

# GLORY OF KINGS

## SEARCHING OUT GOD'S CONCEALED END-TIME TRUTH



**“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter  
is the glory of kings” (Proverbs 25:2)**

**Robert Sheldon**

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### **Glory of Kings - Endorsement**

*“Robert Sheldon speaks with great clarity and wisdom into a topic rife with unscriptural notions and wild conspiracy theories. His penetrating and thought-provoking analysis helps the reader correct previously held misconceptions and ‘connect up the dots’ in relation to end-time Biblical prophecy in a meaningful way. I thoroughly recommend it as a significant contribution to this vitally important area of study.”*

David J. Lambourn, author: “But Is He God?”, “The Forgotten Bride” and “Babel Versus Bible”

### **With Thanks**

There will never be adequate words to express the depth of our gratitude for the Lord Jesus - for all that He is, all that He has done for us, and all that He will yet do on our behalf. He is our God, our Saviour, our High Priest, and much more besides. To Him belongs all the power, the praise and glory. He is also our King, and the “Glory of Kings” is His alone. Yet even in this, He chooses to share His glory with us. He knows all things, yet does nothing without announcing it first through His prophets (Amos 3:7). What remains concealed, He invites us to search out (Proverbs 25:2). Ultimately, all prophecy points to Jesus, so this booklet is entirely about Him.

I am grateful, too for all those servants of the Lord, named and unnamed, who have diligently and humbly contributed to what follows through the insights they have shared with the Body of Christ as a whole or in personal conversation. In particular, I thank Peter Sammons for his encouragement, dedication, and wise counsel in helping to bring this booklet to publication.

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## Introduction

What follows are some suggested principles to help ordinary believers approach the study of last days Bible prophecy for themselves. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

We often come to a Biblical text already predisposed to a particular interpretation due to what we have heard from various “experts” or from being exposed to a theological framework which may provide useful insights, but in other respects be incorrect. Believers have a collective responsibility to work together and seek out the truth of Scripture for the building up of the body, for “iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17) – an approach taken by the Berean Jews when checking the validity of Paul’s claims that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah (Acts 17:11). Unlike so many of us, who have favourite teachers or pet theories, the apostle was delighted to be challenged and cross-examined by those who put the Word of God above individuals, no matter their reputation. This should also be our model.

Furthermore, the central focus of study for the Bereans was Jesus Himself. We especially need to keep this in mind with regards to the Lord’s return. (Readers who long for a Jesus-centric study on the book of Revelation need look no further than Philip Wren’s uplifting “Revelations of Jesus Christ”.) The disciples asked the Master “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3) and, as their parting question “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Taken together with the Lord’s rebuke of the pharisees for their lack of discernment concerning spiritual times and seasons, His answers are instructive, particularly when we consider chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew in their entirety. At the risk of oversimplifying, I believe we can state certain things with confidence:

- We have been given work to do in the Kingdom, and the Lord expects us find us actively engaged with this when He returns.
- Believers should be sufficiently spiritually and biblically astute (with oil in our lamps) as to get a sense of the nearness of the Lord’s return. However, no matter how ingenious we are, we will not be able to work out the precise date and will likely be surprised by His timing!
- Believers need to take special care not to be seduced by false teachers, prophets and “messiahs”, and all the more so as the time of the Lord’s appearing approaches.
- The destruction of the Jewish temple and the Jewish exile were a *partial* fulfilment of Jesus’ prophecy. Israel and the Jewish people are central to events of the Second Coming. At His return Jesus will take His rightful place as King of the Jews, thereby restoring Israel’s fallen kingdom and bringing to fruition all of God’s covenantal and prophetic purposes for the Jews.
- There are specific signs to look out for as a pre-condition for Jesus’ return – some global in scope, and others specifically in Israel. We should know what they are.

Beyond that, exactly how the specific details will work out in practice is a matter for ongoing consideration. As a community of believers, we need to agree on the essential foundations and build from there in a spirit of humility, prayer and diligently searching the Scriptures. Peter Sammons' excellent book "Last Days & End Times – Making the Connection" is strongly recommended, as the author has carefully sought to establish broadly where these boundaries lie, and at what point we move into the realm of speculation. The book is thoroughly "Hebraic" in approach, drawing on Sammons' earlier work "The Jesus Pattern", which focuses on the prophetic importance of the Levitical Festivals as they relate to Jesus' ministry in the Gospels, and to His return.

This booklet is based on the assumption that these broad principles of how to interpret future Bible prophecy are understood. It goes on to investigate areas which are more speculative and which therefore will, of course, be open to a wider range of possible interpretations. This is precisely the reason why a discussion around principles of interpretation, and understanding what assumptions are being employed when debating any given area of study, are so important. What is given here is by no means a definitive list of such principles, but rather intended as a contribution to this wider discussion.

The booklet consists of two sections. The first is a brief outline of these principles, in which each one is assigned its own alphabet letter for cross-referencing purposes. Then, in the main text, we consider various frequently debated matters relating to last days Bible prophecy (again, a far from comprehensive list), in each case making suggestions as to how to approach the question by referencing those specific principles which may prove helpful.

It can be useful to understand any author's particular bias, as no-one is capable of being entirely objective. In the interests of transparency, in addition to the bullet point summary made above, I believe that although Dispensationalism makes some useful contributions to understanding the future, like many others, I have what I consider to be reasonable doubts about the Scriptural accuracy of some of its claims. Establishing agreed principles of interpretation aids greatly in seeking to both ask the right questions and answer them in a more satisfactory and mutually edifying way. Finally, I am not a professional theologian, and frequently find that I need to revise or question my own assumptions as the Lord continues graciously to provide greater insights through many of His servants in these times. My understanding of Daniel 12:4 is that this is yet one more sign of the Lord fulfilling His prophetic word as His blessed return gets ever closer.

Marantha!

## PART 1 - PRINCIPLES

### Principles for Interpreting Prophecy

#### (A) Geography matters

Prophetic events in the Bible are frequently linked to a specific geographical location. Some events clearly lie in our future, either because they have not yet taken place, or because they appear to be associated with a specific End Time event, such as the world recognising Yahweh for Whom He truly is (Ezekiel 38:16, 23, 39:6-7, 21, 27). (Some commentators make the case for Ezekiel 38 taking place during Messiah's Millennial reign, with Ezekiel 39 being fulfilled at His return. Either way, however, the events remain yet future.)

Many prophecy teachers have long asserted that the invasion of Israel from the far north of Israel must be from Russia, and this certainly fits geographically. (In addition, they point out that the Hebrew word "Meshech" sounds somewhat like Moscow – an argument which, however, fails the rigours of linguistic science.) Why is it then, that although several regions are listed as participants in the invasion, when referenced against the most trusted Bible atlases none of them correspond to the location of modern-day Russia, whereas several of their modern-day counterparts are in Turkey? This is not to deny possible Russian involvement, or even that some of the areas listed may correspond to former USSR territory on the Black Sea, but we have to be careful not to read things into the Biblical text which are not clearly present.

"Newspaper exegesis" is a somewhat dismissive term used to describe those who are too quick to link current events to Biblical prophecy. However, we know that these predictions will have a specific fulfilment at a particular time and place in history, and we are called to "watch and pray". Regarding Russia or the former USSR as a possible candidate for Ezekiel 38, the geo-politics of the cold war and President Putin's 2022 invasion of the Ukraine have naturally provoked interest among many believers. Many of the modern-day nations or areas which *can* be clearly linked geographically to their Biblical namesakes have received considerable Russian military support during their involvement in various wars against Israel since its foundation.

There is also a school of thought which argues that Bible locations should be understood in terms of the historical ethnicity of the people living there. So, to use a modern analogy, if someone living in the 17<sup>th</sup> century had written a prediction referring to Britain, a reader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century might reasonably take this to mean the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand, due to British emigration to those countries. The challenges of applying such a methodology so as to link Bible prophecies (written thousands of years ago) to modern events should be self-evident.

When considering Biblical geography, we also need to recognise that it is Israel-centric, or more accurately, focused first and foremost on the God of Israel. Whilst understandable, for example, that some American believers might ask "where is the USA in prophecy?", such



questions start from the wrong premise! Looking at the world from the perspective of The Tanakh ("Old Testament"), we might picture things differently:



The New Testament, of course, brings a fresh perspective to this, and therefore raises some interesting questions. After all, Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman that in future the place of worship would move from the physical temple in Jerusalem to wherever true believers were in union with the Father (John 4:21-24). How then should we understand Paul's reference to the "man of lawlessness" proclaiming himself to be God in the Lord's temple? Is a spiritual meaning intended, or is this a prophetic reference to a future restored Jewish temple in Jerusalem? Or perhaps, are both interpretations true? If we are looking out for this as a key sign of the Lord's imminent return (and assuming this does not take place after the "Rapture" of the true church), then the question surely matters.

As a fascinating aside, the glory of the Second Temple was greater than that of the First (Haggai 2:9) *because* the incarnate Lord Himself visited it (Malachi 3:1). Yet the One Who was the Shekinah presence at the heart of Solomon's temple would, as a Jewish man not descended from the tribe of Levi, only have been allowed entry to the outer court of the Second Temple. Even then, he was threatened with being stoned within its precincts (John 8:59), and of course He was then put to death outside as both our atoning sacrificial lamb, and scapegoat.

## (B) Details matter

The details which the Lord includes in His Word are important. I provide a number of examples in the pages which follow, highlighting particular points that I believe may have been largely overlooked. These include the dual reference to lion, bear and leopard, the possible significance of the false prophet's two uncrowned horns, and also the iron beast's bronze claws.

### (C) Same or separate events?

Bible sceptics argue that differences in descriptions of the same event should invalidate the narrative. A particular case in point is whether one or two angels were present when Jesus' followers went to the garden tomb. This presents no great difficulty. In the course of normal human activity one person might mention meeting a friend in town, whilst someone else present might also say that the friend was with his wife. Regarding Jesus' resurrection, true believers readily acknowledge the differences between the various accounts, but would not thereby conclude that Jesus was resurrected on more than one occasion!

