

Revelation, Part 24

Armageddon

What we are going to look at now is very complicated. Supporting texts are found all over the Bible in bits and pieces, and putting them together into a coherent order is very challenging. For this reason, expositors are all over the place on the order of the events we are about to look at and when they happen. What follows comes mainly from Dwight Pentecost and his book on eschatology called *Things to Come*. I do not agree with everything he says, but his chronology seems to be the one most in line with Scripture, and I have generally followed it. Even though the subject is complicated and so very controversial, I will spend only one lesson on it. That is because it is more future history than doctrinal. Some expositors hardly mention it in their commentaries on Revelation. Dwight Pentecost is a notable exception and spends a great deal of ink on the subject.

This subject is often referred to as the “Battle of Armageddon,” but it would be more accurately described as the “Campaign of Armageddon” or the “Armageddon War” because it encompasses much more than a single battle. It involves numerous battles with various foes in a war that lasts for years.

Pentecost observes, “It has been held commonly that the battle of Armageddon is an isolated event transpiring just before the second advent of Christ to the earth. The extent of this great movement in which God deals with “the kings of the earth and of the whole world” will not be seen unless it is realized that the ‘battle of that great day of God Almighty is not an isolated battle, but rather a campaign that extends over the last half of the tribulation period. The Greek word “*polemo*,” translated as “battle” in Revelation 16:14, signifies a war or campaign, while “*machē*,” (not used), signifies a battle, and sometimes even single combat.

The name comes from the Hebrew *Har Megiddō* which is the prophesied location for a great end-times battle. *Har* means “a mountain or range of hills”. *Megiddo* refers to a fortification made by King Ahab that dominated the Plain of Esdraelon. Esdraelon is the Greek for the Hebrew *Jezreel*, the Valley of Jezreel. The “mount” of Megiddo in northern Israel is not actually a mountain but is a tell which is a mound or hill created by many

generations of people living and rebuilding on the same spot. It is mentioned only in Revelation 16:16.

Rev 16:12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. 15 (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) 16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

This campaign or war lasts for the entire last half of the Tribulation beginning sometime before the middle and the Abomination of Desolation.

Several geographical locations are involved in this war.

- Joel 3:2, 13 speaks of events taking place in “the valley of Jehoshaphat,” which seems to be an extended valley east of Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel 39:11 speaks of the “valley of the passengers,” which may be referring to the Valley of Jehoshaphat because it is a well-traveled route going to Jerusalem.
- Isaiah 34 and 63 picture the Lord coming from Edom (or Idumea), south of Jerusalem, when He returns for judgment.
- Jerusalem itself is seen as the center of the conflict in Zechariah 12:2-11 and 14:2.
- Thus, the campaign is seen as extending from the Plain of Esdraelon in the north, down through Jerusalem, extending out to the Valley of Jehoshaphat in the east and Edom in the south. This covers much of Israel, which is what Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 38:9 and 16, that the invaders will “cover the land”. John also described its expanse in Revelation 14:20, “And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.”

The Players

There will be four great world powers involved in this war.

1. The ten-nation federation we have been calling the Revived Roman Empire under the Beast (Antichrist). It is possible and probable other nations are aligned with this ten-nation federation, but they are not mentioned specifically.
2. The “Kings of the North” — a federation of nations including Russia, Turkey, perhaps part of Germany, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and maybe Saudi Arabia.
3. The “Kings of the South” — North African powers that include mainly Egypt and a few other North African nations.
4. The “Kings of the East” are the Asiatic peoples from east of the River Euphrates. China is central to this group which probably also includes other far eastern countries either willingly or as conquered nations.

To that list, we ought to add the Lord and His armies from Heaven which get directly involved at the end.

Ezekiel 38 describes the opening shots of this war and gives significant detail concerning the Kings of the North.

Ezekiel 38:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him 3 and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4 And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. 5 Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.

The translated “chief” is the Hebrew rosh. Other translations have taken the word as a proper noun and transliterated it as “Rosh.” Should the Hebrew word, which means “head” or “chief” be taken as an adjective (“head prince,” or “chief prince”) or as a proper noun (“Rosh”)? Some say the evidence seems to favor taking it as an adjective because “Rosh” never appears as a nation in any other biblical list of place names. Some say Rosh is modern Russia and give substantial historical evidence to support that.

Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal were called “Scythians” by the ancients. They roamed the country north of Israel around the Black and Caspian Seas and the Caucasus Mountains. Caucasus means Gog’s fort. The Scythians have a tradition that they originally came from Armenia. Historians agree the Scythians (Magogites) were made up of two groups: Japhetic (European) and Turanian (Asiatic). The Japhetic comprised what the Greeks and Romans called Sarmatians, who were later called Slavs and Russians. They settled around the Black Sea and extended to the Baltic and the Ural Mountains in Russia. The Turanian group comprised Asiatic Magogites, who dwelt in the Great Plain of Central Asia. They are Tartars, Cossacks, Finns, Kalmuks, and Mongols. Ezekiel 38:2 associates Magog with the person Gog, indicating that Magog was the land (along with Tubal and Meshech) over which Gog ruled.

Persia is modern-day Iran. Since Cush is one of the “many peoples” that come with Gog out of the “uttermost parts of the North,” this suggests strongly that Cush is not the Ethiopia of northern Africa. Furthermore, cuneiform tablets of Assyria, Babylon, and Arabia suggest this represents two other areas: The Kassite region east of central Babylonia, and the land and people of northern Arabia. Put is commonly identified as Libya in North Africa, but this makes no sense for them to come with Gog from the North. John D. Davis in his Dictionary of the Bible says Put lay south or southeast of Cush somewhere adjacent to Persia (Iran). Gomer, according to the Talmud, is Germany. Togarmah is that area we call Armenia according to Assyrian records and supported by the Roman Tacitus. It is probably the tribes of central Turkey and may extend to include some Siberian tribes, how far is a guess. “Remotest parts of the North” has to refer to Russia.

It appears this is a confederation of nations comprising some combination of peoples or nations out of modern Turkey, Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, Slavs, and Russia. These are all north of Israel except Arabia.

Sheba and Dedan are both Arabic tribes. Tarshish is the northern Mediterranean coastal people stretching from Italy to Spain, and later, a seaport in Spain.

Note that God says in verse 4, “I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and bring you out with all your army, horses and horsemen, all of

them fully armed, a great company with shields of different types, all of them armed with swords.” It is by an act of God that this alliance forms and comes out against Israel, but is Satan recently kicked out of Heaven that is the tool used by God.

Ezekiel 38:8 After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them. 9 You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

10 “Thus says the Lord God: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme 11 and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,’ 12 to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth.

Israel is a nation once more, and the Jews have begun returning to their traditional homeland where they are living in peace and feeling secure. This is likely because of the covenant they made with the Antichrist at the beginning of the Tribulation, a covenant that offered security, rights to the land and to build the Temple, and a call for Jews to regather in the land. It should also be seen as a Satanic imitation of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant that gave Israel title deed to the land, something that Messiah is expected to accomplish.

Ezekiel 38:18 But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger. 19 For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 20 The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. 21 I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man’s sword will be against his

brother. 22 With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. 23 So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

Ezekiel 39:3 Then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. 4 You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5 You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord God. 6 I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the Lord. 7 “And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. 8 Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken.

God deals directly with them and destroys the armies. There is no indication God had any help from man or, more specifically, from Antichrist. His purpose is to identify Himself as the protector of Israel.

Ezekiel 39:9 “Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, 10 so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord God.

11 “On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea. It will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried. It will be called the Valley of Hamon-Gog. 12 For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. 13 All the people of the land will bury them, and it will bring them renown on the day that I show my glory, declares the Lord God. 14 They will set apart men to travel through the land regularly and bury those travelers remaining on the face of the land, so as to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make their search. 15 And when these travel through the land and anyone sees a human

bone, then he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-Gog. 16 (Hamonah is also the name of the city.) Thus shall they cleanse the land.

17 “As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field: ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. 18 You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. 19 And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. 20 And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord God.

21 “And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. 22 The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward. 23 And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. 24 I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them.

25 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. 26 They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, 27 when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies’ lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. 28 Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. 29 And I will not hide my face any more from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.”

What do we have here? An army, composed of Russia and various other nations mostly to the north of Israel invade Israel. Israel is living in peace without walled cities and is vulnerable. That army is destroyed on the mountains of Israel by the Lord with no indication of humans involved in

that defeat. It takes seven months to bury the dead and seven years to burn the implements of war. God does this to demonstrate His power and protection of Israel.

Regarding the seven months and seven years, many have charged that because of the seven months to bury the dead some argue this defeat of the Northern Confederation could not possibly happen at the end of the Tribulation because there would be dead bodies still contaminating the perfect environment of the Millennium that follows. A similar charge is made regarding the seven years spent burning the implements of war, thus some argue this invasion must happen before the Tribulation to allow enough time to burn all the war material before the Millennium. Neither argument is valid. There is no indication that the Millennium begins on day one after the Second Advent. Many things must happen between the Second Advent and day one of the Millennium, such as several judgments and preparing the war-torn world for the “perfect environment” of the Millennium. That could take as many as several years. As for when it happens, it does not occur at the end of the Tribulation nor before it starts. This invasion takes place around the middle of the Tribulation.

