

the Arabs in

Bible Prophecy

Turkey 37-3

Syria

Jordan

Iraq

Iran

CASPIAN SEA

Pakistan

West

India

Kuwait

Saudi Arabia

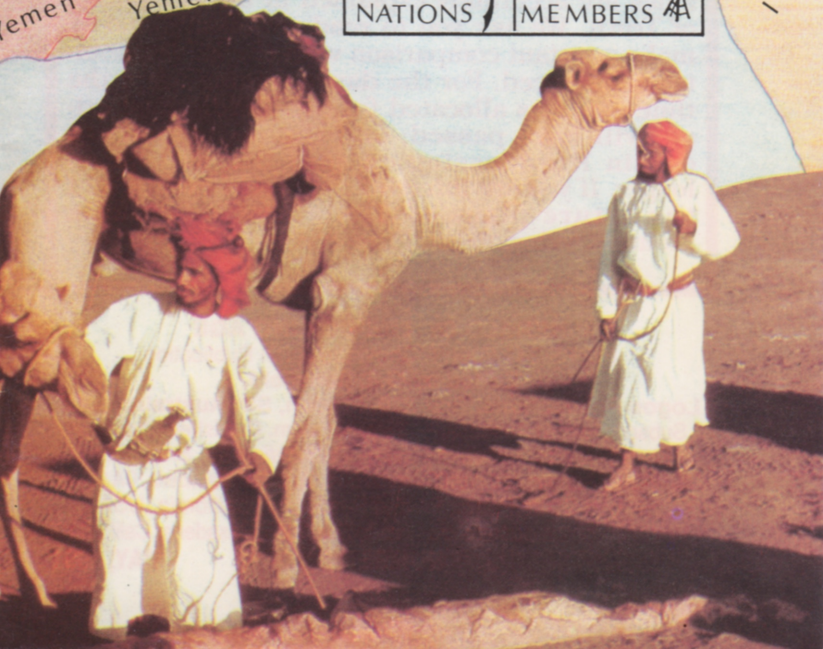
United Arab Republic

South Yemen

Oman

Yemen

ISLAMIC NATIONS	OPEC MEMBERS
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THE ARAB WORLD has been brought prominently before the public by the Arab-Israel antagonism of the last fifty years, the drawn-out Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's, the Kuwait invasion by Iraq in 1990-1, and the continuing trauma of the international energy problem. Unknown to most, however, this is playing an important part in the development of a world crisis that will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ, the battle of Armageddon, and the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Bible prophecy reveals that the Arab peoples are to play a prominent part in the future purpose of God. These matters not only concern world politics, but are of vital importance to your own individual salvation. This booklet outlines some astounding Bible prophecies which are coming to pass before your eyes! The events about which you read in newspapers and magazines are accurately explained in the Scriptures of Truth. We ask you to read this issue, and to make constant comparison with the Bible quotations advanced. For the day is coming when the time God has allocated for the Middle East crisis will have passed; and the opportunity to obtain His blessing on your life will be no longer. If you are interested in world events, and the future plans of Almighty God, take a moment today, to read the evidence herein.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

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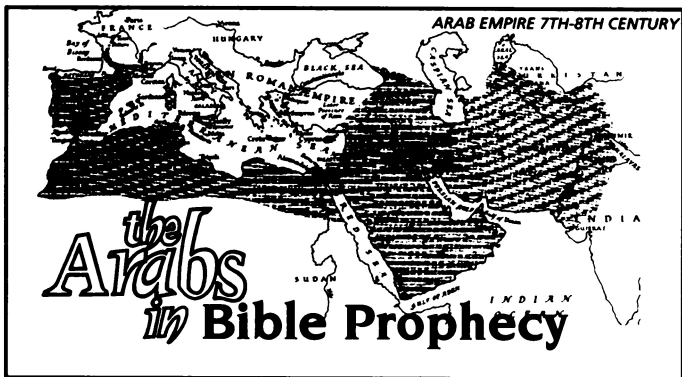
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THE MIDDLE EAST is known as the “Cradle of Civilisation”. It was in the area of ancient Mesopotamia that the roots of mankind were planted, for history records that humanity came therefrom, later spreading to all parts of the world and to develop into the present-day nations. But today, the area might be better entitled the “Crisis of Civilisation”! For there is more devastation, destruction, and ill feeling as the nations of the Middle East vie with each other for supremacy, than in any other part of the globe.

