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Yemen Crisis due to Iran's Attempt to Revive the Persian Empire, with Babylon as its Capital

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh.” - Luke 21:28

By Mike Wingfield

The potential for a major war between the two largest factions of Islam, the Sunnis and Shiites (Shias), is now centered upon a struggle for Yemen, Saudi Arabia's southern neighbor. At the epicenter of this threat of war within the Islamic world is the growing influence of Iran and its Shiite axis of power in the region. We may not be able to understand all of the details of this development in the light of the overall prophetic picture of the last days. However, the Scriptures declare that Iran will play a major role in the end-time events, forming an alliance with Russia and other Shiite friends in the Middle East. (Ezekiel 38-39) Make no mistake; the evil apocalyptic Islamic regime that is ruling over the Iranian people has its sights set on the annihilation of Israel. Its ultimate goal is the establishment of an Islamic empire that will rule over the world, with Babylon as its capital.

Before I direct our attention to Iran, I want to briefly address a related consideration that I believe is of great

significance. Many of us who study Biblical prophecy agree that the end-time political and religious power described in Revelation 17-18 is Islam. We also agree that the Antichrist will be a Muslim who will rule the Islamic world from Babylon, Iraq for 7 years. However, beyond that we are still looking at the current events in the light of the Scriptures, and wondering how all of this is going to play out. Obviously, we will not be here for the 7-year Tribulation Period, but it is our duty and privilege to study the prophetic Word of God and warn this present generation of the approaching divine judgment. The wrath of God and Satan is about to be unleashed upon this terminal generation. In comparison, our Lord gave an ominous warning of impending judgment to Israel in Old Testament days through His prophets. While the office of a prophet is not available today, I do believe the Holy Spirit desires to speak through His church and sound a warning to this present generation *“to flee from the wrath to come.”* (Matthew 3:7) Evangelical believers who

literally interpret the prophetic Scriptures are the only people on earth who have any wisdom concerning the future. This is simply because we have been enlightened by the prophetic Word of God. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) We do not have all of the details, but we have been given a divine revelation that tells us how it is all going to end.

We must remember that no one knows when the Rapture will take place. Jesus said: *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”* (Matthew 24:36) Even Satan does not know when the Rapture will occur. So, we must conclude that for almost 2,000 years, Satan has been guessing and preparing his forces for the final showdown in the Tribulation Period between himself and Jesus.

Satan knows the Bible. He used it and twisted it to tempt Jesus during His incarnation. (Matthew 4:6) Satan, for his own purposes, has become very knowledgeable about the prophetic Word of God. He must know what the Lord will do in the future so he can prepare his diabolical plan in a desperate and foolish attempt to defeat Jesus when He returns. This means that Satan needs to have several possible antichrist figures ready at any moment for the Tribulation Period. Near the end of the first century, the Apostle John alluded to this when he wrote: *“Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”* (1 John 2:18)

We are living in such an hour. When a person looks across the political landscape of the Islamic world in the Middle East, there are several men Satan may be grooming to be potential antichrists. Chaos is escalating in the Arab Islamic world and it appears that many leaders are aspiring to become the Muslim caliph. This caliph, or global dictator, will have total control of the Muslim world. This is really nothing new, but while looking at the global context and the rise of Islam, these developments seem to be uniquely timed to usher in the Tribulation Period.

Various factions of the Sunni and Shiite Islamic groups are locked in a battle for the honor of creating the political and military platform from which their messiah will rule the world. While these Muslim factions have their differences, they all agree that we are living in the end of

days. They further believe that their messiah, the “Mahdi,” is soon to appear. That belief is driving their apocalyptic agenda and methods.

Potential antichrist figures can be found within the dangerous apocalyptic Iranian Shiite regime. This genocidal religious leadership believes they can hasten the public appearance of their Mahdi, the Islamic messiah, by wreaking havoc and destruction around the world. It is their view, that after the annihilation of Israel and this global destruction, the Mahdi will be able to proclaim the Islamic New World Order, called the Caliphate.

