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Chapter 8 - Islam's al-Mahdi The Biblical Antichrist

Introduction. *The day was September 17, 2005.* The President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was addressing the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. He closed his speech with these remarks and a prayer:

"Dear Friends and Colleagues,

"From the beginning of time, humanity has longed for the day when justice, peace, equality and compassion envelop the world. All of us can contribute to the establishment of such a world. When that day comes, the ultimate promise of all Divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being who is heir to all prophets and pious men. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace..". . "Oh mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace."

Read it again. Slower. Notice these phrases: "perfect human being," "lead the world to justice and absolute peace," "hasten the emergence of your last repository," "the promised one." . . .

Each of these words/phrases has a specific meaning to Shi`ah Islam; and when Ahmadinejad used them before the United Nations it was not because he was petitioning Allah to bring about peace and the laying down of arms by the nations of the world. *Ahmadinejad sees this peace as possible only after Islam has world dominion.* On that day in 2005, Ahmadinejad told only half the story. He didn't mention that "*absolute peace*" under the leadership of this "*perfect. . . promised one,*" will come only, according to Shi`ahs, through a time of world chaos resulting in the deaths of many, *beginning with those of the Sunni sect of Islam.* This so-called "promised one" will "emerge," not with olive branch in hand, but with the "sword of Muhammad."

This chapter will name "*al-Mahdi,*" Shi`ah Islam's "promised one," as the Biblical Antichrist appearing in the Tribulation period of the Last Days. *Why does he matter?* Because he is prophesied to come with an "economic sword" as well as a military one. He will be able to accomplish the miraculous, and deceive and bring humanity under the will of his god. We have already interpreted Allah as this false god. We will now interpret al-Mahdi to be the Antichrist incarnate who will be the Biblical Antichrist/false prophet, and who will lead Islam in its final jihad.

Antichrist as an Individual - the Bible's Prophecies. In prior chapters, we discussed the fact that the word "antichrist" is found in only four verses in the Bible, all in 1 and 2nd John (1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3, 2 John 1:7). In these verses, John uses the word in two ways: as a general spirit of deception that is anti-Christ and anti-God in human culture; and, secondly, as a demonic incarnation in a specific individual. Scholars have broadened the use of the word, "antichrist" through interpretation of several other Bible passages to apply to him. In addition, the Bible often uses the phrase "false prophet" to describe the Antichrist. The "last" false prophet is prophesied in the following passages. Each refers to the same Antichrist incarnation who will appear in the Last Days:

1. The "different" horn of the 4th beast of Daniel 7:20-22, 24-25;

2. The “man of lawlessness” of 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10;
3. The “second beast” who comes up out of the earth”; Revelation 13:11-15;
4. The “eighth head” of the “scarlet beast” of Revelation 17:8, 11;
5. “Abaddon,” the “angel” of the “abyss”; Revelation 9:11;
6. The “king” of the “latter period” who will be “insolent and skilled in intrigue”; Daniel 8:23-24;
7. The “one who makes desolate” that is made “desolate”; Daniel 9:27;
8. The “king” that “does as he pleases” and exalts and magnifies himself above every god.” Daniel 11:36.

The above list can be very confusing; and, it does not include all those included in scripture that have been referred to as “antichrist” by scholars (some also include the “1st beast” (from the sea) Rev 13:1-10, and the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8). The length of the list can be imposing just in its length. Also, we are interpreting prophecy, which, for this writer, always begins with metaphor and then seeks a literal truth behind the metaphor. The good news is that all of the above metaphors refer to the same “incarnation,” i.e., the “Antichrist,” and *not to different demonic incarnations*. Most of these we have covered or will cover in a later chapter. For now, here is the point most critical to our interpretation: there are only three literal satanic figures behind all of the Biblical metaphors for satan or his two associates.. Here is how we know this. *There are only three satanic figures in scripture that are individually and separately judged by God in the Lake of Fire.* All creatures in all metaphors must be interpreted to be one of these three literal spiritual beings because only these three are judged by God. The three spiritual beings were introduced in our last chapter as we interpreted one of the three, the “beast” (the “first beast” of Revelation 13). The three have been referred to by some as the “trinity of evil” simply because there are three in number and all are related to one of the three, satan, the prince of demons. All three play an important and related role in satan’s timeless struggle against God.

Trinity of Evil. The “trinity of evil” gets its name from three related “creatures of darkness” found in prophetic scripture. These three alone are judged, alive, individually and separately, by God in the Lake of Fire. The trinity of evil includes:

- #1. The “dragon.” He is Satan (Rev 12:9).
- #2. The “beast.” He is the “first beast” (Revelation 13:12) of two beasts in Revelation 13. We have interpreted him to be Islam’s supreme being, Allah. We refer to him as the “first beast” in this writing.
- #3. The “false prophet.” He is the “last” false prophet. He is generally referred to as the “Antichrist” by scholars. We will refer to him in this writing as the “Antichrist/false prophet” or the “second beast” (Revelation 13:11f).

