



THE ARAB WORLD IN PROPHECY

Events soon to occur in the Arab world will bring mankind to the very brink of annihilation! Here is the story—and the good news beyond.

by Keith W. Stump

Who are the Arabs? Is the Arab world mentioned in Bible prophecy? Today the Arab world is an area of

vital concern to nations around the globe. Both political and economic considerations place that vast region—stretching from the Atlantic

to the Indian Ocean—at the very focal point of world attention. Could Bible prophecy overlook the Arabs? Assuredly not!

The Arab peoples are destined to play a significant role in the development of future world events. They will be at the very center of a series of crises which will plunge the Middle East into a major war—ultimately drawing in all the nations of the earth!

What Is an Arab?

But first—just what is an Arab? This question has plagued scholars for centuries. Peoples of many different ethnic groups, often exhibiting widely differing physical characteristics, consider themselves or are considered by others to be “Arabs.” Experts place the number of “Arabs” in the world today at well over 100,000,000.

The Arabic term *al-Arab* originally referred only to the wandering Bedouins (*Badawis*) of the Arabian Desert. The Bedouins consider themselves to be the original Arabs and the only true Arabs remaining today. Scattered from Morocco to Iran—but concentrated in the Arabian Peninsula—the Bedouins maintain a lifestyle which has changed little since the time of the Old Testament.

But the meaning of the term “Arab” has changed over the centuries. During the Moslem military conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., widespread Bedouin intermarriage with the indigenous peoples of conquered North Africa and other areas of the Middle East served to blur earlier ethnic distinctions.

To this day, no standard or “official” definition of an Arab has yet been agreed upon, or is likely to be. The best criterion of who is an Arab is probably *language*. Therefore many use the term “Arabic-speaking peoples” instead of “Arabs” to designate a linguistic group composed of many diverse peoples.

Where Did the Arabs Come From?

Nations are merely families grown big. In general, the Arab peoples are descended from one man—Ishmael (called *Ismail* by Arabs), the son of the biblical patriarch Abraham (or *Ibrahim*). The Arabs themselves acknowledge this. The story is found in

the book of Genesis, beginning in chapter 16.

Abraham’s wife Sarah was unable to have children. Sarah suggested that Abraham take Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, and obtain an heir by her. Abraham agreed, and Hagar conceived a child.

As could be expected, friction soon developed between Sarah and Hagar. Sarah began to treat Hagar harshly. When she could take it no longer, Hagar fled into the desert. There an angel appeared to her, telling her to return to Sarah. The angel declared: “Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael [meaning “God will hear”]; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction” (Genesis 16:11). The angel also revealed that her progeny would be multiplied exceedingly, that it would “not be numbered for multitude.” So Hagar returned and soon afterwards presented Abraham with a son.

Thirteen years passed. God then appeared to Abraham and announced that Sarah—then age 90—would soon bear Abraham a son! Abraham was incredulous. Moreover, he had grown to love Ishmael greatly and desired that he be his heir and receive the birthright blessings. “O that Ishmael might live before thee!” Abraham entreated God.

But God replied: “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with *him* . . .” (Genesis 17:19). But God understood Abraham’s concern for Ishmael’s future, and assured him: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation” (verse 20).

After the birth of Isaac, Hagar and Ishmael were cast forth into the desert at the insistence of Sarah. There God miraculously preserved them and reaffirmed His promise to make of Ishmael a great nation (Genesis 21:18). “And God was with the lad,” the account continues, “and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran [the modern Negev Desert]; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt” (verses 20-21). One or two additional wives were later added.

As God had prophesied, Ishmael became the father of 12 sons, whose names are recorded in Genesis 25:13-16: Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. Ishmael also had one daughter, called Mahalath or Bashemath (Genesis 28:9; 36:3), who married Esau, the son of the patriarch Isaac.

A Great Nation

Ishmael died at the age of 137 (Genesis 25:17). As God had promised, his twelve sons grew into a “great nation”—today numbering scores of millions!