Let’s see if we can sort this out. Daniel 11 is a prophecy of the end of the Age of the Law. It accurately describes the rise and fall of Alexander the Great and the war that followed. But when we get to Daniel 11:36 we have a time shift from describing events surrounding Alexander the Great to the future. Everything before verse 36 is history and very accurately recorded. Verse 36, however, begins a look at events of the Seventieth Week.

Dan 11:36 “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. 37 He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. 39 He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

40 “At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. 41 He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. 42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. 44 But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. 45 And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

Starting with Daniel 11:36 the prophecy moves from the “near” fulfillment to the “far fulfillment”. The events recorded in verses 36-45 will occur during the final 3.5 years of the Seventieth Week (9:24). Verse 36 says this coming king will be independent of any authority apart from himself. He will do as he pleases. Midway through his seven-year reign, he will exercise the political power given to him by the ten kings of the Revived Roman Empire (Rev. 17:12-13). He will also take to himself absolute power in the religious realm. “He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thes. 2:4). “He will speak against the Most High” (Dan. 7:25). This is the Abomination of Desolation and it occurs after the invasion of the Kings of the South and the subsequent destruction of the King of the North. The world will be persuaded to worship him as god by the miracles the false prophet will perform in his name (Rev. 13:11-15). He will succeed in spreading his influence around the world, both politically and religiously (Rev. 13:7-8).

He will be successful as the world ruler during the time of wrath, the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, but at the end of that period, the judgment determined by God will be meted out to him (Dan. 7:11, 26; 9:27; Rev. 19:19-20).

The events in Daniel 11:40-45 will transpire at the “time of the end,” that is, they will occur mainly in the second half of the 70th week. “Him” refers back to the king introduced in verse 36. In verses 40-45 every occurrence

of “he” (seven times), “him” (four times), and “his” (three times) refers to this coming king. He will have entered into a covenant with the people of Israel, binding that nation as a part of his domain (9:27). Any attack, then, against the land of Israel will be an attack against him.

The king of the South will attack Israel and thus Antichrist. Some suggest that this will occur in the middle of the Seventieth Week. Some say it will take place toward the end of the second half of that seven-year period. In this invasion, Egypt will not come alone but will be joined by the Libyans and Nubians (v. 43). I think this event is in concert with the invasion from the North seen in Isaiah 34 and 35 and takes place right before the middle of the Tribulation. Isaiah and Daniel are seeing the same event from two perspectives.

Some think this takes place after the invasion from the North and its defeat at the hands of God. Note the reference in verse 40, “At the time of the end, the king of the south will attack him. Then the king of the north will storm against him with chariots, horsemen, and a large armada of ships.” The King of the North attacks after the King of the South attacks. Antichrist defeats the King of the South, but “news from the east and the north shall alarm him”. That has to be the invasion of the Kings of the North and threats from the Kings of the East. He turns and reenters Israel and pitches “his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain” (v45). This has to be in Jerusalem which is between the Med Sea and the Dead Sea.

All this happens soon before the middle of the Tribulation. This invasion activates the treaty between Israel and Antichrist, and he uses it as an excuse to invade Israel (v41). He enjoys some success and takes Jerusalem.

Dan 12:1 “At that time Michael, the great prince who watches over your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress unlike any other from the nation’s beginning up to that time. But at that time your own people, all those whose names are found written in the book, will escape.

The “time of distress unlike any other” should be seen as the Great Tribulation and the context suggests it begins after the invasions of Israel and all that is described in Daniel 11:36-45. The focus of the Antichrist will

be the destruction of all Jews but “all those whose names are found written in the book will escape”.

Isaiah 28 and 29 follow this same chronology.

Isa 28:15 For you say, “We have made a treaty with death, with Sheol we have made an agreement. When the overwhelming judgment sweeps by it will not reach us. For we have made a lie our refuge, we have hidden ourselves in a deceitful word.”

Isaiah speaks of the Assyrian Invasion that took the northern tribes into captivity. This is the near fulfillment of the prophecy. They made a treaty with Egypt (man) instead of trusting God. The same happens for the far fulfillment when Israel puts its faith in the Antichrist to protect them instead of God. Chapter 28 goes on to speak of them being swept away and besieged. Chapter 29:17-24 speaks of far fulfillment and God’s ultimate redemption of Israel. The rest of 29 speaks of Israel’s misplaced trust in man. Then chapter 30:1-29 speaks of the destruction coming upon them. Look at verse 30:

Isa 30:30 And the Lord will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and storm and hailstones. 31 The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the Lord, when he strikes with his rod. 32 And every stroke of the appointed staff that the Lord lays on them will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres. Battling with brandished arms, he will fight with them. 33 For a burning place has long been prepared; indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it.

