

Ad-Dajjal

ad-Dajjal is the Muslim version of the Antichrist. However, it is important to realize that the description of ad-Dajjal in Islam and the Antichrist in the Bible are not the same. See this article for more discussion on this.

Ad-Dajjal is described in the hadiths as a male, being blind in one eye and that his eyes are like protruding grapes. Thus, he is a rather hideous looking creature. He is able to travel around the world very quickly and perform many miracles. He is supposed to have the letters "kfr" (meaning "infidel" in Arabic) on his forehead. All Muslims are supposed to be able to recognize these letters and therefore refuse to follow him. Muslims are told to be wary of the "Trial of ad-Dajjal" and that by reciting certain verses of the Qur'an, they are supposedly protected from him. There are certain hadiths that speak of him appearing before Muhammad and his followers, so that means he is not likely a normal human (since he has such a long life-span). The hadiths say that ad-Dajjal is supposed to oppose al-Mahdi and will be killed by Isa (Muslim version of Jesus).

Muslims tend to think that ad-Dajjal is similar to the Antichrist described in the Bible. This similarity, however, is similar in name only. In contrast to the description of the Antichrist in the Bible, ad-Dajjal is not a world leader (since at least 1.3 billion Muslims will not follow him), not a persecutor of Christians and Jews (in fact, ad-Dajjal is supposed to be a Jewish leader), did not have a treaty with the people of God, etc.

However, we believe that ad-Dajjal corresponds to descriptions of the Two Witnesses in the Bible. Thus, ad-Dajjal may specifically correspond to one of the Two Witnesses, or a generic one. See below for more details.

al-Mahdi

Al-Mahdi is the first of the Major signs in Islamic Eschatology. This major character is supposed to arise after a period of chaos in the world (perhaps that is what some Muslims like Iranian President Ahmadinejad is trying to do). Muslims worldwide eagerly anticipate his coming. In fact, there are some Muslims who are committed to creating the conditions viable for the emergence of al-Mahdi (like President Ahmadinejad).

At first, he will deny that he is the one the Muslims are waiting for, but some of the Muslim religious leaders will recognize him and pledge allegiance to him. Muhammad said in the hadiths that all Muslims are to pledge allegiance to him when he is revealed. News will then travel around the Muslim world, and he will become the leader of the Muslims. He will then lead the Muslims in jihad against the rest of the world and be victorious over them. He will lead the world into a period of justice and peace under Islam. He is said to be called Muhammad bin Abdullah, the same name as Muhammad, and will be his descendent (through Fatimah, the only daughter of Muhammad to have surviving descendents). Note that Fatimah was the wife of Ali, the fourth Caliph, whom the Shiites regard as their first Imam. In fact, Madhism is especially strong among the Shiite Muslims.

Al-Mahdi is said to be tall, handsome, fair-complexioned and will look like a Jew. His face will be like a glittering star. He is said to rule for seven years (although some hadiths say 8 or 9 years), and under his rule, there will be rain and sun so that the crops will grow very well. His seat of authority of the global Islamic Caliphate will be in Jerusalem. There will be plenty of wealth during his rule and he will distribute wealth without counting.

He will be assisted by Isa (the Muslim version of Jesus), who will help him establish Islam throughout the whole world. In contrast to Isa who is recognized as a prophet, al-Mahdi is usually not recognized as a prophet, but as an Imam (leader) of the Muslims. As the schism between the majority Sunnis and the Shiites is very large (witness the killing between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq), this means al-Mahdi must not only be acceptable by both sects, but must also have the ability to mediate between them. Thus, he must be an extraordinarily persuasive person, not unlike Muhammad himself.

Antichrist

In the Bible, "Antichrist" is a generic term and the word appears only in the Epistles of John. The Apostle John warned us:

Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist -- he denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

Hence, from a Biblical perspective, an antichrist is the opposite of the Biblical Jesus Christ and comes to oppose him. He also

denies that Jesus is God, denies that He is the Son of God, and denies that He had come in the flesh (i.e., God became man).

