

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.
Interim President,
Executive Vice President & Provost
Criswell College

Current Events, Prophecy and the Last Days

The Basis for the Arab/Israeli Conflict

The nations that concern us are those that have set themselves against Yahweh, God of the Bible, and against Israel. Their opposition to Israel is longstanding and relates to two events in the book of Genesis.

1. Islam laments the loss of legal status of Ishmael. In Genesis 16:1-17:26 and 21:1-7, Ishmael and Hagar are sent away [cf. 17:8-21]. Muslims claim Jews added 17:8-21 to steal their legitimate claim to Abrahamic covenant [Gen 12:1-3]. This can hardly be true since these events took place 2200 years before the Romans changed the name of the land of Israel to Palestine and 2900 years before Islam became a religion. Galatians 4:21-31 says that Ishmael represents works salvation, which is what Islam teaches [4:23-25]. Isaac represents faith for children of the promise [4:28-31].
2. Islam laments the loss of legal status of Esau in Genesis 27-28 and 33. Edomites [Gen 36:9] are bitter enemies of the people of God, see Obad 1-21; Heb 12:16
3. **Allah**, means "the God." The word existed in pre-Islamic Arabian tradition whose religious roots recognized lesser gods of which Allah was the supreme. Judaism and Christianity always have been monotheistic.
4. The Koran says Allah rewards and punishes individuals. He is only one god so there is no thought of a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Allah wills all things.
5. Islam does not admit of any mediator between Allah and humans.
6. Islam has no room for Jesus. Jesus could not be the Divine, or the Son of God, or our mediator, or our Savior, or one who will return—in short, the God of our Bible and the Jesus of our Bible are a contradiction to the teachings of Islam.
7. Most Muslims are not aware of the fact that Islam began with Mohammed who lived AD 570 to 632 and was the originator of the Muslim religion. It was created as and still is a political-religious system that is bent on becoming a one-world religion. Muslims claim that the Hebrews created the passage in Genesis 17:1-27 to exclude Muslims. This cannot be possible since the passage was part of the Books of Moses that date to 1450 BC. Many Muslims have been converted just on the basis of this information.

The End Time Opponents of the People of God

The names of the nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 are unfamiliar to us today. Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, and Togarmah [Ezek 38:3], all are names of regions or areas that look back to the table of nations in Genesis 10:1ff. The geographical region of Ezekiel 38-39 includes Eastern Turkey, Western Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan. Ezekiel 38:5

mentions Persia (Iran), Libya, and Cush (Ethiopia). This entire list sounds like a who's who of world terrorists, anti-Semites, and anti-American propagandists. Gog is a cryptogram for Babylon as noted below. Gog is an allied confederation (Ezek 38:6-7) and the organizing mastermind of the anti-God "Mystery Babylon" in Revelation 14:8 and 17:1-18:24. It is a ten-nation/region confederacy. Seven mountain ranges are associated with this region: Taurus Mountains, Lebanon Mountains, Hejaz Mountains, Asir Mountains, Hadramawt Mountains, Zagros Mountains, and Elburz Mountains.

Three Babylons of the Bible

1. Babylon is a byword in Scripture for ruthless, godless government.
2. There are three Babylons in the Bible: (1) Babel in Gen 10:10-12 under Nimrod; (2) Babylon II in Dan 1-5; Hab 1-3 [Chaldea = Babylon]; and (3) "Mystery" Babylon, Rev 14:8; 17:1-18:24.

Significant Passages on the Three Babylons of the Bible

1. The Babylon passages in Isaiah 13:1-22 and 14:1-23
2. The passage in Isaiah 47:1-15
3. The destruction of Babylon in Jeremiah chapters 50-51
4. The battle of Gog and God in Ezekiel 38-39
5. Revelation 14:8 and 17:1-18:24. "Mystery" Babylon [Iran/Iraq]. NOTE: In 17:5 the phrase, "martyrs of Jesus," is used only here in the entire Bible.