Concerning Bible prophecy, however, there is a well-established pattern of repeated fulfilments. It is therefore important to consider what principle we use for deciding whether two passages refer to the same event, or to different ones. A case in point is Ezekiel chapters 38 to 39 juxtaposed with the Armageddon conflict of Revelation chapter 16. As stated previously, some who compare and contrast these passages conclude that these two Ezekiel chapters describe two separate invasions of Israel – one shortly before the Lord's return, and the other at the end Jesus' millennial reign.

Another example is Matthew chapters 24 and 25 compared with first and second Thessalonians. Some Dispensationalists consider that Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives does not apply to believers as the church will have already been "raptured" by this point. They see Jesus' reference to the gathering of the elect as a reference to the Jewish return from exile among the nations. They consider Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, by contrast, as addressed to the church. Dispensationalists support this argument by highlighting a few details that appear in one passage, but not the other. By contrast, author Alan Kurshner identifies some 30 similarities between these sections of Scripture, leading him to conclude that they refer to the same events, and therefore all believers will see the Anti-Christ and go through tribulation.

So, how do we approach the balance of evidence when comparing similarities and differences between broadly similar passages? Similarities are simpler to deal with; the greater their number, the higher the likelihood that the same event is in view. As for differences, I would suggest that one useful question to consider is whether these are simply cases of different details omitted, or whether they cause an obvious contradiction between the passages in question – or indeed history. For example, advocates of Replacement Theology argue that the Roman desecration of the Jewish temple in AD 70 fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel, Jesus, Paul (and arguably John in Revelation) concerning the "abomination that causes desolation". Yet the facts of history demonstrate only a partial fulfilment, indicating that the main event still lies in the future.

Cross-referencing Scriptures helps us build a more accurate, complete picture of what the Bible teaches. It may be reasonable to conclude that when the Lord says essentially the same thing in various passages, yet in slightly different ways, that He does so to reinforce the most important message, as any good teacher does. Furthermore, if done in a

comprehensive and careful way, it can resolve difficult and complex issues that divide believers. For example, many Christians are simply unaware of the obvious contradiction between Jesus' "three days and three nights" statement and the almost universally accepted belief in a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection. Peter Sammons' and David Serle's insightful book, named after this same statement, is a particularly effective demonstration of this principle, showing how upon careful examination, apparently contradictory passages actually agree with one another and lead to an unexpected conclusion.

When it comes to Bible prophecy, Joel Richardson is similarly diligent in his "deep dive" analysis and cross-referencing of Scripture. His conclusions have caused many to re-evaluate widely-held mainstream views, such as the assumed Russian invasion of Israel and the Anti-Christ emerging from a resurrected Roman Empire in Europe.

#### (D) Exegesis or eisegesis?

In a court of law, should someone with a firm alibi be convicted of a crime based upon the weight of circumstantial evidence?

The importance of sound exegesis is a well understood (although not always consistently applied) principle for Bible interpretation. It is just as valid when it comes to approaching Bible prophecy. The late David Pawson argued that the plain text of Scripture contradicts the teaching of a pre-tribulation "Rapture". Whilst Dispensational Theology builds what may appear to be a strong case by making *inferences* from a considerable number of passages, ultimately this approach appears to represent the wisdom of human logic, rather than the Lord's clear *revelation*. Whilst many readers may not agree with Pawson's conclusion regarding the pre-tribulation "Rapture", the question he raises concerning exegesis (reading out of the text) versus eisegesis (reading into the text) is of profound importance, and must be taken seriously.

#### (E) The meaning of words and language

The starting point for understanding any passage of Scripture is to know exactly what the author was saying in the original language. This either requires fluency in Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek or, for most of us, reliance on those who have become proficient in these skills. Furthermore, in many cases a simple literal translation of words and grammar is not enough (think of using "Google Translate", for example). Other matters may come into play, such as:

- Idioms
- Cultural allusions
- The context of the passage
- The message of the book as a whole
- References to other Scriptures

The Bible's Jewish authors were steeped in a culture where one simply had to quote a sentence, or refer to a phrase from a passage of Scripture, to recall an entire passage to their readers' or listeners' minds. Perhaps the easiest way for modern Christians to understand this is to think of a phrase from a well-known film or television show and imagine people's reactions – for example, “I'll be back” (spoken in a deep Austrian male accent), or “don't tell him, Pike” (at least for British people of an older generation)!

From all this, it should be evident that a serious student of prophecy cannot afford to rely simply on their favourite Bible translation on its own, let alone the opinion of their favourite Bible teacher! For easy comparison of multiple translations, [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) is helpful, whereas for more serious study, [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) is the essential on-line tool, giving readers access to all the resources of Strong's and Young's respective concordances, with the capability to deep-dive into word meanings and cross-reference their use across the entire Bible.

To provide a practical illustration, some are convinced that the “apostasia” in Thessalonians refers to a physical rather than a spiritual departure. This being so, rather than indicating that believers should expect a widespread abandonment of the true Gospel by the professing church as a sign preceding the appearance of the Anti-Christ, the church should expect to be “Raptured” before his appearance and the coming tribulation. This is clearly of huge significance to believers living in the End Time and, if it can be proven that “apostasia” does indeed mean a physical departure, it could settle the debate over the timing of the “Rapture” once and for all. (The respected scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum holds this opinion yet, like anyone else, his arguments should be carefully weighed against Scripture.)

My own attempt to understand the truth, or otherwise, of this claim was to start by listening to one of its proponents who stated that the word “apostasia” does not appear anywhere in the New Testament. However, I believe this misses an important linguistic point; many nouns have a corresponding verb. For example, “he drives too fast” carries a similar meaning to “his driving is too fast”. In one case “drive” is used as a verb, and in the other a noun. Interestingly then, the Blue Letter Bible uses this approach to cross-reference “apostasia” with one other New Testament passage - Acts 21:21 - in which Paul is accused of encouraging Gentiles to turn away from The Torah ([G646 - apostasia - Strong's Greek Lexicon \(NIV\) \(blueletterbible.org\)](#)). In other words, the only other New Testament reference is specifically to do with spiritually falling away. However, when I presented this information to a friend who is both an advocate of the pre-tribulation position and a strong Greek scholar, he replied with a very detailed linguistic analysis about related verbs which showed me that I still have much to learn!

Rather than despairing that even our “experts” cannot agree over specific interpretations of prophecy, we know that the Lord has given us enough in His Word for daily living in a hostile world (2 Timothy 3:16), and that He desires for us to search out the truths which He has carefully laid up for us in Scripture (Proverbs 25:2).

To conclude this section on the importance of language, let us turn to the matter of Daniel's seventieth week, in which we read that:

*"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering."* (Daniel 9:27)

Dispensationalists assert that the "he" in this passage refers to the Anti-Christ, whilst some other scholars (not all of them advocates of Replacement Theology), conclude that Jesus Himself is the subject. Their differing conclusions are based both on their understanding of the context and of the original language. These interpretations are not just strikingly different, but have potentially profound implications for believers eagerly awaiting the Lord's return. If this is indeed a prophecy about Messiah's atoning death, rather than some future agreement between the Anti-Christ and Israel, we would be wrong to wait expectantly for a specific event indicating the beginning of a seven-year countdown to the Second Coming. This might even be a deception, distracting us from the genuine fulfilment of Bible prophecy taking place before our very eyes!

I am personally undecided on this matter, but a couple of questions may at least be helpful. First, if Jesus' death half way through the seven years is in view, what about the remaining three and half years? Did they follow on immediately, perhaps concluding with the Sanhedrin's rejection of the apostles' testimony – Stephen's stoning, for example, or are these events yet future? Revelation emphasises a three-and-a-half-year period in various places, but not a seven-year one. Perhaps the most important question is whether *all* the events described in Daniel's seventieth week were accomplished during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry and the years which immediately followed, or not. History, context and language all matter:

*"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place."* (NIV)

## (F) Increasing clarity as the Lord's return approaches

In Daniel 12:4 we are told that in the last days "many will go here and there to increase knowledge", that is, understanding of the sealed scroll. So, for example, the statement in Revelation that no-one will be able to buy or sell without the mark of the beast makes far more sense today as a realistic possibility than it had ever done throughout most of the time since John recorded this prophecy. The enthusiasm that governments around the world have shown for "covid passports" as a means of social control during the last few years is a particularly striking example of a trend towards the totalitarianism which the Bible foresees.

## (G) There will be shadows!

Important Biblical truths are often reinforced in Scripture through the types and shadows that illustrate them. For example, some commentators have noted both the dimensions of

Nebuchadnezzar's statue (60 cubits by 6 cubits) and that everyone was forced to bow down to it, as a clear prophetic foretaste of what will happen in future with the mark of the beast. Whilst this particular example gives us a spiritual hint through the use of Biblically significant numbers, another common pattern is the repetition of events which bear a strong similarity to each other, such as the various desecrations of the Jerusalem temples. It can also help to consider the broader scope of history in this regard. The tragic and uncanny recurrence of Jewish calamities occurring on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av is a case in point.

#### (H) Consistency of context / Scripture's "big picture"

Once again, discussion around the timing of the "Rapture" provides a useful illustration of a helpful principle, which I refer to as "consistency of context". It is of course a well-established principle in life generally, as well as of Biblical interpretation, that *context matters*. As anyone who has faced a hostile media knows, one of the worst forms of misrepresentation is to be quoted out of context! In the Bible, the breadth of relevant context can range from the few lines preceding or following a particular verse to the broader message of a particular book, or indeed the overall picture presented in Scripture.

Concerning the latter, the **letter** to the Hebrews reminds us of the unchanging principle that we should all be people *of faith*, loving God and demonstrating this in a practical way through personal obedience. Rather than changing this principle, the New Covenant empowers it in a practical way by forever making it possible for people to come into a relationship with the Lord, in which He personally dwells within us through His Spirit. Therefore, although the principle holds true, it is also accurate to say that the Lord does deal with people in different ways at different times.

Is it valid to assert, however, as some within Dispensational theology do, that during the last 7 years of human history God will effectively set aside the New Covenant and go back to dealing with people under the terms of the Old Covenant? And that this will take place after the "Rapture"? This belief seems to result in some interesting and apparently contradictory conclusions. For example, when Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning the signs of His return in Matthew 24, it is said that He addressed them as Jews living in the last days, who would go through the tribulation. Then, a couple of days later in John 17 (at the "last supper"), His talk of preparing a home in advance for them should be understood as a reference to the "Rapture". In other words, He was now addressing them as "the church". Therefore, within the space of a few days, and in both cases speaking to His disciples, He gave them different expectations as to whether they would go through the tribulation or be spared it. This would seem, therefore, to be an example of an inconsistent use of context.

