

## Author's Preface

I WAS BORN IN THE MIDDLE EAST, spent my early years in the culture of the Middle East, and I return to the Middle East often. I have had many long, revealing conversations with Muslims in general and Islamist hard-liners in particular. I know the Middle East well and have had much firsthand experience with Islamic practices and thought processes. Although I am an American now, for most of my life I have lived with one foot in the West and one foot in the East.

Throughout this book, I have tried to distinguish between Islamic ideology and Muslims as people. I have many dear friends and acquaintances who embrace Islam. While I risk being criticized for my sociological, economic, political, and religious assessments of Islam, my ardent desire is that no one would misunderstand my genuine affection and appreciation for Muslim people.

From my perspective as a Christian, I see all other religious systems as less than whole. Jesus declared, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). And the apostle Peter testified before the members of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). I cannot be true to my Christian faith and believe otherwise.

Yet the fact that I, as a Christian, understand Islam to be a false worldview does not mean I look down on Muslim people in any way. On the contrary, I am compelled by my love for Muslim people. I feel a deep burden for them, and I humbly yearn for them to know the fullness of life that comes only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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## INTRODUCTION

### A Wake-Up Call

AL-QAEDA FOUNDER OSAMA BIN LADEN was killed by Navy SEALs at his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011. Almost five months later, Anwar al-Awlaki, one of al-Qaeda’s top recruiters, was killed by a CIA drone attack in Yemen. Yet the threat of terrorism only grew greater and more frightening in the ensuing months.

By 2014, we began to hear rumblings of a new terror threat in the Middle East. Operating for years beneath the radar of Western news organizations, a Sunni terror group called “al-Qaeda in Iraq” broke away from the larger al-Qaeda organization. Calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or simply the Islamic State (IS), it proclaimed itself a caliphate, with religious authority over all Muslims.

ISIS took advantage of the civil war in Syria and the power vacuum in Iraq following the US departure. It metastasized like a cancer, swallowing territory, conquering villages and cities (including Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq), slaughtering thousands of Christians and Shiite Muslims, and dumping their bodies in mass graves. In August 2014, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that ISIS was running a self-sustaining economy by looting banks, selling pirated oil and antiquities, ransoming kidnap victims, and extorting protection money from business owners, farmers, Christians, and other religious minorities.<sup>1</sup>

We are horrified at the inhuman acts of ISIS—from beheading journalists to crucifying, stoning, and beheading Christian men, women, and children.<sup>2</sup> We turn away from these horrors, wishing we could get the images out of our minds, feeling

sorry for “those poor people over there,” and feeling glad that “at least that could never happen here.”

Yet if ISIS and other Islamist groups get their way, they *will* bring these horrors here. They won’t stop at gobbling up Iraq and Syria or the entire Middle East or Europe and Africa. Their goal is to establish a *global* Caliphate. Could ISIS accomplish this ambitious goal? Who knows?

But no one should assume that Western civilization is safe. No one should assume that ISIS cannot do what it says it will do. In January 2014, ISIS controlled one city—Fallujah, forty-three miles west of Baghdad. By August 2014, ISIS controlled one-third of Iraq and one-third of Syria, and it showed no signs of stopping. No one can predict what the forces of Islamic extremism might accomplish.

So we wonder, What’s next? Is there any hope for world peace—or is terror our destiny? Why is there so much turmoil in the Middle East? How can we understand the mind-set of Islamic extremists whose ideology is so fanatical that they are willing to kill themselves in order to slaughter us?

Bible-believing Christians have even more questions: How does radical Islam fit into Bible prophecy? What do today’s turbulent events in Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Iran (biblical Persia), Iraq (biblical Babylon), and Russia (biblical Magog) mean in prophetic terms? In a world that is crying out for peace, which will prevail: Jesus or jihad?

Christians and non-Christians alike look at alarming developments in the Middle East and around the globe and wonder what the implications are for our future. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam feature parallel accounts of the end times, and all three accounts focus on a messianic Savior, an apocalyptic final war between good and evil, and a central role for the city of Jerusalem. Do these prophetic end-times scenarios intersect in some way? And, more pressingly, do recent global events reveal that we are living in the end times?