If one listens to the fiery speeches and rhetoric coming from the power circles in Iran, they reveal a dangerous religious and political ideology. In a recent article for the *Washington Post*, Michael Morell (acting and deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2010 to 2013) alluded to a speech given recently at a conference in Tehran on “Iran, Nationalism, History, and Culture.” This speech was given by Ali Younesi, who served as the head of intelligence for former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami. Morell reports that this influential Iranian leader told the conference attendees, ““Since its inception, Iran has [always] had a global [dimension]. It was born an empire. Iran’s leaders, officials and administrators have always thought in the global’ dimension. Younesi defined the territory of the Iranian empire, which he called ‘Greater Iran,’ as reaching from the borders of China and including the Indian subcontinent, the north and south Caucasus and the Persian Gulf. He said Iraq is the capital of the Iranian Empire — a reference to the ancient city of Babylon, in present-day Iraq, which was the center of Persian life for centuries.” (www.washingtonpost.com, April 3, 2015)

The fact that a current Iranian leader would make these statements about Iran’s global ambitions and its connection to ruling the world from Babylon, Iraq (see [Isaiah 14:4](#)) is an example of the revived Islamic empire of the Antichrist called *“Babylon”* in the book of Revelation. ([Revelation 14:8; 17-18](#)) Iran appears to have advanced its influence in the region more than any other Islamic state. The Iranian leadership has expanded its Shia crescent power base across the Middle East. In neighboring Iraq, Iran has a dominating influence over the Shiite centers in the south. As a result, Iran is a menace to the newly-created Iraqi government. In Syria, they have a

power base supported by Syrian President Bashar Assad and the Alawites (a Shia religious group). In Lebanon, they have a very important political and military foothold on the northern border of Israel through their proxy, Hezbollah (a Shia military terrorist group funded and trained by Iran). In Gaza, they have almost total control of Hamas, a radical Islamic terrorist entity. And, in recent months, the Iranians have released another terrorist group in Yemen, the Houthi rebels. These rebels have captured Aden, the capital of Yemen, and its international airport.

policies of the Obama administration in the Middle East, particularly with Iran, are making it a very dangerous place to live. In his speech to Congress March 3, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu so eloquently stated this concern: “Iran's neighbors know that Iran will become even more aggressive and sponsor even more terrorism when its economy is unshackled and it's been given a clear path to the bomb. And many of these neighbors say they'll respond by racing to get nuclear weapons of their own. So this deal won't change Iran for the better; it will only change the Middle East for the worse. A deal that's supposed to prevent nuclear proliferation would instead spark a nuclear arms race in the most dangerous part of the planet. This deal won't be a farewell to arms. It would be a farewell to arms control. And the Middle East would soon be crisscrossed by nuclear tripwires. A region where small skirmishes can trigger big wars would turn into a nuclear tinderbox.” (www.time.com/3730318/transcript-netanyahu-speech-to-congress/)

Sunni Arabs know that Iran is attempting to force the Sunni world into submission, annihilate Israel, and especially take control of Saudi Arabia, the religious center of Islam. The Saudis view the Iranian attempt to turn Yemen into another Iranian proxy state as a major step in the accomplishment of this Shia agenda. In response to the shift in American policy, and the Iranian threat in Yemen, the Saudis have formed a 10-nation Sunni coalition to join them in their military strikes against the Houthis' forces in Yemen. The military strikes against these Iranian interests in Yemen have brought about sharp threatening communications between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which could lead to war in the region. One needs to remember that Iran and Iraq were at war from 1980 to 1988. Wars pitting Muslims against Muslims are raging throughout the Middle East at this very hour. But, a conflagration between Iran and Saudi Arabia would be very costly, and bring a titanic shift to the balance of power in the Middle East.