The “Assyrians” in verse 31 is a reference to the King of the North. Assyria is frequently used by God to chastise Israel and is figuratively used here in that context. This passage describes the destruction of the Northern invaders.

Chronology

In Isaiah 30 and 31 we have the description of the destruction of the King of the North. In Isaiah 33 and 34 we see the destruction of all the nations

at the end of the Tribulation followed by the Millennium in Isaiah 35. We find the same chronology in the Book of Joel. In Joel 2 we see the invasion of the northern army (v20), followed by the destruction of the nations in Joel 3, followed by the Millennium described in 3:17-21. The basic chronology is the same in both. The armies of the North are destroyed at a separate time, in a distinct movement, before the destruction of the nations which is at the end of the Great Tribulation, and then comes the Millennium. To place this invasion by the King of the North and related in the middle of the week is the only position consistent with the chronology in these two passages.

Such a view would lead us to the following most likely sequence of events concerning Armageddon:

1. Israel makes a false covenant with the Beast at the beginning of the Seventieth Week.
2. While the rest of the world is in turmoil during the first half of the Tribulation, Israel occupies their land in false security and relative peace (Dan 9:27; Ezek 38:8, 11).
3. Satan gets kicked out of Heaven soon before the middle of the Tribulation.
4. The King of the South (Arab confederation) invades Israel as part of an invasion by the King of the North.
5. The Beast breaks the covenant with Israel and moves into the land and defeats the King of the South (Dan 11:43).
6. Outwardly motivated by Satan, but in reality, his actions are driven by God, the King of the North invades Palestine "for spoil" (Ezek. 38:11; Joel 2:1-21; Isa 10:12, 30:31-33, 31:8-9).
7. The King of the North is destroyed on the mountains of Israel by acts of God (Ezekiel 39:1-4).
8. Antichrist moves back into Israel from Egypt and probably takes credit for the destruction of the Northern Federation then occupies Jerusalem (Dan 11:45).
9. It is likely about this time that the so-called "fatal head wound" happens.
10. The Abomination of Desolation goes up in the Temple, and Antichrist demands worship. The "image" of the Beast that speaks at the Abomination of Desolation is probably the "resurrected" version of the Beast.

11. This is also probably when the Two Witnesses are killed in Jerusalem, as Antichrist begins consolidating his power and eliminating enemies.
12. A great coalition of nations forms a one-world government under the Beast (Ps 2:1-3; Rev 13:7). "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (Rev 13:4)
13. Nearer the end of the Great Tribulation, the Kings of the East come against the armies of the Beast (Rev 16:12).
14. When the armies of all the nations are gathered together around Har Megiddo, Jerusalem (Zech 14:1-3), and the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2) the Lord returns to destroy the armies of the world powers so that He might rule the nations Himself.
15. This is further described in Zech 12:1-9, 14:1-4; Isaiah 33:1-34:17, 63:1-6, 66:15-16; Jer 25:27-33; Rev 20:7-10.

What Others Believe

As one would expect, both the Jews and the Muslims have their own versions of these end times which we will now briefly consider. All three religions, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, have a common ancestry in the Old Testament. It is natural to assume their eschatologies would be similar, and they are, but in some strange ways.

Jewish Eschatology

Jewish eschatology is very close to the beliefs held by premillennial Christians. That should be no surprise because both use the same OT texts which contain much information about the end times. The New Testament only builds on that for Christians. Obviously, the two differ regarding the person of Jesus Christ. What do they agree on? Both agree:

- There will be a time of great tribulations.
- There will be a time when Messiah destroys the enemies of God.
- He will rule from Jerusalem (Millennium).
- He will build the temple.
- Jews and Gentiles will pilgrimage to Jerusalem for worship.

The difference is mainly how Messiah accomplishes these things.

The Jews get their end-times information not only from the Old Testament but also from other sources, such as the Talmud and the writings of certain rabbis. What follows is a very brief description of some of these beliefs.

Two Messiahs?

While many Jewish groups are expecting only one Messiah, Messiah Ben David, some others are expecting two Messiahs. The first is called Messiah Ben Joseph, and the second is Messiah Ben David. It is said that Ben Joseph fights and wins great wars with Israel's enemies, and that is exactly what the Jews expect to see in their Messiah, someone who is a real fighter. That is one reason they rejected Jesus, as Messiah. They were looking for the kick-butt Messiah. The First Advent Jesus was not that Messiah. He came as a sin offering, but the Second Advent Jesus will be that expected kick-butt Messiah.

