

BOOK OF DANIEL

RISE AND FALL OF THE ANTICHRIST (DAN. 7:15-28) – COREY STARK

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- C. Daniel's final response to the vision (7:28)

II. OVERVIEW

A. Daniel had just seen a vision of four beasts representing four world empires (7:1-8), the Ancient of Days seated upon His throne as the eternal Sovereign (7:9-10), the ultimate defeat of the Antichrist (7:11-12), and Jesus' exaltation as the Son of Man over all the nations of the earth forever (7:13-14), yet he was so deeply grieved by what he saw that he recorded his troubled response twice (7:15, 28). Daniel 7:16-27 explains why.

Dan. 7:15 I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

B. Daniel asked the angel for understanding of the vision two times (7:16, 19). The angel's interpretation was given in three parts (7:17-27).

- 1. Part one: Focuses on the four beast empire's and the assurance of victory for the saints (7:17-18).
- 2. Part two: Focuses on the Antichrist's persecution of the saints (7:21) in response to Daniel questioning the implications of the beast, ten horns and little horn (7:19-20), yet the saints victory was assured (7:22).
- 3. Part three: Focuses on further details of the fourth beast (7:23), the ten horns (7:24a), and the little horn (7:24b-25), along with assurance that the saints will rule the kingdom of God forever (7:26-27).

III. DANIEL'S RESPONSE TO THE VISION (DAN. 7:15, 28)

A. Daniel was grieved and troubled by the fourth beast's supernatural power, violence, and arrogance (Dan. 7:15). The vision left Daniel in a state of extreme grief, affecting both soul and body. He was perplexed in his mind and sought to gain more understanding. Daniel again described how troubled he was (Dan. 7:28).

Dan. 7:28 As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

B. Daniel was troubled by the intensity of the Antichrist's empire, which will be dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong (Dan. 7:7). If we are not greatly troubled by what Daniel shared about the Antichrist and his empire, then we have not yet understood what he saw.

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IV. PART ONE: DANIEL’S FIRST QUESTION – VICTORY ASSURED (DAN. 7:16-18)

A. Daniel first asks to know the “truth” or full implications of “all this” (i.e. entire vision), including the consequences for Israel (7:16). “These things” speak of the four beasts (7:1-6) and especially the fourth (7:7).

Dan. 7:16 I came near to one of those who stood by [an angel], and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation [and implications] of these things [the four beasts].”

B. The first part of the angelic interpretation focuses on the four beasts (7:17) and the sure victory of the saints (7:18). The angel reveals the four beasts are *four kings* (7:17) and then later *four kingdoms* (7:23). The kings in view are Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon), Cyrus (Medo-Persia), Alexander the Great (Greece) and Antichrist.

Dan. 7:17 Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But [don’t be troubled] the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom, forever...

Dan. 7:23 Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.

1. Both Old and New Testaments confirm that individual kings and their kingdoms are often symbolized together (Dan. 2:37-40; 7:17, 23; Rev. 17:9-10). This principle is important because it reveals that the Antichrist is both *a man* and *an empire* (Rev. 13:1-4; 19:19).

2. *Sea vs. earth*: These four kings “arise out of the earth” (Dan. 7:17), instead of their kingdoms, which Daniel saw “coming up from the sea” (Dan. 7:3). The False Prophet is described as “coming out of the earth” (Rev. 13:11), whereas the Antichrist Empire “rises up out of the sea” (Rev. 13:1). Like Adam, individuals are created from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7), whereas kingdoms are comprised of multitudes of people, rightly symbolized through the turbulent “sea of humanity” (Isa. 11:9; 23:4; 57:20; 60:5; Ezek. 26:3-4; Mic. 7:12; Hab. 3:14; Jas. 1:6; Jude 13; Rev. 17:15).

C. Four kingdoms will arise out of the Gentile nations to fight for dominion of the earth, but God will take it from them and give it to the saints (Dan. 7:18, 22; 27). The saints will govern every area of society during the Millennium and reign on the earth forever (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:4, 6; 22:5). Before giving Daniel the details of the Antichrist’s persecution (Dan. 7:21, 25), he strengthens him with an eternal perspective of the ultimate victory. Seeing our victorious reign affects our view of our labors, trouble and sacrifice in this age.