Middle East



In light of all of this, the potential of Iran manufacturing its own nuclear weapons has become a major concern for the Sunni Muslims in the region. While Iran moves ahead with the development of a nuclear arsenal, the West (and especially the U.S. administration) is viewed as playing a deadly game of chicken with Iran. It is apparent to Israel and the Sunni Arabs that the U.S. administration has already accepted the fact that Iran will be a nuclear nation and become the dominant player in the region. This major ongoing shift in American policy in the Middle East is fueling chaos and revolutions, called the Arab Spring. As a result, radical elements are gaining more power and moving the world closer to an apocalyptic Middle East. Many former Arab-Islamic allies of the U.S. are joining Israel's warnings that the failed foreign

While all of this is taking place, Russia recently agreed to sell and deliver S-300 surface-to-air defense missile systems to Iran. This system would make a future military strike by Israel or the U.S. against Iran very difficult, but not impossible. The U.S. has positioned several of its aircraft carriers in the region to prevent Iran from supplying the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen. Israel has answered the Russian move in Iran by sell military

arms to Ukrainian forces that are fighting against Russian-backed forces. Israel's move brought sharp criticism from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

To add to the ever-changing developments in the Middle East, Turkey's president, Tayyip Erdogan, recently visited Iran. While Turkey and Iran have some major differences about the wars in Syria and Yemen, the leadership of Iran agreed with Erdogan that their respective countries need to cooperate with each other in the region.

It is obvious that Russia, Turkey, and Iran all have different ambitions for building their own empires. While they each have their own global agenda, they are willing to cooperate in order to capitalize on the United States' declining influence in the region. Their common goal is the destruction of Israel.

These developments, in light of [Ezekiel 38-39](#), are amazing! It is very apparent that a coalition of Shia nations and cooperating friends in Libya, Ethiopia, and Sudan are joining with Russia for dominance in the Middle East. It is only a matter of time until these nations make their move against Israel. When that happens, it is interesting to note that the onlookers of this invasion are "*Sheba*" (southern Saudi Arabia) and "*Dedan*" (northern Saudi Arabia), along with "*the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions*" (some view this as a reference to Great Britain and her former colonies, which would include the United States). ([Ezekiel 38:13](#))

These developments in the Middle East continue to indicate our world is being changed so that the Biblical end-times events can unfold on any given day. I remind you once again to be ready for the shout that will take us out!

Deployment of Tunnel Detection System

Israel Breaking News has just released a report about an advanced tunnel detection system that's being deployed along the Israel-Gaza border. Last summer, Israel discovered that Hamas was digging tunnels from Gaza into Israel in an attempt to ambush and kidnap Israelis. Many of the tunnels were destroyed. However, since the war ended, Israeli intelligence has reported that the work on these terrorist tunnels has aggressively resumed.

In response to this threat, an Israeli firm has just completed its research on a very effective tunnel detection system that is now being deployed along the border with Gaza. This system will allow the Israeli military to identify these tunnels and destroy them before they are used by terrorists against Israel. This system is already bringing a sense of relief among Israelis living in southern Israel. Long ago, the ancient prophet of Israel, Isaiah, spoke on behalf of the Lord to his people: "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.*" ([Isaiah 54:17](#))

Israel Turns 67

The miraculous modern nation of Israel is now 67 years old. Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948. However, using the Jewish calendar, a lunar rather than solar-based calendar, Israel celebrated its 67th birthday on April 22. Israel now has a population of 8.3 million people. "The 6.25 million Jewish residents of Israel represent 74.9 percent of the population, while the 1.73 million Arabs make up 20.7% of the current population. Residents without any official religious affiliation and members of other religions (including non-Arab Christians) make up 4.4% of the population." (www.timesofisrael.com, April 21, 2015) The amazing growth, prosperity, security, and divine protection of Israel is the greatest evidence of the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in the last 100 years. The Lord has proclaimed: "*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" ([Malachi 3:6](#))

Christians and the Climate of Hatred

As we listen to the news reports from around the world, it is obvious there is a growing climate of hatred for Christians. Christians are being persecuted, attacked, and killed around the world.