It has never been more important to understand Bible prophecy in relation to world events. If we spread out today’s headlines alongside the prophecies of God’s Word, we notice many disturbing parallels. We see that prophecies written centuries before Christ still cast their shadows over the twenty-first century. The warnings Jesus issued on the Mount of Olives are frighteningly relevant today.

In this book, I will shed light on the ideology and events in the Middle East with answers that are concise, biblically accurate, and targeted on the challenges that confront us in this dangerous world. Westerners in general, and Christians in particular, are the targets of Islamic extremist terror attacks. So we seek to understand who is attacking us, how these trends fit into the flow of prophecy, and how we should respond.

*Jesus, Jihad, and Peace* is not a pop-theology book exploiting end-times mania. Instead, this book looks at current events against the backdrop of biblical prophecy and issues a clarion call: Wake up! Heed the warnings of Scripture and read the prophetic signs all around you!

Just as in Old Testament times, God is displaying His character and His purpose through global events. This book unmask the intentions of Islamic extremism, exposes the threat that radical Islam poses to the free world, and calls us to turn back to Jesus—before it’s too late.

# The Goal of World Domination

MOHAMED BOUAZIZI WAS a twenty-six-year-old street vendor in Sidi Bouzid, a rural village in central Tunisia. His father died when he was three, and his stepfather was unable to work. So from the time he was ten, Mohamed had worked hard to provide for his family. In his twenties, he found it difficult to find work and was rejected by the army, so he bought a vendor's cart and sold produce, earning a little more than a hundred dollars a month. He budgeted his money carefully so that he could help support his mother, stepfather, and siblings. He even put one sister through college. He also set a little money aside each month in hopes of one day replacing his cart with a van.<sup>1</sup>

His customers loved him. "Mohamed was a very well-known and popular man," said a friend, Hajlaoui Jaafer. "He would give free fruit and vegetables to very poor families." Yet Mohamed was constantly bullied by the police, who demanded bribes and confiscated his produce when he couldn't pay. "Since he was a child, they were mistreating him," said Jaafer.<sup>2</sup>

On the morning of December 17, 2010, as Mohamed Bouazizi was on the street, selling his wares, the police stopped him to shake him down for another bribe. Not only did Mohamed have no money for a bribe, but he had borrowed two hundred dollars to buy produce for his cart. When Mohamed said he couldn't pay the bribe, a woman named Faida Hamdy, a municipal official, came out to confront him. Witnesses say she confiscated Mohamed's weighing scales (valued at one hundred dollars), and when he protested, she slapped him, spat at him, insulted his dead father, and overturned his produce cart. In Mohamed's culture, being shamed by a woman is the ultimate humiliation.

With his produce ruined, how could he pay back the loan? The police told Mohamed he would be fined, but he had no money to pay the fine. He went to the governor's office to ask for his scales back, but the governor refused to see him. Believing his life was ruined, Mohamed stood in the intersection in front of the governor's office, doused himself with gasoline, and shouted, "How do you expect me to make a living?"<sup>3</sup>

Then he flicked a match and set himself ablaze.

Severely burned over 90 percent of his body, he lived for eighteen days in the hospital and then died on January 4, 2011. More than five thousand people attended Mohamed Bouazizi's funeral, enraged that the corrupt government had destroyed the twenty-six-year-old street vendor's hope.<sup>4</sup>

Anti-government anger spread through the country like wildfire. People expressed their rage through mass demonstrations and revolts from one end of Tunisia to the other, sending Tunisian president Zine Ben Ali fleeing into exile in Saudi Arabia.

The spark of revolution spread quickly across the region. In Egypt, thousands of protesters poured into historic Tahrir (Liberation) Square in Cairo. Protests also popped up in Alexandria, Suez, and other Egyptian cities. The demonstrations were nonviolent at the beginning, but as the government of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak clamped down, clashes broke out, killing hundreds and injuring thousands. Demonstrators demanded an end to the corrupt, repressive Mubarak regime. On February 11, 2011, after eighteen days of protests and violence, Hosni Mubarak resigned, ending three decades of the Egyptian police state.

More civil uprisings took place in Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Western Sahara. Palestinian protesters launched demonstrations along the borders of Israel. Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, and Morocco implemented reforms to prevent the protests from getting out of control. A full-fledged civil war broke out in Libya, which sent Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi scurrying for cover. On

October 20, 2011, NATO planes struck a convoy of vehicles. Gaddafi, who was in one of the vehicles, escaped and hid in a drainpipe. Libyan rebels dragged him out of the drain, beat him, and dealt him a brutal tyrant's death. The Syrian government, by contrast, doubled its repressive measures and eventually resorted to chemical weapons.

