

The Seventh Head of the Beast of Revelation

The enigmatic nature of the Apocalypse (or Revelation) has eluded innumerable scholars throughout the ages of all persuasions and of the highest calibres. We cannot therefore be so presumptuous or arrogant to think that we could simply unlock the mystery where others have failed, without rigorous and robust investigation. Too often have flippant, careless and reckless attitudes been entertained when trying to unlock the Apocalypse, ending in utter failure; where they claim to have decoded the enigma, their theories seem totally disconnected to the realities in the real world of the past and present.

The words of Indiana Jones, when venturing upon the “Last Crusade,” aptly come to mind: “Only the penitent man will pass.” If you recall from that movie, every man who failed to understand that cryptic warning did not kneel, only to be left headless from the booby-trapped spinning blade. For us, although failing to heed these words might not lead to our decapitation, the Apocalypse itself tells us that it is to have dire consequences if we do obscure its true message:

“I warn everyone hearing the words of the prophecy in this book that if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues written in this book. And if anyone takes anything away from the words in the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the Tree of Life and the holy city, as described in this book.”

- Revelation 22.18-19 (David Stern, *Complete Jewish Bible*)

The reward, however, if we are brave enough to venture upon such a quest, is the abundance of life giving water (so-to-speak) from the “blessings” of the Messiah (Rev. 1.3, 22.7). The path ahead of us therefore is not to be treaded lightly. Utmost reverence of spirit, humility of heart, and sharpness and rigour of intellect must be employed. Cautiously but firmly must we take each step.

First Steps

“And I saw a beast come up out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads. On its horns were ten royal crowns and on its heads blasphemous names.

The beast which I saw was like a leopard, but with feet like those of a bear and a mouth like the mouth of a lion. To it the dragon gave its power, its throne and great authority.

One of the heads of the beast appeared to have received a fatal wound, but its fatal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed after the beast in amazement.”

- Revelation 13.1-3 (CJB)

So how do we begin? When approaching a book as perplexing and enigmatic as the Apocalypse, and particularly the cryptic figure of the Seven-Headed Beast, I believe that in order to make a case absolutely immovable, it is crucial to find a clear, easily discernable and irrefutable anchor point that serves as a foundation on which to build everything else. In that way, no matter what winds and storms of opposition are weathered against it, because it is so deeply rooted, it will stand perpetually.

In the search for an anchor, an approach that seems sensible would be to first find out whether the revealer of the vision has himself given an explanation of the vision (which is mostly the case in other visions). It turns out in this case that, to our delight and excitement, he has:

“Then the *angel* said to me, “Why are you astounded? *I will tell you the hidden meaning* of the woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that was carrying her.”

- Revelation 17.7 (CJB)

God’s Explanation of the Seven Heads (through the Angel)

“This calls for a mind having wisdom. The *seven heads* are *seven mountains* on which the woman is seated. They are also *seven kings*—*five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.*”

- Revelation 17.9-10 (*Tree of Life Version* by the Messianic Jewish Family Bible Society)

Heads Represent Mountains/ Empires and Their Founding Kings

The angel's explanation of the *seven heads* is the following:

"The seven heads are seven *mountains*... The are also seven *kings*."

Many have come to interpret the seven *mountains* as seven literal *hills* upon which the city of Rome sits. This interpretation however fails to fit the second half of the explanation which is that they are seven *kings*. It can hardly be said that there is a direct correlation between a literal Roman hill and a literal king. Moreover, there are several other cities that are built on seven literal hills, Jerusalem being one and Constantinople (present day Istanbul in Turkey) – which became the beating heart of the Ottoman Empire – being another. Therefore this interpretation is unsustainable.

What I find to be a more fitting and preferable explanation, is one that can be found through ascertaining the Bible's own symbolism on the issue, and ascertain if there is any link with "king." And it just so happens that there is such a symbol with just such a link. Guest Professor of Biblical Studies at Telos Biblical Institute, [Dr Tony Garland ThM, ThD](#), in his profound commentary on the Book of Revelation, explains:

"The relationship between kings and mountains is well-established in Scripture—*mountains represent the power of kingdoms and their individual kings* (Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35; Zec. 4:7)."

- Tony Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ – Vol. 2: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, (Camano Island, WA, U.S.A.: SpiritAndTruth.org, 2004), p. 47.

Mountains represent kingdoms and the kings that rule them. A perfect fit. Another name for 'kingdom' in the context of the ones mentioned in the Bible (namely the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires) is ***empire***. Therefore, these ***seven kingdoms are actually seven empires***. Which empires these seven heads represent seems self-evident, since the Bible itself testifies to the encounters of the Israelites with the misdeeds and machinations of six of them:

1. The ***Egyptian Empire*** from the time of Joseph bringing the Israelites into Egypt, up until the time when Moses brought them out (Genesis to Exodus);
2. The ***Assyrian Empire*** which harassed Israel's northern cities culminating in the final conquest the Northern Kingdom of Israel and initiating the Great Jewish Diaspora (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles);
3. The ***Neo-Babylonian Empire*** that ended the Assyrian one, and which infamously exiled the Israelites from Jerusalem and Judah, initiating a second Diaspora, through its most famous of kings ***Nebuchadnezzar*** (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and the Prophets);
4. The ***Persian Empire*** led by ***Cyrus the Great***, who brought down the Babylonian Empire, and famously initiated reforms that allowed the rebuilding of the Second Jewish Temple (Ezra to Nehemiah) – consequently he was to become the only Gentile in the Bible to be named by Jews as a "Messiah" (Isa. 45.1; cf. Isa. 44.28);
5. The ***Macedonian or "Greek" Empire*** (as the Bible terms it) of ***Alexander the Great*** whose brutality and expansion of empire was unrivalled at age 33, and whose rise and later reign of successors was recorded in the prophecies of Daniel (the apocryphal books of the Maccabees – which were interestingly included in the original King James canon – actually records the encounter of the Israelites with the successor dynasty to Alexander, the Seleucids, culminating in the most notorious of all Seleucids, Antiochus Epiphanes);
6. The ***Roman Empire***, infamous for its crucifixion of our Lord, Jesus the Messiah, as well as its hold on Judea during the entire New Testament period and beyond.