The title Antichrist can mean any or all of the following:

- against Christ
- false Christ
- substitute Christ

On the other hand, other parts of the Bible describe the coming of a person called variously as: "The Beast", "The Lawless One", "The Son of Perdition", etc which in content and description appears to refer to the same person. This person is described as the epitome of opposition against Christ and his followers. Thus, the title of "Antichrist" is generally applied to this particular person. Hence, in specific application, the Antichrist is a person that is to arise in the Last Days and will govern the whole world, go against the God and Christ of the Bible, and persecute the saints (Jews and Christians).

Since the meaning of Christ (and Jesus) are rather different in Christianity and in Islam, the term "Antichrist" similarly does not have the same meaning in Christianity and Islam. Failure to grasp this point leads to the fatal conclusion that ad-Dajjal is the Antichrist described in the Bible. This is not so.

In Islam, there is also an Antichrist known as ad-Dajjal for more details. See this article for more details. However, this ad-Dajjal does not have the same characteristics of the Antichrist in the Bible. It is important, therefore, not to confuse the two characters just because they appear to have the same title.

It is significant to note that Islam as a religion denies that Jesus is God and therefore was not God come in the flesh. From the point of view of the Bible, Islam is clearly Antichrist in nature.

Babylonian Empire

The Babylonian Empire was the first of the four great empires in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (see Dan 2). See here for more details about this empire.

It is said that Saddam Hussein often thought of himself as Nebuchadnezzar.

Babylon also figures in the apocalyptic vision of Apostle John in Revelations 17. It is not clear, however, if Babylon in the vision is to be interpreted literally as the ancient Babylon, or as a symbolism.

Beast

There are many descriptions of beasts in the Bible, especially when referring to End Times figures. These are not literal beasts (animals), but are symbolisms. The beasts can represent a person, an organization, a king or an Empire. Very often, the king and the Empire he ruled are described by the same beast symbolism.

In eschatological terms, "The Beast" refers to Rev 13:1, which we commonly refer to as the Antichrist. This Beast will rule over the world and those who refused to follow him will be killed.

Caliph (Arabic: Khalif)

Literally Vice-regent, successor or representative. This term is used to refer to the leader of the Muslim Ummah or community of Islam after Muhammad's death. After the death of Muhammad, the four caliphs that were chosen in order were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. The Shiites however, believed that Muhammad had chosen Ali to be his successor. Except for Abu Bakr, the other three caliphs were all assassinated. After Ali's death, the Caliphate passed on to the Umayyads, then the Abbasids, and finally the Ottomans (Turks). When al-Mahdi appears, he will be the expected Caliph of the Muslims.

Caliphate

The caliphate (Arabic, khilafah) refers to the jurisdiction of a Caliph. Originally, the first four Caliphs were chosen by the people, but after the assassination of Ali, the Caliphate passed to the Umayyads, then the Abbasids, and finally the Ottomans. However, the Ottoman Caliphate came to an end in 1923.

When al-Mahdi appears, his caliphate will include the Muslim nations, and after waging jihad against the rest of the world, his caliphate will cover the entire world.

End Times

"End Times", "Last Days", "Last Hour" all refer to the period of time (most like in years) before the end of the world, known also as the Apocalypse. Both Christians and Muslims believe that before the End of the World, there will arise some important characters, as well as disasters. Also during that period, the Christians and Jews will be persecuted. This period is also known as the Great Tribulation in Christianity. At the End of the World, there will be judgment for all people.

Eschatology

This is the study of the Last Days or End Times (the period of time before the End of the world). This includes the study of persons, events, phenomena, etc., that are supposed to happen in the End Times. Many religions have their own versions of eschatological events and characters.

False Prophet

This title is given to a specific character in Revelation 13:11-17:

Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship

the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The "first beast" in the passage above is commonly referred to as the Antichrist. The description in the above mentioned passage indicates that the False Prophet will be an assistant to the first beast (or Antichrist) and will help him set up a worldwide religious system. He has the ability to perform great miracles (eg. cause fire to come down from heaven), and thus deceive the people of this world to follow him.

We also see that he looks like a lamb (referring to Jesus), but instead speak like the dragon, symbolically Satan. That means this person will try to deceive people into believing that he is the real Jesus, but in reality, he is Satan's instrument on this earth.