The specific genealogies of each of the modern-day Arab tribes, subtribes, families and clans are virtually impossible to trace back in every case to their ultimate biblical origins. But some of the major lines of descent are known. For example: From Ishmael’s son Kedar (*Qaidar* in Arabic)—dated approximately 1840 B.C.—can be traced a line of descent to Adnan (or *Qais*)—122 B.C.—and from him (21 generations further on) to Mohammed (A.D. 570-632) of the Koreish tribe, the founder and prophet of the Islamic faith.

Though Ishmael is considered to have been the progenitor of the majority of the Arab world, there are indications of some intermingling of Ishmaelites with other related peoples—specifically the Joktanites and Keturahites.

Joktan (called *Qahtan* or *Kahtan* by the Arabs) was the son of the patriarch Eber (Genesis 10:25), who lived many generations before Abraham and Ishmael. This Joktan—whom authorities consider to have been the ultimate father of all *southern* Arabs—had 13 sons, named in Genesis 10:26-29. One of them, Jerah (*Yarab* to the Arabs), is believed to have founded the kingdom of Yemen in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Some authorities believe his name was the origin of the

word "Arab," the meaning of which is thought to be "arid."

Yarab's brother Hadoram (*Jorham* to the Arabs) is believed to have founded the Hejaz, an important kingdom along the western coast of Arabia, containing the cities of Mecca and Medina. According to Arab history, the daughter of Mudad, a descendant of this Jorham, became one of the wives of Ishmael. It is from that union that Ishmael's illustrious son Kedar is said to have come.

Another of Joktan's sons, Hazar-maveth, is claimed by the present-day tribesmen of the Hadhramaut (a region in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula) as their ancestor.

The other line with which the Ishmaelites are said to have intermarried is that of the Keturahites. The Keturahites were descendants of Keturah, whom Abraham married after the death of Sarah. Abraham and Keturah had six sons (Genesis 25:2), whose progeny, like that of Joktan, gradually became incorporated into the house of Ishmael.

Thus, after making due allowance for mixture with Joktanites and Keturahites, the Arabs may be regarded as essentially an Ishmaelite race.

In Bible usage, the name *Kedar* is often employed as the collective name of all the nomadic Arab tribes generally, as Kedar apparently had been the largest and most conspicuous of all the Ishmaelite tribes. The tribe's importance can be inferred from the mention of the rich "princes of Kedar" in Ezekiel 27:21 and elsewhere.

The prophet Isaiah, in his "burden [or denunciation] upon Arabia" (Isaiah 21:13-17) prophesied the demise of the "glory of Kedar"—a reference to the invasion of Arabia by Sargon in 716 B.C., during the wars between Egypt and Assyria. The glory of Kedar did fail, and the Arabs slipped for many centuries into obscurity.

The Conquests of Islam

Through the period of the Medo-Per-sian kingdom and on into Roman times, the Arab tribes lived in semi-isolation from the rest of the world, breeding camels, goats and sheep in

the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. Their principal interest appears to have been fighting wars among themselves—an activity designed not so much with the intent of eradicating or enslaving rival tribes but rather to break the wearisome monotony of watching animals graze in the vast emptiness of the desert.

When it came to religion, the Arabs were idol worshipers. The great temple of Mecca—overseen by the influential Koreish tribe—was said to have contained 365 idols.

Ironically, it was from the Koreish tribe that Mohammed arose early in the 7th century A.D.—six centuries after Christ. He succeeded in abolishing the idolatry long prevalent in Arabia and bringing his fellow Arabs a new faith, *Islam* ("Submission to God"), based on belief in one god, Allah. Moreover, Mohammed's



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teachings forged the divided Arab tribes into a socially and culturally united people. Islam provided them for the first time with a powerful unifying force, making it possible for them to aspire to greatness as a nation.

A little history will be useful here to show how the stage has been set over the centuries for the prophetic events which lie just ahead.