The entire area is exploding in the headlines of today’s news, for not only are these countries important from geo-political, economic and military aspects, but Biblically, they occupy a unique position in prophecy — and are yet to play an important part in the future destiny of mankind.

Recent events emphasise that no-one is exempt from the trauma of the Middle East anguish. The price of petroleum, the security of a country’s existence, and the economies of the world’s financial structures are all dependent upon what happens in the Arab countries. And, the difficult question of the Arab/Israel problem remains unsettled, whilst the Middle East is in turmoil.

THE MIDDLE EAST is rich in oil, important in its strategic location, and vital to the security of the nations. The area features daily in the newspapers; it draws the attention of the world's statesmen; it excites the emotions of both East and West. Its situation is important, being bounded by three important waterways: the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean; it joins together three great continents: Africa, Europe and Asia.

Any activity or controversy in this area inevitably involves the rest of the world, especially the developed nations which depend largely upon the oil resources contained below the surface of the region. Almost two-thirds of the world's oil is controlled by the Arab States in the Middle East, so that with millions of barrels of oil being produced and shipped out through their waterways, they constitute the jugular veins of the industrial nations. In fact, Europe and Japan receive over 90% of their oil requirements from this vital area of the Middle East; the USA gets about 25%.

If these supplies dry up, or be refused, many important nations would find their economic and political stability threatened. That is why America and her coalition partners moved so swiftly to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait controversy in August 1990/February 1991, and to provide the continuing supply of that essential power source. Indeed, all the major nations became quickly involved in that contest, in an endeavor to bring a solution. Both Russia and the West view with greatest suspicion the involvement of each other in this area. And, well they might, for the Middle East will provide the powder keg that will one day erupt, drawing all nations to the final great battle of God Almighty, called in the Bible *Armageddon* (Revelation 16:16).

Every time trouble erupts in the Middle East it seems inevitably to draw attention to the continuing Jew/Arab dispute. Even when Arab fights Arab, which occurred when Iraq invaded Kuwait, the propaganda twisted to involve Israel, and the Palestinian question!

Arab Opposition to Israel's Revival

To most Moslem nations the presence of Israel in the Middle East is a festering sore that will only be remedied by political surgery. Just as the Jewish people have clung to their hope of

Messiah reigning in Jerusalem, so the Arabs have refused to give up their hope of driving Israel into the Mediterranean, and restoring the entire land, including Jerusalem (the third most holy city in the Arab world) to Arab possession. With the wealth that they command from the rich deposits of oil discovered beneath the burning sands of their deserts, it seems only a matter of time before they will accomplish their aims.

But, in fact, they are fighting destiny. Already, on the field of battle, the Arabs have been defeated time and again. In the Jewish War of Liberation in 1948, the Sinai Campaign in 1956, the Six Day War of 1967, the Yom Kippor war of 1973, and later skirmishes, the Arab armies were repulsed, and on each occasion Israel was able to extend its borders at the expense of its neighbors. Then, in 1991, when Saddam Hussein made his thrust for domination, he involved Israel in a Scud Missile attack, but with little effect.

Bible prophecy indicates that the Arabs will never drive Israel from the land. The Jewish nation has returned to its ancient homeland in fulfilment of many Biblical statements. One such is in Ezekiel 36:22-24, "Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy Name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went ... for I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land". God declared that He would do this, not for Israel's sake, but for His "holy Name's sake" — that He might vindicate His Name by fulfilling the promises and declarations that He has made over four thousand years, since the nation was first formed with the selection of Abraham (Genesis 12).

The establishment of the modern state of Israel, and the threatening Arab opposition that has been maintained over the past half-century, are sure and certain signs of the imminence of Christ's return to fulfil the purpose that he initiated 1900 years ago, in accordance with God's plan for this world. He declared that he "would return" to set up his power in Jerusalem, to discipline the Jewish people so that they become submissive to his control, and to extend his authority throughout the earth. By this means the wonderful promise of the gospel will become a fact: "In thee (God declared to Abraham) shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8).