#### (I) Knowledge of history plus current trends and events

We can too easily take for granted that a certain passage, or prophecy, refers to specific historical or current events, based on what others tell us. It takes a lot of research to confirm or deny such assertions. In consequence, very few are willing to do the hard work required!

A lack of historical awareness also increases the risk of us focusing, in an overly narrow way, on immediate current events for our interpretation of Bible prophecy. That said, we need to be aware of social and geo-political trends and have a sense of the prophetic calendar – Jesus criticised the religious leaders of His day for not being able to read the signs. He told His disciples to “watch and pray” and told them how to respond “when you see” certain events unfolding. A time will inevitably come when a specific *current event* is in fact the ultimate *fulfilment* of a particular Bible prophecy, and it will take a combination of things to recognise when this happens: a deep knowledge of Scripture, God-given insight, familiarity with historical precedents and shadows, and an understanding of current affairs.

## Applying the Principles

What follows are some thoughts regarding five particular aspects of the last days (Hebrew “end of days” – “acharit ha yamim”). Many are based on work already done by those more qualified than myself (such as Joel Richardson and Jacob Prasch, for example), whilst some are perhaps more original in their approach. In any case, the intent is not to be dogmatic, but to contribute to ongoing discussions. We explore on a few select topics, instead of undertaking a comprehensive analysis of End Time prophecy or restating well-known theological positions.

This is summary of the individual reflections, each numbered and explored further in the main text, where they are organised thematically.

### Believers and Last Days

1. Jesus’ warning about people betraying each other seems increasingly relevant in an age of global communication and surveillance, and the enthusiasm with which governments around the world have embraced draconian (or even totalitarian) measures in response to Covid-19.
2. Daniel includes two stories of the persecution of God’s people. They complement each other, giving us a fuller picture.

### Geography

3. The Bible presents a picture of both globalisation and regional or ethnic conflict at the end of the age, strongly reflecting present-day reality.
4. The most frequently asked question regarding Bible prophecy by American Christians is “where is the USA in prophecy”? This brief section pulls together observations from various believers to look at the global geo-political landscape through the lens of Biblical prophecy at the time of Jesus’ return.
5. The Tanakh prophets make up a significant part of the Bible but tend to be overlooked. If we translate the geographical areas about which they spoke into modern-day equivalents and seek to identify which of these relate to last days prophecy, what picture emerges?
6. Prophecy students are divided as to whether the Anti-Christ’s empire is a revived Roman Empire (EU) or a revived Ottoman Caliphate. Yet are there perhaps hints in Scripture which *may* point to a more nuanced interpretation?
7. Joel Richardson asserts that the final beast empire will be a revived Turkish Caliphate. Do current geo-political trends indicate a movement in that direction?
8. Islam appears to have a place in Bible prophecy. Are the historical divisions between Turk and Arab and between Sunni and Shia reflected in Scripture?



9. Is there any need to debate whether Daniel's vision of a lion, bear and leopard is past or future? The Bible seems categorically to answer this question.

### **Details of Significance?**

10. What might it mean that the beast of Revelation has a "blasphemous name" on each of its seven heads?
11. We are told that the final beast empire is "different" from its predecessors. What might that mean?
12. Joel Richardson and Mark Davidson (for example) have questioned whether certain passages in Daniel, which are normally considered historical, actually refer to future events. It is possible that there could in fact be overlaps or double fulfilments?
13. Do the two horns of the False Prophet provide important clues to his identity?
14. The identity of "Mystery Babylon" is widely debated. One important consideration must surely be its relationship to the beast. How convincing are various beast/harlot combinations?
15. Are numbers in Bible prophecy to be understood spiritually, literally, or both? How should we approach prophecies specifying a particular time duration?
16. Scripture refers to many anti-Christ. Recent world history may point to some future realities.

### **Types and Shadows**

17. God's historical judgements in the Bible continue to show us what provokes Him. The extent to which today's world is committing the same sins and rebellion against the Lord gives another useful, albeit broad, indicator of where we are on the prophetic timeline.
18. Might there be a prophetic shadow in the story of Nebuchadnezzar losing his mind and living like an animal?

### **Trends – a more Helpful Approach?**

19. Disagreement, false predictions and confusion among prophecy "experts" turns people away from Bible prophecy. Instead of trying to predict the identity of the Anti-Christ and the date of Jesus' return, might we be better served by focusing on trends which we can agree serve as clear "signs of the times" or "shofar blasts"?

Note: The suggested cross-referencing of the principles outlined at the beginning of this booklet is not definitive, but may be helpful. I have not specifically referred to principle (i) – the need to be aware of history, Scripture and current events, as this applies generically when interpreting any prophetic passage.

## PART 2 - SPECIFICS

### Believers and the Last Days

#### 1 - Betrayal

*Principle: (f) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

Jesus warned about people betraying each other in the last days (Matthew 24:10). We certainly live in an age when the pressure to conform is becoming increasingly severe. Social media, global surveillance and politically driven “woke” social engineering projects, relentlessly pushed by state-sponsored and other “independent” media, are all-powerful drivers in this regard. People are denounced by work colleagues and fired for daring to voice “off message” opinions.

A simple observation of human behaviour shows that the greater our distance from other people, the freer we feel to vent our inner feelings. A person is more likely to wave a fist at someone from the relative security of their car than they would if face-to-face. The relative anonymity of social media provides people with such protection and has become extremely polarised. Today we see widespread censorship, for example regarding the way many of the world's most respected physicians were ruthlessly marginalised and branded “anti-vaxxers” for raising valid concerns around the way governments around the world responded to Covid-19. These included Dr Robert Malone, who holds nine of the ten patents for the mRNA biotechnology used in the Pfizer and other vaccines!

#### 2 - Persecution in Daniel

*Principle: (g) shadows*

People have rightly said that Revelation is a “manual for persecution”. Accepting this, then what about Daniel? Daniel contains two powerful stories of persecution which differ from each other in an interesting way. In one case an ego-maniac demands worship (bowing to the golden image), whilst in the other, jealous officials plot against the righteous to make the worship of God illegal. “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.” (Dan 6:5, NIV). Could these be complementary images that give us a bigger picture – the worship of man inspired by Satan on the one hand, and legislation to make the worship of the One True God illegal on the other? Autocratic societies such as Communism and Islam have the power to demand absolute obedience, whilst in those nations still clinging to the vestiges of democracy, more insidious means are needed – the passing of laws with the specific intention of criminalising the Lord's people on the basis of technicalities. In the UK, arresting Gospel preachers for quoting the Bible is perhaps one of the most striking examples. Such laws mean that even those who might be sympathetic to Christians are obliged to act against them, as was King Darius against Daniel.

## Geography

### 3 - Globalism versus Regional and Ethnic Conflicts

*Principle: (h) context / big picture*

The Bible includes various passages that encourage us to think of the Anti-Christ's reign as universal, such as the "mark of the beast" and Psalm 2. On the other hand, the Anti-Christ also engages heavily in regional military conflict. Jesus Himself referred to "wars and rumours of wars" and ethnic conflicts (Matthew 24), which would hardly be the case if the Anti-Christ's dictatorship were to give him complete control of the world. Present-day reality reflects these tensions between globalism and conflicts, either regional or ethnic.

### 4 - World Geo-Politics at the Lord's Return

*Principles: (a) geography matters, (b) details matter, (f) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

The Biblical focus on the last days is very much on Israel and the Middle East. Various prophecies refer to an invasion from the North, essentially repeating an historical pattern in evidence ever since the birth of a Jewish nation; Israel and Judea were invaded by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans – all from the North.

The Anti-Christ, during his invasion of Israel and Egypt, will be alarmed by "reports from the North and East" (Daniel 11:44), possibly referring to Russia and China respectively. Furthermore, if we consider verse 21 onwards as a *future* prophecy, we know that he will be opposed by a significant fleet in the Mediterranean (v30), which from our present-day perspective might translate to NATO or European forces. This opposition appears to be in response to his invasion of Egypt, rather than his attack on Israel. Historically the USA has stood with Israel, so some commentators infer from this that the USA will either be greatly weakened at this time or that the political landscape shall have changed so drastically that it will no longer side with its former ally. Both of these scenarios are increasingly plausible in light of recent events, such as President Obama's support for Iran's nuclear programme and the Biden administration's ignominious withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

Outside the Middle East, we have little else to go on concerning world geo-politics. The reference to the Euphrates drying up to make way for the "kings of the East" (Rev 16:12) and a mysterious army of 200 million (Rev 9:16) could refer to armies from as far afield as China, making use of the new "great silk roads" as an invasion route, or perhaps to nearer Middle East nations such as Iran and Pakistan.

## 5 - The Matrix – Prophetic Geography

*Principle: (a) geography matters*

When we consider the prophets as a whole and the regions about which they prophesy with regard to the End Time, a sharp picture emerges of war in the Middle East and conflict centred on Israel. Whilst this is well-known, using a visual cross-matrix helps to make this clearer.

The illustration below, in which Biblical regions are mapped to their probable modern-day equivalents, at least gives an *impression* of this. It must be stated very clearly that this is a work-in-progress and there is plenty of room for legitimate disagreement over details. For a chart such as this, it is especially important to state with clarity the assumptions made and the short-cuts taken in producing it. Christians, in particular, have been trained through the pastor-led church model to “trust the experts” and let others do our thinking for us. Bible prophecy, especially, is an area where this is unfortunately often the case, due to the considerable effort needed to engage seriously with the subject matter. This chart should be regarded therefore as a starting point, not an end.

So, how was this matrix produced, and what improvements could be made, either to make this more accurate or to show more clearly other aspects of the prophetic writings?