We have stated that the Bible judges only these three, alive, in the Lake of Fire. Therefore, all others “creatures” must be one of these three (or a human being, and not satanically incarnate). Here are the passages that describe God’s judgment of these three. As you read, remember that when the text refers to the “false prophet,” it is referring to the “Antichrist/false prophet” (#3 above of the trinity of evil):

Revelation 19:20 "*And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the*

beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Emphasis added)

Revelation 20:10 “*And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*” (Emphasis added)

Revelation 16:13 “*And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, . . .*” (Emphasis added)

Revelation 14:9 “*And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast . . . , 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, . . . ; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”* (Emphasis added)

The member of the trinity of evil we will be discussing in this chapter will be the Antichrist/false prophet. We will not review all of the passages that refer to him; that would take too much paper! We will look at one of the key references, the “eighth head” of the “scarlet beast.” As you read, be certain not to confuse the eighth head of the scarlet beast with the “beast from the sea” (Revelation 13:1-10), the “first beast.” We have already interpreted the “first beast” to be Allah. The Antichrist will *serve the first beast*, by “pointing” or “directing” humanity to the first beast . Revelation 13:12 states the second beast “exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence.” In other words, the second beast has no power unless he supports the first beast (doesn’t sound like darkness trusts darkness very much!!).

We will first provide Shi`ah Islam’s prophecies of the coming “al-Mahdi.” Then, we will compare the Bible’s prophecies of the coming Antichrist/false prophet (and discuss why we are not comparing Sunni prophecies).

The Antichrist will be the Hidden Imam of Twelver Shiism. Muhammad b. Hasan, born 872 AD, was the son of the 11th Imam, Hasan al-Askari, of Twelver Shi`ah Islam ² (Shi`ahs are the minority sect of Islam (10%). Twelvers are the majority branch of Shi`ah Islam). Since Islam’s historic divide in 680 AD, Sunnis have been the dominant and controlling sect of Islam. The result has been the continuous persecution of Shi`ahs by Sunnis, particularly, Shi`ah Imams. Shi`ah Imams were considered a threat by Sunni caliphs because Shi`ah Imams were blood descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima. The Sunni caliphs saw Shi`ah Imams as contenders for the caliphate, and, as such, did all they could to insure the elimination of this threat through death or imprisonment.³ To protect themselves from Sunni caliphs, Shi`ah Imams were forced to hide (or to practice “taqiyyah,” the Shi`ah practice of “subterfuge,” of hiding one’s beliefs, in order to protect oneself from harm.⁴ This was the case for the 11th Imam who was poisoned by the reigning Sunni caliph.⁵

Because of the danger to the Imam and his descendants, when Muhammad b. Hasan was born, his father, the 11th Imam, hid his son from public view. Only a few Shi`ahs were even aware of his son’s existence.⁶ At his father’s death (873 AD), when Hasan was only seven, and by “Divine Command,” he went into “hiding,” an event Twelvers refer to as “occultation.”⁷

The doctrine of “occultation” (“ghayba”) is summarized by Dr. Abdulaziz Sachedina, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia,⁸ as follows:

“Occultation (ghayba) is a state chosen by God for the Imam who is in danger of being slain by his enemies. Thus the twelfth Imam, Muhammad b. al-Hasan . . . , went into occultation in the year 260/873—74 and will continue to live in this state for as long as (Allah) deems it necessary; then He will command him to reappear and take control of the world in order to restore justice and equity. During this period of concealment the Imam is not completely cut off from his followers but has spokesmen, in the person of learned jurists, who can act on his behalf and guide the Shiites in their religious matters.”⁹

Twelvers believe that Muhammad b. Hasan, the 12th Imam, whose body was never found, *never died. He lives today, still in hiding, after more than 1,200 years.* According to Twelvers, he still lives because Allah will not leave humanity without divine guidance; and, as the sole surviving Imam heir of Muhammad through Ali and Fatima, he is the only one who can give this guidance.¹⁰ He continues to provide divine guidance to Shi`ahs through their spiritual leaders, thereby enabling them to instruct Shi`ahs in the performance of their required religious duties.¹¹ The 12th Imam will continue to live in hiding until Allah decides the moment he will “rise up” and commands him to do so, accordingly.¹² He is also known among Shi`ahs as the “Master of the Age,” an infallible, sinless leader, and protector of the religion.¹³

Twelvers believe the Hidden Imam lives continuously among the people¹⁴ but is concealed from their view; and, every year he attends the *Hajj* (annual pilgrimage to Mecca) alongside them.