Recent surveys of American university professors indicate they have a profound hatred for conservative, evangelical Christians. I remind you that history demonstrates hatred for Christians is a precursor to their open persecution and martyrdom. Jesus connected hatred for His followers with their persecution and martyrdom. ([John 15:18-16:2](#)) This message was echoed by His apostles. ([1 John 3:15](#))

Our response should be the promotion of peace, love, and forgiveness. Read what Jesus has told us to do in [Matthew 5:9-12](#). In the midst of their own suffering, the

apostles admonished the early church to also rejoice. (1 Peter 4:12-19)

May our Lord give us wisdom, grace, and strength for what lies ahead. The greatest era of deadly Christian persecution is rising all around the world. What is taking place in the Middle East is a picture of what will unfold around the world during the Tribulation Period.

Increasing Global Volcanic Eruptions

Jesus said that the last days would be marked by great geological upheaval. (Luke 21:11) According to many prophetic Scriptures, during the final seven years before the Lord returns to establish His kingdom upon earth, the earth will experience the most radial geological devastation in the history of man. (Revelation 16:18) Massive global earthquakes will rearrange the topography of earth. (Isaiah 24; Revelation 6:14; 16:20) These global earthquakes will trigger global volcanic eruptions (Revelation 6:12; 8:8-9), and tsunamis. (Luke 21:25; Revelation 8:9)

In light of all of this, the following report by Michael Snyder, a believer who researches how our world is moving toward the end as defined in the Bible, is very significant. "Is the number of volcanic eruptions worldwide increasing? Yes. During the 20th century, there were a total of 3,542 volcanic eruptions globally. That works out to approximately 35 eruptions per year. That may sound like a lot, but according to Volcano Discovery there are 36 volcanoes erupting around the world right now. In other words, the number of volcanoes erupting as you read this article is greater than the 20th century's yearly average. And all of this is part of a larger trend. In 2013, we witnessed the most volcanic eruptions worldwide that we had ever seen in a single year, and 2015 is already threatening to be another one for the record books. All over the planet, volcanoes that have long been dormant are beginning to wake up, and this is greatly puzzling many scientists." (www.endoftheamericandream.com, April 16, 2015)

It is apparent these trends are indicating that earth is moving toward its geological climax of upheaval. It is yet another powerful sign that the One who controls all of His creation is preparing the earth for His time of judgment. Jesus is the One who "*appointed the foundations of the earth.*" (Proverbs 8:29) He "*laid the foundation of the*

earth.... all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed." (Psalm 102:25-26) When the end comes, He will "*shake terribly the earth.*" (Isaiah 2:19) The Lord "*[looks] on the earth and it [trembles]; He [touches] the hills, and they smoke.*" (Psalm 104:31)

The stated purpose for all of the approaching global upheaval is given in Isaiah 2:11: "*The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*" This is the aim of all of God's works, both in the past and in the future.

War and Rumors of Wars for Israel

When Jesus responded to His disciples' question about the signs that would mark His coming at the end of this age, one of the signs He pointed to are the dangerous security threats the newly reborn nation of Israel will face. He said to His Jewish disciples: "*And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*" (Matthew 24:6)

Today, Israel faces some of the greatest security threats in its modern history. Israel must be ready for war at any moment on multiple fronts. At present, Israel is dealing with six ongoing crisis that jeopardize its very existence.

1. Israel must guard its southern border with Egypt along the Sinai. Since the beginning of 2010, the Sinai has been occupied by several radical Islamic terrorist groups. Israel recently completed a security fence along the entire Sinai border that is monitored 24 hours a day by highly trained Israeli personnel. However, Israel realizes that the calm it now enjoys along this border could end at any moment.

2. The Gaza Strip continues to be a source of great concern for Israel's security. Hamas continues to rebuild for its next war with Israel. This is of great concern to Israeli leaders because these terrorist activities are being funded by Iran.

3. The "West Bank" (Biblical Judea and Samaria) continues to be a security threat that could erupt at any moment. Iran is trying to help Hamas gain a foothold in the area, while attempting to supply Palestinian terrorists with weapons to fight against Israel.