1. The starting point was to skim read all the prophets and, when a prophecy was given, noting to which region it related, such as Assyria, Edom, Philistia and so on. Sometimes the Bible refers in broad terms to the nations in general. I included this too in the analysis. Because there are so many prophecies relating to Israel and the End Time, Israel has been left out of the analysis. Possible improvements include:
  - A more in-depth reading to ensure no details were missed.
  - Extending the analysis to include other prophetic material in the other two sections of The Tanakh - the Writings (Psalms etc) and The Torah (Pentateuch).
2. Regarding prophecies concerning judgement, I tried to decide whether they appeared to have been completely fulfilled in the past or not, based on my understanding of the passage and existing historical knowledge. If there seemed to be *any* outstanding future fulfilment, I categorised the prophecy as End Time, which would indicate that it would be worth noting as a possible sign to watch out for. Otherwise, I categorised it as historical. Possible improvements include:
  - Further research into each prophecy to check the timing of its fulfilment.
  - Including both past and future fulfilments for the same region/prophet on the chart, as I have done for the *blessing prophecies*. The “future” category could even be sub-divided into recent modern day, current, and future - both before and after Jesus’ return – depending on one’s interpretation.

3. Referring to Joel Richardson's work in "Mideast Beast" on the most common mapping used by Bible atlases, I attempted to assign each location to its modern-day equivalent(s). Possible improvements include:
  - Refinement and validation of this analysis, including other more remote possibilities and highlighting the relative strength of the individual mappings.
4. I extended the chart to include prophecies of mercy and salvation. The book of Jonah is the outstanding example of an entire group of people responding to a prophecy of judgement by turning to the Lord in repentance and being spared, and is therefore worthy of particular note. Is it not instructive that it appears right at the heart of the prophets, and deals with the Lord calling a Gentile nation to repent? Furthermore, we must remember that the Lord frequently uses judgement to bring about repentance, so that He may demonstrate mercy. For example, Egypt will be wounded in order to heal her people by bringing them to faith in the God of Jacob:

*"The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.'" (Isaiah 19:25).*

Surely mercy triumphs over judgement! So important is this point, that I have chosen to include *both* judgement and mercy for the prophet Isaiah, who tells us that Messiah has come to bring salvation to Israel, and to Gentiles from *all* nations (Isaiah 49:6, Acts 17:16-27). Even in the Lord's most severe judgements on Israel, such as the Babylonian captivity, He showed mercy to a remnant and used chastisement to open the way for a return to Him. We should therefore not be surprised that today, in those lands experiencing the greatest upheaval, especially much of the Middle East, people are turning to Jesus in unprecedented numbers.

Mercy and Judgement Relative to Nations		Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Daniel	Hosea	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah	Micah	Nahum	Habbakuk	Zephaniah	Haggai	Zachariah	Malachi
Egypt	Egypt	Green															
Nubia	Egypt/Sudan																
Philistia/Gaza	Gaza Strip	Green															
Persia	Iran																
Babylon	Iraq (Babylon)	Green	Yellow														
Ninevah	Iraq (Mosul)																
Edom/Moab/Ammon	Jordan																
Lebanon/Tyre/Sidon	Lebanon	Green															
Libya / Put	Libya																
Dedan/Teman/Arabia	Saudi Arabia																
Cush	Sudan																
Damascus	Syria (Damascus)	Green															
Media	Syria / Iraq / Turkey																
Assyria	Syria, Iraq, Turkey	Green															
Gomer	Turkey																
Lydia	Turkey																
Magog	Turkey																
Meshech	Turkey																
Tubal	Turkey																
Togamah	Turkey / Armenia																
Javan	Turkey / Greece																
All nations	All nations	Green															

- Mercy - Historical
- Salvation - Future
- Judgement - Historical
- Judgement - End Time?

Finally, we should make a couple of observations regarding the international coalition of nations aligned against Israel (Zechariah chapter 12, for example). The picture painted by Bible prophecy is complex and nuanced (Daniel 11:40-45), as we explore elsewhere. Although the specific Gentile nations outside the Middle East opposed to Israel at the End Time may be hard to categorically identify, the Bible does indicate that this hostility will be widespread and intense – perhaps even universal (Psalm 2). Furthermore (and as hard as it may be for some Christians to acknowledge), Israel is not exempt from God's judgement either. Nevertheless, as in the case of Egypt and Assyria, this is intended as a refining fire and ultimately for redemption (Daniel 11:35). Readers who struggle with this idea may find that Joel Richardson's "The Mystery of Catastrophe" provides helpful insights into the ways in which the Lord works in times of extreme duress.

## 6 - The Iron Beast – Geography and Possible Implications for Europe

*Principles: (a) geography matters, (b) details matter, (c) meaning of words, (d) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

The competition between the revived Roman Empire versus the revived Ottoman Empire theories *may* be overly polarising in terms of what will actually transpire. If the revived Islamic Caliphate interpretation of Scripture is true, which I believe it is, does that mean that Europe is absent from the Biblical picture? Possibly not entirely, for the following reasons:

The EU has an extraordinary occultic desire to identify itself with everything identified in Revelation as godless, from its headquarters modelled on the Tower of Babel to its flag of 12 stars representing the Catholic worship of Mary (an image distorted from Revelation chapter 12), and of course the woman riding the beast which figures on its currency and statues. This woman is Europa, a princess in Greek mythology who was seduced, carried away and impregnated by the "god" Zeus (whom Jesus calls Satan) from across the Mediterranean. The EU identifies itself (perhaps subconsciously) as the conquered, and Islam sees itself as the conqueror, with Europe in its sights. This helps to understand the EU's otherwise inexplicable instinct to bow down to Islam, even enforcing quotas for Islamic immigration – topics explored by Douglas Murray in his ground-breaking book "The Strange Death of Europe". Furthermore, the media is strangely silent on the Barcelona Declaration and its proposed Union of the Mediterranean - effectively the EU's attempt to unite in a free trade zone with Islamic Mediterranean countries, as well as building strong ties in culture and defence.

Regarding Islamic influence on Europe from across the Mediterranean, that of Turkey's President Erdogan is the most powerful. He has openly expressed the view that parts of Greece belong to Turkey and has recently conducted aggressive naval interventions against Greece in the Mediterranean Sea. As Islam is required to reconquer any territory it formerly occupied, his ambitions no doubt include a European invasion of some kind, a sentiment expressed in many of his speeches. Some Balkan nations, with large Muslim populations (or ironically even those feeling threatened by EU immigration quotas) are already closely

aligning with Turkey, including Hungary, Macedonia and Romania. Even mainstream European nations are divided over whether to align with or against Turkey for economic or defence reasons. Given the EU's strong anti-Israel stance, it would not be surprising to see some European nations supporting an Islamic Anti-Christ. This might transpire after a future disintegration of the EU.

From a Biblical perspective, I can see potentially some reasons why a revived Ottoman Empire might include parts of Europe – either through alliance or conquest:

- Whilst Joel Richardson is correct to draw our attention to the region of Javan (translated “Greece” in our Bibles) as referring to Western Turkey, arguably it also refers to parts of Greece. Is this a deliberate ambiguity in the Word of God?
- The final iron beast has bronze claws. Bronze is associated with the Greek empire in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a statue.
- The final composite beast of lion, bear and leopard should, I believe, be understood to mean that its territory includes that of Alexander the Great's empire, which would include Macedonia, Greece and part of the Balkans.
- The Anti-Christ will uproot 3 countries belonging to the 10-nation (or possible 10-region) coalition, implying violent overthrow. Which ones these are is, of course, highly speculative at this point.
- The final empire is a mixture of “iron and clay” – strong and weak nations that ultimately cannot stick together. Both proponents of the revived Roman and revived Islamic empire theories draw attention respectively to the divisions between the European nations and those between the Sunni and Shiite Muslims to support their case. However, if the revived Ottoman Empire also includes some Mediterranean European nations, the description of “iron and clay” is even more striking in its accuracy. After all, what does Islam have in common with Western democracies - especially of the increasingly “woke” variety? From a geographical perspective, the most noticeable characteristic of Turkey is how it literally bridges Europe and the Middle East. This contributes to its considerable regional power. President Obama once actively promoted Erdogan's Turkey as the role model of a Westernised, Islamic democracy – a profoundly flawed globalist dream that was shattered by reality. Erdogan's extremist hard-line Islamic iron has failed to mix with Europe's weak clay. Turkey's and Europe's ambition for Turkey to join the EU has certainly cooled off in recent years. If the future 10-nation coalition of Bible prophecy does include some European countries it will, in all likelihood, be a very strained relationship.



## 7 - Turkey Coming into Focus?

*Principles: (a) geography matters, (b) details matter, (f) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

Joel Richardson's case for the final beast empire being a revived Ottoman Empire is persuasive, and his analysis has brought about something of a paradigm shift in our understanding of Bible prophecy. Not surprisingly, therefore, some people also wonder if Turkish President Erdogan might be the Anti-Christ, although Richardson himself believes not, whilst speculating that he may yet be the "broken horn" of Daniel 8:8). The parallels between Erdogan and Hitler are indeed legion, and in that respect, he certainly is *an* anti-Christ; his ambitions openly include ruling the Islamic world and conquering Israel.

It has been instructive to observe Turkey exerting increasing influence over the last few years, either politically or militarily in the areas which were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, and doing so consistently in light of these goals. 2020 was a particularly significant year in that respect, most notably regarding Turkey's armed intervention in Libya and the confrontation this brought about in the Mediterranean with France. With respect to Daniel 11:42-43, Turkey's relationship with Egypt, Sudan and Libya are worth paying close attention to – the links in the footnotes<sup>1</sup> represent just a cursory search on this theme. (We should also note that history tends to repeat itself, reflecting ethnic conflicts, the significance of geo-political factors, and of course powers and principalities in the heavenly places. There is, for example, a precedent for Turkey invading Egypt with its former conquest of 1820.)