Ultimate Peace for All Mankind

This epitome of the gospel message shows that God's purpose relates to the future of the earth, and all nations thereupon. Among

those nations are Israel and the Arabs — and both are destined for an honored position in the universal kingdom that Jesus Christ will establish. Notwithstanding the present conflict and absolute hatred that exudes from the Jewish/Arab disputes, that atmosphere will change! The power of Jesus Christ will be exercised upon both Semitic brothers, and the present state of hostility that has existed between them for so long, will end.

Ultimately, they will live in unity and co-operation with each other, in specific areas of the Middle East that Jesus Christ will allocate in his kingdom.

As a first stage in this divine program it was necessary for Almighty God, through His invisible angels, to regather His ancient Jewish people from their dispersion of the past 2000 years. It is significant, that when the existence of Israel was threatened by war in 1956 and again in 1967, *Radio Jerusalem* broadcast the words of God, as recorded by the prophet Amos: "I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them, saith the Lord your God" (Amos 9:14-15).

The prophecies relating to Israel and the Arabs are obvious, and the commencement of their fulfilment is evident today. A future epoch of great rebuilding and prosperity in the Middle East is clearly predicted at the return of Christ, after which Israel will never again be uprooted from it (2Samuel 7:10; Zechariah 14:11), and the Arab tribes will at last find rest, amity and harmony in worship (Psalm 72:9-10).

The Problem of Arab Wealth and World War

But before God's kingdom is established, a terrible crisis will erupt in the Middle East. It will become the focal centre of *Armageddon*, a war that will involve all mankind in a "time of trouble such as never was" (Daniel 12:1). All nations will feel the effects of devastation as the turmoil spreads from Jerusalem to involve even lands afar off (Isaiah 59:18).

The basis for this crisis is being laid at the present time in the deserts of the Middle East. Much of the Arab lands which have featured so prominently in news broadcasts during the wars fought thereon, are desolate and uninviting, bleached into sandy wastes by the merciless rays of its bright sun. Dry sands stretch to the horizon, and frequent storms stir up terrible dustbaths, a night-

marish experience to foreign armies involved in Arab hostilities from time to time.

Yet, though deficient of the showers of heaven, and the verdure of nature's bounty, the land has released from its depths an incalculable treasure of black gold: oil! This wealth has permitted its Arab peoples to enjoy a fabulous life style, and exercise a global influence far exceeding their numerical, political and military potential. It was to increase his holding over this wealth that Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded his neighbor state of Kuwait in 1990.

But people forget why such wealth is there! And why it should be discovered at a time when it is so desperately needed!

It was Almighty God who predetermined these events. The apostle Paul declared that "God ... made the world and all things therein ... and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:24-26). It is of God that Arabia has been settled by the Arabs; it is He who placed that black gold beneath its deserts; it is He who permitted the industrial revolution that brought the value of oil to the attention of the nations. Today all world powers have their covetous eyes rivetted on the oil of the Middle East.

Soon the area will erupt in total anarchy and bloodshed, predicted in the Bible: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh ... for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (Zechariah 14:1-2). "In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also *gather all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat" (just outside Jerusalem) for judgment (Joel 3:1-2).

Here is predicted a latter-day gathering of nations to the Middle East. For what purpose do they come? Ezekiel 38:13 declares: "to take a spoil". The important and extensive oil resources of the Arab powers (as well as the vital water and wealth attractions) constitutes such a spoil, and would be a valuable acquisition by nations dependent upon petroleum power. Possession of that oil has brought the future of the Arab powers into prominence in the counsels of the nations; and was a reason for the prompt and thorough support given by the Western powers against Iraq in 1991. But it remains a potential flash point for future war, and is shaping the world for Armageddon.

The Origin and Historic Disunity of the Arabs

Not all Moslem nations are of genuine Arab stock. The Turks, Persians and others are not Arabs, though, as Moslems, they are

often classed among the Arab peoples. The true Arab descended from the half-brothers of Isaac, son of Abraham. Whereas the family of Isaac developed into the Jewish nation, from his brother Ishmael and the related sons of Keturah came the peoples we know as the Arabs (compare Genesis 17:19-21; 25:2-6).

Therefore, despite their mutual antagonism, Arabs and Jews are closely related ethnologically, both races deriving from Abraham, 4000 years ago.