“Mecca is not only the place where his (rise) will commence at the End of Time, but also (as many Shi`ites believe) his residence. . . Shi`ites assert that he comes for the pilgrimage to Mecca every year. . . The Imamite sources on the twelfth Imam are full of such traditions which emphasize one thing, that every year the hajj is being attended by the one closely related to the Prophet, who is also the promised one to appear in the future.”¹⁵

Twelvers also believe that when Hidden Imam “rises up,” he will not be “rising from the dead” (as Christians believe Jesus Christ did following his crucifixion¹⁶). To have died requires a *ceasing to exist*; and, the Hidden Imam as the “proof of God” has *never* ceased to exist.¹⁷ Rather, the Hidden Imam’s “rising” is more likened to an “appearing,” “emerging,” or “coming forth” out of his deathless state of “concealment.”¹⁸

When the Hidden Imam rises, he will appear not as the Hidden Imam or the Twelfth Imam but as “al-Mahdi.”¹⁹ “Mahdi” literally means “rightly guided one”: *“It is reported on the authority of Abu Basir, a companion of Ja’far al-Sadiq [the sixth Imam], that when the Imam was asked, . . . , “Why was he named Mahdi?” He answered, “Because he guides to the secret things. . . ”²⁰*

As the “risen” Imam, al-Mahdi will continue the blood line of Muhammad, through Ali and Fatima (Muhammad’s daughter).²¹ Muhammad is reported to have stated, *“The world would not continue, but for that day wherein Allah will send a man from the family of my house.”²² “The Mahdi will be from my family, from the descendants of Fatima.”²³*

“Al-Mahdi Al-Muntazar.” The Mahdi is known among Shi`ahs as “al-Mahdi, al-Muntazar,” the “Awaited One.”²⁴ He receives this title by virtue of the Shi`ahs long wait for one to rise up who

will redress the wrongs committed against them by the ruling sect, the Sunnis. With Ali having been passed over as caliph in 632 AD, with Husayn's martyrdom in 680 AD, and with the failure of Shi'ahs thereafter to reclaim the caliphate from Sunnis (with the exception of the Fatimids (Ismailis) ruling simultaneously in Egypt (909 - 1171 AD)²⁵), Shi'ahs were forced into "quietism" to stay alive.²⁶ The fifth and sixth Shi'ah Imams, Al-Baqir and Al-Sadiq, foretold of this "awaited one," as a means to keep Shi'ahs of the 8th century and later from losing hope that they would not be delivered from their oppression by Sunnis.²⁷ Al-Mahdi, when he emerges from occultation, will be that one.

Al-Mahdi is called "al-Qaim." According to Shi'ahs, al-Mahdi is also called "al-Qaim," the "redresser of wrongs." Shi'ahs believe, "*It is the promise of God, . . . , that he will raise the cry of al-Qa'im for those who killed al-Husayn, and He will take vengeance against those who wronged him.*"²⁸

Dr Timothy Furnish adds, "*All Shi'ah groups do, however, agree that a Hidden Imam will reveal himself before the Last Days as al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, the "Awaited Mahdi," who will not only create a worldwide socioeconomically just Islamic state (a point on which they agree with the Sunnis) but also rebuke the Sunnis for their stubborn refusal to admit their historical mistake of rejecting the Shi'ah Imams.*"²⁹

Al-Mahdi is called the "Master of the Sword." Some Shi'ahs believe that al-Mahdi will bring about peace and justice but only *through his sword*.³⁰ That is, peace will not come through the surrender of conquered peoples (as "dhimmis," i.e., conquered peoples of Muslims; a tax along with submission required in exchange for one's non-conversion to Islam) but by bloodshed and forced subjection to al-Mahdi's version of Islam. The Mahdi, as Master of the Sword, will use his "sword" to bring Islam under one banner and the world under one religion, Islam. Some Shi'ahs believe he will do so without mercy:

*"Al-Baqir is reported to have said, "I can see your religion mixed with blood However, al-Qa'im will not follow the Prophet's example of gentleness and flexibility and winning over the people by uniting them; He will also not follow the example of 'Ali, who adopted the path of forgiveness and benevolence in his dealings with the people, . . . His state of affairs will be the sword. . . ."*³¹

As Master of the Sword and redresser of wrongs, Al-Mahdi will avenge the acts of Sunnis against Shi'ahs, and is prophesied to be especially severe on Arabs. He will not accept repentance from anyone nor will he receive rebuke from any contemporary.³² He is prophesied to rise with a new teaching of Islam:

*"Al Qa'im will rise with a new authority, a new Book, and a new order, which will be severe on the Arabs (his main supporters, according to some traditions, will be the non-Arabs). His state of affairs will be the sword (he is known as the sahib al-sayf, Master of the Sword), and he will not accept repentance from anyone, nor will the rebuke of his adversaries deter him from carrying out the command of God."*³³

Al-Mahdi, according to Shi'ah traditions, is prophesied to appear at a time when the entire world is in chaos. Professor Sachedina quotes from a Shi'ah tradition:

“According to another tradition, a person who had met the twelfth Imam in Mecca asked him about the time when he would appear. The Imam replied that the sign of his appearance would be total turmoil and chaos in the world.”⁸⁴

Do you remember our opening quote from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran? According to Ahmadinejad, this “long awaited one,” will be “benevolent, fair and just, perfect and pure, and will bring peace and justice.” How will he do this? According to Shi`ah prophecy, he will do so only by his sword. *Ahmadinejad is Shi`ah. It seems he only told us half the story!*

The “eighth head” of the “scarlet beast.” Revelation 17 brings us to another vision for the Apostle John. He is carried away into the desert wilderness where he sees a woman riding a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns (17:3). We will discuss who the woman is in a following chapter; for now, it is the 8th head of the scarlet beast we are focusing on, upon which the woman rides. The text gives us specific information about the scarlet beast. It states, Revelation 17:11 *“And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.”* Thus, the scarlet beast will be the eighth “king” of the kingdom represented by the scarlet beast.

The “eighth head” of the scarlet beast. The text gives us very detailed, unique characteristics about the eighth head of the scarlet beast. The characteristics are very specific and will lead us to interpret whether or not we are interpreting the leader of the kingdom or the kingdom itself. Revelation 17:8 states, *“The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. . . .”*

Here are the four clues the Bible gives us to identify the eighth head of the scarlet beast:

1. The eighth head of the scarlet beast “was”; 17:8, 11;
2. The eighth head of the scarlet beast “is not”; 17:8, 11;
3. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is “about to come up out of the abyss”; 17:8, 11;
4. The eighth head of the scarlet beast is about to come up out of the abyss and “go to destruction.” 17:8, 11.

We will first apply the four Biblical requirements to al-Mahdi using the Shi`ah prophecies we have reviewed.

The Biblical Antichrist - the eighth head of the scarlet beast “was.” The first requirement of the eighth head is that he *existed in the past*, as an historical person (Revelation 17:8), i.e., he “was.” *Muhammad b. Hasan*, the 12th Shi`ah Imam and son of Hasan al-Askari, the 11th Imam,³⁵ was an historical person. He lived in the 9th century AD and Shi`ahs record him as their 12th Imam. He is the “Hidden Imam” to Shi`ahs. *Muhammad b. Hasan*, the Hidden Imam, “was.”

The Biblical Antichrist - the eighth head of the scarlet beast “is not.” Remember the doctrine of “occultation” for the Hidden Imam? According to Shi`ahs, Muhammad b. Hasan, the 12th Shi`ah Imam, went into a deathless state of “existence” in the ninth century AD. This state is referred to by Shi`ahs as “occultation.” In this deathless state, Shi`ahs believe that the 12th Imam is still alive, but “concealed” or “hidden” from humanity. While concealed, he is “absent” from humanity but still in existence. This is why the 12th Imam is referred to by Shi`ahs as the

“Hidden Imam.” *He is “hidden” and cannot be seen, even though he continues to exist. The Hidden Imam “is not.”*

The Biblical Antichrist - the eighth head of the scarlet beast is “about to come up.”

According to Shi`ahs, the Hidden Imam will “rise” at the command of Allah at some date in the future.³⁶ The Hidden Imam will “rise up” from his concealed, hidden state, and emerge in plain sight of humanity. This is a future event and cannot occur, according to Shi`ahs, until Allah commands the Hidden Imam to “rise up.”

Dr Said Amir Arjomand, Professor of Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook,³⁷ gives this summary from a Shi`ah tradition:

“In another tradition, al-Sadiq [6th Imam of Twelvers] is reported to have explained that the Qa’im is known as such “because he will rise after his death for an important task, and will rise by the command of God.” . . . Qa’im and the Mahdi are one and the same person . . . He will rise for an important task.”³⁸

The Hidden Imam is “about to come up.”

The Biblical Antichrist - the eighth head of the scarlet beast is about to come up “from the abyss.” Revelation 17:8 describes the place from which the eighth head will come up as the “abyss.” This term is a Biblical term that refers to the *place of incarceration for demons*.³⁹ “Abyss” translates from the Greek word, “*abussos*” and is defined by A T Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament:

“Of the pit of the abyss “Abussos” is an old adjective . . . , the bottomless place. It occurs in Romans 10:7 for the common receptacle of the dead for Hades (Sheol), but in Luke 8:31, a lower depth is sounded (Swete), for the abode of demons, and in this sense it occurs in Rev. 9:1-2, 11; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 20:1, 3. . . .”⁴⁰ (Emphasis added)

“*Abussos*” is used nine times in the New Testament, all but two of which are found in Revelation. A revealing passage is found in Luke 8:31 when Christ is about to deliver a man possessed by many demons. The demons express this plea to Jesus: “*And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*” Clearly, the demons recognize the “abyss” as the logical place for them to be dispossessed. Why else plea that they not be sent (or return?) there?