Erdogan's obsession with conquest is inadequately covered in the Western media. However, according to one report from 2020, he even threatened Spain (which, whilst partly controlled by Islam, was never part of the Ottoman Empire), but his comments were only reported in Turkish. By way of reference, it may be helpful to note the modern-day equivalents of those countries which are, or were, under Islamic rule. The table below is the result of studying various maps available in the public domain, and is broadly accurate. I may refine it further in a future re-issue of this short booklet:

Ruled entirely by an Islamic Empire, but not the Ottoman Empire	Iran
Ruled partially by an Islamic Empire, but not the Ottoman Empire	Spain, France

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-sudan-port-idUSKBN1EK0ZC>  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/11/egypt-sudan-israel-alliance-turkey-influence-somalia.html>  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53262725>  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/06/egyptians-call-to-boycott-turkish-products-erdogan-hostility.html>

Ruled entirely by the Ottoman Empire	Greece, Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Transylvania, Crimea, Azerbaijan, Walchia / Romania, Moldavia, Bessarabia, Boznia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Israel, Gaza / West Bank, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Yemen
Ruled partially by the Ottoman Empire	Jordan, Poland, Austria, Croatia, Russia, Saudi Arabia (*)

(\*) Significantly, this area included Mecca and Medina. Richardson argues that the revived Ottoman Caliphate will invade Saudi Arabia and destroy Mecca, moving the capital of Islam to Jerusalem, and states that this is in accordance with some Islamic prophecy.

The Pergamum Altar may be especially relevant to Turkey's future role in the fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Jesus identified Pergamum as Satan's throne (Rev 2:13), where Zeus was worshipped as God. Antiochus Epiphanes was the ruler of the Seleucid Dynasty which included that area, and the first emperor to worship there after its construction. He went on to defile the temple in Jerusalem, and is regarded by Bible prophecy experts as the ultimate fore-runner of the final Anti-Christ (based on Daniel and Jesus' and Paul's comments). The Bible foresees Satan giving the beast empire / Anti-Christ his throne (Rev 13:2), but what might that mean?

From the Biblical Middle Eastern perspective, Satan's throne (Pergamum Altar) first belonged to the Greek empire (specifically the Seleucid part, which centred on Turkey and Syria – an important foreshadowing of End Time events). This region was then conquered by Rome, which now possessed the Pergamum Altar. Like the Seleucids, Rome (the sixth beast of Revelation) conquered the Jewish people in Israel, going even further in terms of genocide and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. After that, Islam conquered Roman territory in the Middle East, taking possession of the Pergamum Altar. Islam built a mosque on the site of the Jewish temple and has since actively sought to eradicate all evidence of any historical Jewish connection with the site. The final Islamic empire, the Ottoman, gradually declined until it ceased to exist in 1923.

Prior to that, Germany acquired the Pergamum Altar in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, moving it to Berlin, where it now resides. Possessing Satan's throne, Germany's aggressive militarisation was one of the most powerful driving forces behind World War I. Kaiser Wilhelm, the architect for this empire building, declared that the Pergamum Altar was his most prized possession. On coming to power, Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, created a vast arena modelled directly on the Pergamum Altar to hold huge parades where Hitler was worshipped. The anti-Semitic spirit behind Satan's throne dominated Germany and much of its conquered territory in Europe, leading to the Holocaust and the murder of 6 million Jews.

After the war, Berlin was taken by the Soviet army, giving control of the Pergamum Altar to the USSR. Communism, a deeply anti-Semitic ideology, became the main threat to world peace (the Cuban Missile Crisis nearly caused a global nuclear holocaust), until the fall of the USSR in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The re-unification of Germany followed, with the Pergamum Altar returning to German control. Germany is now the dominant power in the EU.

If our interpretation of Revelation is correct regarding a revived Ottoman Empire as well as our understanding of Satan's throne, we might reasonably expect the return of the Pergamum Altar to Turkey. For several years, the exhibit in Berlin has been closed to the public and will remain so until 2023. This is the year when Erdogan plans to launch massive celebrations in Turkey at the centenary of the last Ottoman Empire, to showcase the re-establishment of Turkish Islam. Turkey has acted very aggressively in retrieving archaeological artifacts from throughout the world, with Erdogan being able to exert considerable pressure on Europe by threatening to release mass Islamic immigration of refugees into the West. As a result, the EU paid billions of euros to Turkey, effectively as protection money, or perhaps even a form of jizya. Regarding Germany specifically, Erdogan stirred up trouble by seeking to claim the loyalty of its large Turkish immigrant population, and the front-page of an edition of Time Magazine even showed a cartoon of German President Angela Merkle bowing down to Erdogan.

Whether or not Germany does return the altar to Turkey, at the very least, there are reports of the site of the Pergamum Altar being reconstructed as it was in antiquity. If the monument itself were to return to this location, the spiritual consequences for the region and the world will most likely be of profound and terrible significance. On the other hand, if 2023 comes and goes without this happening, does it damage the case for a revived Ottoman Empire, and if so, to what extent?

Richardson himself, whilst mentioning the possibility of the altar moving to Turkey, has wisely chosen not to speculate too much on the issue. Indeed, he and his close collaborator Dalton Thomas envisage that Turkey will not become prominent until after a short and extremely violent war between Iran and Israel, that will lead to a significant peace in the Middle East as a pre-condition for the events described in Ezekiel 38. In other words, they take a somewhat longer view of prophetic events unfolding. So, whilst 2023 is an obvious year for the Pergamum Altar to return to Turkey, there is nothing to preclude it from happening in the more distant future and, even then, the revived Ottoman Empire interpretation of Scripture neither mandates nor depends on this event.

## 8 - The Divisions of Islam

*Principles: (a) geography matters, (b) details matter, (f) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

Islam is divided between Sunni and Shia. This has resulted in various Middle East conflicts, such as the Iran-Iraq war and Iran's current aggression in seeking to extend its influence

beyond the Shi'ite Crescent. Southern Islamic Sunni nations, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia feel particularly threatened by Iran. Furthermore, Iran has its own particular brand of Islamic messianic eschatology – one in which Iran has an important role to play in bringing about chaos and devastation in the world. The way Barack Obama and prominent European heads of state effectively encouraged Iran's nuclear armaments programme by implementing a toothless treaty is almost incomprehensible until considered in terms of spiritual powers and principalities.

The second Islamic division is between Turks and Arabs. The first Islamic empires came from the latter, whilst the most recent one, the Ottoman, was Turkish. In World War I, Turkey fought against the Arabs, surprisingly even battling them in Mecca itself. End Time Biblical prophecy accurately reflects these divisions, especially in terms of the North-South conflict, such as the Anti-Christ's invasion of Egypt, Libya and Sudan (Daniel 11, 42-43). Revelation identifies the area bordering the Euphrates, centred on Syria, Iraq and parts of Turkey, as a region of unparalleled conflict (Rev 9:14-15) – a highly accurate description of what has happened there in the last few years. There is also a question (discussed below) as to whether the vision of the ram and the goat in Daniel 8 has both a past *and* future interpretation, in which case we may see a conflict between Turkey and Iran as a significant milestone in the events leading up to Jesus' return. This is a complex subject, but worth consideration. We do know that ultimately Iran will be part of the Turkish-led alliance of Islamic nations against Israel, seemingly as described in Ezekiel chapter 38.

## 9 - Lion, Bear, Leopard – Past, Future or Both?

*Principles: (a) geography matters, (b) details matter, (c) same or different events, (g) shadows*

The identity of the lion, the bear and leopard in Daniel's vision divides Christians. Some see these as being a parallel vision to Nebuchadnezzar's statue, with the lion corresponding to the golden head (Babylonian), the bear to the silver chest and arms (Medo-Persian) and the leopard to the bronze thighs (Macedonian, Greek). Others regard the vision as pointing to a more distant, End Time future. An example of this is the winged lion representing Britain and the USA, the bear the USSR, and the leopard either Germany or a Middle-Eastern Islamic power.

I am inclined to the former view for various reasons. I believe sufficient similarity has been demonstrated by students of prophecy between the imagery of Daniel's visions and the historical empires it is argued they represent. Also, the starting and ending points for the visions are the same – Babylon and the iron beast. Those who disagree consider that some of the details may not be an exact match (a view worth careful consideration) and wonder why Daniel would have received this vision right at the end of the Babylonian empire, when it appears to relate to the future? However, according to experts in Aramaic, the verb tense

is indeterminate, allowing for present, past and future. Regarding the specific choice of beasts, it seems likely that the Bible would use those which describe the characteristic behaviour of an empire (for example, Alexander the Great's empire resembles the leopard in terms of the incredible speed of its conquests), rather than a nation's own self characterisation, such as the eagle used by the USA, Germany, and ancient Rome.

Regardless of personal opinion, the Bible apparently settles this matter for us.

Revelation describes the beast with seven heads and ten horns as being a composite of lion, bear and leopard, with the leopard being the predominant beast (the animal resembles a leopard, but with a lion's teeth and a bear's claws). What this suggests is that we should understand the beast in terms of the combined geography of the region controlled by the Babylonian, Persian and Macedonian-Greek empires, but from a prophetic perspective pay particular attention to the latter. (The prophet Daniel contains a great deal of material dealing with the Greek and Persian conflict and, in particular, the break-up of Alexander's empire and subsequent history, foreshadowing Anti-Christ in Antiochus Epiphanes. This would seem to affirm such an interpretation.) By way of observation, geographically Babylon was the smallest of the three empires, whilst the territory occupied by both the Persians and the Greeks at the zenith of their power was much larger and roughly the same for both these empires.

Regarding the beast's seven heads, John is told that five are historical (a widely-held view being that these represent Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece), one is present (Rome), whilst the seventh (and the resurrected eighth) are future with respect to his own time frame. As each empire was respectively overthrown by its successor, the identity of the seventh is the one which overthrew Rome. Islam conquered Rome in the Middle East and later captured Constantinople, the capital of the Western Roman Empire, invading much of Europe too. Regarding the geographical territory which the Bible identifies as prophetically significant, Islam conquered it all, unlike Rome. (Joel Richardson's *Mideast Beast* deals with this subject in great detail, providing extensive maps and historical detail.)

Revelation 17:8, regarding the seven-headed beast (leopard, lion and bear) states:

*"The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction."*

From this, we should draw these conclusions:

- Rome, or a revived Roman Empire in the form of the EU, is definitely not in view when it comes to the final beast empire, because the beast "now is not". From the perspective of Biblical geography, this is an entirely accurate historical fact. The Roman Empire occupied much of the Middle East's Mediterranean region, but never conquered Babylon and its heartlands or those of Persia. This also confirms

the interpretation that the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's statue represent the Islamic empires and not Rome. (The vision was given to the king to show him what would happen in future to the region he reigned over – Rome would be entirely irrelevant.)

