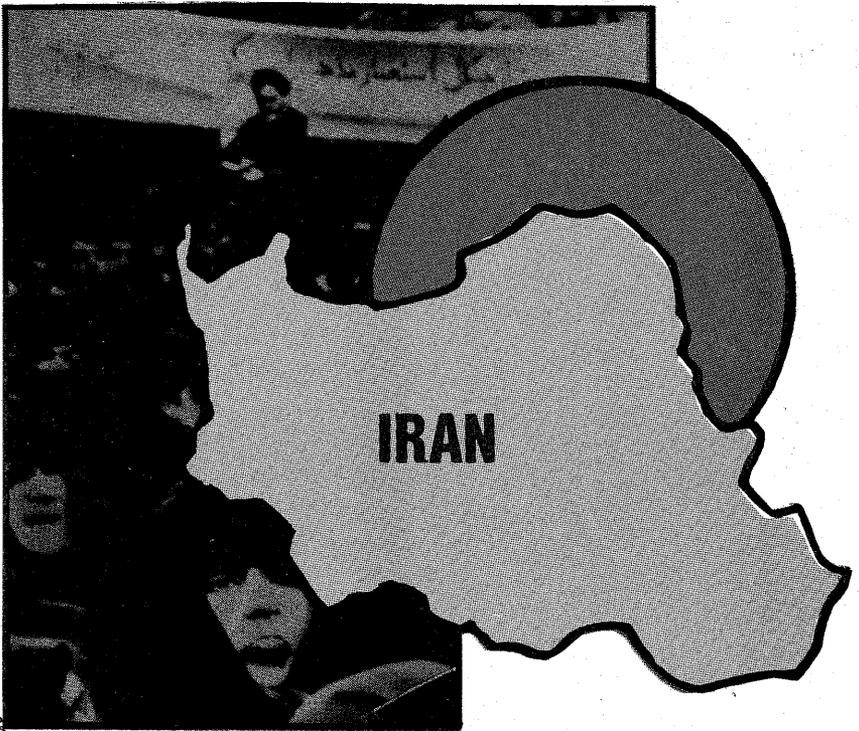


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# Iran in Prophecy

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Ray Brubaker



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**Ray Brubaker**



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# IS IRAN IN PROPHECY?

The DAVIS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE points out that the name of Persia and that of the plateau of Iran are used synonymously.

When the Persian empire was at the height of its power, it stretched from the empire of India on the east to the Grecian Archipelago on the west; and from the Danube, the Black Sea... to the Arabian and Nubian deserts on the south.

It's interesting to note that Persia (presently Iran) is mentioned along with Ethiopia and Libya as joining Russia in its eventual march on Israel in Ezekiel's account of this endtime invasion--a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

We have watched with interest as Ethiopia and then Libya have joined the Communist Camp. And now it might appear that Persia (or Iran) is also being drawn into the vacuum created by the ouster of the Shah.

The Soviet news media welcomed the upheaval in Iran with enthusiasm. While intelligence officials in the United States have reported that "Iran is not in a revolutionary or even pre-revolutionary situation," it was well known in Europe that the Soviet Union was sending thousands of agents into Iran. These European intelligence sources maintain that the trouble with the Shah was largely stirred up by Soviet meddling.

Moscow knows how important the oil-producing nations on the Persian Gulf are to the United States and to the remainder of the non-communist world. And it knows that Iran is the key to the Persian Gulf and its future conquest of the Middle East.

One official has pointed out that the Soviet Union is not prepared to go too far in Ethiopia, for example, "But Iran is right on their border. They would be prepared to turn this whole situation into another Cuban missile crisis." (NEWSWEEK, Jan 8, '79, p.19)

So the crisis in Iran is a victory for the Soviets. Iran may join Iraq in becoming pro-Soviet. Turkey and Pakistan are similarly softening in their opposition to Moscow.

While the Prophet Ezekiel sees Persia, Ethiopia and Libya aligned together, it is interesting to turn to Daniel to see what he says about these countries as they relate to the endtime.

Daniel, chapter 11, begins by mentioning Persia which we have said would be a reference today to Iran.

Writes Daniel: "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all." The three kings mentioned are no doubt Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes and Darius, while the fourth king is Xerxes. Then mentioned are the king of the north and the king of the south as playing a vital role throughout the future history of this land.

For instance we read, "And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement." Although this was fulfilled, it is interesting to see a repeat of history in more recent events.

European analysts point out that for months before the Iranian crisis, an underground Communist weekly has been circulating

in Iran, having been printed in the Soviet Union's Tehran embassy. What has been the message of this Communist journal? It was a call for an alliance between Communists and the Muslim fundamentalists who opposed the Shah.

Then we saw pictures of Yassar Arafat of the notorious PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) kissing Ayatolla Ruhollah Khomeini. Arafat drew rare smiles from the usually somber Moslem patriarch.

Arafat told reporters that "the Iranian revolution is an earthquake and it may arrive in Palestine." He also noted that it turned the strategic balance in the Middle East "upside down."

The Iranian government reported that the main principle of its foreign policy would be support for the Palestinian cause, and that relations with the Jewish state would be cut off. Israeli officials were expelled and all Iranian government employees in Israel were ordered home.

The Prophet Daniel was told what would happen to his people. Remember how he prayed but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him for twenty-one days and kept his prayer for wisdom from being heard. Then Michael, one of God's angels appeared, saying: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for yet the vision is for many days."

Among the things shown to Daniel was the appearance of one we call the Antichrist who is buffeted by two kings--the king of the north and the king of the south.

Here's what we read: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall also enter into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown."

Then mention is made of the land of Egypt which shall not escape the conquering path of the Antichrist. We read, "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt."

Now, do you remember how Ezekiel mentions Libya and Ethiopia as joining with Russia in her march on Palestine? Daniel, too, mentions these same two countries, saying: "And the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps."

It must be remembered that the Antichrist comes from a European federation of nations. He is the leader of ten nations which align themselves under his direction.

Witnessing his conquests causes consternation among the remaining powerful nations at that time, mainly Russia and China. We read, "Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore, he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." (Daniel 11:44)

To what extent Antichrist will invade Palestine is plainly shown, for we read: "He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

Keil points out that when the final Antichrist rises up to subdue the whole world, sets up his camp in the Holy Land, it is then we read: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which

standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation..." (Daniel 12:1)

Michael, who withstood the prince of Persia (Iran), is now seen again coming to the defense of the remnant of Israel when an attempt is made to utterly annihilate and destroy them.