Notice how this image of Ben Joseph will play into the hands of the Antichrist who will fit the role the Jews are expecting by subduing their enemies and bringing about "security" and prosperity for Israel, especially when he forms this one world government with him as the king. Furthermore, they will be able to build the Temple and return to worship as defined by the Law. Antichrist will appear to be fulfilling the promised Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants and the New Covenant. He is going to look like the Messiah Ben Joseph of their rabbinical teachings or the Messiah Ben David if you believe there will be only one Messiah. After much success in these wars, Messiah Ben Joseph is killed. They get this from Zechariah 12.

Zech 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn."

Of course, we know this is speaking of Jesus as the one they have pierced, and the Jews are the ones that did the piercing. But the Jews interpret the guilty piercing "they" not as themselves but as referring to their enemies, and they are the ones who were abused (pierced), specifically Ben Joseph. Should we see his death as the "fatal head wound"?

Then we have the "second Messiah" come on the scene, Messiah Ben David. He is seen as a second person and superior to Ben Joseph. The idea of two Messiahs only exists in rabbinic tradition. Notice how this plays into Satan's scheme: Antichrist enjoys political and military victories around the middle of the Tribulation and enters Jerusalem triumphantly,

but he is soon killed only to resurrect, and I think, as the “image” in the Temple? When the Jews of the Tribulation see this, they will immediately think of their tradition of two Messiahs.

Ben David has his own wars to deal with, and because of the successes of the two, the power of Ben David becomes almost universal, which resembles what we know about the Antichrist Beast. After Israel becomes the center of the world under Ben David, Jewish eschatology teaches they then begin the destruction of all unrepentant Gentiles who will not submit to Messiah Ben David. Sounds like Antichrist?

Whether there are two Messiahs or only one, that being Messiah Ben David, what is accomplished is the same, and it gives the same appearance to the Jews as fulfilling their eschatology.

Muslim Eschatology

Imam Al Mahdi is the main figure in Muslim eschatology. He will unite Islam spiritually and fight wars for various periods of time, depending on the source. One specified period in their traditions is, coincidentally, seven years. Islam will be great under his leadership. He is said to be a descendant of Mohammed to lead Muslims to rule the world and rid it of evil and injustice.

The second character in their eschatology is the Dajjal who is an evil figure roughly analogous to Antichrist. He is born somewhere in the West and claims to be the Jewish Messiah. His full name, “Al-Masih ad-Dajjal” means “imposter Messiah”. Various hadiths (sayings by Mohammed and his followers years after his death) describe Dajjal in very negative terms, including blind in one eye and grotesque looking. Tradition says he will gain considerable power over the world. The emergence of this Jewish Messiah, which they will see as the Dajjal, will likely trigger a war with Israel drawing in their allies, Antichrist and the Revived Roman Empire. Daniel 11:40-45 suggests the Antichrist is first attacked by the Muslim world in alliance with Gog.

The third person in this bunch is Isa Ben Mary (Jesus, son of Mary). He is a Muslim version of Jesus, who they see as a great prophet but not God. Muslims believe Jesus will return to be subordinate to the Mahdi. His main focus is to kill the Dajjal. This Muslim version of Jesus will return on a mountaintop somewhere outside Israel, at the start of a war between the

armies of the Mahdi and the Dajjal. Isa is also said to be responsible for the conversion of many Christians to Islam.

Many of these end-times beliefs come from hadiths. Mohammed and his followers had access to New Testament teachings and beliefs, thus many of their beliefs reflect what is in our Scriptures but with a few changes, such as casting the Christians and the Jews as the bad guys. For example, in the story of Abraham taking Isaac up Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him to God, the Islamic version has Abraham taking Ishmael to be sacrificed. They claim the Jews and Christians have altered the Scriptures.

As you can see, there is much overlapping of the end times beliefs of the Jews, Muslims, and Christians. All this is the result of manipulations by Satan to create confusion during the Tribulation among all parties involved regarding the Antichrist and his plan. All are expecting some version of the characters who have roles in Daniel's Seventieth Week, and they will see what Satan plans for them to see so he can lead them to the conclusions he wants them to have. All will be expecting a War of Armageddon of some sort and a great messianic figure that fits their eschatology. All will be brought to a final cataclysmic gathering of the powers of the world in one final battle where Satan's ultimate objective is the destruction of Israel and the defeat of God's armies.