

Session 16

The End of the Age and the World to come

Islam

The Day of Judgement one of the pillars of Islam and an essential article of faith. There is not a lot of detail in the Qur'an regarding the "**end time events**" that precede it. The main source material is the Hadith; although there are variations in interpretation there is broad agreement about what to expect.

As with other Islamic doctrines there is a great deal of "borrowing" from Jewish and Christian Scriptures but with major reinterpretation and applications; (of course Muslims would claim that their scriptures are original and authentic and that the Bible is the corrupted version).

The centre of these events at the end of the age is Jerusalem, not Mecca, and Jesus is one of the principle participants in the coming great judgment.

These signs will precede the Day of Judgement

1. The emergence of the [Sufyani](#) (a tyrant from N. Africa)
2. [Appearance](#) of the [Mahdi](#).
3. Black flag army will appear from [Greater Khorasan](#) (Persia)(Weak hadith).
4. The false messiah, [Masih ad-Dajjal](#), shall appear with huge powers as a one eyed man with the other eye blind and deformed like a grape. He will claim to be God and to hold keys to heaven and hell and lead many astray, although believers will not be deceived. His heaven is the believers' hell, and his hell is the believers' heaven.
5. Medina will be deserted, with true believers going to follow Mahdi and sinners following Dajjal
6. The return of [Isa](#), from the second sky to kill Dajjal
7. [Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj](#) (Gog and Magog), two tribes of vicious beings which had been imprisoned by [Dhul-Qarnayn](#), (possessor of the two horns - a force building a wall to keep Gog and Magog in check), will break out. They will ravage the earth, drink all the water of [Lake Tiberias](#), and kill all believers in their way (or see). Isa, Imam Al-Mahdi, and the believers with them will go to the top of a mountain and pray for the destruction of [Gog](#) and Magog. Allah will eventually send disease and worms to wipe them out.
8. [Mecca](#) will be attacked and the [Kaaba](#) will be destroyed.
9. A pleasant breeze will blow from the south that shall cause all believers to die peacefully.
10. [Quran](#) will be forgotten and no one will recall its verses.
11. All Islamic knowledge will be lost to the extent where people will not say "La Illaha Ila Allah" (There is no god, but AllThe ah), but instead old people will babble without understanding "Allah, Allah".
12. [Dabbat al-ard](#), (the Beast from the ground) will admonish the unbelievers for their lack of attention towards God, *S27:82 And when the Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), we shall produce from the earth a beast to (face) them: He will speak to them, for that mankind did not believe with assurance in Our Signs.* The Beast has the [Staff of Moses](#) and the [Seal of Solomon](#). It will strike the face of the disbelievers with the ring of Solomon; "He is destined for Hell" will be written on his forehead, and his face will blacken and it will brighten the face of the believer with the staff of Moses and "He is destined for Paradise" will be written on his forehead.
13. People will fornicate in the streets 'like donkeys'.
14. A huge black smoke cloud will cover the earth.
15. The sun will rise from the west.
16. The first trumpet blow will be sounded by [Israfil](#), (an archangel) and all that is in heavens and earth will be stunned and die except what God wills and silence envelops everything for forty (an undetermined period of time).
17. The second trumpet blow will be sounded, the dead will return to life and a fire will start that shall gather all to Mahshar Al Qiy'amah (The Gathering for Judgment).

The coming of the Mahdi , (guided one) is of central importance, although his identity is disputed.

"Islam shall neither pass away nor be deviated while there are my 12 Caliphs (successors) from my nation in it, all of them will be from Quraysh. When the last of them passes away, the Hour will be established and the earth

will be destroyed (swallowed) with all its inhabitants." (Hadith of Muhammad). He will come to Jerusalem, unfurl the black flag of Mohammed, restore true Islamic worship and rule for a number of years prior to the reign of Jesus.

A majority of **Shiite Muslims** believe that Mohammed ibn Hasan (born 868 A.D), the 12th Imam descended from Mohammed, was placed by God into hiding (known as occultation) until the day of judgment. *"I am the chief of the Prophets ... and after me my successors shall be twelve ... Al-Mahdi (is) the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity like it would be brimming with injustice and tyranny ... even if a day remains for the life of this world, the Almighty Allah will prolong this day to an extent till he sends my son Mahdi, then he will make 'Isa ibn Maryam to descend and pray behind him. And the earth will be illuminated by his radiance. And his power will reach to the east and the west." Hadith.* The present Ayatollahs of Iran see themselves as joint caretakers of the office of the Imam until he returns.

