even if the form of fulfilment is not that which was initially or ideally intended. Daniel 2-7 are written in Aramaic [Chaldee], not Hebrew. The section has a concentric structure, in which the visions of chapters 2 and 7 form the opening and concluding parts. They are clearly to be related to each other:

Daniel 2- Vision of empires

Daniel 3- Deliverance of three Jews from death

Daniel 4- God’s discipline of the king

Daniel 5- God’s discipline of the king

Daniel 6- Deliverance of Daniel from death

Daniel 7- Vision of empires

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was given a dream which Daniel interpreted. He saw an image comprised of various materials, in the form of a man. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, followed by the breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, two legs of iron, and finally two feet [10 toes] made from a brittle mixture of iron and clay. A stone cut out from a mountain

without hands then struck the image on its brittle feet, and destroyed the gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. A whirlwind carried them all away, and the stone grew into a mountain which filled the earth and will never pass away as the previous kings and kingdoms passed away. This is interpreted as the establishment of God's eternal Kingdom on earth (Dan. 2:44). The stone is a fairly common symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. 118:22 cp. Mt. 21:42-44; Acts 4:11; Is. 8:14; 28:16; Rom. 9:32,33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4,6-8), the Messiah of Israel (Gen. 49:24; Zech. 3:9; 4:7,10), the begotten Son of God, cut out without human hands.

Bible prophecy can be understood on a number of levels. It would be legitimate to see these four empires as referring to the succession of kingdoms which had dominion over "all the earth". We must remember that the Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek and Chaldee. We read through the mask of translation. The Hebrew word and concept of *eretz*, translated "the earth", can refer either to the whole planet, or specifically to the land promised to Abraham, between the Nile and the Euphrates. The word is used in modern Hebrew to refer to *eretz Israel*, the state of Israel. Clearly enough, the domination of "all the earth" (Dan. 2:39) doesn't mean the entire planet. It surely refers to domination of the land promised to Abraham, and the people of that land, i.e. Israel. Likewise Babylon is described as being ruler over "wherever the children of men dwell" because they had been "given into your hand" (Dan. 2:38). This isn't speaking of a literal dominion over every human being on the planet. The reference was to the way that Babylon had scattered the Jews amongst the various areas of the *eretz* [land promised to Abraham] under its control. The very same words for 'give into the hand' are used of how God would give *the land and people of Judah / Israel* "into the hand of" the king of Babylon (Ezra 5:12; Ps. 106:41; Jer. 20:4,5; 22:25; 32:3,28; 34:2,20,21; 44:30; Ez. 16:39; 39:23). Indeed, within the book of Daniel the point has been made; for the book opens with the statement that the king of Judah has been 'given into the hand of' the king of Babylon

(Dan. 1:2). This is all quite some emphasis- the people ‘given into the hand’ of Nebuchadnezzar do not refer to all people on the planet, rather are they specifically the Jewish people. Likewise, the earth / land which is in view isn’t the whole planet, but rather the land promised to Abraham. Note too that ‘the earth’ [*eretz*] is often understood as the people of Israel within their land. Thus: “Concerning Samaria and Jerusalem... hear, all you people; hear, O earth [*eretz*] and all that therein is” (Mic. 1:2). Frequently, the physical land of Israel is addressed by the prophets, when clearly it is the people of the land which is in view. Ezekiel 6 is full of this: “Set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places... I will cast down your slain before your idols... I will scatter your bones around your altars... your works wiped out... and you shall know that I am the LORD” (Ez. 6:2-7). Therefore the domination of the land / *eretz* can be understood specifically as the domination of the people of Israel within that land. This would explain why there is an apparent gap in fulfilment of the Daniel 2 and 7 visions- the historical fulfilment appears to stop once Rome was no longer dominating Israel, and then restarts in the very last days, in the period of the ten toes / horns. This would be because there was no land / state / people of Israel in their land to dominate.

After Babylon’s domination of the land, there followed the Medo-Persian empire (breast and arms of silver), then the Greeks (belly and thighs of brass), followed by the Roman empire, divided as it was into Western and Eastern parts, symbolized by the two iron legs. Out of this arose the two feet with their ten toes. But after the Roman empire, the people of Israel were exiled from their land, only becoming a nation again in 1948. The two feet with their ten toes would then represent a brief period of mixed domination of the land, under a confederacy of ten groups broadly divided into two

camps. I say ‘brief’ because in proportion to the size of the image, the feet are not very large. The proportions of the different parts of the body match the length of time over which the various empires dominated Israel. Thus Babylon dominated Judah for 70 years, and they are represented by the head, which is not a large part of the human body.

The prophecy of Daniel goes further to provide more details of this series of empires. Daniel 7 describes the same succession in terms of four beasts, which also represent the same empires as the metals in the image of Daniel chapter 2. The fourth beast has ten horns, corresponding to the ten toes of Daniel’s image; and out of them, one particular horn is prominent. This beast becomes the prototype for the beasts we encounter in the book of Revelation, who likewise dominate God’s people and will be destroyed by Christ’s return.

Radical Islam and the Land Promised to Abraham

Radical Islam has a lot to say about the land promised to Abraham- what the Bible prophecies refer to as the *eretz* or land / earth. The Islamic State and al-Nusra Front speak much about it; their definition of the Levant or Sham is pretty much that of the land promised to Abraham. ‘Nusra’ is an acronym standing for the Front for the Defense of the Levant. They claim to be fighting to prepare the way for the coming of the Mahdi to establish God’s Kingdom worldwide; they call the land promised to Abraham “Land of *Malahim*,” or “epic battles”, and they expect there to be the *al-Malhamah al-Kubra*, the “Great Battle of the last hour”, at Jerusalem. This is what the Bible calls Armageddon. When the true Jesus appears in Jerusalem, all nations in the earth / land will be gathered together to battle at Jerusalem. And the jihadist theology is preparing them for this. They consciously speak of their caliphate as being extended over the land promised to Abraham, and they are urging people to leave their native lands as Abraham

left his, and journey to live in the caliphate, comprised as they wish it to be, of the territory promised to Abraham. They call their caliph or leader ‘Caliph Ibrahim / Abraham’, and urge migration or *hijrah* to the land promised to him. The pieces are all falling into place to fulfil the Biblical pictures of the last days. Jihadist theology makes much of ‘signs of the times’, leading up to the coming of the Mahdi and the final battle against the antiChrist. These ‘signs of the times’ they look for are often the same signs which are to be found in the Bible, e.g. the re-establishment of Israel as a nation before Armageddon. So as they apparently come true, Islamists are the more convinced that antiChrist [who they call *Dajjal* and understand to be a Jew] is about to appear in Jerusalem, and they must fight him in the last great battle, in order to enable the Mahdi to return. Who they consider to be the antichrist will in fact be the true Christ. They will rush to fight Him, believing Him to be the antichrist they are expecting. Their destruction by Him will presage the establishment of God’s *true* Kingdom on earth, the revived and restored kingdom of Israel. This would explain why many Biblical terms used about the very last days are also found in Jihadist theology. They speak of the events of the very last days before the Mahdi returns as being “the hour”; and yet Revelation speaks of how the kings of the earth / land will have power for “one hour” and be destroyed likewise in “one hour” (Rev. 17:12; 18:10,17,19). These similarities are unsurprising because Mohammed clearly plagiarized the Bible and Judaism for his teachings.

The changing of times and laws by the antichrist figure of Dan. 7:25 sounds like the radical Islamist desire to impose the Islamic calendar and *sharia* law in the land promised to Abraham, which they see as their caliphate; and for sure, if Israel becomes part of an Islamic state, then the keeping of the Jewish calendar will be outlawed. The implementation of *sharia* law and changing legal structures to reflect it, is a major theme in their program. It’s clear that the three and a half year domination of Jerusalem and changing of the Jewish law and calendar had an initial fulfilment in the

abuses of Antiochus Epiphanes, who desecrated the temple. There was a three and a half year period from the edict of Antiochus in June 168 BC to the rededication of the temple in December 165 BC. The little horn of Daniel 8 comes out of the Greek kingdom, but the horn of Daniel 7 out of the fourth kingdom. I suggest that this is because the prophecy could have been fulfilled totally at the time of Antiochus- Messiah could have come and destroyed him. But the various required preconditions weren't met, and so there was another possibility of it coming true out of the Roman kingdom [another possibility is that the four beasts and metals refer to Babylon-Media-Persia-Greece rather than Babylon-Medo Persia-Greece-Rome]. Revelation uses the same imagery to describe the antiChrist of the last days, who will incorporate some elements of the previous historical fulfilments of the little horn in men like Antiochus Epiphanes.

Issue number 3 of the Islamic State magazine *Dabiq* frequently talks of the call to follow Ibrahim [Abraham] in making *hijrah* [migration] to the land promised to him: “Islam in the end of times will be more manifest in Shām... So the best of the people on the earth in the end of times will be those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, which is Shām” [Majmū’ul-Fatāwā]. Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullāh) also said, “So he informed that the best of the people on the earth are those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, in contrast to those who pass through it or leave it. The land that Ibrāhīm made hijrah to is Shām... the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah... And the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah, has been made for us equal to the land of our Prophet’s hijrah. The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrāhīm’s hijrah”. Note how the theology of these jihadists effectively replaces the land of Saudi Arabia and the city of Mecca with that of the Levant, the territory promised to Abraham; and Mecca is replaced in their focus by Jerusalem. With Saudi Arabia now supporting the Western coalition against the Islamic State, such a shift in emphasis isn’t surprising. But it means that all is being prepared for the last

days- for the Bible prophecies focus upon the domination of the land of Israel and Jerusalem in particular. It's significant that the Caliph of the Islamic State Caliphate is referred to by his followers as Caliph Ibrahim / Abraham; the idea is that the faithful will follow him in migrating from their homelands to the land promised to him- which is the very same *eretz* which is the focus of the Bible's latter day prophecies, and which is to be dominated by an antiChrist figure and his beast.

The Image Stands Complete in the Last Days

The image of Daniel 2 must stand complete in the last days- the whole image, not just the toes, are to be broken in pieces "together". This feature of the prophecy is crucial to correct interpretation. Babylon, the head of gold, must therefore rule over the system which the image represents. The image is a man- let's not forget that. The head is Nebuchadnezzar. The entity which will be destroyed by the Lord's coming is therefore headed up in an individual; and there are other Bible themes and specific predictions which flesh out the picture of this anti-Christ of the last days.

According to the interpretation given in Dan. 2:38-40, the first kingdom (Babylon) was destroyed by the second (Medo-Persia), and the second was destroyed by the third (Greece); but we read that the iron (Roman) kingdom would break in pieces all the previous empires, not just the Greek empire: "iron breaks in pieces and subdues all [these]; and as iron that crushes all these, shall it break in pieces and crush them" (Dan. 2:40). This was achieved in the sense that there were elements of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires in the Greek empire which Rome crushed; as Keil puts it in his commentary, "the materials of the first two kingdoms were comprehended in the third". And likewise there are elements of the iron in the last part of the image- for the feet are made of iron mixed with clay. On this basis we can conclude that the final part

of the image, the feet of iron and clay, will incorporate elements of all the previous empires which dominated Israel.

Apart from the head of gold, all the metals / beasts have a strange feature in common- they subdue three previous powers. The second beast has three ribs in its mouth` (Dan. 7:5)- speaking of three powers subdued by the Persians. The third entity, Greece, subdued “three... even four” kings of Persia (Dan. 11:2). I suggest this is a Semitism which effectively means ‘three very great ones’- cp. “for three transgressions and for four” in Amos 1, “three things... even four” (Prov. 30:15,18,21,29). The fourth entity, the legs of iron (Dan. 2) and the terrible fourth beast (Dan. 7) devoured, broke in pieces and stamped upon the remnants of the preceding three beasts / powers (Dan. 7:19). The little horn roots up three of the ten horns [cp. the ten toes], meaning that “he shall subdue three kings” (Dan. 7:24). Clearly the final phase of the kingdoms of men will include this feature which was in all the preceding ones. We should look, therefore, for a system which subdues three other kings or kingdoms.

If you tried to build a replica of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, with human dimensions and the same metals, it would not stand up. The relative gravity of the materials is such that it would be pulled over by the weight of its head. Gold has a specific gravity of 19.6, and the other materials have progressively lower gravities- clay has only 1.8 [silver 11, brass 8.5, and iron 7.8]. Specific gravity refers in layman’s terms to the tendency of the material to fall to the ground. The whole image is pulled down to the earth by the weight of the head of gold. The specific individual heading it up therefore has an overpowering effect upon the whole entity. This of itself indicates not only how fragile are the Kingdoms of men, but how a specific individual, the latter day head of gold, will bring the image down. The whole colossus of humanity is actually kept standing by God- because the image as it is described could not stand. God is in history, He was and ever

shall be and will bring it all down at the appointed time. This of itself is great comfort, as we feel dwarfed by the seeming inexorability of historical event and the apparent colossus of human corporation and empire.

Some of the words used about the behaviours of the elements of the image are elsewhere used specifically about the persecution of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, and indeed the other empires, are described as 'ruling' over the earth / land (Dan. 2:38 etc.), but the equivalent Hebrew word is used specifically about how the enemies of the Jews sought to rule over the Jewish people. The word is used of how Haman the Agagite [the man of Gog] sought to "have power over" [s.w.] the Jews (Esther 9:1). Likewise, the word used for how the iron would 'subdue' (Dan. 2:40) is only used elsewhere of how the Israelites were subdued or 'made feeble' by their Egyptian persecutors (Dt. 25:18). The iron would "break" all beneath it, and this word is used of Esau [forefather of the Arab Moslem peoples] 'hurting' Jacob (Gen. 31:7), the Egyptians breaking Israel in Egypt (Ex. 5:22,23; Num. 20:15; Dt. 26:6), the Assyrians 'breaking down' the land of Judah (Is. 24:19) and the Babylonians breaking down Jerusalem (Jer. 25:29; 31:28). God's Kingdom will "consume all those kingdoms" (Dan. 2:44), using the same word as used about the 'consuming' of all things *upon the land of Israel*, both Gentile dominators and the apostate within Israel (Zeph. 1:2,3).

So much of God's prophetic word had some initial fulfilment and relevance to its first audience. But always we are left with the sense that the fulfilment was only partial. The prophecies of Israel's restoration from Babylon did indeed have a fulfilment in the return of the exiles, as did those of Babylon's judgments, but clearly the major and complete fulfilment is yet to come. And thus it will be in the last days and in the return of Christ to earth that the entire

prophetic word has its complete fulfilment. The word will take on the full flesh of reality in a way it has never done previously. The fulfilments and applications of Revelation's prophecies about the beast over history are but a prelude to that which is yet to come. We are seriously mistaken if we think that because we can discern a historical application of these prophetic words, therefore there is no future fulfilment. The schema of the image in Daniel 2 visually demonstrates this; the sequence of empires which can be discerned is not the main fulfilment of the prophecy. Rather is the ultimate and main fulfilment in the way that the image stands complete in the last days and is destroyed by Christ's return to earth. Likewise all the beasts exist at the coming of Christ (Dan. 7:12). The arising of four beasts from the sea doesn't mean they had to arise at different times; they are a parody of the four beasts representing God's Angelic organization. John describes these in Rev. 4:7; clearly he saw them all at the same time: "The first creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had the face of a man and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle". Because the continuous historical application is true as far as it goes doesn't preclude the main fulfilment of the prophecy in a rather different way in the very last days. And thus the book of Revelation too can have discernible historical applications over history, but throughout the book there is the strong impression that the prophecies speak of situations immediately before Christ's return, appeals and judgments which are urgently poured out immediately prior to 'the end'- and in that sense He is spoken of as coming "soon" (Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,12,20), in that the ultimate message of the book is for the generation who will be alive at the Lord's coming.

The complete image will have elements within it of the previous entities who dominated God's people in their land. But it's also possible that for the image to stand erect there will be four entities dominating the *eretz*, represented by the four beasts and four metals, with one of them sprouting ten toes / horns and an antichrist

figure. This scenario would explain how after the fourth beast is destroyed the other three beasts have their dominion taken away (Dan. 7:11,12).

The Head of Gold

Nebuchadnezzar was given a kingdom of power, strength and glory (Dan. 2:37 LXX). Biblically, this is *God's* Kingdom, which at that time was Israel. The animals and birds given into his hand (Dan. 2:38) surely refer to those of the land promised to Abraham, rather than literally the whole planet. For in what sense were the birds of the Amazon or Australian kangaroos given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar? The phrase 'beasts of the field and birds of Heaven' is repeatedly used to represent the 'wild' nations living in *eretz* Israel, from the Euphrates to Egypt. It is they who were at one time protected by the great empires and then turned against them (Ez. 29:5; 31:6,13; 32:4); they are used as symbolic of the nations in the invasion of Ezekiel 38:20, and of Israel's neighbouring enemies (Ps.79:2; Hos. 2:18). It was *these* which were given into Nebuchadnezzar's hand; and later in Daniel we read that the birds and beasts represent the nations dominated by Babylon (Dan. 4:2,21). Clearly Nebuchadnezzar's dominion was not global, and I submit that the only other clearly definable domain for 'the entire earth' is the earth / land promised to Abraham. God is said to have 'given' the beasts and birds 'into the hand' of Nebuchadnezzar. This exact phrase is used of how God gave the people of Israel into his hand (Ezra 5:12). It is so often stated that God would give His people into Babylon's hand (Jer. 20:4,5; 22:25; 32:3,28; 34:2,21). Clearly it is the Jewish people in their land who are in view. As Babylon reigned over them as the head of gold, so the succeeding empires likewise would reign over them, and the entire image would stand therefore upon the land and people of Israel in the last days. Nebuchadnezzar was "made ruler over all"; but the "all" requires definition. I suggest it means all the *eretz* promised to Abraham, and all God's people within it. The same word is used of how the Persians wished to ruler over / have power over God's

people (Esther 9:1). The 'all the earth' over which these kings / kingdoms had power (Dan. 2:39) is not referring to the entire planet, but specifically to the land promised to Abraham and God's people within it.

The whole intention of the vision was to "make known to the king what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28). Now that of course can simply mean 'in the future' ("hereafter", Dan. 2:29). But "the latter days" is a term often used in the Bible regarding 'the last days'- the period directly prior to the return of Christ to earth. So we are invited to see the entire prophecy of the image standing complete and being broken as speaking of events to happen directly prior to the Lord's return. This requires the image to stand complete, and for the entire prophecy to have a primarily latter day fulfilment. The form of the entire image was "terrible" (Dan. 2:31), and this is the language of the last beast which would exist at the time of Christ's return (Dan. 7:7,19 s.w.). That beast, which is the basis of the beasts we meet in Revelation, is a summary of all the components of the image. The stone cut out without hands (Dan. 2:34) must be connected with the way in which the antiChrist figure of the very last days will stand up against the Prince of Princes [Christ] and be broken "without hand" (Dan. 8:25), just as the stone quarried without hands would 'break' the entire image. The individual of Dan. 8:25 is therefore the embodiment of the entire image of Daniel 2; the entity represented by the image will be incarnated in its individual leader, who will exist at the very time of the Lord's coming. And the language of Dan. 8:25 is clearly picked up in the prophecy of the "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2, who will challenge the Lord Jesus and be destroyed by the brightness of His second coming.

The Feet of Iron and Clay

The ten toes are split into two groups, represented by the two legs. This could refer to the deep division between Sunni & Shia Islam, or to the latter day entity having two foundations within the land of Israel- in the West Bank, and in the Gaza Strip. Imagine the image standing with its two legs standing on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Jerusalem in the middle; if the image is facing East, it would be looking precisely towards Mecca, as if it is an observant Moslem. Or it could be that there will be ten leaders, or ten groups, within the land promised to Abraham. Another consideration is that the "emirate" of the IS was stated to be headed by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and his "cabinet" of ten "ministers.

The cementing together of the iron and clay recalls the words of the Koran in Surah 61:4: "Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure". And yet the prophecy requires that they will be mixed together, but will not cleave with each other. And this will be the basis of their destruction, just as the disunity between Israel's historical enemies was the basis of their destruction. Ps. 60:8 and 108:9 predict that God will triumph over Philistia- literally, He will split, divide them. But their own internal divisions are effectively their own judgment. And this is how God so often works.

The military arm of Hamas is the Qassam Brigades; *kassam* in Arabic means 'divider', another allusion to the feet part of iron and part of clay, when the Kingdom of Israel's oppressors shall be "divided" (Dan. 2:41). *Hamas* means 'strong', and the Gaza strip / Hamas controlled area will be part of the final strong / weak, iron / clay entity that briefly dominates the land according to Daniel 2. The uniting of the disparate elements in the ten toes is matched by the great emphasis in the Moslem world upon unity. We read of "King Hussein's plan for the establishment of a so-called United Arab Kingdom" (Y. Harkabi, *The Palestinian Covenant And Its Meaning* (Totowa, N.J: Valentine, Mitchell & Co., 1979) p.135).

This sounds exactly like the ‘uniting’ of the iron and clay in the entity of the last days which will dominate Israel. “The Palestinian National Authority will strive to achieve a union of the confrontation countries [i.e. “all nations around about” Israel-D.H.]... or a step along the road to comprehensive Arab unity” – Political Programs of the P.L.O., Article 8. “The Arab ‘nation’ is made up of ‘peoples’ and the (one) Arab homeland comprises the national homeland of these peoples... the relationship of the people and the individual to the overall Arab homeland and nation is called in modern Arabic *Qamwiyya* (nationalism)... like the trunk of a tree that branches off into offshoots of local patriotism... the splitting up of the Arab region into separate states carved out by the colonial powers. However, once Arab unity is achieved and the frontiers wiped out...” (Y. Harkabi, *The Palestinian Covenant And Its Meaning* (Totowa, N.J: Valentine, Mitchell & Co., 1979) p. 31).

There is a gap in historical fulfilment between the end of the iron legs, the Roman empire, and the brief time of the iron and clay [the feet are a small proportion of the image of a man]. This need not concern us unduly. It could be that this is because there was no nation dominating Israel in the land promised to Abraham, because the Jews were in dispersion from Roman times until the 20th century revival of the state of Israel. This period may be what Jesus had in mind when He spoke about “the times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24). Or it may be that indeed the prophecy had a possible fulfilment in the first century, or even earlier, that didn’t happen – and so the fulfilment was delayed, resulting in this apparent gap in fulfilment. We encounter a similar gap at the end of Daniel 11, when the fulfilment jumps from the time of the Greek empire to the last days; likewise Daniel 8 makes the very same jump. And the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel 9 seems to require a similar jump from the time of Jesus to the last days. Another possibility is that the entire thrust of the Daniel 2 prophecy is indeed, as Daniel said, to

show what shall be in the last days. The fulfilment over history is not exact and is only a dim primary fulfilment of the vision.

Moslem Unity and Disunity

The entire image with all its component metals is "broken to pieces *together*" by the little stone (Dan. 2:35). The Chaldee word translated "together" is the equivalent of the Hebrew *echad*, one. The various metals, along with the feet of iron and clay, may not naturally cleave to each other and yet in another sense they are one. And this is exactly the scenario we see developing- bitter intra-Islamic rivalry, with the IS murdering Shia Moslems, whilst united passionately. The only commonality they all have is their joint hatred of Israel and desire to destroy the Jewish people and dominate their land. The same word is found, almost untranslated, in Dan. 2:31, where we read that the king saw *a* great image. The "a" translates the same original word which is translated "together" in :35. The image was not just 'an' image, but a together, united image. The different metals were united together in one form and person, as a conscious imitation of Nebuchadnezzar and ultimately, Mohammad, whom the IS and the jihadists claim to embody. Remember article 8 of the Hamas Covenant: "Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model". Recall too that the IS developed out of the *Tawhid wa al-Jihadi* group, meaning 'Unity & Jihad'. Unity is such a major and recurrent theme in the founding documents of so many jihadist groups, not least the IS [ISIS] and Hamas.

The 'Palestinians' were historically destroyed not by Israel but by the king of the north: "Howl, gate! Cry, city! You are melted away, Philistia, all of you; for smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks" (Is. 14:31). Historically, God seems to prefer to provoke division and confusion amongst Israel's enemies so that they turn on themselves and self-destruct. The horns hate the whore riding the beast, and there are many other hints at such a scenario in the last days. The King of the North, a

re-formed Babylon, or Assyria *redivivus*, will likely end up conflicting with Hamas, or the final rulers of Gaza, and likewise destroying them.

Intermarriage of the Clay and Iron?

But Biblically, the potters clay is Israel. They and the Arabs do not mix with each other. The strong iron, fragments and elements of the iron legs, the fourth beast system, will be mixed with them but they will not cleave to each other. Hamas / Gaza, the strong ones ['Hamas' and 'Gaza' both mean 'strong'], will be mixed with a weak remnant of Israel within the land- and the whole entity will be destroyed by the Lord's coming. Iron and clay don't cleave or marry to each other (Dan. 2:43). The same word for "cleave" is used about marriage in Gen. 2:24. They are mixed with each other- and the Hebrew and Chaldee words *arab* are used here. Clay is a symbol for Israel (Is. 64:8; Jer. 18:6). The Jeremiah 18 reference is significant in that God says that Israel are as clay and He will break them in pieces because they didn't respond to His appeals. The very same image is used of the destruction of the feet of clay in Daniel 2. The clay is specifically "potter's clay" (Dan. 2:41). And that is really the key to the interpretation, because Jeremiah 18 speaks of Israel as the clay in the hands of the Divine potter. The iron in the toes is clearly to be connected with the iron of the legs, which corresponds to the terrible fourth beast with iron teeth (Dan. 7:7,19). The dominators of Israel in the last days will seek to cleave [in marriage] to the clay, Israel. The clay is called "the seed of men" (Dan. 2:43), recalling the descriptions of Israel as "the seed of the Jews" (Esther 6:13). Mingling with the men of the seed would certainly suggest marriage. Is this a reference to a future Islamic domination of Israel unsuccessfully forcing the remaining Jews to marry Moslems? The iron and clay are "mixed" with each other; and the same word is used in Ezra 9:2 of how the people of Judah "mingled themselves" in marriage to the peoples of the land. The suggestion is that the iron and clay 'marry' but do not cleave to each

other in that relationship. This is a feature of radical Islamist domination of territories. In Tunisia and other areas brought under Moslem domination, the Jews there were either killed or, if they were women, forced to marry (polygamously) Moslem men. It would not be out of character with the IS if those they conquer [Israel in particular] were given the same choice.

Religious Hypocrisy

The image is clearly presented as an idol- this is how the word translated "image" is usually used in the Old Testament. The chief deity of Babylon was Marduk who was considered to be the "god of gold". Herodotus described the image of Marduk as a golden statue seated upon a golden throne before a golden table and a golden altar. Pliny also notes that the robes of Marduk's priests were interlaced with gold. The word used for the breaking in pieces of the image (Dan. 2:34) is that used frequently about the breaking in pieces of idols (Ex. 32:20; Dt. 9:21; 2 Kings 23:6,15; 2 Chron. 34:4). The sequence of metals (gold, silver, brass and iron) is found again in Dan. 5:4,23 in describing the materials used by the Babylonian kings for their idols. It's as if they wanted to show that actually all the metals of the image were comprehended within their empire- and they would last for ever. The latter day entity will be distinctly religious, too. The IS, as Sunni Moslems, are passionately against any idols or memorials, hence their destruction of any Shia shrines they take control of. But in a turn of irony which can only be Divine, their religious system is of itself an idol, which is to be destroyed by the Lord's second coming. The entity represented by the image of Daniel 2, which I suggest refers to an Islamic state established in the land promised to Abraham, is destroyed by the return of Christ as of a stone cut out without hands. But the Kaaba stone, the black stone of Mecca which is the central point of the grand mosque in Mecca towards which Moslems pray, is believed by Moslems to have been cut out

without human hands and to have come to earth from Heaven, and will reappear at judgment day (1). And yet this stone, which serves as the focal point of Islam, will be shown to be but a parody of the ultimately true stone cut without hands, the Lord Jesus, who will return from Heaven as the stone to smash the image.

We can likewise observe that the description of the beast in Rev. 17 is very un-islamic- in fact, the very opposite. The beast is ridden by a prostitute who is drunk- both abominations to radical Islam. The woman has a golden cup- drinking from golden cups is specifically forbidden to Moslems by the Quran. The cup is full of idolatry- and Sunni Islam particularly is passionately against any idolatry or worship of anything apart from God. An image is set up to the beast and worshipped- also abomination for Moslems. The false prophet does miracles- whereas Moslems claim that Mohammed did no miracles and the Quran itself is the one supreme miracle of Islam. The gawdy decoration of the beast and whore of Rev. 17 is far from the sobriety of jihadist Islam. Why the apparent contradictions? The similarities with what Islam is *not* are so pronounced that a point is surely being made. The beast of Revelation is how God views the Islamic State and radical Islam. From His perspective, they are the very and exact opposite of all they are claiming. And as has often been observed, the supposed 'religion of peace' is responsible for huge destruction and mass murder. Another possibility is that the more opulent descriptions of the beast actually match well with the Islamic conception of Paradise- as defined, e.g., in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Article 'Jannah'): "One day in paradise is considered equal to a thousand years on earth. Palaces are made from bricks of gold, silver, pearls, among other things. Traditions also note the presence of horses and camels of "dazzling whiteness", along with other creatures. Large trees are described, mountains made of musk, between which rivers flow in valleys of pearl and ruby". It may be that the IS seek to portray their caliphate as paradise come on earth.

The Destruction of the Image

The 'breaking in pieces' of the colossus is described using the same word as is used about how Israel will break in pieces their latter day enemies (Is. 41:15; Mic. 4:13). Whilst God ultimately will do this, it may be that He uses the tiny, ragged, repentant remnant of natural Israel to do so in the last days, achieving the most humanly unlikely, David versus Goliath victory of all human history. For it is God's style to always work through some human mechanism in achieving His judgments. The destruction of the nations will be as the wind blowing away the chaff from the threshing floors at harvest time (Dan. 2:35). But God usually works through a mechanism. It is a repentant Israel who will be Yahweh's threshing instrument and who will trample their enemies to pieces and destroy them as chaff (Is. 41:15; Mic. 4:13- very much the language of the destruction of the image in Daniel 2). Thus again we have the picture of the tiny, now faithful remnant of Israel being mightily used by the Lord to destroy their oppressors. And yet unbelieving Israel are described as chaff (Is. 5:24; 33:11; Jer. 23:28; Hos. 13:3; Zeph. 2:2). Those Jews who come into covenant with the oppressors will be treated as them and share their judgment, just as those who do not come out of Babylon will share in her plagues, and the unfaithful Christian believers will be "condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32). The work of the Elijah ministry will culminate in the Lord Jesus appearing on earth in order to destroy the chaff (Mt. 3:12). So we can infer that the work of the Elijah prophet in appealing for Israel's repentance occurs at the same time as Israel's domination by the oppressors. For both activities culminate in the Lord Jesus destroying the chaff.

The image of threshing definitely connects with other prophecies describing the judgment process at the Lord's second coming as being a threshing. Mic. 4:11,12 predict that the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem in order that they may be threshed there. Jerusalem has been the attraction for these peoples-

and Islam so strongly desires it. Those are threshed are the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2, the 10 horns of the beast of Daniel 7. These therefore represent nations who desire to take Jerusalem. It is Babylon who will be threshed in the last day (Jer. 51:33), so we can understand these collected together nations as all under the control of Babylon. Which is what the image requires, because it was what Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon effectively saw as it were in the mirror, it was him, with his face. Joel 3:2,12 envisages these nations being gathered into the valley of Jehoshaphat as a result of a holy / sanctified war which they have declared, a jihad (Joel 3:9), where God will first plead with them to repent (Joel 3:2) and then judge them at the harvest (Joel 3:12,13). The Joel 3 passage is developed in more detail in Revelation 16, where we read that once the Angels restraining the forces of evil at the Euphrates release them, the kings of the East will come charging towards God's people. And the hordes of the IS are currently gathered at the Euphrates river. But this will in reality be a gathering of them together unto Armageddon, meaning a heap of sheaves in a valley. Still within this same metaphor, Daniel 2 describes the threshing process, resulting in the wind blowing away the ground up peoples like chaff.

The image of a nation being threshed into dust is used in 2 Kings 13:7 of how the Syrians did this to an apostate Israel- inviting us to see the feet of iron and clay as having at least some reference to Israel. "The precious sons of Zion" are likened to potters' clay being smashed by the Babylonian invasion (Lam. 4:2); and the toes are of potters' clay (Dan. 2:41). The imagery suggests the destruction of an apostate Israel by a latter day Syrian / Babylonian. The stone which does the destruction is the Lord Jesus, but it is He working through the enemies of Israel to do this, just as God did so many times in judging His people historically.

Notes

(1) Hava Lazarus-Yafeh *Some Religious Aspects of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1981) pp. 120–124.

2.1 Finer Details in Daniel 2

The "great mountain" of God's Kingdom fills the whole earth, but the mountain initially begins at one point on the planet. Elsewhere in Daniel, the mountain is defined specifically as Jerusalem: "Your city Jerusalem, even Your holy mountain" (Dan. 9:16). The toes are therefore specifically dominating Jerusalem at the initial point of impact of the stone upon the land. And this is what we would expect from an Islamist confederacy dominating the land of Israel- Jerusalem is the key issue for them. And we know from Zechariah that "the city shall be taken".

Note that the stone was cut out of a mountain, but after hitting the image, it becomes a mountain, filling the whole earth. This second mountain is interpreted as the Kingdom of God coming on earth. Biblically, mountains represent people. The equivalent in Daniel 7 is that the kingdoms of the world are given to "*the people of the saints of the Most High*" (Dan. 7:27). The first mountain likewise, therefore, refers to people. Out of the mountain of humanity, or perhaps the mountain of the Hebrew people (Ex. 15:17; Ps. 48:1; Is. 2:2 "the mountain of Yahweh's house / family / people will be exalted"), the Lord Jesus as the stone was cut out without human hands, born through the virgin birth. But the people of God will finally all become like Him. He as the stone becomes them, the mountain. We will finally manifest the Lord Jesus in totality, eternally. And if I am correct in understanding "the mountain" as specifically referring to God's people Israel, then the second mountain, the Kingdom of God on earth, is in fact the eternal and glorious re-establishment of the Kingdom of God as it was in the form of Israel. And this is indeed Bible teaching elsewhere (Ez. 21:25-27; Acts 1:7 and see more evidence in my *Bible Basics* chapter 5).

Detailed Notes on Daniel Chapter 2

2:19 *A night vision*- Effectively, Daniel dreamed the same as Nebuchadnezzar did, making him effectively equal to the king who thought he had no equal. And because he remembered the dream and the interpretation, he was thereby declared greater than him.

2:31 *A great image*- Matthew Henry notes: “Nebuchadnezzar was an admirer of statues, and had his palace and gardens adorned with them; however, he was a worshipper of images, and now behold a *great image* is set before him in a dream”. He was being shown that all his worship of images was effectively a worship of himself. And so it can be with all religion; we can think we are doing God service when in reality we are merely using it as a channel for worshipping ourselves. The only other time we encounter the sequence of gold, silver, brass and iron in Daniel is when we read that the idols of the Babylonians were made of these very metals (Dan. 5:4,23), as are the idols of the latter day Babylon (Rev. 18:12).

Whose brightness was excellent- “Brightness” was associated with the cherubim, symbols of God’s glory, which were to return from Babylon to Judah (Ez. 1:4,27,28); “brightness” was to be a feature of God’s restored Kingdom in Judah (Is. 59:9; 60:3,19; 62:1). It is very much the language of theophany (Ps. 18:12; Hab. 3:4) and the return of Christ (2 Thess. 2:8), and therefore the impression is given that this is a fake Kingdom of God, an anti-Christ, a system which appeared as the true when it was the false. Daniel concludes with a picture of how the brightness of God’s people shall be eternal, as opposed to the fading brightness of the image (Dan. 12:3).

Stood before you- The idea is ‘rose up before you’. It is the same word used of how God raises up kings (2:21), “another kingdom shall *arise* after you” (2:39), “the God of Heaven will *set up* a Kingdom” (2:44). The king was being enabled to see himself from outside himself. It is used eight times in Daniel 3 to describe

how Nebuchadnezzar defied this revelation by ‘setting up’ another image, purely of gold, as if to say that his kingdom would in fact be eternal; he refused to accept that others would ‘arise’ after him.

2:32 *The image’s head*- Literally, the *rosh*, the great leader, of the image, the same *rosh* spoken of in Ez. 38 as leading a latter day invasion of Israel. The image is of a man; a latter day Nebuchadnezzar. For he was the head of gold.

We note that the value of the metals decreases with distance from the head of gold. Dreams reveal our subconscious thoughts and value systems; Nebuchadnezzar saw himself as most important, and as he speculated about the future, those furthest from him in time seemed less important and valuable. But that illusion was shattered by the idea of the Jewish Messiah, the little stone, destroying the image and becoming an eternal mountain on earth. We need to learn the lesson, valuing the Kingdom perspective far above our immediate prospects. It’s worthy of note that the other empires, especially Medo-Persia and Rome, had far greater dominion and extent than Babylon ever had- both geographically and culturally. And yet from Nebuchadnezzar’s perspective, they were inferior and insignificant simply because they were far away from him in time. The dream was in a sense *his* dream, which is why the empires are described as “inferior” to him; this is how it was from his perspective. But the interpretation was from God, and the twist in the tail is that all these kingdoms of men are to become as nothing before the Kingdom of the God of Israel to be established on earth.

Legs of iron- the latter part of the Grecian monarchy, the two empires of Syria and Egypt, the former governed by the family of the Seleucidae, from Seleucus, the latter by that of the Lagidae, from Ptolemaeus Lagus . The idea that the two legs represent Eastern and Western Rome [centered in Constantinople and Rome] is problematic, in that these areas were not part of the land promised to Abraham. The image prophecy speaks specifically of kingdoms reigning over “the earth”, the land of Israel. Turkey [Constantinople] and Italy [Rome] were not part of that land. So I

prefer to see the two Roman legs as referring to how the two Greek thighs were taken over by Rome. And they will have their revival in the last days in the form of the feet and ten toes- split between two groups, two entities which between them dominate the land promised to Abraham.

2:34 *Without hands*- The Lord Jesus surely alluded to this in saying that His resurrection would be a rebuilding of the temple “without hands” (Mk. 14:58). It could be that He perceived the possibility of the smiting of the image as being fulfilled in His resurrection. Thus the vision had several potential fulfilments which were not realized. This would explain the gap in fulfilment between the end of the Roman domination of Israel and their land, and the latter day existence of the ten toes / horns which come out of the Roman beast. This apparent awkwardness in the symbology can be explained by Israel not being in their land from then until our last days; but it can also be understood in terms of a reworked fulfilment, after the earlier possible fulfilments were disallowed by Israel’s lack of response.

2:35 *To pieces... like the chaff*- Combining the images of Daniel 2 with those of the beasts in Daniel 7, we see a progressive sense of breakup. Babylon was headed by one king, Medo-Persia is presented as a divided kingdom, split between the two arms of the Medes and Persians; then the third Kingdom is likened to a leopard with four heads, referring to the four states that came after Alexander the Great. The fourth empire was divided into two legs (in Daniel 2), and in Daniel 7, it has ten horns, who have conflicts with each other. These are the equivalent of the ten toes, which don’t mix with each other. Then, the entire image is ground to pieces and becomes like tiny pieces of chaff. And the ultimate unity of God’s Kingdom on earth is then established. We see in society generally, and especially in the territory of the land promised to Abraham, a progressive breaking up. And this will continue, until it is confirmed by the Lord’s return breaking into even smaller pieces.

2:41 *Potters' clay*- The coming of Christ is described in Is. 41:25 as: "I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come; from the rising of the sun, one who calls on My name; and he shall come on princes as on mortar, and as the potter treads clay". The "princes" are surely some of the ten kings represented by the ten toes (2:44). Note that Israel's latter day invader is described as one "from the north"; this person will be an imitation of Christ, the ultimate One from the north. His coming will be as "the rising of the sun" (Mal. 4:2), just as that of the antichrist will be. The coming of Christ upon princes who are as clay therefore connects directly with the language of Daniel 2. Habakkuk 2:6 speaks of the latter day Babylonian antichrist figure as one who "lades himself with thick clay", to be destroyed by the Lord's coming and the Kingdom of God, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (Hab. 2:14). The "clay" would then refer to the same more lowly components of the feet part of iron and clay.

Chapter 7: The Beasts of Daniel 7

The four metals of the image of Daniel 2, followed as they were by the feet and ten toes part of iron and clay, are matched by the four beasts of Daniel 7, culminating in the beast with ten horns, which is also destroyed by the second coming of Christ. It is emphasized that Nebuchadnezzar 'saw' the image, or literally, he had a vision of it (Dan. 2:26,31,34,41,43,45). The same word is used in Daniel 7 of how now *Daniel* 'saw' or 'had a vision of' the four beasts (Dan. 7:1,2,4,6,7,9,11,13,21). The Daniel 7 vision or 'seeing' was perhaps from God's perspective, Heaven's view of the same realities which Nebuchadnezzar saw from an earthly perspective. There are many verbal similarities, as well as the general outline similarity between the four kingdoms. Thus the intention of the Daniel 2 image was to show how God 'sets up kings' who 'rise up' (Dan. 2:21,31,39), and the same word is used of how both the lion and the bear are 'set up' or 'raised up' (Dan. 7:4,5); indeed, all four beasts "are four kings which shall arise out of the earth" (Dan. 7:17). The kingdoms of Daniel 2 reigned over the earth, and that clearly refers to the *eretz* promised to Abraham, Israel, rather than the entire planet. Daniel 7 makes the point that these kings or kingdoms will arise out of that same 'earth' which they later dominate. Clearly we are not to look for any identification of the beasts or kings from outside the land promised to Abraham.

The ten horns likewise represent "ten kings" which shall "arise" (Dan. 7:24); and although it is not stated specifically, we are to assume that they arise also out of the same area, the "earth" / land. We should therefore be looking for a group of four kings / kingdoms, out of which arise ten kings / kingdoms; and out of them arises one "little horn" in particular. Revelation's take on the beasts

adds more detail- there are also seven heads, a false prophet acting as publicity agent for the beast, a whore riding the beast, sitting on seven hills / kings. The four beasts / kings are initially in conflict, striving with each other upon the sea, and arising from that comes the fourth beast entity, the composite beast including elements of all the previous ones. And from that there arises the ten horns and one little horn. We should not, however, think of these situations as having to be chronological developments, i.e. first the four, then the fourth beast, then the ten horns, then the little horn. It may work out like that, but not necessarily. The precise details need not concern us ahead of time; the picture is of a series of leaders and powers involved in the domination of the land promised to Abraham. The fact is, the beasts will all exist together in the last days, just as the metals of the image will. These various entities will “arise” from the land. And this is what we see happening already- in the last few years there has been what is called the Arabic, and particularly Sunni, *sahwa*, ‘awakening’. Powers and kings have risen up out of the scrubland and desert of the *eretz*, united in their hatred of Israel, but bitterly divided against each other.