Babylon's Satanic Connections

1. Old Babylon of Genesis 10-11 was the beginning of organized apostate religion under Nimrod and his wife, Semiramus, who started astrology and nature worship.
2. Isaiah 13:1-14:23, the fall of Lucifer [light bearer, 2 Cor 11:14], referred to by Jesus in Luke 10:18.
3. Ezekiel 38-39 presents Gog, the name from a Sumerian loan word *gug* meaning "darkness." His true nature is darkness.
4. The doom of Antichrist's end-time Babylon is announced in Revelation 14:8.
5. Revelation 17-18 is end-time Babylon, empire of the Antichrist and Satan.
6. Revelation 20:7-10, Satanic rebellion to be put down at the end of human history.

Babylon's Geography

1. Babylon of Daniel 1-5 is the same geographical location as Genesis 10.
2. Babylon of Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 17-18 is same location as Genesis 10. Revelation 17:1 says Babylon "sits on many waters" and 17:9 "seven mountains." See the geography of Babylon below, which includes modern Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. The "many waters" include the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, Gulf of Suez, Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, Caspian Sea, and Black Sea.

3. The seven mountains are: Taurus Mountains, Lebanon Mountains, Hejaz Mountains, Asir Mountains, Hadramawt Mountains, Zagros Mountains, and Elburz Mountains.
4. Ancient Mesopotamia was the site of the Genesis 10 Babylon of Nimrod and the site of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. The same area today contains Syria, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Of these nations Iran and Iraq are in the center.

Geography of Babylon



Palestine in the Last Days

During the period of Roman rule, the Jews clashed with the Romans several times beginning in AD 66. The Roman leader Titus besieged Jerusalem and entered it in AD 70. He burned the Temple that was built by Herod. During the reign of Trajan (AD 98-117), the Jews in five of the Roman kingdoms (Mesopotamia, Cyprus, Egypt, Cyrenica, and Palestine) revolted. Trajan set out to destroy them in the first four kingdoms. After Trajan died, he was succeeded by Hadrian (AD 117-138), who suppressed the Jews in Palestine, killing a large number of them.

Hadrian severely punished the Jews. Prisoners were sold into slavery in massive numbers, and Judaism as a religion was under attack. He forbade the people to teach Mosaic Law or to own scrolls of any sort. Pagan temples and symbols were erected all over the province and even directly over old Jewish religious sites. The province itself was renamed Palestine, and of course, Jerusalem was already called Aelia Capitolina to stamp out any reference even to the Jewish names. The people were even forbidden from entering the temple complex to pray at their own sacred grounds, and the outer wall of the complex eventually came to be known as the "wailing wall." He built a statue to Jupiter on the site of Herod's Temple and ended Jewish ties with the land. So the land belonged to the Jews when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and created a territory called Palestine to eradicate any reference to the Jews in connection with Jerusalem or Israel of the first century. By the fifth century AD, there were three "Palestines" that covered the region between the Mediterranean and Arabia.

This was written 2,000 years before there was a listing for "Palestine," designating the land between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea on a map of the 5th century AD during the Byzantine period, see map attached and article "Israel, Whose Land Is It?" The term "Palestine" became a popular designation for this same area in the British mandate occupation, 1920-48.

Iran: Babylon in the Last Days

Saddam Hussein captured our attention with his anti-United States rhetoric. Now, he is gone, and Iran and its leader have stepped into the spotlight. We have already geographically identified Iran as a part of the ancient Babylonian Empire that occupied all of Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea under both Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar. That territory today is an Arab stronghold. Iran is much in the news today. Here are several issues worth your time.

1. Iran and the Bomb

"Islamic Iran today possesses 6,000 centrifuges," Ahmadinejad told a group of professors in the city of Mashhad. He has repeatedly stated that the end of the evil United States Empire is imminent. According to the Associated Press, "A total of 3,000 centrifuges is the commonly accepted figure for a nuclear enrichment program that is past the experimental stage and can be used as a platform for a full industrial-scale program that could churn out enough enriched material for dozens of nuclear weapons. Iran says it plans to move toward large-scale uranium enrichment that will ultimately involve 54,000 centrifuges." That said, not everyone is convinced Iran is telling the truth, or that all 6,000 centrifuges—if they do have them—are actually operational. "An Israeli official who closely monitors the Iranian nuclear program said in an article in *The Jerusalem Post* that Ahmadinejad was probably lying. 'Our assessment, based on the latest available

information and recent reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency, is that the figure of 6,000 centrifuges is unlikely,' the official said. 'We believe a figure of between 3,400 and 3,500 is more accurate.'