Sunnis believe that the Mahdi will be a new and separate person. "It has been well known (and generally accepted) by all Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family(of the Prophet) will without fail make his appearance, one who will strengthen the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi.

Following a time of great hardship the Dajjal (Anti-Christ, ?Satan) will appear on a donkey, and his call will be heard from one end of the earth to the other. He will tell the people that he is their creator and their lord. He has a single eye on his forehead, shining like the morning star and on his forehead is written: "This is the kafir (non-believer)". He will tempt people by bringing food and water, which will be scarce at that time, a test for sifting the true believers of God from the false ones.

In the **Shiite** traditions the function of killing the Dajjal is reserved for al-Mahdi. *"Those who follow him on that day will be the enemies of God, who will be wearing something green on their heads. God will cause them to be killed in Syria at a spot named Afiq, on Friday, three hours after the sunrise, at the hands of the one behind whom Jesus will worship.* After this no repentance will be accepted.

On the other hand, some **Sunnis**, related a tradition attributed to Mohammed: *"There is no Mahdi save Jesus, son of Mary."* They argue that there is no mention of Mahdi in the Qur'an, the return of Jesus was well established in the signs of the Hour, and he, not the Mahdi, would kill the Dajjal.

However, **Muslim eschatological tradition is unanimous in assigning to both Jesus and the Mahdi a significant role in the doctrine of the qiyama (resurrection).** Many exegetes of the Quran in explaining the verse, *"He (Jesus) is surely a knowledge of the Hour" (S43:61)*, state that the descent of Jesus during the rulership of the Mahdi will make the approach of the Hour known. "He (Jesus) will descend in the Holy Land at a place called Afiq with a spear in his hand; he will kill with it al-Dajjal and go to Jerusalem at the time of the morning prayer. The Imam (Madhi) will seek to yield his place to him, but Jesus will refuse and will worship behind him according to the Sharia of Muhammad.

Thereafter **Jesus will kill the swine, break the cross, and kill all the Christians who do not believe in him.** Once al-Dajjal is killed, all the Peoples of the Book (i.e., Jews and Christians) will believe in him and will form one single Umma of those who submit to the will of God. Jesus will establish the rule of justice and will remain for forty years, after which he will die. His funeral will take place in Medina, where he will be buried beside Muhammad, in a place between Abu Bakr and Umar."

S4:87. Allah! La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). Surely, He will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. And who is truer in statement than Allah?

S22:7-9. And surely, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and certainly, Allah will resurrect those who are in the graves. And among men is he who disputes about Allah, without knowledge or guidance, or a Book giving light (from Allah), Bending his neck in pride (far astray from the Path of Allah), and leading (others) too (far) astray from the Path of Allah. For him there is disgrace in this worldly life, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall make him taste the torment of burning (Fire).

3:21-25. *Verily! Those who disbelieve in the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah and kill the Prophets without right, and kill those men who order just dealings, ... announce to them a painful torment. They are those whose works will be lost in this world and in the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers.*

Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Scripture? They are being invited to the Book of Allah to settle their dispute, then a party of them turn away, and they are averse. This is because they say: "The Fire shall not touch us but for a number of days." And that which they used to invent regarding their religion has deceived them. How (will it be) when We gather them together on the Day about which there is no doubt (i.e. the Day of Resurrection). And each person will be paid in full what he has earned? And they will not be dealt with unjustly.

Jewish and Christian Scriptures

I have grouped these together to consider **the prophetic Scriptures of the complete Bible**. Obviously most Jews do not believe in Jesus as Messiah and, therefore might logically be expecting the Messiah to fulfil the complete prophetic "package".

The era of the "Last Days" was inaugurated by the coming of Jesus, Hebrews 1:1-2 - God's final revelation, the coming of the Kingdom of God in the person of the King, Matt. 3:1-3, 21:5, 9.

It encompasses the whole period to the conclusion of history, Acts 2:16-21, c.f. Joel 2:28-3:2.