The Sixth Empire “Is”

Knowing these empire encounters in the Bible and reading the explanation given by the angel it really is not too difficult to determine who those heads/empires are. The anchor that I would choose to build my entire thesis upon is encapsulated in two words: **“one is.”** In the context of the sentence – “five [empires] have fallen, one is” – it should be obvious that the “one” refers to the *sixth empire* in the list because it follows the “five”; and “is” means extant – in other words, the **sixth empire is presently existing** (contemporary to the Apostle John). Which empire existed at the time of Apostle John? There cannot be any doubt that this refers to the **Roman Empire**. Looking at the above list, the previous five therefore become self-evident.

The next million-dollar question is – and of which this article is primarily concerned – **who is then the Seventh Empire?** Again, it should be obvious by now that the Seventh Empire must naturally follow the Roman Empire, via the rules of the sequence. And the key to doing that is to find out exactly when the Roman Empire was conquered and ended, and who carried it out; **military invasion and conquest** seem to be the predominant method of what determines the natural order of succession, and therefore this will be a key aspect in recognising it.

Since this empire existed way after the New Testament, it is of utmost necessity at this point, to now look at the historical realities that surround the Roman Empire.

The New Rome: Constantinople (330 AD)

It is important to begin with looking at some key shifting dynamics occurring within the Roman Empire before any collapse. In **330** the **Roman Emperor Constantine** made the **new capital** of the Roman Empire **Constantinople** (present-day Istanbul in Turkey). This had the effect of shifting the **centre of gravity** of the Empire from West to *East*:

“Refounded as the **“new Rome”** by the **emperor Constantine** in **330**, it was endowed by him with the name **Constantinople, the city of Constantine.**”

– *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, ‘Byzantine Empire,’ retrieved 14 Feb 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/87186/Byzantine-Empire>.

“Constantine the Great transferred the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium (330), renamed Constantinople and New Rome.”

– *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, ‘Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople,’ ‘Istanbul,’ retrieved 14 Feb 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/178827/Ecumenical-Patriarchate-of-Constantinople>, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/296962/Istanbul>.

“Byzantium considered itself the centre of the world, and Constantinople as the replacement of Rome. Though Greek-speaking, it saw itself as the Roman Empire and its citizens as Romans.”

– Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*, (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. xvii.

“Nowadays he is known as **Constantine the Great**, and with good reason: with the exceptions of Jesus Christ, the Prophet Mohammed and the Buddha, **he was to be perhaps the most influential man who ever lived. It is given to few men to take a decision that changes the course of history; Constantine took two...** The second decision was political. **Constantine moved the imperial capital away from Rome, to a new eastern city built expressly for it on the shores of the Bosphorus, occupying the site of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium – a city that he originally intended should be named New Rome, but which from the start was always called after him, Constantinople.** He inaugurated it on 11 May 330 – dedicating it, incidentally, to the Virgin.”

– John Julius Norwich, *The Popes: A History*, (London: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 13.

“The New Rome: Constantine’s ambition was to be sole ruler of the Roman empire, and Licinius’ revocation of the edict of toleration for Christians provided Constantine with the ideal pretext to march east and overthrow him. Christians were far more numerous in the Greek-dominated east than in the still overwhelmingly pagan west and Constantine found plenty of support. Following Licinius’ defeat and execution in **324**, **Constantine decided to mark his break with Rome’s pagan past by founding a new eastern capital for the empire, named Constantinople after himself**, on the site of the ancient Greek

colony of Byzantium on the Bosphorus straits. Constantine's choice of site was an inspired one. **Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) was a natural stronghold.** Situated on the peninsula it was surrounded by sea on three sides and the landward approaches were strongly fortified. **The city was also at a crossroads of major sea and land routes, making it a natural commercial and communications centre.** **While Rome's population was now in decline, settlers flooded into Constantinople, attracted by its commercial and administrative opportunities, official financial incentives** and offers of free bread for the poor."

– John Haywood, *Chronicles of the Ancient World: 3500 BC – AD 476*, (London: Quercus, 2012), p. 307.

What is significant is that at this point Rome is in decline demographically due to the commercial and economic prosperity that Constantinople offered. It is therefore only natural for a new capital such as Constantinople to be the new beating heart of the empire, and thus re-focus Bible prophecy eastward.

Interestingly enough, so dilapidated had the city of Rome become even before the transference that it ceased to be the hub for even western emperors and vassal rulers:

"There was one problem only: the fact that **Rome itself was in rapid decline, becoming more and more out of touch with the new Hellenistic world.** Throughout the Italian peninsula populations were dwindling; and the Empire's principal enemy, Persia, was several weeks', if not months', journey away. Even when in **293 the Emperor Diocletian** split his empire into four, **he made his capital at Nicomedia (now Izmit, in the north-eastern corner of the Sea of Marmara)** and **none of his other three tetrarchs (joint rulers) dreamed of living in what was still technically the imperial capital [Rome]. The whole focus of the Empire had shifted to the east. Italy had become a backwater.** In the absence of the Emperor, the Pope was the most important man in Rome; but **Rome itself was now a sad and distinctly seedy city, decimated by malaria and showing little trace of its former splendour.**"

– John Julius Norwich, *The Popes: A History*, (London: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 12.

The same dilapidated and obsolete state was Rome in even during the second division of the Roman Empire:

"**Theodosius the Great, dying in 395, divided it again** – giving his elder son, Arcadius, the East, and his younger, Honorius, the West. It proved a disastrous decision. Under the sway of **thirteen emperors, living for the most part not in Rome but in Ravenna**, each more feckless than the last and all today virtually forgotten, the Western Empire now embarked on an inexorable eighty-year decline, prey to the Germanic and other tribes that progressively tightened their grip."

– John Julius Norwich, *The Popes: A History*, (London: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 18.

The New Division of the Empire: East and West (395 AD)

In **395 AD** another vital turning point had been reached in that the empire was divided into two partitions: **the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire**:

"After the death of the emperor Theodosius in **395 CE**, the **Empire was split into two**, a **western empire** ruled from **Rome**, and an **eastern empire** ruled from **Constantinople**."

– Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), p. 33.

"**395 Roman Empire Permanently Divided:** ...After Eugenius was killed in battle in September, Theodosius became, briefly, the last emperor to rule both the eastern and western halves of the Roman empire. In January **395 Theodosius died** of heart disease at Mediolanum and **the empire was divided between his two young sons Honorius (r. 395-423), who became emperor of the west**, and **Arcadius (r. 395-408)**. This time, **the division proved to be permanent but this did not mean that the empire ceased to be a single state because laws passed by one emperor were automatically valid in the other half of the empire.** However, in the long run, **this arrangement disadvantaged the western half of the empire because it could now no longer automatically draw upon the resources of the wealthier and more populated east.**"

– John Haywood, *Chronicles of the Ancient World: 3500 BC – AD 476*, (London: Quercus, 2012), p. 312.