Following Mohammed's death in 632, the leadership of the Moslem nation passed to a succession of *caliphs* ("successors"), ruling initially from Medina. They completed the unification of the Arabian Peninsula and began to push outward, eventually bringing the entirety of the Middle East under their rule.

In the early 7th century, the Near and Middle East were divided between two great rival powers: the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire

(called *Rum* by the Arabs) centered at Constantinople, and the Sassanid Empire of Persia. These two adversaries had exhausted each other by long and destructive wars, and thus were "sitting ducks" for the vigorous new Islamic power sweeping out of Arabia.

To the frenzied cries of *Allah Akbar!* ("God is Great!"), camel-mounted Arab tribesmen swept with lightning speed into neighboring territories, taking Syria in 635, Iraq in 637, Palestine in 640, Egypt and Persia in 641. Jerusalem was taken in 638. Not since the days of Alexander the Great had such swift and far-reaching conquests been seen. "The Believers smote and slaughtered till the going down of the sun," recorded one contemporary Arab historian, "and the fear of the Arabs fell upon all kings."

The supreme office of caliph, originally elective, soon was made hereditary—first in the Omayyad family (from A.D. 661 to 750) and then in the Abbasid family (750 to 1258). The Omayyad dynasty, ruling from Damascus, was responsible for the conquest of the remainder of North Africa and most of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). In the East, Omayyad armies swept over Central Asia toward India and China. In less than 100 years, the Omayyads had built an empire larger than that of Rome at its height. Millions were added into the fold of the Moslem faith.

It was the great Omayyad caliph Abdul Malik, incidentally, who constructed the great Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem in 691-692 on Mount Moriah, the former site of the illustrious Temple of Solomon.

The Abbasid dynasty, ruling from Baghdad, consisted of 37 caliphs, among them the famous Harun al-Rashid (786-809) of *Arabian Nights* fame. The first two or three centuries of Abbasid rule marked the Golden Age of Islamic culture and literature. While Europe lay engulfed by the "Dark Ages," the Arabs kept the torch of knowledge burning throughout their far-flung domains.

Increasingly, however, the Abbasid caliphs grew soft, succumbing to the ease of sedentary palace life and



Wide World

COMING MIDEAST WAR will pale previous conflicts into insignificance. Above: Israeli soldiers hold position in Gaza Strip region during June 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Both sides are better equipped militarily today than ever before.

losing their martial vigor. Internal weaknesses resulted in a gradual breakdown of the political solidarity of the Moslem Empire and its disintegration into autonomous or semi-autonomous states. Eventually Baghdad itself was conquered by invaders, and the Abbasid caliphs became mere figurehead or “puppet” rulers.

In addition, the Islamic faith itself became split and fragmented into dozens of sects, sub-sects and offshoots, as it remains to this day. In fact, modern Islam is as divided as modern Christianity!

War and Independence

Early in the 16th century, the majority of Arab lands came under the sway of the Ottoman Turks, ruling from Istanbul. For the following four centuries there was no independent Arab state. The Arabs bristled under the corrupt and despotic rule of the Ottomans.

During World War I the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) sided with the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary against Britain. An opportunity thus presented itself to Britain. The British believed that a rebellion of Arabs against their Turkish overlords would enable Britain, while

fighting Germany, simultaneously to defeat Germany’s ally Turkey. Britain consequently encouraged and gave assistance to a rebellion of the Arab tribes.

The rebellion was proclaimed in June 1916 by Hussein ibn’ Ali, the illustrious Sherif of Mecca (a descendant of Mohammed) and self-proclaimed “King of the Arabs.” In exchange for his revolt against the Turks, Hussein received a promise from Britain to recognize the independence of the Arab countries after the war.

Assisted by the legendary T. E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”) in the field, the “Revolt in the Desert” was successful. With Turkey’s defeat, Ottoman rule in Arab lands came to an end.

But the free and united Middle Eastern Arab empire promised by Britain did not materialize. The majority of Arab lands were instead given to Britain and France to rule as mandates. The Arabs felt betrayed, claiming Britain had duped them, had made false promises and had shown bad faith. After centuries of Ottoman rule, they were now to be ruled by Europeans!

