

Islam, Christianity and Prophecy, Pt. 2 - From Mecca to Rome

Date: 2016-10-22 Scripture: John 14:6, 1 John 4:1-3, Genesis 25:18

Note: *This is a verbatim transcript of the live broadcast. It is presented as spoken.*

We are continuing a series that will probably just have about three parts to it, dealing with the subject of Islam and Christianity in prophecy. Last week we talked about sibling rivalry and today we're going to be talking about from Mecca to Rome and we think this is a very important study for where we are in the world today and I do solicit your prayers as I share and I just want to be faithful to his word. I don't claim to understand everything that's going on, but I do feel impressed that we are on the - on the cusp of a lot of Bible prophecy being fulfilled and I think God wants us to understand and, also, to understand that it does matter what you believe. Amen. I think most of us know that the Middle East has become something of a tinderbox in recent years.

Some are dating the latest implosion of stability to early in 2011 when they had what they called the 'Arab Spring'. A lot of the countries across North Africa and through the Middle East that were dictator regimes, they went through a great deal of upheaval and it looked like democracy was going to settle in and a number of these countries began to protest and ask for more rights and social media, being available, made a lot of the young people say, you know, 'why don't we have freedoms of some of these other countries?' and it looked like it would be a fresh awakening like, kind of, the American Revolution - looking for freedom and democracy - but what started out as an Arab Spring quickly turned to winter and it descended into violence and instability. And countries like Tunisia and Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Sudan, Oman, and others all, almost simultaneously, began to unravel. I think we know, at least at the time of this recording, that there's been an ongoing civil war in Syria and as many as 300,000 people have died in those struggles. People are wondering at what point is this tension in the Middle East going to reach critical mass and what will that mean?

At the same time, there's this kind of instability in that part of the world. We also see that there's a great deal of growing terrorism that is, more times than not, associated with the religion of Islam. Now, I want to quickly repeat that I do not believe that we need to be afraid of our Muslim neighbors. I was playing racquetball, with a Muslim friend I've known for years, this week. But we also need to admit and be honest and aware that there is at least a variety of Muslims that have been radicalized by their belief and some of them are very fundamental in their beliefs and their interpretation of the Quran and we'll talk more about that a little later. You remember last week we explained these two great religions of the world - largest religions in the world: Christianity - number 1 - about 2.2 billion - Islam - number 2 - about 1.7 billion - there's varying numbers that have been reported, but that's - I'm picking a medium number. It's anywhere between 1.5 and 1.8 billion Muslims in the world.

While it is true most Arabs, who are the people that descended from Ishmael, are Muslims, not all Arabs are Muslims. There are some Arabs that have been Christians for 2,000 years because Christianity, when it spread through Egypt - and right now many of the Christians in Egypt are being persecuted by the Muslims there. And there are Arab Jews, believe it or not, and I've met them before. And so, I just - and then also keep in mind that of the 1.7 billion Muslims in the world, most are not Arab. Most of them are living in Pakistan and North Africa and mostly Indonesia. But in the same way, most Christians in the world are not Jews - the early church was all Jewish. They all sprang from Isaac and Jacob, and the Arabs have principally - I'm sorry, the Muslims have principally sprung from the Arabs, but it has spread way beyond their coast. They were very aggressive in their mission outreach. Now I just thought it was interesting to share with you - it's been now substantiated by science that there is a common parentage between the Jews and the Arabs. As the fighting continues in the Middle East there is a new study that reveals more than 70% of Jewish men and more than 50% of Arab men whose DNA was studied, inherited their Y chromosome from the same paternal ancestors dating back about 3,000 years ago. Do you know that is exactly what the Bible says? Amen. And that's been confirmed - that the Jews and the Arabs, they do go back to the same common ancestor.

You know, not all of them because there's - with conquests there's a little intermarriage that happened with the local peoples, but they can pretty well prove that. And so it is a large sibling rivalry that's carried all the way from the days of Abraham down to our present day. And I want to remind you again - I know some were not here - some may be visiting today - the way you see these two great religions can be traced back to the battle that happened in the family between Abraham and there was Ishmael and there was Isaac. Ishmael, Galatians tells us, came into the world through natural means, whereas Isaac was born of faith - it was a supernatural event. Ishmael was circumcised at the age of 13, when you technically became an adult and age of responsibility. Isaac was circumcised - 8 days old - as a baby - an age of dependence. Ishmael - mount sinai in Arabia - don't miss that - the new testament says 'mount sinai in Arabia' and was born after the flesh - Isaac, born after the spirit. He is called 'the only son'. When [God] told him to offer Isaac he said, 'take your son, your only son' - because he was the only son he was supposed to have. He was the son of promise. Isaac - Ishmael represents the one who is - or Ishmael persecutes Isaac, the son who is born after the Spirit. Isaac represents Jerusalem - the new Jerusalem is the place of the faithful. Isaac has a near-death experience, Hagar prays, an angel speaks to her, and he is delivered - Ishmael has a near-death experience - right, Ishmael has a near-death experience, Hagar prays - Isaac has a near-death experience on the mountain and God - the angel stops Abraham from offering him. Both the names Ishmael and Isaac are given by God.