This partition gives more support to the idea that after 476 the Roman Empire did not die, simply because it lived on in the East where the beating heart and lifeblood of the empire was now drawing primarily from.

The Roman Empire Lived On in the East After 476 AD

Therefore, when the Western half of the Roman Empire fell in 476 it **did not mean the end of the Roman Empire**, contrary to what is popularly thought (among many Adventist leaders/evangelists at least). The **Roman Empire in fact continued on in the East for another one thousand years**, having already firmly established its new capital in Constantinople and rich resources from the Eastern provinces:

“Within a comparatively short time, the western empire was submerged in a series of barbarian invasions, and in effect ceased to exist. The eastern empire survived these difficulties, and was able to maintain itself for another thousand years.”

- Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), pp. 33-34.

“When the Roman empire in the West fell in AD 476, the empire in the East, based at Constantinople, carried on business much as usual. And did so for another thousand years.”

- Jon E. Lewis ed., *Rome The Autobiography: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire by Those Who Saw It*, (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2010), p. 397.

“The Roman empire of the West came to an end in the fifth century; but the Roman empire – as a continuous legal, cultural and political institution – persisted in the East for another millennium, and its capital, the ‘New Rome’ of Constantinople, was the seat of Roman emperors into the age of gunpowder and cannon; the last of them died only four decades before the discovery of the Americas.”

- David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith*, (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 233.

Even before it fell, the city of Rome was in a dilapidated state having been sacked and pillaged in 455:

“Pope Leo had saved Rome once; but when, only three years later the Vandal King Gaiseric appeared at the walls, he was less successful. He persuaded Gaiseric not to put the city to the torch; but he could not prevent a hideous fourteen-day sack... By now, after both the Goths and the Vandals had done their worst, there can have been little of the old Rome that was still worth plundering. Imperial Rome was already dead, and past recall; more than a hundred years before, its spirit had passed to Constantinople.”

– John Julius Norwich, *The Popes: A History*, (London: Vintage Books, 2012), pp. 23-24.

Romans Not Byzantines

Although in modern times the Eastern Roman Empire is termed ‘Byantium’ this was not how they viewed themselves. They indeed saw themselves as **Romans of the Roman Empire**:

“It is worth noting that the ‘Byzantines’ never used the term in this way themselves; right to the end they called themselves and their empire Roman.”

– Colin McEvedy, *The New Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992), p. 30, fn. 1.

“The name Byzantine, which is nowadays generally applied to the eastern empire, is a term of modern scholarship, and is derived from the name of the settlement which previously existed on the site of the city of Constantinople. The Byzantines never called themselves Byzantines. They called themselves Romans, and were ruled by a Roman emperor, purporting to enforce the Roman law.”

– Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), p. 34.

“This eastern half of the Roman Empire is Byzantium. That name was not given to it until the sixteenth century, when humanist scholars tried to find a way of identifying what remained after the collapse of Old Rome in the West. Although they coined a term which has been used ever since, it is important to remember that the inhabitants of the empire called themselves Romans (in Greek, *Romaioi*), and saw themselves as such. Their claim on Roman qualities was not a vanity or snobbishness. From 330 to 619 Byzantium enjoyed imperial realities as well as ideology.”

– Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*, (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 25.

“The very name Byzantine illustrates the misconceptions to which the empire’s history has often been subject, for its inhabitants would hardly have considered the term appropriate to themselves or to their

state. Theirs was, in their view, none other than the Roman Empire... they called themselves Romaioi, or Romans."

– *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 'Byzantine Empire,' retrieved on 14 February 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/87186/Byzantine-Empire>.

"It is important to remember that neither he [Constantine] nor his subjects recognised any qualitative change or break in continuity. To them the Empire was what it had always been: the Roman Empire of Augustus and his successors; and they, regardless of the language they spoke – and, as time went on, Latin died out and Greek became universal – remained in their own eyes Roman through and through."

– John Julius Norwich, *The Popes: A History*, (London: Vintage Books, 2012), pp. 13-14.

This is key because it dispels any notion that by renaming it Byzantium in modern times after it existed does anything to effect the actual reality and status of it truly being the Roman Empire.

The Actual End of the Roman Empire: 1453

Why is any of this important? It's important because whoever ends the **Eastern Roman Empire** – which as we have discovered is now resident in the East, with its capital in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul in Turkey) – is the clear winner for who the 7th Head/Empire is. So **when in fact did the Roman Empire end? 1453:**

"Refounded as the 'new Rome' by the emperor Constantine in 330, it was endowed by him with the name Constantinople, the city of Constantine. The derivation from Byzantium is suggestive in that it emphasizes a central aspect of Byzantine civilization: the degree to which the empire's administrative and intellectual life found a focus at Constantinople from 330 to 1453, the year of the city's last and unsuccessful defense under the 11th (or 12th) Constantine. The circumstances of the last defense are suggestive, too, for in 1453 the ancient, medieval, and modern worlds seemed briefly to meet. The last Constantine fell in defense of the new Rome built by the first Constantine."

– *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 'Byzantine Empire,' retrieved on 14 February 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/87186/Byzantine-Empire>.

And **who actually caused its end? The Islamic Empire of the Ottoman Dynasty:**

"The eastern half of the Roman Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, formerly Byzantium. The Eastern Roman Empire survived the collapse of the Western Empire by nearly a thousand years, only falling to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, when Constantinople was taken."

– Bruce P. Lenman, Trevor Anderson, eds., *Chambers Dictionary of World History*, 'Byzantine Empire,' (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd., 2000), p. 128.

"The Empire (31 BC-AD 476 in the West, AD 1453 in the East)... In the 5th century, hordes of trans-riverine tribesmen (eg Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths) poured into the Western provinces carrying all before them. In 476 with their deposition of the last emperor, Romulus Augustulus, they marked symbolically their destruction of the Western half of the Empire. The Eastern provinces, however, proved more resilient; here the barbarian challenge was contained for another thousand years, until the Eastern capital Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453."

– David Crystal, ed., *Penguin Encyclopedia 2nd Edition*, 'Roman history,' (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 1315-1316.

'Ottoman forces entered Europe in 1345, conquered Constantinople in 1453, and by 1520 controlled most of south-eastern Europe, including part of Hungary, the Middle East and North Africa.'