We read, "At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Dan. 12:1) Is this a reference to the remnant that will be brought through fire...refined as silver? (Zech 13:8-9)

Then we read, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

This latter Scripture has caused some to question whether a physical resurrection is meant here. Gabelein says that a physical resurrection is not taught here or else it would teach a general resurrection. Rather he sees this as a type of the national revival of Israel in the last days of this age.

However, Robinson notes: "If a resurrection of the body is not here declared, it will be difficult to find where it is, or to imagine words in which it can be."

No injustice to Scripture is seen here, for we await the rapture when many will come forth to everlasting life. And could it be that some of the righteous will come forth to shame and everlasting contempt?

Did not the Apostle John warn of the possibility of being ashamed at our Lord's coming?

He writes: "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (I John 2:28)

Or, as Dr. Wuest, the Greek expositor, points out, that at our Lord's return there will be those who "in shame shrink back from him."

How we need to be found ready for our Lord's coming so that we will have an abundant entrance into His presence.

As Daniel goes on to suggest, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Dan. 12:3)

May we be among the wise, even as Jesus spoke of the "wise virgins" in contrast to the foolish virgins whose preparation was inadequate when the Bridegroom came.

And may we be soulwinners. For as "one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:41-42) By our glow we will reveal how active we were at winning others to the Lord. If there is any reason for "everlasting contempt" as Daniel describes it, I believe it will result from believers being resurrected only to be filled with everlasting regret that they did not live for Jesus as they should have, nor did they witness for Him. Thus they missed out on the blessings and rewards bestowed upon the faithful.

In conclusion, we would sum up by saying that the situation in Iran is a reminder of calamitous conditions predicted by our Lord for the endtime. For He declared that upon the earth there would come "distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." (Lu 21:25)

With Iran aligning itself against Israel and the West, while becoming more pro-Russian, we can see the day coming when she will be drawn into the battle described so vividly in Ezekiel 38-39. In fact, the stage may now be set for this invasion.

During that invasion we see the United States and Russia becoming involved in a nuclear war that will bring utter annihilation to both countries. This we see resulting in the Antichrist arising and calling for a united Europe to build an empire so vast that there can be no one to oppose it. It is the conquests into Palestine that cause the remaining armies of Russia and China and the other nations of earth to march to Armageddon where together they meet their doom. For the Lord, descending with His army of saints, brings judgment upon the armies of earth seen gathered in the valley of Megiddo.

Our closing comment would be that of the great G. Campbell Morgan who once observed: "Man is failing in governmental power." He went on to say, "The hope of the world is that Jesus will come to rule within the lines of His own royal policy." And he declared, "Once take hold of this great truth of the coming of the King, and it affords a bright outlook along every avenue of life and brings gladness to the weary heart."

Indeed, the outlook is bleak but the uplook is bright!

Ahead for this world is great tribulation such as the world has never seen, nor ever shall see again.

But we are reminded that when conditions we described today "begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28)

These are days in which if you are not an all-out believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you should avail yourself of the opportunity to become one of His loyal disciples. Give your heart and life to Him after you trust Him as Saviour and Lord. Live in momentary expectation for His coming, and you would not want to be found doing anything that would make you ashamed at His coming.

For remember He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN IRAN?



**W**hen the Ayatollah Khomeini initiated the takeover of the United States Embassy in Tehran, he performed an act unprecedented in the annals of international diplomacy.

James Reston of the NEW YORK TIMES writes: "It has been established for generations that an embassy is not only a symbol but a physical part of a nation's sovereign territory. Even in the ugliest phase of the Cold War, embassies were respected not only as a safe haven for officials and their families but as a refuge for dissenters."

He observes further, "Much as Moscow hated the Roman Catholic Church and tried to intimidate its priests, it usually respected the sanctity of foreign embassies and had the decency, if that's the right word, or at least the good judgment not to hound them down behind the gates, since the Russians wanted diplomatic immunity for their own people and supporters."

Reston calls Khomeini as much a criminal as one who takes over a commercial airliner with a gun or a bomb, but with this difference. "The hijacker," he notes, "usually acts on his own, but Khomeini is acting on the name of a nation and a religion to the detriment of both and placing what's left of world diplomacy between nations in jeopardy."

Why would Khomeini support the takeover of our embassy?

Khomeini said of the hostages that those guilty of spying, of espionage and conspiracy in our embassy in Tehran, did not enjoy international diplomatic respect.

How do Iranian students in the United States feel about the Ayatollah Khomeini and the deposed Shah? The word "ayatollah" means "a reflection of Allah," but some see him as a symbol of a revival of moral principles and others depict him as returning to the rule of the dark ages.

The Ayatollah Khomeini declared of us, "America is the great Satan." To him, our country has represented all that is evil in Iran.

We might ask ourselves, Do we see ourselves as others see us? Some see America as the land of the free and the home of the

brave--a land of opportunity and hope, the friend of the world's dejected people and the poverty-stricken.

Others see America as the crime capital of the world, with more assaults such as rape and murder than anywhere else on earth, along with a million abortions performed each year. Sending such items as pornographic films abroad, we can only corrupt both mind and manners of people whom we should influence in the ways of morality.

That's one reason why the Ayatollah Khomeini calls America "Satan."

During Iranian student demonstrations in New York City, a Columbia University undergraduate turned to a foreigner from Iran to say, "We're gonna ship you back, and you aren't gonna like it! No more booze. No more big Macs. No more rock music. No more television. No more sex. You're gonna get on that plane at Kennedy, and when you get off in Tehran, you're gonna be back in the 13th Century."

When you stop and think about it, is that what America is all about? Booze, rock music, drugs, and sex?

May God help us.

Isn't it time we realize that America offers a message of hope to the world through broadcasts such as this emanating from a land of freedom of speech and freedom of religion unparalleled in today's world?

Should we not thank God for America, and should we not recognize the God that made America great, and Jesus Christ whom He sent into the world--not to condemn the world but that through Him all might be saved who place faith and trust in Him. For, said Jesus, "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." Life begins when Jesus comes into the heart and life and makes all things new, giving purpose for living and eternal life.