We are for sure in the stage of the winds / *ruach* / Angel controlled nations ‘striving’ with each other- the *eretz* is full of conflict as never before, not just between Israel and her neighbours, but between those neighbours. There are currently four non-Jewish nations within the *eretz*- Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. But they exist just on paper as lines on the map; there are other significant entities within the area, e.g. Kurdistan, the Islamic State, Gaza, parts of Egypt and Turkey [depending how one defines the northern border of Israel], parts of Saudi Arabia [depending how the eastern border is defined]. In total they make ten kingdoms, but the number ten may not be literal. We would then be awaiting for the “little horn” to arise- a charismatic, antiChrist leader, or perhaps another very small entity. For the horn is called the *little* horn, and yet it is the most powerful in the very last days. However, the Hebrew and Aramaic words translated “little” can mean ‘short’ in terms of time

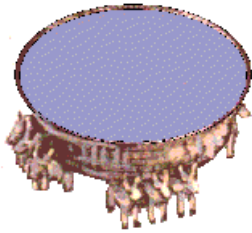
as well as size. The idea may be that it lasts a very short time indeed, maybe literally days or hours in the very last day, and is the human representative of the beast / horns who personally challenges the Lord Jesus and is destroyed by the brightness of His coming.



The Origins of the Beasts

The empires of Daniel 2 dominate the earth. The Hebrew *eretz* can refer either to the entire planet, or to the land- the land promised to Abraham, the land of Israel, from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. The dominion of the four beasts is therefore over the same area. Daniel saw the beasts arising out of the great sea. This could be a reference to the laver, which is also called a 'sea' (1 Kings 7:23-26,39). This was a huge circular bowl for washing which was set upon 12 bronze oxen, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. They were arranged in four groups of three, facing north, south, east and west, in imitation of the camp of Israel in the

wilderness. The beasts therefore arise out of the territory promised to the twelve tribes of Israel.



Rev. 17:15 interprets waters or seas as "peoples". The beasts therefore arise out of the peoples who are to be found in the land of the 12 tribes of Israel. The interpretation is confirmed by the words of the Angel in Dan. 7:17, who says that the four beasts who arise out of the sea are four king[dom]s which "shall arise out of the earth / land".

Another possibility regarding the "great sea" is that it refers to the area of Babylon's dominion. The vision of Daniel 7 clearly parallels that of Daniel 2, which was intended to explain what would happen after the Babylonians. The arena of the "great sea" was to be dominated by other kingdoms apart from Babylon. In confirmation of this, we find the word *rab* ["great"] used about the greatness of Babylon ("great Babylon", Dan. 4:30; Joel 2:2,11). But *rab* is also translated "master" (Dan. 1:3), "lord", "captain", "chief" (Dan. 2:10,14,48), "master" (Dan. 4:19; 5:11). We could understand the "great sea" as the sea of nations ruled over by the master, the lord of the sea, the king of Babylon- and Daniel is seeing this vision in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon (Dan. 7:1). As in the Daniel 2 vision, Daniel is explaining that the leadership of Babylon will not last, other kingdoms will arise to also dominate the sea of nations which was then under Babylon's sole control. This again pushes us towards understanding the entire vision as specifically concerning the

area over which Babylon had dominion, and not the whole planet.

Dan. 7:21,22 speak of how the "saints" will be persecuted by the beast, and then "the saints" will 'possess the Kingdom'. The "saints" are Israel, the same Hebrew word is used in Ex. 19:5 to describe them as a holy or saintly nation, a nation of saints, sanctified ones. If we understand the Kingdom as primarily the land promised to Abraham's seed for them to 'possess', then this makes sense. That land will be dominated and trodden down by the beast, and then the remnant of Abraham's seed will triumphantly possess it eternally; and that mountain, or Kingdom, will then grow to fill the whole planet.

The little horn devours, treads down and breaks in pieces "the earth" (Dan. 7:23); that has little meaning if applied to the whole planet. The context speaks of destruction and persecution of "the saints", God's people in His land. The reference is surely to the specific land of Israel.

Controlling Angels

The four beasts are "diverse from one another" (Dan. 7:3), just as the four metals of the image of Daniel 2 do not naturally bond with each other. The four beasts are controlled by four spirits in Heaven who 'strive' with each other (Dan. 7:2). God makes His Angels spirits (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7). Each of those kings or empires had a representative Angel in Heaven. It's not that the Angels themselves strive with each other, they are all obedient to God (see my *The Real Devil* chapter 2 <http://www.realdevil.info/2-1.htm>) but they play out before the court of Heaven the situation on earth. Later in Daniel we find Angels likewise representative of kings and kingdoms (Dan. 10:13,20). The comfort is that God is aware of all that happens on earth, and in fact He orchestrates it. The situation on earth is therefore not ultimately spinning out of control. My point in this context is that the four beasts strive with each other and do

not naturally bond with each other. This is the same situation as we find in the feet and toes made part of iron, part of clay, mixed with each other but not cleaving to each other. Just as the image stands erect in the last days in order for it to be destroyed, so the sequence of beasts which we have in Daniel 7 are not simply a historical outline of a sequence of empires. Each of them exists in some form in the last days, and are united together in their brief domination of the earth / land promised to Abraham. The first three beasts stand 'before' the fourth one, the original meaning 'in the presence of', rather than previously in chronological terms (Dan. 7:7). The fourth beast has its body destroyed, although the other beasts are also present there and have their lives prolonged "for a season" (Dan. 7:11,12). The historical interpretation of the beasts is not irrelevant, however. The final entity dominating Israel will incorporate aspects of all the previous systems which have dominated the land promised to Abraham.

The Fourth Beast

The fourth beast with the ten horns equates with the legs or iron and ten toes of the image of Daniel 2. This entity will be in existence at the time of Christ's return, because it is to be destroyed by His coming. And we have that same picture in Revelation. Historically, the legs of iron represent Rome, but the beast is not a historical entity, it exists in the last days. So although there are parallels and outline similarities between the metals of the image and the beasts, this is not to say that they are all one and the same. The final beast has elements of all the previous beasts, it is a composite entity including all the elements of the previous systems which have dominated the land and people of Israel. Just as the image stands complete in the last days, so the final beast stands complete. The whore sits on many waters, representing various languages and peoples; and yet she sits upon the beast (Rev. 17:1,3,15). The latter day beast is therefore not one nation but an amalgum of peoples.

As the entire image was "terrible" (Dan. 2:31), so the fourth beast system is described with the same word (Dan. 7:7). As the image appeared "excellent" (Dan. 2:31), so the strength of the fourth beast was 'excellent' (s.w. Dan. 7:7). Dan. 7:7 emphasizes that this final beast is altogether more aggressive than any previous beast / dominator of the land: "Dreadful, terrible, strong exceedingly... it was different from all the beasts that were before it". The original word translated "dreadful" suggests whoever sees it slinks away in fear- its strength and advantage over others is "exceeding". This is the same awe we find in Rev. 13, where the world looks on at the beast, marvelling at this entity and feeling that nobody can even begin to make war with him. This speaks of an entity that is more aggressive and fear-inspiring than the aggressive Babylonians, Assyrians or abusive Nazis. It implies too the eclipse of the West as the dominant world power block and power broker. The current IS may develop into an entity which fits this bill- a reign of terror involving cutting off children's heads and parading their actions on videos, live crucifixion of any who don't agree with them, but with a stranglehold advantage over any critics... The same radical difference between this final beast and all previous ones is brought out by the way in which John, after all he had earlier seen, was in shock at the way the beast drank the blood of the saints, i.e. the people of God, Israel in their land (Rev. 17:6). The whole world likewise is in shock horror at this beast (Rev. 13:3; 17:8). The entity currently known as the IS hasn't yet struck so much fear into everyone, but the time is surely coming. Dan. 12:1 puts it this way: "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was" for God's people, and they will be saved from it by the standing up of Jesus for His people, the resurrection of the dead and the destruction of the "king of the north". The "time of Jacob's trouble" from which he shall be saved (Jer. 30:7) must be understood in the context of how the phrase "time of

trouble" is used in the Bible to describe times of Israel's invasion and suffering at the hands of their neighbours (Is. 33:2; Jer. 2:27,28; 8:15; 11:12,14; 14:8,19; Ez. 7:7). "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was" therefore suggests a time of abuse of Israel such as has never been seen. And this includes the Nazi holocaust, the death camps of Europe, the Babylonian and Assyrian atrocities... It's purely wishful thinking to hope that the IDF and Israel's military technology will stave this off. It will not. Jerusalem is to be taken and the women raped (Zech. 14:2). The beast is to dominate the earth / land of Israel.

The "iron teeth" of the beast (Dan. 7:7) can be connected with the way that "Damascus" tore the Israelites with teeth of iron (Am. 1:3). Damascus is a key player in the future Islamic state which is to be established in the land promised to Abraham. There will be an element of the historical Syrians in the entity which finally dominates Israel. And we can clearly see that in the IS. The same figure of a beast with huge teeth closing in upon Israel is to be found in Joel 1:6, describing the Babylonian and / or Assyrian invasion of the land. Teeth like lions are also mentioned in the picture of men with long hair arising like aggressive locusts out of the earth / land to torture to death those who live there for five months (Rev. 9:4-8). This very much sounds like the long haired jihadist fighters of the IS briefly dominating the land at the end. But they are part of the beast system, which includes this element of teeth because it is a composite figure including all elements of Israel's persecutors.

The beast will "devour" the land (Dan. 7:7), just as the historical Babylon 'devoured' Jerusalem with fire (Jer. 30:16; Lam. 4:11; Ez. 15:5; 19:12; 23:25; Hos. 8:14; Am. 1:4; 2:5) and the Assyrians devoured the land (Jer. 50:17; Hos. 11:6; 13:8; Joel 1:4,19,20; 2:3,5,25). All these verses use the same

word translated 'devour' in Dan. 7:7. Clearly enough, the 'devouring' of the fourth beast is a summation of all previous 'devourings' of God's land and people. Even in Old Testament times, this idea of a singular beast embodying all Israel's enemies was not unknown. For Ez. 34:28 looked forward to the day when "Neither shall the beast of the land devour them [any more]". Mal. 3:11 likewise speaks of how "the devourer" will be rebuked by God when finally Israel respond to the Elijah prophet (Mal. 3:1). This again suggests that the final devouring of Israel will be whilst the Elijah prophet is making an ongoing appeal for their repentance and acceptance of Jesus. Once they do so, the devourer is rebuked and Jesus returns to His desperately repentant people.

The beast stamps on others (Dan. 7:7); the same word is used for how Egypt did this to God's people and others within the land promised to Abraham (Ez. 32:2). Although Egypt doesn't figure in the sequence of metals in the image of Daniel 2, the beast incorporates aspects of all Israel's previous dominators- and they include Egypt. We can therefore expect the beast entity to include features of Nazi, Catholic and other historical persecutors of God's people, even though those entities weren't part of the Daniel 2 image. This is why the historical interpretations of 666 and the beast which apply them to Nero's Rome and various Catholic persecutions are not *per se* incorrect. They were true for their time. But the final persecuting entity will include them all within what it is and what it does.

The Remnant

It is specifically stated that the beast "stamped the remnant" after it had torn and destroyed the land. This could refer to the remnant or "rest" of the beasts (7:12 s.w.). But it may mean that as a result of all the persecution and destruction of the majority of Jews in the land, the surviving remnant of

God's people is stamped underfoot, or subjected to despise. The very same metaphor is used of how the city of God will be "trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". Those "times" may well refer to the period of 1260 days, three and a half years, spoken of in the prophecies of the tribulation. This trodden down and abused remnant are those who will finally repent and accept Jesus. There are prophecies of how this "remnant" (same word translated "residue" in Dan. 7:7 AV) will finally repent (Is. 10:20-22; 28:5). Is. 11:11,16 speaks of the latter day gathering of this "remnant" from areas throughout the land promised to Abraham- as if there will be a literal taking captive of the surviving Jews left in the land, scattering them throughout the 'land' promised to Abraham. The chronology fits well- the beast briefly dominates the land, the majority of Jews living there are killed, a remnant remains, who are stamped underfoot whilst Jerusalem likewise is trodden underfoot, and this leads to their repentance and therefore the return of the Lord Jesus to save them from the IS. It's worth noting that the word "remnant" is used repeatedly of the remnant of Judah who were in captivity in Babylon at Daniel's time and the remnant of them who returned to the land. This would've been how his first audience naturally understood the term- referring to Jewish people who had been taken out of their land by their neighbours (Ezra 3:8; 4:3,7,9; 6:16; Neh. 10:28; 11:1,20; Esther 9:16 "the remnant of the Jews that were in the king's provinces").

Then shall come to pass the word of Zech. 12:8: "He that is feeble among them [s.w. Dan. 11:41 about how many in the land of Israel will be overthrown or made feeble] in that day shall be as David". The suggested allusion is to David overcoming the Palestinian Goliath, who all else feared to make war with as he spoke his blasphemy against God and Israel- exactly the language of Rev. 13:4-8.

The Beasts all Exist Together

There is a clear parallel between the four winds which strove with each other upon the sea, and the four beasts who came up out of the sea. The impression is that these beasts all exist at the same time, and their conflict with each other leads to the final appearance of a beast which represents all of them; and this entity dominates the earth / land promised to Abraham, and God's people upon it. The appearance of this entity will therefore be brought about by massive conflict within the land promised to Abraham- and this is what we are seeing before our eyes. The only uniting issue between the powers in that area is a common hatred of Israel and desire to take Jerusalem. This will be the basis of the final beast arising. We can perhaps look to the development of four distinct power groups within the land promised to Abraham, giving rise to ten 'kings' or leaders, the horns of the beast, the ten toes of the image. The period of conflict between those groups could be very brief. We need not, therefore, think that the Lord's coming isn't near because we can't currently identify those four entities or ten leaders. What we are seeing before our eyes is the winds blowing on the sea, striving between the peoples of the land / earth promised to Abraham, leaving millions dead and the entire region in bitter division. And this, according to Daniel 7, will give rise to the emergence of the final entity of abuse, probably an Islamic State, likely on the pattern of the entity now known as the Islamic State.

The beast of Revelation 13 has elements of all the other beasts. And so does the fourth beast of Daniel 7. It had iron teeth and brass nails (Dan. 7:19), alluding to the brass of the third kingdom and the iron of the fourth kingdom. It had "eyes of a man" and a human eye on its horn, (Dan. 7:8,20), just as the first beast, the lion, had a human heart and stood up like a man (Dan. 7:4). The bear, the second beast, had three ribs in its mouth, representing its conquest of three other powers; the

fourth beast features a little horn which conquers three other horns (Dan. 7:8). The bear also ‘devoured much flesh’ (Dan. 7:5); the fourth beast ‘devours’ the land (Dan. 7:7). The third beast, the leopard, had four heads (Dan. 7:6), rather like the fourth beast also has ten horns; and Revelation 13 explains that these are later located on seven heads. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 is therefore a composite beast; the other beasts merge into an entity which includes all of them, even though they still exist separately- for in the final Divine judgment, the fourth beast entity is destroyed, but the beasts have their dominion taken away although their lives are “prolonged for a season and time” (Dan. 7:12). This may mean that the final entity is destroyed, but the individual components of it continue to exist “for a season and time”. The only other reference in Daniel to a period being “prolonged” is when the same word is used in Dan. 4:27 regarding the possibility of the king of the kingdom prolonging his life by repentance; it could be that the delay or prolonging is in order they repent. This may also explain why the first beast, representing Babylon, is pictured as having a man’s heart being given to it after its wings [power] are cropped. The historical king of Babylon had a beast’s heart (Dan. 4:16), but his understanding [a human heart] returned to him on his repentance (Dan. 4:34). So this feature of the first beast may be a hit at a repentance after the pattern of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4.

The Revival of all the Beasts

On one hand, the metals of the image in Daniel 2, and the sequence of beasts which parallel them in Daniel 7, speak of a series of kingdoms in history which dominated Israel. And yet on the other hand, they must all exist in the last days, under the headship of a latter day Babylon. I suggest this will be fulfilled by the latter day entity which dominates Israel including elements of all the previous empires which dominated Israel. The other prophecies in Daniel contain more detail about these

various empires in their historical fulfilment. Elements of those prophecies will therefore also have some application in a latter day sense; various characteristics of those empires will be seen in the final entity which dominates Israel. It will be not only Assyria *redivivus* but also Persia, Greece and Rome *redivivus*. This kind of thing is seen elsewhere in the Scriptures- for often Israel's enemies are described in terms of their previous oppressors, especially Egypt. Take Is. 52:4: "My people went down into Egypt to live there, and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause". It was the Egyptians who oppressed Israel in Egypt, but they are here called the Assyrian- because at Isaiah's time, the Assyrians were the threat to Judah, but they are cast by Isaiah in terms of the Egyptians of previous centuries.

Daniel 7 depicts the various metals of the image as various beasts. The final beast of the last days incorporates all the elements of the previous beasts. But her head will be Babylon, replete with a latter day Nebuchadnezzar. Note that the first three of the empires of Daniel's image had Babylon as their capital. It is appropriate that the latter day revival of the image and beast has Babylon likewise as its capital. It surely cannot be accidental that in Babylon today, "the ancient temple of Ishtar has been rebricked, replastered and whitewashed... carved into the bricks are reliefs of oxen and a mythical beast called the mushrishu, with the head of a serpent, body of a fish, front legs of a lion, and back legs of an eagle" (*Chattanooga New Free Press*, April 5, 1987). Latter day Babylon chooses to identify itself as an amalgam of beasts!

The various beasts and metals must all be in existence at the time of Christ's return in order for him to destroy them by his coming. The little stone hits the image on its ten toes- corresponding to the ten horns of the fourth beast of Dan.7. The ten horns must in a sense be in existence at the time of

Christ's coming. But so also is the fourth beast, corresponding to the legs of iron- because it is at the coming of Christ that “the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (Dan. 7:11). Likewise at this same time, “the rest of the beasts... had their dominion taken away” (Dan. 7:12). The other beasts, corresponding to the earlier metals in the image, are ‘alive’ at the coming of Christ. Just as the image stands complete, so all the beasts are alive in order to receive judgment. The horns are presented as part of the fourth beast; their destruction is part and parcel of the fourth beast’s destruction.

Daniel sees the four beasts (corresponding with the four metals of the image of Daniel 2) all come up *together* after the waves of the sea are troubled (Dan. 7:3), connecting with the Lord's description of the last day powers around Israel in the same way (Lk. 21:25). The fact they all come up together shows that he was not only seeing a continuous historic vision. The way he sees the beast representing Babylon come up when historical Babylon at the time of the vision had already 'come up' shows it was not a historical description of those powers. The beasts all exist again in the last day, just as all the metals of the image exist together in order to be destroyed together by the Lord's return. Yet the 'traditional' interpretation of the beasts as depicting the various empires which dominated Israel in the past still holds true; the point is, the final beast incorporates elements of all those powers which once dominated Israel. It is in this sense that the whole image of Dan. 2 stands complete in the last days; the latter day Nebuchadnezzar has beneath him all the elements of Israel's previous persecutors.

Dan. 7:19 describes the fourth beast as having the iron and brass metals of the image of Dan. 2 in it. The fourth beast had feet and teeth, we are specifically told. The lion, representing

the head of gold, had feet (Dan. 7:4); the bear, representing the breast of silver, had powerful teeth. The fourth beast has “claws of brass”, but brass referred to the *third* empire in the sequence of empires in the parallel Daniel 2. The point being, that the fourth beast has elements of the previous beasts in it. And likewise, the final entity which dominates Israel at the time of the Lord’s return in glory will have within it elements of all the previous dominators. Thus the fourth beast had all the characteristics of the other beasts. By it being destroyed through its ten horns being smitten by Christ’s return, it is as if the image of Dan.2 is standing erect and complete in the last days, being hit on the ten toes (cp. the ten horns of the beast) by Christ’s return.

Various Possible Outcomes

The four beasts are described as “diverse” from each other (Dan. 7:3). The Aramaic word translated “diverse” is used 21 times, and every time it distinctly means to be changed from one state to another. It is used about ‘altering’ a king’s word (Ezra 6:11; Dan. 3:28), the face of a man being ‘changed’ from one appearance to another (Dan. 3:19; 5:6). The idea is not simply that there were four beasts which were different from each other; it’s surely axiomatic that four different beasts are going to be different from each other. The beasts of Daniel 7 are clearly related to the metals of the image in Daniel 2; but this is not to say that the same thing is being said simply through different symbolism. That would be relatively pointless. There is an extension of the ideas and a modification of the way in which the final end [the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth] will be achieved. I have suggested in the appendix that Daniel’s prophecies were conditional; a sequence of four kings could have arisen after Nebuchadnezzar, culminating in the establishment of the Kingdom on earth. Daniel’s long life spanned the 70 years captivity of Judah and the reign of at least four kings; the

prophets repeatedly state that the intention of that captivity was that the captives might “know that I am Yahweh”; the experience was to be God’s pleading with His people to repent (Ez. 20:36). Daniel wrote his visions for others to read, indeed it is specifically mentioned that he spoke out loud the Daniel 7 vision (Dan. 7:1). The visions were part of that pleading with the captives to accept God’s perspective and join in on the side of His Kingdom. But Israel, as a whole, would not. Most of them preferred the soft life in Babylon and did not return at the time of the restoration. They would not “know Yahweh” nor did they repent- instead, as Ezekiel 18 makes clear, they blamed their captivity upon the sins of their fathers being visited upon them by an unjust God. Because of this lack of response, the possible outworking of the visions changed.

The passing of power from Babylon to the Medes could have continued according to the Daniel 2 vision; four kings could have arisen (note they are called ‘kings’ and not ‘kingdoms’ in Dan. 7:17), and the Kingdom of God would have been established at the end of the 70 years captivity. But there were delays because of the Jews’ lack of response. Hence Daniel’s sorrow and shock throughout the book as he saw the final outworking being delayed. Therefore the fact the beasts are ‘changed’ or ‘altered’ is seamlessly in context with this idea of delayed and recalculated outcomes of the prophecies. This would explain why the further visions of the beasts in Daniel 8 suggests that in the time of the third kingdom [the Greeks], a charismatic leader would arise [clearly having Antiochus Epiphanes in view] who would be destroyed by the coming of God’s Son and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. But that scenario also didn’t work out, and Antiochus Epiphanes became a prototype of the final antichrist, requiring a gap between that part of the prophecy and the last days. Perhaps this is why Daniel’s first vision in Daniel 7 is of the first three beasts, and then “After this I saw in the night

visions, and behold, a fourth beast” (Dan. 7:7)- as if the vision of the first three beasts was separate to that of the fourth beast. Likewise at the end of Daniel 11, the king of the north is clearly Antiochus Epiphanes throughout the chapter; but 11:40- 12:5 clearly envisages him standing up against “Michael” and being destroyed at the time of the resurrection of the dead. This didn’t happen, and so there arose a hiatus in fulfillment. This is not to say that God’s word is falsified; rather is it proved ultimately true in a way which takes on board human freewill. For otherwise, the very existence of God’s prophetic word would be deterministic of human behavior to an extent that human freewill is taken away by the very existence of the Divine word.

It’s noteworthy that the vision of Daniel 7 is presented as seven separate visions, each introduced by the rubric “I saw” (7:2,4,6,7,9,11,13). Revelation is an expansion upon Daniel’s visions, and there we find seven visions which are in turn subdivided into seven visions and some of those subdivisions even are subdivided into seven visions. Admittedly, these can be defined in various ways, but some of the more obvious ones are: 7 visions:

- 1) Revelation 4 - 8:1
- 2) Revelation 8:2 - 11
- 3) Revelation 12 - 14
- 4) Revelation 15, 16
- 5) Revelation 17, 18
- 6) Revelation 19
- 7) Revelation 20

The seven visions of conflict explaining the Establishment of God’s Kingdom between Rev. 11:15-13:8:

1. The woman with child: the birth of Jesus, 12:1-2
2. The great red dragon: the enemy of Peace, 12:3-6
3. The war in heaven: the Cross, 12:7-12
4. The dragon, the woman, and her children: the struggle of God's people, 12:13-17
5. The seven-headed beast from the sea: the power of Rome, 13:1-4
6. The war against the saints: persecutions, 13:5-10
7. The beast and his mark: corruption of the emperor and the dragon's agents, 13:11-18

Then there are the Seven Visions of Mt. Zion, Rev. 14:1-20; the Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God, Rev. 15:1-16:21; the Seven Visions of the Fall of Babylon, Rev. 17:1-19:10 ; the Seven Visions of Recompense, Rev. 19:11-21:5.

The point is that the outline scenario of Daniel 7 is repeated in more detail in Revelation. But the primary reference remains the same- a prediction of a final time of trouble within the land promised to Abraham, which will come to term in the return of Christ to earth to establish His Kingdom upon the ruins of Israel's enemies.

The Four Beasts and the Cherubim

It's apparent that the four beasts are full of allusion to the cherubim vision seen by Ezekiel- also whilst in captivity in Babylon, just as Daniel was. The cherubim were likewise four separate living creatures [beasts] which somehow were also one. The four beasts of Daniel 7 become comprehended in the fourth beast and in the one composite beast of Revelation 13, which includes all elements of the previous beasts within it. Note that the Hebrew / Aramaic for "beast" means literally a living one- the living creature of the cherubim vision. The cherubim featured the faces of lion, ox, man and eagle (Ez.

1:10), and lion, ox and eagle feature in the descriptions of the four beasts; the ‘man’ element is found in that the lion has the heart of a man, and the little horn of the fourth beast has the eyes of a man. The first living creature has wings which are lifted up from the earth (Dan. 7:4)- which is precisely the language of the cherubim wings being lifted up from the earth in Ez. 1:19,21; 10:16,19. As the first beast is made to stand on its feet (Dan. 7:4), so the cherubim caused Ezekiel to stand on his feet (Ez. 2:2; 3:24). The second creature had a “side” which was “lifted up” (Dan. 7:5), as the cherubim likewise had ‘sides’ which were ‘lifted up’ (Ez. 1:8,20). The third beast had four wings as each of the living creatures / cherubim did (Dan. 7:6; Ez. 1:23). The first and fourth beasts / living creatures have feet (Dan. 7:4,7) as the cherubim do (Ez. 1:7). The description of how these living creatures / beasts will be judged by the Lord Jesus includes language also used in Ezekiel’s cherubim visions- One seated upon a throne, wheels of burning fire (Dan. 7:9).

Ezekiel’s vision was surely well known to Daniel. The connection is surely that throughout the course of human history, especially the course of Gentile domination of the land of Israel, the glory of God shone through it all, it was all going according to His purpose; and the various beasts were in fact manipulated by the living creatures of the Angel cherubim. Daniel 7 says this in different terms by opening with the statement that the four spirits / Angels of Heaven were responsible for the uprising of the four beasts (Dan. 7:2,3). Events were not just taking their course, with everything spinning out of control; but rather, God through the Angels was powerfully in control. And His glory shone through the apparent cruelty, shame and randomness of the events that appeared to be happening to His land and people.

Who is the Beast?

If we are looking for a power or ideology within the land promised to Abraham which focuses upon the destruction of Israel, then we do not have far to look. Islam explicitly encourages Moslems to attack Israel and force Jews to either convert to Islam or be killed: Consider these passages from the Hadith: "You will fight against the Jews and you will kill them until even a stone would say: Come here, Muslim, there is a Jew (hiding himself behind me); kill him" (Book 41.6981). Book 19.4366 likewise: "I will expel the Jews and Christians from Arabia and will not leave any but Muslim". The 'Arabia' here is often interpreted as the Arabian Peninsula, but that was probably not in Mohammed's perceptual geography. By 'Arabia' he meant 'the lands where the Arabs live', and that area includes Israel, inhabited as it is by several million Palestinian Arabs.

The Eclipse of the West

However we interpret the fourth beast and its horns, the point has to be accepted that it is radically different to any entity or empire which has ever dominated the earth / land of Israel before. It was "terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong... it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it" (Dan. 7:7). It is this same beast which led John in Revelation to be staggered and amazed. For such an entity to dominate Israel in the last days, the current geopolitical situation must change. The West will be powerless to stop it. The historical support of Israel by the West, and their continual involvement on the ground in the Middle East to avert catastrophe and protect their interests there... will end. This could be because of their financial collapse, or an oil / energy stranglehold over them, or the uprising of domestic forces allied with Islam which leave them powerless to get involved; or maybe they genuinely turn against Israel.

Or perhaps the beast entity is in possession of military technology, just as Goliath was, which leads to the sense that nobody can make war with this beast: "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). And if 'all' that is required for peace is to let these guys have their way with Israel... well, that will be a price which will seem cheap compared to the unleashing of nuclear, germ, chemical or some other kind of technology against the West. "Who is like unto the beast?" suggests that it is felt that nobody is comparable with the beast in order to make war with it; there is a superiority of military ability which is perceived which results in recognizing that this entity cannot be challenged. The language is very much of David and Goliath. The current dependency of Israel upon military technology to maintain the upper edge over their enemies must therefore come to an end. All those scenarios are well on the way to development. Nuclear technology is already in the hands of Iran, and can spread easily to irresponsible hands. It would also be typical of Russian foreign policy to spite the West by arming the West's enemies with such technology. Without the West as the power broker in the Middle East, such an entity will surely arise. The release of the restrained horsemen on the banks of the Euphrates may refer to this restraining influence being removed (Rev. 9,16). The growth of the IS shows the potential for it, if nothing else. So the very prediction of such an entity arising in the land promised to Abraham has some radical implications for the West.

Judah's invasion by the Babylonians is clearly a type of the latter day invasion by the Islamic entity or state. The Biblical record emphasizes Judah's sense of betrayal, in that her lovers and friends [i.e. other nations] had not come to her aid as they had promised and as she had hoped (Lamentations is full of such language). This has its counterpart today, in that Israel depends upon the West to be the power broker deflecting

any major strike against them by the Islamic powers around them. But that factor will be removed, the promises and undertakings will not come true- because the Biblical picture is of a huge state in power over Israel without opposition.

The Horns on the Beast

The ten horns represent ten kings- the reference may be to individual leaders rather than to nations (Dan. 7:24). They arise out of the head of the beast, maybe implying they share the same overall ideology or thinking. That ideology would be that of hatred of Israel and a common desire to destroy her- which rather suggests Islam. That is the only appropriate ideology within the earth / land promised to Abraham which could be the candidate for the fulfilment of this prophetic requirement.

The overall picture presented by the descriptions of the horns is of conflict with each other, whilst at the same time dominating the earth / land of Israel. The little horn 'subdues' [to abase / humiliate / degrade] three of the horns, and according to Rev. 17:16, the ten horns hate the whore, the individual riding the beast entity, and bitterly destroy and burn her. And the fortunes of the entire entity ebb and flow- one of the wounds has a deadly wound but revives, the beast itself has a deadly wound from a sword but revives (Rev. 13:3,12,14), the beast was, is not and yet is (Rev. 17:8), and we are beginning to see this ebb and flow of the fortunes of the entity developing in the land / earth. This is precisely the picture that has more recently unfolded in the land promised to Abraham- a series of increasingly powerful and aggressive leaders and powers, morphing together *from the perspective of Israel and God's people* into a system of abuse such as has never been seen and never will be. And yet from another viewpoint, they are bitterly divided against themselves.

The tendency is to want to clearly identify each of the ten toes / ten horns of the fourth beasts, the wings of the lion, the three ribs in the mouth of the second beast, the four wings and four heads of the third beast, the three horns who are plucked up by the little horn of the fourth beast, and then in Revelation we have seven heads found on the beast, as well as the ten horns, who in Revelation “hate the whore” and burn her; and the whore who rides the beast sits on seven hills or kings. Each of these attributes [toes, horns, wings, heads] refer to kings / kingdoms. Looking at the scenarios through half closed eyes, as it were, not sweating the details, we have the impression of a latter day entity dominating the earth / land promised to Abraham, which is comprised of a bewildering array of smaller powers and charismatic leaders who are often pitted against each other. This is exactly the position we see developing in that geographical area. We don’t need to interpret the fine details ahead of time- that is not how prophecy functions. When it all happens, then it will be clear. What we are seeing is the general picture developing- an array of aggressive powers, some strong and some weak, broadly grouped into four groups, matching the four beasts who will exist in the last days. They are all united around a desire to dominate Israel. It’s not hard to imagine how they will destroy each other, which is God’s preferred method of judging His people’s enemies.

The Little Horn

The changing of times and laws by the antichrist figure of Dan. 7:25 sounds like the radical Islamist desire to impose the Islamic calendar and *sharia* law in the land promised to Abraham, which they see as their caliphate; and for sure, if Israel becomes part of an Islamic state, then the keeping of the Jewish calendar will be outlawed. The implementation of *sharia* law and changing legal structures to reflect it, is a major theme in their program. It’s clear that the three and a half year

domination of Jerusalem and changing of the Jewish law and calendar had an initial fulfilment in the abuses of Antiochus Epiphanes, who desecrated the temple. There was a three and a half year period from the edict of Antiochus in June 168 BC to the rededication of the temple in December 165 BC. The little horn of Daniel 8 comes out of the Greek kingdom, but the horn of Daniel 7 out of the fourth kingdom. I suggest that this is because the prophecy could have been fulfilled totally at the time of Antiochus- Messiah could have come and destroyed him. But the various required preconditions weren't met, and so there was another possibility of it coming true out of the Roman kingdom [another possibility is that the four beasts and metals refer to Babylon-Media-Persia-Greece rather than Babylon-Medo Persia-Greece-Rome]. Revelation uses the same imagery to describe the antiChrist of the last days, who will incorporate some elements of the previous historical fulfilments of the little horn in men like Antiochus Epiphanes.

7.1 Daniel 8

Daniel 8 gives more detailed information about the kingdom of Greece. Their great leader, Alexander the great, was “the great horn” on the goat (Dan. 8:21); this was broken, and four kingdoms arose out of that (Dan. 8:22). But out of them arose “a king of fierce countenance” who was to be “broken without hand” (Dan. 8:25). This is the very language of the entire image being broken by the stone cut out without hands, which speaks of the return of Christ to earth (Dan. 2:44). But at first blush, this seems out of chronological sequence- that a fierce king arising out of the breakup of the Greek empire [surely referring to Antiochus in its historical sense of fulfilment] should be broken by the second coming of Christ- many centuries later. But the problem is solved once we understand that the image stands erect and complete in the

last days, in the sense that elements of all the previous empires and leaders would be incorporated in the final entity which shall be destroyed “without hand” by the return of the Lord Jesus.

Daniel 7 has spoken of the fourth beast having a little horn which is destroyed by the coming of Christ and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. But Daniel 8 speaks of the *third* beast, the third kingdom of the image of Daniel 2, as having a “little horn” which is destroyed by the Kingdom of God. The conclusion would seem to be that at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, to whom the little horn of Daniel 8 clearly refers, there could have been the coming of Christ and establishment of the Kingdom. But this didn’t happen, and so Antiochus Epiphanes became a prototype of the latter day little horn, which will emerge from the *fourth* beast; and there is a large gap or delay in fulfilment between his time and that of Christ’s coming.

Chapter 8: The Beasts of Revelation

The beasts of Revelation are built upon the beasts of Daniel. The various beasts are perhaps pictures of various aspects of the final beast. The beast of Rev. 13:2 was "like a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion". Here we see the elements of the various beasts of Dan. 7 and therefore the metals of the image of Dan. 2 all incorporated into this latter day beast. It is the equivalent of the image standing complete in the last days. It has "seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 13:1)- which is the total number of heads and horns of the four beasts of Dan. 7. In harmony with this, Hos. 13:7 describes Israel's latter day invader as a lion, bear, leopard and wild beast. All elements of the beasts are brought together in the final latter day invasion. The [singular] beast of Rev. 13:1 arose out of the sea, but the beasts of Daniel 7 all arise out of the sea; it's as if all those beasts are epitomized in the one beast, just as the image of Daniel 2 stands complete at the time of Christ's return, incorporating all the metals / empires of history.

The metals of the image of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7 all have dominion over "the earth", and I have explained that the reference is to the earth / land of Israel. This, I suggest, continues to be the focus in the visions of Revelation. When we read of various judgments being poured out upon the "earth", we are reading about the situation in the land promised to Abraham. The references to 'thirds' of the earth / land being judged is clearly alluding to the Old Testament prophetic descriptions of 'thirds' of Israel or the population of Jerusalem being judged, especially in Ezekiel and Zechariah. Rev. 14:15 speaks of judgment coming when "the harvest of the earth / land was fully ripe"; the allusion is clearly to

the judging of the inhabitants of the land of Israel once “the iniquity of the Amorites [was] full” (Gen. 15:16). The nations at the four corners of the earth (Rev. 7:1; 20:8) is more comfortably understood as a defined territory on the planet, rather than as referring to the entire globe. The horns on the beast are “the kings of the earth” (Rev. 19:19), but these kings and the beast arise out of the earth; and in line with Daniel 7, this is the land promised to Abraham. Indeed Rev. 14:6 appears to draw a distinction between “them that dwell on the earth” and the more general inhabitants of the world: “every nation, kindred, tongue and people”. Rev. 1:7 opens the prophecy by making the connection between Israel and the “earth”: “Those who pierced [crucified] Him and all the tribes of the earth [land] shall wail because of Him”. This is quoting from Zechariah’s prophecy of how all the tribes *of Israel* will weep in repentance because of their crucifixion of their Messiah.

The Composite Beast

The four beasts of Daniel 7 are replaced in Revelation by one beast, although it is presented from different aspects. This, I suggest, is because the beast of Revelation specifically is the latter day beast, which incorporates all the previous beasts.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the first self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State, said that Muslims should unite to capture Rome in order to "own the world". The significance of this is that the ten horn entity, the Islamic State, is seeking to incorporate an element of the previous metals / beast systems, i.e. Rome. This is what we would expect if the image is to stand erect in the last days. Source: McElory, Damien. ["Rome will be conquered next, says leader of Islamic State"](#). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved 3 July 2014.

Revelation 13:2 is the key: "And the beast which I saw was like unto a Leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a Bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a Lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority". The beasts of Daniel represented

empires, but this beastly empire in Revelation is a composite Leopard-Bear-Lion. It isn't just one of Daniel's three empires. It's all three empires rolled into one. In other words, this new empire is composed of the descendants of those earlier empires, in the same geographic location. Looking back at the history of the Middle East, we can now identify this new empire as the various powers that have controlled the Holy Land whilst the Jews were established within it. And Islamists themselves identify themselves with the beast metaphor; Surah 27:82 is amazingly relevant: "And when the time for the fulfilment of our word against them will come, we shall bring forth for them a beast from the earth who will speak to them because people did not believe in our Sign".

The Decline of the West

One feature of the presentation of the beasts is that both John and "the world" wonder at it and at the whore riding it (Rev. 13:3; 17:6,7). This matches with the stress in Daniel 7 that the fourth beast is strikingly different from all the other beasts. The world will be in shock and awe at the entity which will suddenly develop- and we see the beginnings of that with the awe and fear inspired by the IS. This speaks not only of the fear inspired by the entity in its enemies on the ground, but implies a watching world onlooking in awe and fear, unable to do anything against it: "Who is like unto the beast? And who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). This in turn is based upon the prototype of Goliath the Philistine / Palestinian, who likewise had a mouth speaking great things against Israel and Israel's God. That similarity is continued by the description of the small, finally repentant remnant of Jews who overthrow the beast as being like David (Zech. 12:8). This is not to say that there will not initially be opposition to the beast- the horn recovers amazingly from a "deadly wound" which could likely refer to some form of Western operation against this entity (Rev. 13:3). Likewise the beast was, is not, and yet will be [Rev. 17:8- i.e. it will be revived after apparent destruction]. But the final picture is of the beast having free reign in the earth / land promised

to Abraham. We must look, therefore, to Zion being forsaken of all her lovers, America particularly pulling out of supporting Israel. We already can see the beginnings of such a situation developing. The West will either collapse, perhaps financially, and become impotent; or will come to a policy position which refuses to support Israel nor get involved in on the ground operations within the land promised to Abraham. Their impotence is however described in terms of their 'worshipping' the beast and *therefore* fearing to make war with it (Rev. 13:4). The Greek for 'worship' can mean to cower or fawn before a person; the West may be forced to this position by Islamic elements within their own nations, by an oil and energy embargo, or something similar. Another option is that the 'world' spoken of in Rev. 13 is specifically the world around Israel; but in our days of a global village, that would still require that the West is left impotent to intervene. It has been their background support of Israel which has kept the current situation in balance so far. But Rev. 9:14 speaks of the hordes of enemies being bound at the Euphrates River, and then being released by Angelic action. This restraint which is released could well refer to an Angelically-orchestrated removal of the West's restraining power. With no such power broker in the region, the forces of Islamic jihad will without doubt burst forth over the Euphrates, the boundary of the land promised to Abraham, and surge towards Israel. Rev. 13:10 speaks of the final desolation of Israel by the beast in terms of 'leading into captivity', associated with the beast having power over "all kindreds, tongues and nations" in the earth / land promised to Abraham. The remaining Jews will be taken into captivity in those areas; and the attitude of the IS, ever seeking as they are to incarnate Israel's historical enemies, is such that this scenario is now quite imaginable.

It's worth mentioning that the Koran teaches that the final punishment of the Jews will involve faithful Moslems becoming as a beast of the earth to Israel: "And when the word is fulfilled concerning them, we shall bring forth a beast of the earth to speak unto them" (Sura 27.82). Perhaps Mohammad was again getting his

Bible references garbled (note how the Koran assumes Haman and Pharaoh lived at the same time, Sura 28:6); perhaps he actually had in mind “the beast arising from the earth” of Rev. 13:11 which has a mouth speaking great things against Israel. Radical Islamists seek to fulfil the Koran as literally as possible; but because it contains so many fragments of Bible prophecies, they are effectively striving to fulfil latter day Bible prophecy!

The Beasts of Revelation and the Beasts of Daniel 7

It's surely significant that Daniel 7 is comprised of seven visions- each introduced by the statement that Daniel 'beheld'. This matches with the series of seven visions we find in Revelation. I would say that Revelation is therefore a development and expansion of the ideas presented in Daniel; the basic picture presented in Daniel will come true, but the outworking of it is developed somewhat in Revelation.

The four beasts of Daniel 7 clearly are to be connected with the four separate beasts which we encounter in the book of Revelation:

1. The dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns, casting down a third of the stars of Heaven; the dragon occurs in Rev. 12 and then in Rev. 20, where the dragon is called 'Satan' (Rev. 20:2,7). He persecutes "the remnant" of the seed of the woman (Rev. 12:17), just as the fourth beast of Dan. 7:7,19 downtreads “the remnant”.
2. The sea beast with seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13). One of the heads receives a deadly wound, but this is described as the beast receiving a deadly wound, thus identifying the beast with one of its particular heads (Rev. 13:3,12).

3. The earth beast with two horns who speaks like the dragon (Rev. 13:11), exercising all the power of the first beast. He demands worship for the wounded and healed sea beast, and to "the image of the beast".

4. The scarlet beast ridden by the whore with seven heads and ten horns, which was, is not, and yet is (Rev. 17:8). This beast arises out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 17:8)- it is therefore the same beast from the bottomless pit as in Rev. 11:7. John "wondered with great admiration" at the scarlet beast (Rev. 17:6), just as the world had wondered after the sea beast (Rev. 13:3). "The seven heads are seven mountains... they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast" (Rev. 17:9-13). "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages" (Rev. 17:15). "The woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth" (Rev.17:18), and the city is defined in Rev. 18 as Babylon.

