

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. 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.

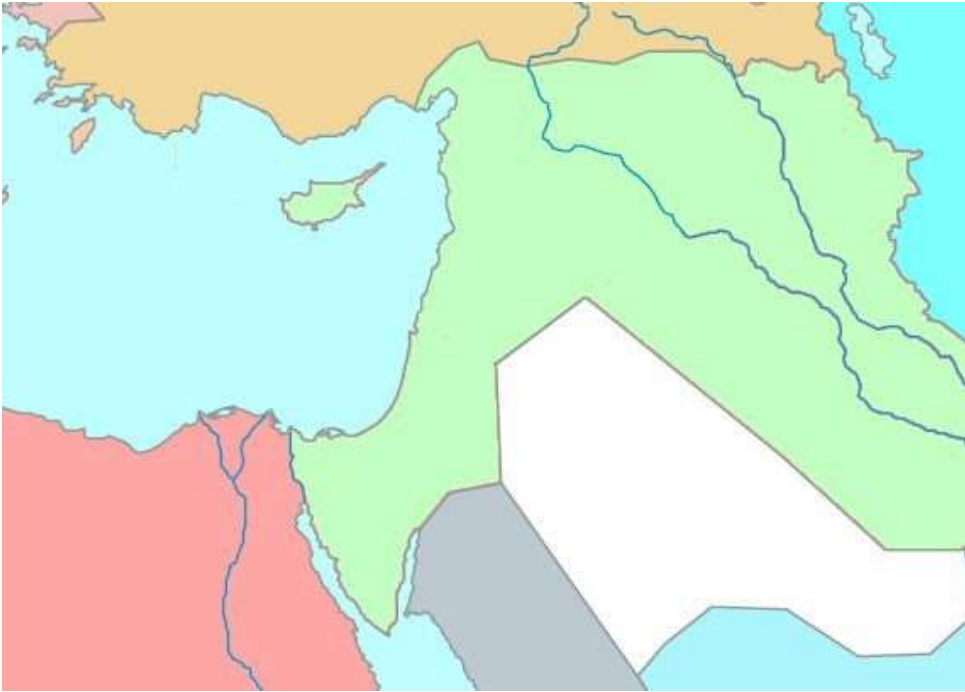
One feature of the civil war is the bitter disparity between the various Islamic groups opposed to Assad. And the same is true in much of the Arab world. The *only* factor which can unite them is their joint hatred of Israel and desire to destroy her. The bitter disunity between the Arab factions is 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 Kafibat 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
Palestinian
The
Hamas
Hezbollah
Democratic Front for the Liberation of
Palestine
Fatah
Al Aqsa
Abu Nidal

Liberation
Islamic
Muslim
Martyrs

Front
Jihad
Brotherhood
Brigades

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 kufr [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:



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>

The IS will be a strictly religious entity, keen to take the predictions and commands of the Koran and Hadith as literally as possible- including “When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield, strike off their heads until you have crushed them completely; then bind the prisoners tightly,” (Sura Chapter 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.

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

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

:8 After many days 8:8; 10:3 “the day of
you shall *be visited*. In visitation” upon Assyria.
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
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 consider / it will come into your mind Is. 10:7

: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 the 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.

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 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 Dydima, 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.

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). 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-Ùqāb, 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). The idea is clearly that these hordes will come 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. 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