Another revealing passage is found in Revelation 20:2-3: “*And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.*” Thus, the abyss is some type of prison, holding place, for the demonic (whether literal or metaphoric).

As we move to Revelation 9 we find the same Greek word, “*abussos*,” but there it is translated “bottomless pit.” The opening verses depict the unleashing of demonic creatures from this pit.

Revelation 9:1 “*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen*

to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.” (Emphasis added)

Revelation 9:11 gives us the name of the “angel of the abyss,” the “king” of the demonic.

*Revelation 9:7 “And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. . . .
11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.” (Emphasis added).*

Finally, look at how Revelation 17:8 identifies the place from which the scarlet beast will originate: “*The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. . .*” Thus, the scarlet beast’s origin, the place from which he will “come up,” is this same demonic prison.

Now, compare the Bible prophecy with that of Islam. The Bible prophesies of a demonic figure coming up from the abyss, the abode of demons. When he comes up, he will lead his “kingdom.” Islam’s “Hidden Imam” is prophesied by Islam to have been in hiding for 1200 years, to still be “alive” while in “hiding,” and that one day, he will “rise” as al-Mahdi. When he does, he will lead Islam to dominate the world in the name of Allah. *That’s the same prophecy as that of the Bible except the Bible uses a metaphor for this leader. He is the “beast” from the earth (the “second beast of Revelation 13), the “scarlet beast” (Revelation 17), and the king of the Abyss (Abaddon, Revelation 9).*

Perhaps you are wondering if I actually believe that Islam’s Hidden Imam, actually exists? After 1200 years, how is that possible? How can any intelligent human being in the 21st century actually believe in such a far fetched idea? *If the Bible says he exists, then so far as I am concerned, he does. The 8th head of the scarlet beast is a metaphor for the Hidden Imam. One day he will “rise from the abyss.”*

The Biblical Antichrist - the eighth head of the scarlet beast is about to come up from the abyss and “go to destruction” (Rev 17:8). Not only does the eighth head rise “from the abyss,” the abode of demons, but the eighth head does not “die.” Rather, instead of experiencing death, he experiences judgment. According to Revelation 17:8, he is “about to go to his destruction” in the Lake of Fire. *He goes, alive, to his “destruction” in the eternal Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20).* There he will be joined by the two other demonic/satanic beings, the beast, and the dragon, all of whom by-pass death and experience eternal judgment (Rev 16:13, 19:20, 20:10). By the process of elimination, the scarlet beast is the Antichrist/false prophet. We know that because he cannot be the 1st beast – the first beast is the head of the false religion whom we have interpreted to be Allah. The scarlet beast is not the dragon, satan. The only one of the trinity of evil left is the Antichrist/false prophet. This is the 8th head of the scarlet beast.

The Hidden Imam, also prophesied by Islam not to have died, will “rise” from the abyss as the last false prophet. This one will be the al-Mahdi, the Antichrist. He will never die, but rather,

will “go to destruction” in the Lake of Fire.

The Biblical Antichrist - Four Conditions All of Which Must be Met, Simultaneously. There is one very important final requirement that must be met if we are to properly interpret the text. The text gives us four conditions to identify the eighth head of the scarlet beast. The first three of these must be met simultaneously. The fourth can only be met in the future. If these conditions cannot be met simultaneously, they *have little meaning*. In fact, to not require a simultaneous application of the first three characteristics of 17:8 is to strip the text of its specific, unique requirements, and render the requirements without meaning. Consider them once again: the eighth head (17:11) of the scarlet beast:

1. “was,” (17:8, 11)
2. “is not,” (17:8, 11)
3. “is about to come up out of the abyss” (17:8)
4. and, “go to destruction.” 17:8, 11)

First, remember what the text told us about the 8th head of the scarlet beast. *It is a “king.”* As a king, the 8th head of the scarlet beast, must meet the first three requirements, simultaneously (the fourth is a future requirement that occurs only after he comes up). Applying the first three requirements to al-Mahdi gives him a fulfillment that is so unique that it is astounding. If we try to apply the same three requirements to an empire, then the requirements lose all of their uniqueness. In fact, applying the three to an empire *results in almost any past empire meeting the requirements of the text simply by holding that one day the empire will be “revived.”* For example, since Rome existed in the past as an empire (it “was”), and since it is not at present an empire (it “is not”), then it can easily meet the third condition (it is “about to come up”), provided, we interpret Rome as a “revived Rome” for a future time. *If we interpret the 8th head as a kingdom, this interpretation violates the unique complexities of the prophecy, and thereby renders the complexities as without meaning or merit.*

On the other hand, if the eighth head is a “king,” and not an empire, then, the *threefold requirements are uniquely met by the Hidden Imam/al-Mahdi*. No human being can possibly meet the requirements of the text: how can a human being exist in the past (“was”), not exist in the present (“is not”), and yet, be about to “come up” at some future time? *That is the point. This “king” will not a human being.* He will appear in human form, but he will not be human. Rather, *he is one of satan’s kind*, only appearing to be human, he will actually be demonic, and in all likelihood, he is “Abaddon, the prince of the abyss” according to Revelation 9:11.