Note how the four 'evil' beasts of Revelation are a conscious contrast with "the four living creatures" of God's heavenly throne room (Rev. 19:4 cp. Ez. 1:5,15). Perhaps the contrast is also to demonstrate how as in Daniel, the nations on earth have their representative, controlling Angels in the court of Heaven.

Each of the beasts has some similarities with the other beasts. Three of them 'arise'; they all have horns; three of them have the same number of horns and heads; they all persecute God's people, etc. They all exist at the same time- they do not arise in chronological sequence. They are a different take on the four beasts of Daniel 7, but they have only outline similarities. The sequence of beasts / empires in Daniel 7 was a potential prophetic program, which never came to complete fulfilment. But the essence of the prophecy is repeated in Revelation, and will come true in the last days. It could be that we should not unduly sweat to understand the precise details of the beasts in Daniel 7, because this was part of a prophetic program which did not come about- see the Appendix on Conditional prophecy in Daniel. But the essence of the prophecy will come true in the last days, and we find it fleshed out in Revelation.

We read of "the beast" without any specification as to which beast is in view (Rev. 19:19,20; 20:4,10). This is surely because the various beasts are only manifestations of the one beast, just as the four beasts of Daniel 7 are comprehended in the fourth beast. The beasts are in a sense separate- thus the beast is put into the lake of fire before the dragon is (Rev. 20:10). But in another sense, these entities are all expressing the same reality and principles. Different aspects of the dominating entity may be destroyed at different times in different ways- hence the usage of the imagery of more than one beast.

The Riders of the Beasts

"The beast" has "the false prophet" with him as a kind of associated act (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), the scarlet beast has a whore riding it, the sea beast has a horn which becomes its representative, the earth beast has an image of the beast. These associated acts indicate that each of these entities has an individual controlling them- and this is the antichrist figure. The dragon is described has

having “his angels” with him during the fight against Michael and His Angels- which suggests he is to be seen as representative of a person. We note that the dragon was used in the Old Testament not as a symbol of Egypt, but specifically as a symbol of the individual Pharaoh of Egypt (Ez. 29:3); and likewise the dragon is used as the symbol of Nebuchadnezzar personally (Jer. 51:34).

The two beasts of Rev. 13 appear to effectively operate as one, just as the beast is identified with its horn which is mortally wounded and yet revives (the same language is used of the beast- Rev. 13:3 cp. 12,14). It seems that the beast has publicity agents- another beast which appears to be a lamb but speaks as the dragon. Perhaps the idea is that a religious entity like the false Christian / Catholic / Orthodox Church seeks to get people to worship the Islamic beast under colour of some compromise. There will be apparent miracles which encourage people to believe these entities have credibility. Rev. 13:14,15 speaks of an image being made to the beast and the image speaking. It was common in the first century to claim that statues could speak; the Simon Magus of Acts 8:9 is recorded in extra-Biblical history as being able to do this (see G.E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* p. 184). God will ‘allow’ this to happen, in line with His way of deceiving the deceivers and confirming them in the way they wish to go. The bringing to life of an image recalls the way that God created Adam and then gave him the breath of life. The claim will be that resurrection and new life are in the power of the new entity and its leader; perhaps there will be a claim to be the resurrected Mahdi figure of Islam or something similar. And God will “allow” this, or give real power to make it appear that these miracles have really happened.

The One Beast

Daniel 7 2 Thess. 2 Rev. 13 Rev. 17 Rev. 19

1.	<i>Called:</i> The beast		The beast	The beast	The beast
	<i>Also called:</i> The little horn*	The man of sin		The eighth head	
2.			Comes out of the sea	Comes out of the deep (i.e. the sea)	
3.	Associated with 10 horns		10 horns	10 horns	10 horns
4.	Emerges at end of Gentile times	End of Gentile times	End of Gentile times	End of Gentile times	End of Gentile times
5.			Amazing recovery	Amazing emergence	
6.	A mouth speaking great things against the Most High	God- defying	Opens mouth in blasphemy against God	Full of names of blasphemy	
7.		Deceitful signs and lying wonders	Deceitful signs and lying wonders t		Deceives them that had received the mark of the beast t
8.			Given publicity by the beast out the earth		Given publicity by the false prophet(i.e. the beast of the earth)

9.	All deceived who do not believe the truth	All that dwell upon the earth worship the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life	They that dwell on the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, wonder at the revival of the beast
10	Persecutes and overcomes saints	Intolerant of all religions	Persecutes and overcomes the saints Destroys the whole
11	Duration of 3V2(?) years		Duration of 3 <i>Vi</i> years
12		The son of perdition	Goes to perdition
13	Destroyed by Christ	Destroyed by Christ	Destroyed by Christ Destroyed by Christ

* When the little horn holds sway, he is the beast — Daniel 7:11.



Chapter 9: The Defeat of Israel and Fall of Jerusalem

Let's not get caught up with the idea that Israel shall survive and defeat the invaders in her own strength. The beast must dominate Israel. Jerusalem will be taken. Dan. 7:7,21 speaks of how the beast made war with the saints and prevailed against them-Israel- *until* the Ancient of days came; in Dan. 7:23 he devours the whole land [as a beast] and shall tread it down. The beast of Revelation is so powerful in the earth / land that "the world" wondered at it and at the whore riding it (Rev. 13:3; 17:6,7), feeling unable to make war with it. This of itself requires the demise and degrading of America, Europe and the West generally. Dan. 11:41,45 are likewise clear about the latter day King of the North: "He shall also come into the glorious land... He shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him". Dan. 9:26,27 require the city of Jerusalem to be taken, and the abomination of desolation placed there; and this is quoted by the Lord Jesus as requiring fulfilment in the last days just prior to His return (Mt. 24:14,15,29-31). Any previous fulfilments were incipient at best; they did not immediately herald the Lord's visible return as required by the Oliver prophecy. Lk. 21:24 adds: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". The allusion is to Dan. 8:13: "The transgression of desolation gave both the sanctuary and the host (i.e. the people of Israel) to be *trodden underfoot*". This part of Luke 21 is clearly alluding to Zechariah 14, a prophecy about the final desolation of Jerusalem:

Luke 21

Zechariah 14

20. Jerusalem surrounded by 2. All nations against
armies Jerusalem to battle
20. The desolation of 2. The city shall be taken
Jerusalem is near
21. Let them which are in 5. You shall flee to the ...
Judea flee to the mountains
mountains
22. Great distress in the land 2. Houses ransacked, women
raped.
24. Led away captive into all 2. Half the city shall go into
nations captivity
24. Jerusalem trodden down 12:3 LXX Jerusalem a stone
by the Gentiles. trodden down by the
Gentiles.

The “treading down” of Jerusalem didn’t end in 1967; for if that is the reference of the prophecy, then Christ should be back by now. The presence of the Dome of the Rock and Arab possession of East Jerusalem hardly sounds as if 1967 was much of a fulfilment anyway. The times of the Gentiles have clearly continued since 1967. The more logical interpretation is surely that Jerusalem must be trodden down by Gentiles until the “times” of that domination end- and that is probably a reference to the 42 months / 1260 days / three and a half year down-treading which we meet in both Daniel and Revelation.

Zechariah 14

Zech. 14:1-4 are clear: “Behold, the day of Yahweh comes, when your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city will be taken, the houses pillaged, and the women raped. Half of the city will go out into captivity, and the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then Yahweh will go out and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. His feet will stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in two, from east to west, making a very great valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, and half of it toward the south”.

Zechariah was prophesying in the context of Judah’s return rather unenthusiastic return from captivity in Babylon; and most of them remained behind in Babylon. The memory was still relatively fresh of how a generation ago, Babylon had captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and taken the people into captivity. And now they had returned after the 70 years captivity- and Zechariah was telling them that yet again, Jerusalem was to be “taken” and the population taken into captivity. The same Hebrew word translated “taken” is many times used of how Babylon took Jerusalem (Jer. 32:3 “I will give this city into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall *take* it”; Jer. 32:24,28; 34:22; 37:8; 38:3,28). Clearly the implication is that a second, revived Babylon would arise and take Jerusalem; and there would be yet another captivity. We are seeing Babylon – Assyria reforming, and focusing upon taking the city of Jerusalem. The prophecy of Zechariah 14 has never been fulfilled- but it will be. The description of the Lord’s feet standing on the Mount of Olives naturally looks ahead to the words of the Angels at the ascension of the Lord Jesus from that same Mount, promising that He would return in the same way.

Significantly, half of Jerusalem is comprised of East Jerusalem, which is Arab. So when we read of how “Half of the

city will go out into captivity”, this may well refer to the Jewish half of the city.

The gathering of all nations to battle predicted here is the language of Rev. 9 and 16 regarding the gathering of the nations to Armageddon after the release of the hordes bound by the Euphrates- and we have already seen that happening. The point is, the words of Zechariah 14 are applied to the events of the last days. Jerusalem therefore must fall. The final outworking of all this, of course, depends upon whether, or to what degree, Israel repent in response to our appeals:

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the Earth." "Behold, I come quickly!" (Suddenly) (Revelation 3:10-11)

"Gather yourselves together, Yes, gather together O undesirable nation. Before the decree is issued, Before the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, Before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the Lord, all you meek of the Earth... Seek righteousness, Seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zephaniah 2:1-7)

Other Prophetic Requirements

Other Bible prophecies speak of a great re-gathering of a repentant Israel from dispersion around the return of Christ. It's been tempting to apply this to Jewish emigration to Israel post 1948, but many of the prophecies in their context require that this return is part of a spiritual restoration. Dt. 28:68 speaks of Israel being punished by being taken into Egypt in ships- and it's hard to find a very significant fulfilment of that prophecy to date. Such scattering of the Jews throughout the *eretz*, the territory of the land promised to Abraham, would fulfil the patterns set by Babylon, Assyria,

Persia and Rome in their dominations of Israel. Such scattering is possible and likely, seeing that it is a requirement of the Hadith about jihad against Israel: "Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war... When you meet your enemies... invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them. Then invite them to migrate from their lands to the land of Muhairs... If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the Jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them" (The Hadith, Book 19.4294, about Jihad). This paying of tax is likely to involve accepting the seal / mark of the beast, without which there can be no trading. "The land of Muhairs" refers to the lands of origin of the Moslem fighters; *muhair* means 'origin' in Arabic. This means that a mass deportation of Jews to other parts of the land promised to Abraham, the lands of origin of their enemies, is very much what the jihadists envisage. These concepts are particularly applied to the Jews, in Hadith 19.4363: "(Let us) go to the Jews... The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) stood up and called out to them (saying): O ye assembly of Jews, accept Islam (and) you will be safe... He said to them (the same words) the third time (and on getting the same reply) he added: You should know that the earth belongs to Allah and His Apostle, and I wish that I should expel you from this land... and they may have to go away leaving everything behind".

Chapter 10: The Antichrist

The various prophecies of the last days all feature a distinct personal leader of the invaders of Israel. The Greek idea of *anti* carries the idea of an equivalent or imitation, rather than [as in Latin] someone ‘against’. Daniel speaks of a little horn who speaks great things, the whole image of Daniel 2 is in the form of an individual man; Daniel 11 speaks of a “king of the north”; Ezekiel 38 has the invasion led by a rosh, a leader and prince; Daniel 8 speaks of a king of fierce countenance; Revelation has a whore riding the beast, a false prophet, and a specific ‘satan’ individual. The "king of the North" throughout Daniel 11 refers to the King of Syria- so the latter day King of the North who attacks Israel and is destroyed at Christ's return, as detailed at the end of Daniel 11 and the start of Daniel 12, must refer to an individual based upon a King of Syria. Such an individual could easily be the leader of ISIS, who are taking power in Syria. We can therefore look to the, or an, Islamic State taking power in Syria and the IS leader becoming as it were the king of Syria.

The Emir of the Islamic State

The IS clearly see huge significance in their leader. And they connect him to their passion for holy war: “There is no jihad without an Emir, a leader and Imam”. So quoted ISIS spokesman Uthman bin abd al-Rahman al-Tamimi in “Informing the People About the Birth of the Islamic State of Iraq” on January 7, 2007. The significance is that Islam has not had a caliph, a leader of an Islamic state since 1924 when the Ottoman caliphate was dissolved by Ataturk. It has not a caliph since that time as well. And perhaps we could say that the first antichrist was also from Assyria- Nimrod "the mighty hunter against the Lord" (Gen. 10:9, Hebrew). The Hebrew for 'mighty one' is related to 'Gibbor', the title of Christ

used in Is. 9:6. Nimrod appears to be a prototype anti-God and anti-Christ, and for this he was well known even then. We note that Mic. 5:6 speaks of the latter day invader as an Assyrian individual: “And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the *land of Nimrod* in the entrances thereof: thus shall he [Christ] deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders”. The leader of historical Assyria was Sennacherib- *Sîn-ahhī-erība* – The man of sin. The behaviour of the blasphemous little horn and 'Prince' of Daniel 7 and 8 is based upon the historical blasphemies of the various Kings recorded in the narrative sections of the book of Daniel. This latter day entity is to have the characteristics of previous kings of Babylon and Persia. Just as the final form of the beast is the embodiment of previous beasts who have persecuted Israel.

Article eight of the Hamas Covenant states something which the IS also state in their agenda and self-perception: “Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model”. The entire shape of the intended conflict with Israel is based around a man- the prophet Mohammed. This fits with how the final entity which dominates Israel before Christ comes is presented in terms of a man, the statue of Daniel chapter 2. Rev. 16:13; 19:20 and 20:10 speak of an individual known as “the false prophet” who will be upheld by the beast of the last days. Clearly enough, Mohammed is the false prophet of the last days, upon whom the entire conflict with Israel and the Jews is to be ‘modelled’. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple (2 Thess. 2:4). So an Islamic Caliph matches the Biblical mandate for Antichrist. Antichrist is called “The Prince who is to come” in Daniel 9 and the Caliph has the title “The Prince of the Faithful”.

Hints at the Antichrist

So often, there are hints at this figure. The first seal features a man on a white horse, appearing like Jesus, but going forth to

conquer the land for Israel's enemies. The fearful figure of Rev. 13:5,6 is clearly based around an Old Testament 'man of sin', Goliath- a real, historical person. Rev. 11:4,13 draw a contrast between a God of the earth / land of Israel, and the God of Heaven. The "god of the earth" has two olive trees and two candlesticks standing before him, with evident allusion back to Zech. 4:14; 6:5, where the Lord / King of the earth / land appears to refer to the King of Babylon.

Nah. 1:15 RV describes the leader of the Assyrian invasion as "the wicked one", the "wicked counsellor" (1:11), "*he* that dasheth [Israel] in pieces" (Nah. 2:1).

The Man in the Image

The face of the image is emphasized in Dan. 2:31. The AV reads "His brightness was excellent", but the Chaldee word translated "brightness" is the same word translated "face" in describing how the face of the ruler of Babylon was 'changed' as the sequence of empires had its fulfilment (Dan. 4:36; 5:6,9,10). The entity represented by the entire image is focused upon the face of the man heading it up. That face was notable and awesome, just as the fourth beast entity was "strong exceedingly" (Dan. 7:7,19 s.w. "excellent"). The entire image stood "before you", i.e. Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:31). The Hebrew idea of *q'bel* suggests that the image stood there opposite Nebuchadnezzar 'on his behalf', as a reflection of himself. The image is of course a person; the entity represented by it in its complete form is a reflection of a person, modelled after the king of Babylon. This all suggests that the entity which the image represents will be a personification of someone. That individual would be the caliph or prince which governs it, to whom the IS swears loyalty. And the IS insists that loyalty be sworn to their caliph, who in turn is seen as the incarnation of the [false] prophet Mohammed. It is this individual who is the antiChrist of the last days. The appearance of the image of the man was "terrible" (Dan. 2:31), it struck fear into the heart of

the viewers. And this is the effect of the IS on those beholding them. But we can expect more emphasis to be given to their leader, with greater prominence accorded to loyalty to him and an aura of fearfulness emanating from him. The same word translated "terrible" is used of how all nations "trembled and feared" before Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 5:19), and of how uniquely and unsurpassedly "terrible" was the fourth beast (Dan. 7:7,19) whose leader is an embodiment of it. The Chaldee word *resh* used for the "head" of the image is also translated 'the sum'. The head, the man whose face was on the image, was the sum of the image, he was the embodiment of it in a person.

The head was of "fine gold", and the equivalent Hebrew words are found in Gen. 2:12, where we read that "the gold of that land was good ['fine']". Which land? "Havilah", according to Gen. 2:11. Perhaps the leader of the entity will therefore be from Havilah. But there are various options in seeking to identify this area. Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary on Genesis opt for a location in the Caucasus mountains- and many of the IS fighters are from there, especially from Chechnaya. Other arguments would place it in Yemen or Saudi Arabia, which is where much of the financial and logistical support for the IS is currently coming from, seeing they too are Sunni Moslems. Another line of enquiry is suggested by the way that "fine gold" is used to describe what was used in Yahweh's temple (2 Chron. 3:5,8; Lam. 4:1). And where did Solomon get that from? Solomon constructed the finer details of the temple from materials prepared by his father David (1 Chron. 22:14). And David received that fine gold as a present from Tou, king of Hamath (1 Chron. 18:9,10). Hamath is in Syria. Perhaps Syria is another possible source of origin for the head of the IS image. The true Christ will be "more precious than fine gold" (Is. 13:12); He will thus stand in opposition at the last day to the head of "fine gold" which heads up the IS. The manifestation of God in Christ is presented in visual form in Daniel 10:6 "His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming

torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude". This vision has outline similarities with the image of a man explained in Daniel 2. The two 'men' will face off against each other in the last days; and Jesus wins. That, in the end, is the simple message of all prophecy, especially the book of Revelation.

The "head" of the image uses the same equivalent Hebrew word *rosh* as we find in the Ezekiel 38 description of ten nations being lead against Israel by a *rosh*, a leader, a prince, what the Arabs would call a caliph. Again and again, we find a specific figure being identified as the leader of the latter day invaders.

The interpretation that Nebuchadnezzar was a "king of kings" (Dan. 2:37) was surely understood by him to mean that he was in some sense king over the other kings which featured in the image. Perhaps God graciously inserted this element in order to preserve Daniel's life before the king. But it will come true in the final erection of the image upon earth, in that the component nations of the image will be headed up by an individual who is effectively a Nebuchadnezzar-like figure for them all, Babylon personified in a single man.

The Beasts Embodied

The entire vision of the beasts of Daniel 7 is summed up in Dan. 7:1: "the *rosh* of the words" (AV "sum of the matter"). And the *rosh* surely refers to the individual of Ezekiel 38:2 who will lead the latter day armies against Israel. The whole system of beasts is summed up in an individual *rosh* or leader, just as the metals of the image in Daniel 2 are in the form of a man with the face of Nebuchadnezzar. The little horn of Daniel 7 is actually called "the beast": "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).

The first beast, representing Babylon, had "the heart of a man" (Dan. 7:4). It was the embodiment of an individual person- Nebuchadnezzar. The latter day Babylon likewise will be centred around a person- the antiChrist figure of the last days, who in turn will profess to be the incarnation or embodiment of the false prophet Mohammed. Nebuchadnezzar in his madness became as a beast- with a body like a beast, hair like an eagle, and nails like those of a beast (Dan. 4:33). This language is all used about the beasts in the later prophetic parts of Daniel's prophecy. They had features of eagles (Dan. 7:4), bodies of beasts (Dan. 7:11), and remarkable nails or claws (Dan. 7:19). Nebuchadnezzar became like such a beast because the latter day beast would be the embodiment of him, just as the image of Daniel 2 had the face of Nebuchadnezzar and was in the form of a man. The beast is epitomized by a man- "the number of the beast...is the number of a man" (Rev. 13:18).

A Fake Kingdom of God

The dream of Daniel 2 ascribes to Nebuchadnezzar "the Kingdom, power, strength and glory" (Dan. 2:37), but this is exactly the language of *God's* kingdom. The emphasis of passages like 1 Chron. 29:11 is that *Yours* is the Kingdom, power, strength and glory (as in Ps. 145:11; Mt. 6:13). Nebuchadnezzar is thus presented as an anti-Christ and the Kingdoms of men as a fake imitation of *God's* Kingdom.

The animals and birds were even under Babylon's control according to Dan. 2:38. But it is the beasts and birds of the sky who later are prophesied as feasting upon Babylon (Rev. 19:17). This is the equivalent of the horns on the beast hating the whore of Babylon who rides it (Rev. 17:16); the destruction of the Babylon system will ultimately be more by Moslem infighting than direct bolts of destruction from God. Indeed, this was historically God's

preferred method of destroying Israel's invaders in Old Testament times.

Article 5 of the Hamas Covenant presents the envisaged Moslem state of Palestine in terms which the Bible uses about the Kingdom of God which is to be established in the same area: "...it extends to the depth of the earth and reaches out to the heaven. "Dost thou not see how Allah putteth forth a parable; representing a good word, as a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed in the earth, and whose branches reach unto heaven; which bringeth forth its fruit in all seasons, by the will of its Lord? Allah propoundeth parables unto men, that they may be instructed." (Abraham - verses 24-25)". The envisaged Moslem state is therefore a fake, imitation Kingdom of God- just as the Assyrian empire was described by Rabshakeh in the very language of contemporary prophecies of God's Kingdom on earth.

The King of Daniel 8

This person arises in *the time of the end* (Dan. 8:23)- and this phrase in Daniel always has some reference to the time of the Lord's return. He is to arise out of the Syrian Kingdom, i.e. part of the divided empire of Alexander the Great. The time when he will arise will be the time when "iniquity is come to the full"- which fits most comfortably with the very last days. Dan. 8:17, 19 make it clear: "The vision pertains to *the time of the end*... the final period of indignation... the appointed *time of the end*."

The manifestation of a Kingdom in its leader is to be found in the way the antiChrist is called "the king of fierce countenance" in Dan. 8:23. But the entire nation or entity which persecute Israel in the last days is a "nation of fierce countenance" (the same words are used- Dt. 28:50). Their leader is an embodiment of them. The fierce king of Dan. 8:25 "by peace shall destroy many". This

certainly sounds like the result of jihadist Islam, the [supposed] religion of peace. The Semitic consonants S-L-M are at the root of the words Islam and also Shalom, Salaam [Hebrew and Arabic for 'peace']. There were no vowels in ancient Hebrew and Arabic. The connection is in that peace ['salaam' in Arabic] is believed to come from 'islam', submission. Moslem apologists frequently justify their religion by claiming that Islam is a religion of peace [even if they believe in murdering anyone who disagrees]. As we survey the atrocities being performed in the name of Islam today in the territory of the IS... we are seeing this being fulfilled. By peace / salaam / islam, many are being destroyed. What however we are still waiting to see is more focus upon the leader of the IS. The Biblical prophecies focus upon 'kings' and 'horns' [kings] more than more abstract 'kingdoms'. This may partly be because God attaches much importance to the responsibilities of leaders, but also because there must arise prominent leaders, especially an antiChrist figure who is the "fierce king" orchestrating this destruction of many by his religion of 'peace'.

The Lord Jesus is called "Messiah *the Prince*" in Dan. 9:25 in order to contrast with how the anti-Christ, the fake Christ, is also called "the prince of the host" in Dan. 8:11. "It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host" (ESV). This prince "shall stand up against the Prince of princes", the Lord Jesus (Dan. 8:25). There will be a final showdown between these two princes, and their respective followers and Kingdoms. The armies of the earth / land will be gathered together against those of the Lord Jesus. And the Moslems will eagerly rush into this final conflict, believing that this is "the Day of Discrimination, the day when the two armies met" (Sura 8.41).

The little horn makes himself as if he is "the prince of the host" (Dan. 8:11 Heb.); he sets himself up as an alternative Christ, an antiChrist. God is presented in Daniel as being able to depose kings and change or decree the times and seasons; the decree of

Nebuchadnezzar to kill all the Babylonian wise men was “changed” by the revelation of His prophetic word through Daniel. The same words are used for how the little horn will change times and laws [s.w. ‘decrees’] (Dan. 7:25). In terms of 2 Thess. 2, he declares himself as God enthroned in the temple of God.

Daniel 9

Daniel 9 likewise speaks of a coming “prince”, an emir or caliph, in Arabic terms, who will lead Israel’s enemies in desecrating the temple area and capturing Jerusalem. This figure had incipient fulfilments in Antiochus Epiphanes and the AD70 Roman desecration of the temple mount. The final conflict with a true Messiah figure and the establishment of God’s Kingdom could have come at these points, but it was delayed, so that these became but shadows of the final fulfilment in the last days.

It is however significant that the Roman desecration of the temple is used by the Lord Jesus in the Olivet prophecy as a prototype of that which shall be done in the last days. The Roman empire began as the republic of the city of Rome; but there were simply not enough literal ‘Romans’ to dominate the large area of the Roman empire. The majority of Roman soldiers were not Romans, but mercenaries or nationals of other areas apart from Rome. What’s interesting is that the legions which destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD70 were largely comprised of Arabs, Syrians and other neighbouring nations who bitterly hated the Jews.

Tacitus explains: “Titus Caesar... found in Judaea three legions, the 5th, the 10th, and the 15th... To these he added the 12th from Syria, and some men belonging to the 18th and 3rd, whom he had withdrawn from Alexandria. This force was accompanied... by a *strong contingent of Arabs*, who hated the

Jews with the usual hatred of neighbours...” (Tacitus, *The History*, New Ed edition Book 5.1. Editor: Moses Hadas, Translators: Alfred Church, William Brodribb (New York: Modern Library, 2003)). This Arab / Syrian destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, albeit under the control of a larger ‘beast’ entity, is a detailed prototype of that which is yet to come. Josephus confirms the record of Tacitus by saying that the Roman troops were gathered in Syria, i.e. the army was gathered together from Syrian recruits: ““So Vespasian sent his son Titus [who], came by land into Syria, where he gathered together the Roman forces, with a considerable number of auxiliaries from the kings in that neighborhood” (Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus, The Wars of the Jews or The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book III, Chapter 1, Paragraph 3)”. Josephus also mentions that at least 6000 Arabs were sent by just one Arab king: ““Malchus also, the king of Arabia, sent a thousand horsemen, besides five thousand footmen, the greatest part of which were archers; so that the whole army, including the auxiliaries sent by the kings, as well horsemen and footmen, when all were united together, amounted to sixty thousand” (Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus, The Wars of the Jews or The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book III, Chapter 4, Paragraph 20)”.

This picture of a Syrian / Arab desecration of Jerusalem in AD70 is supported by other discoveries and reports. “Legions based in Cappadocia, Syria, and Egypt were made up of recruits from Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt”, Nigel Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (University of Michigan Press, 2000) p.15. Josephus claims that in the siege of Jerusalem, “the whole army, including the auxiliaries sent by the kings, as well horsemen and footmen, when all were united together, amounted to sixty thousand” (Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus, The Wars of the Jews or The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Book III, Chapter 4, Paragraph 20). A legion contained around 5,000 soldiers and he says there were four full

legions and two partial legions involved in the attack- around 25,000 legionaries. This means that the remaining 35,000 were auxiliaries, relatively local men. Josephus confirms this when by noting that the auxiliaries were “sent by the kings” from “the neighbourhood” of Syria, Asia Minor and Arabia. Pollard gives more reason to think of there being many Syrians involved: "Other evidence that Syrian legions of the Flavian period were characteristically 'Syrian' in some way comes from Tacitus' reference to Legion 3 Gallica saluting the rising sun 'according to the custom of Syria' [*ita in Syria mos est*]... in A.D. 69" (*op cit* p. 116). Josephus is quite explicit about this: "The greatest part of the Roman garrison was raised out of Syria; and being thus related to the Syrian part, they were ready to assist it" (*The Wars of The Jews, History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, by Flavius Josephus. Trans. William Whiston, Book II: Chapter, Para. 7).

What we do know from Daniel 11:31 is that the “vile person” is also called “the king of the north”, and this is a common title for the ruler of Assyria- present day Iran / Iraq / Kurdistan / Syria. And we’ve shown above that Old Testament passages about the ruler of Assyria are the basis for other ‘antichrist’ prophecies of the New Testament. The phrase “vile person” is interesting in itself. If the first usage of a word in Scripture is significant, then Gen. 25:34 is indeed helpful here- because it is used of Esau, father of many of the Arab tribes. And it recurs in describing Edom in Obadiah 2, Goliath the Philistine / Palestinian (1 Sam. 17:42), “Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian” (Neh. 2:19), and Haman the persecutor of the Jews (Esther 3:6). All these men were Arab prototypes of the “vile person”, the ruler of Assyria, who is to again persecute God’s people. Note that “the man of sin” of 2 Thess. 2:8 alludes to “the wicked one” of Is. 11:4 LXX, who is, again, “the Assyrian”! So it would appear very likely that the antichrist figure comes from ‘Assyria’. And what’s going on in Iraq and the territory of ‘Assyria’ right now is gripping the whole world’s attention. Note how the Assyrian is described in Is. 30:31-33 as

being thrown into a lake of fire- just as the future beast will be (Rev. 19:20).

A Jewish-Moslem Antichrist Covenant?

The “prince that shall come”, who finally stands in opposition to “Messiah the Prince”, will “confirm the covenant with many for one week”, during which he places the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27). The same language is used here as about the “little horn” of Daniel 7 and 8. This individual is characterized in Dan. 8:24,25 as being politically crafty: “He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand”. Note that *amad* translated “stand up against” is a word also found in Arabic, and is one of the names of the prophet Mohammad (Sura 61:6). The latter day caliph or “prince of the [Moslem] faithful” will (like all good Moslems) be the emulation of Mohammad. I have explained in commenting on Revelation chapters 6 and 7 that radical Islam has a special theological interest in forcing Jewish people to convert to Islam. And they will feel justified in brutally punishing those who resist- all as predicted in those chapters of Revelation. The idea of Antichrist making a covenant with the Jews is in fact required by the Koran in Sura 3.64: “Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah”. It would seem that a covenant is made whereby the Jews accept Islam in return for mercy; but then this covenant is broken and the Jews are butchered. Such agreements featured in Israel’s Old Testament history. Sura 4.154,155 and commentary upon it justifies the fiercest punishment of the Jews by Moslems because “We took from them a firm covenant. But because of their breaking of their covenant...”. We can imagine how things will develop: The downtrodden people of Israel will enter a covenant with the Moslems or Islamic Beast / Islamic State,

then they will be accused of breaking it, and this will justify the Moslems in embarking upon a policy of totally destroying them, believing they are being obedient to the Koran by doing so. Sura 5.14,15 likewise: "And because of their [O children of Israel] breaking their covenant, we have cursed them and made hard their hearts. They change words from their context [in distorting the Torah to contradict the Koran] and forget a part of that whereof they were admonished... Therefore we have stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection". This "enmity and hatred" is the kind of hatred against God's people in the land that is described in the prophecies of the latter day beast, venting "the old hatred" (Ez. 25:15) against Israel.

The Koran frequently complains that Israel broke their covenant with God and were punished, and the commentaries on the Koran passages about this urge that Moslems should in God's Name punish Jews for doing the same: Sura 7.12 "We found no [loyalty to any] covenant in most of them. Nay, most of them we found wrong-doers". Sura 7.134-136 is relevant: "And when the terror fell on them they cried: O Moses! Pray for us unto thy Lord, because He hath a covenant with thee. If thou removest the terror from us we verily will trust thee and will let the Children of Israel go with thee. But when we did remove from them the terror for a term which they must reach, behold! they broke their covenant. Therefore we took retribution from them; therefore we drowned them in the sea: because they denied our revelations and were heedless of them". Jihadists believe that they must punish Israel, and then make a covenant with them in order for the punishment and terror to be lifted; but Israel will break that covenant and therefore be totally destroyed. This is precisely the picture we get from Daniel 9, speaking of how the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel after abusing them first, and then attempt to totally destroy them for breaking that covenant. Sura 33.7,8 and commentaries thereon almost revel in the pain to be exacted upon Israel for breaking the covenant: "We took from them [O children

of Israel] a solemn covenant; that He may ask the loyal of their loyalty. And He hath prepared a painful doom for the unfaithful".

The Little Horn

The little horn seeks "to change times and laws"; but we go straight on to read that God's people are given into his power for "a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25). It could therefore be that the time period of time, times and half a time [three and a half years?] is in fact defined and chosen by the little horn, as part of him seeking to establish "times". This could explain why there is some variableness in this period- Daniel 12 mentions 1260,1290 and 1335 days. If Israel repent, or other preconditions are met, then the time of intended abuse is changed. It may be that the little horn power or ruler decrees a time of abuse for the remaining Jews. Or it may be that the new caliph seeks to change some tenets of Islam, as he already is doing by shifting the focus of Islam from Mecca (which is in Saudi Arabia, who are officially against the Islamic State currently)- to Jerusalem. Or it may be that they seek to change GMT time to Mecca time- something radical Moslems already live by, and seek to spread to the entire planet. Indeed, the biggest clock in the world has been built in Mecca in a bid to enforce Mecca time on all Moslems rather than GMT. The Mecca Clock Tower has been designed in purposeful contrast to Big Ben:



The little horn of Daniel 7 is the beast of Revelation 13:

Daniel 7

"... a mouth speaking great things" (verse 8) "And he shall speak great words against the most High ..." (verse 25)

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (verse 21)

Revelation 13

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (verses 5,6) "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (verse 7)

Notice that the little horn of Daniel 7 is actually called "the beast": "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).

The little horn is also to be connected with the “King of the north” of Daniel 11, which is based upon Antiochus and the leaders of the northern part of the Greek empire, from Syria. The fact ISIS and their leadership have emerged from Syria is maybe significant in this context:

Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Daniel 11
The little horn	The little horn	"The king"
At the end	At the end	At the end
of the times of the Gentiles	of the times of the Gentiles	of the times of the Gentiles
Very aggressive	Very aggressive	Very aggressive
"A look more stout than his fellows"	Magnifies himself	Magnifies himself
A mouth speaking great things against the Most High		Speaks marvellous things against the God of gods
Makes war against the saints and prevails	Destroys the holy people	
Destroyed by the Ancient of days	Destroyed by the Prince of princes	

We note further that the little horn of Daniel 8 is connected with the beast of Revelation:

"... it cast down some ... of the stars to the	"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of
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ground, and stamped
upon them"
(Daniel 8:10)

heaven and did cast them
to the earth"
(Revelation 12:4)

The IS Will Treat Jesus Christ as AntiChrist

In Islam, the *Masih ad-Dajjal* (the False messiah in Islam) is an evil figure (similar to the Christian concept of Antichrist), who will appear to deceive humanity before the second coming of Jesus. The Hadith records that Mohammad claimed that the Dajjal would be a Jew who had no children (Book 41.6995), and would come with 70,000 Jews with him (41.7034). Islam believes that the antiChrist will be a false *Jewish* Messiah, one falsely claiming to be the Messiah of Israel. They call him "the deceiving Messiah", literally- so when Islam observes Jesus returned and claiming to be Messiah, they will immediately identify Him with the antiChrist, the false claimant to be the Jewish Messiah. According to the Hadith, Mohammed claimed: "While I was sleeping, I saw myself (in a dream) performing *Tawaf* around the *Ka'ba*. Behold, I saw a reddish-white man with lank hair, and water was dropping from his head. I asked, "Who is this?" They replied, 'The son of Mary.'- Collected by Muhammad al-Bukhari *Sahih al-Bukhari* Sahih al-Bukhari, 9:88:242 . He will travel the whole world preaching his falsehood- Sahih al-Bukhari, 3:30:105 – and this will have been fulfilled by the Gospel of the Kingdom going into all the world before the end comes. "the *Dajjal* will gather an army of 70,000 Jews... and lead them in a war against ... an army of the righteous, along with Imam Mahdi” .

The Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2)

The difficulty with this passage may be because it had an intended and possible fulfilment in the first century, which never fully materialized. Just as Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 8 could have been the final opponent to the true Messiah, so the Kingdom could likewise have come in the first century after the development

of this “man of sin” figure. Paul certainly wrote as if he at least expected the return of Christ then. But due to various preconditions not being fulfilled, it didn’t happen. The events of AD70 therefore became but an incipient fulfilment of prophecies such as the Olivet prophecy; but the main and final fulfilment is at the second coming, in our days. And so it seems that potentially at least, such an individual could have arisen within Judaism in the first century. I have argued this at length in *The Last Days*.

The overall picture in 2 Thess. 2 is of an individual doing false miracles who arises, sits in the temple of God acting as God, and enters direct conflict with the returning Lord Jesus, who destroys *his* ‘coming’ by His second coming. The individual is a fake, imitation Christ- an anti-Christ in the true Greek sense of *anti*. The passage has many connections with the Olivet prophecy and with the prophecies of Revelation about the little horn and the beast. Clearly, we are to expect a latter day appearance of such an individual. The restraining factor in his appearance we have noted elsewhere as being similar in concept to the ‘restraint’ of the hordes by the Euphrates, which restraining factor is released in the last days. Of particular significance is the way that the man of sin exalts himself “against all that is called God or that is an object of worship” (2 Thess. 2:4 RVmg.). This is exactly relevant to Islam, whose insistent belief in one God leads them to be aggressive against any icon, idol or object of worship. This is the very opposite to the Catholic way of venerating objects of worship.

The Olivet prophecy in Mt. 24:15 speaks of the abomination of desolation standing in the temple as being a clear sign that Christ's return is imminent. This is just as the man of sin in the temple is the clear sign of the second coming (2 Thess. 2:3). The Lord’s words are looking back to Daniel’s prophesy that a desolator (RV) is to appear in the temple, and also to the description of Nebuchadnezzar as a ‘desolator’ of God’s people and His cities , who achieves his ‘desolation’ by a fake theophany, coming with clouds and chariots

just as the Lord Jesus will (Jer. 4:7,13). The language used by Jeremiah in that section is very similar to that used in Ezekiel 38 about the individual named as 'Gog'. The abomination that desolates is at the hands of a desolator- the man of sin of 2 Thess. 2. When Mk. 13:14 records the Lord speaking of the desolating abomination, he uses a neuter modified by a masculine participle- indicating that an individual is being referred to. There are multiple connections between the Olivet prophecy and the "man of sin":

Matthew 24

Lawlessness will abound
(v.12)

Men saying "Lo, here is
Christ" (v.23)

"Believe it not" (v.23)

"For there shall arise false
Christs, and false prophets,
and shall shew great signs
and wonders" (v.24).

"Insomuch that, if it were
possible, they shall deceive
the very elect" (v.24);
implying the non-elect will
be deceived.

"Behold, I have told you
before" (v.25), as Christ
prophesied his sufferings.

"As the lightning cometh out

2 Thessalonians 2

The man of lawlessness

"Be not soon shaken... by word...
that the day of Christ is here" (v.2
R.V.); the man of sin represents a
false coming of Christ.

"Let no man (of sin) deceive you"
(v.3).

"With all power and signs and lying
wonders" (v.9)

"All deceivableness... they (shall)
believe a lie...but you, brethren
beloved of the Lord, hath from
the beginning (been) chosen
to salvation" (v.10,13)- i.e. it was
impossible for *them* to be deceived.

"When I was yet with you, I told you
these things" (v.5)

"The brightness of his coming" (v.8)

of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (v.27)

"The Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven (Angels) with power and great glory" (v.30)

"Shall gather together his elect" (v.31)

"I am Christ... shall deceive many" (v.5)

"Iniquity shall abound" (Greek: 'multiply', i.e. convert more people to it)

"The love of many shall wax cold" (v.12)

With his mighty Angels... the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:8,9 cp. 2:8)

"Our gathering together unto him" (v.1)

"Strong delusion, that they should believe a lie...all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (v.11,10).

"The mystery of iniquity doth...work" (v.7)

"They received not the love of the truth" (v.9)

There are also clear connections with Revelation:

2 Thessalonians 1& 2	Revelation
2: 3 - son of perdition (see also Jn. 17:12)	17 v 8 - beast goes into perdition
2 v 7 - mystery of iniquity (<i>anomia</i>)	17 v 7 - Babylon associated with mystery
2 v 8 wicked (lit lawless - gk <i>anomos</i>) one revealed (see also v 7 where " iniquity" = gk <i>anomia</i>)	1 v 1 - The revelation of Jesus Christ

2 v 8 - Lord consumes him with the spirit of his mouth (ref to Isaiah 11 v 4) (<i>a reference to the wicked one of 2 v 8</i>)	19 v 11, 15 - Christ destroys the beast (ref to Isaiah 11 v 4)
1 v 8 - Lord Jesus in flaming fire	19 v 12 - Christ's eyes "as a flame of fire"
2 v 11 - those who perish believe a lie (<i>a reference to the wicked one of 2 v 8</i>)	19 v 20 - "false (or lying) prophet"
2 v 11 - strong delusion (or working of deceit) (<i>a reference to the wicked one of 2 v 8</i>)	13 v 14 – deceive 19 v 20 - deceive (<i>references to the second beast and the false prophet</i>)
2 v 9 - signs (gk <i>semeion</i>) (<i>a reference to the wicked one of 2 v 8</i>)	13 v 13 - wonders(gk <i>semeion</i>) 19 v 20 miracles (gk <i>semeion</i>) (<i>references to the second beast and the false prophet</i>)
2 v 4 - temple	11 v 2 - temple

The Temple

I have mentioned elsewhere that there is a major shift in radical Islamic thinking- perhaps paving the way for their leader to ‘change times and laws’. One such shift is in their theological focus being removed from Mecca to Jerusalem, and the desire to make Jerusalem the supreme holy place for the new caliphate they wish to establish in the land promised to Abraham. This would make more realistic the picture of the antichrist figure sitting in the temple (in Jerusalem). It may equally be possible that the Jews

fulfil their plan to rebuild a temple there, which is then taken over by the Islamic invaders.

Lying Wonders

The same are predicted in the Olivet prophecy. The latter day beast of Revelation and his publicity agent likewise do apparent miracles; the little horn of Dan. 8:24 will destroy by miracles (AV “wonderfully”, but the Hebrew is elsewhere translated as ‘miracles’ or ‘performing miracles’). The Koran claims that God will perform miracles in support of Moslem activity and judgment of unbelievers, especially Israel. The prophet Mohammad is the pattern and “aim” of Islam and their leaders. The miracles attributed to Mohammad in the Hadith are similar to latter day judgments upon Israel. It may be that the Islamists bring these judgments in a manner which appears miraculous:

Multiplying bread and water *Volume 4, Book 56, Numbers 779, 780*

Making animals speak *Volume 3, Book 39, Number 517*

Splitting the moon *Volume 6, Book 60, Number 388*

Making stars appear *Volume 1, Book 8, Number 454*

Making rain *Volume 8, Book 73, Number 115*

Making a dead body arise *Volume 4, Book 56, Number 814*

Ascended into the sky and thence to Heaven

All these things are spoken of as happening in the various seal or trumpet judgments. It may be that the Caliph of the Islamic State does indeed appear to be able to do miracles, and he consciously does these things because he wishes to impersonate Mohammad. Remember article 8 of the Hamas Covenant: "Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model"- also quoted by the Islamic State.