In country after country across the Arab world, people chanted, “*El Shaab yurid iskat el Nizam!*” (The people want the fall of the regime!)<sup>5</sup> Thus began a wave of uprisings that came to be known as the “Arab Spring.”

## The False Hope of the Arab Spring

In the early stages of the Egyptian uprisings, there was cooperation between Egyptian Christians and Muslims. For example, after a New Year's Day 2011 car bomb destroyed the Saints Church in east Alexandria, killing twenty-five worshippers, Muslims attended Mass alongside the Coptic Christians as a show of support. One Muslim Egyptian told the *Los Angeles Times*, “I'm here to tell all my Coptic brothers that Muslims and Christians are an inseparable pillar of Egypt's texture. . . . We will share any pains or threats they go through.”<sup>6</sup>

Initially, that spirit of cooperation flowed both ways. In February 2011, as anti-Mubarak demonstrations were in full swing in Cairo, thousands of Muslims gathered in Tahrir Square to protest and pray. Hundreds of Coptic Christians encircled their Muslim compatriots, joining hands to form a protective cordon around the Muslims against police and military forces.<sup>7</sup> But just a month later, as the BBC reported, Tahrir Square became the site of violent clashes between Christians and Muslims, killing thirteen people.<sup>8</sup>

Across Egypt, cooperation between Christians and Muslims disintegrated and clashes erupted. In late February 2011, a Coptic priest was stabbed to death by masked men shouting, “Allah is great!”<sup>9</sup> On March 12, the Shahedin Church in Helwan Province was torched by a Muslim mob, setting off a street battle that killed thirteen Christians.<sup>10</sup> In May, a dozen Egyptians were killed in attacks on Coptic churches.<sup>11</sup> On September 20, a Muslim mob partially destroyed the al-Marenab Church in the southern Aswan Province.<sup>12</sup>

Though many young Muslims demonstrated support and solidarity with Christians in Egypt, the Muslim extremists and hard-liners infiltrated the Arab Spring movement and turned it into an opportunity to terrorize and kill Christians.

For example, Ayman Anwar Mitri is a Coptic Christian, a middle-aged man living in the Egyptian town of Qena. Mitri rented an apartment he owned to two Muslim sisters. In early 2011, soon after the beginning of the Arab Spring uprisings, Mitri learned that the two sisters had been charged with prostitution. Not wanting his property used for immoral purposes, he evicted the women.

Days later, Mitri was awakened at four in the morning by a phone call telling him the apartment was on fire. He arrived as firemen were extinguishing the blaze. As Mitri inspected the damage, a Muslim appeared at the door, tricked him into going to another apartment—and there a dozen Muslim men ambushed him and began beating him. The fire had been a setup to lure Mitri into a trap. The Muslim men shouted, “We will teach you a lesson, Christian!” The group brought in one of the sisters and ordered her to admit an adulterous relationship with Mitri. She refused, so they beat her until she accused Mitri.

The Muslims hacked off Mitri's right ear, gashed the back of his neck, and slit his other ear and his arms. They were about to toss Mitri out of the window of the fifth-floor apartment when a policeman among them said killing Mitri would get them into trouble. The men demanded that Mitri convert to Islam, but he refused. Finally, the men called the police, who

came and took Mitri and the prostitute away. No one was ever arrested for the attack on Ayman Mitri.

The Arab Spring in Egypt began as a pro-democracy movement under the slogan, “The people want the fall of the regime!” Yet the young pro-democracy reformers who had set the Arab Spring into motion were leaderless and disorganized. So Islamic hard-liners quickly seized these demonstrations for their own purposes. Before it was over, gangs of Muslim men swarmed through Cairo with clubs and torches, chanting, “The people want to bring down the Christians!”<sup>14</sup> I personally spoke with Christian leaders in Cairo, and they told of roving gangs of thugs who smashed and looted shops and banks.

An Egyptian-Canadian friend told me she had gotten through to her family and learned that her father was sick and bleeding in the hospital, but most of the medical staff had fled so there was no one left to provide medical care. The janitor and other low-level hospital workers defended the patients from thugs and looters. It was anarchy, and the police could not protect the citizens.