Gerhard Kunzelmann, in his book, *THE ARABS AND THEIR DREAM OF THE GREAT ARAB KINGDOM*, noted: "120 million Arabs are awaiting the new prophet. They hope he is coming soon..." The author added: "The new prophet will be a Socialist and not Marxist."

We might ask, "Is Ayatollah Khomeini that prophet?"

Appearing on the world scene at a time when the world is looking for a messiah, is that a mere coincidence? Religious leaders, it would appear, have a respect that is unprecedented.

However, concerning the Ayatollah Khomeini, there have been a lot of questions raised as to whether he is a divinely-appointed leader or a dangerous dictator.

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat called Khomeini a "lunatic who misrepresents Islam. Islam teaches love and brotherhood," said Sadat.

Just what does Islam teach?

Dr. Hosny M. Gober, who is a Moslem author, says: "Islam believes in justice, peace, love, brotherhood among all nations, and the other principles taught by Jesus, the Torah, the Book of Psalms, and the Gospel."

Dr. Gober says: "Dictatorship has no place in Islamic politics, since the ruler is bound to abide by the principles of Shurs (the parliamentary council) prescribed by the Koran itself."

Dr. Gober notes: "Islamic teachings are against violence, mobs and murder." For instance, the Koran says: "If anyone slew a person, unless it be for murder or for spreading mischiefs in the land, it would be as if he slew the whole people, and if anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the people."

Ex-Iranian leader Bakhtiar says, "What is going on in Iran today is not in agreement with Muslim traditions of the Moslem people in Iran."

Looking back to the seizure of the American Embassy, he noted, "This was against the traditional traditions of the Iranian people."

Bakhtiar noted that what went on in Iran--the burning of the American flag, the takeover of the U.S. Embassy and the hostages, slogans such as "Death to Carter," and "Death of America"--are all in violation of international laws and Islamic laws."

He asks, "If Khomeini is 'one of the faithful,' as he calls himself, how can he justify what is going on in his country today?"

The Koran calls Muslims to respect their covenants with non-Muslims and orders them not to commit acts of treachery.

However, concerning Christian, Zionist and Bahai Missionary centers in Tehran, the Khomeini feels these are designed to mislead the people with their propaganda. Cries Khomeini, "Is it not our duty to demolish these centers?"

In order to foster and maintain morality, there are serious consequences for offenders. For instance, the law of Islam demands 80 lashes be given as punishment to wine drinkers, or 100 lashes be laid on fornicators of ill repute. Stoning is required of a male or female fornicator of previously chaste reputation.

To those who cry that these are harsh and crude rules, Khomeini explains: "The rules for criminal punishments in Islam came into being to prevent obscenity and undesirable, immoral behavior among a great and far-flung people.

Khomeini replies to those who oppose his actions by declaring, "The prophets and the Imams (Muslim leaders) and the people all follow the wish of God and His laws."

Witnessing the many thousands who marched on the embassy in Tehran and shouted slogans in favor of the Khomeini and against the Americans made many wonder, What kind of man is the Ayatollah Khomeini? What part will he play in the future history of the world? And how does America fit into the picture?

In a book entitled ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT written by the Ayatollah Khomeini, he declared, "Imperialism...with Zionism and atheistic materialism are joining forces to pervert and mutilate Islam."

Khomeini has let it be known who's running Iran. By rejecting the President's peace envoy, and turning a deaf ear to the Pope's emissary, it might be considered a violation of Islam rules and principles. For example, the Koran says, "If your enemy inclines toward peace, do thou also incline toward peace and trust in God, for He is the one that heareth and knoweth all things."

It was Mohammed himself who said, "Whoever wrongs an allied non-Muslim person or imposes upon him a difficult task--I will be his adversary in the Day of Judgment."

While not condoning Islam and its beliefs, we simply point out

that many see a danger in the Khomeini takeover and operation of the government in Iran as against both political and religious convictions.

For instance, Stephen Rosenfeld of the WASHINGTON POST has stated, "The crisis in Iran conveys the chilling message that a dark new force is at work in the world..."

Secretary-General of the United Nations Kurt Waldheim has likewise observed, "What is going on now in Tehran is a dangerous affront to the U.N. Charter and to the fragile order of world politics."

Just to show you how far the Khomeini would go in enforcing his edicts, we read from his own statement when he said; "We want a ruler, who would cut off the hand of his own son if he steals, and would flog and stone his near relative if he fornicated."

Princeton historian, Bernard Lewis, observes that Westerners are unaccustomed to assigning a central place to religion in public affairs. He notes, by contrast, the essence of Islam is the identification of religion and government. (See THE RETURN OF ISLAM) (Also Script # 1270)

Looking ahead, we're reminded of what Dr. Jerry Falwell, Radio/TV evangelist, sees for the future. Says Falwell, "I am fearful that America is going to lose her liberty during the 1980's because of her sin." He laments, "The divorce rate is sky-rocketing and homosexuality and bisexuality are fast becoming acceptable alternate lifestyles." Says Falwell, "This country is about to enter a Decade of Destiny -- that may mark the end of our great nation."

In view of what we see happening abroad in many countries of the world, with governments crumbling, we might very well wonder about the future.

As U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT points out, in 1979 alone, military men have carried out at least seven successful coups. In fact, more than 40 countries in the non-Communist world find generals, admirals or military councils now holding the reins of power.

G. Campbell Morgan once observed, "Man is failing in governmental power; and the hope of the world is that Jesus will come to rule within the lines of His own royal policy."

Says Morgan, "Once take hold of this great truth of the coming of the King, and it affords a bright outlook along every avenue of life and brings gladness to the weary heart."

Witnessing events such as we are seeing today makes us think of the words of Jesus Who foresaw as one of the signs of His coming, distress of nations, with perplexity. But He followed with these assuring words, saying: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." And He added, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (See Luke 21:25-28)

My friend, in view of days in which we live, if not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, won't you realize there is little hope for this nation or our world except to those who come to know the Saviour.

So, believe in Him without delay. Realize His blood was shed on the cross for your sins, and that you might have salvation as

a gift and the hope of eternal life.

Accept Jesus now as your Saviour and Lord. Then live for Him daily, and "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."



## THE CRISIS IN IRAN

What of the crisis in Iran? What is its significance?