The coming of the "wicked one" is "after the working [Gk. *energeia*] of the Satan". The Satan of the last days is as defined in Revelation 12- the beast of the last days. But God sends "strong

delusion that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:9,11). "Strong delusion" again uses the same term, *energeia*. The energy in the whole thing is from God, not some 'satan' in the orthodox sense of radical evil in the cosmos. The satan-beast of the last days is under God's direct Angelic control, as made clear in Revelation. Due to the false miracles, the masses will flock to believe in this individual. We are already seeing something of the sort in the land promised to Abraham, where the Islamic State and its caliph is being believed and followed in a way which is strange and unbelievable to the rational observer. God will confirm these people so that they believe this individual and the beast-satan system behind him.

The "lie" which they believe is the "lying wonders" done by this man (the same word is used in :9,11). The closing comment of Revelation is that all who love and make lies are left outside the holy city (Rev. 21:27; 22:15 s.w.). The particular falsehood in view is that of the man of sin and the beast system; for in the context, it is they who are left outside the purpose of God and destroyed. The opening letters of Revelation define the 'liars' as those within "the synagogue of satan" (Rev. 3:9). The presence of the man of sin within the temple of God may refer to his presence in the congregation of God's people, rather than any particular physical reference to a temple building. This is in line with his description as "the son of perdition" (2:3), a term only elsewhere used for Judas the false disciple. This situation could be as a result of the covenant made between the little horn [the same figure as the "man of sin"] and Israel / the Jewish leadership which we noted earlier. The followers of the man of sin will be condemned for not believing the Truth, but instead believing the lying miracles and message of the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:12). This suggests they will be condemned along with their leader; and further, that they will have heard the Truth but rejected it. This will be because, as outlined in Revelation 10-12 and elsewhere, there is a preaching of the Gospel to all

within the land promised to Abraham, partly due to the Elijah ministry.





Chapter 11: Hamas and the Palestinians

Article 11 of the Hamas Covenant states: “Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgement Day”. Hamas and radical Islam therefore see the Islamic domination of the land of Israel as required in order that the last day can come. Article 13 continues: “As in said in the honourable Hadith: "The people of Syria are Allah's lash in His land. He wreaks His vengeance through them””. The Palestinians are therefore open to help from the latter day Syrians- the Islamic State, who are clearly empowering Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Hebrew word *khamas* is the equivalent for the Arabic *hamas*; it means strength, violence. And we find that this was the word used to characterize the situation in the earth / land at the time of Noah. God intervened because the earth / land promised to Abraham was filled with such *hamas*. We know from New Testament allusion that the situation at the time of Noah is typical of the last days before Christ's coming; the call is to take refuge in the ark of Christ by baptism into Him. The Hebrew word *hamas* is quite common in Scripture, and the usages speak of how God is provoked by *hamas* to bring judgment upon the enemies of His people (Gen. 6:11-13; Mic. 6:12; Zeph. 1:9) and also to intervene in order to save His people (Ps. 18:49; Ps. 72:14). How amazingly appropriate that an organization actually called *hamas* has arisen in these last days to do violence to Israel! If Biblical history means anything to us, clearly enough God's intervention in appropriate judgment and salvation cannot be far off. Note how Hagar's persecution of Sarah- typical of the Arab-Jew conflict- is described as her *hamas* (Gen. 16:5).

The military arm of Hamas is the Qassam Brigades; *kassam* in Arabic means ‘divider’, another allusion to the feet part of iron and

part of clay, when the Kingdom of Israel's oppressors shall be "divided" (Dan. 2:41). *Hamas* means 'strong', and the Gaza strip / Hamas controlled area will be part of the final strong / weak, iron / clay entity that briefly dominates the land according to Daniel 2.

Not only does *hamas* mean 'strong'. Gaza, their effective capital for the moment, is the Arabic form of the Hebrew word *az*, 'strong', and again connects with the idea of some elements of the latter day entity of Daniel 2 being 'strong' and others weak. It is the same Hebrew word used to describe how Israel's latter day enemy will be "a nation of fierce [*az*] face" (Dt. 28:50), led by "a king of fierce [*az*] face" (Dan. 8:23); the fierce nation will be epitomized and embodied in their fierce king, just as the dominating entity of Daniel 2 is embodied in the form of an individual man. The nation with the face of Gaza is forming itself for the final showdown-before our eyes. The Philistines appear to have had their centre of operations in Gaza, at least at the time of Samson (Jud. 16). And the Palestinians likewise. It's clear that the Palestinian Hamas movement based in Gaza is the equivalent of the Old Testament Philistines who were based in the same city. Jer. 25:20 continues the relevance of Gaza to the feet of iron and clay, partly strong and partly weak, mixed together in the final system which dominates the land; for we read there that Gaza is inhabited by "the mingled [Heb. *ereb* , cp. 'Arab'] people".

The 'Palestinians' were historically destroyed not by Israel but by the king of the north: "Howl, gate! Cry, city! You are melted away, Philistia, all of you; for smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks" (Is. 14:31). Historically, God seems to prefer to provoke division and confusion amongst Israel's enemies so that they turn on themselves and self-destruct. The horns hate the whore riding the beast, and there are many other hints at such a scenario in the last days. The King of the North, a re-formed Babylon, or Assyria *redivivus*, will likely end up

conflicting with Hamas, or the final rulers of Gaza, and likewise destroying them.

The prophecy of Zeph. 2:4-13 must be given due weight:

"Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation; Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to you inhabitants of the seacoast, you nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines; and I will destroy you until no inhabitant is left. And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures, with meadows for shepherds and folds for flocks. The seacoast shall become the possession of the remnant of the house of Judah, on which they shall graze, and in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the LORD their God will intervene for them and restore their fortunes. I have heard the taunts of Moab and the revilings of the Ammonites, how they have taunted my people and made boasts against their territory. Therefore, as I live, declares the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Moab shall become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah, a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste forever. The remnant of my people shall plunder them, and the survivors of my nation shall possess them. This shall be their lot in return for their pride, because they taunted and boasted against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD will be awesome against them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth, and to him shall bow down, each in its place, all the lands of the nations. You also, O Cushites, shall be slain by my sword. And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert".

The "seacoasts" are a very small geographical area. This prophecy has never had such a fulfilment- but God's word will come true. The final victory in the area, however, will be by a "remnant" of Israel, suggesting the majority perish in the last days, just as required in Zech. 14. The fate of Gaza is connected with that

of Ashkelon, which is currently in Israeli hands. It would appear that this city must briefly be taken by the Palestinians / Philistines. We note too that the Palestinians / Philistines in Gaza are connected with the people of Cush [North African Moslems, many of whom are fighting for the Islamic State at this time], Moab and Ammon [Jordan / Kurdistan], and a latter day Assyria [which is reforming in the form of the Islamic State / ISIS]. The connection between these groups and Hamas in Gaza is clearly established. The destruction of the 'coastlands', the Gaza Strip, is prophesied as being due to a direct Divine 'intervention'; and that surely speaks of the return of Christ to save the remnant of Israel. The 'remnant' is a term used in Bible prophecy not merely with reference to a numerical minority within Israel, but specifically to the righteous, repentant remnant. The picture seems to be of Israel being crushed militarily until a remnant remain, who repent and turn to Christ. And then He appears for their salvation and the final destruction of their enemies. It's not good news for secular Israel, whatever short term military victories they may achieve in their own strength.

Psalm 83 provides a list of ten areas around Israel who will form a covenant against her in the last days. It's tempting to associate them with the ten toes of the Daniel 2 image and the ten horns of the beasts we meet in Daniel 7 and Revelation. What's significant about the specific areas listed in Psalm 83 is that the list roughly corresponds to the places where exiled Palestinians have settled. The 'covenant' which is mentioned in Psalm 83 would therefore be the Palestinian Covenant, which calls for the destruction of Israel.

Chapter 12: Some Speculations

1. The Formation of Three Groups

The Hadith often mention “the three” from Syria. The Assyrian army was split up under three leaders, Tartan, Rabsaris and Rabshakeh. These names all have religious meanings, just as do the names of the leaders of the various Islamic brigades today-e.g. "Tartan" is related to the Assyrian god Tartak (2 Kings 17:31). The subdivision of the Arab invader into three groups, as in the original Assyrian battle plan, may also be thus foreseen in the last days, seeing that some previous Arab invasions may have had this feature too:

- "The spoilers of the Philistines (raided Israel) in three companies" (1 Sam. 13:17).

- The Israelites fought their Ammonite enemies "in three companies", perhaps because there were three groups of Ammonites (1 Sam. 11:11).

- The account of Gideon's victory over Midian, a clear type of the latter-day Arab destruction, has a triple emphasis on Israel attacking them in "three companies" (Jud. 7:16,20,22) - perhaps for the same reason.

- The "great city" of Babylon/Assyria will be "divided into three parts" for its destruction (Rev. 16:19).

- The Chaldeans (Babylonians/Assyrians) attacked Job, symbolic of faithless Israel, in three bands (Job 1:17)

- Is there some reference to this in the enigmatic three frog like spirits of Rev. 16?

- Rev. 9:14-18 describes how in the last days, 200,000,000 horsemen came from the Euphrates (i.e. Babylon/Assyria), using "fire and smoke and brimstone" to punish God's apostate people just before Christ returns. "By these three was the third part of men

killed" might suggest that this invading army has three aspects to its work. The huge number of horsemen must allude to the "great company" of horsemen of Ez. 38:4, which we have shown to be rooted in the Assyrian invasion. The 200,000,000 horsemen of Rev. 9:16 may correspond to the fact that the strength of the Assyrian army which came against Jerusalem is claimed in some inscriptions to have been 200,000 men.

The Koran has interpretations attached to it called the Hadith, written by various Imams [Moslem pastors and teachers]. These are considered by many Moslems to be of similar authority to the Koran itself, and there is a conscious striving by jihadists to fulfill the predictions made in them. One of them is most significant in our context: "Abdulla Ibn Hawala, the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "You will be split up into groups of armies. An army will be in Al-shaam, an army in Iraq, and an army in Yemen". Here we have it- three groups of armies coming against Israel, one of them being from A-Sham! And much support for the IS comes from Yemen and the Arabian peninsular. This teaching is now being appropriated by the Islamist factions who are coming to power in Syria- just search for these sentences on the internet and you'll see how common they now are!

We might therefore watch out for three separate military entities forming, which make a three pronged attack upon Israel.

2. Accept Islam!

Initially, the Assyrians demanded that Israel pay them tribute and accepted their religion. One could well imagine 'Assyria' of the last days stipulating Israel's acceptance of Islam as a condition for military help and mercy. God was Israel's father (Jer. 3:19; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; 2:10) and master (Mal. 1:6; Deut. 32:36); both these concepts were well understood by Israel. For king Ahaz to say to

Tiglath-Pileser, "I am *thy* servant and *thy* son" (2 Kings 16:7) was therefore a conscious rejection of Yahweh as Master and Father. For this reason Isaiah, prophesying in this period, stresses the fact that God claims Israel as *His* servant (e.g. Is. 44:1,2,21). The historical account sadly records how not only Ahaz but Hoshea (2 Kings 17:3) and Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1) also became 'servants' of their Arab dominators - doubtless thinking that they could serve two masters. Note in passing how 'Islam' is a call to 'submit'. This conscious rejection of Yahweh worship is further shown by Ahaz cutting off "the borders of the bases" of the laver (2 Kings 16:17), i.e. the cherubic faces which were on the wheels. These would have been a distinctive part of Yahweh worship. 2 Kings 16:10,11 records how after meeting Tiglath-pileser at Damascus, Ahaz ordered a replica altar to one which he had seen there. Ez. 23:7 confirms that Judah were forced to accept Assyria's religion: " She committed her whoredoms with... the chosen men of Assyria (i.e. the Assyrian diplomats with whom Ahaz's messengers negotiated)... with all their idols she defiled herself".

During the final invasion, the Assyrian commander Rabshakeh demanded: "Make an agreement with me... and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree... until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey" (2 Kings 18:31-32). The repetition of the word "land" and the evident allusions to the description of the promised land Israel would have if they were faithful (e.g. Deut. 8:7,8), show that Rabshakeh was offering the Jews a fake kingdom of God. The reference to each man eating his own vine and fig tree is alluding to Mic. 4:4, a prophecy which was uttered during this period, and doubtless repeated by the prophets within Jerusalem: "They shall sit every man under his vine and... fig tree". These conscious allusions by Rabshakeh again show that there was a strong

religious element in his reasoning - as if to say, "Make a deal with us, and we can offer you something better than the kingdom your prophets tell you will soon come and is worth suffering for". The Islamist demand of the last days may run along similar lines: "Become Muslims, and *then* you will be the real children of Abraham and have hope of being in a real paradise". The language of vines, oil, corn, honey etc. are prominent in the Islamic concept of 'paradise', their equivalent to the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 13: Conclusions

Opportunistic Interpretation?

I can't stand opportunistic interpretations of Bible prophecy. What I mean by that is the forcing of Bible verses to somehow have relevance to any current event. I was guilty of this myself. Here's a photograph of me 30 years ago standing up in London's Hyde Park and dogmatically declaring that Bible prophecy required a Soviet invasion of Israel, and that Christ's return was 'imminent'. That means, any time right now. And that God's "more sure word of prophecy" would absolutely make all this come about. Right then, in 1983. I was wrong. Get it- *I was wrong*.

I have spent most of the subsequent 30 years living in the former Soviet Union, speaking Russian and having Russian speaking believers as my closest friends. As I sit here in 2014 in my apartment in Riga, Latvia, I can overhear my daughter speaking Russian as she watches a Russian movie. I was wrong. The USSR collapsed in 1991. Christ didn't return in 1984. So, am I just having another crack? Maybe in a sense, yes. And I might be wrong again. I was wrong then and I might be wrong again. I am no prophet nor did I ever claim to be one. But from the late 1980s I shifted my attention from Russia and the West to the land promised to Abraham [from the Nile to the Euphrates], which is the focus of Bible prophecy. That is not to say that Russia, Europe, the Catholic church and the West generally have no role to play, but I do not think it is the leading role. I expressed the bulk of my thinking as presented in this article in a book, *The Last Days*, published in 1992 and still in print. You can get a free PDF of it from www.heaster.org/ld.pdf . I mention this personal perspective because the crisis in Syria and the Arab Spring revolutions aren't being just forced into the mould and requirements of some Bible

prophecies which I had a look at just last week. The overall picture of Bible prophecy requires the creation of an entity like *Al-Sham* and a focus of the Arab peoples upon overrunning Israel and



establishing an Islamic state there- just prior to Christ's return. And all seems going to plan. I'm excited about this, and that's why I've been bold enough to share my thoughts with you.

A Personal Appeal

"He that shall come, will come" (Heb. 10:37). Whether I am right or wrong in my take on Bible prophecy. Effectively, Christ's return is only so far away as our death. And that could be any moment. And so my appeal to you is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who shall return- and soon, relatively speaking. Give your brief, fragile life to Him by identifying with His death and resurrection by baptism into Him. Become one of the true children of Abraham by baptism (Gal. 3:27-29), and rejoice with me in sure hope of resurrection and eternal inheritance of the land in God's eternal Kingdom. About *that* there is no doubt. That much is sure. Matching geopolitics with Bible prophecy is one thing. Maybe I got it wrong about Syria, just as I got it wrong about Russia. But in the bigger picture that is neither here nor there. What is sure and certain is that the Lord Jesus Christ lived, died *for you*, 2000 years ago, on a day in April, on a Friday afternoon, on a hill just outside

Jerusalem. And three days later, He rose again, is now in Heaven, and shall surely return to establish God's Kingdom upon earth. And you really, really can connect with Him now and live with Him eternally then. Please give yourself no rest until your future is assured. Get a free Bible from us, and / or the free book *Bible Basics* which explains the Bible's message and prepares you for baptism into Him:

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Digression: Conditional Prophecy in Daniel

The Olivet prophecy quotes and alludes to various parts of Daniel's prophecy, and yet the Olivet prophecy's intended fulfilment in AD70 didn't happen as was potentially possible, and was rescheduled. This therefore implies that Daniel's prophecies, which are alluded to, are thereby capable of a similar more elastic fulfilment. And looking in more detail at Daniel, this does indeed seem to be the case. Daniel prophesied whilst Judah were in captivity, and the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are full of potential prophecies of how the Messianic Kingdom could have been established at Judah's return after 70 years in Babylon. Ezekiel's conditional prophecy of the temple system is a parade example, although this was more commandment than prediction. I have discussed this in great detail in *The Exiles*. I suggest that like the Olivet prophecy, the prophecies of Daniel were an outline of a potential schema of events that could have taken place, leading up to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. But due to Judah's overall preference to remain in Babylon, and the lethargy of those who did return, that schema was rescheduled and was given a longer term application over history, culminating in the events of [our?] last days and the final, inexorable establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on earth.

As is well established, Daniel's prophecies are interrelated. The metals of the opening vision in Daniel 2 develop into the beasts of Daniel 7, and the other prophecies give more details of potential fulfilments and developments of the beast systems, culminating in the war between the Kings of the North and South and the final revelation of Israel's triumphant Messiah and the resurrection in Daniel 12. The sequence of metals in the image of Daniel 2 speak primarily of four kings, each having a king-dom, a dominion over which they reigned. And they all form part of the image of an

individual *man*. Nebuchadnezzar personally, rather than the Babylonian empire, was represented by the head of gold (Dan. 2:38). Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know what would happen to him after his death, and he sees himself standing in front of him. The ten toes of the image represent “kings” (Dan. 2:44 “in the days of these kings”). The prophecy started to be fulfilled- for in Daniel’s lifetime, the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar’s dynasty, gave way to Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:31), and still in Daniel’s lifetime, to Cyrus the Persian (Dan. 6:31). But even that sequence need not have happened the way it did if Nebuchadnezzar had repented more quickly; if he had, there would have been a “lengthening of your tranquillity” (Dan. 4:27). If he had, perhaps the next metal of the image would have followed him directly, rather than following his son. The time period intended for him could have been changed. The same word translated “lengthening” occurs only again in Dan. 7:12, where we read that the beasts had their “lives *prolonged* for a season and time”. Their intended time periods were added to. The setting up of God’s Kingdom on the earth / land of Israel was exactly what had been prophesied in Jeremiah and Ezekiel as happening once the captivity in Babylon had ended; at that time, the stone could have hit the earth and destroyed the situation envisaged in the image of Daniel 2. But this intended sequence of four kings followed by ten kings didn’t come about as intended. That captivity was intended to last for 70 years, but in reality it lasted longer- hence Daniel’s confusion and pleading with God in Daniel 10 to do what He had promised. And yet his prayer of Daniel 9 suggests that he realized Judah’s sins were such, and their lack of real repentance in Babylon was such, that the restoration program had been delayed. His response to understanding the 70 year period is to pray to God, admitting Israel have sinned and are still impenitent- as if he realized this was why the period had been extended (Dan. 9:2,3). In Dan. 9:19 he asks for God to forgive, to accept his repentance on Judah’s behalf, and therefore not to “defer” or delay any longer. Clearly he saw that the intended 70 year period had been extended, because Israel had not repented as

required. It seems to me that this is the same reason for the ‘delay’ in Christ’s second coming; the bridegroom does indeed “delay”, the same word translated “tarried” (Mt. 24:48; 25:5). It didn’t happen in the first century as planned but was delayed, just as the coming of the Messianic Kingdom was delayed in Old Testament times.

It should be noted that the legs of iron do not have to refer to Rome. Another historical interpretation could be:

1. Head of gold - Babylonian Empire
2. Breast and arms of silver - Median Empire
3. Belly and thighs of copper - Persian Empire
4. Legs of iron - Greek Empire of Alexander
5. Feet partly of iron and partly of clay - The Seleucids and the Ptolemies.

In this case, Dan. 2:43 ("they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another") refers to the unsuccessful marriage alliances between the Seleucids and Ptolemies (Dan. 11:6, 11:17). This means that the Kingdom’s coming could have been at the end of the Seleucid empire; but again, it was delayed. With this in mind, we must bear in mind that the ten horns can have application to the situation after the end of the reign of Alexander the Great; and yet they clearly represent 10 such kings which will be in existence at the time of end. There is no contradiction in interpretation here. The fact is, the idea of an antiChrist figure being preceded by ten other leaders will be found in the last days, but it is a repetition of a theme found in earlier empires, Greece in this instance. The ten kings from Alexander on through the Seleucid kingdom would be:

1. Alexander the Great
2. Seleucus I Nicator,
3. Antiochus I Soter,
4. Antiochus II Theos,
5. Seleucus II Callinicus,
6. Seleucus III Ceraunus,
7. Antiochus III the Great,

8. Seleucus IV Philopator, (assassinated by the following)
9. Heliodorus,
10. Seleucus IV's infant son Antiochus (puppet for Heliodorus).

The last three "horns" had to fall to make way for the "little horn" Antiochus IV Epiphanes. All this was a potential fulfilment-which didn't happen because various preconditions were unfulfilled.

It could be argued that the Roman Empire was the restraining force written about by Paul in 2 Thess. 2:7,8. The fall of Rome and the disintegration of the ten provinces of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, the ten toes, could have led to Christ's return and the establishment of the Kingdom. But it was only potentially true, it didn't happen, and so the prophecy was delayed. This would explain the gap in chronological fulfilment between the two legs of iron, and the latter day feet of iron and clay.

The beasts of Daniel 7 are based upon the four metals of the image in Daniel 2, with the feet and ten toes of iron and clay matched by the horns upon the fourth beast. The first beast was given a man's heart and stood up looking like a man, showing it represented a personal king (Dan. 7:4). Dan. 7:9 speaks of how "the thrones were cast down" and then the last judgment sat. The beasts are therefore kings or "thrones"; their casting down is the same as the smashing of the metals of the image. My point is that the beasts were initially intended to be seen as kings, individuals rather than empires. Dan. 7:17 is clear: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth / land". Likewise "the ten horns... are ten kings" (Dan. 7:24). We are so familiar with the rescheduled, long term application of the prophecies, rolling through the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, that we can overlook the simple fact that the intended fulfilment was in a swift succession of kings after Nebuchadnezzar which

would conclude with the return from exile and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom upon the ruins of the kings who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar. When it became clear that there would be some delay, Daniel was given the vision of Daniel 8, in which another version of the horns on the fourth beast was given. In this vision, a ram with a great horn spawned four leaders, out of whom came another horn, which persecuted Israel and defiled the sanctuary for 2,300 days, placing the desolating abomination (Dan. 8:13). This time period has no obvious fulfilment. But this very verse is quoted by the Lord Jesus in the Olivet prophecy; and clearly it has the capacity for various potential fulfilments which can be rescheduled if human repentance and response is inadequate. Dan. 8:20-22 says that the two horns on the goat represented the kings of Media and Persia- both of whom Daniel served under (Dan. 5:31; 6:31). After them, four kings could have arisen, followed by a charismatic leader who would conflict with "the prince of princes" [Messiah] and be "broken without hand" (Dan. 8:25) just as the little stone cut out without hands would destroy the image of Daniel 2. Such a situation could have happened in Daniel's time, or at least in the time of Alexander the Great. But it didn't. Firstly, in Daniel 2, he saw a succession of four kings. But then, after the second king, he has a vision of another four kings needing to arise; in other words, another element has been added to the sequence, delaying the fulfilment somewhat. Daniel's response was feeling depressed (Dan. 8:27)- because obviously he wanted the fulfilment as soon as possible.

The LXX of Dan 8:9-11 would imply that only at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the captivity of Judah would be "delivered": "And out of one of them came forth one strong horn, and it grew very great toward the south, and toward the host: and it magnified itself to the host of heaven; and there fell to the earth some of the host of heaven and of the stars, and they trampled on them. And this shall be until the chief captain shall have delivered the captivity". Thus the period of only 70 years in captivity was

lengthened; and even then, this is not how things worked out in practice. Likewise the time for the restoration of the temple from the hands of pagan abomination is redefined in Dan. 9:27 LXX as now no longer being in Daniel's time, nor any time close to it, but rather at the time of the Kingdom of God: "on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations; and at the end of time an end shall be put to the desolation". It's surely significant that the temple was dominated by the abominations of Antiochus Epiphanes for around three and a half years, the time, times and a half, or 1260 days (from 168 / 9 to 165 BC). This was the intended prelude to the restoration of the temple by Messiah. The Maccabees liberated the temple and re-established temple services there after that period-but in their own strength, and they became spiritually lost in a form of nationalistic Judaism. And so the promised Messiah and Kingdom of God didn't come, and the three and a half year tribulation period was delayed, to be re-enacted in the last days before the final coming of Jesus. There was a similar period of tribulation for Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in AD67-70, but again, it didn't come to term in Israel's repentance and the establishment of the Kingdom. But in the last days, it shall do so.

In Daniel 9, Daniel pleads for the prophecy of restoration to be fulfilled, recognizing that the 70 year period had been extended; he is recorded as repenting on behalf of Judah, and asking that God will not further delay the fulfilment (Dan. 9:19). The answer is the prophecy of the 70 *weeks*. This could mean that 70 *weeks* were going to be added to the 70 *years*. This could have meant a literal 70 weeks from the time of Daniel's prayer, or the seventy sevens could be a total of 490 day / years. Despite many ingenious attempts, there is no persuasive interpretation of the 70 weeks prophecy. It could be that it is a series of potential possibilities; seven literal weeks from the commandment to restore Jerusalem unto Messiah, and then 62 weeks from Messiah's coming to His 'cutting off'. But then the prophecy speaks of how the city and sanctuary would again be destroyed and the destroyer then himself

destroyed. This would've been most discouraging for Daniel, who was expecting and hoping for the immediate restitution of the temple.

Then in Daniel 10, Daniel was told that the appointed time had been made longer (Dan. 10:1 Heb.). This was in the third year of Cyrus, when according to the earlier prophecies, Daniel was looking for a new king to arise (Daniel 2), or four kings (according to the sequence of Dan. 8). Seeing Daniel had lived through the reigns of at least three kings, he likely expected the reign of these kings to be very brief, so that he might see the coming of the restored Kingdom. But now he is told that the time period has been extended. No wonder Daniel mourned this vision for three weeks (Dan. 10:2). Daniel then symbolically dies and resurrects; the comfort being that he would ultimately be resurrected to the life eternal, but the sadness being that he must die because “the vision [i.e. its fulfilment] is still for many days” (Dan. 10:14). His praying and weeping for those three weeks had not brought about a reverting of the time period back to that originally planned- it was yet or still “for many days”. In the spirit of Moses, Daniel had tried to change God’s will. All we learn at least from this is that prophetic time periods are open to change. The Olivet prophecy speaks of how “the days”, and the context suggests the ‘days’ of Daniel’s prophecies were in view, will have to be shortened otherwise even the elect will fall away (Mt. 24:22). Dan. 11:2 went on to explain to Daniel that now another series of three or four kings was envisaged, this time all Persian kings, in contrast to the idea of four *Greek* kings arising in Daniel 8; and this would culminate in two leading kings, of the North and South, who would have a series of conflicts climaxing in the temple being captured again, and conflict with Messiah leading to the resurrection (Dan. 11:40-12:2). This scenario also didn’t happen- and it would explain why no very credible interpretation has been found for Daniel 11. When we read allusions to these prophecies in the Olivet prophecy, and perceive that the Lord had in mind fulfilling them in the first

century but later rescheduled that, we must remember that those prophecies had already had various potential fulfilments which had not worked out because of the lack of repentance within Israel. This is the all-important sign of fruit on the fig tree, and an encouragement to give highest priority to preaching to Israel.

Daniel's response is to ask "How long to the end of these things?" (Dan. 12:8 Heb.). He's given various time periods of days, but told that these do not concern him, for he is to fall asleep in death, and then stand again "at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13), however many they were, whether shortened or extended, "the end" would come all the same, and he would be resurrected then. And this is the great comfort to all of us as we reflect whether we will live to see the Lord's coming or not.

Revelation: A Futurist, Islamic Approach

The Nature of Revelation

Revelation is full of visual images, borrowed from the Old Testament. But it presents them as a kaleidoscope of images, overlaying each other, relying upon other images for the final picture presented. As such, it simply cannot be read as a chronological prediction of historical events. The images presented of the new Jerusalem and God's ways are intended to deconstruct the images of Babylon and her ways. In earlier application, Christians living within the 'Babylon' of the Roman empire were subject to her images, worldviews etc., and Revelation enabled them to re-imagine life from God's perspective, thinking according to His images of the world, seeing Babylon and the beast for who they are, and seeing ourselves and God's people for who they are. This is of supreme practical value today, as it has been in every age. But it will be of ultimate value for those living under the domination of the beast entity in the land / earth under the beast's domination in the brief period of tribulation before Christ's return. A major theme of Revelation is of martyrdom and witness. It is not God's pleasure to destroy the beast, and He expects His people to make His final appeal and witness to the beast, even at the cost of their lives, physically, economically and socially. The radical nature of that call comes to each of His people over history, but it will be at its most intense and acute in the last days. Another theme of Revelation is the Lordship of Jesus; exalted titles are given to Him, and things stated about God are stated about Him. This is not to say that He is God; rather the intention and necessity of this message is that as strongly as the beast insists that *he* is Lord, so we are to insist and proclaim that *Jesus* is our Lord. The image of the slain lamb, the crucified Jesus, hangs as a watermark image over the book of Revelation; and again, that makes sense. For the

community of the last days, under intense physical and / or psychological oppression from the beast, will have the image ever before them of Him in His time of suffering and dying.

A Futurist Approach

I submit that in the last days, all God's prophetic word will come true. All previous historical fulfilments of it were true and valid, but they will be seen as but incipient fulfilments of the final and ultimate fulfilling of God's word in the events of the last hour, and the final triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ in His return to earth to judge the enemies of His people. Rev. 1:1 opens Revelation by saying that the things revealed or apocalysped are to "shortly" come to pass, and the book ends with the same statement (Rev. 22:6). The Greek can just as well mean that these things will happen quickly, suddenly- rather than requiring that the entire book had a fulfilment shortly after the time it was first given. For clearly the events described in the book did not all happen 'shortly' after John's time in the first century. That is a fact, and I would argue that it leaves us little leeway in interpreting *tachos* as therefore meaning that they will happen quickly, suddenly. The ultimate thrust of their fulfilment, therefore, is not over an extended period of time from John's time over the two millennia to the time of Christ's coming. The same phrase is used by the Lord to the believers in Rev. 2:5,16 where He warns them that He will come unto them "quickly"- the idea is that His coming in judgment will be sudden *unless* they repent. The quickness or suddenness of His coming is related to His wrath in judgment; if they repent, then the coming will not be 'sudden' or 'short'. He surely doesn't mean 'If you don't repent, then I will come back soon. If you do repent, then I won't come back soon'. He uses the same concept of suddenness and unexpectedness, although without using *tachos*, in Rev. 3:3: "If you shall not watch, I will come as a thief, and you shall not know what time I will come upon you".

Attention must be paid to Revelation especially in the last days because "the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3); but *eggos* means literally

‘squeezed’ or ‘throttled’- creating the idea that things are going to happen very quickly at the end. The fulfilment of God’s word in this sense will be ‘hastened’ (Is. 60:22; Jer. 1:12). And the world situation we are in enables this to be the case as no other generation. The student of Revelation, therefore, will not be caught by surprise by the speed of events in the last days- that seems to be the idea.

This is not to say that the prophecies did not have relevance to the historical experience of God's people. The continual theme of persecution and comfort of ultimate victory against the world was, of course, a powerful and relevant message to God's persecuted people throughout history. But those fulfilments were but shadow fulfilments of the final triumph and events which the book describes. These are to happen quickly, suddenly, in a short time space. This explains why each of the various visions, of seals, trumpets, bowls etc. all end with the final victory of Christ's coming and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. They can all be read as having specific reference to the last days- whatever historical fulfilment they may have had. To argue otherwise requires that these events had their main fulfilment at some time in the last 2000 years, and then there is a gap until their fulfilment in the coming of Christ. But the nature of the language and arguments used hardly allows for that. At best it could be that after each of those historical incidents there was the possibility of Christ's return, but that didn't happen because other preconditions weren't met. Therefore the prophecies were rescheduled and reapplied for their main fulfilment in the events of the last days. This would explain why some of the historical fulfilments suggested by expositors of the continuous historical school appear to 'fit' better than others. But at best, these were only incipient fulfilments- the final reality for each of God's prophetic words must come in the last days, just as the image of Daniel 2 had some continuous historical application, but the image must stand erect

and complete in the last days- and that is the main fulfilment of the prophecy, whatever application it may have had in history.

Revelation 4

Unlike Hebrew, the tenses in Greek are precise and have specific reference. In Rev. 1:19 John was told to write down the things which he had seen, the things which presently are, and the things which shall be “hereafter”. I suggest the things he had seen were the things of the vision of the Son of Man; the things which are refer to the messages to the seven churches; and “the things which shall be hereafter” is a phrase developed in Rev. 4:1, where John is bidden come and see “the things which must be hereafter”. The things from then on all refer to the future, the last days and the coming of Christ. The vision of the Heavenly throne room in chapters 4 and 5 therefore refers to how things are in the Heavenly court *in the last days*. The four beasts full of eyes which are found there (Rev. 4:6,7) are the Heavenly reflection of the four beasts of Daniel 7, and the powerful little horn with its cunning eye is thus presented as a weak parody of the Heavenly reality. The seven heads and mountains of the beast perhaps have their match in the seven spirits / Angels before God’s throne (Rev. 4:5). As found in Daniel, the situation on earth is not at all out of control; rather is it a reflection of the Heavenly throne room, just as the beasts of Daniel 7 arise out of the sea as a result of the [apparent] ‘striving’ of the spirits / Angels / winds. The lightnings which flash out of the throne (Rev. 4:5) were not just what were ‘usually’ there in Heaven; rather are these the lightnings which flash in the last day events of Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18, recalling the flashing of lightning as a sign of God’s especial and saving activity of His people (Ps. 18:14). The thundering recorded in the vision of Rev. 4:5 is that of Rev. 19:6 at the time of the second coming of Christ. The great voice out of the throne of Rev. 4:5 [“voices” may be a reflection of the Hebrew idea of an intensive plural] is the great voice out of the throne of Rev. 16:17; 19:5 when “it is done”. It is the voice of victory which effectively comes out of the throne at the last day

(Rev. 7:9,10). Here in Rev. 4:6 there is a tranquil “sea of glass”, but this is the very same symbol as used in Rev. 15:2 concerning how this situation is arrived at *after* and *as a result of* the fiery judgments upon God’s enemies in the last days. This glass sea is “clear as crystal”- which is the very metaphor used to describe the Kingdom conditions (Rev. 21:11; 22:1). Again and again, Revelation 4 uses the language of the period surrounding the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. It’s a prophetic vision of the things which shall be “hereafter” (4:1), rather than a description of how things were in Heaven at John’s time and how they have been ‘up there’ for the last 2000 years.

The vision is in the form of "a voice of a trumpet" (4:1). The same Greek words are found in Mt. 24:31 and 1 Thess. 4:16 about the "sound [s.w. "voice"] of a trumpet" which will be heard at Christ's return. The same words are used of the trumpets heard at the final outpouring of woe upon the land at the Lord's coming (Rev. 8:3). The vision therefore has a clear end time reference, and describes the scene in Heaven at that time, rather than being a general picture of how things are in Heaven. The setting up of the throne in 4:2 recalls the language of the throne being 'set' for judgment at Christ's return (Ps. 122:5; Dan. 7:9). The elders are 'clothed in white clothing' (4:4), but every time those words occur in Revelation the context is of believers who have overcome the tribulation and are now clothed in white (3:5,18; 7:9,13). The vision of such clothing in Heaven may suggest that the elders thus clothed are the representative Angels of the believers on earth. Revelation is full of this kind of representation of human situations before the court of Heaven. Their golden crowns (4:4) are the crowns of victory which the faithful wear after judgment (the *stephanos* is specifically a victory wreath- 1 Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19; the crown which shall be given "at that day", 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10). Golden crowns are worn by the latter day enemies of God's people (Rev. 9:7); the specific usage of *stephanos* here, the victory wreath, suggests that they are

celebrating their brief victory and establishment of a fake Kingdom of God. This is exactly what Moslems expect their Mahdi to do as a result of their latter day victories against the Jews. The ten horns of the beast are also crowned (13:1); the brief victory of the beast is a parody of the establishment of the true Kingdom of God. As lightning, fire and thunder 'proceeds' out of the throne and from the mouth of Him sitting upon it (1:16; 4:5), so the same word is used of how fire and judgment proceed out of their mouth of God's briefly victorious enemies (9:17,18). So often the contrast is drawn between the things of God's Kingdom and God's people, and those of His opposition. As the Angelic entity of Heaven, representing the believers, has no rest day nor night from His service and praise, so the beast worshippers have no rest day or night from their judgment (4:8 cp. 14:11). These are the only times in the entire New Testament that this Greek phrase for 'having no rest' are used. Indeed, so often Revelation uses phrases and words which occur only in Revelation. The giving of honour to Him who sits upon the throne (4:9) is an idea only found elsewhere in 19:7, where honour is given to the Lord on the throne "for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready". Again, we are directed to understand the giving of honour as appropriate to the Lord's second coming.

The whole scene happens "before the throne" (4:6), but this phrase is repeatedly used later in Revelation to speak of the situation before the judgment throne of the Father and Son, when this as it were is set up on earth. Before that throne the faithful shall be found faultless (14:5), and they sing before that throne a new song because of their triumph (14:3). Those who overcome the tribulation of the last days are found "before the throne" (7:9,11,15). So what we are seeing in chapter 4 happening 'before the throne' is not a mere description of 'what was going on before God's throne at John's time, and has been going on all along since

then'. No. This is about what shall happen before that throne *at the day of judgment at the second coming*. That is the time referent of Revelation's language of "before the throne". Rev. 4:8,11 clarifies all this beyond doubt- for there we read of "the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" 'receiving [*lambano*]' "glory, honour and power [*dunamis*]". The only other time we read of this is in Rev. 11:15-17, when the seventh Angel sounds and the Kingdom of God is established: "We give You thanks O Lord God Almighty, who is and who was; because You have taken [*lambano*] Your great power [*dunamis*] and have reigned".

Revelation 5

This continues the vision of chapter 4, which we have clearly located in the last days. The sealed book of 5:1 is the book of life, which is only opened at Christ's return (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12). The opening of the seals is therefore something which is the opening of the book- and the events associated with them therefore occur at the last hour, when the book is opened. The joy of the redeemed that the Lamb has opened the book through His blood is not just joy that prophetic revelation has been given in the seals; it is joy that they have been redeemed because the book has been opened (5:5,9). The Lamb's blood was required to open the book, and it is redemption, a place in that book of life, which was enabled by the Lord's death. The actual opening of the scroll is performed by the Lord Jesus in His role as "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (5:5). Why this unusual title for the Lord in this context? Surely because the events are happening at the time when He is fulfilling His role as the lion rather than the lamb. That time for active and aggressive manifestation of Jesus against others- not least against the other beasts of the latter days- is at His return. The allusion is obviously to Gen. 49:9 which speaks of Judah's lion as aggressively triumphing over his prey- the work of the Lord Jesus *in the last days at His return*. In Rev. 5:5, the lion of Judah 'prevails', the language of struggle, in order to open the scroll. The loosing of the seals therefore speaks of the Lord's activity at the time of His coming in triumphant judgment upon the other beasts of the field. Yet the lion's triumph is only because He had previously been the sacrificial lamb; but He is portrayed as a rather aggressive looking lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes (5:6). Again we note that the beast with his ten horns and a little horn with eyes (Dan. 7:20) is an anti-Christ, a parody of the real Jesus. We note the sustained emphasis that the Lamb alone was "worthy" to open the scroll of life (4:11; 5:2,4,9,12); but the Lord graciously

says that His redeemed people will walk with Him because they too are “worthy” (3:4). This is a deep insight into the extent of imputed righteousness, and what it means to be counted as “in Christ”.

The redeemed burst into praise when the Lamb takes the book of life to open it- they thank Him for redeeming them, and for making them “kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth” (5:10). This sounds like they are about to start reigning. The time when this is said is therefore that of the establishment of the Kingdom on earth. Seeing there is no conscious survival of death, it is hard to imagine how the redeemed could have said this to Jesus 2000 years ago, especially seeing that many of them were not then in existence. The vision goes on to the time of the total establishment of the Kingdom on earth, when all existence in heaven, earth and sea praise the Lamb (5:14). Not every detail has been given of how that end has been achieved, but in chapters 4 and 5 we see a broad sweep from the beginning of the last days right through to the full establishment of the Kingdom.

That the scroll refers to the book of life was first pointed out to me by Peter Watkins. One of the most compelling reasons is the way that Daniel 7 is being alluded to, and the parallel with the opening of the books at the judgment is in the scroll of Revelation 5 being opened:

	<i>Daniel 7:9, 10</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
a)	thrones were set	the 24 elders upon 24 thrones (R.V.) (ch. 4 :4).
b)	the Ancient of days did sit.	a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne (4:2).
c)	His garment white as snow.	like unto a jasper (4:3).
d)	His throne like the fiery flame.	and a sardine stone.

e)	His wheels as burning fire.	(Ezekiel 1:15-21. Not mentioned in Revelation except by implication in connection with the four-fold cherubim-chariot of Revelation 6).
f)	a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him.	the sea of glass.
g)	thousand thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.	the number of the angels was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands (ch. 5:11).
h)	the judgement was set and the books were opened.	I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life (ch. 20:12).

Revelation 6: The Seals

General Observations

The seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials, subdivided as they are in places into subdivisions, all appear to be parallel. But they aren't necessarily describing the same events. I suggest the seals refer to the judgments to come upon God's people and land, Israel / the land promised to Abraham; and trumpets and vials describe God's commensurate judgment of the beast system which inflicts these judgments. The similarities are because as they have judged, so they will be judged. The cup they give others to drink must be drunk by themselves. And it could be argued that their judgment will be even more severe and complete. Thus in the seals, a fourth part of things are affected; in the trumpets, a third part; whilst the vials speak of total destruction. As with the judgments on Egypt, which form the basis for the seven vials, the people of God may initially be affected by the outpouring of those judgments, but those who are sealed are saved from them.

The vials are really bowls or cups poured out on the land. The same word is used in one of the Aramaic targums on Is. 51:17,22,23 concerning how the "cup" of judgment drunk by Jerusalem will be given to her judges, the beast system of latter day Babylon. This explains why the vials / bowls / cups are based around the plagues on Egypt, representing the abusers of Israel:

Vials in Revelation	Israel's experience and plagues on Egypt, Exodus
Boils 16:3,4	9:8-12
2 and 3. Water to blood,	Water to blood 7:14-21

water sources contaminated, 16:6	
4.Scorching heat from the sun, 16:8,9	This will specifically not come upon God's people (Is. 49:10; Ps. 121:5,6; Rev. 7:16), just as the later plagues did not harm the Israelites in Egypt.
5.Darkness 16:10,11	10:21-23
6.Gathering to Armageddon- perhaps Jerusalem. The word could mean 'The desirable city', 'His fruitful mountain', 'the mount of assembly'. It may refer to the Mount Megiddo.	Mount Megiddo was where repentant Israel won a great victory against the Canaanites, the tribes within the land (Jud. 5:19).
7.Lightning, plague	As on Egypt. The reference is also to Ez. 13:8-16 which describes such things coming on Jerusalem- perhaps the idea is that those who now dominate Jerusalem will be punished in this way.