– Bruce P. Lenman, Trevor Anderson, eds., *Chambers Dictionary of World History*, 'Ottoman Empire,' (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd., 2000), p. 609.

"After the fall of the west, the eastern Roman empire continued to flourish and under the emperor Justinian (r. 527-65) even won back control of Italy and North Africa... During the seventh century the newly Islamized Arabs conquered Egypt, Palestine and Syria, but their attempts to capture Constantinople failed. Confined to Anatolia and the Balkans, the empire survived, as much by diplomacy as military force, as a bulwark of Christendom in the east. However, a crushing defeat by the Seljuk Turks at the battle of Manzikert in 1071 sent the empire into decline, and the sack of Constantinople by crusaders in 1204 ended the empire's days as a great power. The final blow came when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. To the very end, Byzantine emperors continued to regard themselves as true Roman emperors."

“On **29 May 1453**, two years after the sultan’s accession and seven weeks after the siege began, the janissaries made the final assault on the crumbling walls of Constantinople. **The last Constantine was killed fighting among his troops**; the crescent was raised above the dome of Hagia Sophia, and the sultan took up residence in the imperial city. **With the conquest of Constantinople, for so many centuries the coveted goal Muslim arms, the last piece had fallen into place. Sultan Mehmed II, henceforth known as Fatih, the Conqueror, had sealed the union of the two continents, Asia and Africa, that formed his inheritance, and of the two traditions, Islam and the frontier, that had moulded them. The principality of the frontier fighters had become an empire; its chief, an emperor. This victory established the Ottoman sultanate as the spearhead of Islam pointing to the West, and brought it immense prestige within the Islamic world.**”

– Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), pp. 110-111.

“**Sultan Mehmet** had promised his men the three traditional days of looting... By then there was little left to plunder, and his soldiers were fully occupied sharing out the loot and enjoying their captives. In the late afternoon, accompanied by his chief ministers, his imams and his bodyguard of Janissaries, he rode slowly to St Sophia. Dismounting outside the central doors... he entered the Great Church... At his command the senior imam mounted the pulpit and proclaimed the name of Allah, the All-Merciful and Compassionate: there was no God but God and Mohammed was his Prophet. The Sultan touched his turbaned head to the ground in prayer and thanksgiving. St Sophia was now a mosque. Leaving it, **he crossed the square to the old, ruined Palace of the Emperors, founded by Constantine the Great eleven and a half centuries before**; and as he wandered through its ancient halls, his slippers brushing the dust from the pebbled floor-mosaics... he is said to have murmured the lines of a Persian poet: **‘The spider weaves the curtains in the palace of the Caesars; The owl calls the watches in the towers of Afrasiab.’ He had achieved his ambition. Constantinople was his. He was just twenty-one years old. The news of the conquest was received with horror throughout Christendom. The refugees carried the epic story with them; and their story lost nothing in the telling... The Roman Empire of the east was founded by Constantine the Great on Monday, 11 May 330; it came to an end on Tuesday, 29 May 1453.**”

– John Julius Norwich, *A Short History of Byzantium*, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 381-382.

Islam’s Mandate to Conquer the Roman Empire from Its Inception

What also bolsters this case is the fact that from its very earliest beginnings part of the Islamic Empire’s mandate was to conquer the Roman Empire and its capital Constantinople. One of Muhammad’s first imperial acts was to issue a proclamation to the Eastern Roman Emperor Heraclius to embrace Islam or face certain destruction:

“According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet Muhammad sent letters from his home in Arabia to the kings and princes of the infidels, **informing them of his apostolate and summoning them to embrace Islam**. Many rulers, governors, and bishops are cited as receiving such letters, but **the most important of them are named as ‘Caesar’ and ‘Chosroes’, that is to say, the emperors of Byzantium and of Persia, who between them divided the Middle East.**”

– Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), p. 133.

These letters read:

“**Now then, I invite you [the Roman Emperor Heraclius] to Islam (i.e. surrender to Allah), embrace Islam and you will be safe**; embrace Islam and Allah will bestow on you a double reward. **But if you reject this invitation of Islam, you shall be responsible for misguiding the peasants (i.e. you nation).**”

– Hadith Bukhari, vol. 4, book 56, no. 2941, cited in Robert Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*, (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2007), p. 152.

Naturally, the Roman Emperor refused.

“Heraclius did not accept Islam, and soon the Byzantines would know well that the warriors of Jihad indeed granted no safety to those who made such a choice.”

So beginning with the founder of Islam, we have in him the irresistible desire and monumental hubris to pursue the conquest of the great Roman Empire. Stemming from this drive came a religious mandate to conquer the capital of that empire, and indeed the entire empire itself. It is reported by a *Hadith* (record of sayings of Muhammad) that Muhammad said in reference to Constantinople:

“Verily you shall conquer Constantinople. What a wonderful leader will her leader be, and what a wonderful army will that army be!”

- http://www.theottomans.org/english/campaigns_army/1453-the-conquest.asp,
http://www.livingislam.org/fiqhi/fiqha_e63.html, <http://sunnah.org/msaec/articles/Constantinople.htm>, retrieved 16 February 2016.

And in yet another Hadith it is reported that he prophesied that Constantinople, the city of the Roman Empire, would fall to the Muslims:

“The Prophet Muhammad was asked: ‘**What city will be conquered first, Constantinople or Romiyya [Rome]?**’ He answered: ‘**The city of Hirqil [i.e. the Roman emperor Heraclius] will be conquered first**’ – that is, **Constantinople.**”

– cited in Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 232; see also <http://maitreya.org/english/PIslam.htm>.

The net result of all of these statements is that Muslims ever since sought to fulfil that prophecy in an obsessive, relentless pursuit of obtaining that trophy, and were thus henceforth engaged in conflict with the Roman Empire up until the fall of Constantinople itself:

“Constantinople had been the great prize since the Prophet’s time, and Muslim armies had made many unsuccessful attempts to conquer it.”

– Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), p. 349.

“Geography alone made its ultimate survival as a Christian capital impossible. It was surrounded by too many enemies – Arabs, Slavs, Turks, Bulgars, Mongols, among others – and **from the seventh century onwards was engaged in an almost continuous struggle with the immense power of Islam. With the rise of the Ottoman empire, the Byzantines were confronted with an enemy that could not be defeated, and that could not be resisted indefinitely.**

– David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith*, (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 233.