In fact, the character of the Arab was predicted before the birth of Ishmael, son of Abraham, and it remains true of the nation today. His mother, Hagar, was told of her son: "He will be a wild-ass man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (Genesis 16:12). The first part of this prediction proclaimed the character of the people who would develop from Ishmael, whilst the second part described the area in which they would settle.

They were to become like a "wild ass". The book of Job depicts the wild ass as an untameable, lonely animal, roaming at will in the desert, tough and independent. This accurately describes the traditional mentality and attitude of the Arab people. The Bedouins' boundless love of freedom and independence is well known. They are an independent people, fiercely individual, and dangerous when provoked or attacked.

But the prophecy also states that "his hand shall be against every man and every man's against him". In spite of the pressures brought to bear upon the Arab powers, and their common hostility towards Israel, there has been little cohesion among them. Proclamations of Arab unity have been made, but seldom properly implemented and sustained. Consider their well-known record of disunity. Egypt, at one time or another, has sent troops into Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, the Sudan, Algeria, Yemen. Its air force has raided Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It has bitterly fought Israel, but in 1979 it signed a peace treaty with Jerusalem. In 1991 it sided with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait against Iraq! Its northern companion, Jordan, has sent troops in Kuwait, massed troops against Syria, involved itself in Yemen. King Hussein lost control of the West Bank because of his stupid and stubborn involvement in the Six Day War with Israel. Later he sided with Iraq against Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The Arabs argue over many things important and insignificant. Iraq and Syria still quarrel over the interpretation of Baathist

Socialism; Iran and Iraq are divided over religion, and argue over territory; Lebanon has been racked by internal crises as brothers shed blood in civil war. Even among the Moslem disciples there are several bitterly divided sects. The two chief branches are divided into the *Sunni* and *Shi'a* sects, with the *Kurds* (a group mainly in Iraq, and representing almost 20% of its population) fighting for their independence for over fifty years. The *United Arab Republic* formulated some time ago by Syria and Egypt, was unable to provide any unity!

With all these confusing and conflicting elements, the Islamic world remains as fragmented as ever, devoid of inspiring and unifying leadership, illustrating to present times the accuracy of God's prediction to Hagar concerning her son Ishmael: "His hand shall be against every man's".

But that prophecy also indicated the area of Arab control: "he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren". The Hebrew word for "presence" means *Before the Face*, and relates to the rising of the sun; thus: *Towards the East*. God predetermined that Ishmael and his descendants would live "in the east of all his brethren", and accordingly they have occupied the deserts of Arabia, mostly in the barren land that lies between Persia, Syria, Israel, Egypt and Ethiopia. The northern part is the area adjacent to the Euphrates, a line of 2,000 kilometres terminating at the Straits of Babelmandeb in the south. The sides of the triangle gradually enlarge with the southern section presenting a front of a fifteen hundred kilometres to the Indian Ocean.

This has been "to the east" of the area to which the Jews, descendants of Isaac, the brother of Ishmael, have returned in fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. Ultimately, when the kingdom of God is established, the Arab nations will obtain a privileged position "to the east" of the inheritance of Isaac's seed in the Holy Land (see Ezekiel ch. 48).

The Development of Islam

The book of Revelation is a book of symbols designed to record "things which must shortly come to pass" (ch. 1:1) and outlines the progress of history from the days it was written (AD 96) to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, when "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (ch. 11:15).

Among the incidents of history foreshadowed is the uprise of the Islamic movement. The work of the Islamic leader, Mahomet, is therein symbolised as a bright star falling from the political

heavens (ch. 9). In AD 622, he was forced to flee from Mecca to the city of Medina. That year is called by the Muslims, the *hegira*, or "flight", and marks the beginning of the Mahomedan era. Mahomet proclaimed himself a prophet of God. Though he could not write, he dictated principles of his teaching which, after his death, were collated and published as the *Koran*, the Bible of the Muslims. Gradually the number of his converts increased. Proclaiming his belief in one God, he declared open war upon the Trinitarians of the Greek and Roman Catholic persuasions. As his power grew, and his influence extended over Arabia and Palestine, he sent ambassadors to the court of Constantinople, and when they were contemptuously rejected by the authorities of the eastern Roman Empire, he decided to overthrow it by force. He died in AD 632 before he could accomplish this, and was succeeded by Abubeker, the first Arab Caliph.