The Mahdi meets these three conditions and meets them all simultaneously. The Mahdi meets them right now, and has met them since Islam began prophesying of his future “rising” almost 1200 years ago. The Hidden Imam “was,” “is not,” and “is about to come up from the abyss.” When he does, he will carry Islam’s banner as al-Mahdi, the Awaited One. He will be the Biblical Antichrist.

By the way, how can Rome, the Empire (or any human empire), come up from the “abyss,” the abode of demons? An empire is the sum of its individual citizens. It can hardly, as an empire, exist in the abode of demons. Individuals can; but not empires.

The Biblical Antichrist - the beast from the earth will appear as a “lamb,” yet he will

speak as a dragon. The interpretation that the eighth head of the scarlet beast will be a demon incarnate is also supported by other passages which warn us that the Antichrist will have superhuman abilities. The “second beast,” the beast from the earth, is described in Rev 13:11, “*And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.*”

Notice the warning: the beast will have *two horns like a lamb* – but he will *speak as a dragon*. The text is using a “lamb” as a metaphor to tell us how this one will present himself to the world. A lamb is harmless. In fact, as a member of the animal kingdom, sheep have literally no way to defend themselves from prey. Yet, the text adds a second metaphor: “*he will speak as a dragon.*” So how can this one who appears to be a “lamb” actually be harmless if he speaks as a “dragon,” i.e., “satan”? Because he will not be what he appears to be! The picture is one of deception. The “beast” will hold himself out to be one who can be trusted; to be one who will make the world a better place; to be one who will bring peace and justice; for he has “*two horns like a lamb.*”

Does “*two horns like a lamb*” sound like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s “*perfect and pure human being*” who will “*lead the world to justice and absolute peace*”?

The Biblical Antichrist - the beast from the earth (the “second beast”) will be able to accomplish the miraculous. The second beast is prophesied to be able to perform the miraculous for the express purpose of deception (Revelation 13:13, 15).

His ability to perform the miraculous will result in many people being deceived into worshipping the first beast, i.e., Allah.⁴¹ Here are some more prophecies of his ability to perform the miraculous:

Matthew 24:24 “*For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*”²⁵ “*Behold, I have told you in advance.*”

2 Thessalonians 2:8 “*And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*⁹ *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*¹⁰ *and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*”

Revelation 19:20 “*And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.*”

Conclusion. This false prophet will be the last false prophet, i.e., the Antichrist. He is symbolized as the eighth head of the scarlet beast. He will be Shi`ah Islam’s al-Mahdi, a demonic being that has been “in hiding” for almost 1200 years.

Other Relevant Twelver prophecies of the Mahdi. Before concluding this chapter, it will be helpful to briefly mention some of the remaining and yet undiscussed Islamic prophecies of al-Mahdi.

- “Emerge” in Mecca, in the Ka`ba. Al-Mahdi will appear in Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, in the Ka`ba, between the “Rukn and Maqam,” the two holy spots.⁴² He emerges from Mecca rather than Kufa (the site of the battle of Karbala and Husayn’s martyrdom) because al-Mahdi rises for all people (not just Shi`ahs).⁴³ Sachedina quotes a Shi`ah tradition:

“At that time he would come to Mecca and would be in the Ka'ba, when the people would be demanding that an Imam be appointed for them. A discussion would follow until a person would get up among this group and would look at the Imam, and then would say, "O people, this is the Mahdi, look at him," and they would take his hand and place it between the Rukn and Maqam, two spots in the sanctuary of the Ka'ba, and would pay allegiance to the Imam, though until then they had been on the point of despair.”⁴⁴

- He will rule from Kufa (located in modern day Iraq). Al-Mahdi will govern from Kufa assisted by 313 of his close associates.⁴⁵
- He will lead an army from the East, from the area of Khurasan (north east Iran and western Afghanistan) carrying the black flag of Islam⁴⁶, to liberate Jerusalem from the Jews and to liberate the Arabian Peninsula.⁴⁷
- He will reign for seven years.⁴⁸

Shi`ah versus Sunni “al-Mahdi.” I have given you only the Shi`ah prophecies of al-Mahdi. What about the Sunni prophecies? Do the Sunnis believe in the Mahdi as well? Yes, but certainly not in most of the Shi`ah prophecies of al-Mahdi. For example, the Sunnis do not accept that al-Mahdi will “emerge” as “al-Qaim,” who will avenge the Sunni wrongs committed against Shi`ahs throughout Islamic history. Nor do they accept elements of the Shi`ah prophecy regarding al-Mahdi’s occultation. Dr Timothy Furnish, in his book, *“Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden,”* discusses eight Sunnis in Islamic history who have claimed to be the Mahdi. His book, along with that of Joel Richardson, *Antichrist, Islam’s Awaited Messiah,* both include a complete source of references for Sunni prophecies.