The first four seals, the four coloured horsemen, are based upon the horsemen of judgment in Zechariah 1, which vision is repeated in Zechariah 6 but with the difference that the four horsemen go out to judge the nations who have performed these judgments upon Israel, e.g. "the north country". These four horsemen inflict punishments and judgments which are full of Old Testament allusions to prophecies concerning how God would

judge His people, His land and specifically Jerusalem for their impenitence. Ezekiel 5-7 is full of the same language about what shall come upon Jerusalem, e.g. famine is described in the same language as in Revelation 6 (Ez. 4:16). The four judgments of Rev. 6:8 are those of Ez. 14:21- to come upon Jerusalem. The language of Jeremiah's prophecies against Judah are particularly alluded in these first four seals (Jer. 6:22-26; 14:11,12; 15:1,2; 16:4,5; 18:11-21; 21:8-10; 38:2; 44:11-14). And the language of the fifth seal is alluding to the Lord's word of judgment upon Jerusalem in Mt. 23:35. Most significantly, the language of the four horsemen is taken directly from the curses upon Israel for disobedience to the covenant in Dt. 32:23-35.

Clearly enough, beyond any question to the serious Bible student, the focus of the four horsemen is upon God's people in their land, and especially the city of Jerusalem, in the last days. The Old Testament allusions continue in the appendix to the seals which we find in Revelation 7:1-17. There, the sealing of some of God's people is obviously based upon Ez. 9:4, where the same was done to the faithful at the time of the Babylonian invasion.

The theme of 'seven' judgments coming upon the land surely connects with the claim that Mohammad waged seven military campaigns against the infidels in the land [promised to Abraham]. The Hadith several times speaks of the "seven military expeditions led by the Messenger of Allah himself (may peace be upon him)" (e.g. Book 19.4469), or of the "seven battles" he was victorious in (Book 19.4462). This would explain the seven fold structure of the seals-trumpets-vials. The Moslem pretenders to the pattern of Mohamad bring seven judgments upon Israel, and are punished by likewise receiving back seven judgments, drinking the cup they made others to drink. The Hadith claims that Mohammad predicted three cycles of calamities in the last days, which would be subdivided into various other calamities: "Hudhaifa b. al-Yaman reported: By Allah, I have the best knowledge amongst people

about every turmoil which is going to appear in the period intervening me and the Last Hour; and it is not for the fact that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) told me something confidentially pertaining to it and he did not tell anybody else about it, but it is because of the fact that I was present in the assembly in which he had been describing the turmoil. and he especially made a mention of three turmoils which would not spare anything and amongst these there would be turmoils like storms in the hot season" (41.6908). This is exactly the Biblical picture- of three cycles of judgments and turmoils in the land (seals-trumpets-vials), subdivided into various specific calamities. As the jihadists strive to obey the letter of their writings, they will thereby be fulfilling the outline picture of the last day crisis which is foretold in Revelation.

It's noteworthy that the seven seals and seven trumpets and seven vials all conclude with the seventh being the establishment of the Kingdom. So there are actually six judgments in each case. The Hadith (Book 41.7040) speaks of six signs before the last day: "Hasten in performing these good deeds (before these) six things (happen): (the appearance) of tribe Dijjal, the smoke, the beast of the earth, the rising of the sun from the west, the general turmoil (leading to large-scale massacre) and death of masses and individuals". These six are very similar to the things spoken of in the seals and trumpets- signs in the sun, mass death, smoke, beasts of the earth. The jihadists are seeking to consciously fulfil the Hadith and so, due to the allusions the Hadith and Koran make to Revelation, they will end up fulfilling God's word of their own volition.

The Seventh Seal?

It is my belief that prophecy is to some extent conditional, and the outcome is variable upon human repentance, God's gracious holding back of legitimate, prepared judgments, the intensity of His people's prayers etc. The lack of any detail about a seventh seal, even though it is opened, is significant. All we read is that there

was silence in Heaven at that time for half an hour (Rev. 8:1). This has the same feel to it as the seven thunders whose details were specifically not written down (Rev. 10:4). Why mention them? I submit that the final judgments intended upon the land and God's people are not in fact going to be performed, although they are potentially prepared- because of God's gracious response to human repentance, prayer and the suffering of His dear people.

This idea that the seventh seal is not opened is confirmed by the observation that the sixth seal is the composite one that contains the trumpet and vial prophecies — the *sixth* seal and not the seventh.

Sixth Seal (Revelation 6: 12-17)	Seven Trumpets
great earthquake	great earthquake (11:13) another earthquake (11:19)
sun black	third part of sun smitten (8: 12)
moon as blood	third part of moon smitten (8:12)
stars fall from heaven	"there fell a great star from heaven" (8:10) third part of stars smitten (8:12)
the great day of his wrath	"thy wrath is come" (11:18)

Sixth Seal	Seven Vials
great earthquake	great earthquake (16:18)
sun black	darkness in kingdom of beast
islands moved	every island fled away (16:20)

mountains moved	mountains were not found (16:20)
the great day of his wrath	the vials of the wrath of God (16:1)

The Seals and the Olivet Prophecy

It is clear enough that the Olivet Prophecy has application both to the "last days" of AD70 and also to our last days. Revelation is the Lord's expansion upon His words on Olivet- and therefore we should use this as a framework for interpreting the book. It applies to both the first century and also our last days, and the seals are perhaps the clearest example of this.

Revelation		Olivet Prophecy	
6:1,2	Mt.	:14	Mt.
	24:14		24:35
:3,4	:6,7	:16	Lk.
			23:30
:5,6	:7	:17	Lk.
			21:36
:7,8	:7	7:1	Mt.
			24:31
:9	:12	:3	Lk.
			21:18,28
:11	:14	:14	Mt.
			24:19,21
:12	:7	8:3	Lk.
			21:36
:13	:32	:5	Mt.
			24:27

John was told that the events of the seals "must take place"- *dei genesthai*. The Olivet prophecy uses the same phrase (Mt. 24:6; Lk. 21:9).

All the seals must be opened if a scroll is to be opened. The scroll doesn't become partly visible because one seal has been broken. I suggest the imagery is chosen in this way in order to lead us away from seeking to interpret the events of the seals as being continuous historic, consecutive events. Rather are they different aspects of the total picture of what has to happen before the book of life can be opened. The idea of opening a sealed scroll is obviously alluding to Dan. 12:1-4, where Daniel was told that the scroll would be opened specifically in the last days- i.e. the seals to it would be then removed. This means that we have to look to the last days for the time when the seals are removed.

In my youth I attended regular continuous historic studies of Revelation, noting carefully in my wide margined Bible the suggested fulfilments of the various seals, trumpets and vials in events during the Roman empire and subsequent European history. Some of these fitted better than others. I couldn't deny that there was a fairly good fit in some areas, but in others, eyebrows had to be raised. The fit seemed forced and lacked the ring of truth in terms of credible interpretation. We don't need to take a red pencil and put a line through all those interpretations. Like the continuous historical interpretations of the image in Daniel 2, they have a certain validity. But just as the image was specifically about a latter day entity which stands erect and complete in the land promised to Abraham in the last days, destroyed in totality by the Lord's return, so Revelation has its major fulfilment in the last days. Any shadowy fulfilments we may discern over history are incidental compared to the ultimate and main, intended thrust of latter day prophecy- which is focused upon the events in the land promised to Abraham in the last days before Christ returns. We live at the end of human history; the previous fulfilments are but mere shadows compared to the ultimate reality which is now starting to unfold before our eyes.

The Hadith claims that the Moslems will be as horsemen in the final conflict at the end of the age: "The Last Hour would not come until... there would be a terrible fight and the Muslims would prepare a detachment (for fighting unto death) which would not return but victorious... Allah will decree that the enemy should be routed... Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: I know their names and the names of their forefathers and the colour of their horses. They will be best horsemen on the surface of the earth on that day". (41.6927). As we find so often in Revelation, the descriptions of the main players are expressed in terms which fit admirably with Moslem self-understanding as expressed in the Koran and Hadith.

The Four Horsemen and Zechariah

The vision of horses going forth to bring judgment is clearly alluding to the similar vision in Zech. 1:8-12; 6:1-8, and we need to get a handle on what is in view there in order to understand how this will come true in the last days:

"I stared into the night, and there was a man mounted on a red horse! The horse was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him there were red, brown, and white horses. Then I asked, "Who are these, sir?" The messenger who was talking to me answered, "I will tell you who these are." The man who stood among the myrtle trees answered, "These are the ones whom the LORD sent out to wander throughout the earth." Then they reported to the angel of the LORD who stood among the myrtle trees, "We have wandered throughout the earth—and look!—the entire earth is at rest. Everything is quiet and peaceful." And the angel of the LORD replied, "LORD of the Heavenly Armies, how long will it be until you show mercy to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, with whom you have been angry for these past seventy years?"... Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second

black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?". And the angel answered and said to me, "These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country." When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. Then he cried to me, "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country."

The horses of Zechariah 1 are those nations who have trampled up and down the earth / land of Israel, subduing it until it is quiet. The chariots / horses of Zechariah 6 are the Angel cherubim representatives of those nations, who are sent out against them in judgment. Such judgment is portended in chapter 1 also, where straight after the vision of the horses we read of the four horns who have abused Israel being cut off by the carpenter Messiah of Israel. Significantly, there is an Angel stationed with the horses in the valley from which they emerge, as if to show that the judgments upon the land were Angelically controlled; Israel was not at the hands of chance human evil, indeed the horses report back to the Angel. This sets the scene for the horses / chariots of chapter 6 going out in judgment against those nations. The land lying still and at rest is explained further in 1:11,12- it was because the cities of Judah were lying in ruins after the horse powers had trampled over them. This all looks forward to how Jerusalem shall be trodden down in the last days, after the pattern of how the Babylonians trod it down (Is. 5:5; 28:18; 63:18; Lk. 21:24)- which is when this prophecy will have its final fulfilment. We can look, therefore, for the three or four entities which trod down the land and people of Israel to have their latter day equivalent, and a like judgment from Heaven. And this is what Revelation 6 is explaining

in more detail- in a latter day context. The immediate message in Zechariah's time was therefore that a future treading down of the land and Jerusalem was to happen, but the silver lining of that cloud was that this would finally lead to the eternal restoration of Israel. This is exactly the same style as in Ezekiel 38; we noted in studying the context of that prophecy that it was given at the time when news of Jerusalem's fall had come to the rebellious captives in Babylon amongst whom Ezekiel was sitting. They were being told that another even worse desolation was to happen, patterned after the events they were now hearing of, and yet from this would come the eternal restoration of Israel in God's Kingdom on earth. But not immediately.

The two brass mountains of Zech. 6 are from where the horses / judgments issue forth- towards the north and south of Israel. The mountains must therefore be in central Israel. I suggest the mountains in view are both in Jerusalem- the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion, in between which is the valley of Jehoshaphat. These mountains and that valley are from where God's latter day judgments proceed (Joel 3:2,16; Zech. 14:14). Or it may be that they are the two mountains formed by the cleavage of the Mount of Olives predicted in Zech. 14:4, at which time "half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half toward the south". This would connect with the horses / chariots going out towards the north and south here in Zech. 6. Any difficulties with exact chronology may be accounted for by the suggestion that the meaning and nature of time will change in the time around the Lord's coming, as I have outlined at length in *The Last Days*.

The four horses / chariots are understood by most commentators to have connection with the four metals and beasts of Daniel's prophecies. Their connection with the four winds / spirits of the Heavens (Zech. 6:5) recalls the way that the four beasts of Daniel 7 arise as a result of the same four winds / spirits being active. I have explained elsewhere that the four metals and

beasts of Daniel's prophecies refer to powers that will dominate the land and people of Israel in the last days, whatever historical application they may have had. The metals and beasts all exist together in the last days, because they are all judged together at the coming of Christ to earth.

Potential Fulfillments of the Horses of Zechariah Chapters 1 and 6

The way prophetic words can be rescheduled in fulfilment is demonstrated by the 70 years. They came to fulfilment at the time of Daniel's prayer in Dan. 9:2; but also at the fall of Babylon and edict of Cyrus (2 Chron. 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1); and yet also in the second year of Darius (Zech. 1:1,12). This latter period would have been timed from the actual destruction of the temple (2 Kings 25:2,8,9); whereas the captivity began before that. And the predicted restoration didn't happen as prophesied. But it will ultimately happen- at the Lord's return.

The little horn of Daniel 7 grows out of the fourth kingdom, represented by the fourth beast. But in Daniel 8, a very similar horn grows out of Greece, the third kingdom. We can therefore conclude that the antichrist figure of Daniel 8 would have appeared as an outgrowth of the Greek kingdom, and been destroyed by Messiah's coming. But this didn't happen, and Antiochus Epiphanes became but an incipient fulfilment of the antichrist of the last days. Zechariah, like Daniel, contains many conditional prophecies- "And this shall come to pass, *if* you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Zech. 6:15). Zech. 9:13 appears to be another such conditional prophecy, similar in reference to that of Daniel 8 about the possibility of Messiah's coming at the time of the Greek empire. God says He will place Ephraim within the bow of Judah, to be fired at her enemies; and He would "raise up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece" (Zech. 9:13), leading to the final salvation of God's people, the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, and her Messianic king coming unto her (Zech. 9:9). But this didn't come true; the

resistance of the Maccabees was not based on true spirituality, and the Romans took over control of the land from the Greeks. No Messianic Kingdom was established. This would explain the purposeful ambiguity of interpretation which there is in the image of Daniel 2; a good case can be made for the sequence Babylon-Media-Persia-Greece, and yet also for the sequence Babylon-Medo Persia- Greece-Rome. Daniel 8 predicts the breakup of the Greek empire after Alexander's death into four horns, out of which a little horn arises (Dan. 8:8). The only other prophetic reference to four horns is again in Zechariah, when we read of how the four horns who had scattered God's people were to be cut off by the carpenters (Zech. 1:18,19). The carpenters surely look forward to the carpenter Messiah. He could have appeared and cut off those four horns; but He did not, and so another prophetic sequence was allowed, in which another [fourth] beast arose, this time with ten horns, not just four. And in Revelation we find this developed further, in that seven heads also appear on the beast, and a whore rides the best, sitting upon [another?] seven hills / kingdoms. The number and ferocity of the enemies of God's people seems to increase over time. If Israel had repented earlier, then all this would have been unnecessary. The three horses of Zechariah 1 thus become four horses in Zechariah 6. The fact the four cherubim chariots are sent out in judgment of those same coloured horses speaks of how all earthly entities have their representative Angels in Heaven.

This same situation can be found in the way that Zechariah 1 opens the prophecy with a vision of three kinds of horses- red, white and speckled. These represented the powers which had subdued the land of Judah and left it in the desolate state it was at the time of Zechariah (Zech. 1:12). It's tempting to interpret them as Assyria, Babylon and Medo-Persia; or perhaps Babylon, Media and Persia. Straight away, we read of *four* horns, representing the powers who had desolated God's people; and how they would be destroyed by the carpenters, surely looking forward to the carpenter Messiah. And the vision of Zech. 6 has *four* and not *three* kinds of horses- red, black, white and speckled. This may be Zechariah's way of saying that because of Israel's inability to fulfil the required spiritual

preconditions, the longer version of the prophetic program was going to come into play. Although as always, there is the distinct message of hope, that finally God's triumphant purpose with Israel shall come to realization.

The Final Scenario

The vision of Zechariah 6 could have had fulfilment in Zechariah's time; the three horses of Gentile oppressors in chapter 1 are matched by the horses of the Divine cherubim in chapter 6, who are sent forth to judge those powers. But there are four of them- because by the time of chapter 6, the prophetic program had been extended to coax repentance from Israel. And now in Revelation 6, we have a similar scene in the last days- four horses of different colours are sent out into the earth / land of Israel. The context is the same- these are the powers which will dominate Israel in the last days, under Angelic control, in order to bring about her repentance and eternal restitution to God. I don't think we have to look for four literal entities. The 'four' clearly connect with the four beasts and four metals, and the speckled horses of Zechariah invite comparison with the feet of iron and clay; especially if we read the Hebrew *amots* in Zech. 6:3 as meaning 'red' [AV "bay"]- they would be speckled with red, as if the strength of the red horse was partially in them. Until Zechariah's time, there had been various horses of Gentile powers, the fulfilments of the metals of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7, dominating the land and people of Israel. They had trodden down the land and people until they were silent (Zech. 1:10,11). This treading down is to happen in the last days, when the image stands complete, and all the beasts exist together. This is the burden of the first four horses pictured in the first four seals.

We need not look for these events to come chronologically; for all the seals have to be removed before a scroll can be opened. The event of 'opening the scroll' is presented by the metaphor as one event, and the seals are presenting different aspects of the events required for the scroll to be opened.

The horses were “sent” by Yahweh “to walk to and fro through the land” (Zech. 1:10). These are the same Hebrew words found in Jer. 25:9 for how Yahweh “sent... all the families of the north...and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” into the land. The horses are thus confirmed to represent the nations who had subjugated the land. And the same Hebrew words are found in Hab. 1:6: “I raise up the Chaldeans... which shall march [s.w. “walk to and fro”] through the land”. These horses are effectively parallel with the four horns who ‘scattered’ Israel (Zech. 1:19). Israel were to be “scattered [s.w.] beyond the Euphrates” (1 Kings 14:15); the number four is not perhaps referring to four specific powers, but rather alluding to the way that Israel’s domination according to Daniel’s visions was to be by ‘four’ entities.

The coloured horsemen of Revelation 6 are therefore full of reference to the nations who subdued the land and people of Israel, and also to the Angelic powers who ultimately permitted those nations to do that work, and who finally judged them. The horsemen are presented in Revelation as clearly under the control of the living creatures, the Angel cherubim, and that was the same as in Zechariah. The first horse was white and conquering; this doesn’t mean that firstly there was a period of military victory, followed by one of hunger and necessity. The seals don’t have to be chronologically separate from each other. The opening of the book of life will require a military conquering of the land / earth of Israel, as well as the sufferings of the other seals [hunger, famine etc.].

The Four Horsemen

The White Horse

The white horse of Rev. 6:2 must be understood as the latter day version of the white horse of Zechariah chapters 1 and 6, which went forth to conquer the land promised to Abraham and to tread down its cities and inhabitants. The simple point is that the land of

Israel will be conquered; the current technological advantage of the IDF and the bravado of the state of Israel will not ultimately save them. Only faith in Christ will. And yet the figure of a rider on a white horse is used later in Revelation regarding the Lord Jesus. This doesn't mean that it is the Lord Jesus who is in view here in 6:2. For often in Revelation, the powers and entities who dominate God's land and people are presented in terms elsewhere used about the true Kingdom of God and its king. Thus the whore who rides the beast represents the city of Babylon, but the descriptions used have clear connection with the description of the true city of God. This is not to say that they are one and the same. It means that the antiChrist is a fake, imitation Christ, and his Kingdom is likewise an imitation of the true. So the white horse conqueror of the land is an antiChrist- bearing in mind that the Greek idea of *anti* carries the idea of an equivalent or imitation, rather than [as in Latin] someone 'against'. The Hadith in book 19.4388.4390, 4392 and 4437 claim that Mohammad rode on a white horse during the time of the early Moslem battles with the Jews. The language of conquering is very current amongst Islamic jihadists: "Allah hath decreed: Lo! I verily shall conquer" (Sura 58.21).

The horses invite connection with the locusts like horses and "the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle" in Rev. 9:7,9,17, which I later interpret as the hordes of Israel's neighbours from the Euphrates who will rush into the land promised to Abraham to destroy it. Horses are frequently used in the Bible to represent military action. In Rev. 14:20, blood comes up unto the horse bridles- these invaders meet a terrible destruction. The final destruction of Israel's enemies features the destruction of their horses (Rev. 19:18), and that prophecy compares their horses with the white horse of the Lord Jesus and His followers also on white horses (Rev. 19:11,14,19,21). This juxtaposition of 'horses' suggests that the white horse conqueror of 6:2 is not Christ, but rather an antichrist, an imitation, fake Christ.

The rider on the white horse was “given” a crown, a *stephanos* of victory, and with that ‘gift’ he goes out to ‘conquer’. We find the same Greek words translated ‘given’ and ‘to conquer’ in Rev. 13:7, where “the mouth” of the beast is “given... to make war with the saints [God’s people, Israel] and to *overcome* [s.w. “conquer”] them”. The mouth of the beast is his publicity agent, the false prophet, the little horn- the antichrist figure. And it is this same individual who is pictured in 6:2 as riding the white horse, an imitation Jesus, an anti-Christ. The same Greek word translated conquer / overcome is also found in a similar context in Rev. 11:7: “The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit [having experienced a death and amazing ‘resurrection’] shall make war against them [the two faithful witnesses] and shall *overcome* them and kill them”. But the same word is found frequently throughout Revelation and John’s letters, speaking of how ultimately God’s people shall conquer / overcome. The point is, they will temporarily be overcome, but they shall gloriously overcome at the end. “A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last” (Gen. 49:19).

The crown of the antichrist connects with how the horns of the beast have crowns. His bow connects him with Gog, the individual leader of the assembly of ten nations from within the land promised to Abraham who will invade Israel in the last days. In Gog’s defeat by Divine intervention, his bow will be smitten out of his hand (Ez. 39:3). The bow is the weapon of Esau / Edom, the father of the Arab peoples (Gen. 27:3); and it is repeatedly used about the weaponry of the Babylonians and Assyrians and the neighbours of Israel, whose desolation of the land and Jerusalem are the prototypes of the latter day desolation (Is. 5:28; 13:18; Jer. 4:29; 6:23; 46:9; 50:29,42; 51:56). Jeremiah perceived that the bow of Babylon was effectively the bow of Yahweh, drawn against His own people in judgment (Lam. 2:4; 3:12). Again we see that the horses, their riders and weaponry are also those of God, just as the coloured horses of Zech. 1 are matched by the same coloured horses which comprised the Angel cherubim in Zech. 6. Zech. 9:10 speaks of how the horse, chariot and battle how will be “cut off from Jerusalem” just prior to the establishment of

God's Kingdom on earth. Here in Rev. 6:2 we have the development of that situation- and the focus will finally be upon Jerusalem as the holy city of Islam, now proclaimed by some Jihadist theologians as more holy than Mecca.

The Red Horse

6:4 *Red horse*- The red horse is literally a flame / fire coloured horse [*purrhos*]. The same root word is found in describing how the horses released from beyond the Euphrates spit "fire" [*pur*] upon the earth / land of Israel, with which they destroy the people there (Rev. 9:17,18). Perhaps the "fire, smoke and brimstone" which they bring upon the land means that they consciously think they are bringing Divine judgment upon Israel- this is indeed the radical Islamist position. Or there may be reference to some form of warfare which makes use of fire, some kind of white phosphorous or other weaponry which creates intense fire which water cannot quench. The only other time we meet the colour 'flame-coloured' ["red"] is at Rev. 12:3, the great red dragon. This horse is therefore to be associated with that system of latter day domination of the land.

It was given unto him- Constantly, the comfort is given that none of these calamities upon the land are a result of radical evil, evil that is totally free of any control. All the traumas to come upon the land are under direct Divine control through the Angels.

Him that sat thereon- The same words used of how the whore sits upon the beast (Rev. 17:1,3,9,15; 18:7). The whore is the embodiment of the beast, of the same red colour as the red horse. They are symbols for the same thing- an entity of latter day domination of the land which is controlled by an individual-the antichrist, the rider of the horse, the rider of the beast.

To take peace from the earth... kill one another- It is ultimately the Lord Jesus who sends a sword rather than peace upon the earth (Mt. 10:34); the horses and their woes are all, therefore, under His direct control. There seems to be allusion to

Mt. 10:34 because Rev. 6:4 goes on to say the red horse rider has a sword, and he causes those in the earth / land to kill each other. Mt. 10:34 records the Lord teaching that He had come to send a sword in the form of division between persons. The red horse rider causes those living in the territory of the land promised to Abraham to kill each other; and this is the scenario we currently see unfolding in that very area. It is conflicting forms of religion which are clearly at the root of that conflict; this is the characteristic of the feet of mixed iron and clay, that will not cleave to each other.

The earth- Revelation is written in Greek but is clearly a Hebrew book. We can safely assume that the *ge* in view is the same as the Hebrew *eretz*- the land of Israel. And this is indeed how *ge* is often specifically used in the New Testament in speaking of the land of Israel. In Matthew alone: Mt. 2:6,20,21; 5:35; 9:26; 12:42 the Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost part of the *ge*, the land promised to Abraham; 17:25; 23:35 “all the righteous blood shed upon the earth”; 27:35. And almost every reference to *ge* in Revelation can be understood as the land promised to Abraham [this of course is not the same as the territory currently occupied by the state of Israel].

Given unto him a great sword- Again the idea is that these invasions of the land are allowed and even empowered by God. The idea of being given a sword likewise implies that the horse and rider are executing judgment from God. This is how present day Israel are crying out for serious Divine judgment, from the gay bars of Tel Aviv to the arrogance of the IDF, overarched by a refusal to repent for crucifying God’s Son and refusing Him to this day.

The Greek translated “sword” is the word for a knife; being given a great knife has connotations of sacrifice. We think of Islamic State beheadings, publicized by them with pictures of jihadists holding a knife over their victims. This is exactly the picture we have here. This is what we are seeing before our eyes on the media.

The Black Horse

6:5 *A black horse*- The black horses of Zech. 6 were sent into “the north country”, associating this horse with the invasion from the latter day Assyria / Babylon.

Balances in his hand- It could be that the message is simply that there will be terrible famine in the land, and tiny amounts of food will cost much money. But the rider has the balances in his hand, as if he is the merchant and seller. We think of the prediction that none will be able to buy or sell without the mark of the beast; the suggestion may be that the invading power sells food to some within the land for high prices. The Islamic State insists upon conversion to their form of Islam but will make concessions if a *jizya* tax is paid. This is what they offered to Kurdish Christians who remained in Mosul. So it may be that we have here a description of how famine will come about for God’s people as a result of such actions.

Comparing the prices here with those mentioned for food during the siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 7, these prices are very high but not as great as when “an ass's head was sold for 80 shekels, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five” (2 Kings 6.25). The figures are not such as we would expect if real famine, and particularly the famine conditions of a siege, were in view. A man could buy three times as much barley as he needed for a day's wage. This isn't talking about actual death by famine, but rather food being sold at grossly inflated prices compared to income—that's surely the impression being created. This would fit my suggestion that the dominators of Israel are pictured as selling food at grossly inflated prices to those under their control, in a manner reminiscent of the Jewish ghettos of central Europe under Nazi domination.

Hurt not the oil and the wine- The GNB appears to be closest to interpreting this: "do not damage the olive trees and the vineyards!". The Greek translated "hurt" occurs several times later in Revelation, also in the sense of hurting or damaging. The Angel of Rev. 7:2,3 is told not to "hurt" the physical land until God's servants have been sealed. And likewise in Rev. 9:4, there is the proviso that men must be hurt, but not the plants of the land. The word is used about the hurting of the people on the earth (Rev. 9:10,19), and the faithful are initially not "hurt"- until they are killed after they have completed their witness (Rev. 11:5). The voice that states "hurt not the olive trees and the vineyards" comes from between the four beasts- it is an Angelic limitation placed upon the damagers of the land / people in the land promised to Abraham. The sense may be that initially, the physical land is not to be damaged; the people of God, and then the entire dwellers in the land, are to be 'hurt', and not the physical land. Therefore the lack of food created by the rider on the black horse would not be because of famine, but rather as I suggested- because of selling food at high prices as a form of destruction of those who refuse to convert to the Islamic State.

Another consideration is that the phrase could be rendered "Hands off our oil and wine!". Oil and wine occur together in pictures of abundance and luxurious living (Num. 18:12; Dt. 7:13; 8:8; 28:51; 2 Chron. 11:11; 32:28; Prov. 21:17; Jer. 40:40; Joel 2.24); and note especially that these are part of the luxury of the Babylon-beast system in Rev. 18:13. The implication could be that the desolators of Israel enjoy a brief period of opulence, having grabbed the wealth of Israel and the Jews, and submitting those they have conquered to heavy *jiyza* tax and exorbitant prices for food.

The Pale Horse

6:8 *Power was given unto them-* The plural presumably refers to death and hades.

The fourth part of the earth- It's unclear whether this is geographical, or refers to a quarter of the population. The idea which we meet in the Revelation of 'parts' of the land and people being damaged or killed is in line with the Koran, which speaking of judging "the children of Israel" says that Moslems are "to cut off a part of those who disbelieve" (Sura 7.127).

To kill with sword and with famine and with death and by the wild beasts of the earth- As it stands, it seems redundant to say that death and the grave [*hades*] kill with sword, famine, wild beasts and death. How can 'death' be one of the four listed methods of killing? Perhaps it refers to some specific kind of death- a death penalty of execution (the word is used in this way in Mt. 10:21; 15:4; 20:18). Likewise how can any one horse rider have power over wild animals? The first century fulfilment was clearly in Christians being thrown to the lions; a related word is used for how Paul fought with wild beasts (1 Cor. 15:21). I would suggest that the latter day fulfilment will be in that those who refuse to convert will meet their end in one of four ways at the hands of this horse rider- death by the sword, i.e. in battle; by controlled and enforced starvation, as in the Nazi death camps; "death" in the sense of the death penalty; or death by being thrown to wild animals, as was done to the early Christians by the Romans.

The Greek word translated "sword" here is *rhompaia*, which has already been used of that proceeding from the mouth of the Lord Jesus (1:16; 2:12,16). It is connected not so much with killing in battle or war, but with deliberate, judicial, putting to death. This recalls the Islamic jihadist approach to killing those who will not convert to Islam- they are seen as being killed in a judicial sense, before a court of Moslems who are both judge, jury and prosecution, as well as the execution squad.

The four judgments mentioned here clearly allude to Ez. 14:21: "I send upon Jerusalem my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!". The 'fourth part' of the land that is thus judged is

therefore likely to be Jerusalem. Again we see that the location of the 'earth' is not the entire globe but the land promised to Abraham. The Ezekiel passage goes on to say that out of those judgments will come forth a repentant remnant- which is the same picture we have throughout latter day prophecy. It is this remnant which will enable the return of Christ to Israel. The same pattern is to be found in Ez. 33:27-29; the four judgments on the land, involving a total desolation, result in the repentance of the remnant: "Thus says the Lord Yahweh: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword; and him who is in the open field will I give to the animals to be devoured; and those who are in the strongholds and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. I will make the land a desolation and an astonishment; the pride of her power shall cease and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate [i.e. not producing food- leading to famine], so that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am Yahweh, when I have made the land a desolation and an astonishment, because of all their abominations which they have committed".

The Fifth Seal

6:9 The altar- The fact the people are 'slain' on the altar connects with our comment on 'death' in 6:8. These are those slain by the Islamic State for refusing to convert to their false religion.

Under the altar- The allusion is to the blood at the base of the altar from the sacrifices, representing the blood or lives lived of the faithful who had been sacrificed.

Souls- Represented by the blood. The witness of their lives, who they essentially were, cried out to God, just as Abel's blood cried out. Cain, his brother, becomes the prototype of Israel's latter day persecutors- it is their own half-brothers, their Arab neighbours, who slay them. The Hebrew for 'Cain' is the root of the word

'Canaan'. The persecutors of the faithful are Canaan- the inhabitants of Canaan, Israel's aggressive neighbours

Slain- In their death they as if they died with their Lord, the slain lamb (Rev. 5:6). The Greek suggests to be butchered, which is absolutely the behaviour of the jihadists to their victims. Note that those in view are not necessarily Western hostages, but those who are butchered for the sake of their witness to God's word. What we are seeing in the butchering of any who get in the way of the Islamic State is a precursor of what can be expected on a wider scale, especially of true Christians witnessing to God's word.

Their testimony- Their preaching God's word was a *marturia*, a legal testament at court, and this was the basis of their martyrdom. The jihadists believe that all who refuse to accept their version of Islam must in some form come before an Islamic court, often presided over by themselves as both judge and prosecution, and then be legally butchered as a result. From their perspective, they are not guilty of wanton butchering; they claim they are doing it in fulfilment of Moslem legal requirements. The parallel is in Rev. 20:4: "Them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God; and such as worshipped not the Beast nor his image and received not his mark". The 'slaying' is particularly by beheading; and Islam is the only world religion today which legitimizes and practices beheading. And they are publically doing it.

6:10 *Cried with a loud voice-* Just as the Lord cried with a loud voice at His death (Mt. 27:46,50; Lk. 23:46). The suffering and even death experienced by the faithful during the tribulation will identify them with the crucifixion sufferings of their Lord. In Revelation, it is usually an Angel who 'cries with a loud voice' (Rev. 5:2,12; 7:2,10; 8:13; 10:3; 11:12,15; 12:10; 14:2,7,9,15; 16:1,17; 18:2; 19:17- a very considerable theme). We have here another example of Revelation's theme that the believers on earth have their position reflected in Heaven, by Angels in the court of

Heaven. Their representative Angels loudly proclaimed to the court of Heaven the injustice done. It was not so much they themselves who cried out, seeing that death is unconsciousness, but the witness of their lives [their ‘soul’, the ‘blood’] represented by their Angels before the throne of God in Heaven.

How long, O Lord- Clearly alluding to Is. 6:11-13: “Lord, how long? He answered, Until the cities are waste without inhabitant and houses without man and the land becomes utterly waste, and Yahweh has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. If there is a tenth left in it, that also will in turn be consumed: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stump remains when they are felled; so the holy seed is its stump”. The context is the same- an utter desolation of the land by an ‘Assyrian’ invader, resulting in the repentance of the remnant. This is the context of many other ‘How long?’ laments in the prophets- the answer is ‘Until Israel repent!’ (Jer. 4:14 “Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?”; 4:21; 12:4; 23:26; 31:22 “How long will you go here and there, you backsliding daughter?”; Hos. 8:5 “How long will it be until they are capable of purity?”; Hab. 1:2). Particularly relevant is Zech. 1:12: “how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah”. The significance is in the fact that the vision of four coloured horsemen is based upon Zechariah 1, and so the “how long?” theme continues the allusion. Again we note that the territory in view is Jerusalem and the land promised to Abraham. The answer of Dan. 12:6,7 to the question is more precise; effectively it is the same as the answers which said ‘How long? Until Israel repent!’: “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 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 a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished”. Daniel’s answer to ‘How long?’ appears to be ‘Until the three and a half year period is

finished, and God's people have been thoroughly broken in pieces'. For it seems it is only then that the necessary repentance will occur. Those interested in trying to work out a chronology of events might take note that these particular believers must be killed earlier in the tribulation period. The cry 'How long until justice?' is answered by the news that three and a half years tribulation must pass, and more must yet be killed.

O Lord- The "holy and true" is defined earlier in Rev. 3:7 as the Lord Jesus. This is not the usual Greek word translated "Lord". We have to think long and hard as to why a word with such negative connotation as *despotes* should be used about the Lord Jesus. Why not the more natural *kurios*? I suggest that the more tyrannical and draconian *despotes* is used exactly because a despot, the antichrist, is then reigning over the land, and has caused the death of these believers. But for them, their *despotes*, their Lord, is not him, but the true Christ. Hence they address Him as the "holy and true" *despotes*- hinting that there is a false one, one that is *not* holy, to whom they have refused allegiance.

Do You not judge- Perhaps the emphasis is on 'You', seeing they have been judged by some human court and punished with death; see on 6:9 *Their testimony*.

Avenge our blood- The same words are found in Rev. 19:2- the blood of God's servants is avenged at the hands of "great whore". The horse riders of the seals are therefore part of the beast system dominated by the whore. The avenging of Israel's blood will be by God's "sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates" in the latter day of Yahweh's vengeance, the day of the Lord of Hosts (Jer. 46:10). This suggests again that the shedders of Israel's blood are those from the north country, Babylon / Assyria, who come from the Euphrates. And this is the current source of jihadist Islam.

On them that dwell on the earth- What they mean is ‘Avenge our blood on those men who shed it’. To describe those men as ‘earth dwellers’ seems somehow redundant and rather too obviously self-evident- unless there is some particular significance to being an earth dweller. We need to understand the ‘earth’ here as specifically the land promised to Abraham, and not the whole planet. The significance of the murderers as being ‘land dwellers’ is perhaps because these people have come over the Euphrates, the northern border of the land promised to Abraham, and they are invaders now dwelling in the land. The other NT references to dwelling in the earth / land are specifically about dwelling in the land promised to Abraham; Abraham moved into the land of Canaan, in which land the Israelites now dwelt (Acts 7:4); Abraham dwelt in the land of promise (Heb. 11:9). The earth / land dwellers are singled out for particular judgment because of how they have persecuted God’s people (Rev. 8:13; 11:10; 12:12). It’s as if being an earth dweller is a cause for judgment; this is far more understandable if we understand the term to refer to neighbouring invaders who are now dwelling in the land promised to Abraham in the last days. The earth dwellers are those who worship the beast and give power to him (Rev. 13:8,12,14; 17:2). The domain of the beast is the ‘earth’ or land promised to Abraham, seeing it is based upon the fourth beast of Daniel 7, whom we have demonstrated to have this specific dominion. Rev. 14:6 draws a distinction between the earth dwellers and every nation, tongue and tribe- which would lend support to our definition of them as the invaders who now dwell in the land promised to Abraham in the last days.

6:11 *White robes-* Those who come through the great tribulation of the last days are clothed in the same way (Rev. 7:9,13,14), and this tribulation is clearly that which the Lord in the Olivet prophecy predicted for the last days immediately prior to His coming. Revelation aims to give us Heaven's perspective on events on earth; the martyred believers are counted as being clothed in white robes, they are assured of salvation. This is an interesting parody of the

belief of Islamic jihadists, that their martyrdom will assure them of salvation. This will in fact be the case for those whom they kill. It is Angels who are presented as clothed in white robes (Mt. 28:3; Mk. 16:5; Jn. 20:12; Acts 1:10; Rev. 4:4). Again we see how the martyred believers have representative Angels whose clothing is as theirs will be finally. The promised reward of white robes is also for those who "overcome" whatever they must pass through in their generation (Rev. 3:4,5,18). Our sufferings are in that sense no less than the terrible persecution unto death which is in view here in Rev. 6 and 7 for the latter day believers in the land promised to Abraham.

Unto every one of them- The Lord is intensely aware of the suffering and death of every individual believer in Him.

That they should rest- The same word as in Rev. 14:13 about those blessed ones who die in the very last days before the Lord's coming, during the great tribulation: ""Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"".

A little season- The very same term used in Rev. 20:3 of the "little season" during which the dragon is let loose on earth after his 'death' in the bottomless pit and he has recovered from his deadly wound. This connection strengthens the suggestion that Rev. 20:3 speaks of events at the time of the establishment of the 1000 years, and not at their end [AV "fulfilled" can be translated 'established']. The 'season', Gk. *chronos*, "time", is perhaps part of the time, times and half a time of the tribulation period of Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14.

Until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been- Note the AV makes a mess of translating this. This is the significance of "every one of them" - God is working to a precise number. Paul speaks of how the full number of the Gentiles must come in (Rom. 11:25). God is working to an exact number, and this is why the calendar date of the Lord's return and the outworking of these prophetic possibilities is to some extent open ended. The sooner that number come in, the

sooner the number to be slain are slain, then He will come. Note how the work of preaching is paralleled with the experience of suffering for that latter day witness which makes the converts. The full number of Gentile converts will be reached when the full number of preachers have died. We can expect there to be conversions to Christ despite the obvious risk of death for making that conversion. That is what happened in the first century, and that is the power of the Gospel. The Gospel must be preached for a witness to all nations, and the end shall come (Mt. 24:14). But *marturion*, "witness", can simply be a legal term referring to testimony or witness in a prosecution; through the Islamic 'trials' of those who refuse to convert, the Gospel will be spread by the witness of those who are slain for their testimony and refusal to convert to Islam. The "times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24) appear to refer to the time of Gentile domination of Jerusalem, and yet it is reapplied to refer to the time of Gentile opportunity to learn the Gospel, according to how Paul alludes to it in Rom. 11:25.

Their fellowservants and their brothers- "Fellowservants" suggests those who serve the same Master, the Lord Jesus. The difference between fellowservants and brothers may be intentional. Perhaps the group in view are Jewish Christians of the last days; their fellowservants are their fellow Christian believers, and their brothers may refer to other Jews. Of course the two terms may be used in simple parallelism, referring to the same group. Another insight is that "fellow servant and brother" is only elsewhere used in Revelation about the Angels (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). There must be some purpose in this. Perhaps the hint again is that these slain believers have their representative Angels in the court of Heaven. Their agony and crisis, just as for all of us, is intensely recognized and portrayed in Heaven. This is why there is an Angelic voice *in Heaven* rejoicing that the false accuser "of our brothers" has been cast down (Rev. 12:10). The Angels see us their charges on earth as their brothers. Truly man is not alone, beyond the steely silence of the skies there is huge Angelic activity and support for all our witness for His sake. Note how in 19:10 the brothers have the testimony of Jesus; in 22:9 the brothers are the prophets. A prophet is strictly one who speaks forth God's

word, not necessarily a predictor of the future. The prophets in the new Israel therefore are the preachers, the forth tellers, of God's word. The view of Judaism was that the prophets were a category of white faced saints somehow of an altogether higher category than ordinary members of God's people. But the Lord Jesus created a new Israel in which all His people were preachers, and thus all are prophets.

A further indication that the fifth seal concerns the last days is in the obvious connection between the altar scene and the parable of the widow crying for vengeance on her persecuting adversary; she would be avenged " when the Son of man cometh" (Lk. 18:8). The same word for 'avenge' is used (Lk. 18:3,5).

6:12 *A great earthquake*- This along with the sun becoming dark recalls the Lord's crucifixion, and is another reason to think that the sufferings of the believers in the tribulation lead them to a close identity with His sufferings, that they might share in His resurrection. And that principle in fact works out in all our sufferings, in whatever generation and context we live in. Mt. 24:7 says that there will be a number of earthquakes in the last days. And it may be that the various earthquakes recorded in Revelation are not all referring to the same earthquake. Zech. 14:5 associates an earthquake with the coming of Christ after Jerusalem has fallen to her latter day enemies. The seals appear to refer to the sufferings experienced by God's people (both natural and spiritual) in the land promised to Abraham; just as the horses of Zechariah 1 speak of the judgments upon the land, and then the horses of Zechariah 6 speak of the judgments upon those nations. The seven vials and the various judgments upon the beast system include similar language, but appear to refer to the Divine judgments upon the persecutors of His people. These judgments will be similar to those they meted out to Israel, according to the principle that the beast system is tormented with the same things they brought upon their victims (Rev. 18:7), being made to drink the same cup she gave others (Rev. 18:6). The earthquake of Rev. 6:12 is matched by the earthquakes of judgment upon Israel's

persecutors in Rev. 11:13,19; 16:18.