In contrast **the "former time"** was a period of ignorance, Acts 17:30-31, especially for Gentiles, c.f. Eph. 2:11-13, 3:1-9 (note v5 **"other ages"**, v9 **"from the beginning of the ages"**).

It was also the case for Israel, acting in ignorance of the significance of the message of the prophets, Acts 3:17-18; Peter then described the whole period from the coming of Jesus to the end of the age, as the message of the prophets, v19-26.

"The Time of the End" refers to the period and events **towards the conclusion of the Last Days**.

The expression comes from Dan. 11:40 and 12:4&9; it is clear from the whole passage, 11:40-12:13, that **understanding of this period will only be given to "the wise" who live at that time**, 12:8-10.

It will involve invasion of the Holy Land 11:45, and the shattering of the power of the Holy People 12:7, but also their deliverance, 12: 1. It will conclude with the resurrection of the dead, 12:2-3, 13.

Sometimes in context "The Last Days" seems to refer particularly to this period, i.e. that things common to the whole era will become more intense during the penultimate period, 2 Tim. 3:1-9, 2Peter 3:1-4,10-13, c.f. Luke 21:7-11. this stage includes the completion of the **"Times of the Gentiles"**, Luke 21:24.

Jesus will not return until all the remaining prophecies have been fulfilled.

"... Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began". Acts 3:21.

The key to interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled is to see how the others have been fulfilled.

The answer is that they were fulfilled **in a literal way** in the historical settings that they described (e.g. if Bethlehem, why not the Mount of Olives? If the scattering of Israel was actual, why not the re-gathering?).

Prophecies often use metaphorical language to speak of real space/time events so we should not misinterpret them as allegories that contain spiritual truth but divorced from physical and material events.

There may be a wider spiritual application for the church with reference to the Messianic Kingdom but this should not be substituted for the obvious meaning - that **Jesus will reign from Jerusalem, from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth, that the knowledge of the glory of the LORD will cover the earth, and that His people will reign with Him.**

What are these things?

- **A great increase in knowledge and travel (?communications)** Dan 12:4
- **The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all nations, fulfilling Gen 12:3, Isaiah 49:6, Mal.1:11, Matt. 24:14, 28:19-20.**

- **Major social and moral breakdown and a falling away from the faith**, Matt. 24:12, Luke 18:11, 1Tim. 4:1-3, 2Tim. 3:1-5.
- **The scattered Jewish people return to the Land and are reconstituted as a united nation** Ezek. 37
- **Jerusalem must be restored to Jewish rule** Luke 21:24, Acts 1:6, 3:21
- **A final great empire and an Anti-Christ figure** Dan.7:15-27, 2Thess. 2:1-13, 1John 2:18-23, Rev.13.
- **A period of intense persecution of God's people** Dan 12:1, Matt. 24:22, Rev. 13.
- **The nations will attack and almost overwhelm Israel** Ezek. 38:1-39:2, Joel 3:9-12, Zech. 14:1-2

Removal of the blindness from Israel Zech 12:10-13:1, 2Cor. 3:14-16, Rom 11:25-36,

The time sequence of this is not clear - whether before or at the coming of Messiah Jesus. The conversion of the Jewish people will result in "life for the world" Rom. 11:15 - a major revelation to the Gentile nations of the truth of God's Word, Isaiah 2:2-5.

The return of the Messiah Jesus (not necessarily in chronological order)