Eventually, however, various inde-

pendent Arab states did at last emerge. Iraq became independent in 1932; Syria and Lebanon in 1941; Transjordan in 1946; Egypt in 1951. In Arabia, King Ibn Saud of Nejd (central Arabia) succeeded in conquering the Hejaz in 1925, and in 1932—after uniting other areas under his control—formed the soon-to-be oil-rich Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Calls soon began to issue forth from various quarters for these newly independent Arab states to unite into one giant Arab Nation. Many Arabs began to look back with a sort of nostalgia to the first few centuries after Mohammed, when Islam was politically united as a single world empire, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indus River. Why not, they asked, seek to re-create the political and theological unity of the early Islamic caliphate—beginning with the unification of the Arab world? The possibilities would be tremendous, they suggested.

Elusive Dream

This idea (called “Pan-Arabism”) of a single united Arab Nation with one flag and one capital was not new. Throughout the centuries, the goal of a single political entity embracing all Arabic-speaking peoples has been a widely held dream among Arabs. But it has proved to be as elusive as the mirages of the desert. Indeed, the pages of Arab history brim with stories of tribal feuds, national conflicts and personal rivalry among Arab leaders.

The common historical origin, common faith, language and culture of the Arab peoples—factors that would seem at first glance to provide an excellent basis for Arab solidarity—prove to be a mere facade of unity. In actuality, the Arab peoples are deeply divided by often fierce political, ideological, economic, theological and territorial rivalries. Though the desire for unity is strongly felt, there are wide and almost irreconcilable differences among Arab nations over the manner in which that goal is to be achieved.

Even more hopeless has been the centuries-old quest for the wider-scope ideal of Islamic unity. Multiple millions of non-Arabic-speaking

peoples also follow the Moslem faith, including those of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, and parts of India and Africa. In fact, one person in six in the world today is a Moslem. The concept of the unity of the entire Islamic world—both Arab and non-Arab—is called “Pan-Islam.” Though all Moslems recognize the tremendous possibilities that might be realized through greater cooperation, such ideals often clash with the pragmatic interests of individual Moslem nations. Like the lesser-scope concept of Pan-Arabism, Pan-Islam’s chances for success—in the estimation of most observers—are small.

Religious Upheaval

What hope remains, then? Will the long-sought unity of the Arab and Moslem worlds ever be realized? If so, most observers feel, it will probably have to come through swift and possibly violent change—in the wake of tumultuous political or religious upheaval.

The Moslem world today is ripe for something new. After centuries of divisive religious and political infighting and frustrated ambitions, Moslem sentiments are coming to a head. Moslems are ready for a new concept to provide the catalyst toward realizing their long-thwarted dreams. They want to again become a powerful force in world affairs, in a role befitting their size and glorious past.

Increasing numbers of Moslems—Arab and non-Arab alike—believe it is time for a rekindling of the fires of their faith, time for a wide-scale religious and spiritual revival in the face of growing secularization, materialism and Westernization (witness recent events in Iran, for example). From Morocco to Indonesia, “back-to-the-Koran” sentiments are growing, along with calls for a united, fundamentalist Islam.

The lacking vital ingredient is *leadership*. “There have been many attempts at a pan-Islamic policy, none of which has made much progress,” observes Bernard Lewis, a British scholar of the Middle East. “One reason for this lack of success is that those who have made the attempt have been so unconvincing.

This still leaves the possibility of a more convincing leadership, and there is ample evidence in virtually all Muslim countries of the deep yearning for such a leadership and a readiness to respond to it.”

Moslems in general and Arabs in particular have historically responded like no other people to the charismatic personality. Since the founding of Islam, men have periodically arisen in various parts of the Moslem world claiming to be the long-awaited *Mahdi*, the expected end-time messiah who is to cleanse and restore the Islamic faith to its original purity, unify the Moslem world and usher in a seven-year golden age just before the end of the world.