In AD 637, Jerusalem fell to the Muslims. From Palestine and Syria they spread northwards to Asia Minor and Persia, and southwards to Egypt and North Africa. Within fifty years of Mahomet's death, they had advanced to the two great bastions of Europe: Constantinople and Gibraltar, annexing the countries they conquered, and compelling the people to accept Mahomet as a prophet and the *Koran* as their guide. Passing over the Straits of Gibraltar, the Saracens, as they were called, entered Spain and conquered much of its territory. At that stage they threatened to overwhelm Europe itself, and were only held at bay by the Merovingian king of the Franks: a man by the name of Charles, who organised an army of Franks and successfully opposed the Arabs at Poitiers (AD 732).

Consider!

We pause for a moment to wonder at the ease with which the Arabs accepted the authority and teaching of Mahomet, and so were, for the first time, united in preparation for the mission before them. What explanation can be given to account for this remarkable development? The answer is found in the situation of the Jewish people — the Arab Semitic brothers! Why have the Jews returned to their ancient land? Why is it that suddenly and inexplicably, they turn from their accepted traditional avocations of finance and business, and have willingly undertaken the unaccustomed hardships of agriculturalists and farmers in Israel? The answer is that Destiny has called them! God has a purpose with them and has declared that He will regather them. The spirit which today moves Jewry and impels them to return to their land,

is the hand of providence working in the nations, unknown to the majority of mankind (Daniel 4:17).

So it was with the Arabs in the days of Mahomet. God had a purpose with them. The various elements which prepared the Arab mind for the acceptance of Mahomet's teaching, the readiness with which they united under his banner were all part of the preparation for their divinely-appointed mission. At the death of Mahomet they were moved by a proselyting religious zeal which erupted against an apostate Christian world. When faced with the alternative of "the Koran or the Sword" (the battle cry of Islam), millions quickly saw the point of the argument, and the Islamic religion extended far and wide.

At breathless speed, one dominion after another fell before the Arab power. Syria, Egypt and Persia were taken in rapid succession. By AD 750, the Arab Empire extended from the borders of China in the east to Spain in the west; and the eastern section of the Roman Empire had been reduced to the region of Asia Minor (Turkey today). The sword had brought overwhelming success to the Koran, so that the whole world trembled before the threat of Moslem power.

The Golden Age of Islam

By AD 750 the conquests of the Arabs were complete, and their empire reached its greatest extent. This remarkable people now turned to other triumphs. Science, philosophy, literature and culture now claimed their attention. They absorbed and extended the learning of all the dominions where their sword had been successful. In the same way as they had introduced artillery into warfare (predicted in the symbology of Revelation 9:9-10) they now learnt paper-making from the Chinese, mathematics from the Indians, commerce and banking from the Jews, astronomy from the Egyptians, poetry and literature from other areas.

Wherever they went, they carried with them the results of their increasing knowledge. They established centres of learning throughout their empire, and notably in Spain. The Western culture is greatly indebted to the influence of the Arabs. Many Arabic words are now found in our language: such as alchemy, algebra, almanac, elixir, zenith, etc. Indeed, the university and education systems in current use throughout the Western world, were founded by the Arabs.

The age of the navigators was made possible by the release of knowledge in the great schools of navigation and astronomy established by the Arabs, though a further impetus was brought

about by the developments that came from the fall of Constantinople by the Turks. The contests between Spain, Portugal, Holland and Britain for the supremacy of the seas that came a little later, and Britain's ultimate rise to world mercantile ascendancy as the merchant power of Tarshish (see Ezekiel 38:13), thus owes much to the Arabs.

With this age of learning, however, there came a decline in military conquests. Instead of attempting to extend their dominions, the Arabs limited their contests from AD 782 to 933, to the eastern Roman Empire, bitterly opposing the Trinitarians of the Greek Orthodox Church, but, although they attacked Constantinople on several occasions, they failed to obtain control over the city.