4. The Syrian border with Israel along the Golan Heights continues to be another real security concern for Israel. The bloody war between the radical elements that are fighting against the Assad forces have come very close to Syria's border with Israel. On a couple of occasions, missiles have landed on the Israeli side. All of this is of great concern to Israel because Assad and his military are being funded by Iran.

5. Perhaps one of the most immediate threats to Israel's security is along its border with Lebanon. This area is occupied by another radical terrorist entity that is controlled by Iran, Hezbollah. Israeli intelligence reports that Hezbollah, with the help of Iran, now has over 30,000 trained military personnel and approximately 170,000 missiles. Some of these missiles have the capability of striking targets anywhere in Israel.

6. However, the most dangerous of all military threats against Israel is in the radical Shiite leadership in Iran. This fanatical Islamic group has ambitions of becoming the Islamic superpower in the Middle East. And foremost, Iran desires to reestablish the ancient Persian Empire. They know that the successful annihilation of Israel would garner great support for their ambition to exert a greater leadership role in the region.

Nonetheless, the Bible tells us that all of these evil ambitions will never lead to the destruction of Israel, or drive the Jewish people from their ancient home. ([Amos 9:15](#)) The stage is set for the God of Israel to demonstrate to the world that He alone is God. Through a series of prophetic events documented in the Bible, the Lord will repeatedly and supernaturally defend His people and His land. He has declared: *"I will seek to destroy all of the nations that come against Jerusalem."* ([Zechariah 12:9](#))

Remember the Holocaust

When I take people with me to Israel, the very last place we visit is Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem. This museum is an overwhelming reminder of what hate and deception can accomplish. This museum is filled with artifacts and historical data from the era of the Holocaust. The hallways of the main building are filled with personal items of the Jewish victims, along with video testimonies of some of the survivors. I and many with me have shed many tears as we walk through this

touching reminder of one of the most tragic events of the 20th century.

I want all who travel with me to experience the heart wrenching reality of what the Jewish people have endured. It is a clear reminder why there must be a modern nation of Israel that can defend its own people in a time of moral collapse in our world.

Each year, Israel has a Holocaust memorial day. This April 16th the sirens sounded out all over Israel and everyone stopped what they were doing and stood in complete silence in honor of the 6 million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust. At this year's memorial, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a very thought provoking speech. Here is some of his comments: "Seventy years ago we were a people of war refugees, powerless and voiceless. Today we express what we have to say, and we are determined to guarantee our existence and our future. It is our duty to fight those who wish to destroy us, not to bow down to them nor to downplay reality. We will not allow the State of Israel to be a passing episode in the history of our nation. ... Today, we have our own country – a flourishing and modern country. A country that imbibes the heritage of our fathers and stands at the forefront of global knowledge. A country that disseminates a great light. A country that has taken charge of its destiny. Seventy years after the valleys of death, we revere the living, the vibrant, the creative, the flourishing.

Israel breaks ground on every front of modernization – in science, medicine, technology, agriculture, education and culture. And we do this not only for our people. We do this for the benefit of all humanity. This is what our existence is based upon – on our commitment to the safety and future of Israel, on the deference to our heritage, and on the unity of a nation in which beats a vast life force. The nation of Israel, that has arisen from the hellfire, is ready for any challenge.

'Shake thyself from the dust; put on thy beautiful garments, my people.' [Isaiah 52:1-2] The nation of eternity has shaken itself from the dust, returned home, stood tall, and established an outstanding country and an outstanding army, the Israel Defense Force, in which our brave and courageous sons and daughters serve." (www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speech_yadvashem150415.aspx)

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Please pray for these meetings and encourage your family and friends who live near these meetings to attend.

It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view.

Check out www.ptnews.org for more information.

May 21	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church	540-798-5110
May 23-24	Fort Valley, VA	Dry Run Christian Church	540-933-6277
May 24-26	Front Royal, VA,	Front Royal Baptist Temple	540-551-0580
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June 14	Riner, VA	Fellowship Baptist Church	540-392-3032
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June 20	Salem, VA	Faith Baptist Church	540-353-6357