- The leopard, lion and bear are historical. Because Revelation is a vision based almost entirely on prophecies in The Tanakh, we should seek to explain this reference on the same basis. Daniel's vision is the only previous source of material referring to empires in this way. Therefore, it would be correct to understand the lion as Babylon, the bear as Persia, and the leopard as the Macedonian-Greek empire.
- This also confirms that the future seventh / eighth iron beast will appear again to occupy the same geographical territory – there will be a future incarnation.

It is worth noting that Mark Davidson, in "Daniel Revisited", makes the case for a successive reappearance of the lion, bear and leopard as part of the End Time paradigm, arguing that Saddam Hussein's Iraq is the lion. His arguments are interesting, although not entirely persuasive. The Bible certainly does seem to confirm a revived *composite* empire consisting of the territory occupied by these nations. Daniel 2:35 states that when the rock, which is Messiah, strikes Nebuchadnezzar's statue on the feet, the iron, clay, bronze, silver and gold are all smashed at the same time.

## Details of Significance?

### 10 - The Blasphemous Names of the Beast

*Principle: (b) details matter*

*"The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name." (Rev 13:1)*

Blasphemy in the Bible either refers to slandering God directly or implicitly by falsely claiming to be God – the charge levelled against Jesus at His trial. Is it possible that the blasphemous name on the head of each beast refers to the chief deity of the empire which the head represents? Furthermore, might there be distinctive similarities between the characteristics of that deity across different empires, regardless of the name used? Certainly, by the time of the Babylonian Empire, the concept of “king of the gods” had arisen and was attributed to Marduk (also known as “Bel”). Persia, Greece and Rome all followed suit - with Ahura Mazda, Zeus and Jupiter respectively.

As discussed earlier, Jesus stated that Satan’s throne was in Pergamum (Rev 3:9), where stood the infamous Pergamum Altar, which was dedicated to Zeus. This monument appears to be of profound spiritual significance in world history, and especially in connection with the Biblical beasts from Greece onwards. The first ruler to worship there after its construction was Antiochus Epiphanes.

There is a widely-held understanding that the Anti-Christ will be the leader of the final empire – the seventh head. In which case, Daniel’s much-debated prophecy may be significant with respect to the blasphemous name:

*"He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. Instead of them, he will honour a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honour those who acknowledge him." (Dan 11:37-49 - NIV)*

As in all matters concerning future prophecy, this is another highly debated passage. Anyone interested in exploring this further will need to undertake serious research into the various nuances of the original language, the context of the passage and any potentially relevant historical or cultural background information.

## 11 - The Last Beast – Different, but How?

*Principle: (b) details matter*

The final beast empire is described as “different” from the others (Dan 7:3, 7:9), but in what way we are not specifically told. However, it is described as crushing all the previous empires it replaces, which may provide a useful clue. Throughout history, some empires have been broadly content with ruling over their subject nations and exploiting them for economic and military purposes, yet leaving their culture and customs broadly intact, whilst others have sought to more stringently impose their own beliefs and way of life.

The other aspect is that Revelation describes it effectively as a confederacy or coalition of 10 nations (or possibly regions) which willingly align themselves with the Anti-Christ (Rev 17:16-17). Whilst there have been alliances between nations throughout history, all those others which we consider part of the Biblical empire narrative (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Islam) have mainly gained their territory through conquest. This is not to deny the extreme use of war by Anti-Christ (Rev 13:4), whom we know overthrows 3 of the nations in the confederacy and invades Israel, Libya, Egypt and Sudan (Dan 11:41-43). However, the coalition aspect of the final empire is perhaps more aligned with our modern world, in which regional economic, political and military unions are increasingly becoming the norm.

## 12 - Daniel: Past, Future or Both?

*Principle: (c) same or different events?*

A number of passages in Daniel, widely regarded as historical, are now being presented by some commentators as potentially relating to the future. I previously referred to the evidence for the four beasts in Daniel 7 being historical, but also telling us something about the future, based on statements in Revelation. According to Jacob Prasch, the pattern of Biblical prophecy is one of repeating events. I therefore wonder whether various other passages in Daniel have a dual fulfilment. This might be intentional on the Lord's part; if we are well-versed in the historical fulfilments and also look at the same passages through a present-day lens, we might more easily see Biblical prophecy unfolding before our eyes and be wiser *before* the event – a wisdom God foretells and commends (Daniel 12:3). In addition to Daniel chapter 7, the passages which follow possibly have a dual fulfilment, based on the assumption that there is truth in *both* the arguments advanced for them being historical *and* for those advanced in favour of a future outworking.

Daniel chapter 11 – v21-33 is much debated as to whether it refers to Antiochus or the Anti-Christ. What if it refers to both, with Antiochus foreshadowing the Anti-Christ? (Verse 31, for example, refers to the “abomination of desolation”, which Jesus warns is a future event in Matthew 24). Might it even be possible that there are several fulfilments? Here is an interesting contribution to the discussion, presenting an entirely different interpretation



from what we are used to: <https://revelation-now.org/wp-content/uploads/Umar-The-King-Will-Do-As-He-Pleases-v-1.08.pdf>

Daniel chapter 10 is apparently historical and leads directly into chapter 11, which refers to the remaining Persian kings up to their war with Alexander the Great. Also, the conflict with the prince of Persia is given in the present tense. Nevertheless, some argue this also foreshadows the threat to Israel from Iran (Persia) in the last days. If so, this would suggest Javan ("Greece" - more likely Turkey) replacing Iran as the dominant power in the Middle East. The angel Michael appears in this account as well as in the context of Israel at the time of Jesus' return (see Daniel and Revelation).

Arguments have been put forward for Daniel chapter 8 referring to the future because there are several verses indicating these events take place right at the end (v17, 19, 26), and whilst in broad outline they were fulfilled in the conflict between ancient Persia and Macedonia / Greece, arguably some of the precise details do not match. Verses 9 to 14 mirror statements elsewhere in Daniel regarding the abomination of desolation and the overwhelming persecution of God's people which we know from other passages will take place in the final years of this age. If Daniel 8 is also future, the implications are profound, because we have a clear sequence of events leading up to Jesus' return.

Historically the ram's first and shorter horn is understood to refer the kingdom of the Medes, whilst the later and longer horn refers to Persia. Some argue that a present-day / future meaning relates to two powers arising in Iran (military and religious), although I favour the former referring to the Kurds and the latter to Iran. The Kurds are descended from the Medes and occupy roughly the same territory. It is fascinating to see the scenario described in the Bible apparently having started to play out in recent years, at least in large measure. First the Kurds rose up and were the only effective resistance to ISIS, then Iran (which seems to be loosely allied to the Kurds) rapidly expanded its influence in the region, especially in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen through proxy wars conducted by its mercenaries. This agrees with prophecy concerning the ram charging to the west and the south, although this does not yet seem to have happened regarding the North (unless we count Iran's growing political and military alliance with Russia).

If this interpretation is correct, we will see Turkey arising to militarily overpower the Kurds and Iran – both plausible outcomes given Turkey's long-standing violence towards the former and its vying with Iran as the dominant Islamic power in the region. However, it would also mean that we will then see a breakup of the region of "Javan" into four, with the Anti-Christ later emerging from their midst. The time needed for these events to unfold would obviously imply a significant wait yet before Jesus returns.

## 13 - The Identity of the False Prophet

*Principles: (b) details matter, (e) meaning of words, (g) shadows*

We rightly understand the False Prophet as a religious or spiritual leader who deceives the world into following the Anti-Christ. However, it is possible we miss other important clues in the text?

In Bible prophecy, an empire and its leader are synonymous. For example, Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are the "head of gold". Empires and kingdoms are described as beasts, mountains, hills and heads. The great beast in Revelation is described as having 7 successive heads and it comes out of the sea. An eighth belongs to the seven (not specifically the seventh, although we tend to interpret it that way), which we understand to be the resurrected beast which had received a "fatal wound". Some see this as referring to the Anti-Christ mimicking Jesus' resurrection. The Bible allows for both interpretations to be true. The final beast empire consists of a coalition of 10 nations, described as "kings" and "horns" - horn symbolising strength and in this case a worldly power. Careful reading of all the relevant texts in Revelation reveals that the 7 heads and the 10 horns are all crowned (12:3, 13:1).

How is this relevant to the False Prophet? If we compare and contrast with the beast from the sea we observe:

- The False Prophet is from the earth (or the land) rather than the sea.
- The False Prophet forces people to worship the beast or die.
- The False Prophet has two horns but no crowns.

To be consistent in our principle of Biblical interpretation, whilst we should understand the False Prophet as an individual, I believe we should also see this beast from the earth as consisting of two religious powers working together in unity. Revelation is abundantly clear that the False Prophet's role is spiritual deceiver (a counterfeit Holy Spirit), so the absence of crowns makes sense. In The Tanakh, the role of priest and king could never be combined, the only exceptions being when the passage refers to a type of Christ – Melchizedek or, in Zechariah, the High Priest Yehoshua being prophetically crowned symbolically as the coming branch (a Jewish term for Messiah).

What then of the sea and the land? The sea in Biblical symbolism generally represents disorder and chaos, which only the Lord can bring under control. It can also refer to the Gentile nations, which likewise are chaotic and not yet submitted to the Lord's rule, as the beasts so graphically illustrate. In Hebrew, the term "ha aretz" (the land), is literally synonymous and interchangeable with the land of Israel. Therefore, Revelation may be telling us that two false spiritual powers originating from the Promised Land will work together in the last days to deceive and force people into worshipping the Anti-Christ. My suggestion is that these represent Christendom and Judaism, although Islam as one of the

two is also a possibility. Judaism of course originates in The Tanakh, but historically the Jewish religious establishment consistently rejected the prophets and indeed Messiah Jesus, whom it continues to reject to this day. Christendom's origin is in The Tanakh and the New Testament (both Jewish), but through Replacement Theology it has, in large part, cut itself off from its Biblical roots. Much of the church establishment – Catholicism in particular – is already spiritually aligned with the anti-Christ spirit of false religious unity.