That included the Ottomans, who from 1357 embarked on a series of conquests that annexed territory from the Roman Empire piecemeal, even before the ultimate conquest of Constantinople in 1453:

“The [Ottoman] clan controlled Western Anatolia, and in **1357** began a **series of conquests which brought Macedonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria under their control**; regions which the Turks called **“Rumelia”, from Rūm, the Byzantine (“Roman”) Empire.**”

– Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), p. 349.

The point to take away from all of this is that Islam from its very inception had deeply embedded within its *existential purpose*, the *mandate to conquer the Roman Empire*. Fascinatingly enough, one of the *primary existential features* of the (Eastern) Roman Empire in response, was that it had been protecting the Western world from the Islamic juggernaut, and in doing so preserved Western civilisation from succumbing to subjugation:

“Perhaps for us today, **the most significant feature of Byzantium** lies in its **historic role in protecting the Christian West** in the early Middle Ages. **Until the seventh century, Byzantium was indeed the Roman Empire.** It ruled North Africa and Egypt, the granaries that fed both Rome and Constantinople, southern Italy, the Holy Land, Asia Minor as far east as Mount Ararat, all of today’s Greece and much of the Balkans. Then **the tribes of Arabia inspired by the new religion of Islam conquered most of the eastern Mediterranean.** They fought in the name of a revelation that presented itself as the successor to the Jewish and Christian faiths. **Byzantium checked their expansion into Asia Minor and prevented them from crossing the Dardanelles and gaining access to the Balkans. Constantinople held out against**

numerous sieges... Had Byzantium not halted their expansion in 678, Muslim forces charged by the additional resources of the capital city would have spread Islam throughout the Balkans, into Italy and the West during the seventh century, at a time when political fragmentation reduced the possibility of organized defence. By preventing this potential conquest, Byzantium made Europe possible. It allowed western Christian forces, which were divided into small units, time to develop their own strengths.”

– Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*, (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. xviii.

All of this demonstrates that Islam, from its very beginnings, had infused into its manifesto the goal of conquering the Roman Empire – it was in the very nature of Islam to do so. In summary:

7. **Islam had the mandate to conquer the Roman Empire given by no less than the founder of Islam himself, the Prophet Muhammad;**
8. The actual forcible and increasingly successful **taking of territory from the Roman Empire;**
9. The **relentless attempts at taking Constantinople;**
10. The finale of **the Conquest of Constantinople** itself and thus **the Conquest of the Roman Empire**.

All serve to prove beyond question that the Islamic Empire is the prime and ultimately successful candidate in succeeding the Roman Empire and becoming the Seventh Empire of Revelation 13.

The Ottoman Islamic Empire: The Legitimate Successor to the Roman Empire

Finally, what I found absolutely striking was that according to a recent BBC documentary titled *The Ottomans: Europe's Muslim Emperors*, the Ottomans, and in particular their leader Mehmed II who had led the enormously successful and unprecedented conquest of Constantinople in 1453, viewed his nascent empire as the natural successor to the Roman Empire!

“[Presenter BBC News Correspondent Rageh Ommar:] Mehmet saw himself as heir to the Romans, ready to model his new Ottoman Empire as their natural successor. [Professor Karen Barkey:] For the Ottoman Empire Mehmet II is Augustus. He plays the same role, because Augustus changes the Republic into an Empire, and Mehmet II changes the small Ottoman state through the conquest of Constantinople.”

– Karen Barkey, Professor of Columbia University, in Rageh Ommar, *The Ottomans: Europe's Muslim Emperors*, ‘Episode One,’ (Salford: BBC, 6 Oct 2013).

I found this later confirmed by other historical sources:

“Nothing could stop Turkish expansionism... On May 29, 1453, Mehmed II rode his white horse into Constantinople, making this proud city his new imperial capital and winning the honorific title of “The Conqueror.” For the West this was a dark moment. For Islam it was a cause for celebration. For nearly a millennium Constantinople had been the foremost barrier – both physically and ideologically – to Islam’s sustained drive for world conquest and the object of desire of numerous Muslim rulers... He was no longer a ghazi “blazing forth the way of Islam,” or even the foremost sultan in the House of Islam. He was the head of a great empire stretching from the Black Sea to the very heart of Europe and the legitimate heir to the universal Byzantine [Roman] Empire. Manifested by Mehmed’s adoption of the title Sultan-I Rum – “Ruler of Rome” (or rather Byzantium) – and his determination to turn his new capital of Constantinople, or Istanbul as it would henceforth be called, into the leading world metropolis, this alleged continuity was to become a central component of the Ottoman claim to universal empire.”

– Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, (North Yorkshire: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 89.

“Among the titles Sultan Mehmed claimed for himself was that of ‘Roman Caesar’, signifying his aspiration to succeed to the mantle of the Byzantine [Roman] Empire at the height of its greatness under Constantine and Justinian... He saw himself as the legitimate heir to Byzantium and as having realized Islamic traditions that the peerless city of Constantinople would one day be Muslim; and also as the epigone of the heroes of the Classical world. He knew some Greek, and his interest in the ancients must have been widely known in contemporary political circles. It was alluded to in his own time by the Venetian Niccolo Sagundino, a native of Euboea, in his account of the Ottomans. **Mehmed, wrote**

Sagundino, was fascinated by the Spartans, the Athenians, the Romans and the Carthaginians but identified above all with Alexander of Macedonia and Julius Caesar. The Byzantine Critoboulos of Imbros (Gokceada) wrote in the preface to his eulogistic biography that Mehmed's exploits equalled Alexander's... Mehmed fostered this identification of himself with great warriors of the past... He had the Iliad and the standard life of Alexander, Arrian's Anabasis of Alexander the Great, copied for his library. The historical tradition Sultan Mehmed tried to keep alive and of which he felt himself to be part reached far back into the past, but his eyes were set on a brilliant future for his empire."

– Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923*, (London: John Murray Publishers, 2006), pp. 70, 80.

"The capture of Constantinople bestowed on Mehmed incomparable glory and prestige and immense authority in his own country, so that he began to look upon himself as the heir of the Roman Caesars and the champion of Islam in holy war. It is not true that he had preconceived plans for his conquests, but it is certain that he was intent upon resurrecting the Eastern Roman Empire and upon extending it to its widest historic limits... Mehmed had assumed the title of Kayser-i Rum (Roman Caesar) and, at the same time, described himself as "the lord of the two lands and the two seas" (i.e., Anatolia and the Balkans, the Aegean and the Black seas), a designation that reflected his idea of the empire. During the quarter-century after the fall of Constantinople, he undertook a series of campaigns or expeditions in the Balkans, Hungary, Walachia, Moldavia, Anatolia, the island of Rhodes, and even as far as the Crimean Peninsula and Otranto in southern Italy. This last enterprise (1480) indicated that he intended to invade Italy in a new attempt at founding a world empire."