While Western news agencies painted a rosy picture of the Arab Spring as a peaceful outbreak of pro-democracy feelings, the Arab Spring movement was co-opted by Islamic fundamentalists, including the Salafi sect (followers of the Salafiyah Islamic movement), which views mob violence as a legitimate form of Sharia justice. *Sharia* literally means “the straight path,” and Muslims believe that Sharia law governs all aspects of life.

The hope of the Arab Spring proved to be a mirage.

## The Pattern of Islamic Revolution

During the early stages of the uprisings, I accepted invitations to appear on CNN, Fox News, the Christian Broadcasting Network, and other news outlets to talk about these events. While most Western media celebrated this seeming wave of freedom sweeping the Arab world, I was one of the few voices sounding a warning. I predicted these changes would result in violence and persecution for Christians—and as Muslim mobs torched Egyptian churches and Egyptian military vehicles rolled into crowds of peaceful Christian demonstrators, my predictions came to pass.

Appearing on Governor Mike Huckabee’s show on Fox News Channel, I said, “I’m not here to defend former president Hosni Mubarak. During his thirty-year tenure, state corruption grew and political dissidents were often imprisoned without trial. At the same time, Mubarak made a number of positive reforms. For example, he privatized the banks and grew the economy, which in turn helped create a large Egyptian middle class.”

In 2011, I saw student protesters waving signs that read, “Down with the tyrant Mubarak!” I thought, *Those kids don’t know what a real tyrant is*. I grew up in Egypt under the harsh rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser. When I was around my friends in high school, I avoided talking about politics because I never knew which of my friends might be a government informant. It seemed like every other person was a potential informant, and every once in a while, someone you knew would be denounced and arrested. It was like living in George Orwell’s *1984*. Life under Mubarak was no utopia, but it was hardly the repressive Egyptian society I grew up in.

The young, university-educated demonstrators of the Arab Spring were sincere in their desire for freedom and democracy. But they didn’t realize that Islamic extremists were working in the shadows, exploiting their youthful fervor and quietly infiltrating and manipulating the revolution, just as Ayatollah Khomeini had manipulated the Iranian Revolution more than three decades earlier.

During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Islamists stirred up revolutionary passions and sent students into the streets of Tehran to demonstrate against Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. When the Shah abdicated and left the country, Ayatollah Khomeini took over the revolution. All the freedom-loving protesters who dreamed of a democratic Iran were silenced. The last thing Islamists want for the people is freedom.

That's the pattern most Arab world revolutions follow. Hidden Islamists stir the pot and keep idealistic students inflamed and angry. Once the revolution is in full swing, the Islamists seize power, round up the activists, and chop off their heads—either figuratively or literally. After the revolution, the Islamists refer to the original demonstrators as *hemir al-thawra* (donkeys of the revolution)—stooges to be used and then discarded.

Hamas, the Sunni Palestinian terror organization and political party, followed the same pattern in coming to power in the Gaza Strip. An offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas gained power by exploiting the revolutionary passions of the demonstrators during the First Intifada, the Palestinian uprising against Israel in 1987.

And the same pattern has been playing out in Egypt. As I told Governor Huckabee, "If the Egyptian political system falls, it will be a free-for-all. The extremists and militants will move in for the kill. Make no mistake, they will use the secular-educated Muslims to get the power, but once they get to power, they are going to get the dissidents out of the way. . . . Their number-one goal is to break the accord with Israel, create an alliance with Hamas in Gaza, and then reignite the conflict and enmity with Israel again. . . . The Arab world is in ferment all around the nation of Israel and is working all around the borders of Israel. Once Israel falls, their vision, their third wave of jihad, is Europe and then the United States."

Islamic extremists are totally committed to their goal of establishing a global Muslim state, the Caliphate (more on that in chapter 8).

## The Muslim Brotherhood

One of the largest and most influential of all the Islamic extremist groups is the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, now operates throughout the world, including the United States. The slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood is "Islam is the solution." The credo of the Brotherhood is "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. Koran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."<sup>15</sup>

Where did the Muslim Brotherhood come from and what are its goals for the Arab world? What are its goals for the West?