So why does this writing discuss Shi`ah prophecies and not Sunni prophecies? In our earlier chapter, we looked at the prophecies of Daniel. *The 4th beast of Daniel pointed us to Shi`ah prophecies, not Sunni.* It was in Shiism that we found, for example, a “little horn” that uprooted three others; and, this horn possessed “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.” (Daniel 7:7-8). The text in Daniel has Shiism in mind. Similarly, the text in Revelation 17:8 has Shiism in mind. It is in Shi`ah prophecies of al-Mahdi that we find fulfillment of the Bible’s prophecies.

The Prophecy of the “Assyrian.” One final note regarding a very interesting Bible prophecy of a coming “Assyrian”:

Micah 5:3 "Therefore, He will give them [Israel] up until the time When she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren Will return to the sons of Israel. 4 And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great To the ends of the earth. 5 And this One will be our peace. When the Assyrian invades our land, When he tramples on our citadels, Then we will raise against him Seven shepherds

and eight leaders of men. 6 And they will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, The land of Nimrod at its entrances; And He will deliver us from the Assyrian When he attacks our land And when he tramples our territory. (Emphasis added)

Biblical Assyria was located in modern day Iraq, north of modern day Baghdad, and east to include much of modern day Iran. Assyria was a mighty nation that conquered many nations, including the “Northern Kingdom,” of Israel (the “ten lost tribes” of the people of Israel), Phoenicia, Philistia, and Idumea.⁴⁹ The ancient and prosperous city of Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Assyria was defeated by a coalition of the Babylonians and Medes (north to central Iran) in 625 BC.⁵⁰ Its defeat is prophesied in Isaiah 10:5-19. Yet, Micah’s prophecy regarding an invading “Assyrian,” appears to be for a later period of time than that which prophesied of Assyria’s defeat in Isaiah 10.

Micah’s prophecy is of a time after the coming of Jesus Christ (Micah 5:3): *“Therefore, He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. . . .”* Thus, God will “give them up,” i.e., the people of Israel, until the time of Jesus Christ; some time later, the “remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel” (v 5:3). The text is telling us that after Israel returns to Jerusalem from having been scattered among the nations in exile, God will act in this time against an Assyrian who will invade Jerusalem. Israel returned to Jerusalem in 1948. In the future, an “Assyrian,” will invade Jerusalem. Seven “shepherds” and eight “leaders” will deliver Israel and Jerusalem from the Assyrian.

Assyria includes parts of Iraq and Iran (Kufa, from where al-Mahdi is prophesied by Shi`ahs to rule, is in modern day Iraq). The populations of both countries are predominantly Shi`ah Muslim. When Saddam Hussein was removed from power in Iraq, the minority Sunnis (40%) were in control. At present, the new government in Iraq is predominately Shi`ah. Also, Iran’s population is 95% Shi`ah. Ahmadinejad of Iran has publicly stated that Israel should be “wiped off the map.” Al-Mahdi is prophesied to “emerge” as al-Qaim, redresser of wrongs, and the long awaited one, from Shi`ah Islam. The Bible prophesies of a coming Assyrian against Jerusalem.

Conclusion. When we compare the Shi`ah prophecies of al-Mahdi, he fits hand in glove with that of the Bible. Al-Mahdi “was”; al-Mahdi “is not;” al-Mahdi is about “to come up;” al-Mahdi is about to come up “from the abyss;” al-Mahdi will one day go “to his destruction” as Antichrist/false prophet. The Bible warns us that even though he may perform the miraculous; and, even though he may appear as a lamb – do not be deceived. He is a force of the dragon - the Antichrist version. His present Biblical name is likely, Abaddon, the king of the abyss; and, his fate is reserved in the Lake of Fire, where he will suffer eternally with his two companions, satan and the beast.

Summary of Key Points in this Chapter	
Point 1	The Bible prophesies of three separate demonic creatures, each of which does not die, but is judged by God in the Lake of Fire for eternity. This “trinity of evil” includes: 1) satan, 2) the “beast” (from the sea), and 3) the false prophet (the Antichrist). All other Last Days’ creatures are metaphors for one of these three, but just using a different metaphor.
Point 2	Islam prophesies of a supernatural creature that will “emerge” at a time of world chaos as their “long awaited one.” This long awaited one is the “Hidden Imam” of Shi`ah Islam who is “al-Qaim,” the “redresser of wrongs,” committed against Shi`ahs by Sunnis. He is Shi`ah Islam’s “master of the sword,” prophesied by Shiism to lead Islam to bring the entire world under Islam.
Point 3	The 8 th head of the scarlet beast is the last false prophet, the Antichrist. Shi`ah Islam’s al-Mahdi meets the four fold requirement of Rev 17:8, 11 as this last false prophet: he “was”; he “is not”; he is about to “come up out of the abyss”; and, “go to his destruction.” All of these requirements must be met simultaneously. Al-Mahdi does this. He will be the Biblical Antichrist.