Many of these individuals—often men of considerable eloquence and extraordinary personal magnetism—gathered great armies and attempted to unify the Moslem world by religious wars. Some gained thrones; others—the majority—died bloody deaths on the field of battle. But none were to be ignored.

One of the most recent Mahdis was Mohammed Ahmed, the “Sudanese Mahdi,” who united numerous tribes against British and Egyptian control of the Sudan and succeeded in capturing the strategic Nile city of Khartoum from General Charles George Gordon in 1885. His goal of a single united Moslem nation, however, went unfulfilled.

A Thing of the Past?

Nearly a century has passed since the Sudanese Mahdi’s victory at Khartoum. To many observers, militant Mahdism is a thing of the past. A major flare-up of radical messianism is deemed unlikely—by some, even impossible. But is it really?

The expectation of a coming Mahdi (in Arabic, “the divinely guided one”) is prevalent among virtually all Moslem sects, though they often differ in the specifics of the concept. Moslems today yearn for a guide, a teacher, a deliverer—one who embodies their innermost hopes and dreams, who will breathe new life into Islam, give new direction, and set about healing the schisms which divide the Moslem world.

There has always been magic in

the name *Mahdi*. Were a revolutionary new religious figure to suddenly appear in the Moslem world—a dynamic, charismatic leader who could capture the imagination of Moslems everywhere and effectively capitalize on their hunger for greatness—the Middle East picture could be transformed overnight!

The appearance of a 20th century Mahdi—as fantastic as the prospect might appear to Western minds—cannot be quickly dismissed. In Islam, politics and religion are inextricably mixed. There is a close relationship between the spiritual and civil power.

Islam waits to be united. The role of Mahdi—the Great Unifier of Islam—awaits a player. Mahdis have marched in their dozens and scores through the pages of Moslem history. There is no reason to believe the days of Mahdism are past. Indeed, circumstances in the Moslem world appear riper than ever for a Mahdist flare-up. Even now a Mahdi may be waiting in the wings for the opportune moment.

Prophesied in the Bible?

As the Bible so clearly demonstrates, it is *God* who makes and unmakes nations. The prophet Daniel declared that God “removes kings and sets up kings” (Daniel 2:21, RSV). And it is God who declares “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (Isaiah 46:10). God reveals the future before it happens!

The Bible is not silent about the Arab world. Among other prophecies for the region, it strongly suggests the emergence of a coming Arab-Moslem Confederation, possibly under the overall leadership of one powerful individual!

In chapter 11 of the book of Daniel is found the longest prophecy in the Bible. The prelude is found in the tenth chapter. There, the archangel Gabriel appears to Daniel: “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” (verse 14).

The prophecy of Daniel 11 details events—at that time, still future—from the remaining days of the

Medo-Persian empire, through the reign of Alexander the Great and his successors in Syria and Egypt, and on through to the second coming of Christ!

Beginning in verse 40 we read of a conflict between two great powers: "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 . . ."

This is an important "end-time" prophecy. Following the chronological progression of the chapter, it becomes apparent that the phrase "king of the north" had at first referred to Syria under the Seleucid dynasty, and later, in the New Testament times, to the Emperor of the Roman Empire. (For a detailed, verse-by-verse examination of Daniel 11, write for the free reprint article "The Middle East in Prophecy" by Herbert W. Armstrong). Thus, in its final end-time application, the "king of the north" is the prophesied strong man who will lead a coming union of ten European nations—the seventh and final revival of the ancient Roman Empire prophesied by Daniel and in the book of Revelation (see Revelation 17:12-13).

But who is the "king of the south"? In the earlier portions of Daniel 11, the phrase refers without question to ancient Egypt under the rule of the Ptolemaic dynasty, later including Ethiopia which was annexed to Egypt. But in verse 40 we skip to "the time of the end"—this present century. The verse undoubtedly found at least partial fulfillment in the offensive in 1896 of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia ("king of the south") against the Italian armies of King Humbert I ("king of the north")—and in the air, land and sea invasion of Ethiopia 40 years later by Mussolini's forces.