– Halil Inalcik, 'Mehmed II: Ottoman sultan,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Retrieved 14 Feb 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Mehmed-II-Ottoman-sultan>.

The claim to being the legitimate heir to the Roman Empire; the adoption of the titles Sultan-i Rum, "Ruler of Rome," and "Roman Caesar"; identifying with the greatness of past Roman Emperors Constantine, Justinian, Julius Caesar, as well as with the Macedonian Conqueror Alexander the Great; all of which Mehmed consciously used to prove his claim to being a universal sovereign of an empire; further demonstrates very emphatically that the Islamic Ottoman Empire under Mehmed II was indeed the actual successor to the Roman Empire. It is therefore not difficult to see by any stretch of the imagination that what the Bible saw as the Seventh Empire in Revelation 13 is the Islamic one.

"He Must Remain a Little While"

"This calls for a mind having wisdom. The *seven heads* are *seven mountains* on which the woman is seated. They are also *seven kings—five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.*"

– Revelation 17.9-10 (*Tree of Life Version* by the Messianic Jewish Family Bible Society)

This phrase in Rev. 17.10 is the most confounding of the descriptions of the Seventh Empire that I have found. It seems that no matter what candidate or interpretation has been put forward by scholars – be it the Roman Empire, the Papacy, the Islamic Empire – they all seem to fail at this crucial stumbling point. It has indeed perplexed me for a very long time, and I give credit to Rachel Cory of prophecyviewpoint.com for pointing this out and pressing this all-important factor in my mind. Mercifully, I believe I have come across the essential key to understanding it, and I give credit to Matt McClellan – who has a Master's Degree in Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Bachelor's Degree in History from Indiana State University – in his brilliant article (Matt McClellan, "The Antichrist, the Islamic Caliphate, and the Seven Heads of the Beast," (Christian Worldview Press, 19 August 2013), <http://christianworldviewpress.com/the-antichrist-the-islamic-caliphate-and-the-seven-heads-of-the-beast/>) for being pivotal in inspiring my solution. I truly could not have found it without him.

If we look at the context of "he must remain a little while" it is preceded by the key interpretation, "they are also *seven kings*." So instead of trying to apply "a little while" to an empire (which is bound to end in failure since empires generally tend to last for vast periods), it seems much more pragmatic and economic to apply it to their "kings." But since all empires have dynasties that usually boast an abundance of kings, this cannot be referring to just any king within the empire. After all, there are

only “seven” that the Bible refers to. Instead, a natural reading of one king for one empire would be more fitting. Judging by the majority of empire kings that the Bible does refer to – **Nebuchadnezzar II** of the **Neo-Babylonian Empire** (2 Kin. 24-25; 2 Chr. 36; Jeremiah 21-52; Dan. 1-5), **Cyrus the Great** of the **Achaemenid Persian Empire** (2 Chr. 36.22-23; Ezr. 1; Isa. 44.28,45.1; Dan. 1.21, 6.28), **Alexander the Great** of the **Hellenist/Greek Empire** (Dan. 8.5-8,21-22, 11.1-4), **Caesar Augustus** of the **Roman Empire** (Lk. 2.1) – with the exception of Assyria (whose first mention of the king is Tilgath-Pileser III - 2 Kings 15.19-29, 16.5-20; 1 Chr. 5.25-26; 2 Chr. 28.19-21), and Egypt (whose first interaction is with Abraham (Gen. 12.10-20) and other interactions with Joseph and Moses), the pattern that we get from them is a focus on the **founding kings of those empires**. The fact that Egyptian and Assyrian interaction with Israel is not with their founding kings does no harm to this view, since what is recorded of those empires in the Bible is the **historical account**, but what is given in Rev. 17.9-10 is a **prophetic overview**; citing those Biblical interactions merely aids my theory of a proposed pattern of **founding kings**, however, an alternative pattern of **kings with initial prominent interactions with Israelites** can also be employed to fit all of the empire kings recorded in the Bible.

Regardless of whichever pattern is utilised, both are revealing to the Seven Kings of Rev. 17.9-10. What these patterns tell us about the Seventh Empire King is that the prophecy regarding “he must remain a **little while**” refers to the Seventh Empire King who is either a founding king or one that had initial prominent interactions with Israelites (we have already discovered the seventh to be the Islamic Empire). Therefore, the primary candidate would be **Muhammad the Prophet of Islam**.

If we compare his reign with what is known of all of the other empire kings something clear emerges:

Empire	King	Reign	Total Years
Egypt (using the New Chronology)	Nebkaure Khety IV (Abraham)	1876-1847 BC	29
	Amenemhat III (Joseph)	1682-1637 BC	45
Neo-Assyria	Adad-nirari II (Founder)	912-891 BC	21
	Tilgath-Pileser III	912-891 BC	18
Neo-Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar II	605-562 BC	43
Achaemenid Persia	Cyrus the Great	559-530 BC	29
Hellenist/Greek Macedonia	Alexander the Great	336-323 BC	13
Roman	Tiberius Caesar Augustus	14-37 AD	23
Islamic	Muhammad the Prophet	622-632 AD	<u>10</u>

Out of all the identified kings of the seven proposed kings of each empire, Muhammad is the shortest! A perfect fit to what Rev. 17.10 describes as remaining “a little while”! As we will see below, the Islamic Empire transformation from a tribe to a state then to an empire was “**the fastest feat of empire building the world has ever seen**” (Waldemar Januszczak, *The Dark Ages: An Age of Light*, ‘The Wonder of Islam,’ (ZCZ, BBC, 2012)) boasting territories “**far larger than the Roman Empire**” (Andrew Marr, *History of the World*, (BBC, Discovery Channel, Open University, 2012)). Thus the final piece of the Seventh Empire puzzle is now in place.