It should also be mentioned that - it tells us the angel of the Lord that appeared to Moses, most Christians believe that was a christophany - Jesus appeared to Moses. Do you know it says the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar? So God was involved in - in both of these names being given. It's interesting, now, the distinction - Isaac ends up going east for his wife - actually northeast - Ishmael goes south - or southwest - for his wife. They go in opposite directions. One wife chosen by the father, the wife of Ishmael chosen by the mother - Isaac chosen by the father. And they almost seem to be - it's the juxtaposition of these two individuals and that still translates into what's happening in the world today - what you see back then. I'll get to that a little later. There was a promise that was given both to Isaac and to Ishmael, that their descendants would be innumerable, and the angel of the Lord said to her, 'return to your mistress and submit to her.' God said to Hagar, 'I will multiply your descendants exceedingly so they will not be counted for multitude.' now, we had this picture up on the screen last week and I never actually did address it. This is a couple of Egyptian pieces of art of characters that lived - and I always say her name wrong - queen nefertiri - or Nefertiti - yeah, that's who she is - it's actually - it's an exquisite piece of Egyptian art because it's one where the paint was preserved and you really get an idea of what the people looked like. And there's a statue of one of the ramses, I believe. It might have been Thutmose - it tells you how much I know about Egyptology - but anyway, these are some of the Egyptians that could read hieroglyphics.

They were not Arabs. Now, the reason I emphasize that is because you go to Egypt today and you go - and I've been in the pyramids and I've been to the sphinx and I've seen this and they say, 'we built this' and it's great patriotism but, in reality, they did not. They could not read the hieroglyphics. They have done dna studies on thousands of mummies - well, I don't know if they did it on thousands - they found tens of thousands of mummies - and they were actually a different people. The Arabs moved in. The Arabs have spread and become innumerable. The babylonians that once ruled the world, they were not Arabs. The people who live in Iraq now are Arabs. The persians, who ruled the world - in iran, there is persian blood, but when you do the dna test, they're more arab than anything. Same thing with the Syrians and the AsSyrians. These were other empires that were basically eclipsed and displaced by the Arabs that spread through there. And so the promise that God made to Hagar - that they would multiply exceedingly - quite literally did come true - and it is still happening. It's interesting that God said that Ishmael would have twelve sons and we know he had at least one daughter because esau married her. And then Isaac's son Jacob had twelve sons and at least one daughter, dinah. And so, again, you see it's just - it's almost like two rivers flow from Abraham that end up in conflict at the end. It shouldn't surprise us - cain and Abel - you've got a conflict at the beginning, but - two brothers, both claiming to worship the same God - you got that? Cain and Abel both claimed to worship the same God - one was right and one was wrong - one killed the other. History's going to repeat itself at the end of time.

They'll be all claiming to worship the same God. And, as of 2010, the european union was home to 13 million Muslim immigrants. From that time to the present it has grown almost exponentially, which is

interesting because all through the dark ages, Islam tried to conquer Europe through wars. They'd make progress and then they'd be driven back. Now, it seems, through immigration, they're achieving what they could not do through war. I'm not trying to be derogatory, I'm just saying it's a fact, if you travel there. The mosques in France, many of them were once churches. And, as you go through England, the church of England, which used to be - they'd be filled every Sunday - are virtually empty now and many of them have been turned into mosques. And so there is a great change happening in the religious landscape of Europe, which plays into why Pope Francis and his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, have been so interested in developing relationships with Christians in the West - because they are losing their foothold in the homeland of Europe. And all of this is factoring into what's happening in the world. Arabs only constitute about 20 percent of Muslims worldwide, as I mentioned that, over 200 million in Pakistan and India - 350 million combined between those countries. So who are the Arabs?

If you go back to the Bible here - if you look, for instance, in Genesis 25, Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, the son of promise, but he gave gifts to the other sons of the concubines - meaning Hagar and Keturah - that he had while he was still living. So he separated his substance while he was alive, like that story of the prodigal son, and he sent them away from Isaac, so there'd be no confusion about what his plan was, to the country of the East. They were sent to an area that is Southeast of Israel, better known as Arabia. You can read in Genesis 25:18, speaking of the people of Ishmael, "(they dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is East of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.)" I think most of you, in your minds, have a little bit of geography. Can you see the Middle East? You know where Egypt is there by the Nile, on the shores in the Mediterranean. You go East of Egypt, you end up in Saudi Arabia. If you go through Saudi Arabia - almost no one went to Assyria that way - you'd end up in Assyria. This is the territory where the Arabs, often called the Bedouins, found their home. Where did Moses go when he was looking for refuge? He fled to that same territory. You can read in Exodus 2, verse 15, "when Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses.