The violence of the False Prophet against those who refuse to worship the beast is certainly a dominant characteristic of Islam, but historically Catholicism has been just as barbaric, whilst the Jewish religious establishment in Biblical times acted violently against many of God's true prophets. As the world increasingly embraces the crushing of all opposition in the name of "tolerance" and "diversity", we should not be surprised if such extremist trends arise again in future. The thought of Catholicism and Judaism actively supporting an Islamic Anti-Christ may seem absurd, however, the recently re-established Sanhedrin has reached out to the Islamic world to support the rebuilding of the Temple, which they see as a way of bringing international unity and world peace. Pope Francis has made it clear through word and deed (at least to those who pay careful attention), that he sees Catholicism as a means of uniting world religions in support of globalist agendas, yet subservient to Islam.

As for Islam being one of the religions represented by the two horns, the Bible arguably describes a disunited Muslim world at war with itself in the End Time, despite both Shia and Sunni looking forward to a coming Islamic messiah figure. Islam has some roots in The Tanakh and the New Testament. Many of its teachings draw on both sources, yet greatly distort their original message. Its origins, however, also go back further, particularly with regard to worship of a regional lunar deity.

Regardless of the precise identity of the two horns of the beast from the earth, most observers of Bible prophecy agree that there is huge spiritual significance to the 2020 "Abraham Accords", which overtly proclaimed a desire to unify Islam, Christendom and Judaism in the Middle East.

## 14 - The Beast and the Harlot

*Principles: (b) details matter, (d) exegesis or eisegesis, (h) context / big picture*

In Revelation, the great harlot is a completely corrupt spiritual power with enormous influence over the world. It is depicted as riding on the beast. Nevertheless, the beast hates the harlot and, in the last days, turns on it and destroys it.

Various candidates have been proposed regarding the identity of the harlot, such as Rome, Islam, or perhaps the world's religious and/or economic system. The argument most used focuses rightly on the specific characteristics of the harlot itself, as described in Revelation. However, its relationship to the beast is also highly significant and can sometimes be overlooked. Therefore, a useful test for any interpretation is to ask whether what might

identity as the End Time beast empire would realistically seek the destruction of what we interpret to be the harlot.

For example, it is easier to envisage Islam as the beast seeking the downfall of Catholicism as the harlot, than the EU being the beast and having the same intent. After all, the EU is a Roman Catholic project! Nevertheless, in Napoleon and Hitler we see two people in the character of the Anti-Christ, both of whom exploited Catholicism, but also resented and sought to control it. Thus, an apparently symbiotic relationship has the potential to turn ugly, as suggested by the imagery Revelation. Joel Richardson argues a case for an Islamic Anti-Christ actually destroying Mecca and moving the capital of Islam to Jerusalem. On the other hand, if the great harlot represents the world economic system, the globalists and Islam both seem eager to overthrow it, in its current form, for different reasons. We should not be misled by the disingenuous slogan “build back better” (“build something entirely different” might be a more accurate catch-phrase)! Yet even the New Woke Order has its limits. Global corporations which changed their logos for Pride Month hypocritically and selectively chose not to do so in the Middle East.

## 15 - Numbers – Literal and/or Symbolic?

*Principles: (b) details matter, (d) exegesis or eisegesis, (h) context / big picture*

The Bible uses numbers in a symbolic way, with each one having profound spiritual significance. For example, seven is related to perfection, six to fallen humanity, twelve to government, and so on. Yet numbers are also literal. For example, Jesus had twelve disciples, and Jeremiah prophesied Judah's 70-year exile in Babylon. The book of Revelation presents a particular challenge to readers because of its incredibly rich use of symbolism, which of course raises the question as to whether the numbers used should also be interpreted that way.

When it comes to such challenges, the “Hebraic” mindset can be particularly helpful, allowing us to understand the text in more than one legitimate way. For example, Jesus walked among seven lampstands, each representing an historical believing community of the time and located in what is now Turkey. However, there is no mention of other contemporary churches such as Corinth and Rome. In this, therefore, the use of seven is symbolic and literal, but not *exclusive* in its literalism – we cannot say there were only seven churches at this time because Jesus walked among seven lampstands.

Might this “Hebraic” approach have any bearing on our interpretation of the beast with seven heads, in which each head apparently represents an empire (with a resurrected eighth one belonging to the seven)? I suggest that whilst we would be correct in understanding that the beast is symbolic of literal empires and that the Lord intends to draw our attention to these specific ones, the Biblical number seven also represents completeness and might therefore also be understood in a more comprehensive way. All empires throughout history have come about as the result of man's self-exaltation and ambition, and therefore also belong to the beast - Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim that he could offer Him the kingdoms of the world in return for His obeisance.

One of the most widely debated matters concerning numbers is when they are used prophetically with regard to time, and especially regarding the future. Most Christians agree that Daniel's 70 weeks refer to 70 x 7 literal years, and that the time of the Lord Jesus' death is accurately predicted within the prophecy, even to the exact year. However, when it comes to the final 7, opinions differ. Even more challenging are Daniel's prophecies concerning the 1,290 and 1,335 days. When people try to make sense of Biblical prophetic time, some principles are widely employed in various different calculations, such as the importance of the 7-yearly sabbatical Shemitah and the Year of Jubilee, which occurs every 50 years.

The challenge, then, is to connect the Bible's prophecies to historical events. Due to the importance of Israel and the Jewish people, the return from Babylonian exile, the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 and the return of Jerusalem to Israeli control in 1967 all figure prominently. Some fascinating studies regarding the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 4 have been made in this regard, for example. Prophecy concerning what yet lies in our future is of course more problematic, and countless false predictions have been made concerning the expected date of either the "Rapture" or the Lord's return. Not surprisingly, this puts off some from studying Bible prophecy! However, we need to remember the Lord's perspective. "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll" (Rev 22:7).

In approaching time durations in prophecy, it would seem that we can approach this challenge from one of two directions, or indeed both. The first is to use classic exegesis, working by interpretation from the Biblical text. The second is to attempt to fit the calculations to historical events. The article <https://revelation-now.org/wp-content/uploads/BIBLE-PROPHECY-CALCULATIONS-v-1.01.pdf>, starting on page 10 at "The Last Seven is Different", draws some unusual conclusions about Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. Some of the linguistic arguments and interpretations of the text appear to overreach or be unsubstantiated but, *assuming* the dates and calculations presented are entirely accurate, then the author may be on to something.

During the last century, aided by powerful microscopes, science discovered the extraordinary and ubiquitous existence of fractals within creation. In simple terms, patterns we see at the macro level are also present in the micro – in trees, and rocks for example. As creation reflects the Creator, it would be surprising if we did not find this pattern within the Bible, and also specifically in prophecy. A case in point would be the cycles of seven and seventy years. The Babylonian exile, prophesied by Jeremiah, lasted seventy years, precisely because the seven-year annual rest for the land was ignored for 490 years (2 Chron 36:21). Thus the pattern of the Lord's command being violated for an individual Shemitah (micro) was repeated seventy times (macro).

The Hebraic approach to Scripture therefore allows us to explore, and rejoice in, multiple possibilities within God's Word. This approach allows those possibilities which are truthful (both with respect to Scripture and history) to be helpful yet complementary in different ways. Types and shadows belong to the Hebraic model of interpretation and are essential for properly understanding the Bible. We shall now consider them briefly in our final section.

## Types and Shadows

### 16 - God's Historical Judgements – Signs of the Future

*Principle: (g) shadows*

God is unchanging and consistent. Examining His past judgements in the Bible tells us what angers and provokes Him. When we see the modern world behaving in the same way as those whom He judged in prior generations, we can see “the writing on the wall”. Various judgements should serve as instructive precedents, including the Flood, the Tower of Babel dispersion, Sodom and Gomorrah, Egypt and the Exodus, the Canaanites, the destruction of the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem, and the fall of Babylon.

We should also regard such events as types which foreshadow the future. This can be helpful, for example, when trying to make sense of Revelation's various cycles of judgement (seals, trumpets, bowls) and whether they should be considered as consecutive, repeated descriptions of the same events, and so on. Regarding this, Jacob Prasch provides some insightful teaching on the way that Revelation prophecies draw on the fall of Jericho, when the Israelites marched around the city, blowing trumpets until the walls collapsed.

### 17 - Nebuchadnezzar's Rise, Fall and Restoration

*Principle: (g) shadows*

Considering the importance of Biblical typology, could there be any future prophetic significance to the account of Nebuchadnezzar losing his mind and living like a beast for seven years before having his authority and sanity restored? The trigger for the Lord's judgement was his extreme pride verging on self-deification, and it was only on acknowledging the Lord that he become fully human again. The Biblical narrative presents him as a great tree cut down to a stump in the ground, bound by iron and bronze.

Because iron and bronze are significant elsewhere in Daniel, could the detail concerning the metals used to bind the stump in the ground have any spiritual meaning, or is this overreach (Daniel 4:15)? Perhaps despite the Anti-Christ's goal for world domination, his rule will be constrained to the Middle East (iron) and the region of Greece and the Balkans (bronze).

### 18 - Anti-Christ

*Principles - (g) shadows, (h) context / big picture*

The Bible tells us that there are many anti-Christ, and there will also be one final supreme embodiment of this same evil spirit. In our expectation of seeing this figure emerge, perhaps within our own lifetimes, and knowing that this individual will hold immense power, it is possible that we may overlook the historical precedent that many anti-Christ are simultaneously at work – often collaboratively?

World War Two was a case in point, when Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and Hirohito were all demonically inspired and worked together. Later, however, Nazi Germany and the USSR turned on each other, waging a war of almost unprecedented violence and destruction. Similarly, we understand from the prophet Daniel that the final Anti-Christ will be opposed militarily, and there are several cases in Scripture where the Lord causes His enemies to turn against each other to their mutual downfall. In our present day, we see leaders such as Putin, Erdogan and Xi all acting in the spirit of anti-Christ. Yet any alliances between their respective nations appear to be characterised by fragility, rivalry, and uncertainty.

## Trends – a more Helpful Approach?

### 19 - Trends towards Biblical Prophetic Fulfilment

*Principle: (b) details matter, (f) increasing clarity as the day approaches*

Prophecy “experts” can put people off when they try to predict the date of Jesus’ return, identify the Anti-Christ and so on. Instead, it may be more helpful to focus on trends which confirm that the world is heading in the direction the Bible foretells, for example with respect to Israel, hostility to Jews and Christians, extreme weather patterns, moral collapse etc.