Conclusion

It should clear beyond any reasonable doubt that the Roman Empire did not end in 476 as many Adventist evangelists, speakers, leaders and pastors have continuously promulgated to this day, unabated and unopposed. To say so is to actually ignore the historical reality of:

- 11. The transfer of the centre of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330;**
- 12. The subsequent splitting of the empire into two halves, East and West, in 395;**
- 13. A thousand years of existence of the eastern half of the Roman Empire up until 1453;**

14. The mandate given by the Prophet of Islam to conquer Constantinople and the Roman Empire, and the relentless pursuits of succeeding Muslim Caliphs to fulfil it ever since;
15. The gradual annexation of Roman territory by successive Sultans-Caliphs of the Islamic Ottoman Empire since 1357;
16. The final realisation of the ultimate ambition to Conquer Constantinople, executed by Sultan Mehmed II of the Islamic Ottoman Empire in 1453;
17. The legitimate claim of Sultan Mehmed II of being the natural successor and heir to the Roman Empire (and even to the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great).
18. Muhammad the Prophet, Founder and King and of the Islamic Empire has the shortest reign compared to all previous Empire Kings, and is thus a perfect fit to remaining “a little while.”

All eight are powerful and irrefutable arguments against the notion that the Roman Empire ended in 476, and in favour of the empire falling to its successor, the Islamic Empire of the Ottoman Dynasty, in 1453.

What is so fascinating is that the Ottoman Empire only ended less than one hundred years ago in 1924 (as part of World War I) – within living memory! In fact, it was because of its collapse that terrorist groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood – the biggest Islamist fraternity in the world, who is responsible for the creation of the plethora of terrorist groups today – sprang up soon after, in an attempt to restore the Islamic Empire. Additionally fascinating is that in our time the *Islamic State* (otherwise known as ISIS or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), the most brutal, sophisticated and successful terrorist state the world has ever seen – former U.N. Envoy to Syria Lakhdar Ibrahimovic called them “the worst of the worst of the worst” – has claimed to have successfully restored the Caliphate in June 2014!

More than that they, along with many other prominent Muslim clerics, hearken back to Muhammad’s earlier mandate of conquering not just *Constantinople* but also *Rome* and thus *Western Europe*! In a harrowing slaughter of 21 Coptic Christian Egyptians on the shores of Libya (click for [pictures](#) and [video](#) – warning: harrowing images of beheadings) that ignited a massive retaliation of the Egyptian military against ISIS and sparked outrage worldwide, proclaimed in prophetic end-time belief that:

“We will conquer Rome, by Allah’s permission.”

– Jared Malsin, ‘Beheading of Coptic Christians in Libya Shows ISIS Branching Out,’ *Time*, retrieved on 16 February 2016, <http://time.com/3710610/libya-coptic-christians-isis-egypt/>; see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_kidnapping_and_beheading_of_Copts_in_Libya).

Shiekh Yousef Al-Qaradawi, the Muslim Brotherhood’s spiritual leader and arguably one of the most influential Islamic clerics today said in 2002:

“The Prophet Muhammad was asked: ‘What city will be conquered first, Constantinople or Romiyya?’ He answered: ‘The city of Hirqil [Emperor Herculius, that is, Constantinople] will be conquered first’ - that is, Constantinople... **Romiyya is the city called today ‘Rome,’ the capital of Italy.** The city of Hirqil was conquered by the young 23-year-old Ottoman Muhammad bin Morad, known in history as Muhammad the Conqueror, in 1453. **The other city, Romiyya, remains, and we hope and believe [that it too will be conquered]. This means that Islam will return to Europe as a conqueror and victor,** after being expelled from it twice – once from the South, from Andalusia, and a second time from the East, when it knocked several times on the door of Athens.”

– Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, (North Yorkshire: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 232.

Other Islamic clerics have stated similar things. Sheikh Muhammad bin Abd Al-Rahman Al-'Arifi, imam of the mosque of King Fahd Defense Academy of Saudi Arabia stated:

“We will control the land of the Vatican; we will control Rome and introduce Islam in it.”

– *Independent Media Review Analysis*, retrieved on 16 February 2016, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=14811>.

Sheikh Naser Muhammad Al-Naser in a sermon at the Al-Nour Mosque in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, quoted the sage Al-Albani, saying:

“The first conquest was carried out, as is known, by Muhammad the Ottoman conqueror, 800 years after the Prophet told of it, and the second conquest [that of Rome] will be carried out, Allah willing, and it is inevitable...”

– *Independent Media Review Analysis*, retrieved on 16 February 2016, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=14811>.

Sheikh Muhammad Abd Al-Karim, in a sermon at a mosque in Khartoum, Sudan, stated:

“The Prophet Muhammad told us of the conquest of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine state, and of the conquest of Rome, where the Vatican is situated... Some of what the Prophet said has already come to pass. The Muslims conquered Persia, the Muslims conquered Byzantium... The Muslims conquered Constantinople, where Eastern Christianity is situated, and in the future, a mighty king will arise for the Muslims; through him, Islam will spread and Rome will be conquered...”

– *Independent Media Review Analysis*, retrieved on 16 February 2016, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=14811>.

All of this proving that the achievement of conquering Constantinople and thus the Roman Empire, along with the rest of the mandate to conquer Rome, and thus Europe, is still very much alive in the minds of prominent Islamic clerics and terrorists even today; thus continuing to bolster the firm evidence that the Islamic Empire stands immovably as the Seventh Empire of Revelation 13.

Eastern Empires: A Biblical Standpoint

Additionally, from a Biblical standpoint, to focus on the eastern half of the Roman Empire is a very natural and fitting interpretation. Virtually *all* the empires are centred around, or focussed from an *eastern* vantage point: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and even Greece are all empires that are based in the Middle/Near East – even Alexander the Great ironically did not base his empire in Greece but in Babylon, and his empire stretched *eastward* all the way up to the borders of India. In Revelation 13 when we view the Beast, who is effectively the “eighth” empire succeeding the sequence of “seven” (Rev. 17.11), he is represented in the form of a Lion, Bear and Leopard – this harks back to the Lion, Bear and Leopard empires in Daniel 7, namely Babylon, Persia and Greece respectively, which are all Middle Eastern empires. Hence, an Eastern Roman Empire focus is fitting to the entire viewpoint of the Bible. Consequently, to view the seventh or eighth empires as the Holy Roman Empire or the Papacy is completely incongruous to the sequence, and ignores the actual historical reality of what happened to the Roman Empire as has been described throughout.