But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well." The people of Midian were - they're the descendants of Keturah. They intermarried, because they were all sent to the same place, with the children of Ishmael. And so, when we're talking about Arabs today, you're talking about the people who were the descendants of Abraham's third wife - you've got Sarah, Hagar, Keturah - Midian was one of those sons. They are called the Midianites and sometimes they're also called the Ishmaelites in the same phrase. You remember last week? Joseph was sold to the Midianites and it also calls them the Ishmaelites - because they intermarried - and Esau married Ishmael's daughter. So there was a lot of, kind of, family relationships happening there. Those people grew into a great people - all related to Abraham - better known as the people of the East, at that time. Sometimes they called them the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East. Matter of fact, take your Bible - turn to the book of Judges chapter 7. You know the story of Gideon? A lot of the time Israel got along with those people, but when they became a nation and they came out of Egypt, they often had conflict and there was war with the people of Midian because they were worried about resources so they'd fight over territory. And there were times - brief times - of peace between the Jews and the descendants of Ishmael, but there were also times of war. One time of war was during the time of Gideon.

Remember, it says people of God were unfaithful? And so they were oppressed by the Midianites for seven years. But you can read here in verse 12 of Judges 7, "now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East," - that's what we would calmly say were the Arabs. Also, notice something it says here it doesn't say about other battles - "were...as numerous as locusts;" - now, when you get to Revelation 9 we're going to hopefully have time to look at today, it talks about this trumpet where there's locusts. "as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number," - so you see, the Midianites, Amalekites, people of the East - have I made my case who the Arab people are? I tried to, you know, do the detective work here and show you that. Here you can look in 2 Chronicles 9:14, "besides what the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia" brought gifts to Solomon - silver and gold - they were very rich. Queen of Sheba came down through the Arabian Peninsula - brought treasures and there was - it was a different climate then and they had a lot of natural resources. But you could also see there was war - not only in the time of Gideon, look at Nehemiah. Nehemiah 4:7 - this is what happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry," - because to

the south of Jerusalem, the Arabs had sort of annexed some of that territory and now, if Jerusalem was reestablished, they were going to lose it. And so there was a confederacy of the Arabs that were fighting against Israel.

Now what was happening with the Arabs religiously? What I'm going to say, I don't want it to seem unkind, but a lot of the early Arabs were deep into moon worship. It's the same thing that happened to the Jews - the Jews often slipped from the worship of Jehovah into pagan forms of worship. And so I'm not saying anything about the Arabs I'm not also saying about the Jews and even the Christians that slipped into sun worship when they started to merge with the Romans. We all know that, right? They sort of co-mingled some of the things from sun worship; indeed, that's where Sunday comes from. Well, the Arabs were into moon worship - I was reading something from history here - and this is a book short history of the Arabs by Philip Hitti - he said, "throughout the entire peninsula, the antiquated paganism of the Arabians, which, for the Bedouins, centered chiefly on the worship of a moon god, as is likely to be the case with a pastoral people in hot climates who find the coolness of the night their friend and the sun their enemy." so it was natural for them to worship the moon because the sun was - they didn't worship the sun for crops, it was an enemy. But they'd finally reached a point in their religion where it failed any longer to meet the spiritual demands of the people.

This was preparing the way for a new religion. They had become dissatisfied with moon worship. Now, while they're worshipping the moon, they still practiced circumcision because they've come from Abraham, they don't eat pork but they have started eating camel. Now, you know, the unclean - the laws say you're not supposed to eat camel. You go to Arabia today, they'll make a big deal and say, 'oh, we don't eat pork. Pigs are unclean.' but then they'll sacrifice a camel. Yeah, so you know, Jesus said, 'they strain a gnat and they swallow a camel.' now he was talking about the Pharisees, who were very fastidious to make sure they didn't get any bugs in the water because bugs are unclean, but then they'd eat a camel steak, which was just as forbidden as eating pork, in the Bible. So they drifted into moon worship and just as, you know, God's people north of them had drifted in their worship too. The pre-Islam pagan Arabs worshiped the moon god they called 'Allah'. Now Allah's a generic term for God so that shouldn't shake you.

By praying towards Mecca - Mecca was a holy site even before Mohammed - several times a day, making a pilgrimage to Mecca, running around the temple of the moon god called the Kaba, kissing the black stone that supposedly fell from heaven - later, Muslims said it was given to Adam and later Abraham built a temple - killing an animal in sacrifice to the moon god, throwing stones at the devil, fasting for the month, which begins and ends with the crescent moon - Ramadan is all built around the moon - giving alms to the poor, etc. And if you've read the news recently, you know that modern-day Muslims practice many of these very same rituals still today, but they can be traced all the way back to the time when it was involved in lunar worship. So this was the state of things of what had happened to Ishmael's descendants. Some of them converted to Christianity during the time of Christ. They had churches in Egypt. Some of them converted to Judaism in Alexandria - there were Arabs that accepted the Scriptures of the Jews.