But Mussolini did not finish the prophecy. He did not, for example, enter into the "glorious land" or Palestine (verse 41). Its greater fulfillment is *yet future!*

Just as there is yet to be a final "king of the north"—called in Bible symbolism "the beast"—who will arise as superdictator over an end-time European confederation, there

may very well emerge in the same manner a final "king of the south"—an overall leader of an Arab-Moslem confederation, possibly even bearing the very title *Mahdi!* And these two individuals will eventually find themselves in a head-to-head confrontation—possibly over oil—which will ultimately lead to devastating war in the Middle East!

Crisis in Palestine

What does prophecy reveal, then, about the succession of events in the Middle East in the coming months and years? And what part will the Arab world play in them?

The Bible does not give an exact sequence of coming events. We must watch world events to discover how and when the prophecies will happen (Luke 21:36). But in piecing together prophecies scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments, a general picture becomes clear.

As all students of Bible prophecy know, the city of Jerusalem is the focal point of all prophecy. Since the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, old Jerusalem has been in the hands of the State of Israel. It is with that nation that we must begin our overview of prophecy for the region.

An important key to understanding prophecy is to realize, first, that the present Jewish state in Palestine is *not* the triumphant final return of Israel to the promised land mentioned so often by the Old Testament prophets.

Anciently, Israel was composed of 12 tribes, descended from the 12 sons of the patriarch Jacob. Following the death of King Solomon, the nation of Israel split into two *separate* nations (I Kings 12): the southern "house of Judah"—composed of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and part of Levi, with capital at Jerusalem—and the larger, ten-tribed "house of Israel" to the north, with capital at Samaria.

The house of Israel was conquered and carried away into captivity by Assyria in 721-718 B.C. (II Kings 18:9-12), never to return. The house of Judah (the "Jews") was carried off in slavery to Babylon over a century later, in 604-585 B.C. (II Kings 25). Judah was laid

waste. Thereafter, no independent Israelitish nation existed anywhere in Palestine for over 2500 years. Though a remnant of the house of Judah returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel 70 years later in 534 B.C., Judah remained under subjection as a Persian, and later a Roman, province. Finally, in A.D. 70, Judea was invaded and Jerusalem destroyed by Roman troops. The Jews were forcefully driven from their homeland.

In 1948—after nearly 19 centuries of being dispersed—a part of the tribe of Judah forged a new nation in Palestine, calling it the "State of Israel." Though this end-time physical restoration of the Jews as a nation was forecast by many Old Testament prophets, it was not the much-prophesied great restoration of the entire nation of Israel. The vast majority of the Israelitish tribes—the so-called "lost ten tribes"—have not yet returned! (See "Jews Are a Nation Again—Prophecy Fulfilled?" by Herbert W. Armstrong in the February 1979 *Plain Truth*). The prophesied return of all Israel to the promised land in peace and security is yet future.

But what does prophecy say of the present Jewish "State of Israel"? Will the Arab nations make further efforts to "drive it into the sea"? Will there be a fifth Arab-Israeli war? And if so, what will the consequences be?

Numerous prophecies speak of various "calamities" yet to befall Judah in the months and years ahead. A great crisis is yet to occur in Palestine. The Arab armies are today better equipped and better coordinated for the waging of war than at any time in the past three decades. A future Mideast war could very well place in danger the very existence of the State of Israel. Moreover, the most sacred religious shrines of the world's three major religions, located in Jerusalem, could become jeopardized. The "Big Powers" may be forced to intervene. Troops may even be dispatched to Palestine as a "peace-keeping force" to patrol and police the volatile region.

King David of ancient Israel, in a

prophetic psalm (Psalm 83) provides additional insight into the coming Mideast picture. Germany (*Assyria* in Bible prophecy) and perhaps the rest of Europe will be in league in the future with a union of Arab nations—a vast confederacy bound together in an effort to crush out the name “Israel” from the face of the earth! This Arab-Moslem confederacy may very well be the previously mentioned “king of the south” of Daniel 11—a sphere of power encompassing vast portions of the Islamic world.