Stephen Rosenfeld of the WASHINGTON POST has stated: "The crisis in Iran conveys the chilling message that a dark new force is at work in the world..."

Recently, we witnessed an uprising which might be called an Islamic Revival led by exiled Islamic religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini has expressed his concerns in a book entitled, ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT which is from a collection of lectures he once gave.

Here are some of his statements in which hatred of Christianity and Judaism has been expressed.

He noted that "Imperialism and its agents among the traitorous rulers together with Zionism and atheistic materialism are joining forces to pervert and mutilate Islam."

He continues: "Before us we see the Jews making a mockery of the Koran, and distorting its text in the new editions printed in the occupied lands and elsewhere. It is our duty to reveal this treachery and shout at the top of our voices until people understand that the Jews and their foreign masters are plotting against Islam and are preparing the way for the Jews to rule over the entire planet."

He went on to suggest: "It is because of our weakness that we may wake up one morning to find a Jewish ruler dominating our country--God forbid!"

And Khomeini noted: "In Tehran, Christian, Zionist and Bahai missionary centers issue their publications in order to mislead people and to alienate them from the teachings and principles of religion. Is it not our duty to demolish these centers?" he asks.

Khomeini decries the reformers who say: "Woe to Islam," when it is the law of Islam that 80 lashes be given as a punishment to wine-drinkers, or 100 lashes be laid on fornicators of ill repute, or when stoning is required of a male or female fornicator of previously chaste reputation.

He observes: "How these (Reformers) scream: 'These are harsh and crude rules derived from the crudeness of the Arabs,' while in fact the rules for criminal punishments in Islam came into being to prevent obscenity and undesirable, immoral behavior among a great and far-flung people."

Khomeini replies to those who oppose his actions by declaring: "The Prophet and the Imams (Muslim leaders) and the people all follow the wish of God and his laws."

Then referring to the leaders of the country, he demands: "Compliance with the qualifications of the canonical rulers (ie, in accordance with Islamic law) is still required if he is to be deemed worthy to rule. These qualifications--consisting of knowledge of the law and rectitude--exist in the majority of our religious experts in this age."

States Khomeini: "We want a ruler who would cut off the hand of his own son if he steals, and would flog and stone his near relative if he fornicated!"

From the writings and lectures of Khomeini you get a picture

of his beliefs and the reason why he led the opposition against the Shah of Iran.

It must be realized that what we are seeing in Iran is something of an indication of a trend that will expand in the months ahead. It is an intrusion into politics by representatives of religion. And, in the case of Islam, it represents nearly a billion people who can easily influence the outcome of the world's future.

Princeton historian, Bernard Lewis, in an article, "The Return of Islam," observes that Westerners are unaccustomed to assigning a central place to religion in public affairs. He notes, by contrast, the essence of Islam is the identification of religion with government.

Did you hear it?

Bible students know that in the endtime there is forecast the appearance of two personages called in Scripture, "The Beast" the "The False Prophet," who will exercise worldwide authority. Thus, it behooves us to observe the recent chain of events in order to discern if we are approaching what we might call "the era of the Antichrist!"

The "beast" is a personification of a world-ruler seen appearing whose domain will include the sphere of the ancient Roman Empire. He is seen arising from a confederation of nations within Europe although the scope of his authority and rule will be worldwide.

Listen to the Prophet Daniel's description of four beasts which he sees in a vision and which were representative of various world kingdoms...the world empire of Nebuchadnezzar, the world empire of Media-Persia, the world-empire of Greece under Alexander, and the Roman Empire.

Now Daniel was greatly troubled by what he had seen, and desired an explanation especially concerning the last beast. We read where Daniel says, "I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful...and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom all three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than all his fellows."

Can you visualize this picture? Imagine a beast that has a head with ten horns, and then another horn appears.

Here's the explanation that Daniel was given. He was told "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces."

This fourth beast was representative of the Old Roman Empire.

Then we read, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall arise after them."

Can you understand why Bible students are watching plans in Europe to form a confederacy of nations which today is an economic union but will eventually turn into a political union?

According to Daniel, eventually ten nations will appear from which will emerge the despotic dictator we hear referred to as the Antichrist.

In the book of the Revelation, we see this same picture of a

beast with ten horns. We're told, "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." And we're reminded, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." (Rev. 17:12,13)

In other words, ten nations will surrender their authority to the Antichrist world ruler, saying, "Rule over us."

We read, "Power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb...." (See Rev. 13:7-8)

Again we're told, "Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." So, he rules for three-and-a-half years.

Then we see the appearance of another figure who arises. He is also pictured as a beast with two horns like a lamb, but he speaks as a dragon.

As we would understand it, the two horns represent both his political and religious power which he wields. He is like a lamb which signifies his lowly, pious nature. In contrast to Hitler and other ferocious dictators, he appears calm and peaceful; nevertheless, he speaks as a dragon. What he says motivates people to bloodshed and violence.

While stealing and adultery are wrong, so is murder. When you saw the milling crowds chanting "Death to the Shah," or "Kill the Shah," was it not the voice of the dragon we were hearing?

Some refer to this personage as the Antichrist, for he poses as a great miracle-worker who doeth great wonders so that he can make fire descend out of heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

We read how he deceives them that dwell on the earth by the power of these miracles, for he encourages the people of earth to worship the first beast--the emperor. In fact, he erects an image of the emperor and causes a decree that all the inhabitants of the world, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, are to receive a mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, and that as many as will not worship the image of the beast shall be killed. (See Rev. 13:11-18)

We read, "Let him that hath understanding count the number six hundred, three-score and six." (Rev. 13:11-18)

What we are going to see in the days ahead will be an even greater role for religion. In fact, it will be so great as to bring about a world church referred to in Scripture as "Babylon," meaning "confusion." However, religion isn't salvation. You can be religious but still be lost. For only as a person puts faith in Jesus Christ can he be saved. Of all the religious leaders to appear on earth, Jesus Christ alone has atoned for man's sins, and God proved to the world that He is the Christ by raising Him from the dead.

Religion in politics will become a dominant theme in the days ahead.

Khomeini, the religious leader who has led the opposition against the Shah of Iran, has stated that there cannot be separations of religion from government.

We have the constitution of Russia which speaks of the "separation of church and state," but in contrast to that philosophy is

the belief that you can't separate the two. So, the last world government will be predominantly a religiously-oriented state.