The False Prophet is also the one who instituted what is commonly known as the "Mark of the Beast", a sign, symbol or mark that is put on the forehead or hand of a person belonging to his religious system. Clearly, this mark distinguishes between those who submit to his religious system and those who do not. Those without this mark will not be able to buy or sell anything. Those who refuse to follow the religious system will be killed.

In Islamic eschatology, we find that Muslims expect Isa to return to this world and help al-Mahdi to set up Islam as the world religion. He will implement Shar'ia over the whole world. Also, Islamic eschatology talks about a beast appearing that will mark each person on the forehead with a sign, in order to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims.

hadiths

(plural: ahadith. However, in the English, we also use hadiths). The hadiths form the second source of Islamic jurisprudence after the Qur'an. The hadiths are records of sayings or deeds attributed to Muhammad. Each hadith report consists of a chain of narrators (isnad) and the content of the hadith report (matn).

The "Science of Hadiths" consist in verifying that the isnad are possible (eg. they need to overlap and have opportunities to meet in order to pass the information). The narrators also cannot be known liars. The matn is not scrutinized the way the chain was, and so sometimes the matn may differ or be contradictory when dealing with the same incident. The Sunni Muslims consider the Sahih Bukhari (collected 150 years after Muhammad) and Sahih Muslim to be the most trustworthy.

The hadiths have varying authenticity, according to the "Science of Hadiths". The hadiths can be classified as Sahih (authentic or sound), Hasan (sound or good), da'if (weak), da'if jidan (very weak) or maudhu (fabricated). In Islam, the first two types can be used to establish matters of law (Shar'ia Law), the third can be used establish virtues of a person.

The six major Sunni collections of hadiths are:

Sahih Bukhari
Sahih Muslim
Sunan al-Sughra
Sunan Abi Da'ud

Sunan al-Tirmidhi
Sunan Ibn Maja/Al-Muwatta

The first two have almost impeccable authenticity according to the "Science of the Hadiths". The hadiths are very important to Islam because the Qur'an seldom have historical anchors, but the hadiths sometimes clarify how the particular verse in the Qur'an came about. In Islamic practices, often the Qur'an gives vague instructions (eg. about daily prayers known as salat), but the hadiths explained them in detail. Sometimes, the hadiths provide information where the Qur'an did not. For example, the penalty for apostasy is death, and is found in the hadiths, not in the Qur'an. Sometimes, the hadiths talk about the missing verses of the Qur'an (eg. the verse about stoning of adulterers).

There are some minority Muslims who view the hadiths as largely untrustworthy, and felt that they should only follow the Qur'an. However this group are often persecuted by the majority Muslims.

Halal

That which is permitted, according to Islamic Law. Often, this refers to things that can be consumed or owned, and acts that can be done by Muslims. This is the opposite of haram.

Isa

Isa is the Islamic name for Jesus. It is not clear what is the etymological development of this name, with some claiming that it came from Esau, twin brother of Jacob. The Greek form of Jesus is Iesous, which came from the Hebrew Y'shua (Joshua), meaning "God saves".

The description of Isa in Islam is not the same as the Jesus of the Bible, the most obvious being that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who came in the flesh and to die for the sins of man. Islam denies all these three points.

Both Islam and Christianity believes that Jesus will come back again. However, their roles are not the same.

Islam

The word "islam" means "submission", from the Arabic root word "al-silm". A "muslim" (muslimah - feminine) is one who submits. Despite what some Muslims try to tell non-Muslims, it does not mean "peace" (Arabic salam), which comes from the Arabic root word "salamah", even though "islam" and "salam" share the same consonants in English.

Islam requires that a believer submits completely to the will of Allah. The highest honor of a Muslim is to be a slave (Arabic "abd") of Allah.