There was a great deal of Christian and Jewish influence among the Arabs because they lived in - they were neighbors - in proximity. But then, after 538, when the Pope began to be a ruler - a political force - as well as a religion, and it seemed like idolatry had become institutionalized and the Muslims had no respect for that - that - they weren't Muslims yet, sorry - the Arabs had no respect for that because many of them did not believe in idolatry. They became very dissatisfied. It was in this environment that a man was born, that we know today as Mohammed. 570 - it's interesting that from Rome you've got one religion arising 538 - and another arising - well, he was born 570 - the religion didn't really rise until about 50 years after that. And I don't want to make too much of this but, you realize, even though Ishmael was born first, Isaac outlived him. He lived to 180 - Ishmael 137 - and because Ishmael was 13 years older - about 12 years older - he - you've got this span of like 50 years. This is about the distance of time between the establishment of 538 and the establishment of Islam. You getting me? There's actually a gap between the brothers - you can see - you can match up with the gap between the religions later - that had become the two great religions of the world.

He was born in 570 - died June 8, 632 in Medina - he was born in Mecca. He's accepted by Muslims as the last of the prophets of God. Now Mohammed was orphaned at an early age and he was raised under the care of his paternal uncle. Periodically he would seclude himself in a mountain cave for several nights of

prayer. At age 25, Mohammed wed his wealthy employer, who was 15 years older than him - she was 40 - a merchant, kadalia. This marriage was, for the most part, happy. And it was a monogamous marriage and she helped him in many ways because she had some wealth. And 25 years later, when she died, he ended up taking several wives, one of them as young as 9 years old. And it was during this time that he kind of went from a prophet to a little bit of a politician. Most of his early visions were very peaceful; later visions, when he was fighting for power, there was a little more violence involved. Something - and this is from the book written by Ramon Bennet - I'm reading a lot in preparing for this - Islam Revealed page 48, "as a young child, Mohammed was nursed by a Bedouin woman by the name of Halima and, in his third and fourth years, the child had numerous fits, which made Halima think he was demon-possessed.

Later, at age 40, he reported being visited by Gabriel in a cave where he started to receive his first revelations from God. Three years later Mohammed started preaching these revelations publicly proclaiming that God is one and that complete surrender" - by the way, that's what the word 'Islam' means - connected with the word salom or shalom - salam is how you say it in Arabic - "that he is the only way acceptable to God and that he was the prophet of God, similar to other Bible prophets. Early Muslim tradition records that when Mohammed was about to receive a revelation from Allah, he'd often fall down on the ground, his body would begin to jerk, his eyes would roll backward, he would perspire profusely, and they'd cover him with a blanket during such episodes." he'd come out of these visions and he'd say he had a message. And this is from the book The Islamic Invasion page 71, "and during the time that he was in this trance-like state he received these divine revelations." that's from the book The Great Deception. "Mohammed gained a few followers early and he met with hostility from the other Meccan tribes. To escape persecution he left Mecca. Gradually he built an army and he gained converts in Medina. He returned to Mecca with 10,000 soldiers and was met with little resistance" - very little bloodshed - he basically took the city. It later became the center for the religion. And that the Bedouins were spread all over Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, they really didn't have a national religion.

Mohammed became the natural one to sort of coalesce them all. Some of them leaned towards the Jews and so he said, you know, 'I agree with the Old Testament.' some of them leaned towards the religion of the Christians, he said, 'I agree with the teachings of Jesus.' but the problem was, he said, 'you cannot trust their Scriptures.' the original Scriptures of the Christians and the Jews were true, but they have been tampered with and you can't believe them anymore.' and so, Islam teaches, not just what Mohammed said, they still teach today, 'yes, we agree with the Bible. We agree with the teachings of Jesus, but the Bibles you have today cannot be trusted. There is no copy left of the Bible and the New Testament that really contains the original. It's all been corrupted. So the only Scriptures that can be trusted today are the Quran.' so they kind of say, 'oh yes, we agree' but they say, 'we don't agree with your Scriptures. If there's any conflict between your Scriptures and what we say.' and so, it sort of - he was trying to find a religion that would bring them all together, but not have them go to the Scriptures for their truth. And so you'll find a lot of reference to the other religions in the Quran. Most - oh, by the way, one more thing on Mohammed, you know that there are more men in the world today named Mohammed than any other name? It is the most popular name in the world. So who wrote the Quran? Most Muslims freely agree that Mohammed was probably illiterate.

There was no indication in history that he wrote. About 19 years after he died - he died suddenly after a trip to Mecca. He came back to Medina and got sick. Some said that he had a Jewish servant who poisoned him - there's been all kinds of speculation but history really doesn't say what happened. And so about 19 years after he died, the religion continued to grow. There was some fight about who was to be his successor and that's where you get the difference between the Sunni and the Shia. Now, Sunni Muslims represent about 80% or 85% of the Muslims in the world. The Shia contest the - the lineage and the power and the authority. And there are some differences in their beliefs, but they all claim to believe the Quran and have most beliefs in common. They say the Quran is the word of God around which their religion is based.