The sun became black- This is a clear example of the language of the Olivet prophecy about the last days being developed in Revelation. The allusion is to Mt. 24:29: "During [Gk. *meta*, AV "after"] the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light". We are clearly being pointed to a distinctly latter day interpretation. Whatever application this had in the first century (Acts 2:20), the final and main fulfilment is in our last days. The first century fulfilment may have included a literal element in the events of AD70 and the Lord's crucifixion, and so it may also be in the last days. But sun, moon and stars are introduced to us in Joseph's dream as symbols of Israel. We have here for sure a prediction of the total destruction of the Jewish system. It may be that initially a third part of the sun and moon are darkened (Rev. 8:12)- which suggests a literal darkening is not primarily in view. Rev. 9:2 says that the sun is darkened as a result of the beast system arising from the bottomless pit, the deadly wound healed and the vicious revival of the beast system [after an initial Western destruction of them?]. The sun being darkened and the moon turning into blood is the sign that the day of the Lord is about to come (Joel 2:31,32). We are to understand this event as happening immediately prior to the Lord's coming.

Black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became as blood- These terms are hard to interpret. Hair sackcloth would suggest mourning; but why would the sun mourn in this context? And why would the moon become blood? What really could that mean in terms of symbology? I see no very credible explanation in terms of symbology. But I came across online Special Paper 186 [1981] of the Geological Society of America, by Troy Pewe: *Desert Dust: Origin, Characteristics and Effect on Man*. In this very technical article, the author makes the throwaway comment that the words "Black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became as blood" are a superb description of an approaching dust storm coming out of the desert. The Americans called their 1991 military operation in Iraq 'Desert Storm'. The picture is of an army coming out of the desert; and this is exactly relevant to the invasion of Israel by the hordes who burst across the Euphrates and move

across the desert to engulf God's land and people.

6:13 The stars of heaven fell unto the earth- This would continue the usage of sun, moon and stars as in Joseph's dream- as symbols of the Jewish system (Gen. 37:9; Dt. 1:10). The sons of Jacob, the stars, will fall into the earth, losing their power and station. This is a direct quotation of the Lord's words about the situation in Israel and Jerusalem specifically in the very last days (Mt. 24:29). We note that the King of Babylon sought to exalt himself above the stars (Is. 14:13)- the Jews in Jerusalem. The connection may imply that the latter day king of Babylon is briefly successful in this, and those stars fall. The latter day little horn, the antichrist, succeeds in dominating God's people and casting them down like stars to the ground, and stamping upon them (Dan. 8:10). This is the basis for the Lord's prediction that Jerusalem shall be trodden down, stamped upon, by the Gentiles. We note the repeated focus upon the fate of Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

As the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a mighty wind- The fig tree and fruit on it is a Biblical picture of Israel's spiritual state. The "winter fruit" or "unripe fruit" refers to fruit that came covered in leaves in the Summer, but never turned ripe. It therefore remained until the Winter, and the strong Winter wind blew it off the tree. The reference is clear- Israel had time to produce spiritual fruit, but they didn't; and so the falling of their stars to earth is precisely because they had not brought forth spiritual fruit. The falling of the figs is parallel with the falling of the stars.

Shaken- The same word is used of the shaking of the Jewish heaven and earth / system in Heb. 12:26.

A mighty wind- This continues the allusion to a desert dust storm which has caused the moon to look like blood (see on 6:12). The wind is representative of both an Angel and also an army. Recall how the four winds / Angels blow on the sea to cause the beasts to

arise in Dan. 7. The mighty wind of the invaders is Angelically directed by God. The day of judgment at Christ's coming is likened to a mighty wind in Mt. 7:25,27. This mighty wind is to be connected with the four winds we will soon encounter in Rev. 7:1, which will blow upon the earth / land in judgment but will not affect the sealed, righteous remnant. The strong wind blows away the unripe fruit. It could be that the singular mighty wind prepares the way for the four winds of chapter 7, replete as they are with connection with the four winds of Daniel 7 which cause the beasts to arise in domination of the land.

6:14 *And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up*- Remember this is all in the context of the scroll being opened by the lamb. For that book to be opened, the scroll / heaven of political Israel has to be closed and removed for ever.

The Old Testament passage in view here in this section is clearly Is. 34:4-8. This however speaks of God's final judgment of Edom, which is Esau (Gen. 36:1,8). Revelation 6 is talking about judgments against Israel; but the point is that what latter day Esau / Edom does to Jacob will be done to them: "All of the army of the sky will be dissolved, the sky will be rolled up like a scroll, and all its armies will fade away, as a leaf fades from off a vine or a fig tree. For My sword has drunk its fill in the sky. Behold, it will come down on Edom and on the people of My curse for judgement. Yahweh's sword is filled with blood, it is covered with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen will come down with them and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; and their land will be drunken with blood and their dust made greasy with fat. For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion".

and every mountain and island were moved out of their places- I mentioned in notes at the beginning of Revelation 6 that the things done to Israel / the land during the seals are then repeated to Israel's abusers during the trumpets and vial judgments. The cup they made her drink must be drunk by them. And in keeping with this, the same ideas are found in Rev. 16:20- when Babylon falls, "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found". However, the repetition of the terms shows that literal islands and mountains are not in view- they cannot totally disappear twice. The supporters of Israel, the powers represented by mountains and islands, those who seemed so stable and eternally fixed in their place, will remove; just as the figurative mountains and islands supportive of Babylon will likewise. I have explained elsewhere that the West must fall or be rendered ineffective.

The final tribulation of Israel will be at the same time as the Elijah ministry; and the intention is to bring down the mountains, making a smooth way for the second coming of the Lord Jesus (Is. 40:4; Lk. 3:5). These judgments, involving mountains moving, are all part of that preparatory process.

6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman- The kings of the land are parallel with the stars who fall from the sky, the heavens and earth who are rolled up. The leading lights of the Jewish system are the kings of the land. The kings of the land are described later in Revelation as facing judgment for their support of the beast against Israel. The current Jewish rulers of the land are to be replaced, therefore, by a new set of rulers of the land; who will be punished with the same judgment they meted out to the rulers whom they overthrew. The "princes" (AV "great men") translates the same Greek word found in Rev. 18:23 about how the great men of the earth supported Babylon but would now be judged. Indeed, the terms used here in 6:15 are elsewhere found about those who will be judged in the land for having supported Babylon. The Jewish mighty ones, the stars and heavens, will be

replaced, however briefly, by those of the Babylon / beast system. Likewise “chief captains” is found again in Rev. 19:18. The wide range of people listed here in 6:15 stretch right across society; and similar words are used about the entire range who accept the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16) and follow the beast (Rev. 19:18). Jewish society in the Israel of today is to be replaced by that of their invaders and the system of the beast.

Hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains-
This hugging of the earth is a result of the stars and unripe figs falling to the earth (:13). The kings of the land are thus connected with the stars and unripe figs- representative of Israel’s unspiritual leadership. The allusion is to Is. 2:19-21, which was initially addressed to the proud Jews who were in Jerusalem just prior to the Assyrian invasion. They are the prototypes of arrogant, self-assured Israel in the land today: “Men shall go into the caves of the rocks and into the holes of the earth from before the terror of Yahweh, and from the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily. In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold which have been made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the caverns of the rocks and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Yahweh, and from the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily”. But Isaiah 2 speaks of this hiding in the rocks as part of the preparatory process for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, on the tops of the very mountains where men only recently had been hiding themselves (Is. 2:2-4). Yet again, we are dealing with last days language, and also specifically about the situation in and around Jerusalem.

The hiding in caves from the face of the Lamb recalls the desire of those in Jerusalem living just before the Babylonian invasion: they wanted to hide themselves from the Lord’s presence (Jer. 23:24). Likewise the Jews of Amos 9:3 sought to hide themselves in the mountains of Carmel. The idea of hiding from the Lamb very much suggests the kings of the land in view are Jewish

rulers of Israel. The Lamb's wrath was being manifested through the events of the seals, and the Jewish leadership desperately seek to hide from it.

Living in the caves and mountains recalls the behaviour of the faithful in Heb. 11:38. Perhaps that connection is purposeful, to hint that through all this suffering, a minority will come to faith in Christ and repentance.

6:16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb- Fall on us- This again is a quotation from the Lord's words about the judgment to come upon Israel because of their crucifixion of Him (Lk. 23:30). It is also a quotation from Hos. 10:8, when because of "the sin of Israel... they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us". My point is that these passages are all talking specifically about Israelites; the kings / rulers of the land of the sixth seal are Jews in the last days within an Israel that is to be crushed amidst unspeakable abuse and atrocity, as the pent up Moslem and Arab wrath of centuries explodes upon them. The Hosea passage in its context speaks of Israel lamenting that they have no human leaders any more (Hos. 10:3,7) and how "the nations shall be gathered against them" (Hos. 10:10). This is precisely the message of the sixth seal- the heavens / stars of the Jewish system fall, sun and moon no longer shine, and all nations are gathered together against Jerusalem at Armageddon.

Hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the throne- There are multiple Old Testament statements that in the final time of Israel's sufferings, God will hide His face from them (e.g. Dt. 31:17,18; 32:20; Ez. 39:29; Mic. 3:4). This is from their perspective- the reality is, according to this insight here, that Israel themselves seek to hide from His face.

If the reference is to God enthroned in Heaven, this fear seems rather misplaced. Would sinful men experiencing judgment really feel they were in the presence of the throne of God in Heaven, and wish to run away from the one enthroned? The reference is more appropriately understood in a futuristic sense. In some sense, Jesus is now visibly enthroned, on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and the sinful Jews slink away from His throne, just as the rejected are pictured doing in 1 Jn. 2:28 Gk.. Rev. 4:2,9 have introduced the Lord Jesus as enthroned *at His return*. These sinful Jewish leaders have some sense of this, and wish to slink away from His presence in rejection. These people seek to be hid from the face / presence of the wrathful Lamb, but in 14:10 we read of how some will be tormented in the presence / before the face of the Lamb. Their desire to escape His judgment doesn't come to anything.

6:17 *The great day of His wrath is come*- The situation clearly refers to the last day. The Old Testament 'day of wrath' is usually against Israel and her leaders; and these are in view here, the kings of the land. The Babylonian invasion was the day of wrath (Dt. 29:28; Jer. 32:31; 44:6; Lam. 1:12; 2:1.21.22; Zeph. 2:2,3). The same word translated "wrath" is used by the Lord in the Olivet Prophecy concerning how there shall be "wrath upon this people". The people of Israel are therefore those who suffer under the sixth seal. "The great day" is Joel's "great and notable day of the Lord", the second coming. Jude 6 uses the very expression in talking about "the judgment of the great day", "the great day of God Almighty" of Rev. 16:14.

And who shall be able to stand?- The allusion is to Mal. 3:1-3 concerning the coming of the latter day Elijah prophet to Israel: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, He comes! says Yahweh of Armies. But who can endure the day of His coming? And *who will stand* when He appears? For He

is like a refiner's fire, and like launderer's soap; and He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver". At the time of the sixth seal, Elijah (or the Elijah ministry) will be active in Israel amongst Jewish people. Those who do not respond to this ministry will be unable to stand before the Lord.

Revelation 7: The 144,000

The seals speak of the latter day outpouring of judgment and trouble upon the land and people of Israel, perhaps throughout the entire territory of the land promised to Abraham. God's judgments on His people are never simply the wrath of a powerful Deity; they are intended to elicit repentance. They are His appeal to men. After the seals, we read of the sealing of 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel. This could be all purely symbolic- 12 tribes multiplied by the 12 disciples, making 144, and thousands of them, speaking therefore of Jews who had come to Christ. But the laboured repetition of the "12,000" and the names of each tribe is striking. It may simply be that the Lord wishes to stress how every single one of those latter day believers is known to Him. Or it could be a literal number, and the ethnicity / tribal origins of the Jews is known to the Lord. But I somewhat doubt that kind of literalism is to found in Revelation or the entire apocalyptic genre. Perhaps there is a geographical reference- Jews from the entire extent of the land and tribal allotments of Israel.

The Seals and Islam

Reading through the seals is like reading parts of the Koran and Hadith which speak of the judgments which Islam wishes upon the Jews. This is not simply because the Koran is full of garbled allusions to the Old and New Testaments [e.g. Sura 2.249 confuses several Bible stories: "And when Saul set out with the army, he said: Lo! Allah will try you by [the ordeal of] a river. Whosoever therefore drinketh thereof he is not of me, and whosoever tasteth it not he is of me, save him who taketh [thereof] in the hollow of his

hand. But they drank thereof, all save a few of them. And after he had crossed [the river], he and those who believed with him, they said: We have no power this day against Goliath and his hosts. But those who knew that they would meet Allah exclaimed: How many a little company hath overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave! Allah is with the steadfast”]. The reality is that radical Islamists, in strict obedience to the Koran, will seek to bring these judgments upon the people and land of Israel because they think this is what the Koran tells them to do; and in so doing they will fulfil Revelation. For the kind of brutality they practice is only possible for a person who has been brainwashed with religious or political philosophy. That’s why IS volunteers are firstly sent for weeks of ‘teaching’ before being sent to fight. The kind of extreme, severe abuse of Israel which is required by the language of Revelation and Daniel 7 is such that it would require people fuelled by deep religious programming to execute it. The Quran often speaks of God’s severity against the Jews because of their supposed sins against Mohammad and refusal to accept Islam, e.g. Sura 2.211: “Ask of the Children of Israel how many a clear revelation we gave them! He who altereth the grace of Allah after it hath come unto him [for him], lo! Allah is severe in punishment”. This is the reasoning which will inspire the Moslems to abuse the Jews so intensely. “Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews... we have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom” (Sura 4.160,161). Unashamed aggression is taught by the Koran multiple times, e.g. Sura 9.123 "O ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you". “Then seized I those who disbelieved, and how intense was my abhorrence!” (Sura 35.26). And so we could continue:

"Fight (slay and kill) those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the last day (judgement day), nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, nor they follow the religion of truth (the religion of Islam) out of those who have been given the Book (Jews and Christians), until they pay the tax, in

acknowledgment of superiority and (recognition that) they are in a state of subjection (to Islam)" (Sura 9:29).

"Worst among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) wilt thou find the Jews and pagans" (Sura 5:82).

"O ye who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other, and he amongst you that turns to them for friendship is one of them Verily, Allah guideth not a people unjust (Jews and Christians)" (Sura 5:51).

"Those who reject Islam among the people of the book (Jews and Christians) and among the polytheists (all other religions) will be in hell fire to dwell in there for ever and they are the worst of creatures" (Sura 98:6).

Not only Revelation, but many other latter day prophecies are full of language strikingly similar to that found in the Koran. The jihadist Moslems seek to obey the Koran, and by doing so, they will be fulfilling Bible prophecy about the last days. For example, Joel 2:6 LXX speaks of how in the final day of the Lord, Israel will be invaded by a latter day Assyrian, "a numerous and strong people" (:2), and "Before them shall the people [of Israel] be crushed: every face shall be as the blackness of a caldron (AV "gather blackness")". The Kuran in Sura 7.106 speaks of this happening at the last day, when Moslems will blacken the faces of those who refuse to convert to their religion: "On the Day when [some] faces will be whitened and [some] faces will be blackened; and as for those whose faces have been blackened, it will be said unto them: Disbelieved ye after your [profession of] belief? Then taste the punishment for that ye disbelieved".

The punishments of the seals are the very punishments which the Koran says must be brought upon the Jews in order to make them repent and accept Islam and that Mohammed was a messenger to them: "We shall test you with fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits [so that] when afflicted with calamity [they will] say, Truly!

To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return" (Surah 2.155,156). These calamities will indeed cause a remnant to repent-but return to the God of Israel, rather than convert to Islam. Surah 4.160,161 and the Hadith [expansions] upon it speak of starving the Jews and torturing them, which is how I interpreted Rev. 6:5-8: "Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews we forbade them good things which were [before] made lawful unto them, and because of their much hindering from Allah's way, and of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people's wealth by false pretences, We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom".

Sura 17, *Al-Isra*, is about future Moslem judgments upon "The children of Israel". Sura 17.7,8 speaks of how latter day Moslems will repeat the historical judgments of the Jews upon them. This explains why the IS and other Jihadist groups see themselves as the revival of Babylon and Assyria: "So, when the time for the second [of the judgments] came [we roused against you others of our slaves] to ravage you, and to enter the Temple even as they entered it the first time, and to lay waste all that they conquered with an utter wasting. It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if ye repeat [the crime] we shall repeat [the punishment], and we have appointed hell a dungeon for the disbelievers". The language of utter wasting and taking the temple mount is exactly that of latter day Bible prophecies about what is to happen to Israel in the last days. The Hadith and some Suras of the Koran are full of such language of what shall be done to the Jews and Israel: "we annihilate it with complete annihilation... or punish it with dire punishment... There is not a township but we shall destroy it ere the Day of Resurrection, or punish it with dire punishment" (Sura 17.16,58). And radical Islam is all set up to fulfil it. The same Sura continues to liken that final destruction of the Jews to a book of judgment being opened: "We shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open. [And it will be said unto him]: Read thy Book" (Sura 17.13,14). Likewise Sura

17.58: "There is not a township but we shall destroy it ere the Day of Resurrection, or punish it with dire punishment. That is set forth in the Book [of our decrees]". This is the significance of the judgments upon Israel in the last days being likened to a scroll / book being opened.

Digression: Beheadings

The IS will be a strictly religious entity, keen to take the predictions and commands of the Koran and Hadith as literally as possible. Their crucifixions of their enemies are in strict obedience to passages like Sura 5.36: "The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified... Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom". And the IS likewise are careful to obey the commands to behead enemies: "When you encounter the unbelievers on the battlefield, strike off their heads until you have crushed them completely; then bind the prisoners tightly," (Sura 47). The world today is indeed shocked at reports of ISIS' gruesome sweep into northern Iraq. The UK *Daily Mail* reported of ISIS: "They lined the streets with the decapitated heads of police and soldiers". Beheading is now a well-known method used by the IS, popularized by their YouTube videos of beheading Western hostages. We note that it is the fate of those who do not worship the beast or accept his mark in Rev. 20:4. Apologists claim that the Koran doesn't support these beheadings; but it does. *Sura* 8:12 says that beheading can be used in order to psychologically terrify the non-Moslems: "I will cast dread into the hearts of the unbelievers. Strike off their heads, then, and strike off all of their fingertips". *Sura* 47:3 is similar: "When you encounter the unbelievers on the battlefield, strike off their heads". Beheading is justified in some of the hadith on the basis that Muhammad ordered the beheading of 700 Jews in Medina for allegedly plotting against him. It is therefore to be used specifically against God's people.

Until recently, it seemed impossible that such a method of death would be literally used- but it is now becoming known worldwide that it is indeed being practiced and gloried in within the entity that is taking over the land promised to Abraham. It must be noted that Islam is the only major world religion today that legitimizes beheadings.

Rev. 20:4 says that there will be a special blessing for those who were beheaded for the sake of Jesus, and this involved them in not worshipping the beast or receiving his mark. The short term fulfilment of this was in the beast as the Roman empire. But the Roman Empire only beheaded *citizens* (e.g. Paul); non-citizens were killed in other ways, e.g. by crucifixion, throwing to wild beasts. Mentioning beheading was therefore purposeful. The text could more easily have said ‘martyred’ or ‘killed’. The blessing in view was therefore particularly for Roman citizens who refused to accept the faith of their own empire, for the sake of Christ. The climax of all Bible prophecy, however, is not in history; it is in the literal coming of Christ to earth. In the last days, therefore, Rev. 20:4 must have its final and ultimate fulfilment. But the incipient fulfilment in the days of Rome guides us towards understanding that final fulfilment. I suggest therefore that this class of latter day martyrs refers specifically to those who are citizens within the area controlled by the latter day entity known as the beast. Those who do not submit to its rulership will be beheaded. And we are already seeing that happening in the IS, with roads lined with heads. And we see the IS forcing Christians and Yezidis to convert to Islam, or to face the sword- quite literally, in beheading. They stated themselves in July 2014: “We offer them three choices: Islam; the *dhimma* contract—involving payment of *jizya*; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword”. The blessing of Rev. 20:4 is for those who endure this for the sake of Christ.

Here are pictures from IS media of the forced conversion of Yezidi men to Islam; those who refused were beheaded:







Revelation 7: The Sealing of the 144,000 and the Great Multitude

7:1 *The four corners of the earth*- Proof enough that the earth / land doesn't refer to the whole planet but to a specific territory on the planet- the land, promised to Abraham, with defined borders. The Hebrew word translated 'borders' in the context of the borders of the land is also translated "corners". We think of Ez. 7:2 : "You, son of man, thus says the Lord Yahweh to the land of Israel, An end: the end has come on the four corners of the land". The four Angels on the borders of the land connect with the four Angels on the Euphrates, the northern / eastern border of the land, who shall release the hordes they are holding back to surge towards Israel. That process may already be in operation. We are here introduced to the idea that there are Angels holding back the winds of destruction on the borders of God's land and people. This explains the miraculous survival of the state of Israel since 1948. The hordes of neighbouring enemies have been restrained- by the Angels on the borders of the land. But they will remove that restraint, and we can see that already happening. It's worth noting that the key enemies of Israel in the Old Testament are described as dwelling in the corners of the earth / land (Jer. 9:26; 25:23; 49:32); and Israel are described as going into captivity in the corners of the earth / land promised to Abraham (Dt. 32:26; Is. 11:12). So it's appropriate that the winds of destruction come from these same corners of the land. Rev. 20:8 defines "the nations which are in the four quarters of the land" as being "Gog and Magog"; clearly the Ezekiel 38 Gog is being defined as the epitome of the nations along the borders of Israel, who both historically and currently are Israel's main enemies.

The Four Winds

The four winds of the earth / land- The situation is reminiscent of Dan. 7:2; the four beasts which dominate the earth / land of Israel in the last days all arise as the result of the four winds / spirits / Angels operating over the sea of nations. Now, the four winds / spirits / Angels are told not to blow upon the land and sea until the faithful have been sealed. The connection would teach that the final domination of the land by the beast systems occurs after the events of the seals; or perhaps, the seals are part of that domination period, but there is a break, the winds of destruction are held back, so that those Jews who have responded in repentance can be sealed. In Ez. 37:9, the wind from the four winds comes to spiritually revive the spiritually dead Israel who have returned to their land from dispersion. But here in Rev. 7, these four winds are the winds of destruction. It is from them and the desolation associated with them- that spiritual life is breathed into Israel. The winds are controlled by the four Angels who 'stand' or 'are appointed' at the four corners of the land- it may be that they were appointed from Old Testament times, not least in Daniel 7.

Significantly, the Koran likens the judgment of Jews and apostates to the coming of winds. The whole of Sura 77 is entitled *Al-Mursalat* (The Emissaries, Winds Sent Forth). These winds of judgment come "when the stars are put out, and when the sky is riven asunder, and when the mountains are blown away" (Sura 77:8-11). This is all very much the language of the seals, trumpets and vials. The judgments upon Israel are brought by the Moslems in terms of their own understanding of condemnation. And they too will be judged in the same way- the thing they greatly fear comes upon them, the cup they give Israel to drink, they must drink.

We noted at the beginning of the seals in Revelation 6 that the first four seals, the four horsemen, are based upon the horsemen of Zechariah 1 who desolate the land of Israel and scatter her people. Here in Revelation, the thought then moves on to the four winds-

and the same is to be found in Zechariah, where Zech. 2:6 associates them with the scattering into the provinces of Babylon and Persia: “flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I will gather you from the four winds of heaven” (LXX). The land of the north (Babylon, where Judah were in captivity in Zechariah’s time) is “the four winds” because its territory covered much of the land promised to Abraham. The same Hebrew words are found in Zech. 6:5, where the four horses responsible for desolating Israel are “the four winds [AV “spirits”] of the heaven”. Judah were also gathered from the four winds in the sense that the Angels were with them, as demonstrated by Ezekiel’s vision of the four beast cherubim. This is surely the idea of Mark 13:27: “Then shall He send His Angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth [land] to the uttermost part of Heaven”. The earth / land in view is that promised to Abraham, and the heartland of Israel’s enemies is [and always has been] at the uttermost part of it, at the Euphrates border [where ISIS are from and are currently]. The parallel between Heaven and earth here in the Lord’s teaching is in line with what we find so often in Revelation- the situation on earth is reflected by the Angels in Heaven who stand in the Heavenly throne room.

The four winds / four Heavenly cherubim beasts are the Heavenly antithesis of the four winds and four beasts of Daniel 7 on earth who desolate the land. The four horns which arose from the third empire were “towards” the four Angelic winds of Heaven; there was a connection between them (Dan. 8:8; 11:4). There is no such thing as radical evil- even the worst desolators of God’s people are under direct Angelic control. We note too the prophecy of the four winds in Jer. 49:36 against Elam, modern day Iran: “I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds”. The “quarters” of Heaven suggest that Heaven, like the earth / land with its corners, is a territory. I suggest that ‘Heaven’ here is a reflection of the earth / land promised to Abraham. Elam / Iran will likewise be judged by the Arab nations living in the corners of the land promised to Abraham, and will be scattered into those areas.

The four winds [plural] are spoken of as one wind (7:1). This is rather like how the four beasts are effectively one beast. Scattering to the four winds was scattering to “the land of the north” (Zech. 2:6). The four cherubim beasts of Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10 are effectively one system, moving the same way. We shouldn’t therefore be necessarily looking for four distinct entities to dominate the land in the last days. The ‘four’ refers to Heaven’s organization, and how it is reflected on earth.

Holding the four winds- The Greek for ‘holding’ means restraining. This sounds similar to the idea of the Angels restraining the hordes which then burst over the Euphrates to desolate the land; and to the restraining influence which stops the antichrist being revealed in 2 Thess. 2:5-7. This period of restraint is maybe seen by John in order to serve as a dividing point between the suffering of the six seals, and the fact that some in the land repent as a result of this. These are sealed, and then the trumpet judgments are poured out, and then the desolating powers are destroyed, as outlined in the seven vials. But there may not be an actual period of time required to ‘seal’ the 144,000.

Blow on the earth- The language of winds blowing is that of the final judgment in Mt. 7:25,27.

7:2 Another Angel ascending from the East- The East is ‘the sunrising’. The idea of the sun rising connects with the language of the Lord Jesus returning as the sunrise (Mal. 4:2). Again the time is located around the second coming of the Lord. The allusion may be to the Lord’s description of His coming as a bright shining arising from the East (Mt. 24:27).

Having the seal- Other references to sealing refer to a mark being placed on a person by God which *He* recognizes, although the world doesn’t see it. Thus Paul’s converts were a seal of His

apostleship (1 Cor. 9:2)- to God, but not to men. The seal of God is simply that “The Lord knows them that are His” (2 Tim. 2:19). We are sealed by being given the Spirit in our hearts, very privately and intimately (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). But that knowledge is to Him, and is not publically displayed. For people to be sealed, they are as it were known by God, stamped with His mark. It might even be that there is a mass baptism into Christ of Jewish people in the land- that would certainly be a point at which believers are sealed. This would admirably fulfil the otherwise strange prophecy of Zech. 13:1, that a fountain will be opened in Jerusalem in which the inhabitants of Jerusalem can be washed from their sin.

The outline idea is of an Angel putting a mark on God’s people so that other Angels don’t harm them with the judgments they are pouring out. And this of course recalls the Passover Angel hovering over the homes of the Israelites who had placed the mark of the Lamb on their doorposts, so that “the Destroyer” Angel would not destroy them. Ez. 9:4 is similar- a mark is placed upon the forehead of those in Jerusalem who are repentant, so that they are not hurt by the judgments of the Babylonian invasion and destruction of the temple. These allusions further encourage us to understand the 144,000 as Jewish Christians within the land / earth.

The four Angels- In Daniel 7 it is the four beasts who do the hurting of the land. But these are but the earthly counterparts of the Heavenly cherubim, which are portrayed also as four beasts. And here the point is made explicit- there are four Angels coordinating the desolation of the land in the last days.

To whom it was given to hurt...- Again we note the constant comfort that it is God who allows the desolation and even ultimately empowers it. The ‘hurting’ is of the earth, sea and trees (:3). The same word was used in 6:6, where the oliveyards and vineyards were not to be then hurt. This may mean that now the judgments upon the land are poured out upon it.

Sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads- This sealing of the 144,000 is presented at the beginning of Revelation 14 as the counterpart to the sealing of the other inhabitants of the land with the mark of the beast in *their* foreheads which we find at the end of Revelation 13. The faithful who come through the traumas of the six seal judgments of chapter 6, refusing to take the easy way out by receiving the mark of the beast in their forehead, are sealed with the Father's Name in their foreheads. They are known by Him, and they know Him. The presence or absence of 'marks in the forehead' decides whether the beast system will persecute people or not; and in response to this, the Divine judgments will likewise be upon those who lack the Father's Name but instead have the beast's name (Rev. 9:4; 13:16; 14:1,9; 20:4). And it is those who have the Father's Name in their foreheads who will again be given it yet more permanently at the day of judgment (Rev. 22:4). This means that their response to the beast's persecution is in effect their day of judgment ahead of time; because they refuse to accept his mark in their foreheads, therefore the Father will give them His mark in their foreheads- which is the reward of the faithful at the last day. This is a feature I commented upon extensively in *The Last Days*- that our response to the tribulation is effectively our judgment day. And this has an appropriacy to it- for if the generation alive at the Lord's coming will be the only one to never die, they need to be prepared in a unique way for the passage into eternity which they will experience. And this will be achieved through their experience of the tribulation.

The mark of the beast in the forehead is clearly intended to be understood as the inverse of the "seal of God" which is in the forehead of the believers (Rev. 9:4). The word *sphragis* used there definitely means a seal, and it is matched by the "mark" of the beast. That mark can be understood, therefore, also as a seal- and what more likely than the seal of Mohammed? It may be that signet rings are used to stamp documents, or it forms part of an insignia

without which no business can be done in the land. The Koran itself speaks of how true Moslems will have the mark of Mohammad on their foreheads as a sign that they worship: "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves. Thou [O Muhammad] seest them bowing and falling prostrate [in worship], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] acceptance. The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration" (Surah 48:29). In Revelation 14:9,11, having the mark of the beast is connected with worshipping him. The Islamic jihadist movement set to take over Israel is a highly religious movement, seeking to strictly obey the Koran. They are highly conscious of these verses. They perceive those who don't have *their* mark in the forehead as having the mark in the forehead of condemnation (Surah 9:35); the idea of a seal being placed upon non-Moslems who refuse to convert to Islam is found also in Sura 7.101: "Thus doth Allah print upon the hearts [minds / foreheads] of disbelievers". All this is in fact the picture presented in Revelation of sealing with forehead marks. We have either the mark of the beast [Islam], or of the Father. And so the Koran also says in This is exactly the idea of Sura 7.46,48: "And on the Heights are men who know them all by their marks... the dwellers on the Heights call unto men whom they know by their marks". Islam believes that the unbelievers are sealed by God in their unbelief- whilst the Moslems are sealed as believers. "Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment" (Sura 2:7). Note too that the Koran and Hadith repeatedly speak of faithful Moslems as the servants of Allah, with Mohammad as the supreme servant. The description of the 144,000 as "servants of our God" is purposeful in this context; in the time of Moslem domination of the land, they will be the *true* servants of God, in opposition to the Moslems who falsely claim to be His servants. In this context it's worth noting the claim that "The value of the word "Muhammad" equals the value of the word "Jesus." (Jesus =

444, Muhammad = 444). Therefore, "Muhammad seal" and "Jesus seal" both equal 666".

The seal is the Name of the Father, Yahweh (14:1). The only personage in the Old Testament who had the Yahweh Name in their forehead was the High Priest, who on his mitre had written 'Holiness / Dedicated to Yahweh'. The idea was that all of the 144,000 are as the High Priest- in that they are "in Christ" and all that is true of Him is true of them.

7:4 I heard the number- This is added to highlight the contrast with the "great multitude which no man could number" (7:9). This 'hearing' contrasts with how John "saw" the great multitude. I suggest that the same group are in view, just seen from different perspectives. He heard something happening in Heaven- there, the 144,000 are marked off or sealed. There is not necessarily any physical mark upon the faithful, repentant Jewish remnant, apart from that they refuse to wear the mark or seal of the beast, which I have suggested is the seal of Mohammed. There will therefore be a tension between the seals- the seal of Mohammed, the mark of the beast, which is visible; and the invisible seal of God which is seen only in Heaven.

144,000- The 12 x 12 is obviously intentional, as if to say that this group is the true Israel. The thousands would refer to their being 'many'. The sealing of a group of faithful within Israel parallels the 7000 "reserved" by God out of Israel for Himself at the time of Elijah's ministry. The three and a half year ministry of the historical Elijah looks forward to the latter day Elijah ministry during the tribulation for the same period. As 7000 faithful were 'reserved' by God for Himself at that time, so the 144,000 are in the last days. The 7000 remnant in Elijah's time were "left" or 'remained' to God (1 Kings 19:18). The same word is used of the latter day remnant within Israel: "He that is left in Zion, and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is

written among the living in Jerusalem" (Is. 4:3). This is the same idea in essence as in Rev. 7- the 144,000 are numbered and written, carefully noted by God. The same word is used of the latter day Jewish remnant in Is. 11:11,16; 17:6; 24:6 (the few men that will remain when the earth / land is made desolate); 37:31 (the faithful remnant in Jerusalem at the time of the Assyrian invasion which typifies that of the last days); 49:21; Jer. 21:7 (the remnant who remain after the plague, sword and famine of the Babylonian invasion have devoured them, all of which are the source material for the events of the six seals which the 144,000 have come through); 50:20 ("I will pardon them whom I reserve", speaking of the forgiveness of the latter day repentant remnant); Amos 5:3 (the ten percent of Israel who 'remain'); Zeph. 3:12 (the 'remnant' of the "afflicted and poor people" who "shall trust in the name of the Lord"); Zech. 9:7 (the remnant who will "be for our God" after the destruction of the majority of Israel); 12:14 (the 'remaining ones' who weep in repentance for crucifying Jesus).

The 144,000 are the antithesis of the followers of the beast-these follow the Lamb wherever *He* goes. It's highly significant that Muhammad is supposed to have had 144,000 followers or *Sahaba* [Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, "Ashab"]. This is supposed to connect with the claim that there are 144,000 prophets in Islam [Elwood Morris Wherry & George Sale, *A Comprehensive Commentary on the Quran*]. The 144,000 who follow the Lamb are thus in purposeful contrast with the 144,000 who are supposed to have followed Mohammad wherever he went. This confirms the entire thrust of our exposition- that whatever previous historical fulfilments there have been, the latter day application of Revelation is to events in the land promised to Abraham in the last days whilst it is under Moslem domination.

Revelation is full of language which is also found in the Koran- because Islam, like Babylon, Assyria and Rome before them, are offering God's people a fake replica of real spirituality and the true

Hope of Israel. They are an anti-Christ, an imitation Jesus, a false 12 tribes of Israel rather than the true. This explains why the promises of the Kingdom of God in Revelation are full of language which is also used in the Koran for the reward of faithful Moslems. Revelation will have intense relevance to the persecuted under Moslem domination- the rewards offered by Islam will be seen to be a fake Kingdom of God. Thus in Sura 2:25,266: "Give glad tidings [cp. 'the Gospel'] to those who believe [Moslems]... for them will be gardens under which the rivers of Paradise flow... they will be provided with a fruit therefrom... trees with all kinds of fruit... they will abide therein for ever". The final visions of Revelation offer eternal residence in a restored Paradise and eating the fruit of the tree- to those who refuse to accept the religion of the beast, Islam.

Of all the tribes- This makes more poignant the omission of Dan and Ephraim from the list. Due to their apostacy, they are no longer numbered amongst the children of Israel. The order of the tribes is also not according to their age, but it may be according to their faithfulness to God. This is therefore the picture at the time of final judgment, when the true Israel have finally been made up and numbered.

The very laboured mentioning of 12,000 faithful within each tribe may be because they are the antithesis to some yet unseen aspect of the beast. In the ISIS magazine *Dabiq* No. 4 (October 2014) the Islamic State on the back page (p. 56) quote a hadith which states: "They will then gather for the *Malmanah* (the grand battle before the Hour) [the equivalent of Biblical Armageddon], they will come under eighty banners, with each banner there will be twelve thousand people". The IS wish to consciously fulfil such Islamic prophecies in order to hasten the coming of the antiChrist and then the Mahdi. Perhaps in an attempt to fulfil these predictions, there will be groups of 12,000 Moslems who play some role in the earth / land promised to Abraham. Their antithesis-

the Jews who refuse to convert to Islam- are therefore here presented as twelve tribes of twelve thousand.

The Koran claims that the twelve sons of Jacob were in fact 'Moslems', and that current Jewish claims to being descended from Jacob's twelve sons are false (Surah 2.140 "Or say you that Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaque (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob) and Al-Asbat [the twelve sons of Ya'qub (Jacob)] were Jews or Christians? Say, "Do you know better or does Allah (knows better; that they all were Muslims)? And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony)". Again we see the relevance of the sealing of people from the 12 tribes of natural Israel- if at the very time this happens, they are being accused of not being from those 12 tribes, and that in fact it is Arab Moslems who are the true 12 tribes. This situation is reflected by the way in which the descriptions of the 144,000 are in terms elsewhere used by the beast system. Thus they are sealed, just as the beast seals his followers; the great multitude who proclaim "Victory!" before the throne (7:10) are parodied by the beast's followers doing the same in 13:4.

7:9 A great multitude which no man could number- An allusion to how the seed of Abraham would be innumerable (Gen. 13:16; 16:10; 32:12; Hos. 1:10). The great multitude are the true Israel, and are thus parallel with the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel.

Out of every nation, comprised of all tribes, peoples and tongues- This is the same term used about the nations, tribes, peoples under the domination of the beast (17:15), and seems almost a title of the beast system in 11:9. The great multitude are therefore being parodied by the followers of the beast, who also claim [as the Islamic State do] to be universal in their support base. This is just as the 144,000 followers of the lamb are parodied by the supposed 144,000 followers of Mohammad. The events of the

last days will bring about the final and ultimate clash of God's Kingdom and the kingdoms of men.

They "stood before the throne", as men will "stand before" God at the day of judgment (Rev. 20:12 s.w.).

White robes- This has been used about those slain at the start of the tribulation (6:11). In this we see the connection between the seals and the sealing of the 144,000 / great multitude. A specific group is in view- those who were slain in the tribulation.

Of all nations- The multitude came 'out of' [*ek*] "great tribulation" (:14); yet they also come *ek*, out of, the nations, peoples, languages of :9. The suggestion would be that this group of various peoples are those where the tribulation has occurred. The very same Greek phrase "nations, tribes, peoples and languages" is used later in Revelation for the peoples within the land promised to Abraham who support the beast system (11:9; 17:15). The beast / whore rides upon them- and her dominion is over the earth / land, which is therefore where these tribes and peoples are located. This also solves the logistical problem of imagining that literally every tribe and language group of the Amazon or central Africa or Pacific islands must come under the direct control of any one world system. We can legitimately translate *ek* as 'out of'; the same word is found in Rev. 18:4 where "My people" are asked to come "out of" Babylon and the beast system- the mass of peoples and tribes within the land promised to Abraham from Euphrates to Egypt, which is under the control and religion of the beast. It's a typical Western stereotype to assume that all the people living in that area are simply 'Arabs'. That's as facile as saying that Europe is inhabited by 'Europeans'. The area is full of various tribes and ethnicities, as the conflicts in Iraq and Syria have demonstrated. So the statement that the great multitude had come *ek* out of the various nations and tribes is not merely a statement of fact, it is a commendation of the fact that they had spiritually 'come out of'

those peoples. Rev. 15:2 repeatedly uses the word *ek* to speak of how the faithful had come out of the beast system: "Them that had gotten the victory over [*ek*, out of- "over" is not the correct translation] the beast, and over [*ek*, out of] his image, and over [*ek*, out of] his mark, and over [*ek*, out of] the number of his name". Rev. 7:9 says that the faithful come *ek* out of the *phule*, the tribes [AV "kindreds"]. But we have just read with painstaking repetition of how the 144,000 have come *ek* out of the *phule*, the tribes, of *Israel!* We must not fail to give this due weight in interpretation. The 144,000 come out of the tribes of Israel, and the great multitude come out of the tribes who are willingly dominated by the beast. The picture is that the tribes of Israel submit to the beast, but the faithful refuse to do so. Such a covenant is suggested by Dan. 9, and I have commented upon this elsewhere in writing about the Antichrist. This coming 'out of' the beast system may be in view in Mt. 24:31, where we learn that the Lord will gather His elect *ek*, out of, "the four winds". And Rev. 7:1 in this very context speaks of the four winds of desolation to come upon Israel, from which the 144,000 are preserved.

7:10 *Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne*- Revelation is full of allusion to Roman imperial court scenes and rituals. In its first century application, it was an appeal for Christians to not convert to the imperial cult, even at the risk of persecution and death. In its latter day reference, Revelation may well be found to be full of reference to and parody of the culture and structure of the entity which dominates the land in the last days. In the first century, the Caesar declared himself as the 'saviour'. The Roman emperors often gathered people from all nations and languages within the empire, who stood before his throne and cried 'Victory!' or 'Salvation!' to the Caesar. This was seen as legitimizing the Caesar as chosen and approved by the entire empire. Radical Islam loves to use the cry of 'Victory!' and to talk of how each town they overrun has been liberated or saved. They also love to claim that they have support from worldwide and

not simply from Arab Moslems. The crowd of believers here parodies their claims by giving the true international worship to the true God rather than the false one.

7:13 Clothed in white robes- This is the clothing of Angels; they are presented as at one with their Angelic representatives in the court of Heaven. The Lord Jesus is likewise presented as clothed both in white and in a red “garment dipped in blood” (Rev. 19:13). The whore who leads the beast is also described as clothed in white linen (Rev. 18:16) and also in *porphura* (Rev. 17:4), a word which can mean ‘dyed red’. The external clothing of the real Christ and the antiChrist is similar; because the antiChrist is indeed a fake Christ. Moslems also believe in dressing in white robes; it’s as if this group who come out of the Moslem dominated land of Israel are the antithesis of their persecutors.

From where did they come?- The idea is that they had come out of something, namely, the beast system. See on :9 *Of all nations*.

7:14 Came out of great tribulation- The great tribulation in latter day Israel of Mt. 24:9,21,29. ‘Coming out’ can be a Hebraism for coming forth successfully from a trial- e.g. “When He has tested me, I shall *come forth* as gold” (Job 23:10). These are the group who respond to the traumas of the six seals and repent. Their white robes connect with those given to those who die during the tribulation under the fifth seal (“And each one was given a white robe”, Rev. 6:11).

Washed their robes- Perhaps a reference to mass baptisms into Christ in the beast dominated Israel of the last days?

Made them white- It is the function of the three and a half year Elijah ministry [which will occur at the same time as the tribulation] to be “like fullers’ soap” so that Israel may “abide the

day of [Messiah's] coming" (Mal. 3:2). Fullers' soap is what makes white. The reference is to those in Israel who respond to the Elijah ministry and make their clothes white. These are the 144,000 or great multitude.