In contrast, Jesus said in the Gospels that:

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Islamic Calendar

Muslims use the Islamic Calendar, which is different from the Jewish calendar and the Gregorian calendar. The Islamic Calendar starts at the Hijra of Muhammad in the year 622 A.D. (when he escaped from Mecca and went to Medina). Years after this date in the Islamic calendar are marked as A.H. (after hijrah). The Muslim calendar is strictly lunar in nature, as Muhammad disliked the intercalation (the insertion of days or months to somewhat make up for the lesser number of days than in the solar year) that was practiced by the Jews and the pagan Arabs. As a result of this lack of intercalation, the Muslim year is only about 354 days long. Thus, for example, Ramadan (the fasting month) sometimes fall in winter, sometimes in spring, or summer or fall. Fasting

is from sunrise to sunset, so it is easier in winter, but becomes much harder in summer, especially if you live close to the poles (which have very long summer hours).

Jihad

The word in Arabic literally means "struggle" or "strive". In particular, it refers to jihad in Allah's cause. Most often, especially in the Qur'an and hadiths, it refers to fighting against infidels in order to establish the supremacy of Islam. Jihad is seen as the second most important virtuous deed, and also seen by many as the sixth pillar of Islam.

Jizya Tax

This is a tax imposed on the Jews and Christians (dhimmis). By paying this tax, the Jews and Christians are "protected" from outside forces, but are treated as second class citizens within the Muslim jurisdiction. Many Jews and Christians, in order to escape paying this tax, choose to become Muslims.

The Qur'an provides the justification:

Fight those who believe not in Allah and the Last Day and do not forbid what Allah and his messenger have forbidden - such men as practise not the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the book - until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled (humiliated). Surah al-Baqara 9:29

The justification for second class treatment of dhimmis comes from the last part of the verse, "humbled" or "humiliated".

Muslims believe that when Isa returns to this world to help al-Mahdi set up the global Islamic Caliphate, he will also "kill the swine, break the cross and abolish the Jizya tax". The abolition of the Jizya tax implies that the "protection" for dhimmis will be abolished, and that they either have to become Muslims, or face death.

Khorasan

Today, this is a province in north eastern Iran. In ancient times, Greater Khorasan covers a much bigger area including north eastern Iran, parts of Afghanistan and some central Asian republics.

The hadiths say that if a green ensign appears in Khorasan, then the coming of al-Mahdi is imminent. al-Mahdi is said to come from Khorasan, bearing black flags.

Mark of the Beast

In both Islam and Christianity, the End Times will see something known as the Mark of the Beast.

In Islam, it is a literal beast that will appear suddenly on the earth. It will then go around the world, and put a mark on the forehead of Muslims so that their faces will glitter. It will also touch the nose or face of non-Muslims, their faces will blackened. As a result, it becomes clear who is a Muslim and who is an infidel. After this, the beast will simply disappear.

In Christianity, the mark is forced upon (i.e., instituted) by the False Prophet. Only those who accept this mark on their forehead or right hand will be allowed to buy or sell. This mark is the famous 666 or 616 (a number of the name of the beast).

Medo-Persian Empire

The Medo-Persian Empire is the second empire mentioned in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. At the beginning of the Babylonian destruction, the Medes were the stronger of the two, but later the Persians supplanted the Medes.

Muslim

A Muslim is a person who has submitted to Allah. Today, there are an estimated 1.3 to 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. Most of them live in

Northern Africa, Middle East and Indonesia (the most populous Muslim nation). The Arabs actually form a minority of the Muslim population, known as the Ummah. The majority of Muslims, however, are not able to read Arabic, the only language of the Qur'an.

Nation of Israel

In ancient times, the kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Babylonian Empire in 597 B.C., with many Israelites sent into captivity. Under the Medo-Persian Empire, the Temple and Jerusalem were allowed to be rebuilt. In A.D. 70, Jerusalem was again destroyed by the Romans under General Titus, and many Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. Even so, there were still continued Jewish presence in Israel.

During World War II, persecution of Jews and the killing of six million Jews under Hitler and the Nazis caused a wave of emigration from Europe, but the British who were administering Israel in 1939 limited the number of Jews who could return to Israel and placed them in detention camps.

Following World War II, the United Nations (successor to the League of Nations) General Assembly proposed to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Crucial votes from the Soviet bloc enabled the Partition Plan to pass with 33 votes in favor, 13 against and 10 abstentions with 1 absent. As a two-thirds majority was required, this vote meant that the Partition Plan was accepted. The Jews accepted this proposal while the majority of Arabs and Arab states rejected it.