The Quran is 20% smaller than the New Testament - as far as the number of words. There are a number of parallel passages between the Old Testament and the Quran. There are some places where the Quran actually quotes some of the teachings of Jesus. You'll find references to Abraham 70 times in the Quran. Moses' name occurs 40 - in 34 chapters. You've got references to David, Solomon, Saul, Elijah, Job - Jonah, though it's a small book in the Old Testament, figures prominently in the Quran and the fall of Adam is

cited five times. Now, there's a big difference: in the Quran they say the fall happened in a place called paradise that was not on earth. And Adam and Eve were later consigned to earth after the fall. So their creation account is different. You'll find some of the teachings - like an eye for an eye - it talks about where Jesus said, 'a house built upon the sand' - so it's easy to see that Mohammed was at least acquainted with some of the teachings of the old and new testaments, from listening, because a lot of it is incorporated there.

You've probably all heard about the book of Mormon and, of course, many people believe the book of Mormon is inspired. And there are a lot of just lovely Mormon people out there. I, frankly, do not believe the book of Mormon is inspired and, if you study into the history of the book of Mormon, there was a pastor in a place - I think it's called Bellflower, New York - it might be Mayflower, New York - I think it's Bellflower - his name was Spalding - and he was a pastor - well acquainted with the Bible - new and old testaments - and they had a bunch of Indian mounds and ruins around this town and he began to write a story called Manuscript Found, about Jesus coming to the new world. It was very fanciful - he'd write a chapter every week and Sunday night, after church, the church would get together and he'd read them this story. And it was a story about what Jesus would have said to the Indians and that the people of North America were from the ten lost tribes and - and everyone got together and they'd listen to this and he got this whole story - had a lot of biblical language in it because, after all, he was a pastor. Well, a young man named Joseph Smith heard the story and he said, 'I've got to get that manuscript.' and, after Pastor Spalding died, Joseph Smith talked his widow out of the manuscript. He said, 'you know, I just want to make a copy of it and we'll get it back to you.' it never came back to her. Well, the next thing they knew there was this people called the Mormons who said they had this book from golden plates that had been delivered. Well, it was a novel that had been stolen, full of biblical language because it was written by a pastor, and that's what I believe is the origin of the book of Mormon.

That's why it makes all these Bible references, it was written by a pastor, he's talking - telling what meant to be a novel. All the people in this town witnessed Pastor Spalding's book. Well, they had no copy to prove it. Well, I think that the writings of the Quran are - many of them were sayings that Mohammed shared, where he's quoting different principles of truth - it doesn't go through stories like we do, they're just little sound bites. Some are shorter, some are longer and I don't know if you've read the Quran - I haven't read it all, but I've read a lot of it. There's a lot of conflict between the Quran and the Bible. You cannot reconcile the religion of the Quran with scripture. And I say this very gently because I know there's a lot of my friends in ministry and other Christians that are saying there's really no difference between Christians and Muslims - that we all come from Abraham and we all worship the same God. I respectfully disagree. Amen. I think that, you know, you don't - you can believe there are good people in many different churches, but you don't compromise your convictions about 'is it true?'. That's right. And so, I - let me just give you a little list here of what some of the differences are: you've got - the Quran and the Bible portray different gods. The Bible says salvation comes only through Jesus Christ - John 14:6 - while the Quran says that 'only through Islam and obedience to Allah and to his prophet Mohammed can one be avoiding the blazing fire' - that's from the Quran 3:85. The Quran denies Jesus' death and resurrection. That's pretty fundamental to Christian faith. Yes. They say that our Bible's been corrupted - it never happened - it was changed.

The Jews didn't really crucify him. And you find that in the Quran 4:155 through 159. They say Allah just made it appear to the Jews as if Jesus was crucified. The Quran denies the triune God - father, son, and Holy Spirit. And, you know, you can understand their confusion on that. I've talked to some of my Muslim friends about this; they say, 'you guys believe in many Gods.' I say, 'no, we believe in one God. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one.' there's one God. No question about that. But the word 'one', biblically means 'united' - it's not numerical quantity. Our God - Father, Son, and Spirit - is united - he's one. Not like all these - this pantheon of gods the Greeks had always fighting with each other. The Bible says we are saved by grace - that we can be saved through faith alone, not by works lest any man should boast - of course, in Ephesians 2:8 and 9 - the Quran states - and that's in 23:102 that in the judgment God will, kind of balance - he'll put your good deeds on one side of the balance, your bad deeds on the other and you need to have more good deeds than bad deeds and you'll make it. My dad sort of believed that - the Quran version - God was going to add everything up like that. It's not based on how many good works we do that we're saved, amen? Amen. This is, you know, it's in contradiction to the Bible. It says in the

Bible, 'God is love'. Quran nowhere says God is love.

The Bible says to make disciples of all nations and do it with gentleness and respect. But, for Muslims, there's a very different approach proscribed in the Quran: it says, "fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them. Seize them, beleaguer them, lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war, but if they repent and establish regular prayers and practice and regular charity, then open the way for them and I will instill terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. Smite ye above the neck. Smite their fingertips off of them." it's interesting that a few years ago we would have thought, when you read in the Bible about those who are beheaded for their faith in Jesus, that was just a metaphor. We thought that with the french revolution and the guillotine, beheading was pretty much gone as a means of execution, and we've all seen that's been revived in pretty grisly ways in some of these terrorist activities. It makes you wonder again. And I can go on - there's just - there's so many differences that there's just really not time to cite them between the two religions. And so, the Bible and the Quran are very different books and the religions are very different. Sometimes you'll see a Quran and people or Muslims will be praying and they've got beads.