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by a schoolteacher named Hasan al-Banna. He was angry and frustrated over Western political influence and the declining influence of Islam in Egypt. He had two goals in mind when he founded the Brotherhood. His short-term goal was the expulsion of the British from Egypt. His long-term goal was to establish the Caliphate, a global Muslim state with the Koran as its only constitution. A brief review of history will show how Hasan al-Banna became such an influential figure in the Islamic world.

In the 1860s, Egypt was building the Suez Canal in partnership with France, while racking up a mountain of debt to European banks. Ultimately, the only way Egypt could discharge the debt was by selling its share of the Suez Canal to Great Britain. (Here is a lesson for nations that pile up debts that can never be repaid.) This arrangement gave Britain controlling seats in the Egyptian cabinet, and Egypt became a de facto protectorate of the British Empire. In 1922, the government of the United Kingdom issued a declaration of Egyptian independence—but Egypt was not entirely free. The British government reserved four areas for itself: communications in Egypt, the defense of Egypt, the protection of foreigners and minorities in Egypt, and the administration of the Sudan. Though technically independent, Egypt remained under colonial domination.

That was the situation when Hasan al-Banna arrived on the scene in the 1920s. Strongly influenced by the radical Wahhabi Islamist movement in Saudi Arabia, al-Banna was determined to liberate Egypt from British rule and erase all non-Islamic influence. Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in the ancient city of Ismailia, on the west bank of the Suez Canal. In March 1928, the Brotherhood consisted of just seven men: al-Banna and six men who worked for the Suez Canal Company.

He taught them that the only way to defeat the corrupting influence of the Christian West was to return to Sharia law, based on the Koran. A key requirement of Sharia law is an Islamic caliphate as the form of government. From this small beginning, the Muslim Brotherhood grew to an estimated two million members by the late 1940s.<sup>16</sup>

In 1939, Hasan al-Banna and the Brotherhood's inner circle formed a military wing called the Secret Apparatus. During World War II, the Brotherhood worked with Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in British Mandate Palestine, engaging in agitation against the British, acts of terrorism, and recruiting Muslim soldiers to fight in the Nazi military during World War II. After the war, the Brotherhood's Secret Apparatus carried out assassinations and acts of terror against Christians, Jews, and others in Egypt and against the fledgling nation of Israel. The goal of the Brotherhood was to achieve the formation of an Islamic state under Sharia law.<sup>17</sup>

In November 1948, Egyptian prime minister Mahmud Fahmi Nokrashi ordered a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood—so the Brotherhood assassinated Nokrashi in December 1948. In response, Egyptian government agents ambushed and killed Hasan al-Banna in Cairo in February 1949.

The founder was dead, but the Muslim Brotherhood lived on. In 1952, the Brotherhood supported a military coup that overthrew the Egyptian monarchy. The Brotherhood believed it had finally won a place of power in the Egyptian government—but the military junta that seized control had no intention of sharing power or lifting martial law in Egypt.

In October 1954, the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate the leader of the revolutionary junta, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, as he gave a speech in Alexandria. A Brotherhood member, standing twenty-five feet from Nasser, fired eight shots—and all eight missed. The audience panicked, but Nasser appealed for calm. “My countrymen,” he said, “I will live for your sake and die for the sake of your freedom and honor. Let them kill me; it does not concern me so long as I have instilled pride, honor, and freedom in you.” Nasser's courage under fire sent his popularity soaring.<sup>18</sup>

The assassination attempt was a setback to the Muslim Brotherhood. Nasser rounded up the Brothers, executed some, and imprisoned the rest. The imprisoned Brotherhood members languished until Nasser died in 1971 and his successor, Anwar Sadat, released them.

After 1971, the Muslim Brotherhood began disguising its true aims, forming charitable front organizations to give the Brotherhood the appearance of a humanitarian agency. But the ultimate goal of the Muslim Brotherhood remains unchanged: undermining freedom and democracy while seeking to build a global Islamic state under Sharia law.

The Muslim Brotherhood has spread throughout the world, even forming chapters in major European capitals and across the United States. The logo of the Muslim Brotherhood consists of a green disk with two crossed swords and the command (in Arabic script), “Get Ready.” This is a statement that the Brothers are to be always ready for *jihad*—the Arabic word for “struggle.” (Jihad refers to the religious duty of Muslims to resist or struggle against those who do not follow Allah. As it is most frequently used, jihad has militaristic connotations. Read more about the concept of jihad in chapter 7.)