Rev. 5:9 You have... 10 made us a kingdom of priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.

V. PART TWO: DANIEL’S SECOND QUESTION – PREPARATION THROUGH PERSECUTION (7:19-22)

A. Daniel’s second question had three parts (7:19-20). He first wanted to know the “truth” or the full implications about the *fourth beast*, especially why it was so “different” and what the consequences for Israel would be (7:19). Next he asked about the *ten horns*, and finally he asked about the *little horn* (7:20).

Dan. 7:19 I wished to know the truth [implications] about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

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B. We gain more understanding by comparing verses 19-20 to what Daniel saw earlier in verses 7-8.

Dan. 7:7 Behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the [ten] horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

C. Notice the aspects of the vision that are divinely emphasized by being mentioned several times—the beast will be “different” (4x vs. 7, 19, 23, 24) and “pompous” (4x vs. 8, 11, 20, 25), and it will be “dreadful,” “strong,” “terrible,” and will “trample,” “devour,” and “break” the nations (vs. 7, 19, 23). There will be “ten horns” (3x vs. 7, 20, 24) and three of them will be killed (3x) “plucked out” (v. 8), “fell” (v. 20) or “subdued” (v. 24) by the “little horn” (4x vs. 7:8, 11, 20, 21).

D. The following details (vs. 19-20) are in addition to what Daniel previously mentioned (vs. 7-8).

1. *Nails of bronze*: Like the other supernatural features of this beast, making it different and unlike anything Daniel has ever seen, the nails of bronze speak of its supernatural ability to break everything in pieces and “trample the residue” of the conquered nations (i.e. what remains) with its feet (2x vs. 7, 19). There may be connection to the Grecian Empire of “bronze” from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:32).

2. *Before which three fell*: Three kings are killed, being described as “plucked out by the roots” (7:8), “falling before” the little horn (7:20), and “being subdued” by him (7:24). This unprecedented political event is a major sign of the times to alert the prophetic church of the emergence of the Antichrist.

3. *Appearance greater than his fellows*: His appearance and presentation to the nations will be more glorious, powerful and fearsome than any man. He’s described as having “fierce features” (Dan. 8:23).

Dan. 8:23 A king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.

E. The angel answered all three parts of Daniel’s question in the order that he asked by showing him a vision (7:21-22). The first part of the question was to know the implications of the *fourth beast*, that is to know why it was so “different” and what the consequence for Israel would be since it was so dreadful (7:21-22).

Dan. 7:21 I was watching [vision]; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

1. Daniel sees the Antichrist’s persecution of the saints (7:21), yet their victory was again assured (7:22).

2. For the Ancient of Days to allow the Antichrist’s persecution is shocking. Earlier, Daniel saw the Father issue a decree that the beast be slain and leadership of the earth be given to the Son of Man (7:13-14). Then he saw the saints sharing in Jesus’ governmental reign (7:18), so he was undoubtedly perplexed that the Antichrist or “little horn” would be allowed to persecute that saints and prevail against them (7:21).

Dan. 7:9 I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated... 10 The court was seated, and the books were opened... 11 I watched till the beast was slain... 13 Behold, One like the Son of Man... 14 was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples... should serve Him.

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F. The angel addresses a *twofold theological offense* about the end times: 1. Why God allows evil leaders to emerge with great power and 2. Why God allows them to prevail in persecuting God's people? The saints must trust God's sovereign leadership – the all-knowing and all-powerful Father is on His throne, the court is in session and everything will culminate according to God's sovereign purpose for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Dan. 2:20 Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings...

Ps. 2:1 Why do the nations rage...? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed... 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh...

1. Making war against the saints: Jesus said that the saints would be hated by every nation.

Mt. 24:9 They will... kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

2. Prevailing against the saints: This speaks of the martyrdom more fully developed in Daniel 11. The Antichrist physically overcomes the saints for only 3½ years (Dan. 7:25), but they spiritually overcome him by refusing to yield to his threats and drawing back in their love and radical allegiance to Jesus.