It's similar to rosary beads except the purpose of it they're not worshiping the beads, some strings of beads will have a hundred beads because you're supposed to recite the hundred names of Allah - their names - or they call them 'attributes of Allah' and if you go through that, it says all your sins will be forgiven. That's kind of like, you know, in the catholic church it says, 'say this many 'our fathers' and this many 'hail marys' and then you're forgiven.' it's almost like you're praying in vain repetition to gain forgiveness, and I thought that was an interesting connection. Is Allah and jehovah - are they the same God? No. Now, you've got to be careful. This is a loaded question. Let me - let me see if I can answer this carefully. You cannot deny that the Arabs and the Jews spring from the same ancestor of Abraham, that there are trappings and traits that are similar. I mentioned, you know, they practice circumcision, they say there's one God - you can find similar roots - but you cannot reconcile the picture of God that is worshiped by the Muslims with the picture of God that is worshiped by Bible Christians. Amen. For example, 1 John 2:22, "who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the christ?" - well they deny that Jesus is the christ - "he is antichrist who denies the father and the son. Whoever denies the son does not have the father either; he who acknowledges the son has the father also."

I'll also read 1 John 4 - there's many Scriptures I could read - 1 John 4, verse 1, "beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every Spirit that confesses that Jesus christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." and it says many false prophets are in the world. Well, I just personally believe that Mohammed is not a true prophet, based on the Bible, which only leaves one alternative. And you might say, 'but there's many things that he said that are good and true.' that's true of every religion. I find wonderful things in hinduism - I love it when I go to india because I can find good vegetarian food. There's wonderful things in every religion. There's wonderful things in buddhism - there are truths in buddhism about peace.

There are truths in all kinds of different religions. That doesn't mean that they are the truth. Matter of fact, if you're the devil, the way that you deceive people is by mingling elements of truth that resonate with people and then you bring in the deception that's deadly. And this is what I believe is the case. Does that mean there'll be no buddhists in heaven? Or Muslims in heaven? Or people - no, I think God is reaching out to hearts all over the world. Amen. And there are good people in many religions and we've got some nasty people in our religion. (laughter) so we're not talking about people, right? Right. We're talking about what is the truth. Revelation is dealing with the battle in the last days about what is the truth. Amen? Are we together on that? Yes. Alright, before I get into the prophecy part of this, and I've got a lot to say, I want to just review for you so you can better understand what some of the teachings of Islam are. I've talked about the Quran a little bit, but I want to just give you an overview. And this is not an exhaustive list - I took a list that was much longer and shortened it. The word 'Islam' means 'surrender' or 'submission' - again, it comes from the word 'salom' - salam, which is similar to 'peace'.

I've been in some countries where the way you say hello is that. And by the way, the way you say 'God' - a Christian in indonesia, in church, calls God 'Allah'. So that's why I said it's a trick question: the word 'Allah' just means God. So if you're in a Christian church in indonesia, you will be praising and singing to

Allah. Now that might make you squirm a little bit, but that is their word for God. There's nothing wrong with that. The word 'Muslim' - you might wonder what's the difference between Islam and Muslim? Muslim, technically, means anyone or anything that surrenders itself to God, which means, by definition, even a tree or an animal can be a Muslim in that it surrenders to the will of God. That's from their writings, not from mine. Studies show - I already mentioned that - about 1.7 billion people in the world identify with Islam. There are five pillars of practice in Islam and here they are: a) declaration of faith in one God and that Mohammed is the prophet of God. 2) formal prayer five times a day. C) there's a port tax that is due - 2.5 percent - they're getting discounted on our tithe, actually - (laughter) 2.5 percent of one's excess wealth is given to the needy once a year. Fasting during the daylight hours in the month of Ramadan - they fast all day and then they eat quite a bit after dark, which isn't that healthy, I think. Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once, if you're physically and financially able to. And I don't know if you've ever heard about if you go to Mecca there's a grand mosque there - they just did a bunch of renovation work, I don't know if you've heard, but they made two layers. So many people were there, they're getting killed in the crush because there's so many Muslims.