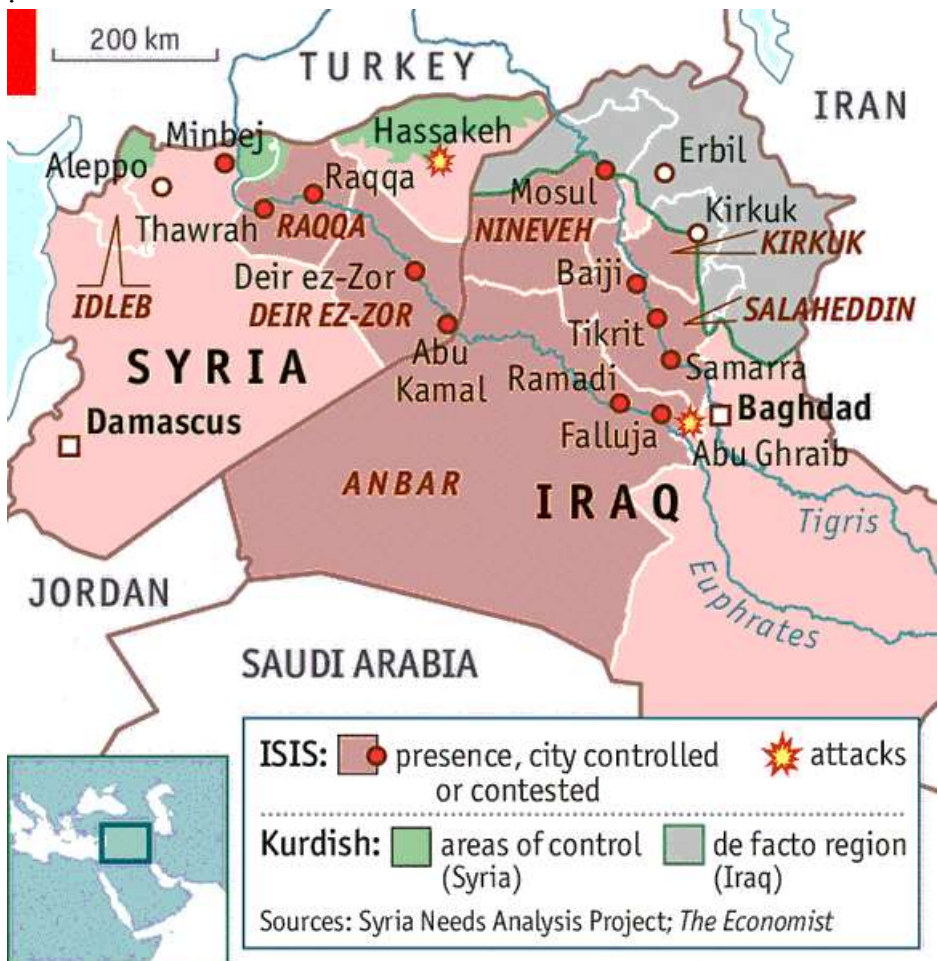
could be that each Angel represents a particular subdivision of the IS. Note how "the Angel of the bottomless pit" refers both to a Heavenly Angel and to a human leader on earth, in that the princes of the earth have their Angelic representative in the court of Heaven. These are surely the same four 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.

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 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.

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. 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 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.

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. 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'. 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 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, (Μαομετιχας) 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).

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 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. 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.

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).

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).

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 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. We can likewise observe that the description of the beast in Rev. 17 is very unislamic- 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.

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.

2:41 *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.

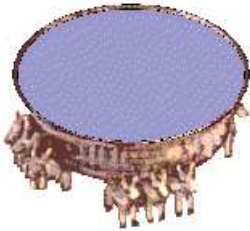
Chapter 7: The Beasts of Daniel 7

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.



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".

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.

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 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). But 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". This speaks of an entity that is more aggressive and fear-inspiring than the aggressive Babylonians, Assyrians or abusive Nazis. The current IS appear to fit that 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... 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 drunk the blood of the saints, i.e. the people of God, Israel in their land (Rev. 17:6). And 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 may mean that as a

result of all the persecution and destruction of the majority of Jews in the land, the surviving remnant 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 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.

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 uprise 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The Beasts of Revelation and the Beasts of Daniel 7

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 as 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).

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.

“For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two... And it shall come to pass in all the Land (Israel), says the Lord, that two-thirds of it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as gold is tested. They will call on My Name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'the LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:8-9)

"Alas! for that Day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's (Israel's) Trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:7)

"At that time Michael (the Archangel) shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people (Israel); and there shall be a time of Trouble (Tribulation), such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1)

"For there will be Great Tribulation (Trouble) such has not been since the beginning of the world until this time no, nor ever

shall be. And UNLESS those days were shortened NO flesh (living thing on Earth) would be saved" (Matthew 24:21-22)

"And to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivers us from the Wrath to come." (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

"For God did NOT appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11)

"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)

Chapter 10: The Antichrist

The various prophecies of the last days all feature a distinct personal leader of the invaders of Israel. 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”.

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 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 centered 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.

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 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 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.

The IS Will Treat Jesus Christ as AntiChrist

In Islam, 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 . 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 leader of the Islamic State claims to be such a Mahdi.

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.

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 kingdom, 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 “tarrying” (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.

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