The Awe of the Islamic Empire and Its Legacy

I want to just end with some thoughts on the legacy of the Islamic civilization and its impact on world history. Islam’s military, cultural and religious achievements, were monumental in scope, and yet they have been seemingly wiped from the West’s memory of history. They were champions of **“the fastest feat of empire building the world has ever seen”** (Waldemar Januszczak, *The Dark Ages: An Age of Light*, ‘The Wonder of Islam,’ (ZCZ, BBC, 2012)). They also boasted a vast swathe of territory, **“far larger than the Roman Empire”** (Andrew Marr, *History of the World*, (BBC, Discovery Channel, Open University, 2012)), including the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, even Spain, and finally banging on the doors of Vienna, closing in on Central Europe. The Islamic Empire truly was **“the fear of Europe”** (Eugene Rogan, *The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, (BBC, 2013)) and masters of the civilised world. If it were not stopped, “there is no reason why they wouldn’t have reached the North Sea” of the British Isles (Andrew Marr, *Andrew Marr’s History of the World*, (BBC, 2012)). And the Islamic empire dynasties were able to maintain themselves for an astounding 1300 years (622-1924).

Bernard Lewis, arguably the world’s pre-eminent Middle East historian, has this to say on the dawn of the Islamic Age:

“Within little more than a century after the Prophet’s death, the whole area had been transformed, in what was surely **one of the swiftest and most dramatic changes in the whole of human history**. By the late seventh century, the outside world attests the emergence of a new religion and a new power, the Muslim empire of the caliphs, extending eastwards in Asia as far as and sometimes beyond the borders of India and China, westwards along the southern Mediterranean coast to the Atlantic, southwards towards the lands of the black peoples in Africa, northwards into the lands of the white peoples of Europe. In this

empire, Islam was the state religion, and the Arabic language was rapidly displacing others to become the principal medium of public life.”

- Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), p. 55.

King’s College professor, Efraim Karsh, describes its Genesis even more emphatically. He informs us not only of its dramatic military surge, but also of the fact that if Islamic expansion were not stopped, today Europeans might all have already been Muslims:

“Few events have transformed the course of human history more swiftly and profoundly than the expansion of early Islam and its conquest of much of the ancient world. Within twelve years of Muhammad’s death in June 632, Iran’s long-reigning Sasanid Empire had been reduced to a tributary, and Egypt and Syria had been wrested from Byzantine rule. By the early eighth century, the Muslims had extended their domination over Central Asia and much of the Indian subcontinent all the way to the Chinese frontier, had laid siege to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantines, and had overrun North Africa and Spain. **Had they not been contained in northwest France by the nobleman Charles Martel at the battle of Poitiers (732), they might well have swept deep into Europe.** “A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles from the rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have **carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland,**” wrote the eighteenth-century British historian Edward Gibbon contemplating the possible consequences of a Christian defeat in Poitiers. “The Rhine is not more impassable than the Nile or the Euphrates, and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without a naval combat into the mouth of the Thames. **Perhaps the interpretation of the Qur’an would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed.**”

– Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 21.

Historian David Bentley Hart describes the majesty of the Islamic Empire:

“But this was also the golden age of Islamic culture. All the material, cultural and intellectual riches of East and West had been drawn into the world of the *umma*, and a new civilization was created out of their interactions. Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate after 762, became a city to rival Alexandria and Rome in the days of their greatness.”

- David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith*, (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 146.

The glory, splendour, wealth, military prowess, and artistic achievements of the Islamic Empire are poignantly illustrated in what historians have to say about the reign of one of the Ottoman Empire’s greatest Sultans, Suleman the Magnificent:

“A war leader, and a great administrator, a man of considerable cultural achievement, a man who was interested in learning, **Suleman is one of the most impressive figures of the age.**”

– [Prof. Jeremy Black, University of Exeter \(*The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, \(Salford: BBC, 2013\)\)](#).

“The Ottoman Sultan really stood out as perhaps **the most powerful man in the world** in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ruling over this vast territory with all of the wealth that the empire enjoyed, the Ottomans were able to put together **an army that was really the fear of Europe**. And it that sense **you could point to the time of Suleman as the period in which Europe was really in awe of and terrified by the Ottoman Empire.**”

– [Dr Eugene Rogan, University of Oxford, in *The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, ‘Episode 2,’ \(Salford, BBC, 2013\)](#).

“It is no wonder that the people in Christian Europe think of the Turk as a figure of fear. **When you’re thinking of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse the people depict that in paintings as Durer does. One of the Horsemen is depicted as a Turk.** Children are told that if they aren’t quiet in the evenings, if they don’t go to sleep, a Turk will get them.”

– [Professor Jeremy Black, University of Exeter, in *The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, ‘Episode 2,’ \(Salford, BBC, 2013\)](#).

“If you asked any European, ‘Who are the Muslims?’ they would’ve said ‘The Turks, **The Ottomans. They are the ones that we are afraid of.**”

– [Professor Robert Hillenbrand, University of Edinburgh, in *The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, ‘Episode 2,’ \(Salford, BBC, 2013\)](#).

“Sultan was a name to be conjured with, in London as in every other city in Europe.”

– [Professor Lisa Jardine, University College London, in *The Ottomans: Europe’s Muslim Emperors*, ‘Episode 2,’ \(Salford, BBC, 2013\)](#).

The Christian world, by contrast, was swept away by the power of Islam:

“The Christian world, however, in little more than a century, had been reduced to a fragment of its former dimensions. Rather than continuing to expand in all directions, it found itself for the first time confronted by a geopolitical power as great as – or greater than – itself.”

- David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith*, (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 146.

Perhaps the Islamic Empire’s greatest legacy is in the religious impact that it has had on its subjects:

“It is the Arabization and Islamization of the people of the conquered provinces, rather than the actual military conquest itself, that is the true wonder of the Arab empire. The period of Arab political and military supremacy was very brief, and soon the Arabs were compelled to relinquish the control of the empire, and even the leadership of the civilization which they had created, to other peoples. But their language, their faith, and their law remained – and still remain – as an enduring monument of their rule.

- Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 Years of History From the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix Press, London, 2005), p. 58.

Today that legacy of Islamization strides on. So much so that through it the dream of the return of an Islamic Caliphate has already begun. And if we believe what the Bible says about a resurrected Seventh Empire that is reborn in the Eighth Empire of the Antichrist (Rev. 13, 17), then its time to really wake up to a new reality – that the world’s present order is about to be usurped by a monstrous Islamic beast that will unleash the Antichrist and bring on the end of the age.

I end with the words from two great British historians, Bernard Lewis and Sir Hew Strachan. Lewis, when asked about what was at stake for the West when it came to Islam, replied sternly and ominously, “**the survival of our civilisation.**” Strachan, a great historian of the World Wars, was even more dramatic.

“In my moments of gloom, if I want to think where a **Third World War** would break out, **it would be in the Middle East.**”

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