It used to be a smaller group would come, they'd walk seven times around this - this simple cube - its about 45-feet by 45-feet by 50-feet - in the eastern corner of this cube - this cube has four sides going to the four corners of the globe. The eastern corner has a big silver plaque and in the plaque is the black stone and every Muslim wants to kiss that stone after you walk around it seven times counter clockwise. They kiss the stone and that will help absolve you of your sins. Sounds a little bit like, you know, idolatry, and you can kind of - salvation by works, in any event. But they had an accident a few years ago while they were building two layers - they couldn't get all the people around - they've had several crushes where people have been crushed trying to get to kiss the stone - because millions of people have gone thousands of miles and thought, 'am I going to get close enough?' they're all fighting their way in. And I don't know if I'd want to kiss the stone after thousands of other people have kissed it. But, you know, in the catholic church they laugh at us because - not that I'm a catholic - they laugh at Christians, I should say, because they go to st. Peter's on pilgrimage and they kiss - they've literally kissed the foot off st. Peter's statue - it's been replaced several times. And if you go there, it's all worn smooth. It looks like he's got a pointy foot because it's just been worn smooth. And so, a crane fell a couple years ago - they were building two or three layers so people could go around the cube like a cake in many layers, and a crane fell on them - over a hundred people were killed in Mecca from that terrible accident a few years ago. But it's the holy city there.

Six articles of faith and this is the one God - I've mentioned this already. Oh, the six articles of faith are different from the five beliefs. One God, all of the prophets of God are true, the original Scriptures revealed to Moses, David, and Jeremiah - you know what they are - to Jesus - the original scripture - since we don't have any original Scriptures, you can't trust your Bibles, so that's sort of a moot point. They believe in angels, the day of judgment, the hereafter and destiny. They believe in the concept of vicarious atonement - that Jesus died for the sins of humanity, but they believe you're responsible, really, for your works in the day of judgment - but they don't look to Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. So they don't really have a redeemer in that religion. Now with that, I'm not going to go long on this because I'll have to take it up next week.

I want to at least introduce - I told you the sermon title is from Mecca to Rome - gave you the background about the birth - of what was happening in 538 in Rome, when the Christian church fell into apostasy - influenced by sun worship. About 50 years later you've got the birth of Islam, the other major world religion, with trappings of moon worship - and they said you could only read the Scriptures in Arabic, where in Rome they said you could only read them in Latin. And it - just very interesting parallels that were happening there. Now, if you look in Revelation chapter 9, verse 1, "then the fifth angel sounded: and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth." - falling star - a star was like an angel. This is a fallen angel - "to him was given the key to the bottomless pit." - the abyssos. You remember when the devils were cast out of that man in Mark chapter 5? They said, 'don't cast us into the deep.' the word there? Same exact word in Greek, it's abyssos. 'Don't send us where devils go where there's nothing to possess.' and so it's like this portal - this abyssos is like a portal of devils - it's the world in its chaotic state where the - Satan is bound at the end. And it said, "smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace.

So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit." - that's often connected with wars that will happen - "then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth." - you remember I just read to you in Judges 7:12, it says that the midianites and the amalekites and the people of the east covered the earth like locusts' - they came upon the earth - "and to them was given power, as the scorpions...have power." scorpions, unlike some snakes, it'll sting you but it won't typically kill you; but it's painful - and they had power on the earth and "they were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads." - genuine Christians were preserved during this time of great battle and persecution because it was focusing on the eastern Roman empire - "and they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months." now, if a day is a year in prophecy, and the hebrew month has 30 days - you know the Bible talks about the woman fled for 42 months?

Those have to be - for that to reach 1,260 days you have to use 30-day months. And so, if you have 30 days in a month and it says five months - that's 150 days, right? Five times ten - 150 - okay. This was a period of time when Islam had grown and spread, in almost one generation, across north africa and made its way up into the european continent, but they had to conquer asia minor. And it really began with othman, who attacked constantinople. I don't know if you remember constantine - they transferred the capital of the Roman empire, later known as the byzantine empire, to constantinople and it still was Christian back then. And so they thought, 'if we can conquer Christianity, we've got to conquer constantinople.' he began that attack, othman, later known as the ottoman empire, which became a very prominent force. That happened in 1299.

It went on for not 150 days but 150 years. When constantinople finally recognized the turkish power, they surrendered in 1449 - 150 years later. And so it happened exactly as the prophecies foretold. I want you to notice something: Italy is in a great peninsula - it is north of Israel - because later we're going to be talking about the king of the north and the king of the south. Saudi Arabia is the greatest peninsula in the world, actually, and it is south. On the west side of Italy you've got a capital that is the religious center of christendom. On the west side of the peninsula of saudi Arabia you have the capital that is the religious center of Islam. People around the world go to rome on pilgrimage. People around the world go to Mecca on pilgrimage. And it's just interesting that one now - and you go to that other map that you showed, Sherle, a minute ago about the north and the south. Alright, stay right there for just a second. I want you to notice something on this map. And while you notice that, I want you to - I'm going to read Daniel chapter 11 and we're going to be talking about the last days here a little bit and I want to just give you a background. If you go in Daniel 11 you're going to notice, all through Daniel 11, talks about a battle between the king of the north and the king of the south. Go to verse 40, for instance, "at the time of the end" - when do you think we're living now? - "the king of the south shall attack him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships;" - that's one thing you notice, that there needs to be water nearby because there's ships - you've got water on both those two peninsulas that I mentioned.