Of the land under the British Mandate, 77% of it was given to create the Arab territory of Transjordan (to become Kingdom of Jordan). Of the remaining 23% of land, Israel was given 55%, of which 75% of it was (Negev) desert, while the rest of the 45% was given to the Arabs.

The modern nation of Israel was officially formed on May 14th, 1948. After nearly 2000 years, the Jews finally have a land they can call their home again, fulfilling many prophecies in the Bible (see for example, Ezek 36:24, 33-34, 38:8). However, this jubilation was short-lived, as the surrounding Arab nations immediately declared war.

The significance of Israel as a nation in the End Times is that the Antichrist will lead a number of Middle East nations (see, for example Ezek 38) and attack her. Before the formation of the nation of Israel, there wasn't even an Israel to attack. More than 2,600 years after it has been prophesied, the Jews once again have their own nation, and being attacked by her enemies is once again a real possibility. Moreover, the anger against Israel since its formation has been seething in many Muslims' mind, and has been referred to time and again by various Muslim leaders and terrorist leaders. It is easy to anticipate and imagine Israel being attacked by zealous Muslims, or even the whole world, if the Muslims gain control over the United Nations (UN). Muslims expect in the End Times, al-Mahdi and Isa will come and then lead them in killing the Jews.

Ottoman Caliphate

The Ottoman Turks were the latest Muslims to have ruled over the Muslim world. It was abolished in 1923, but many Muslims are looking forward to the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate, ruled by al-Mahdi and his assistant, Isa.

Qiyamah

Yawm Qiyamah is literally "The Day of Resurrection", also known as "the Hour of Reckoning", "Day of Account", etc. Belief in Qiyamah is part of the Islamic creed or beliefs.

In Islam, there are Minor Signs and Major Signs associated with Qiyamah. The former includes signs like strife, disasters, etc, while the Major

signs includes the appearance of al-Mahdi, ad-Dajjal and Isa. The Minor and Major signs could be concurrent, so they are in actuality, Lesser and Greater Signs.

Qu'ran

The Qur'an is the primary source of jurisprudence in Islam. Muslims believe that it was brought to Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. It is significant to note that the descriptions of this and subsequent encounters are very different from the various descriptions of the appearance of angels in the Bible. Muhammad thought that he was demon-possessed and was left in a state of shock and fear for about a year so much so that he nearly killed himself by throwing himself over the cliff. It was said that at the critical moment, Gabriel appeared again. In the Bible, it is significant that whenever angels appear to people, they told them "Do not be afraid".

The Qur'an is said to be a copy of the "Mother of Book" in heaven, although some parts have been withdrawn or abrogated (superseded). The Qur'an verses sometimes came in trances, in dreams, etc, but no one saw Angel Gabriel speaking to him. Some people have speculated that Muhammad suffered from epileptic fits.

The Qur'an appeared piece-meal over the entire period of Muhammad's preaching, and the subject matters changed as his situation changed, sometimes, even dealing with Muhammad's personal life (eg. sex-life with his wives and slave girls).

In general, the various verses can be classified into Meccan, Early Medinan, and Late Medinan. The Meccan verses appeared during the period when Muhammad was in his early ministry preaching to the pagans in Mecca. At that time, the Muslims were a minority, and were also often persecuted. The verses during this period were often polemical, targeting the

pagan Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, appealing to them for confirmation of his prophethood. The peaceful verses were also from this period. The Early Medinan verses appeared after Muhammad escaped from Mecca to Medina in the Hijra, and the verses often dealt with the nascent Muslim community in its formation. It also contains verses exhorting the believers to fight in jihad, even though they may not like it. The Late Medinan verses were the latest, and dealt with many important principles to be followed by the later generations of Muslims. Of significance, the Sword Verse (Surah 9:5) came just before his death and forms the basis of latter days jihad against all infidels. These last verses exhorting Muslims to fight against non-Muslims abrogated (superseded) the earlier more peaceful verses.