However, it will not be God, nor Jesus Christ, who will be worshipped, but a man who will seek the adoration of men. As we read in 2 Thess. 2:4, "So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Reference has been made to the many cults existing today but the greatest cult will find the whole world following a man, even bowing down and worshipping him.

The cult may call itself Christian, parading under the banner of religion, yet multitudes will be deceived.

Only by repenting of sin and turning to Jesus Christ for salvation can anyone be saved. This is different from the doctrine of the Antichrist who will teach that man's salvation is found in a political-religious union.

God help us to wake up to the reality that today is still a day of salvation when we can make our decision by turning to Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and allowing the Holy Spirit to change us and save us.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."  
(Acts 16:31)

And be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

# TEST IN TEHRAN

Iran, the Bible land of Ancient Persia, is much in the news of late.

What is the meaning of the march on the U.S. Embassy in Tehran? What lessons might we learn from this episode in history that found Americans taken hostage and thousands of demonstrators chanting "death to America"?

Anwar Sadat called the action of Iranian students in seizing the American hostages "disgraceful," and labeled the Ayatollah Khomeini as a "lunatic." The Egyptian leader was visibly angry, saying, "I am really infuriated because this is not Islam." Sadat went on to say that Islam "teaches love, brotherhood." He warned that the Ayatollah was preparing the ground for a leftist take-over in Iran. Said Sadat, "Sooner or later the whole country will fall into the hands of the leftists. This is for sure."

America is going through a testing time. A country that has stood up for freedom is now threatened with the loss of freedom in those countries that are antagonistic to those values and principles for which we stand.

In an analysis of the situation in Iran, one must recognize it is not simply the result of the unsettled state of affairs since the Khomeini take-over that led to the action of the Iranians, but the cheering of these actions by the Soviet Union. Broadcasts monitored from Radio Moscow called the behavior of the Moslem hostage-takers "understandable and logical," and described the United States' position as "disgusting."

Looking back, we might ask ourselves--"Are we going through a testing time? And, looking at the future, we can't help but ask--"What's ahead? Will we survive through the '80's?"

The Bible describes the closing days of this age as a time of testing. It would seem that few commentators point this out but it is clearly taught in the Word of God; so we should be aware of the fact that what we are seeing today is only the beginning. Ultimately, we can expect greater hostility and even the prospect of a leftist take-over by those with a raised fist. There's also the possibility that events could lead to a third world war that will bring destruction of our cities in America, which has never happened before.

As we see it, a time of testing is due to come upon all the world. God will allow it to come, perhaps as a means to purify and purge; for in the midst of persecution, there is always the refining process that takes place which only strengthens the faith of believers.

Today it is fairly easy to live for Christ in America and in other countries that are still free from the take-over by political or religious zealots. But, tomorrow we can be sure it will be different and men will be martyred for their faith as in days past.

We have those today who boldly proclaim their faith--stars out of Hollywood, sports figures, and prominent people such as

our president. But God is going to permit persecution to come to discover which is the real and which is the counterfeit, which is the wheat and which are the tares. It will be a sifting time amidst trial and tribulation.

Now those who study Bible Prophecy know there is a period coming known as a time of great tribulation.

When asked by His disciples to tell them what shall be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, our Lord began to enumerate things that would take place.

First, there were general signs that would prevail until His coming, such as wars and rumors of wars, along with religious deception with many posing as messiahs. Our observation might be that the Ayatollah Khomeini is one of those false messiahs that would appear as predicted by our Lord. Even Sadat says it is a "shame on the world" to witness the behavior of the Ayatollah.

Second, there are more specific signs that would occur such as famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places; along with nation rising up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

In our lifetime, we have witnessed two world wars and we face a third war that will be even more devastating than anything we have seen before. Cambodia is an example of extinction as a result of war and famine.

Finally, said Jesus, there "...shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24:21)

Witnessing events abroad, along with various forecasts, makes us wonder whether or not we are soon to enter this final phase of earth's suffering seen forecast for the future. For, lamented our Lord, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved..." Can you imagine a time coming when earth's inhabitants will be reduced to a mere fraction of what it is today? We worry about the population explosion; whereas the Scriptures warn of a population reduction that will be so great, so destructive, and so devastating, that God quickly brings it to an end. We repeat what our Lord has said, "Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. 24:22)

So tribulation is ahead; and it could be closer than we think.

That the tribulation will be a time of testing is clearly taught in Revelation 3:10, where reference is made to the Philadelphia church which is believed to be a type of born-again people found living at the time of Christ's Return.

For, concerning these believers, we read: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Did you hear it?

This tells us there is coming an hour of temptation or hour of trial. The Greek word is "peirasmos" which is the same word used in 2 Peter 2:9 which says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

It is believed that it's possible to escape this testing time seen coming upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

If we are saved by the blood of Christ, and found living for Him, there is the hope of escape from this coming tribulation. Why do we believe this? First, because of the Lord's promise to keep us from the hour of temptation seen coming upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth; and second, because the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of this testing time. The means by which He will do this, we believe, is the rapture. And, third, because of our Lord's own words in Luke 21, where he says, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." We do not think the Lord would hold out the possibility of escape unless there was the reality of escaping the coming awful tribulation.

Notice again how our Lord links this time of testing as coming upon the whole world. We read, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke 21:35 & 36)

Some see the tribulation as affecting only Israel, but the Bible plainly speaks of the tribulation as being worldwide. And finally, it identifies the tribulation as a time of testing--a period of trying the faith of those who are a part of the Laodicean Church--lukewarm, shallow, neither hot nor cold, spued out at the coming of the Lord.

We would quote W. H. Hubbard who writes: "The great tribulation is the chastening fires, over which the Lord sits as the refiner of silver, watching, guarding these imperfect, unfit, unworthy, but loved ones, until the dross has been purged and they are ready to reign with Him and to "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Thus, Malachi writes: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap."

Fire purifies and soap cleans--so will be this time of testing that is ahead.

Continuing to read, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Malachi 3:2-3)

So it is quite obvious that the tribulation may serve as a time of purifying and purging. As Daniel writes, "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end..." (Daniel 11:35) And again we read, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly." (Daniel 12:10a)

How wonderful that we can heed our Lord's admonition to be ready for His coming so that we can escape this time of trial seen coming upon the whole world.