Rev. 13:7 It was granted to him [Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them.

Rev. 12:11 And they [saints] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives [more than Jesus] to the death.

Rev. 15:2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast [Antichrist]... standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 They sing...

3. Until a judgment was made: The Ancient of Days has decreed the time in which there will be a sudden reversal of the persecution of the saints. The saints will boldly proclaim this coming victory. This is similar to the appointed time of exodus in Moses day when the people of God came out in great victory!

4. Saints to possess the kingdom: The saints will rule the nations in intimate partnership with the Son of Man (7:18, 22, 27). Jesus replaces the governmental leaders of the earth after the Armageddon campaign.

Dan. 7:18 The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever...

Dan. 7:27 The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom...

5. The time came: At the perfect time the Ancient of Days will suddenly reverse things (7:22). The Father knows how long it will take for the combination of the Antichrist's persecution, the Harlot Babylon's seduction and the manifestation of His glory on the end-time Church to bring her to full maturity, in unity, purity and power, as well as to bring the nation of Israel to salvation, thus creating one "new man" (Eph. 4:13; 5:27), who is prepared to rule the earth with the Son of Man forever (7:27; 11:35; 12:10)!

Dan. 7:22 The Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

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VI. PART THREE: INTERPRETATION OF FOURTH BEAST, TEN HORNS AND LITTLE HORN (23-27)

A. The angel answered Daniel's second question (7:19-20) by first showing him a vision (7:21-22) and then giving more details to answer all three parts of his question (7:23-27) — the truth about the fourth beast, the ten horns, and the little horn (7:20). The angel answered the first part about the fourth beast (7:23), the second part about the ten horns (7:24a), and the third part about the little horn (7:24b-25) and his destruction (7:26).

B. *Fourth beast*: The four beasts are *four kings* (7:17) and *four kingdoms* (7:23). The kingdoms in view are Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), Medo-Persia (Cyrus), Greece (Alexander the Great) and the Antichrist Empire.

Dan. 7:23 Thus he [angel] said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.'

1. *Different*: It will be unique in its relationship to Satan (Gen. 3:15; Dan. 2:43; 2 Th. 2:9; Rev. 13:2) and function in a whole new order of evil, cruelty, and supernatural power (4x 7:7, 19, 23, 24).

2. *Devour the whole earth*: While the Antichrist will have a vastly powerful empire it *will not* include every single nation of the earth. Hyperbole is a common literary device used to create emphasis through exaggeration. The Aramaic phrase kol 'ara' is "appropriately understood here as a large, but limited section of land"¹. This is similar to Alexander's "rule over all the earth" (Dan. 2:39) or Caesar's decree that "all the world should be registered" (Lk. 2:1). The presence of resisting governments (Dan. 11:44-45; Rev. 16:12), nations that escape his hand (Dan. 11:40-42) and wars to the very end (Dan. 9:26) prove that the dominion of the Antichrist will not be *absolutely universal*, but limited in both scope and duration.

C. *Ten horns*: These "ten horns" are ten kings who form a ten-nation confederation with the Antichrist (7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16). Daniel saw the ten horns "on" the beast's head (7:20), meaning they are *contemporaries* with the beast not consecutive kings who rule one after the next in the historical empire.

Dan. 7:24a The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.

1. *Arise from this kingdom*: The ten kings will arise from this kingdom, meaning the same *geographic territory* and/or *ethnic people groups* that are historically associated with the fourth empire (see map).

2. If we take into account Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) where he sees the final stage of the fourth kingdom (feet and toes of iron and clay v. 41) coming out of its earlier expression (legs of iron v. 40), we may conclude that the final stage of this fourth empire is a revived version of its historical counterpart. As mentioned earlier, the only empire to emerge after Greece (leopard) and fulfill the two-fold criteria listed in Dan. 2:34-35, 40 is the historical Islamic Caliphate. Therefore, this is a revived Islamic confederation.

Dan. 2:40 The fourth kingdom [legs of iron v. 33] shall be as strong as iron, as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything... 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the [fourth] kingdom shall be divided [by time]; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it...