The meaning of 666 is one such case – the control over whether people can buy or sell based on a “mark”. For several decades we have seen the gradual emergence of this prophecy becoming a potential reality. Milestones along the way would include, for example, credit and debit cards, electronic tagging of pets and criminals, barcodes, electronic currencies, unprecedented surveillance and data gathering, people’s social media accounts being banned, the Microsoft patent for biometric data gathering and pressures to abandon cash.

The 2020 Covid-19 outbreak was of course used by governments world-wide to accelerate many of these trends. Plans for “vaccine passports” and enforced vaccine injection typify the characteristic “carrot and stick” methods of bullying people into compliance. (The Bible repeatedly demonstrates that the spiritual forces arrayed against us use a combination of seduction and intimidation, depending on what they consider the most effective in any given situation.) Those who failed to go along with such measures would become social outcasts, in many cases even losing their jobs. It requires little imagination to envisage how such a system might be extended in future to bring about the scenario prophesied in Revelation.

We should of course note that there are wider spiritual messages within the narrative of 666 and people being forced to choose allegiance on pain of death, and that these have applied to believers throughout history. The Bible is unique in the way it conveys truth in so many different ways at the same time.

A similar analysis can easily be used with respect to the other afore-mentioned trends, also leading to the conclusion that the Bible is the Word of God and its prophecies both comprehensible and entirely accurate. To God be the glory!



## Appendix 1 - Questions for Self-Study or Groups

If the principles and approach taken in this booklet have helped to stimulate useful reflection on Bible prophecy, the next useful step might be to take this forward with self- or group-study. What unanswered questions do you still have around specific matters, and why not try to approach them afresh, seeking the Lord's guidance as you do so? Searching the Scriptures with other believers is also important. The Bereans tested everything and were commended for it.

Here are some questions for further reflection which might prompt interesting and helpful discussion:

1. Ezekiel 38:4-5 refers to horsemen, swords and shields, and Psalm 2:2 to the "kings of the earth". When we consider these passages as End Time prophecy, we frequently assume that it is correct to translate these terms into modern-day equivalents, such as tanks, guns, prime ministers and presidents. How literally should we take these things and for what reasons? If we conclude that a strict literal interpretation is correct, how might that affect our understanding of a passage?
2. What are the implications of Romans chapter 1 for how we understand the "wrath of God"? Can we identify the most significant stages in people's thinking and actions which lead to a progression of increasingly serious judgement? Why did Paul refer to God's judgement already being revealed in his day? How might this chapter help us to understand the decline and possible fall of Western democracies, including the UK, in recent decades?
3. What are the parallels between Thessalonians chapter 2 and Romans chapter 1 in terms of how the Lord deals with those who reject the Gospel? Does "the lie" in verse 11 refer to deception in general or a specific lie? What is the one supreme lie recorded in Scripture which has caused mankind to exalt itself and reject God? What are the signs that we now living in an age where human "progress" is powerfully contributing to this delusion?

## Appendix 2 - Signs for Evangelism

The graphics which follow are used with kind permission of Peter Sammons, and are taken from his book "Last Days & End Times – Making the Connection". In the context of the book, they are presented as warning signs pointing to the Lord's return, upon which most believers should be able to agree. Obviously, many of these have happened at different times and places throughout history, but it is the collective weight of a multitude of signs *converging* which should make us sit up and pay attention. (Note that some of the signs under "Moral Decay" are not specifically stated in the Bible, but they do violate God's clear commandments). Sammons suggests that it may be helpful to consider these signs as traffic lights, each at a state of green, amber or red, and encourages readers to think through for themselves where we are in each case.

The Bible's message to believers regarding prophetic signs is that we should use them to mutually strengthen and encourage ourselves - "all the more so as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:27). The Gospel writers and New Testament evangelists also used prophecy powerfully in their testimony concerning Jesus. We too can do the same in our own day. Whilst scientific, historical and archaeological evidence supporting the Bible's claim to be the Word of God is undoubtedly compelling, it requires a degree of serious consideration which many of today's "Generation Z" might find challenging. On the other hand, many prophecies apparently being fulfilled within our own lifetime, can have an immediate and powerful impact on those willing to consider them. Furthermore, no-one can dispute that these messages were authored in antiquity and not engineered after the fact to prove a point.

"Prophetic evangelism" has been a fashionable term in recent years, and refers to the use of spiritual gifts such as words of knowledge and healing in outreach. For the Body of Christ to regain the conviction that the Lord is still willing to work powerfully through ordinary believers in this way is a very welcome development - provided New Age spiritualism is not invoked as a counterfeit to the genuine work of the Holy Spirit – a very real danger. (We commend Daniel Holland's book "Prophetic Evangelism: Kingdom Exploits in the Risk Zone" for its Biblically-grounded approach, honesty and wisdom.) Should we not also use prophecy to reach the lost – to reach the mind as well as the spirit, body and soul, in combination with the saving power of the Gospel – "Christ crucified" - of Whom we should never be ashamed?

May the Lord use the illustrations which follow to encourage and strengthen us in our outreach, and prompt a sense of urgency.

## World Events

<b>1. 'Natural' Phenomena</b>	<input type="radio"/>	1. Mark 13: 8 ■ Matt 24: 7 Luke 21: 25-26 ■ Zech 14: 4-5
<b>2. Globalisation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	2. Rev 13: 16-18 ■ Rev 17: 18 Psalm 2: 1-3
<b>3. Nation Against Nation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	3. Matt 24: 6-7 and 21-22 Mark 13: 7-8 ■ Luke 21: 9-10
<b>4. Disease</b>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Matt 24: 7-8 Luke 21: 11
<b>5. Drought/Famine</b>	<input type="radio"/>	5. Matt 24: 6-7 (famine) Mark 13: 8 (famine) Revelation 16: 7 (drought)
<b>6. Signs in the stars</b>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Luke 21: 25-26 ■ Matt 24: 29 Mark 13: 24-25 Revelation 6: 13-14
<b>7. Tribulation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Matt 24: 21-22 and Daniel 12:1
<b>8. International government</b>	<input type="radio"/>	8. Revelation 13: 1-12

## ISRAEL

**1. World rises up  
against Israel**

Luke 21:7 ■ Luke 21:20–22  
*Past, future or both?*

Isaiah 52:7–10

Zechariah 12:2–3

Zechariah 14:1–4

Joel 3:2 ■ Daniel 12:1

Revelation 9:14–16, 16:12–16

**2. False peace**

Daniel 9:27

**3. One New Man**

Ephesians 2:14

## MORAL DECAY

1. Moral Decay

Daniel 12:10 ■ Revelation 17:2  
1 Peter 2:11-12 ■ 2 Tim 3:1-4

2. Abortion

Psalm 139:13-16 ■ Job 10:8-12  
Jeremiah 20:17 ■ Ecclesiastes 11:5  
Leviticus 20:2-5 ■ Jeremiah 32:35  
Acts 17:25 ■ Jeremiah 1:5  
Galatians 1:15 ■ Luke 1:15

3. Euthanasia

Exodus 20:13 ■ Exodus 23:7  
2 Kings 21:16 ■ Psalm 106:37-8

4. Disobedience  
to parents

2 Timothy 3:1-5

5. Pride

Matt 24:6-7 ■ 2 Timothy 3:1-5

6. Assault upon  
Children

Matthew 18:5-6

7. Holy Spirit  
fall afresh  
on all Believers

Joel 2:28-32 ■ Matthew 10:19-20

8. Scoffers

2 Peter 3:3-4

## THE GOSPEL

<b>1. Resistance to the Gospel</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Matt 24:9 ■ Mark 13: 9-11 Luke 21: 12-15
<b>2. Persecution of Believers</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Revelation 6: 9-11 Revelation 17:6 ■ Matt 24: 9 Mark 13: 9-11 Luke 21: 12-15
<b>3. False 'prophets'</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Matt 24:24 ■ 2 Timothy 4: 3-4 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3
<b>4. Antichrist/Beast</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Revelation 13:15 Matthew 24: 15-24 Mark 13: 14-22 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-4 1 John 2:18 ■ Revelation 13: 1-8
<b>5. Rebel 'church'</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Revelation 17 ■ 2 Timothy 3: 4 2 Timothy 4: 3-4 ■ Daniel 12:10
<b>6. Gospel preached across planet Earth</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Matthew 24:14 ■ Mark 13:10 Joel 2: 28-32 ■ Acts 2: 14-21
<b>7. New world religion</b>	<input type="radio"/>	Revelation 13: all Revelation 17 (?)
<b>8. Increase of Knowledge</b>	<input type="radio"/>	(by believers of spiritual situation) Daniel 12:4 ■ Matthew 24: all Mark 13: all ■ Luke 21: 5-36

# GLORY OF KINGS

## SEARCHING OUT GOD'S CONCEALED END-TIME TRUTH

The days in which we live are of unparalleled change and upheaval. So many prophetic signs in the Bible increasingly make sense in light of current events, and even many unbelievers recognise that something extraordinary is taking place in our world.

Under such circumstances, and living in an age of almost unlimited information instantly delivered to our various internet-enabled devices, it is easy for believers to become so focused on connecting the here and now to specific prophecies, that we can lose sight of Scripture's overall picture. There are no shortages of "experts" to guide us, yet so often they disagree with one another!

The Lord expects us to be good Bereans by studying the Scripture for ourselves and using it to weigh carefully any teaching we encounter. This booklet is intended to encourage us in our search for truth by suggesting some important principles of Biblical interpretation that may be particularly helpful with regards to End Time prophecy. It then provides examples of how these principles can be applied to various contentious questions, which might lead us to unexpected conclusions. As we draw closer to the Lord's return, things will increasingly become clearer. The Lord has already given us all the truth that we need – through His Son, His Spirit, and His Word. He will also give us His wisdom in these times, not just to understand what He is doing, but to shine for His glory and lead many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3-4).

*"Robert Sheldon speaks with great clarity and wisdom into a topic rife with unscriptural notions and wild conspiracy theories. His penetrating and thought-provoking analysis helps the reader correct previously held misconceptions and 'connect up the dots' in relation to end-time Biblical prophecy in a meaningful way. I thoroughly recommend it as a significant contribution to this vitally important area of study."*

David J. Lambourn, author: "But Is He God?", "The Forgotten Bride" and "Babel Versus Bible"

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