By AD 933, Arab military power was on the decline; secular power was wrested from the Caliph (as their ruler, the successor to Mahomet, was called). No longer did he exercise the authority to wage war. The empire crumbled into dust, and the caliphs continued only as the spiritual heads of Islam. Nevertheless that influence was extensive. Though Khomeini of Iran did not pose as a caliph, the spiritual authority that he exercised in toppling the Shah from his throne, illustrates how considerable was the power wielded by the Caliphate in the past. In the providence of God, Islam's decline assisted the Jewish revival in the land at the conclusion of World War I.

Why should this power so suddenly rise to enormous prominence, exercise such great influence, and as quickly wane?

The answer is given by the apostle Paul: "God ... hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). The prophet Daniel taught: "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will ..." (Daniel 4:17,25).

The uprise of the Arab Empire considerably restricted the growth of an apostate religious system (Roman Catholicism) which then was oppressing minority groups, among which were some who held the Truth in its purity. This limitation of Papal power permitted the development of greater freedom of thought in such countries as Great Britain, particularly in relation to Bible teaching and religion generally, so that among much error, Bible truth could be maintained. It also resulted in the spread of knowledge, assisting Britain to become a great mercantile marine power, and so take her place in national developments as required by Bible prophecy. The decline of Islamic political power, and the

division of thought which characterises Moslem countries has permitted the revival of Jewish national life in the land, which the Bible predicted as the prelude to Christ's coming. Thus the growth and decline of Moslem power has furthered the plan of prophecy revealed in the Bible.

The Arab Power in Decline

In AD 760 Baghdad was made the capital of the empire, and the Caliph took up residence there. From that time Persian influences were at work, laying the foundation for the divisions of thought within Islamic religion that followed. During the 10th-11th centuries province after province separated from a rulership which became more Persian than Arabian. The education that the Arabs had accumulated during the golden age of their empire was neglected, and their influence and learning declined.

In AD 1258 Baghdad was taken by the Turks, and Turkish power absorbed what was left of the Arab Empire. But though defeated militarily, the Arabs still retained sufficient spiritual influence to finally conquer their conquerors, for the Turks embraced the religion of the Koran! Mahomet, though dead, still triumphed!

During the centuries that followed, the desolating influence of the Islamic Turkish Empire destroyed the culture of the Arabs, and they reverted to their original condition of nomadic, independent and mutually hostile tribes and groups. The Turkish Empire replaced the Saracen Empire, and completed the destruction of the Eastern Roman Empire. In AD 1453 Constantinople fell to Turkish forces, and the Empire was at an end. The Turks, echoing the cry of the Saracens: "The Koran or the Sword" extended their empire as far west as Vienna, north into southern Russia, and as far south as Algiers in North Africa. The whole of the Middle East was under their control.

The Biblical symbol of the Turkish Empire is that of the River Euphrates, from whence originated their power. But the Bible foretold the decline of that power (Revelation 16:12), which occurred after the Turkish power had fulfilled the purpose of God in terminating the Eastern Roman Empire. Students of the Bible anticipated this decline in accordance with the requirements of the prophetic Scriptures. In AD 1643 Joseph Mede declared that the fulfilment of Revelation 16:12 demanded the gradual collapse of the Turkish Empire to be followed by "horrible and unheard-of preparation for war". In 1848 Christadelphian expositor John Thomas, interpreted this passage of the Bible similarly, and from

Ezekiel 38 and elsewhere, added that the final demise of Turkey would come by Russian aggression by overwhelming Istanbul (modern Constantinople), and bringing the independence of Turkey to an end (*Elpis Israel*, part 3).

During the latter part of the last century, Turkish power which previously threatened Europe itself, began to decline. In 1917 the reverses suffered by Turkey in the Middle East at the hands of the combined British and Arabs, led to their evacuation of the whole Middle East. Independent Arab nations again came into existence, such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, etc. The Jews began to return as prophecy required, and, at the conclusion of World War II, the state of Israel was founded. Bible prophecy was being wonderfully fulfilled.

The Islamic empires of the past have gone, being replaced by the modern Arab nations in the Middle East, but the spiritual empire still remains. The influence of the *Koran* extends far beyond the confines of Arabia, to Indonesia and Malaysia, parts of China, Afghanistan, India, Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya and Russia. For many the *Koran* is still the rule of faith, Mecca is still the holy city, and the eyes of millions of worshippers are turned five times a day towards the Middle East.