In length, the Qur'an is slightly shorter than the New Testament in the Bible, and is divided into Surahs (chapters) and ayats (verses). The Qur'an does not have a chronological order, and verses within a surah can deal with different subject matters with no warning of change. Hence, the hadiths often are an important source as to the circumstances of which a verse appeared. In today's Qur'an, it is organized roughly from the longest to the shortest, with the exception of the first Surah, al-Fatihah.

For Muslims, the language of the Qur'an is Arabic, and translations are not regarded as the Qur'an. Hence, all Muslims are exhorted to memorize the Qur'an in Arabic, even if they may not understand Arabic. However, translations are helpful for non-Arabic speakers (of which most Muslims are). See here for more than ten different Qur'an translations.

Salat

Salat refers to the obligatory prayers that a Muslim must perform five times a day. Salah is

performed facing Mecca (known as the qibla). Originally, the qibla was towards Jerusalem, but after the Jews rejected Muhammad's message, the qibla was changed to Mecca.

Some Muslims think that when al-Mahdi comes, the Muslims will be marked with a mark on the forehead due to the prostrations they performed during salat. Contrast this with the mark of the beast.

Seleucid Empire

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire was broken up by his four generals. The largest is the eastern provinces, the Seleucid Empire, ruled by Seleucus Nicator, establishing himself in Babylon. His Empire covers Canaan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, etc. See here for the map of this partition. The lands covered by this Empire are today all Islamic nations. The Bible prophesied that the Antichrist will come from this remnant of the Greek Empire. The hadiths also say that al-Mahdi will come from Khorasan (north eastern Iran, Afghanistan region).

Sharia

Literally, path or road. In particular, this refers to Islamic Law, with its sources from the Qur'an and the Hadiths. Many Muslim nations are governed by Shar'ia Law, although there are some differences among the different schools of jurisprudence. In the Sunni majority, the four main schools are Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki and Hanbali.

Sunnah

Literally, "trodden path". In Islam, this is used to mean the traditions of Muhammad, his acts and words. Often, these are recorded in the hadiths. The Sunnis are those who follow the Sunnah of the Muhammad, although most sects of Muslims follow the traditions somewhat.

Taqiyyah

This is a form of lying allowed in Islam through pretense, concealment, etc, and is often associated with the Shi'a Muslims. The Qur'an and hadiths record some forms of lying that are allowed by Muhammad under certain circumstances:

to effect a reconciliation,
to woo a woman,
under threat of death for one's faith,
under a state of war.

Other Muslim scholars says that taqiyya is also allowed in order to gain wealth, to achieve goals for Allah, etc.

With regards to jihad against non-Muslims, it is important to note that from a Muslim perspective, this is a state of war. Hence, since Muhammad sanctioned the use of lies in war, lying is often seen as an acceptable tactic to use with non-Muslims.

The Two Witnesses

The Bible records that in the Last Days, there will appear Two Witnesses in the world:

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to

strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Rev 11:1-13)

Due to the mentioning of "olive trees" and "lampstands" in verse 4, some felt that this passage is to be interpreted symbolically, representing Judaism and Christianity. However, there are many who believe that there will literally be two persons who will appear and perform the sort of miracles mentioned. The Two Witnesses will be killed by the Antichrist, whereupon the whole world will rejoice at their death. The Two Witnesses will be denied burial, but three and a half days later, they will be resurrected and lifted up to heaven. It is significant that the descriptions of their miracles and death correspond somewhat to those of the the ad-Dajjal in Islam. Ad-Dajjal

also have the ability to perform miracles and torment the people of the world who have followed al-Mahdi. ad-Dajjal is to be killed by Isa (Muslim Jesus) who will descend at the minaret in Damascus. There is no doubt that the whole Muslim world, and probably others that disagree with the Two Witnesses, will rejoice greatly at their death.

In Islam, there is probably only one major figure of ad-Dajjal (although there are also others who say there are many dajjals). If taken literally from the Bible, the Two Witnesses are of course two personalities. In fact, should two such persons appear in the future, Muslims probably wouldn't have difficulty in identifying and attributing both of them as ad-Dajjal. Perhaps, if only one of them has a blind eye and/or is Jewish, then the other person might be missed altogether.

This glossary adapted from:

<http://al-mahdi.atspace.com/glossary.html>