The important issue to note, however, is that Iran is defying the United Nations along with the international community and moving steadily in the direction of enriching enough uranium to high enough standards to be able to begin producing nuclear warheads, possibly within the next year or two, according to senior Israeli intelligence officials. In addition to the development of enriched uranium and plutonium for bombs, you will recall that there was a great deal of flurry earlier this summer over the launching of missiles that are capable of reaching targets in Israel and Europe. There also is speculation that Iran could launch an attack of targets inside the United States from barges stationed offshore in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

2. Iran and "The Secret of Armageddon"

"The Secret of Armageddon" is an Iranian TV series being aired this summer that affirms and teaches what it calls the "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." It promotes the idea of a conspiracy claiming that the U. S. and Israel are planning the genocide of humanity, and Iranian Jews and Baha'i are in on the plot and are planning to take over Iran.

Here is a quote containing some of their rhetoric. "Evangelical Christians, along with the Jews, believe that the War of the End of Days will take place in the desert of Megiddo, in Palestine. They believe that Jesus will return, and that then there will be a millennium of happiness, and that the Jews, under the leadership of Jesus, will rule the world for a thousand years."

Other rhetoric condemning the U. S. states, "The beliefs of these fundamentalist Evangelical Christians, and their support of the Zionists and Zionism, are based on world domination, with Israel at its center. This will be achieved by means of age-old Zionist methods, which appear in the well-known treatise *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This is why this group of Protestants is referred to as 'Christian Zionists' in contemporary political discourse. Along with the Zionist Jews, and out of a desire to conquer the world, they incite war of devastation, examples of which we see all around us.

Still another story being told to the Arab world states, "The Zionist Jews believe that the divine promise was given to them, and that their rule will not be restricted to the land between the Nile and the Euphrates. They believe that God gave them the entire world. They base this belief on the false stories that they themselves invented and keep telling."

3. Iran and The Twelfth Imam

An Imam is a Muslim holy man and usually the leader of a mosque. A central concept of the Shi'ite religious worldview is the teaching of the hidden Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, "The Guided One." He is called Mahdi for short and is believed to be superior to all other prophets including Jesus. While the stories of the first eleven Imams are historical in nature, the history of the twelfth Imam is mystical and miraculous. Hasan al-Askari, the Eleventh Imam, died in AD 874. Six years earlier, in AD 868, Abu'l-Kasim Muhammad, who was then a seven-year-old boy, declared himself to be the Twelfth Imam and went into hiding. The Shi'ites believed that he hid himself in a cave below a mosque in Samarra. The entrance to this cave is blocked by a gate, which the Shi'ites call *Bab-al Ghayba*, or the "Gate of Occultation." This is one of the most sacred sites in Shi'a Islam, and the faithful gather here to pray for the return of the Twelfth Imam. He will return to save the world at the time of the end when it has fallen into chaos.

Ahmadinejad believes the key to bringing in the messianic era of Mahdi is to fill the world with chaos against the "evil empires" of America and Israel. In annihilating millions of Americans, Israelis, and other non-Muslims, Ahmadinejad hopes to create a fevered pitch of chaotic events that will bring the Twelfth Imam out of hiding; thus to precipitate the coming of the Islamic messiah, Mahdi.

It is ironic that the coming of Jesus is associated with love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, truth, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, and all the fruits of the Spirit. The coming of the Islamic messiah, Mahdi, is to be preceded by torture, destruction, carnage, war, beheadings, annihilation, and the destruction of millions of people whose only crime is that they are not Muslims and therefore are infidels.

These Islamic leaders are dead serious about creating colossal worldwide chaos, terrorism, and mass destruction of the non-Muslim population. This is not a small, insignificant, or obscure minority religious cult. It involves millions of radical Islamic fundamentalists who believe they will bring in their millennium by the chaos and carnage of annihilating millions of infidel non-Muslim people. Ahmadinejad is sincerely and unalterably committed to creating a level of violence and carnage on an international scale in order to bring in what he believes to be the Muslim golden age with the arrival of their messiah, the twelfth Imam, Mahdi.