The “Scarlet Beast” Requirements of the Metaphor of Revelation 17:8

1. The scarlet beast “was.” 17:8

Muhammad b. Hasan, 12th Imam, was born 872AD

2. The scarlet beast “is not.” 17:8

Muhammad b. Hasan, the Hidden Imam, has been in “hiding” for the last 1200 years

3. The scarlet beast “is about to come up from the abyss.” 17:8

This “Hidden Imam” will “come up” as “al Mahdi”

4. The scarlet beast . . . goes to his destruction.” 17:8

al Mahdi will be judged in the “Lake of Fire”

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- 1 <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article10336.htm> (accessed August 30, 2007)
- 2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_al-Mahdi (accessed January 31, 2008).
- 3 Abdulaziz Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shiism*, p 6 -7.
- 4 Cyril Glasse', *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 397.
- 5 <http://www.ummah.net/khoei/imam.htm>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 <http://pewforum.org/events/0503/sachedinabio.htm> (accessed September 6, 2007).
- 9 Abdulaziz Abdulaziz Sachedina, p. 23.
- 10 Sachedina, p. 22.
- 11 Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi`ism*, p. 23.
- 12 Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, p. 23.
- 13 Sachedina, p. 22.
- 14 Though it is discounted even by the most extremist clerics, a popular belief in Iran holds that the 12th Imam lives at the bottom of a well in Jamkaran, just outside of Qom. Devotees drop written requests into the well to communicate with the Mahdi.
<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID={32B294D4-A21C-4095-8D59-1B49230E3F5D}>
(accessed August 30, 2007).
- 15 Sachedina, p. 74-75.
- 16 Acts 10:39 "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.⁴⁰ "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible,"
- 17 Sachedina, p. 66-67.
- 18 Sachedina, p. 168.
- 19 Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, p. 71.
- 20 Arjomand, p. 40.
- 21 Sachedina, p. 7-8.
- 22 Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, p. 14.

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- 23 Timothy R. Furnish, p 14..
- 24 Timothy R. Furnish, p. 5.
- 25 Cyril Glasse', p. 123-125.
- 26 Sachedina, p. 13.
- 27 Sachedina, p. 60-61.
- 28 Sachedina, p. 157.
- 29 Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, p. 5.
- 30 Sachedina, p. 64.
- 31 Sachedina, p. 174.
- 32 Sachedina, p. 174.
- 33 Sachedina, p. 174.
- 34 Sachedina, p. 76.
- 35 Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, p. 42. There are many factions within Shiism which disagree based on the historical accuracy of the son of al-Askari, the 11th Imam. Sachedina includes a discussion of twelve separate factions on this question, each of which is reported by Islamic historian, Hasan bin Musa al-Nawbakhti. See p. 42f.
- 36 The concept of al-Mahdi also exists in Sunni Islam. For a review of Sunni views on al-Mahdi see Timothy R. Furnish, *Holiest Wars*.
- 37 <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/arjomand.htm> (accessed September 6, 2007).
- 38 Arjomand, p. 39-40.
- 39 Robert . Thomas, *Revelation 8-22, An Exegetical Commentary*, p. 30.
- 40 Robertson, A.M., D.D., LL.D., Litt. D., Archibald Thomas. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.
- 41 It is not necessary for us to interpret "fire" (Revelation 13;13) and "image of the beast" that "comes to life and speaks" (Revelation 13:15) as literal miracles. Rather, using our "metaphor first" model of interpretation, these specific miracles are representative of the Antichrist/false prophet's ability to perform the miraculous.
- 42 Sachedina, p. 160.
- 43 Sachedina, p. 161.
- 44 Sachedina, p. 76.

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45 Sachedina, p. 175.

46 "In Islam there are two flags. One is white and one is black. Written across both flags in Arabic are the words, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger". The white flag is called *Al-Liwaa* and serves as the sign for the leader of the Muslim army and is the flag of the Islamic State. The black flag is called *Ar-Raya* and is used by the Muslim army. It is also called the flag of jihad, and is carried into battle. One flag is governmental and the other is a military flag. When Muhammad returned to his home city of Mecca after being exiled for eight years, he returned as a conqueror. With him were ten thousand Muslim soldiers. They carried with them black flags. On the flags was one word written in Arabic: "*punishment*." Available at, http://answering-islam.org.uk/Authors/JR/Future/ch04_the_mahdi.htm, at September 3, 2007.

47 http://answering-islam.org.uk/Authors/JR/Future/ch04_the_mahdi.htm. (accessed September 3, 2007).

48 http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=48225 (accessed September 3, 2007).

49 Easton, Matthew George. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*. London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897. WORDsearch CROSS e-book. .

50 Easton, Matthew George. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*. London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.