- **Sudden and unexpected** Luke 12:35-48, 17:20-37, 22:34-35, 1Thess. 5:1-6, 2Peter 3:10.
- **Dramatic and overwhelming** 1Thess. 5:3, Rev. 6:12-17 etc. etc.
- **Resurrection of the saints** 1Thess. 4:13-18, 1Cor. 15:20-28, 51-57, Rev. 20:4-6
- **With His saints** Zech. 14:5b, 1Thess. 5:13-17, 2Thess. 2:9-10, Jude 1:14
- **To the Mt. of Olives** Zech. 14:3-4, Acts 1:10-11
- **Geological upheavals** Isaiah 2:2, Zech. 14:4-5, 8-10.
- **Jesus will rescue Jerusalem and the enemies will be judged** Ezek. 39:3-24, Joel 3:14-21, Zech. 14:3-15
- **Jerusalem will welcome Jesus as King - "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD"**
Luke 13:34-35
- **The return of the Jews to the land of Israel will be completed; the Gentiles will have a revelation of God's glory and will join with Israel in worshipping God**, Isaiah 19:16-25, 66:5-23, Zech. 14:16-21.
- **Satan bound** Rev. 20:1-3. **The Messianic Kingdom** Isaiah 2:1-5 etc. etc. **for 1000 years** Rev. 20:4-6
- **Satan released** Rev 20:7, **Rebellion, soon defeated**, Rev. 20:7-9, **Satan to lake of fire** Rev. 20:10.
- **General resurrection and judgement** Rev. 20:11-15, 1Cor.3:9-15, 2Cor. 4:9-10
- **New Jerusalem, New Heaven and earth** 2Peter 3:10-13, Rev. 21-22:5

A brief outline of Zechariah

Zechariah prophesied during the Persian Empire in the early years after the return of some of the exiles, 1:1, and at the commencement of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

His name, "The LORD has remembered", reveals his message, the comforting news that God has remembered His Covenant. It begins with a call to return to the Covenant, and their positive response 1:2- 6.

Chapters 1-6 comprise a series of eight visions, apparently following one another in succession. An angel interprets 1:9.

1) 1:7-17. God's jealousy for Jerusalem, His renewed purpose of mercy, and His anger with the oppression nations.

The vision involves four horsemen, who have investigated the nations and found them to be at ease (complacent) about the condition of Israel, for which they are also responsible.

One of the horsemen is the Angel of the LORD. He intercedes with the LORD of Hosts on behalf of Jerusalem and Judah and receives a comforting reply - rebuilding, prosperity, renewed relationship.

2) 1:18-21. Dealing with the powerful nations, represented by four horns (c.f. the four parts of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel 2, and the four beasts in Dan. 7). The horns will be "terrified" and "cast out". This had already happened to Babylon and will be the fate of each subsequent empire. In Scripture the 4th one keeps recurring in different forms until the end of time when it is finally destroyed.

3) 2:1-12. The greater future destiny of Jerusalem. It will become a huge city without walls - not needed for protection and too confining for its population - the LORD will be a ring of protective fire and also the glory within.

Jerusalem is the "pupil of His eye" - He will respond if anyone dares to touch it.

God reaffirms His choice of Jerusalem and its destiny to bring the nations to Himself.

4) 3:1-10. How can sinful and unclean Israel be made fit for this purpose? Joshua the High Priest represents the people. Satan is strongly against Israel because of her position as an elect nation (and has energized the actions of the nations). His accusations have apparent force (see the condition of Joshua).

Again we have the interplay between the LORD and the Angel of the LORD (Messiah Jesus). The LORD disarms Satan by cleansing and re-clothing Joshua - the grounds of accusation are removed and he is fit for purpose and can act as a prophetic sign of the Messiah in His priestly function that will remove the iniquity of the land in a single day, v9.

Joshua and his companions become a sign of God's grace and power to restore, v8&10. Joshua prefigures the Messiah - the Branch, the Servant of the LORD, the Chosen Stone of the True Temple, and One who is full of the Spirit. Israel's destiny is to bring Him forth.

5) 4:1-14 Israel is weak; what is the source of power to enable these things? The vision centres on the failure to complete the building of the temple, due to opposition and discouragement. Zerubbabel the prince is faltering in the task - it seems like a great mountain, beyond human strength.

The answer is in the abundant grace of God, v7. The means of supply is supernatural, flowing from a living source - the Holy Spirit Himself, pictured by the two olive trees. The "seven eyes" of the LORD, v10, connect with the previous vision and reinforce the Messianic nature of this vision.

The Spirit is overseeing the whole process and Zerubbabel is prefiguring the coming King who will build the true temple as well as being its chief cornerstone. Joshua has been standing before the Angel of the LORD, 3:1, now joined by Zerubbabel so that there are two anointed ones standing before the Lord of the whole earth.

Together they are **a sign of the Messiah, the anointed Priest and King** - see 6:9-15.