“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have *consulted together* with one consent: they are *confederate* against thee: The tabernacles of Edom [Esau or modern-day Turkey, a non-Arab but Islamic nation] and the Ishmaelites [Saudi Arabia]; of Moab [part of Jordan] and the Hagarenes [anciently these people dwelt in the land known as Syria today]; Gebal [Lebanon], and Ammon [modern Jordan], and Amalek [part of the Turks]; the Philistines [the modern Palestinian Arabs] with the inhabitants of Tyre [Lebanon]; *Assur* [whose descendants, the Assyrians, migrated to Germany] *also is joined with them*: they have holpen [helped] the children of Lot [Jordan and western Iraq]” (Psalms 83:4-8).

Amazingly, such an alliance is already in the making! Europe—and West Germany in particular—is vitally dependent on the Arab world’s oil. It cannot afford to appear overly sympathetic to the Jewish state. Even now, a “special relationship” is developing between the major Arab oil producers in the Middle East and the industrial oil-consuming powers of Western Europe. Europe is seeking long-term guarantees of oil supplies to meet its needs. Moreover, the Arabs—fearful of Soviet inroads in the Middle East and corresponding lack of firm U.S. resolve to counterbalance them—have expressed interest in developing closer *military* ties with Europe. There have even been reports of a suggested “collective security pact” in the Middle East under European guarantees. Mean-

while, Israeli leaders are becoming concerned about what they perceive to be a growing European pro-Arab tilt.

Mideast Invaded

But in the end, this European-Arab alliance will prove short-lived. As shown earlier, the “king of the north” of Daniel 11—the leader of the German-led European union—will ultimately turn against the Arab “king of the south,” with disastrous consequences for the entire Middle East—both Jew and Arab alike. The entire region will be subjected to armed invasion!

Europe’s ire could well be precipitated by a cutoff of vital oil supplies by the Arabs. Whatever the provocation, Europe will act swiftly to protect its interests—sending troops into the Middle East!



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Daniel 11:40-41: “And the king of the north shall come against him [the king of the south] like a whirlwind . . . and he shall enter into the countries. . . . He shall enter also into the glorious land [Palestine], and *many countries* [Arab countries of the Middle East] *shall be overthrown . . .*”

The modern State of Israel will be conquered. Jerusalem will be besieged and taken. The prophet Zechariah also speaks of this capture of Jerusalem, revealing that eventually half the city will be taken into captivity by the European power (14:1-2).

In addition, Daniel’s prophecy specifically mentions that Egypt will be conquered by the German-led European forces. Isaiah shows that Syria, too, will become a “ruinous heap” (17:1-3).

The Arab-Moslem Confederation will, of course, be thrown into chaotic

disarray in the face of invasion. Some of its component countries will be directly occupied by European troops. However, as revealed in Daniel 11:41, Jordan (the present-day descendants of Moab and Ammon) and Turkey (Edom) will escape occupation. Other Arab countries may also avoid full occupation, possibly remaining in some sort of limited alliance with United Europe. “Libya” (or *Put*, the North African Arabs) along with “Ethiopia” (or *Cush*, certain black African nations) shall be “at his [the king of the north’s] steps”—or “following him” as some translations render it.

Great Tribulation

In the wake of the invasion and takeover of the State of Israel by the revived Roman Empire, the “beast” (European strong man) will make Jerusalem his headquarters (Daniel 11:45). As many New Testament prophecies reveal, a great miracle-working religious leader—called the “false prophet” and “man of sin”—will come along from Europe with the beast, in direct alliance with him. This false prophet will make his religious headquarters at Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ spoke of a soon-coming “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). Christ also predicted that an invasion of Palestine would immediately precede it: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem *compassed with armies*, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Luke 21:20). God will permit the European Church-State union to tread Jerusalem underfoot for 1260 days, or 3½ years (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:14).