7:16 They shall hunger no more neither thirst- Quoting from Is. 49:10 about the repentant Jewish remnant of the last days.

Hunger, thirst, no more burning [AV "heat"] and the sun no longer falling upon them all has reference to the experiences in the land during the six seal judgments. The comfort for that group is that these things will be no more.

Wipe away all tears- Quoting from Is. 25:8, again about the repentant Jewish remnant of the last days. In the context, this happens on Mount Zion, which is where the 144,000 are found in Rev. 14, at a time when "Moab" and Israel's neighbour enemies have been destroyed.

The 144,000 and the Great Multitude

We must face the questions: Are the 144,000 the same as the great multitude? And are these 144,000 the same as the 144,000 in Revelation 14? I believe they all refer to the same group of faithful believers, perhaps literal Jews, who repent during the early part of the tribulation which is described in the six seals. But each passage gives different aspects of the same picture. The seven trumpets are the tribulations brought about by the four winds of 7:1. These can still be responded to by those within the land. The 144,000 group are preserved from them, just as Israel experienced the first plagues to come upon Egypt but were preserved from the later ones (cp. Is. 26:20). The seven vials are clearly based upon the plagues upon Egypt, and they are part of the extensive description of the beast's judgment which [interspersed with visions of the faithful] dominate the rest of the book of Revelation.

But are these 144,000 the same as the 144,000 in Revelation 14? The differences don't necessarily have to make them different; John hears the 144,000 and then sees the great multitude, just as earlier John hears about the Lion but turns to *see* a Lamb (Rev. 5:5,6); and so it could be that he is *told* about the 144,000 and turns to *see* a great multitude. It would be facile to suggest that the Lion and Lamb are two different beings. They are simply different aspects of the same personage- the Lord Jesus. And this is common in Revelation and Jewish apocalyptic generally. So the differences are not fundamental, but rather presenting to us different aspects of the same group. In one sense they are the innumerable seed of Abraham, in another sense they are the 12 tribes, the true Israel. The great multitude are dressed in "white robes"- and this has just been used about those slain at the start of the tribulation (6:11). A specific group is in view- Jewish believers who suffered in the land at the hands of the beast during the time of the seals.

There are similarities between the 144,000 and the "great multitude". The 144,000 of Rev. 14:3 are "before the throne" just as the "great multitude" of Rev. 7:15,17 are. If the 144,000 represent the church generally, it's hard to understand why there should be such a laboured enumeration of them as coming from the various listed tribes of Israel. The idea surely is that they are Jewish Christians from within the land- perhaps the mention of the 12 tribes is to show that they will come from the entire geographical inheritance of Israel.

The great multitude have palms in their hands (:9) as if they are lining the streets of Jerusalem to welcome Jesus as King (Mt. 21:8). The term "great multitude" is repeatedly used in the Gospels for the crowds who followed Jesus. So although they do refer to the group of Jewish Christians of the last days, they are clearly to be understood as looking forward to the entire community of Jesus-followers. Rev. 7:14 says of the great multitude: "These are they which came out of great tribulation". The many connections with

the Olivet Prophecy would surely mean that the tribulation in view is partly that of the last days (Mt. 24:21,29).

The 144,000 in Revelation 14

14:1,2 John often 'flits' between earth and Heaven in his visions, because he is demonstrating how situations and people on earth have their representatives in Heaven amongst the Angels who are before God's throne in the Heavenly court room. Here, John sees the 144,000 on Mount Zion, on earth. But he then hears a crowd in Heaven singing the song which only the 144,000 can learn. The voices in Heaven are those of their representative Angels; the singing of victory songs in Heaven with harps is likewise performed by Angels in Rev. 5:8,11,12. The 144,000 are "without fault before the throne of God" (14:5) because their representative Angels stand there before the throne acceptable to God (14:3). The Lamb, the Lord Jesus, is now *standing* on earth, on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, rather than *sitting* at the Father's right hand in Heaven. This surely speaks of the time of His return to earth. Psalm 2:6-12 anticipates the Messiah as being enthroned on Mount Zion; then will be fulfilled Is. 24:23 "The Lord of Hosts will reign on Mount Zion".

Harpers harping with their harps- They are the Heavenly antithesis to the harpers within the Babylon-beast system (Rev. 18:22), just as the 144,000 sealed with the Lord's Name on their foreheads are the antithesis to those at the end of the preceding chapter 13 who have the beast's mark of 666 in their foreheads.

14:4 *The firstfruits*- The promise of greater harvest is perhaps implied in the subsequent presentation of the Gospel we meet in 14:6.

Not defiled with women.. virgins- The contrast is with Babylon the whore who rides the beast system. The faithful Jewish remnant

within the land will have resisted pressure to convert to Islam. Such Moslem pressure upon Jews living in the land to convert to Islam is easily imaginable. For the Koran teaches Moslems that they have a special duty to bring Jews to Islam: "O children of Israel!... Believe in what I have sent down to you (this Qu'ran), confirming that which is with you, the Taurat [Torah]... and mix not truth with falsehood" (Surah 2:40-42). Indeed, much of the lengthy second Surah of the Koran is full of such demands for "the children of Israel" to submit to Islam. The reason given is that the Jews supposedly "conceal the truth while they know it" because the Torah supposedly supports Islam, although Moslems claim the Jews changed the original (Surah 2.146); and also that Mohammed was sent to the Jews but they rejected Him (Surah 2.151).

14:5 *No guile was found in their mouth*- The reference is to Zeph. 3:13 concerning the repentant remnant of Israel. 'Guile' is an allusion to Jacob- this is the true Israel purged of Jacob's negative side. This confirms my suggestion that primarily the 144,000 refer to a group of Jewish Christians redeemed from the earth / land of Israel as a result of their righteous response to the tribulation which comes upon them and their land. It is of course the Lord Jesus who has no guile in His mouth (Is. 53:9)- they are counted as "in Christ" because by faith and baptism they have become in Him, as a result of the Elijah ministry of the last days. We should be beginning that work now.

Blameless- The language of spotless sacrifice in the LXX (Ex. 29;1; Lev. 1:3; 4:3; 5:15; Ez. 43:22,23).

Revelation 8: The Seven Trumpets

The six seals of Rev. 6 brought judgment upon God's people Israel within the land or earth promised to Abraham. A minority responded and were "sealed" in Rev. 7. Now there are seven trumpets, which are judgments on the Jews who are impenitent, and also on others within the land. But trumpets are warnings. In these judgments there is still an appeal being made, even though time is more than up for both Israel and her enemies. The trumpet judgments begin with desolations upon the physical land, in order to help people in the land understand what is going to happen to them. After the trumpets, there is yet another desperate appeal for repentance; and then in 15:7,8 the temple is closed, and the vials are poured out- of final and utter destruction. The vials come in rapid succession, because they are not intended to elicit repentance. Their finality is implied by the words "the seven *last* plagues". Whereas under the seals and trumpets, only a third or quarter of things were destroyed, under the vials there is total destruction. The language of the trumpets and vials is similar- because Babylon is being made to drink the cup of judgments which she gave others to drink during the seals and trumpets:

:

Trumpets

1st. earth

2nd. sea (salt water)

3rd. rivers and fountains (fresh water)

4th. sun, moon, stars

5th. sun and air darkened

6th. River Euphrates

7th. "The kingdoms of this world

are become the kingdoms of our

Vials

earth

sea (salt water)

rivers and fountains (fresh water)

sun, moon, stars

kingdom of beast full of darkness

River Euphrates

"It is done"

Lord"

This explains why the trumpet judgments are effected through a variety of agents, some of them evidently human. The vials, however, are all poured out by Angels.

It should be noted that the seven signs, relating to the destruction of the beast, are also related to the seven trumpets:

Trumpets

(Chapters 8 -11)

A great star falls from heaven (8:10)

A third part of the stars is smitten (8:12)

"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth" (8:13)

The beast that comes out of the bottomless pit . . .

. . . makes war against the witnesses and overcomes them . . .

. . . they of the people and kindreds and tongues . . .

. . . they that dwell upon the earth... (11:7-10)

Resurrection and judgment (11:18)

"Thy wrath is come" (11:18)

Temple of God opened (11:19)

Lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake and hail (11:19)

Signs

(Chapters 12 onwards)

The dragon is cast out of heaven (12:9)

The dragon's tail casts down a third of the stars (12:4)

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth" (12:12)

The beast that comes out of the sea . . .

. . . makes war against the saints and overcomes them . . .

. . . power over kindreds and tongues and nations . . .

... all that dwell upon the earth . . . (13:1-8)

Resurrection and judgment (20:4 and 11-13)

The vials of God's wrath (chapters 15,16)

Temple of God opened (15:5)

Voices, thunders, earthquake and hail (16:18,21)

8:1 *And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven for about half an hour-* Literally “*whenever he opened the seventh seal...*”, as if there is an element of doubt as to whether it will be opened. See on :13.

8:2 *The seven Angels-* The presence of the article "the" indicates these seven Angels have already been referred to. But the only time we have so far read of them in Revelation is in the description of the seven Angels of the churches who represent the believers before God (Rev. 1:20). The seven Angels feature later in Revelation, pouring out the vials of Divine wrath upon the land and the beast system. The Angels responsible for God's people are the same ones who pour out such terrible calamities upon the land. This is the power of our representation before God in the court of Heaven. This is exactly in context, because we go on to read that because of the prayers of the believers, things are poured out upon the land and Angels blow trumpets. This is the power of prayer, and it will be especially evident in the last days.

The theme of ‘seven’ judgments coming upon the land surely connects with the claim that Mohammad waged seven military campaigns against the infidels in the land [promised to Abraham]. The Hadith several times speaks of the "seven military expeditions led by the Messenger of Allah himself (may peace be upon him)" (e.g. Book 19.4469), or of the “seven battles” he was victorious in (Book 19.4462). This would explain the seven fold structure of the seals-trumpets-vials, and the feature of ‘seven’ judgments in various others way within the Apocalypse. The Moslem pretenders to the pattern of Mohamad bring seven judgments upon Israel, and are punished by likewise receiving back seven judgments, drinking the cup they made others to drink.

The Hadith claims that Mohammad predicted three cycles of calamities in the last days, which would be subdivided into various other calamities: "Hudhaifa b. al-Yaman reported: By Allah, I have the best knowledge amongst people about every turmoil which is going to appear in the period intervening me and the Last Hour; and it is not for the fact that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) told me something confidentially pertaining to it and he did not tell anybody else about it, but it is because of the fact that I was present in the assembly in which he had been describing the turmoil. and he especially made a mention of three turmoils which would not spare anything and amongst these there would be turmoils like storms in the hot season" (41.6908). This is exactly the Biblical picture- of three cycles of judgments and turmoils in the land (seals-trumpets-vials), subdivided into various specific calamities. As the jihadists strive to obey the letter of their writings, they will thereby be fulfilling the outline picture of the last day crisis which is foretold in Revelation.

It's noteworthy that the seven seals and seven trumpets and seven vials all conclude with the seventh being the establishment of the Kingdom. So there are actually six judgments in each case. The Hadith (Book 41.7040) speaks of six signs before the last day: "Hasten in performing these good deeds (before these) six things (happen): (the appearance) of tribe Djjal, the smoke, the beast of the earth, the rising of the sun from the west, the general turmoil (leading to large-scale massacre) and death of masses and individuals". These six are very similar to the things spoken of in the seals and trumpets- signs in the sun, mass death, smoke, beasts of the earth. The jihadists are seeking to consciously fulfil the Hadith and so, due to the allusions the Hadith and Koran make to Revelation, they will end up fulfilling God's word of their own volition.

Stood before God- We have just read of how the great multitude,

the minority of the Jews in the land who repent as a result of the six seals, stand before God (7:9), as do their representative Angels (7:11). They are "before God" in that their representative Angels are literally in His presence in the throne room of Heaven. Now, those Angels act on behalf of those believers. And the prayers of the believers are likewise before God (:3). There is only one mediator, the Lord Jesus. The Angels do not mediate those prayers, but Heaven is aware of the prayers on account of their Angels. Our final 'standing before God' at judgment day (20:12) is effectively going on now. We are right now in the presence of His judgment throne.

Given seven trumpets- Again we note the idea of "given". The judgments and calamities to be poured out are not because of any radical human evil, unrestrained in the world. These things are all under God's direct Angelic control. The trumpet sound is very much associated with the return of Christ to earth (Mt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16). Our change to immortality will be when the *last* trumpet sounds (1 Cor. 15:52); and the seventh trumpet announces the full establishment of God's Kingdom on earth (11:15). These trumpets therefore speak of events immediately surrounding the Lord's return.

The trumpet judgments contain several of the plagues on Egypt:

<i>Trumpets</i>	<i>Plagues on Egypt</i>
1. Fire from the altar cast upon the earth.	Dust of the furnace (of the altar) sprinkled abroad.
2. Hail and fire.	Hail and fire.
3. Sea became blood.	Waters turned to blood.
4. Darkness.	Darkness.
5. Locusts.	Locusts.
6. Abaddon, the	The Destroyer Angel (Ex.

Destroyer. 12:23).

7. Men slain by angels. The firstborn slain by angels.

The seal judgments of chapter 6 came upon Israel to bring them to repentance, and a majority repented, as explained in the sealing of the 144,000 in chapter 7. Now, that repentant remnant are spared the plagues on Egypt, as it were; but the impenitent amongst Israel will suffer along with 'Egypt', the unbelieving world. This is as predicted in Dt. 28:59,60- the plagues of Egypt will come upon unbelieving Israel: "Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues... He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt".

8:3 *Another Angel*- Perhaps representative of the Lord Jesus, seeing He is the mediator of prayer.

The altar- There are two altars in view here. The Angel takes fire from the bronze altar of sacrifice, which we have recently encountered in 6:9 as the symbol of the sacrifice of the faithful during the tribulation, and uses this to ignite the incense on the golden altar of incense, which we again encounter in 9:13. The sacrifice of the faithful remnant, their endurance unto death, gives power to the prayers offered for the coming of Christ. The sacrifice of the believers during the tribulation in 6:9 gave rise to the prayer "How long...?", the begging for the Lord's coming. And it was because of their sacrifice that their prayers were heard. That is represented here by the fire from the blood covered altar of sacrifice being used to ignite the incense of prayer on the incense altar. Our lives are in that sense a prayer, and give credibility and integrity to our words of prayer. Otherwise, prayer is mere words. But those prayed words cannot be powerful unless they are rooted in a life lived before God. If this were not the case, then answers to prayer would simply go to those who know how to wordsmith their

language nicely and persuasively. That is a mistake made by so many Orthodox believers, but we can all tend to believe it too.

8:4 *The smoke of the incense... ascended up*- The same Greek words for 'smoke ascended up' are found in Rev. 14:11; 19:3 concerning the smoke of the destruction of the beast system. This ultimately will be brought about by the prayer of the latter day remnant. As I point out in *The Last Days*, much emphasis is given to prayer in the latter day prophecies. But the ascending up of the smoke of their prayers is also to be compared with the ascending up of the smoke from the bottomless pit in 9:2, which gives rise to the locust invasion which torments those in the land. This judgment on the land is therefore a direct response to human prayer.

8:5 *Filled it with fire of the altar*- The fire from the bronze sacrifice altar was used to ignite the incense on the incense altar; see on :3.

Cast it into the earth- The land has the fire of judgment thrown at it because of the prayers of and about those who were slain in it during the tribulation. This is the scene at the altar in 6:9; the blood on the altar leads to a promise of judgment against those who shed it. The Lord perhaps foresaw all this when He used the same words about how He came not to cast peace on the land but fire and a sword (Mt. 10:34; Lk. 12:49)- because Israel refused to accept Him. The scattering of fire on the land recalls Ez. 10:2, where fire is scattered over the city of Jerusalem; and the Babylonian desolation which this primarily refers to is a prototype of the latter day desolation of Jerusalem.

Voices, thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake- What was seen in the Heavenly throne room at the start of the vision (4:5 cp. 11:19). This awesome Divine activity in the temple of Heaven, the throne room (11:19), is triggered by the prayers of men on earth. Voices, thunder, lightning and earthquake are all experienced in the

events which make Babylon fall in 16:18 under the seventh vial (16:17). The voice of thunders proclaims the establishment of God's Kingdom in 19:6. Putting these things together, we see that the voices, thunders and lightnings are all part and parcel of the same final judgment of the beast system and establishment of God's Kingdom at Christ's coming. There is no way that these various passages refer to events over a 2000 year period. They are the events of the very last days. The earthquake which is associated with voices, thunders and lightnings is clearly that of 16:18, for the same words are used. The literalistic, linear thinking mind would expect that there must be a progression of chronological events between chapters 8 and 16. But that is not how apocalyptic works, nor do we find such a chronological development in Old Testament Bible prophecy. Rather are we given repeated snapshots of the same events from different angles, and often the end point is declared and then there is an explanation of how that position was arrived at. This is true of Biblical language generally- consider how in 2 Samuel 24 we are told that the Lord spared Jerusalem because of David's prayer, but then the text reverts in time to explain how that came about.

An earthquake- The same earthquake is in view throughout Revelation (6:12; 11:13,19; 16:18). We naturally think of the great earthquake which is to accompany the return of the Lord Jesus in Zech. 14:5. The earthquake is described in various parts of the Revelation prophecy because chronological order is not very significant in apocalyptic. The images overlap, giving a kaleidoscope effect.

The language in 8:5 and indeed throughout the trumpets is alluding to the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction in Isaiah 29:

"I will distress Ariel, and there shall be moaning and lamentation... I will encamp against you all around... and you will be brought low... in an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the LORD of

hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, all that fight against her and her stronghold and distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night... so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion... In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD... For the ruthless [the Islamic State] shall come to nothing and the scoffer cease, and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off... Jacob shall no more be ashamed, no more shall his face grow pale... those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding". It's hard to find a complete historical fulfilment of this- when God revealed Himself to deliver a besieged Jerusalem with thunder, earthquake and great noise, which then results in the repentance of a remnant in Israel. This time is yet to come, and it is the time spoken of in Revelation 8. The earthquake which fells Babylon is Jerusalem's salvation, and it comes at a time when Jerusalem is surrounded by enemy armies. This is the scenario of Zechariah 14- Jerusalem surrounded by armies, who are judged by the Lord's return and a huge earthquake.

8:6 *The seven Angels which had the seven trumpets*- The blowing of trumpets is commonly used in the OT for preparing war against Israel's enemies. The war being prepared is against Israel's latter day desolators. The obvious connection is with the seven priests blowing the seven trumpets which caused the fall of the great city Jericho (Josh. 6:4,6). Israel's latter day enemies are the equivalent of the Canaanites, the non-Jewish inhabitants of the land promised to Abraham. The Angels are as it were the priests, and we have read earlier in Rev. 8 of the Angels as it were doing priestly duty in the Heavenly tabernacle. The blowing of the trumpets is preparing for the fall of the great city Babylon, the epitome of the beast.

Prepared themselves to sound- We imagine them lifting the

trumpets to their mouths. The detail adds to the general impression that all the calamities of the last days have been carefully prepared. They are not at all the outcome of random evil which has got out of even Divine control. That point is repeatedly made doubtless because it might well appear like that to those who endure those things. There is a strong theme in Revelation of things being prepared by the Angels and then happening on the land (the locusts are prepared for battle, 9:7; four Angels are prepared for action at a precise moment, 9:15; the persecuted woman has a place of refuge prepared for her, 12:6; the hordes from the East are prepared for release from the Euphrates, which is what we are seeing in the preparation of the jihadist hordes in that very area today, 16:12; the bride is prepared through all her tribulations, 19:7: 21:2). It is that preparation process which we are seeing today in the development of the radical Islamists.

8:7 *Hail*- The hail is seen prepared in Heaven in 11:9; now it is sent to the earth. Hail is one of the final bowls that is poured upon the beast system in 16:21. What the beast does to those on the land is done to them; the cup or bowl they gave others to drink, they must drink at the time of the bowls being poured out. The idea of "hail and fire mingled" is clearly alluding to the plague upon Egypt, of hail mingled with fire (Ex. 9:24). But the hail plague did not touch the Israelites in Goshen (Ex. 9:26). This is exactly as we would expect- the seal judgments led a remnant of Israel to repent, and through the symbology of the 144,000 in Rev. 7, they are declared the true Israel. They are sealed so that the judgments of the trumpets don't come upon them. So the allusion to a plague on Egypt which didn't touch Israel is appropriate. Is. 32:19 describes the repentant remnant of Israel as being unharmed by hail in the last days. Note that the plagues on Egypt were intended to elicit repentance in Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and that is likewise the purpose of the trumpet judgments upon the beast system. We gasp at God's grace- that He even wants jihadists to repent. We recall too how a confederacy of five kings of the earth / land , under the

leadership of the antichrist figure Adonizedek ('Lord of righteousness', a fake Christ), were likewise destroyed by hail during the conquest of Joshua-Jesus (Josh. 10:11).

Hail cast down to the earth is exactly the language of the judgment upon the impenitent amongst Israel in the last days who do not accept the Messiah, the corner stone laid in Zion; those who are not amongst the remnant who repent (Is. 28:2,5,16,17); those Jews who will not 'come out of' the Babylon system will experience her judgments, if they are not part of the repentant Jewish remnant, the 144,000. In similar manner, the impenitent Jews at the time of the restoration were struck with hail, albeit as part of a program intended to bring them even then to repentance (Hag. 2:17).

Hail and blood are used by God to "plead" with Gog (Ez. 38:22). Ezekiel 38 is a latter day prophecy, but we again must note that the judgment of hail, blood, plague etc. is in order to plead even with Gog to repent. Only when the warning trumpets are ignored are the vials of complete destruction poured out and the temple is closed to men (15:7,8).

Fire mingled with blood- This is all part of the Lord's second coming, for He comes with flaming fire in judgment upon those who have refused to know Him (2 Thess. 1:7); thus the eyes of Jesus in Revelation are as a flaming fire (Rev. 1:7; 2:18; 19:12). This is the picture of Him at the time of His coming in judgment to earth. Yet the Angels are His eyes, according to Revelation 1 and 4:5, and they are therefore made a flaming fire (Heb. 1:7). Thus the actual, mechanical outworking of His coming in judgment in fire will be through the medium of Angelic activity. And this is what we have spoken of here in Rev. 8:7.

Casting fire on the land [of Israel] recalls Amos 7:4, which also mentions locusts, whom we will meet in the fifth trumpet: "The Lord God contended by fire... and it devoured the great deep, and would have eaten up the land (R.V., LXX: "the Lord's

portion”). The context goes on to predict that “the high places of Isaac (where Isaac was offered- Moriah, the temple mount) shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries [the great sanctuary?] of Israel shall be laid waste”. Notice once again that the punishment by fire is Yahweh ‘contending’. It is again an appeal for repentance.

The third part- In Ez. 5:1-5 Ezekiel shaves his hair and is told to divide it carefully into three parts, except for a mere few bound in the hem of his robe. These three parts are then consigned to destruction by fire, sword or scattering. We have just read in chapter 7 of the 144,000 faithful remnant. They will be saved, but the three parts of Israel who remain apart from them are to be destroyed. Note that the context of Ezekiel 5 is specifically Jerusalem. Zech. 13:8,9 speaks of two thirds of Jews *in the land* being killed, and a third being refined. Zech. 14:2 has half of Jerusalem going into captivity. Bearing in mind the difference between Jerusalem and the whole land, these proportions aren’t necessarily contradictory. The point is, these Old Testament prophecies of a partial desolation of Jerusalem and the land of Israel are being alluded to in Revelation; and the context is of the last days, rather than of some period in past history.

The third part of the trees- Not all trees were destroyed by the hail. This is in intended contrast to how the hail upon Egypt destroyed *every* tree of the field (Ex. 9:25- although some escaped, 10:5,12,15) as well as all the grass. Here, all the grass is destroyed but only a third of the trees. We may not need to think in terms of literal grass and trees. Perhaps the point is being made that yes, the situation is analogous to Israel in Egypt and the plagues upon Egypt, but still they are more restrained than those upon Egypt. This would be because God wants the beast system to perceive the similarities [perhaps therefore literal hail will be used], and to repent- before the bowls are poured out, which speak of utter destruction of the beast system. We note that in this case, Moses before Pharaoh must have a latter day equivalent, and we see this in

chapter 11, where the two witnesses have similarities to Moses at this time.

The destruction of trees recalls what Babylon did to Jerusalem: “For thus hath the Lord of Hosts said, Hew down her trees (RVmg.), and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her” (Jer. 6:6). Likewise Ez. 20:47: “Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein”. These words were applied by the Lord to Jerusalem’s future judgment, both in AD70 and therefore also in the last days (Lk. 23:31). The idea is that the Babylonian judgment upon Israel is to be repeated in the last days. And that may simply be the point of reference to the trees- perhaps we don’t need to look for any literal application. It could be that as in the Lord’s latter day parable of the fig tree, trees represent nations within the land / earth promised to Abraham. Another Old Testament allusion to be aware of regarding trees is Zech. 11:1,2: “Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down”. These words preface a prophecy of the rejection of Jesus and of the resultant judgment for that in the last days.

It’s not my style in this exposition to unduly dwell on the very evident application of Revelation to the run up to AD70, but it’s worth noting that there was a literal removing of trees then. Josephus claims that trees were felled indiscriminately to build engines of war and even the crucifixion of prisoners had to cease through lack of timber to make crosses. There has been an especial attempt to reforest the land of Israel since 1948. This is typical of the way that natural Israel have sought to bring about the fulfilment of Bible prophecies about the fertility of the land- in their own strength. And all that reforestation will be burnt up in the tribulation.

We note that the olive and vine trees were not to be hurt during the time of the seals (6:6). But now, a third of them are. The Hadith records how generally, trees should not be destroyed by Moslems when on campaigns: "The first Caliph Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) gave to his army while sending her on the expedition to the Syrian borders[commands] permeated with the noble spirit with which the war in Islam is permitted. He said: "... Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful" (The Hadith, Book 19 Jihad and Expedition (*Kitab Al-Jihad wa'l-Siyar*). As often happens, the jihadist may go well beyond their own religion. Or it could be that these particular judgments on the land are brought about by non-Moslems.

Burnt up- This is the same word used about the burning up in judgment of the last day when Christ returns (Lk. 3:17; 1 Cor. 3:15; 2 Pet. 3:10) and the burning up of Babylon (Rev. 17:16; 18:8). The weeds are gathered together and burnt up (Mt. 13:30), and this is effectively a latter day prophecy of the gathering together of the nations to Armageddon and their being burnt up in the land. "Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 13:40-42). The furnace is specifically defined as Jerusalem under judgment at the hands of Babylon-Assyria (Is. 31:9; Ez. 22:18), the latter day Sodom and Egypt which are also described as a furnace (Gen. 19:28; Dt. 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51; Jer. 11:4). Sodom and Egypt are Jerusalem of the last days (Rev. 11:8; Is. 1:10; 3:9; Jer. 23:14; Ez. 16:46). The prophecies about this will therefore be fulfilled in stages within the last few days around the coming of Christ. The furnace of Rev. 9:2 must be understood likewise; the overthrow of Babylon is as when God overthrew Sodom (Is. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40).

Green grass- The specific mention of *green* grass may suggest that this happens at Passover time (cp. Mk. 6:39). *Chloros*, here translated “green”, is the same word used about the *chloros* [AV “pale”] horse” of the seals (Rev. 6:8). This similarity with the seals is because what was done to Israel is now being done to those who did it. Babylon is drinking the cup she gave others.

8:8 *Great mountain*- This can refer to Israel and Mount Zion: “Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done” (Mt. 21:21). “This mountain” was Zion, before which the Lord stood at that time, with its altar fire, which never went out. Yet the great destroying mountain is also Babylon (Jer. 51:25). The punishment upon Babylon will come upon an Israel who fail to come out of her.

The mountains had been moved out of their places in the seal judgments (6:14), and now this is in turn done to the enemies of God's people. For the mountain falling represents the destruction of Babylon in the Old Testament. But it also represents Judaism. The fall of Israel as an entity is framed in the same terms as the fall of Babylon. They had failed to come out of Babylon, and so Babylon's judgments come upon them. We're dealing here with a double symbol- of both falling Babylon and falling Israel. By contrast, the "great mountain" of God's Kingdom, the Mount Zion, stands secure (Dan. 2:35; Rev. 14:1; 21:10). The clearest Old Testament allusion is to Zech. 4:7: "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the corner stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" The corner stone is the Lord Jesus, whose second coming will mean the fall of the "great mountain". The creation of a plain instead of elevated land is the language of the required levelling of Israel by the work of the Elijah prophet before the coming of Messiah (Is. 40:4). The immediate context of Zech. 4:7 speaks of how the mountain of

opposition to Zerubbabel would be removed so that the restoration of Israel's Kingdom could come about. And that opposition was from local Arabs such as Sanballat who were opposing it. Zerubbabel failed to restore the Kingdom and become the Messiah figure he could have become. The essence of the prophecy is to be fulfilled in the last days, when the Lord Jesus will be in perfection the Messiah of Israel. The great mountain will then speak of the fake kingdom of God established by the Babylon beast, which shall be cast down.

Burning with fire- This burning with fire is part of the outworking of how fire was cast into the land as a result of the prayers of the faithful remnant (8:5). The mountain is cast down, burning- just as fire is cast onto the earth from above. Yet burning fire is a feature of God's latter day judgment upon the beast, as often spoken of later in Revelation. The Lord Jesus will sit in judgment on the beast enthroned with wheels of burning fire (Dan. 7:19), replete as that language is with reference to the Angel cherubim (Ez. 1:13), the four beasts of Heaven. Again, we are clearly to see in this the language of the last day. The lamps of fire burning before the throne in Rev. 4:5 speak of the view of the Heavenly throne room as it will be in the last day. Finally, the lake of burning fire- fire burning on water- is the end of the beast system. And this same image, fire cast into water and the water burning, is found here in the second trumpet (and also in the third trumpet, where fire hits water again, the rivers). Perhaps we could understand that this is a foretaste of the final judgment of the lake of fire. Only a third of the water is affected, and then a third part of the rivers, unlike the symbology of the entire lake of fire burning. There is again the implication that even at this late stage, men can see what condemnation will be like and avoid it in repentance. This would be in keeping with how God has worked so many times- He gives worked examples of condemnation to men to warn them of where their path shall lead them. Quite simply, because He wishes their repentance. Significantly, the Koran several times claims that

the judgment of unbelievers will be severe exactly because they have rejected warnings (especially Sura 54.16-24). The Moslem followers of the beast will be treated exactly in accordance with their own perceptions of Divine judgment.

Into the sea- In this sense, there is a sea of glass mingled with fire in 15:2. The sea of glass speaks of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, but the picture is mingled with fire because the throwing of fire into the sea is what brings about the Kingdom. We see again how apocalyptic is not interested in precise chronology- the events are run together. Different aspects of the same picture are given. What this means, however, is that the casting of the mountain of fire into the sea is definitely a picture of latter day events, immediately around the time of the establishment of the sea as glass, the Kingdom of God on the sea of nations.

The wicked are as a troubled sea (Is. 57:20). But closer examination of that passage reveals that is talking about the Jews at the time of the Assyrian invasion who chose not to be amongst the righteous remnant. This exactly fits our context. And the Hebrew word translated "troubled" means literally 'sent away', and is also translated 'divorced'. The metaphor of divorce is certainly used about God's relationship with Israel, and the destruction of the faithless majority of Israel at the time of the end will be the final climax of that great divorce. such troubling of the sea will be the lot of the majority in Israel, but "Peace, peace" to the repentant remnant (Is. 57:19).

Sea became blood- In the AD70 application, this may refer to the mass killing of Jews in the Sea of Galilee. Josephus recorded: "One might see the lake all bloody, and full of dead bodies, for not one of them escaped. And a terrible stink, and a very sad sight, there was on the following days over the country. In this way thousands were slain" (B.J. 3:10:9). Likewise, on the Mediterranean coast: "The sea was bloody a long way, and the

maritime ports were full of dead bodies ... and the number of the bodies that were thus thrown out of the sea was 4,200” (B.J. 3:9:3). Perhaps something similar will happen in the last days.

Water becoming blood is obviously a reference to the plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 7:20). The continual allusion to those plagues suggest that there has been an abuse of Israel by a latter day Egypt. In *The Last Days* [chapter 5](#) I work out in more detail the typology of Egypt's domination of Israel, with the Passover deliverance being a type of the second coming. That might explain the reference to "green grass", associated as it is with Passover. Both "rivers" and "waters" are described as being turned into blood in Egypt (Ps. 78:44; 105:29), and both rivers and waters are spoken of here in the trumpets.

A burning mountain coming into the sea would create the impression of a sea of fire- and the lake of fire is the picture of the beast's final destruction (Rev. 19:20; 21:8). There may therefore be no specific symbology in the 'sea' or water beyond this.

Fire destroying things in water is surely an indication that this is from God. The Hadith (Book 41.7012) says that the Antichrist of the last days will do the same: "The *Dajjal* would appear and there would be along with him water and fire and what the people would see as water that would be fire and that would burn and what would appear as fire that would be water". The Moslems will therefore see the entity bringing these things about- the Lord Jesus- as the antiChrist and thus be the more motivated to engage in mad warfare against Him, to their own destruction.

8:9 *Creatures in the sea... the ships*- The connection is clearly with Rev. 5:13, where the "creatures" [s.w.] in the sea all give glory to the Lamb enthroned. To get to that end point, the creatures in the sea who will not give Him glory must be judged. The seals, trumpets, vials and descriptions of the judgments upon the beast

and whore can be read as being all aspects of the final judgment. But it could also be that the last judgment of the unbelieving world comes in stages. Here in the trumpets, a third of the sea creatures die; in 16:3, the sea becomes as the blood of a dead corpse "and every living creature died in the sea". The same Greek word for "died" is used there as here in 8:9. As commented previously, God gives warning of His final judgments, in the hope that men will learn from the condemnation of others and repent. We marvel at His patience, portrayed as it is throughout the various judgments we read of. Our human sense would be to simply liquidate the entire unbelieving, abusive system in one shot. But He works, with all the intricacies of the systems of seven interlocking, interrelated judgments, in order to try to elicit repentance at every turn. Truly, as Emil Brunner observed, "the wrath of God is the love of God". Even in His style of condemning wicked men and systems, we see shining through His urgent desire for human repentance and other, better outcomes. "The sea" is the area from which the beast arises (13:1). We can therefore interpret it as the power base of the beast-the nations and peoples within the land promised to Abraham. This would explain the repeated judgments upon the "sea" in Revelation. The emphasis given to "the ships" being judged would therefore speak of the mercantile activities within that area. The only other references in Revelation to "ships" are when we read that the ships associated with the Babylon-beast system are destroyed in her final judgment (Rev. 18:17,19). At the time of the trumpet judgments, only a third of them are destroyed- but finally, they are all destroyed. The destruction of a third of them is again a portent of the final total destruction- and is therefore an appeal for repentance. Likewise we read that this third part of shipping was "destroyed" but the word is found elsewhere in Revelation only when we read of the total 'destruction' of those who had destroyed the land (11:18).

8:10 *There fell a great star-* The Olivet prophecy speaks of the stars falling from Heaven (Mt. 24:29), and the context begs us

interpret this as referring to the collapse of the Israelite ruling system. The imagery can equally refer to the ruling system of any entity. It seems a specific star or leader is in view, and his fall will result in damage on the earth / land. A great star falling from Heaven to earth recalls Isaiah 14, the parable of the fall of the king of Babylon. And this surely looks forward to the last days. Stars represent rulers or leaders, and Rev. 17:10 speaks of how the five kings supporting the beast system ‘fall’ [s.w.]; here in the trumpets we have detail of the fall of at least two of them.

Burning as it were a lamp- This is the language of the earlier vision of the Heavenly throne room, where the seven lamps of fire burn before the throne (Rev. 4:5). The implication is that this is a result of Angelic involvement in the judgment. But there is also a continuation of the theme that the beast kingdom is a fake kingdom of God. It has just been described as a “great mountain”, which is the language of *God’s Kingdom*. Perhaps the leader who falls will be known as the burning torch or lamp.

Rivers and fountains of waters- See on 8:8 *burning with fire*. Such judgment on water courses is predicted in prophecies about latter day events in the land of Israel. “The mountains of Israel... Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers (R.V. “water courses”; the reference is to wadis) and to the valleys” (Ez. 6:3). Ez. 36:4, 6 uses identical language about the land of Israel, again in a latter day context. Before the Assyrian invasion, typical of the latter day desolation of Israel, Joel 1:20 records that “the rivers of waters are dried up”.

The Koran and Hadith speak hundreds of times of paradise as being a place of rivers and fountains of waters. The contrast is with the *living* “fountains of waters” which the repentant 144,000 come to (Rev. 7:17). The “fountains of waters” of the beast system are turned to blood and dried up in the various judgments brought upon them. They are *dead*. The Moslem concept of paradise will be

destroyed and inverted. In seeking to establish a caliphate in the land promised to Abraham, with Jerusalem as its capital and the temple mount as its central point of worship, radical Islam is seeking to establish a fake, imitation Kingdom of God- just as Assyria offered Judah a land where each would sit under their own vine and fig tree, appropriating the language of *God's Kingdom* to their own. Whilst there may be a literal element to these judgments upon the waters, I suspect that the judgment must be understood in terms of the Islamic conception of paradise.

8:11 *Wormwood*- This is Old Testament imagery for the bitterness of Israel's judgment at the hand of their neighbours, especially Babylon at the fall of Jerusalem: "Behold I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the nations" (Jer. 9:15, 16; Lam. 3:15,19). "Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land" (Jer. 23:15 cp. Jer. 6:26). The allusion is also to Numbers 5, the trial of the bitter waters of jealousy, for the woman who has been unfaithful to her husband. And that woman is clearly enough representative of Israel, according to many Old Testament allusions.

Sura 37.62 of the Koran speaks of a similar plant that Muslims believe is the food of dwellers of Hell-fire, part of the diet of *Adh-Dhari*, bitter fruit, which intensifies their torment (Sura 69:36,37). The similarities with the Koran could suggest that the victims of these judgments will be subjected to an Islamic judgment of condemnation, i.e. ministered by Islam. Or the hint could be that the self-righteous jihadists will understand that they are being condemned, they will feel their condemnation in terms they understand.

Waters made bitter- The parallel is between the waters 'becoming wormwood' and the waters being "made bitter". There

may not be too much significance in the term “wormwood”, rather is the idea being developed of a curse and bitterness. The judgments of the trumpets are partly upon those in Israel who didn’t repent during the seals, and thus weren’t sealed in chapter 7; and partly upon their desolators, or others within the land promised to Abraham. The language of bitter waters obviously alludes to Israel’s experience at Marah in Ex. 15:23. The bitter waters were cured by a tree being cut down and cast into the water. This clearly looked ahead to the tree of the Lord’s crucifixion, through which the bitter waters were made sweet. The unbelieving Israelites were tested / tried at the bitter waters (Ex. 15:25). We could reasonably infer that the way only a third of the waters were made bitter is a hint that this partial judgment is intended to lead Israel to repentance, and to acceptance of the tree / cross of the Christ whom they crucified. Again we marvel at God’s ever saving intention, ever desiring human repentance and salvation. After leaving Marah, and learning the lesson of the tree, Israel came to Elim, where there were “fountains of [living] water” (Num. 33:9). The contrast between bitter water and living water is only really found here in Rev. 8:10 and 7:17, where the repentant 144,000 come to living fountains of waters. Those who don’t accept the crucified Christ have the bitter waters of Marah, from which they will not move on to Elim.

8:12 *Third part*- The darkening of a third of the stars and a third of the sun and moon is very much the picture in Rev. 12:4, where a third of the stars fall to earth. The picture of a part of the heavens falling is exactly how the Koran envisages the last day judgment of apostates- “A fragment of the heaven falling” (Sura 52.44). The judgment they envisage upon others will come upon them, and it will be articulated in terms appropriate to their cultural understanding. This, I suggest, is the significance of the similarities between the Biblical pictures of the latter day judgments, and the wording of the Koran and Hadith.

Sun... moon... stars- Harry Whittaker sums up the various usages of these as symbols of Israel: “

(a) Joseph’s dream, where sun, moon and stars stand for his father, mother and brethren, *i.e.* the whole family of Israel.

(b) Revelation 12:1. The woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars similarly represents the nation of Israel. From this starting point the chapter yields a coherent and highly relevant interpretation (ch. 27).

(c) Genesis 22:17: “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven.”

(d) Jeremiah 31:36: “If those ordinances (sun, moon and stars; v. 35) depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.”

(e) Joel 2:10: “The sun and moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining” - the final invasion of Israel in the Last Days (cp. ch. 3:15).

(f) Daniel 8: 10: “The little horn waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.”

(g) Amos 8:9: “I will cause the sun to go down at noon” is coupled with: “I will turn your feasts into mourning.”

(h) Luke 23:45: “And the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple rent in the midst.” Strange conjunction of phenomena in one verse except it is that both are symbolic of the same thing - the end of the Mosaic economy”.

Smitten- The same word is used in the LXX of the smiting of Israel by the Assyrians (Is. 1:5; 9:13).

The day shone not for a third part of it and the night likewise- Darkness coming upon the earth is the presage of a new creation (Gen. 1:2). The Old Testament prophets use the metaphor about the latter day invader of Israel bringing darkness upon the land (Is. 8:22; Am. 4:13), but that darkness is the necessary precursor for the

Lord arising in glory upon the land (Is. 60:2). This language of a darkened earth is therefore the signal that we should expect imminently the active manifestation of God, through the return of His Son. These events therefore specifically reference the time of the immediate return of Christ. The unnatural eclipse of heavenly bodies recalls the period of darkness at the crucifixion. As so often in Revelation, the message is that the sufferings of the last days will enable people to identify with the crucifixion sufferings of Christ, and through that identification with Him to come to share in His resurrection. The essence of this means to salvation in Christ has gone on throughout the lives of all the Lord's people, at whatever time they have lived. However, the victims of the trumpet judgments are those who did not respond to those of the six seals. We again draw our breath in marvel at how the Lord will even seek with those stubborn people to bring them to identity with Him. Note that many of these judgments are a reversal of creation- for God initially made the sun, moon and stars to shine upon the earth (Gen. 1:15,17 s.w. LXX).

8:13 *Midst of heaven*- According to Vine, "It means, properly, the meridian, the highest point in the heavens which the sun occupies at noon; not the space between heaven and earth". The appeal from the place of the sun at its zenith surely speaks of the Lord Jesus. *En* (AV "through") would be better translated "at", with reference to this specific point. The warning that the next three Angels have very serious judgments to declare must serve some kind of function. It may be to give the impression that these judgments are not to be understood in chronological sequence; they are known before they are pronounced. Or perhaps the declaration is made because, yet again, it is an appeal to repentance.

Woe- This can be read as an invitation to weeping; the weeping of repentance. There is still just about time for repentance, even from those who have turned down the appeals of the six seals. The

Moslem jihadists believe they are to pronounce woe upon the enemies in the last hour: "When a decisive surah is revealed and war is mentioned therein... Therefore woe unto them!" (Sura 47:20). The trumpets speak of judgments which are to come on both the beast and the impenitent Jews. But the judgments are brought about by the Moslem beast itself, which is exactly how God's enemies have met their end in history- by destroying themselves. Rev. 17:16 speaks of how the horns of the beast destroy the beast. So the bringing of "Woe" upon those in the land is what the jihadists are preparing to do.