6) 5:1-4 How is the nation to live in the light of these revelations? The flying scroll represents the Law and had the same proportions as the Holy Place in the Tabernacle. The "project" has reached a critical stage following the recent return from exile. God has responded in grace. There is a need for holiness.

7) 5:5-11 What to do with iniquity? The vision is strange to our eyes but the main point is that the basket and its contents represents wickedness going forth, being carried away, banished from the land as it has no place there. It is carried to the land of Shinar (Babylon), the original place of corporate rebellion, Gen. 11:2. It belongs there, not among the people who have recently returned to Zion. Uncompromising holiness and loyalty to God are the current imperative.

8) 6:1-15 Who will deal with the nations? Who will rule? Who will build the Temple?

The vision of the four chariots explains that the battle with the empires involves spiritual power, v5. The directions of travel may indicate conquest of the two remaining northern empires (Persia and Greece as in Daniel 8) and the southern power of Egypt where the empire of Rome began to spread "throughout the earth", v7.

Daniel seems to form the background to this vision. The two in the north country are seen as dealt with but the remaining one (?Daniel's 4th beast) continues in a variety of manifestations until the end battle.

Joshua the High Priest is crowned as King - these offices were separated in Israel. He is a sign of the coming Messiah Priest/King - the Branch, v12-13. He will build the Temple together with His faithful people - see previous two visions.

There is now a gap of two years, 7:1 c.f. 1:1. On separate occasions Zechariah speaks the Word of the LORD.

- **7:2-14 He answers a question about fasting.** They had been fasting in the fifth month to remember the destruction of Jerusalem and also in the seventh month, the traditional time for rejoicing at Succot. The LORD's reply was that it was futile as they did it to satisfy their own need to do so rather than for Him. They are like their fathers who fasted but would not listen to the prophets who called them to obedience to God and were scattered among the nations. They did not listen to God so He did not listen to them.
- **8:1-23 God promises to treat them in a different way, v11, 15, and turn their fasting into feasting, v18-19.**
He promises overflowing blessing - His presence among them, life, prosperity, peace, relationship, fruitfulness, righteousness. It is a description of the Messianic Kingdom and anticipates the end of the prophecy where they will be joined by the Gentiles acknowledging their chosenness and sharing in worship of the God of Israel.
- **9:1-8 Destruction of local ancient enemies and future security.**
- **9:9-10 The coming King - the enigma of His humility and His universal rule.**
- **9:11-10:12 God's promise of future deliverance** - Greece being the next great empire, v13 defeated in the days of the Maccabees. God will defend and save them as future empires rise. 10:4 has **four Messianic allusions**. Israel will grow in numbers even when scattered among the nations, 10:9-10 and will return to the Land. This prophecy has application far beyond the time of Zechariah.
- **11:1-3 is very difficult to interpret but introduces the theme of the shepherds!**
- **11:4-17 prophesies the dismissal of the false shepherds (the rulers of Israel), the rejection of the true shepherd, and the action of the foolish (wicked shepherd) who will decimate the flock and destroy the sheep.**
These events are well known to us in the Gospels and the destruction of Jerusalem.
- **12:1-13:1 speaks of events at the end of the age when the nations come against Jerusalem, v9.**
The LORD will save His people in their extremity. Jerusalem will be a cup of reeling, a heavy stone, and Judah like a fire - all too heavy and hot to handle.

Israel will recognize their true Messiah - the Shepherd they rejected and mourn in repentance.
There will be national cleansing

- **13:2-6 speaks of a radical turning to God in ultimate loyalty. All forms of idolatry and false prophecy will be eliminated.**
- **13:7-9 is a flashback to the death of the Shepherd** and the events that followed in the destruction of Jerusalem and perhaps also in the sufferings of the 2000 years of exile from the Land - a severe refining process for the people of Israel, yet to reach the goal of v9.
- **14:1-15 describes the final battle for Jerusalem.**
The situation is extreme and is finally resolved by the descent of the Messiah and His saints.
There are cataclysmic events in the landscape and cosmic signs, and total destruction of the enemies, who destroy one another. The LORD is revealed as King over all the earth - He is One and His Name is One, v9.
- **14:16-21 Jerusalem becomes the place where the nations go up to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts and to rejoice in His presence at Succoth.**

Everything is holy to the LORD.