Peter tells us how this time of trial will serve to purify, saying, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

You may go through a time of trial now. It may be for the purpose of perfecting your faith and purifying your life so that you will be ready for Christ's coming.

No one likes trials but they are worth more than gold, says Peter. James, too, writes, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith, worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4)

Abroad, in Tehran and elsewhere, Americans have gone through a testing time, but it is nothing compared to that seen coming upon the whole world.

Recently, discussions have been going on between Red China and the Soviet Union in what could be for the purpose of ending hostilities between the two nations. After all, both are linked together in an anti-God philosophy that could very well bring on the world rule of the coming antichrist.

Concerning the 1980's, General Alexander Haig recently predicted internal changes in the Soviet Union will bring about what he called "an extremely dangerous decade" in the 1980's.

The former commander of NATO said the next Soviet leaders will be another generation removed from the human toll taken in Russia during World War II. Therefore, he argued, those younger leaders "will be as conscious of those sacrifices as of the accumulation of power" by the Soviet military since the war.

Thus, Haig predicts those changes within the USSR will make the 1980's "dangerous."

That there is danger ahead is also the conclusion we would arrive at, as the Scriptures point to tribulation ahead. Nevertheless, we again express our belief that Christ's Coming for His own--for those that are ready--constitutes the great hope of the church.

In closing, we would ask--Are you ready? Would you be ready were Jesus to come today? If not, you can be ready by putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and then living for Him every day.

For our Lord hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."



## WHY DID THE RESCUE MISSION FAIL?



**Demonstrators in Tehran flee through city streets when soldiers open fire on the crowds;**

According to a report by the Rand Corporation there have been 42 terrorist assaults on diplomatic missions since 1971, with almost half of them having taken place within the past two years.

Is the world becoming an infested jungle, beset by marauding gunmen looking for their prey like sportsmen hunting rabbits?

Brian Jenkins, specialist on terrorism for the Rand Corporation says: "Embassy invasion is fast becoming in the '80's what skyjacking was in the '70's."

TIME magazine (3/17/80) points out, "American embassies, symbols of "imperialism" are special targets of leftist zealots."

It notes: "The State Department lists 254 significant terrorist attacks against U.S. diplomatic installations or individuals in the past decade."

Think of it!

Why are embassies and diplomats such popular terrorist targets? Where is the respect that was once maintained that allowed for a foreign embassy to operate, with "immunity" from local laws and regulations, within another country?

The seizure of the American embassy in Tehran, for example, constituted a violation of the principles spelled out in the Vienna Convention of 1961, ratified by 131 nations including Iran.

So our government felt justified in seeking to rescue the hostages that were held by militants in a violation of International Law.

Upon the failure of the mission to rescue the American hostages we were interrogated by a local television station as to our evaluation of events, particularly from a prophetic and biblical standpoint.

We believe we're living in the period the Bible calls "the last days" when our Lord is soon to come. Jesus said concerning the day of his coming that "iniquity would abound." Another word for iniquity is "lawlessness."

What we are seeing today is a disregard for law and order... lawlessness!

Enrico Jacchia, a noted Italian political scientist, comments on our misfortune in Tehran, saying: "We assumed that the Western principle of diplomatic immunity could be applied everywhere in the Third World. In other words, we wanted to export our way of life--and it didn't work.

We are living in a different day when diplomacy no longer has the respect it once had. Several years ago Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty sought and received the safety of the U.S. legation in Budapest for 15 years. But respect for such embassy protection today is lacking in many places.

In fact, terrorism has become a new word for "freedom" for those who would scorn our laws and traditions. As a former U.S. ambassador complains, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." (TIME, 3/17/80)

The Apostle Paul spoke of one coming in the endtime called "the lawless one." He would be the embodiment of lawlessness.

Concerning the Day of the Lord, Paul wrote under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin (lawless one) be revealed, the son of perdition."

Writes Paul, "For the mystery of iniquity (lawlessness) doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (or lawless one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (See II Thes. 2:3-8)

Pat Robertson, in one of his publications, says, "If his dating is 'even close,' and if the antichrist is still to come; then we must conclude that there is a man alive today, approximately 27 years old, who is now being groomed to be the Satanic Messiah."

So what we are seeing is an era of lawlessness that was inspired. Men like Castro of Cuba symbolize the lawless one seen coming.

However, Antiterrorism Expert Robert Kupperman says: "Tehran would never happen to the Soviets. If it did, they would wipe out a hunk of the city, even if they lost everybody in their embassy."

Why, then, is the greatest nation on the face of the earth subject to ridicule? Why did the mission to rescue the hostages

fail? What is the reason for our reverses?

We think of what God told the Children of Israel in the days of Moses that if they diligently hearkened unto the voice of the Lord and kept his commandments they would be blessed above all people of earth. If not, if they failed to heed and to keep God's laws then they would suffer plagues and pestilence and woes and judgments. (See Deut. 28)

Later Isaiah recounts what happened. He quotes the Lord saying: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."

Notice first his description of Israel, saying: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord." (Is. 1:4)

What happens when a nation forgets God?

Isaiah recounts their dilemma, saying: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." (Is. 1:7)

Finally, notice the remedy for Israel's plight.

We read: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well... If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Is. 1:16-20)

When our Lord was on earth there were multitudes that followed him. At the feeding with the loaves and fishes there were 5,000 men besides the women and children.

Now, with that many people in Galilee at the time our Saviour walked this earth, you would think that the increase in population from that time 'til now would find those areas thickly populated. Instead, as the Lord warned, the country is desolate. The land once flourishing is now largely without inhabitant.

What are we saying? If we have forgotten God we are due for adversity. If we have turned to our own way, living selfishly without sharing and without giving thanks, we are due for some shocking developments.

As God told Moses to tell Israel, "Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things." (Deut. 28:48a)

My friend, it pays to serve the Lord. To love Him, and to serve Him, and keep His commandments brings peace, protection and prosperity. Whereas, to fail to serve the Lord will bring want and misery and even destruction from our enemies.

Listen yet to what Malachi writes. He quotes the Lord as saying, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." And one of the ways to return to the Lord is to pay him what we rightfully owe Him.

We read, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me." But ye say, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" The answer is heard, "In tithes and offerings."