The inhabitants of the earth- This talk of "inhabitants" seems rather redundant; until we realize that the reference is likely to those who have but recently invaded the land promised to Abraham, grabbed the wealth of the Jews and are now 'inhabiting' it as their own land.

The three Angels- But only two of the woe trumpets appear to be sounded (9:12; 11:14). This recalls how there is no seventh seal either- just a pointed silence in Heaven, instead of an expected outpouring of calamity. And now it seems there is no seventh trumpet either. This may be because we are intended to see 'the end', the final establishment of the Kingdom, as the seventh trumpet and seventh seal. But the seals and trumpets are of calamities happening to the land and people, not blessings. It could well be that God planned a final calamity which will not happen, just as the seven thunders are prepared but not recorded. His grace and pity may make Him relent; or quite simply the prayers of the faithful for 'the end' are powerful in bringing about some measure of shortening of His work. The Old Testament parallel would be in Joseph apparently cutting short the more extended program of education which He had intended for his brothers.

Revelation 9: The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets

9:1 *The key*- The key to death and the grave is in Christ's hand (Rev. 1:18). This person is therefore an anti-Christ. We note how the locusts who are released from it are specifically obedient to their king-leader (9:4,11).

The bottomless pit- The idea of course is that if you're thrown into a bottomless pit which is locked, there's no way you can ever get out of it. But locusts, representing the desolators of the land, do arise out of it. The figure is similar to that of receiving a deadly wound, a wound that makes one die, and then resurrecting. This is what is said of the beast and its horn (13:3,12). The locusts are connected to that entity. We should be looking, therefore, for the entity which will finally dominate Israel to receive a wound which apparently makes it dead. This could be from Western and / or Israeli intervention against them. There would then be a brief period of worldwide relief- the "peace and safety" period of 1 Thess. 5. But the entity then revives. This scenario is possible as we see from the Western conflict against the Islamic State.

So many of Revelation's allusions to the Old Testament are to material specifically concerning Jerusalem. One could almost argue that the prophecy could have a specific application to the latter day city of Jerusalem. The language of the bottomless pit likewise has specific reference to Jerusalem: "In the floor of the small cave (measuring about 14 feet square with a six foot ceiling) under the great foundation stone in the Dome of the Rock is round marble slab closing a well shaft known as "the well of the souls" (Bir al Arwah)... A Muslim tradition holds this is the entrance into the bottomless pit, the abyss. The souls of the dead awaiting judgment are said to be audible beneath. The Talmud claims that this is the

abyss above the primeval waters of creation and of the Flood” Lambert Dolphin, *Early History of the Temple Mount*.

The language used here is specifically relevant to latter day Islam. Mawdudi writes of how Muhammed and his message came out of “Arabia- the Abyss of Darkness” (Abul A’la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, 8th ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: National Offset Printing Press, 1986), p.63).

9:2 *A smoke out of the pit*- This is the same figure used in 14:11 for the destruction of the beast worshippers. But here it speaks of what they did to deserve that destruction- their actions against Israel and the land promised to Abraham is the grounds for their condemnation.

Smoke- The Hadith mentions smoke as one of the ten signs that the last day is coming: "Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in a discussion). He said: What do you discuss about? They (the Companions) said. We are discussing about the Last Hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs before and (in this connection) he made a mention of the smoke, Dajjal [Antichrist], the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him), the Gog and Magog, and landslidings in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from the Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly" (Book 41.6931). Again, we see the crisis in the land in the last days foretold in terms which Moslems will relate to. Sura 44 of the Koran is entitled *Al-Dukhan*, ‘The Smoke’. It speaks of how painful smoke will be the punishment of God’s enemies in the last days: “But watch thou [O Muhammad] for the day when the sky will produce visible smoke that will envelop the people. This will be a painful torment. [Then they will say]: Our Lord relieve us of the torment” (Sura 44.10-12).

It could be that jihadists bring smoke upon others in an attempt to judge them according to Islam. And they will be judged likewise, drinking the cup they made others to drink. This means that they will be judged as apostates within their own frames of reference.

Furnace- See on 8:7. The language of Sodom (Gen. 19:28) and Egypt. Both these places are used to describe Jerusalem under domination of her enemies as the place of particular suffering for God's people (11:8).

9:3 *Locusts*- The locusts of the fifth trumpet act in a very unlocust-like way. Unlike real locusts, they have a king. And, astonishing to relate, they are forbidden to touch grass or any vegetation! Once again the instruction seems to be: "Hurt not the earth, nor the trees"- only on this occasion it is given to locusts. *Akrab* being the Hebrew for scorpion, we may be justified in seeing here an allusion to the word 'Arab', the likely ethnicity of many of the boots on the ground of the last days. :3 The connection between these specific locusts and their place of origin is in line with how the Bible uses plant and animal imagery. "The prophets, when they used symbolical language to denote any events, commonly, at least, employed those which had a local or geographical reference; thus, in the symbols derived from the vegetable kingdom, when Judah is to be symbolized, the olive, the vine, and the fig-tree are selected; when Egypt is referred to, the reed is chosen; when Babylon, the willow. And so, in the animal kingdom, the lion is the symbol of Judah; the wild ass, of the Arabs; the crocodile, of Egypt, etc." (Elliott, *Horae Apoc.* i. 394-406). Being consumed by locusts was one of the punishments upon Israel for their disobedience (Dt. 28:38,42; Ps. 78:46; Joel 1:2). Again, we are to understand this language as specifically applying to Israel.

The parallels between Joel and Revelation 8 and 9 are certainly impressive.

	<i>Joel</i>	<i>Revel ation</i>
Locusts.	1: 4	9:3.
Symbolic of a nation.	1:6.	9: 4, 7.
Teeth like lions.	1:6.	9:8.
Trees and pasture withered and burnt up.	1: 12, 18-20.	8:7.
Destruction from the Almighty.	1: 15.	9: 11.
Fire.	1: 19; 2:3, 5.	8:7; 9:17.
Rivers of waters dried up.	1:20.	8: 10; 9:14
Blowing of trumpets.	2:1, 11, 15.	8:6.
Darkness.	2:2.	9:2.
Horses.	2:4.	9:7, 9.
0. Chariots.	2:5.	9:9.
1. Torment.	2:6.	9:6.
2. Earthquake.	2:10.	8: 5.
3. Sun, moon, and stars 4. darkened.	2:10, 31; 3:15.	8:12, 9:2.
5. "Turn ye to me ... "	2:12.	9:20, 21.
6. The locust army goes back into the abyss.	2:20.	9:1.
7. Deliverance for the faithful remnant.	2:32.	9:4.

Locusts in Joel

Joel's prophecy is full of reference to the army of locust-horses which invade Israel in conjunction with the Palestinians (Joel 3:4), resulting in the repentance of a remnant who stand on Mount Zion (Joel 2:32), the destruction of the northern invader [another term for the locust army] after their holy war [jihad, Joel 3:9], and then the final establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. He describes the invading army in Joel 2 in terms of a locust swarm, and they come to their end as locust swarms often do in Israel- in the Dead Sea and Mediterranean. In more detail, Joel 3:2,12 speaks of a final conflict in the valley of Jehoshaphat, when the Gentiles "round about" Israel are gathered together and judged- spoken of in Revelation 16 as the battle of Armageddon (which likewise is primarily concerning the peoples "round about" Israel rather than the whole planet). The degree of damage done to the land and people of Israel was limitable- if Judah repented. Hence the frequent appeals for repentance. This prophecy could have had potential fulfilment in the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of Judah; but the prophecy is alluded to in Revelation and in other latter day prophecies, as if it has specific and complete fulfilment in the last days. The overall context is exactly as presented in Revelation- the seal judgments appeal for Israel's repentance, the minority who respond are the symbolic 144,000 who stand on mount Zion; and then there are the trumpet and vial judgments, which are full of allusion back to Joel. The frequent appeals for repentance mention the possibility that the program of judgment and desolation can be limited- if Judah repent. And finally, Joel speaks of the establishment of God's Kingdom and physical restoration of the decimated land, into the wonder of God's Kingdom on earth at Christ's return. Joel opens by saying that the destruction of the land he was burdened to portray had no parallel in the past, and the Jews would tell their children of it and the account of it would be passed down throughout future history (Joel 1:2,3). This is another way of saying that this prophecy is about a time of trouble for Israel such as never was, and never will be in

the future. And that is precisely the language of the Lord Jesus, Jeremiah and Daniel about the latter day tribulation of Israel.

The Arabs and Muhammed have a unique connection to the locust: “In the Bedoween romance *Antar*, the locust is introduced as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites. And it is a remarkable coincidence that Muslim tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Muhammed, bearing on their wings this inscription – ‘We are the army of the Great God.’” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Vol. 18).

:4 *Have not the seal of God*- They also don't have His seal. So perhaps we are intended to read in an elipsis: 'Have not [received] the seal of God'. The idea would then be that those who have not responded to the appeal to repent (as a result of the seal judgments) are targetted.

Not hurt the grass- There are many allusions in this section to the anatomy and style of the locust; the highlighted difference here with locusts [who usually eat up the grass] is therefore intentional. The people represented by the locusts were therefore going to be made to act uncharacteristically due to the charismatic individual controlling them. The reason for this is because these locusts have a king- which, again, locusts typically do not (see on *king over them*).

Keil in his commentary on Joel 2 describes the geographical origins of the locusts which descend upon Israel: "Swarms of locusts come from south, west, north, and east. Their home is not confined to the desert of Arabia, but they are found in all the sandy deserts, which form the southern boundaries of the lands that were, and to some extent still are, the seat of cultivation, viz., in the Sahara, the Libyan desert, Arabia, and Iraq; and Niebuhr saw a large tract of land, on the road from Mosul to Nisibis, completely covered with young locusts. They are also met with in the Syrian desert, from

which swarms could easily be driven to Palestine by a north-east wind... Such a swarm as this might be called the *tsephōnī*, i.e., the northern one, or northerner [Joel 2:20], even if the north was not its true home". These are the very areas from where jihadist fighters are emerging in their tens of thousands, and uniting together to establish an Islamic state and destroy Israel. This geographical connection cannot be merely coincidental!

Concerning trees and vegetation, the Koran says: "When you fight the battles of the Lord... destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of grain. Cut down no fruit trees..." (Quoted in Barnes, *op. cit*).

:5 *It was given*- We are surely to read in the elipsis, that a commandment was given to them. And it is jihadist Islam which forbids damaging trees and plants during military campaigns.

Not kill them- As locusts don't usually cause death but rather suffering.

Tormented- The same word used about Babylon (18:7,10,15) and the beast worshippers being "tormented" (14:10). The language of torment is not, therefore, reflective of an angry God being mean to sinners. Rather will they drink the cup they gave others to drink.

Five months- It could be argued that the book of Revelation will 'come alive' during the three and a half year tribulation in the land, and it's possible that this is a literal period. In any case, it is based around the fact that the season for locusts is five months, from May to September. Five months is their lifespan, so the idea may be that at the end of it they too will come to their end.

9:6 *Seek death*- Sura 75:10,11 speaks in similar terms of the final judgment of the condemned: "On that day man will cry: Whither to flee! Alas! No refuge!". Islamists will therefore seek to

do this to the Jews whom they believe it is their duty to condemn, and in turn they will drink the same cup, seeking death but not finding it (Rev. 9:6).

:7 *Like unto horses*- Clearly the locusts represent fighters charging to war. The Arab Bedouin call locusts *Farras el Jundy*, 'soldiers' horses'. The description of these horsemen from the East accurately fits the Parthians, who were massed to the East of the Roman empire. There was much angst amongst the Romans of the first century as to whether the Parthians would invade; they did not. But the similarity is explained if we accept that Revelation is open to many possible fulfilments. It could have all happened in the first century, and God moved the players into place. But due to human failure, the whole scenario was delayed to our last days.

"Like unto" continues the idea that John is seeing in outline form something he finds hard to describe, and he keeps likening the vision to things he is familiar with. Hence "As...as... like unto... as it were". This is understandable if he saw modern military hardware.

Prepared unto battle- This is the process we see ongoing around us. The Joel allusions encourage us to see this as Joel 3:9: "Prepare war, wake up the might men". The gathering of thousands of fighters to support an Islamic State in the land promised to Abraham is surely the fulfilment of this.

Like gold- The *stephanos* may suggest they are victorious, for a brief period, over the land. But John saw their appearance *like* this. Turbans as worn by Moslems today were not used in his day. If he saw, as I suggest, hordes of latter day Moslems streaming into Israel to proclaim a radical Islamic state, then this is how he would've described them- wearing something like a *stephanos*. The Greek literally means something wrapped around the head. This is the picture of Moslem turbans and jihadist headgear. The Hadith records Mohammed as saying "And turbans are the crowns of

Arabs". "Like gold" means he saw a yellow colour. Perhaps this group of jihadists will have yellow headgear or turbans? According to Suyuti's Commentary on the Koran, there are Hadith which make this association: "Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr: The latter was wearing a yellow turban on the day of Badr, so the angels descended wearing yellow turbans... the Prophet himself came wearing a yellow turban... The day of Badr the angels came down on piebald horses, wearing yellow turbans" [view these quotations online at http://www.sunnah.org/fiqh/islamic_dress.htm].

:8 *Hair as the hair of women*- The long hair of the jihadist fighters.

Teeth of lions- The quotation from Joel 1:6 means that these forces will be a latter day Babylon or Assyria invading Israel. Lions are a common OT symbol of Babylon-Assyria, the historical prototype of Israel's latter day invader.

:9 *And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron* - Another allusion to how the locust has a firm and hard cuticle on the forepart of the breast, which serves for a shield or defence. "“Breastplates of iron” speak of the Arabs’ armor. The poem Antar makes at least four references to a warrior’s cuirass or breastplate. The Koran says, “God hath given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars” ...” (Quoted in Barnes, *op. cit*).

And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle - Alluding to the noise made by locust swarms. They are similar to chariot horses in that the locust's head is similar to that of a horse. The locusts of Joel 1 which invade Israel are also described as war horses in Joel 2:4-6: "Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle". The similarity with locusts is in the springing motion of chariots on mountain

paths. This was surely the first century way of trying to express helicopter gunships and other modern military technology advancing into the land promised to Abraham in final judgment. Joel 2:8 speaks of how this locust army will not be deterred by weaponry: "they fall headlong through weapons [*shelach* means literally a missile], and do not cut themselves in pieces". The greatest missiles and military technology of the IDF and the West will be unable to restrain their ever forward march into the land. Currently, it is superior weaponry that enables Israel to survive and the West to control the jihadists. But the picture of the locust swarm is that absolutely no weapon can stand in their way. Perhaps it is by sheer force of suicidal numbers that the jihadists win- and thousands of Moslems are already flocking to Syria and Iraq to enlist in this great army. In Joel 2, the locust army attacks because Judah failed to respond to the call to repent made in Joel 1. But even at that late stage there is the possibility of repentance: "Yet even now, is the saying of Jehovah, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). This fits the context of the trumpets admirably. The seal judgments in Revelation 6 appealed for repentance; those few who respond, the symbolic 144,000, are sealed and stand on Mount Zion; and then the trumpet judgments come. But even then there is the chance of repentance, so that God would leave behind a blessing, i.e. the harvest-produce which could be used for a meat offering and drink offering (Joel 2:14)- even though this had "all" been destroyed by the locusts (Joel 1:9, 13). And as a result of this, a remnant of repentant Jews are likewise pictured by Joel standing on Mount Zion (Joel 2:32).

Chariots- The reference is also to the language of the cherubim chariots; Ez. 10:5 is the only other place in the Bible where we read of the sound of wings as chariots are in motion. The invaders will be led by the Angels, just as the locust army of Joel 2 is described in terms of the irresistible march of the Angels. But there may also

be the hint that the invaders see themselves as a cherubic system, continuing the theme of the anti-Christ being an imitation Christ.

:10 *Tails like unto scorpions... stings in their tails-* At first blush, this appears to not be true to the figure of locusts. But Smith's "Bible Dictionary" gives a picture of "a species of locust, the *Acridium Lineola*, a species commonly sold for food in the markets of Baghdad, which has a sting in the tail". We may infer that these symbolic locusts come from Iraq, specifically from the area of the Euphrates. This is in harmony with the later picture within this same chapter of hordes of attackers swarming into the land promised to Abraham from the same area- the Euphrates. The only other reference to a "tail" in the NT is in Rev. 12:4, where the dragon uses his tail to cast down one third of the stars. It could be that we are being shown part of the same process here.

To hurt men- Significantly, the same word is used in Lk. 10:19 about how those who are preaching the Lord Jesus will not be hurt by scorpions. This is the context here- these trumpets are part of the judgments which will be restrained from falling upon those who have responded to the seal judgments, the symbolic 144,000. The same word is used in 7:2,3 of how the 144,000 will not be "hurt". And chapters 10-15 teach that the resistant believers at this time will be engaged in witnessing to Jesus.

Five months- See on :5.

:11 *They had a king over them-* Prov. 30:27 observes that locusts have no king. The picture presented is of an unusual and uncharacteristic unity of the locusts under the leadership of a "king" or caliph. This is what students of latter day prophecy are taught by the image's toes of Daniel 2. The components of the final entity to abuse Israel are divided, but uncharacteristically united in their domination of Israel. This will be brought about by the locusts having a king- just as the disparate materials of the image are

united in the form of a man, a latter day Nebuchadnezzar.

The Angel of the bottomless pit- This presumably is the same as the fifth Angel, who opened the pit at the beginning of this section. As in Daniel, so here, the Angel refers both to an Angel in the court of Heaven, and to the person on earth whom that Angel represents before God. Again we see how that even the terrible individual on earth spoken of here is in fact represented in the court of Heaven and under the control of God's Angel. The allusion is to the destroying Angel of the Passover deliverance (Ex. 12:23; 1 Cor. 10:10). The Angel comes in judgment upon the Egyptians and also upon any unfaithful Israelites who would not trust in the blood of the Lamb; hence all the allusions to the plagues on Egypt here in the trumpet judgments. The locusts unleashed by the destroyer Angel therefore come forth to punish people for what they did to God's people Israel, and also to punish those of Israel who will not trust in the blood of the Lamb / Jesus.

In Hebrew... Greek- The two languages are perhaps mentioned because both Jews and non-Jews in the land suffer from this invasion.

Apollyon- This is the noun from the verb *apollumi*. Lk. 21:18 says that not a hair of the faithful will be *apollumi* in the latter day tribulation, and this is clearly what the Apollyon Angel is responsible for.

:12 *One woe is past; behold there come two woes more-* This could seem relatively pointless information, until we perceive that the idea is to appeal for repentance, even now at a time when the window for repentance provided by the six seals and sealing process of chapter 7 has already passed. I have mentioned earlier that the third of the three woes never seems to happen- perhaps because there is repentance, or because God's mercy is such that He restrains the final destruction. Or perhaps the third woe is the

pouring out of the bowls of final destruction upon the beast and impenitent.

:13 *A voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God-* This is the incense altar, and the voice suggests that the combined prayers of the faithful bring forward the execution of God's purpose, causing Angels in Heaven to sound and do things on the earth / land. The words / voice of those prayers really is "before God". This an attempt to relay the degree to which human words in prayer really are rehearsed before God's very presence, and result in a word of command appropriate to the word of those prayers.

:14 *Saying to the sixth Angel-* The voice of prayer is effectively a voice of command to Angels resulting in dramatic action upon the earth / land, and in this case, the loosing of restraining Angels.

Loose the four Angels- See chapter 4, The Significance of the Euphrates <http://islamicstate.info/4.html>

:15 *Prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year-* Vine correctly observes: "This rendering is wrong, since it conveys the idea that the four periods mentioned are to be combined as representing the length of the preparation or of the continuance of the plague. But it is to be noted that neither the article nor the preposition are repeated before day and month and year. The meaning is that the angels are prepared unto the hour appointed by God, and that this hour shall fall in its appointed day and month and year". The parallel is with how the locust-horses are "prepared" [s.w.] unto the final battle. It is this specific battle which is the final date in view here in :15. The way of the kings from the East is likewise "prepared" (16:12 s.w.).

To slay the third part of men- This 'slaying' could be understood as a ritual slaughter [*apokteino*]. The fact it is done at a particular hour

on a particular date and year may mean that there is some kind of religious relevance of the exact time of their slaughter; and that the men are slain at the same "hour", suggesting a specific ritual, organized slaughter rather than the gradual killing of people in the process of war or domination of the land. This kind of thing is imaginable in an Islamic state.

:16 *I heard the number of them*- The very words used about the 144,000 in 7:4. The contrast is made between the sealed 144,000 and this far larger group of their opponents, 200,000,000. The figures are surely not to be taken literally, rather is the idea that the opponents of the faithful are far more, and are as it were a fake imitation of the faithful, just as the anti-Christ is a fake imitation of the true Christ. This concept fits admirably with Islamist theology, as they consider themselves as the descendants of Ishmael to be the true seed of Abraham, and Isaac to be as the Bible presents Ishmael [the roles of Isaac and Ishmael are switched around in the Koran; Moslems believe that it was Jewish scribes who switched the roles to how they are in the Hebrew Bible].

:17 *Fire... jacinth and brimstone*- These are to be connected with the three methods by which the third part of men are killed in :18, fire, smoke and brimstone. The third of men are perhaps divided into thirds, and each killed by a different method. Or it may be that the third part of men are killed by a combination of these three factors. I suggested on :15 that this may be a ritual slaughter, performed at a specific "hour" on a carefully chosen specific date of religious significance. "Jacinth" means 'deep blue'; there may be some specific means by which fire, deep blue and sulphur [brimstone] are used in the destruction process. We are therefore to expect some form of technology which uses these three elements or appearances in order to effect the mass destruction of a large number of people in one hour. The way Babylon's destruction likewise comes in "one hour" would therefore match this; Babylon must drink the cup she gave others to drink.

Another approach is to recall that the fire and jacinth come out of the breastplates of these fighters; and yet jacinth [hyacinth] is also one of the stones on the priestly breastplate. In this case we are invited to see these fighters acting as fake High Priests, which would connect with the undoubted theme of 'anti-Christ'- the Islamic fighters acting as if they are the true Israel of God. We note that in the last day, God will put on the breastplate of judgment against His enemies (Is. 59:17). Sulphur and fire have associations with Divine judgment; these people will therefore believe that they are executing God's judgments for Him. This is precisely the spirit of radical Islam.

:20 *Yet repented not*- Again we note that even now at the time of the trumpet judgments, there is the desperate desire that some still repent; even though after the seal judgments, there was a sealing of those who had responded and a shielding of them from the judgments which were to come upon the impenitent.

Idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood- The allusion is clearly to Dan. 5:4,23, where the very same materials are mentioned as being the idols of Babylon. In the context, the final king of Babylon has been asked to repent in that he had been asked to learn the lesson of his father Nebuchadnezzar, who was smitten with madness and turned into an animal. But Nebuchadnezzar revived from that deadly wound, as it were. It could be that the final leader of the entity known as Babylon is intended to repent because the previous leader was struck down by God, as Nebuchadnezzar had been. But because he didn't repent, he was judged. The appeal of Daniel to him in the very last minutes of his life is therefore to be seen as the equivalent of this final appeal to the leader of Babylon through the trumpet judgments. The 'division' of his kingdom in judgment (Dan. 5:28) perhaps recalls the divided state of the toes of the image just before Christ comes to destroy them. The fifth trumpet began with mention of the opening of a bottomless pit, which I suggested is parallel to the deadly wound of the beast. The

reason for this is so that the deadly wounding will be an opportunity for repentance- this deep Divine desire for human repentance, even amongst His worst enemies, is so clearly portrayed in the structure of this apocalyptic. Nebuchadnezzar's 'wound' was intended to elicit repentance in the final king of Babylon. Hence the allusion to that scenario here in the sixth trumpet.

Which can neither see, hear nor walk- This again is a quotation from Dan. 5:28. The similarity with the fall of Babylon is clearly intended. And what was particularly obnoxious about the king of Babylon at that time was that he was using the temple vessels in a drunken idol ritual; this in outline terms is the same as placing an abomination on the temple mount, which will be the reason for his desolation. The reference to "sorceries" (:21) is likewise an allusion to the practices of the historical Babylon and Assyria (Is. 47:9,12; Nah. 3:4). Such things were the calling card of Jezebel, the prototype of the whore who rides the beast (2 Kings 9:22). Note she was from Tyre, in modern day Lebanon. We may well enquire how idol worship and sorcery could be part of a radical Islamic state, seeing they are passionately against such things. The point is that this latter day entity is being cast in terms of the historical Babylon; and for all Islam's protest against idolatry and sorcery, from God's viewpoint, these are the very things they are guilty of.

:21 Murders... fornication... thefts- This sounds very much the behaviour of jihadist fighters, murdering and thieving, and sexually abusing those whom they conquer (witness the Islamic State's treatment of Yezidi and Christian women whom they captured and declared as their 'spoils of war').

We observe that both the people being judged, as well as those judging them, can easily be interpreted as radical Islamist fighters. But this turning upon themselves is what we expect, both from Bible prophecy (e.g. regarding the divided state of the toes of the

image in Daniel 2) and from Divine historical precedent. For His preferred method of destroying Israel's enemies has been through making them turn upon each other, rather than direct bolts from Heaven.

Sorceries- We only meet this word again in Rev. 18:23, speaking of the sorceries of latter day Babylon. This trumpet therefore speaks of the judgment upon latter day Babylon. The LXX uses the word not only of Babylon (Is. 47:9,12) but also of Egypt at the time of the plagues (Ex. 7:22). And the trumpet judgments are full of reference to the plagues upon Egypt.

Revelation 10

It could be argued that this chapter is a continuation of the sixth trumpet- Alf Norris makes a reasonable case for this.

:1 *Mighty Angel*- These are the same words as in 5:2, "a strong Angel" (AV) offers the book, and Jesus the lamb opens it. Now John, representative of the latter day believers, is asked to follow the role of the Lord Jesus and take the book. The connection with chapter 5 is intentional- hence we read of "*another* mighty Angel". Perhaps this is the same "mighty Angel" who judges Babylon (18:21 s.w.), crying "mightily" (18:2 s.w.); that Angel also "comes down" from Heaven in judgment (18:1 s.w. 10:1 "come down from Heaven").

Clothed with a cloud- The Angel represents the Lord Jesus, who comes with clouds (1:7; Lk. 21:27; 1 Thess. 4:17), sitting upon a cloud (14:14). An Angel coming down clothed with a cloud is very much alluding to what happened after Israel left Egypt; although Moses alone saw this. John, despised and imprisoned on Patmos, is therefore being encouraged that he is in no less an awesome position than was Moses- who was seen in Judaism as the epitome of human spirituality, and whose experience on Sinai was presented as the highest a man has ever gone to God. The idea is that now the tribulation of Israel is completed, and instead of the coming down of the Angel clothed with cloud on Sinai, there will be the literal return of Christ to earth.

A rainbow- Another connection with the opening vision of a rainbow around the throne of the Lord Jesus (4:3). Cloud, rainbow and sun are all part of the same process which results in rainbows becoming visible. From the point of observation, the rain has ceased but the cloud suggests there is still water around. We can

maybe infer that this is a picture of some judgments [the rain] having ended, but others still ongoing. And this is in chronological terms about where we are up to in the book- the remaining judgments described in the book are upon the beast systems, judging them as they had previously judged Israel / God's people.

Face as the sun- The very description of Jesus in 1:16.

Feet as pillars of fire- As the Lord Jesus in 1:17; 2:18. After all the allusions to Joel in Revelation 9, it's not surprising that this too alludes to Joel, time to Joel 2:30- pillars of fire, smoke and blood are to be seen in the land in the last days. The context there would require that this is judgment coming upon the land. And yet this image of judgment is presented along with that of the rainbow, the cessation of judgment- in the kaleidoscope of images which forms the apocalyptic genre.

:7 Declared to His servants the prophets- The message of the prophets was specifically concerning Israel, which is therefore the focus of the "mystery" here.

:11 You must prophesy again- The idea is that John was assumed to be recording his message for the Jews, but it also had reference to the Gentiles. The traumas to happen in the land promised to Abraham will affect both Jew and non-Jew in that land; and this is why both the Hebrew and Greek terms for 'the destroyer' are given in chapter 9.

the little book is the rest of the Book of Revelation being imparted unto John? It cannot be accident that the same expression about "peoples, nations, tongues and kings" meets the reader again in chapter 17:15

A Opening vision (Revelation 1)
 B Seven letters with seven visions of the saints in glory (Rev. 2,3)
 C Christ in glory (Rev. 4,5)
 D 7 seals of judgment upon Israel and sealing of the repentant
 (Rev. 6,7); the language of 'sealing' in both chapters thereby
 connects them
 E 7 trumpets (Rev. 8,9)
 10 Christ stands in glory; commissions John to preach
 11 Preaching by the saints under persecution
 12 The church against the beast- the essence of the Apocalypse
 13 Preaching by the saints under persecution
 14 Christ stands in glory; the Gospel preached
 Ea 7 vials (Ch, 15 & 16)
 Da 7 juds on Babylon, presented as Israel (thus connecting with 'D'); the
 faithful presented in 19:1-10 in the language of Rev. 7 (Rev. 17:1-19:10)
 Ca Christ in glory (Rev. 19:11-21)
 Ba 7 visions of the saints in glory (Rev.
 A Closing vision (Rev.

There is a parallel between the commissioning of John in 1:9,19
 and his recommission in chapter 10. The open scroll given to him
 in chapter 10 is the same scroll which has been opened by the seals
 being removed in chapter 6. The *aggelon ischyron* of 5:2 is the
 same Angel described with the same words in 10:8; both times the
 Angel introduces a scroll. I suggest it is the same scroll. As the
 Lamb took the scroll from the hand of the Angel in 5:7,8, now John
 does the same (10:9,10). Perhaps in this context there is
 significance in the scroll having writing on both sides.

The detailed parallel between Revelation 10, 11 and Daniel 10,
 12 set out below requires that John understood the being he saw to
 be the angel who revealed so much to Daniel.

Revelation

Daniel[\[41\]](#)

1 0:1	A mighty angel.	1 0:5, 12:7	A man clothed in linen.
1 0:2	Right foot on the sea, left foot on the land.	1 2:7	Standing on the waters of the river.
1 0:1	Face like the sun.	1 0:6	Face like lightning.
1 0:1	Feet as pillars of fire.	1 0:6	Feet like polished brass.
1 0:2	Open book in his hand.	1 0:21	“I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth (the heavenly prototype).”
1 0:3	Voice as a lion.	1 0:6	Voice like a multitude.
1 0:5	Lifts right hand to heaven. (The left hand holds the book.)	1 2:7	Lifts both hands to heaven.
1 0:6	Swears by Him that liveth for ever.	1 2:7	Swears by Him that liveth for ever.
1 0:7	Mystery of God to be finished as declared to the prophet.	1 2:7	“All these things shall be finished.”
1 1:2	Temple court “cast out,” given to Gentiles.	1 2:11	Daily sacrifice taken away, abomination set up.
1 1:2	Holy city trodden under foot.	1 2:7	Power of the holy people scattered.

1	42 months.	1	Time, times and an
1:2		2:7	half.
1	The time of the	1	Many that sleep awake,
1:18	dead that they should	2:2	to everlasting life or to
	be judged.		contempt.

THEN WHY LIKE HIM?

Whilst, then, it may be taken as tolerably certain that the rainbowed angel was not Christ, some reason must be found for the remarkable resemblances between him and his Lord. These similarities are worth picking out.

The Angel of Revelation
10

Christ

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| a) | Clothed with a cloud. | “A cloud received him out of their sight ... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10,11). “Behold he cometh with clouds” (Revelation 1:7 and 14:14). |
| b) | His face as the sun | “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (1:16). |
| c) | His feet as pillars of fire (contrast the kingdoms of brass, as if they burned in a men - feet of iron and clay). | “His feet like unto fine furnace” (1:15) |
| d) | “Cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth.” | “The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the seals” (5:5). |
| | “A rainbow was upon his | “There was a rainbow |

e) head.”

round about the throne (4:3)
... a Lamb in the midst of the
throne” (5:6)

:10 *Ate it-* The "little book" is *isabliaridion*, a term used in 10.8,9,10, and Ezekiel 2.9 in a closely similar episode. The book in Ezekiel is "written within and without" (like that in Revelation 5.1) and carries a message of "lamentations, mourning and woe", very much the theme of this part of Revelation. Ezekiel was required to eat the roll, as John is here (10.9); but though Ezekiel was to speak its message to Israel, John must prophesy "again over many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (10.11). For each the book was "sweet as honey", and while in John's case his "belly was made bitter", in Ezekiel's the prophet went about "in bitterness".

I have argued that the seventh seal is opened but the contents aren't revealed- see on 8:1,13. In 4:1, John is told to speak forth what he has been shown, and this is found again in chapter 10. The eating of the scroll in 10:10 is based upon what Ezekiel did in Ez. 2:8-3:11- to make a final desperate appeal to Judah for repentance, even though they are already experiencing judgment. This fits with the explanation we have so far given- that the seals of chapter 6 are judgments on Israel which result in a minority repenting and being sealed (chapter 7), and then further judgments on the impenitent and partially on their abusers are then given in chapters 8 and 9. The sense of re-commissioning in chapter 10 is found in the command to "prophesy *again*" (10:11).

Revelation 11 The Two Witnesses

this measuring of them together with the temple at this point is yet another reassurance that they lie under the protection of God in the tribulations which are to follow, a confirmation of the sealing of Chapter 7 which is to be renewed again in 14.1-5; 15.1-4

"The holy city shall they tread under foot" takes us back again to the Olivet Prophecy, where "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Lk. 21.24).

Revelation 11:7-9

Revelation 13:7,8

"And when they [the witnesses] shall have finished their testimony, the

beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against

them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall

lie in the street of the great city . . . And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days

and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them ..."

"And it was given unto him [the beast whose deadly wound is healed] to

make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him

over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him ..."

Revelation 11 states that the beast makes war against, and overcomes, the witnesses, Revelation 13 says that the beast makes war against, and overcomes, the saints. Can one reasonably resist the conclusion that this is an equation and that the witnesses are saints?

the witnesses represent a larger number of saints. Moreover the two witnesses are called candlesticks, and it is explained in Revelation chapter 1 (verse 20) that candlesticks represent churches.

"O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them."

The down-treading of Jerusalem by the heathen; the slaying of God's servants; the refusal to permit their burial — these are also features of

Revelation 11. The question is asked in verse 5 of the Psalm: "How long,

Lord?" And the entreaty of verse 6 is expressed in the language of the
vials: "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen." Verse 10 is a plea for the
blood of God's servants to be avenged. If there is a valid connection
between Psalm 79 and Revelation 11 (and a number of people have been
impressed by the similarity of language, including the compilers of the
marginal references of the AV), it reinforces three conclusions: that the
setting of the prophecy of Revelation 11 is Jerusalem; that Jerusalem is
to be down-trodden once again by the Gentiles; and that the witnesses
suffer brutal treatment.

One of the witnesses' signs is specially important. After the death of the
witnesses "the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood
upon their feet" (Revelation 11:11). The words "stood upon their feet" are
also found in Ezekiel 37:10, and they also follow the statement that
spirit or breath came into certain people. Concerning that vast company of
Israelites who experience a national regathering in the valley of dry
bones, it is written: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath
came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding

great army." Here then, in the experiences of the witnesses of Revelation

11, is an Ezekiel-type, dramatised prophecy of the ultimate favour that

Israel will receive from God.

Revelation 12

The significance of chapter 12 is that almost every student of Revelation's structure finds this chapter to be the very core of the book. Nils Lund's suggestion has been followed with minor amendments by most students:

A Prologue (1:1-20)

B Seven Epistles (2:1-3:22)

C Seven Seals (4:1-8:1)

D 144,000 saints & Seven Trumpets (7:1-11:19)

E The Two Witnesses (11:1-13)

F Woman clothed with the sun (12:1)

G Dragon in heaven (12:4)

H Woman flees to wilderness (12:6)

J Satan cast out (12:12)

H' Woman flees to wilderness (12:14)

G' Dragon persecutes woman (12:15)

F' Woman's seed keeps the commandments of God (12:17)

E' The Two Beasts (13:1-18)

D' 144,000 saints & Seven Angels (14-1-15:4)

C' Seven Bowls (15:1,5-16:21)

B' Seven Angels: whore of Babylon vs. New Jerusalem (17:1-22:5)

A' Epilogue (22:6-21)

Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: a Study in Gormgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1942)

Alfred Norris in *The Apocalypse for Everyman* sums up the picture of the beasts presented in Revelation: "Once there was a woman in heaven about to give birth, and an evil dragon stood in front of her, intending to devour the newborn child (12.1-3). It had already done great damage in throwing down a third part of the stars (12.4), but when the baby boy was born he was snatched away from the dragon to the safety of God's throne (12.5), while the woman, too, ran away to a safe hiding place in the wilderness (12.6). The

wicked dragon was beaten in a war with Michael and his angels and, with its own angels, was thrown out of heaven to the earth (12.7-9). The heavens rejoiced that the dragon had been expelled (12.10-12a), but things looked bad for the earth, for the dragon meant to continue doing evil during the short time left to it (12.12b). First it pursued the woman, but she fled out of its way to her refuge (12.13-14), and even the flood it sent after her failed to overwhelm her, because the earth itself came to her aid by swallowing up the flood (12.15-16). There were still some of her children left, though, remaining faithful to their God and Lord, so the dragon decided to make life hard for them (12.17). What it did was to stand by the seashore and conjure up out of the sea a dreadful beast to which it gave worldwide authority (13.1-2) and also healed it when it looked as though it was wounded to death (13.3); so that the earth fell down and worshipped before the dragon, and before the beast which took over its power (13.4). From the wings of the stage the dragon still caused its voice to be heard through another beast, from the earth (13.11), and helped both beasts to gather the nations together to war against God Almighty (16.13). But its designs failed, for when the beast and the false prophet (the second beast) were beaten by the Lamb it was placed under restraint in the abyss (20.2) and not allowed out for 1000 years, at the end of which it was released, and gathered the nations together against the saints (20.7). The nations were overcome, however, by fire from heaven, and the dragon was finally removed from the scene by being destroyed in the lake of fire where its helpers, the beast and the false prophet, had been cast (20.10)".

It is obviously the same dragon throughout the Book from chapter 12 to chapter 20.

12:3 *Great red dragon*- it might be tempting to identify this with the beast, were it not completely ruled out by the Book itself, which distinguishes sharply between the two in 13.2,4; 16.13; 19.20; 20.2,10.

Seven heads and ten horns- 7 (Dt. 7:1; Josh. 3:10; Acts 13:19); 10 = Gen. 15:18; Ps. 83; the ten surrounding nations starting with Egypt and ending with Babylon of Jer. 46-50; we note that Jeremiah 50 predicts the final destruction of Babylon, and this is clearly the subtext of the predictions of latter day Babylon's destruction in Rev. 18. These ten nations were promised a land inheritance as Abraham's seed in Gen. 15, and this could be seen as being confirmed in Gen. 21:18; 27:39; Dt. 2:9; Heb. 11:20.

12:16 *The earth helped the woman*- This is very similar to how the Koran describes the abating of the flood in Noah's time: "And it was said: O earth! Swallow thy water and, O sky! be cleared of clouds! And the water was made to subside" (Sura 11.44).

yet the woman with her yet unborn Child, though described as being in heaven (12.1) cannot be in the most exalted heights, since the Child when He is born is "caught up to God and to His throne" (12.5).

Revelation 14

There is an important difference between the 144,000 in chapter 7 and those in chapter 14. Chapter 7 concerns the *sealing* of the faithful Israelite believers. They are marked as God's people, marked for protection, as were the Israelites whose houses were covered by the blood of the Passover lamb, and as repentant Jews were marked on the forehead in Ezekiel 9. In Revelation 14 these redeemed Israelites are *harvested*. They are united to each other and to the Lord Jesus Christ after the resurrection. They are called firstfruits, hinting at the great ingathering later in the same chapter. It seems this group of saints are resurrected before the great multitude from all nations. This would be another application of the principle, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. 2:10). Again, there is an allusion to the events of the Lord's death here; for the graves were opened and Jewish believers who had recently died were resurrected and appeared as witnesses against the system who had crucified their Lord.

Revelation 15

Revelation 15 is a short chapter that introduces the vials, and features a picture of a victorious, rejoicing multitude standing on a sea of glass, having gotten the victory over the beast. The vials in chapter 16 explain how this situation came about. The vials are poured out by angels "clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (15:6). This description is similar to that of the One like the Son of man of chapter 1 — the Lord Jesus Christ. It could therefore be appropriately applied to those who have identified themselves with the Lord, that is to say, the saints. Rev. 19:8 says that fine linen is "the righteousness of the saints". These are perhaps the believers of whom we read in 11:5,6: "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies"; and "these have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will". Their power "to smite the earth with all plagues" is exactly what happens in the vials, which are full of allusion to the plagues on Egypt. The Angels may therefore represent the believers, whose guardians they are- and it is those latter day believers who pour out the vials of the wrath of God, the seven last plagues.

Revelation 16: The Vials

Alfred Norris wisely observed in *The Apocalypse for Everyman*: “But if Trumpets are warnings, Vials or Bowls are outpourings. We have gone beyond mere disclosure, and again beyond the sounding of the alarm, and have reached the point where there is no return, nothing provisional: the end has come. God is pouring out His final judgements on the world, and there can be no turning back. There are a number of parallels in the Old Testament, where the verb *shaphak* is used in just such a way of the ultimate emptying out of God's irreversible judgements on His own or other people (see Psalm 69.24; 79.6; Isaiah 42.25; Jeremiah 10.25; Lamentations 2.4; 4.11; Ezekiel 7.8; 9.8, etc.; Hosea 5.10; Zephaniah 3.8)”. This is why in between the trumpets of warning and the final vials, there is a final desperate appeal through the preaching of the Gospel (Rev. 10:11; 11:3,6; 14:6,7). But after that, the temple is closed and no man can enter it (15:5-8). Revelation stresses God’s creative power- He is the creator of heaven, earth, sea and rivers. In the vials, we see a reversal of His creative activity.

16:21 *Great hail*- The Hadith speaks of extreme rain as a judgment to come upon the land in the last days: "Then Allah would send rain which no house of clay or (the tent of) camels' hairs would keep out and it would wash away the earth" (Book 41.7015). It is a feature of Divine judgment that the thing men greatly fear comes upon them. The jihadist beast will find itself the victim of the very features of Divine condemnation which their own writings say will come upon the condemned.

the literal city fell when a by-pass channel was constructed so as to dry up Euphrates, so that a way might be provided for the kings

from the Sun's Rising, those of the Medes and Persians (Isaiah 41.2,25),- AN IRANIAN INVASION, OR OF LATTER DAY MEDES- KURDISTAN-IRANIAN NEXUS, NON ARABIC INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH

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