Birth of the Mediterranean Union

It did not get much play in the media, but the birth of the Mediterranean Union on July 14, 2008, is very significant. This Union is composed of 43 countries with a total population of 756 million people. It is still in the formative stage, but it includes all the nations of the European Union of 27 nations, plus Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro,

Monaco, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and all the nations in North Africa except for Libya whose leader, Muammar Gaddafi, denounced the Union as the rise of a new Roman Empire.

Jesus and the End Time

Jesus spoke clearly and at length in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24:1-51 about the last days of human history. Any attempt to interpret this passage should also include the context of 25:1-46, which is a part of this discourse about the end times. A careful reading of Matthew 24:1-35 reveals that the focus of this section is on what happens to and in Israel during the last days of human history. The whole passage was presented to His disciples just before His ascension. It was in answer to their question, "Tell us, when will all these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" Matt 24:3. All of the features of this answer are clearly focused on Israel. In fact, the key to the interpretation of the passage was given by Jesus in 24:32-35, where Israel is presented as the fig tree, see Luke 13:6-9; Joel 1:7; Hos 9:10; Jer 33:7-8.

The Olivet Discourse contains the following signs:

1. Israel's search for the identity of the Messiah, 24:4-5, 23-26
2. Israel's existence with wars and rumors of war, 24:6-7
3. Israel as an object of wrath from the nations, 24:9-10
4. Israel will be overrun by false prophets, 24:11.
5. Israel will be the object of lawlessness, 24:12.
6. Israel is challenged to remain faithful to God to the end, 24:13.
7. Israel will participate in the spread of the Gospel in the last days, 24:14.
8. Israel will see the abomination of desolation, 24:15.
9. Israel will see Him coming and flee to be with Him, 24:16-20.
10. Israel will experience great tribulation, 24:21.
11. Israel shall receive shortened days for survival, 24:21-22.
12. Israel's Messiah will come quickly, 24:27-28.
13. Israel will see signs in the sun, moon, and stars, 24:29.
14. Israel will see the Messiah come, 24:30-31.
15. Israel is the focus of all the signs, 24:32-35.
16. Israel will not know the day or hour of Messiah's return, 24:36-44.
17. Israel must remain a faithful servant, 24:45-51.
18. Israel should heed the parable of the foolish virgins, 25:1-13.
19. Israel should heed the parable of the talents, 25:14-30.
20. Israel should beware of the judgment of the nations, 25:31-46.

All the Prophecies of End Time Events Will Come to Pass Quickly

There is a recurring theme encapsulated in a word used in the discussion of the last days in the New Testament. It is used nine times by John in the Book of Revelation, 1:1; 2:5, 16;

3:11; 11:14; 22:6, 7, 12, 20, and once in Matthew 24:22 by Jesus. It is the Greek word *ταχύ*, *tachu*, translated "shortly" or "quickly." In the contexts where it is used, it refers to a limited but brief duration of time. As Jesus used the term, He was speaking of a time of tribulation that will characterize "those days." It will be a very brief period of dire distress that shall occur immediately before His return. In fact, Jesus states the days of the tribulation should be cut short or else no one would be saved alive. But for the sake of the "elect," or believers, the days will be shortened.

The use of the same word, *τάχος*, *tachos*, in Revelation is translated "shortly" in 1:1, with the sense that when the things in the book begin to happen, they will happen very quickly. Even though we are talking about a seven-year period of tribulation, each set of events will unfold quickly. It has the same sense in Revelation 2:5, 16 and 3:11 in the letters to the churches. It is used in Revelation 11:14 to refer to the approach of the third woe, which will come very "quickly." In Revelation 22:6, 7, 12, and 20, it is used for the return of the Lord Jesus. This coincides with Jesus' statement about the swiftness of His return in Matthew 24:27, "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of man be," see also Luke 17:24.

Conclusion

All of the issues and events presented above can be found in scattered media reports about Islam, the Twelfth Imam, Iran and nuclear weapons, "The Secret of Armageddon" film, the birth of the Mediterranean Union July 14, 2008, and related topics. Use Google or other search engines on your computer to search any and all of these topics and you will discover a wealth of information. Also you can look up the website of Joel Rosenberg by typing in his name on a same search engine, and you will find additional coverage and discussion of many of these issues and more.