3. Interestingly "all of the specific nations that the Bible mentions that will make up the Antichrist Empire are all Muslim nations"² (Ez. 38). While there are many individual Muslims coming to Jesus, there are no concrete signs of any of these nations abandoning their Islamic roots. Rather there is a "resurgence of Islamic Fundamentalism sweeping throughout their lands."³ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the future Antichrist Empire will be initially comprised of an Islamic confederation of nations.

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D. Another shall rise: The eleventh horn is the Antichrist and final Caliph of the revived Islamic Empire.

Dan. 7:24b *And another [horn] shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones [ten kings], and shall subdue three kings.*

1. After them: The Antichrist rises to power “after” the ten kings have been established on the world stage.
2. Different: We first learn that the kingdom will be “different” from the other kingdoms (7:7, 19, 23) and now that the king will be “different” from the other kings (7:24), mentioned 4x (Dan. 7:7, 19, 23, 24).
3. Subdue three kings: Three kings are killed, being described as “plucked out by the roots” (7:8), “falling before” the little horn (7:20), and “being subdued” by him (7:24). This unprecedented political event is a major sign of the times to alert the prophetic church of the emergence of the Antichrist.

E. Characteristics of the little horn (7:25); arrogance, persecution and presumption.

Dan. 7:25 *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.*

F. The following details (v. 25) are in addition to what Daniel previously mentioned (vs. 7-8, 19-20). As we look closely at the details given, I believe that we have many hints to the origin of the Antichrist. “As we look at the full picture, only Islam fits the bill of a system that has its own unique calendar and week based on its own religious history and a clear system of law that it wishes to impose onto the entire earth.”⁴

1. Change times – calendar: Besides the Gregorian calendar used by the West, there is also a Jewish, a Hindu and a Muslim calendar among others. “Jews or Hindus however are not a people who would desire to impose their religious laws or calendars onto the rest of the world. Islam however, does have both its own laws and its own calendar, both of which it would desire to impose onto the entire world. The Islamic calendar is based upon the career of Muhammad. It begins at the migration (Hijra) of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. The Muslim calendar is viewed as being mandatory for all to observe.”⁵ As Dr. Waleed Mahanna so accurately stats, “*It is considered a divine command to use a (Hijra) calendar with 12 (purely) lunar months without intercalation, as evident from... the Holy Qur’an.*”⁶
2. Change times – week: Islam also has its own week. Unlike the Western workweek leaving Saturday and Sunday for both Jews and Christians to celebrate their respective days of worship, Islam observes its sacred day on Friday, which is the day that Muslims meet at the mosque to hear sermons and pray.
3. Change law: Antichrist will use the legal system as a tool of oppression and murder. Initially, he will oppress the saints by removing privileges and restricting their civil liberties (Ps. 2:1-3; Rev. 13:16). The laws will become progressively more evil until it’s legal to kill the saints (Rev. 13:15). The way the saints are martyred is later revealed as beheading (Rev. 20:4), which is Islam’s preferred method of execution.

Rev. 13:15 *He was granted power... that the image of the beast should both speak and cause [establish legislation] as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Rev. 20:4)*

4. In Islamic eschatology, the Mahdi (Islam’s Messiah and final Caliph of the Islamic Caliphate) will abolish the Jizyah Tax⁷ (protection money) and establish Sharia Law across the entire earth at which time, “all people will be required to embrace Islam and there will be no other alternative,”⁸ but execution⁹.

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G. The limited career of the little horn (7:25); three and a half years.

Dan. 7:25 *Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time [3½ years].”*

1. There will be a God-given limitation of 3½ years for the Antichrist’s persecution of the saints. The word “time” refers to one year, “times” refers to two years, and “half a time” speaks of half a year.
2. There are eight scriptures and four phrases that describe the final 3½ years before Jesus’ return. It is referred to as 1,260 days (2x Rev. 11:3; 12:6); as 42 months (2x Rev. 11:2; 13:5); as “time, times, and half a time” (3x Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14); and “middle of the week” of the final seven years (Dan. 9:27). By comparison we see that all eight verses describe the same 3½-year time frame.