The Teaching of the Koran

Mahomet claimed to have received visions from the angel Gabriel, which he dictated to others, and after his death were collated to form the sacred book of Islam, the *Koran*. This is a concoction of ideas based upon the Bible, interspersed with the traditions and superstitions of Mahomet himself. He announced that as Moses had come to the Jews, and Jesus to the Christians, so he had been sent to the Arabs to restore them to their original and pure faith.

The doctrine and routine he established in the "five pillars of Islam" claimed that faithful observance of these principles will be rewarded on Judgment Day. These five pillars are:

[1] There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet.

[2] Prayer will take a believer halfway to God; therefore prayer must be made five times daily with the face towards Mecca.

[3] Fasting will bring a believer to the door of God's kingdom; therefore in the month Ramadan, the believer must abstain during the hours from sunrise to sunset, from food and drink, from all sensual pleasure and from unholy thoughts. Alcohol, pork and other unclean foods are prohibited at all times.

[4] Alms will gain a believer entrance to the divine presence; therefore one tenth of income is strictly reserved as "alms to God".

[5] Every believer should undertake at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during his lifetime.

Accordingly, the Islamic religion is particularly adverse to Trinitarianism, and therefore bitterly antagonistic to orthodox Christianity (as, indeed, is the Bible). On the other hand, it favors the monotheism of the Jewish people, and draws upon the Bible to acknowledge the latter-day restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland. It acknowledges Jesus Christ as a great prophet, though subordinate to Mahomet, and teaches that he must return to set up on earth the kingdom of God, with its headquarters at Jerusalem. A minaret in the Ommayad Mosque in Damascus is named "*The Minaret of the Coming of Jesus Christ*" and is dedicated to his second appearance. Arabs have been buried near the Golden Gate of Jerusalem, because they believe that on Judgment Day the Lord will return to Jerusalem via that entrance.

Therefore, it is a remarkable fact that the three great religions associated with Jerusalem: Judaism, Islam and Christianity all announce the setting up on earth of a kingdom under the rulership of the Messiah. Judaism, however, does not recognise Jesus Christ as such; Mohammedanism makes him subordinate to Mahomet, and mixes religion up with fallacies relating to the immortal soul — therefore only true Christianity, as based upon a correct understanding of Old and New Testaments of the Bible, recognises and proclaims the Truth. Unfortunately, most sects of Christendom have intermixed serious and faith-nullifying errors with their teaching.

The Bible declares that there is but "one faith, one baptism, one Lord", etc (see Ephesians 4:4-6), but that is not the case with Christendom today, which includes over 300 different and antagonistic sects. The Bible also predicted that there would be a departure from the true faith, so that the gospel would be retained by very few (2Timothy 4:2-4; 2Peter 2:1-2; 3:3). True Christians will disabuse their minds of the errors that have been superimposed upon the teaching of the Bible, and will seek the way of God in truth. Of these the Lord Jesus declared: "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). They will examine clearly the teachings of the Bible, realising that eternal life at the coming of Jesus Christ is only possible upon an acceptance of Truth in its purity, while we have opportunity to do so.

What the Future Will Reveal

The key to the future of the Arab question and humanity in general is to be found in the boiling cauldron of the Middle East. In the continuing drama between Israel, the Arab nations, Russia and the West, the prophecies of the Bible are coming alive. They proclaim the next great stage in the divine purpose: the coming of Jesus Christ to reign on the earth, to restore the Jewish people as the "first dominion" in the earth (Micah 4:8), and to establish Jerusalem as the centre of a worldwide kingdom. Then Jerusalem will comprise a temple-city where mankind will assemble to worship. Instead of mankind travelling on a pilgrimage to Mecca or Rome, they will visit Jerusalem. Hence the Bible teaches:

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jeremiah 3:17).

"And it shall come to pass ... that many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:1-3).

These statements predict vast changes for the world, and for Jerusalem. The former will be united in peace under the reign of Christ; the latter will be called the "city of truth" (Zechariah 8:3), the "city of the great king" (the Lord Jesus Christ — Matthew 5:35), the "habitation of justice" (Jeremiah 31:23), the "city of God" (Psalm 87:3). Instead of the Dome of the Rock, or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or other centres of superstition and falsehood, there will be the wonderful Temple, described as "the house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:6-8). In that temple-city Christ will preside as King-Priest legislating for the benefit of humanity in things material and spiritual. Associated with him will be those who have sought to obey him in this life by embracing his truth, submitting to baptism, and living in accordance with his precepts. Of them it is said, they shall "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 5:9-10; 20:4,6).