Christ continued in Luke 21: “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled . . . for there shall be great distress in the land . . . they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (verses 22-24)—a graphic picture of Palestine occupied and ravaged during the Great Tribulation. (Other prophecies
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reveal that the revived Roman Empire will invade the United States and Great Britain as well!)

Enter Russia

But all will not go well for Europe. Daniel 11:44 notes that eventually "tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him [the king of the north or the beast]." Threatening news from the Soviet Union—long covetous of the strategic oil-rich Middle East—and the Orient will distress the European dictator. He will launch a blitzkrieg war against the Communist East: "He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." (The European offensive is also described in Revelation 9:1-12.)

The Communist hordes of Eurasia will then counterattack against Europe—with an army of 200,000,000 men! (Revelation 9:16.) Full-scale world war will erupt—a final, climactic global conflict!

The two great power blocs—Europe and the Soviet Communist combine—will become engaged in a desperate struggle for world domination. As the conflict escalates, all nations of the earth will become involved. The beast will marshal his armies at a place called Armageddon—the Valley of Jezreel around Megiddo, 55 miles north of Jerusalem. They will then converge on Jerusalem for the final battle, where the revived Roman Empire will make its stand against the oncoming Eurasian hordes.

Mankind will stand on the very threshold of total annihilation!

Christ Returns

But God will suddenly intervene mightily in world affairs! Jesus Christ will return from heaven with a vast army to put an end once and for all to international warfare. Instead of fighting against each other, the world's armies will turn their attack against *Him*, culminating in the "battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:12-16; Joel 3:1-2, 9-17).

Christ will destroy the beast and the false prophet, and with them the world's armies gathered at Jerusalem: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him [Christ] that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:19-20).

As Daniel concluded, the king of the north "shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (11:45).

With the second coming of Christ, the "times of the Gentiles" will at last come to an end. Christ will deliver Jerusalem from the Gentile forces. All Israel will be gathered from captivity and be brought back to the promised land. Christ—the conquering Messiah, the *true* Mahdi—will then establish His government on the earth—with Jerusalem as world headquarters. Universal peace and prosperity will at last be on the way.

Recalcitrant elements—including a remnant of Soviet forces and their allies (Ezekiel 38 and 39)—will make one last assault against newly repatriated Israel, but they too will be put down by divine intervention.

Finally, all nations will at last dwell together in peace and harmony.

Watch the Middle East!

For over 40 years, *The Plain Truth* magazine has urged its readers to watch the Middle East—the world's most dangerous hot spot. In the December 1938 issue—fully a decade prior to the creation of the State of Israel—Editor Herbert W. Armstrong warned that "in due time, all nations of the world will be fighting over possession of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. . . ."

Despite current hopes for a negotiated settlement of the Mideast dispute, Bible prophecy paints a bleak picture of events to come in the months and years just ahead. So keep your eyes on the Arab world, and on Jerusalem. Events soon to occur there will have far-reaching ramifications. They will change the course of your life, and the history of the world! □

COMMANDMENTS

(Continued from page 24)

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the *strange gods* that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob *all the strange gods which were in their hand.*"

They could hold these gods in their hands. Notice: "And all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." It was a sin to worship idols, and they had idol gods in their own hands.

The Third Commandment

Notice the third commandment in Leviticus 18:3, 21, 27. "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do." Here's the instruction of God to the Israelites in the time of Moses, but it was sin to break that third commandment before Moses!

"And after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, *shall ye not do*: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. . . . And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, *neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God*: I am the Eternal."

There's profanity, or profaning the name of God. Now the 27th verse: "For *all these abominations* have the men of the land *done*, which were *before you*"—before this generation during which the law of Moses came.

In previous generations prior to the law of Moses, "All these abominations have the men of the land *done*, which were before you, and the land is defiled." It was sin. One of the sins was to profane the name of God. Therefore, profanity—taking the