Have we ever thought that our adversity might be the result of robbing God? On the other hand, when we give to Him that which is rightfully His and more--our tithes and offerings, look what happens. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Mal. 2:11)

Wow! Did you hear that?

What else does the Lord promise a people who gives generously to the work of the Lord?

The Lord says: "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal 3:12)

What else?

We read, "All nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 3:12)

Do all nations call us "blessed"? There are those in Iran who call America "Satan" because of our deteriorating morals, immodest dress, and lewd films that we have sought to send abroad. To these nations we are a "blight" instead of a "blessing."

Many of our allies have looked on in bewilderment, in disbelief, and in dismay over the attempt to rescue the Americans left in Tehran.

Why did the rescue mission fail?

Why have we not been successful in getting the release of our hostages?

Could it be that God is trying to tell us something?

For instance, to the people at Pergamos, (in the book of Revelation) our Lord says, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them (thee), with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. 2:16)

As we witness flagrant violations of God's laws, the breakup of the family by divorce, the desecration of his holy day, along with lying and cheating and stealing...we hear the voice of God saying: "REPENT"--change your ways or I will come and fight against thee!

Have you ever felt God was fighting against you? Do our prayers seem to go unanswered? Could it be that we have never truly repented? Could it be that we have not fully trusted Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord? Could it be that we are still living our own life, doing our own thing, withholding our tithes and offerings, and thus experiencing defeat instead of victory?

The solution is to REPENT! We need to turn from our sin to trust the Saviour. And the secret is to surrender to His sovereign will as revealed in His Word, and then to believe for total victory that keeps us in a state of readiness for the day when our Lord will come.

Jesus is coming soon! And his admonition to all is--"Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!"

## ISLAM'S RESURGENCE & CHRIST'S RETURN

WASHINGTON POST comments: "It is difficult, and not at all desirable, to be coolly clinical about photographs of American citizens bound and blindfolded and spat upon by rabble, but the freezing truth is that Americans had better get used to such photographs.... Enduring the contempt of the contemptible is just one severity that life has in store for a declining nation."

What is the reason for this venom of hatred for America that has engulfed, in particular, the Moslem world?

A top Middle Eastern scholar terms what is happening as a "kind of cultural, social revulsion" against the West.

Another expert says: "In the Islamic world at this moment there is a feeling that God has decided that it's now time for Moslems to have a share of domination in the world. They can no longer submit to being dominated or ruled or even influenced by others."

The central belief of the world's 750 million Muslims is expressed in their recitation of faith repeated by the devout five times a day, that "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."

Muslims believe that God decrees everything that happens in the cosmos. A pious Muslim does not beseech God for favors, either material or spiritual, so much as to seek guidance and mercy. The word "Islam" means submission or surrender, so that the true Muslim is seen yielding to the divine will of an all-powerful Creator.

While Islam stresses the Koran as containing the deeds and sayings of Muhammad, they do not worship Muhammad as we worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, the Prophet is revered as God's final Messenger to mankind.

Moses, Abraham and Jesus, too, are revered. But it is considered blasphemy by Muslims to say that "God is Christ and son of Mary."

The basic spiritual duties of Islam might be summed up in five pillars of faith. They are:

- (1) accepting the shadada or confession of faith...
- (2) the daily prayers to God while facing Mecca...
- (3) charitable giving...
- (4) fasting during the daylight hours of Ramadan, a 29-30-day month in Islam's lunar calendar...
- (5) making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one's lifetime.

Some Muslims argue that there is a sixth pillar of the faith, namely, Jihad. The word is frequently translated "holy war" but can also mean the many ways of striving to propagate the faith of Islam.

In the Western world some of the practices of these people are considered harsh--relics of the Dark Ages. Habitual thieves are punished by having a hand cut off; adulterers are either scourged or stoned to death. However, for adulterers to be convicted, four witnesses must be found to testify that they saw the illicit act performed. And a thief might be spared punishment

if he can prove that he stole because he was poor and had no other means to feed his family.

The Koran forbids the drinking of wine, the penalty of which is 80 lashes, the same penalty imposed for those who bear false witness.

Paradise, however, is pictured as a garden where the righteous are promised rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear.

Polygamy is allowable so long as the husband treats his wives equally, and he can end a marriage simply by saying, "I divorce thee" three times in front of witnesses. Women must dress modestly, and anything that damages her decency or honor is forbidden.

Surely, witnessing the uprising of Islam makes us wonder what role it will play in the endtime, especially since the call for a "holy war" against the enemies of Islam. Witnessing Islam's hatred for the Jew, one also wonders what part it will play in Israel's time of trouble when all nations will turn against her.

Professor Thomas Ricks of Georgetown University sees for the decade of the 1980's "an ever expanding and violent conflict in the Middle East, involving outside intervention--not only the United States but Europe, Japan, Russia and China."

Incidentally, an estimated 50 million Moslems live in Russia--which is the fifth largest Moslem population. The rise of Islam will certainly have its impact upon the world.

As Louis Cantori, an Islamic scholar at the University of Maryland, observes: "The heat of violence in Islam is transitory, but the revival of Moslem activism is here to stay."

The Koran has this to say about the day of Judgment, that "When the sun is folded up; when the stars fall, losing their lustre; when the mountains vanish; when the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended, when the wild beasts are herded together; when the oceans boil over with a swell; ...when the World on High is unveiled; when the Blazing Fire is kindled to fierce heat; and when the Garden is brought near, (then) shall each soul know what it has put forward."

Muhammad left no generally recognized instructions on how the leadership of Islam should be continued after his death. Some believe that Muhammad's spiritual authority was passed on to his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. There are those who believe that Ali's twelfth successor, who disappeared mysteriously in 878, is somewhere still alive and will return as a kind of Messiah to establish God's kingdom upon earth.

While Moslems are looking for their own messiah, so Christians are looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We might ask, Will our Lord return in this century? this decade? this year?

Again we ask, If Jesus comes, will we be ready?

We would hope the answer is "Yes" to these questions. However, on the basis of God's Word, we are afraid many who are expecting to be ready will be left behind when Jesus comes, to face the Antichrist and go through the awful tribulation.

Why do we believe this?

First, because of what Jesus said when He declared, "The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." Although our Lord addressed these words to His disciples, there is evidence to lead us to believe that many will miss the day of rapture.