But because of the blindness of humanity, because of the refusal of man to acknowledge God and submit to His require-

ments, the world will first be purged through war. Armageddon will involve the whole of mankind in a universal conflagration, which shall centre on the Middle East. Bible prophecy declares: "I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to battle" (Zechariah 14:2), and present events are a stepping stone in that process.

The Arab peoples will be involved in this final conflict, and will be split into two camps at the time of Christ's coming. Iran, Iraq and Syria will be found under Russian control; whereas the Saudis, Jordan and Kuwait will give their support to the West. In fact, the present state of the Moslem world conforms exactly to Bible prophecy. The independence of Iran, and her ultimate involvement in a Russian attack on the Middle East, is clearly prophesied (modern Elam: Jeremiah 49:39, or Persia: Ezekiel 38:5). The path of war will devastate Syria and Damascus (Isaiah 17:1), will erupt against Egypt (Daniel 11:42-43), and will finally terminate in Jerusalem (Daniel 11:45; Zechariah 14:2). There the Russian invasion will meet its fate, being overthrown by a power greater than mere man: "The Lord shall go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14:3). Wielding divine power, Christ will overthrow the nations and establish his rule and kingdom in the earth.

The Arabs in the Future

The Arabs will be granted an honored place in the Kingdom of Christ. In response to Abraham's prayer, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee", God promised: "I will make of him a great nation". This has yet to be fulfilled, even though the fulness of God's covenant was established with Isaac (see Genesis 17:18-21). Therefore, though the "first dominion" of Christ's world-wide empire will be enjoyed by Israel (Micah 4:8), the Arab nations will also inherit their lot. God promised that they will dwell peaceably "in the presence (*Heb.: to the face of; i.e., to the east*) of all his brethren" (including Israel — see Genesis 16:12). They will do so, not in the Promised Land that Israel will inherit, but in the adjoining territory of Arabia "to the east". Then, "the desert shall blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1), and instead of the burning, blighting heat of their sandy wastes, there will be forests in Arabia (Isaiah 21:13) and water in abundance (Isaiah 21:14).

In a prophecy relating to the future kingdom of Christ on earth, the Bible declares of certain Bedouin Arab tribes descended from Ishmael: "They shall shew forth the praises of the Lord"; Their offerings "shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory" (Isaiah 60:6-7). This Bible

passage predicts the conversion of the Arabs to the "hope of Israel" as the truth in Christ Jesus is called (Acts 28:20), and their incorporation into his kingdom.

Both the land and the people will experience vast changes. They will have to replace the Koran with the Bible; they will have to change from the worship of Allah to that of Yahweh, the God of Israel (Exodus 3:14-15); they will be compelled to acknowledge Christ instead of Mahomet; their restlessness and mutual antagonism amongst their own tribes, their hatred of Israel will cease, and they will have to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem instead of Mecca (Zechariah 14:16).

Tremendous changes? Indeed they are, but only indicative of the vast changes to be brought about in all the world, as all nations will be compelled to accept Christ's reign in truth. The Bible declares: "for the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isaiah 60:12). For the rest, the words of the Bible will be vindicated, and God will cause "righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Isaiah 61:11).

What Must Be Done At This Crisis

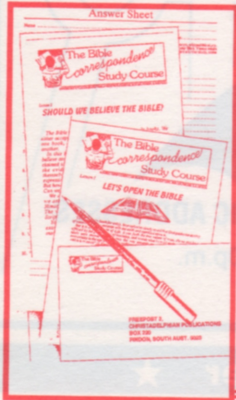
Current events in the Middle East indicate clearly that we live in momentous times. They remind us of the progress of the divine purpose to change this world in conformity with God's stated will. The time imminent when Jesus Christ will return to effect these changes. But the personal future of individuals depends upon what they are prepared to do. We urge the reader to take his Bible and open its pages more than ever before. Read the amazing prophecies that have already been fulfilled, and of those about to occur! But, more importantly, learn of the means by which you can make peace with God and secure a part of the grand program of the future.

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