H. God showed Daniel the great persecution to come in this first vision (553 BC). However, He didn’t give him the reason for this persecution until the last vision (Dan. 10-12), given *seventeen years later* (536 BC)!

1. God will use persecution to *purify* the saints and *prepare* them for governmental partnership with Jesus in the age-to-come. When the Church sees anointed leaders like the apostles fall in martyrdom it will cause wholeheartedness to emerge. No one will give their lives for something they don’t really believe in.

Dan. 11:35 *Some of those of understanding [saints] shall fall [martyrdom], to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end...*

2. While “many” shall be purified (12:10) only “some” shall fall in martyrdom not the majority (11:25). John added that persecution causes the saints to grow in *perseverance* and *faith* (Rev. 13:9-10).

Dan. 12:10 *Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

I. The heavenly court decreed the Antichrist’s destruction over 2,500 years ago (Dan. 7:9-14, 22, 26).

Dan. 7:26 *The court shall be seated, and... take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.*

1. Court shall be seated: The angel shows Daniel the Father’s heavenly court in session regarding the pompous words and actions of the Antichrist (Dan. 7:9-10). In the Millennium the saints are given governmental authority to make judicial decisions concerning angels and humans (1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 20:4).

Dan. 7:9 *I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days [the Father] was seated... 10 The court was seated, and the books were opened.*

2. Take away his dominion: At the Father’s appointed time, He will suddenly reverse things by “taking away” the dominion that He granted to the Antichrist (Dan. 12:11; Rev. 13:5) The Antichrist’s kingdom will be utterly consumed and destroyed at Jesus’ return (2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-21).

Rev. 19:11 *Behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war... 19 And I saw the beast [Antichrist], the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse... 20 Then the beast was captured, and... cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword, which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.*

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J. The Father's eternal plan has always been for the saints to rule the earth in intimate partnership with His Son (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 19:6; Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:4, 6; 22:5). This is not only one of the main points in the vision, but is one of the most remarkable truths related to God's leadership in our lives.

Dan. 7:27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

1. The kingdom: Notice "the" kingdom (singular) and greatness of the "kingdoms" (plural) shall be given to the saints. There is only one kingdom that rules over all the kingdoms of the earth (Mt. 6:10; Rev. 11:15), even as there is only one King over all the kings (Zech. 14:9; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:16).

Mt. 6:9 Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven... 13 For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Rev. 11:15 The seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven... "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

2. Given to saints: The saints will replace all the wicked governmental leaders of the earth. The Father is preparing the Bride as Jesus' eternal companion who will rule the earth with Him. Jesus, the Bridegroom King, desires to rule the earth in intimate partnership with His people forever (Jn. 17:24; Rev. 2:26; 3:21).

Rev. 2:26 He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end... I will give power over the nations...

Rev. 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne...

VII. CONCLUSION: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR (DAN. 7:15-28)

- The Antichrist will persecute the saints and prevail.
- The saints will rule the earth forever.
- The saints are prepared through persecution.
- The persecution of the Antichrist is limited in duration.
- The reign of the Antichrist is limited in scope.
- The Antichrist will be greater in appearance than the other kings.
- Ten kings will arise from the historical Islamic Caliphate.

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Endnotes:

1. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 42
2. Joel Richardson, *Islamic Antichrist*, pg. 98
3. Joel Richardson, *Islamic Antichrist*, pg. 99
4. Joel Richardson, *Islamic Antichrist*, pg. 68
5. Joel Richardson, *Islamic Antichrist*, pg. 67
6. Dr. Waleed A. Muhanna, A brief Introduction to the Islamic (Hijra) Calendar,
http://fisher.osu.edu/~muhanna_1/hijra-intro.html
7. The Reliance of the Traveller and Tools of the Worshipper, a Classic manuel of Islamic Sacred Law,
Translated by Noah Ha Mim Keller, (Amana Publications, Beltsville Maryland, revised 1994), pg. 603
8. Mufti Mohammad Shafi and Mufti Mohammad Rafi Usmani, Signs of the Qiyama and the Arrival of the
Maseeh, (Karachi Darul Ishaat, 2000), pg. 59
9. Joel Richardson, *Islamic Antichrist*, pg. 85