Actually, (as we recount in the Prophecy Edition of the Bible) there are two aspects to our Lord's second coming as spelled out in such scriptures as 2 Tim. 4:1. There we're reminded that our Lord will judge the quick and the dead at His "appearing" and His "kingdom."

The rapture is the day when our Lord will "appear" for His own. Then, following the tribulation, He comes to set up His "kingdom."

Those who heed the message of God's Word will be ready for His "appearing" by coming to know Christ as Saviour and Lord and then living in expectancy for His imminent return by living a holy life.

Our hearts are burdened for those who disregard the clear teaching of God's Word when it comes to the admonitions and warnings related to our Lord's coming.

In Hebrews 9:28 we're told that our Lord is coming for those who love His appearing. We read: "...unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

There are many who say, "We are looking for His coming," and yet by their lives and by their actions, they indicate that they are not ready for His coming.

We're reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Said Jesus, "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Ye that sin.)

It's apparent that the Lord doesn't really know us unless we truly repent of sin. We may claim to know Him. But does He know us?

In fact, it is not enough, dear friend, to belong to a church, or to have been baptized, or to be a minister of the gospel. If our life does not match our lip (what we say), we may be in danger of being left behind when Jesus comes.

Let's face it. We have an easy-believism today that finds many who think they are ready for our Lord's return, and who lie and cheat and steal. The Scripture reminds us, for example, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

While we readily admit that salvation is a gift, we also would be reminded that God has certain requirements in order for us to see Him. One of those requirements is personal holiness, which is the opposite of uncleanness. As we read in I Thess. 4, which is the rapture chapter: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (v. 7)

In a day of gross immorality and lustful relationships, we need to be reminded that God expects of us that we be found living pure and holy lives. Of ourselves we cannot fulfil this demand, but through the help of the Holy Spirit we can live acceptably before God.

When our Lord returns, we read how "in flaming fire" He will

take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

While we stress the necessity of believing the gospel, here we are reminded of the necessity of obeying the gospel.

To obey the gospel simply means to live it. It means we are to walk in the light of God's Word. For "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. (I John 1:7)

This is the way to be "ever-ready" for Christ's coming; by walking in obedience to His will. An "ever-ready" battery is one that lights up a flashlight as the switch is turned on, so an "ever-ready" Christian is one who is ready whenever the trumpet sounds.

During the tribulation, we believe many will die for their faith. Already around the world we see where there is a rising tide of opposition to America and to Christianity.

In recent times we've seen the takeover of our embassies and the burning of the American flag. But there has also been an item in the news that has gained few headlines. It concerned the first international Islamic World Congress held in Karachi, Pakistan, in April of 1976. At that congress, there were delegates from 44 Muslim countries that adopted a resolution calling on their governments to close down Christian mission stations and institutions in the Islamic world, and to insure the peaceful withdrawal of Christian missionaries.

So the tribulation will find a period described as "war on the saints." All who refuse to bow down and reverence the anti-christ world ruler will face death.

In Revelation 7, we read: "After this I behold, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues..." Upon seeing this vast multitude, one of the elders asks the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" The answer is heard, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (See Rev. 7:9-14)

Some see this great multitude resulting from the preaching of the 144,000 Israelites during the tribulation which finds every Hebrew Christian like an apostle Paul, and this great multitude, their converts, we're told. There are Bible scholars who can't accept that explanation, for during the tribulation, Jews will be persecuted, hunted down, and I'm afraid will not be found preaching on street corners of our towns and cities. In reality, it is a time of Jacob's trouble, so that they will be targets of the devil's wrath.

The Jewish remnant that is spared death will be protected in a hiding place believed to be Petra, city carved out of rock. It is there the 144,000 are seen, having fled into the wilderness. And, it is believed that God's army of saints returning back to earth following the marriage supper in heaven is what attracts the armies of earth who gather together to make war with this army seen coming from heaven. This, in reality, is the battle of Armageddon.

Notice, concerning the great multitude seen coming through the

great tribulation, it is said of them that they "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (v. 14)

Now, if these were converts to Jewish evangelists as some teach, would it not be said they were given white robes? But it is stated that they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

No one can be saved apart from the blood of Jesus, "For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (no forgiveness)." (Heb. 9:22)

However, concerning this vast multitude of tribulation saints, it is not said they were given white robes, typifying salvation. Rather, it is said they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Could it be that there are many today of whom it might be said that their lives are not pure and clean? Their robes are filthy. They have defiled their garments and they are in need of cleansing.

Incidentally, when our Lord returns, He will not divide mankind into "saved" and "unsaved." Rather, we read how He divides us into four groups.

Revelation 22:11-12 says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Did you hear it?

In what group will we be when Jesus comes? Will we be among the unjust--the unsaved? Or will we be among the filthy--those whose lives are defiled by filthy habits, filthy lusts and filthy stories? God tells believers to put away filthiness.

Will we be among the righteous and the holy?

Beloved, we need to heed God's Word lest our Lord come and find us unprepared for that all-glorious event. Now is the time to come clean, repenting of sin, and allowing the Holy Spirit to control our lives.

We would call attention to the warning Jesus gave concerning His coming, saying: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

Notice, some will be occupied with legitimate activity such as the normal "cares of this life," and Christ will come. How careful we must be lest we are robbed of the blessed hope of Christ's coming. For it should be a joyous hope that finds us giving all of our time and energy to preparing for His return.

Attending a Congress on Prophecy several years ago at Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, one of the speakers said that the job of the church today is not only to get people saved, but to awaken Christians and to get them out of bed.

We agree. Of the ten virgins, five were found dozing off to sleep when the Bridegroom came and they missed Him. So we need to be awakened to the lateness of the hour. And we need to make sure we are ready--that the "cares of this life" don't crowd our schedule and keep us so occupied that we fail to heed this warning message.

We realize there are many views concerning the coming of our Lord and who will go through the tribulation. Of this, I'm

sure we all agree--Our Lord has urged us to be ready for that day and hour, unknown to us when He will come!

We would ask, Would you be ready were Jesus to come yet today? Have you truly repented of sin to trust the Saviour? Is Jesus Christ the Lord and Master of your life? Are you living for Him a life of surrender and victory?

The Bible says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." May God grant that all who hear this broadcast will be ready for our Lord's return. Our prayer is that no one will be left behind to go through the awful tribulation--a hell--on-earth existence.

Indeed, be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.