In Israel, when they talked about the king of the north and the king of the south, you've got to understand something about the geography. Israel was living in a land bridge. You've got an ocean to the west, you've got a vast, virtually uncrossable desert to the east. Whenever an army came to invade Israel - if you're living in Israel - they came from the north. And so you see - you see Iraq - that's where babylon was. You see Iraq there on the east, but when Iraq came in, they had to follow the valley and they came in from the north. They didn't go across the desert. When Syria attacked, they came from the north. When the Hittites attacked, up around turkey there, they came in from the north. When Egypt attacked, or when these other kingdoms attacked, they came in from the south. And so, you're going to always hear Israel talking about an attack - the king of the north and the king of the south. A lot of times they weren't attacking Israel; the north and the south were attacking each other, but in order to get to the enemy, they had to go through Israel and Israel was often a casualty of these battles between the north and the south. Who was one of the best kings that ever lived in Israel? David. You've got David. How about Josiah? Josiah was one of the greatest kings - godly king - it says nothing bad about him. Pharaoh Neco, in the south, went to war with babylon in the north - or it might have been AsSyria during this battle, actually - in the north. And on his way through Josiah went out to meet him and Pharaoh Neco sent him a letter. He said, 'king Josiah, king of Israel, why do you come out against me?' it says, 'I don't have a quarrel with you, but my God has sent

me to fight with the gods of the Assyrians.

Don't meddle, it won't be good for you. I just have to go through your land to fight the king of the north.' and Josiah went out to battle against Pharaoh Neco and he was hit by the archers and he ultimately died in that battle. So Israel is often a casualty of the battle between the kings of the north and the kings of the south. I could give you case after case where this happened. When Nebuchadnezzar first went to attack Egypt, he had to go through Israel. Along the way, Israel got involved in a war. And when the Pharaoh goes north and when the other kingdoms went north - and so you've got this going on - you've got it going on from the time of Alexander the Great through the Roman conquest. When you get to the end of the time and it talks about the king of the north and the king of the south, well, you've got to keep coming, friends. You're going to find it really interesting (laughter) because I don't want to tip my hand, as they say, too much on that right now. I just want to tell you that I think that everything is about to reach critical mass.

The world of Islam, right now, is very unstable and it is prime time for another strong leader to solidify that religion. At the same time, we know that Pope Francis is making very strong clear overtures to reach out to the Christians of the world because they realize they're losing their beachhead in Europe and that the real battle in the world today - it's going to end up being a religious battle - it's not going to be a political battle, it's going to be something more philosophical than that. You know, when I drive through a national forest, every now and then in the summertime you'll run into one of these forestry signs that will tell you about the fire danger. You ever see one of these signs? I think we've got one we'll put up there on the screen for you. It'll say, 'fire danger: low' - you know, in winter it ought to be on low - and then, you know, sometimes when it starts to dry out in the spring/summer it might be up there in moderate. When it starts to get dry or there's danger it'll say high. Sometimes you'll actually see a statue of Smokey the Bear next to one of these signs. Then you've got very high and then by August, if you haven't had any rain and everything's dry, it'll say extreme. I actually saw one sign it added one more and it was black and it said catastrophic.

I thought you'd get the message if I just put up the sign that said extreme. If I was to tell you where we are right now in prophecy and the volatility, if it was not for the angels of God the Bible says 'are holding back the winds of strife' right now, I think we would see the fires of war just blaze upon the world. The circumstances of what's going on right now - the instability, not only among the nations of Europe, in our own nation, and what's happening with the economies of the world, it is so delicate right now. So many things could just - could you imagine what would happen in North America? I'm not trying to frighten you, but it's a fact.

If there was not a sufficient quantity of fuel for the truckers and the trains to bring the groceries and the supplies - most people now live in cities; used to be, if you didn't have food, well you'd just go to your garden. But today, as of about five years ago, the majority of the world lives in urban areas - in cities - they don't grow their food, they get it from the market, which is brought by the truckers that run on gas. And oil is going to become an issue, I think, in the last days. We're living in a very volatile time in the world and I think we need to understand these prophecies - not that - I want to emphasize - nobody is saved by understanding the seven trumpets or the king of the north or Daniel 11. It's not going to save anybody. What's going to save people is a relationship with Jesus. Amen. And just knowing that He's your God. And, no matter what you believe, it's not going to stop. How you vote is not going to stop prophecy from happening.

I've actually heard people say, 'well, I'm voting this way because of the prophecies.' you're not going to vote prophecy. (laughter) what's going to happen is going to happen when it's going to happen. I think Christians ought to do everything we can to preserve the freedom to practice our religion and proclaim our religion and do good as long as we can. You understand that - but I do think that, at some point, those angels are going to loosen their grip and you're going to see these things unfold, and we'll be talking a little more in our last presentation. I've got one more in this series about how I think it's going to play out - and some more about Daniel and Revelation. I hope you'll be praying. But we're living during extreme conditions right now. That's why I hope you're close to the Lord and why all these different voices are saying 'we've got the truth' and 'we've got the Scriptures' - you've got to know who only has the truth. Jesus said, 'thy word is truth.' Amen. And we need to trust him. Is that your desire? Yeah. For life-changing Christian resources visit afbookstore.com.