

**Identical Prophecies of
the Bible and the Qur'án
Concerning the Advent
of the Bahá'í Faith**

*The Remarkable Similarity
Between Biblical and
Quranic Prophecies*

Hushidar Hugh Motlagh, Ed.D.



www.GlobalPerspective.org

www.TheKnowledgeofGod.com

www.Baha9.com

Identical Prophecies of the Bible and the Qur'án Concerning the Advent of the Bahá'í Faith

Copyright © 2016 by Hushidar Hugh Motlagh

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The New English Bible (NEB)

Copyright © the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV)

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984. International Bible Society.

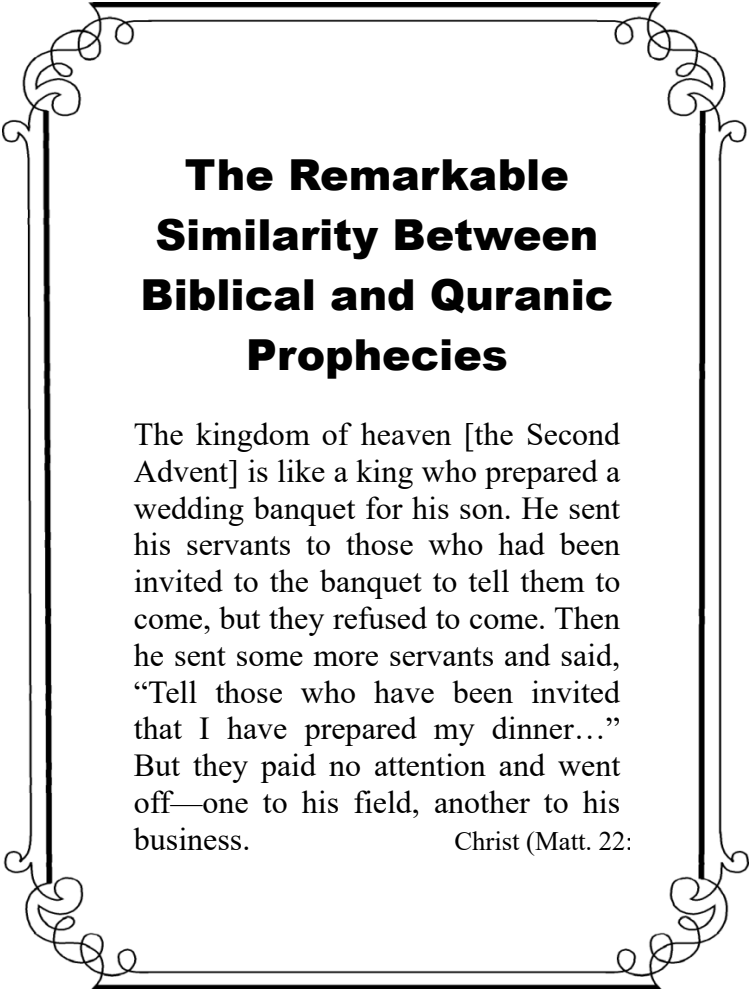
Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJ)

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

The Amplified Bible (AB)

Copyright © 1962, 1964, 1965 by Zondervan Publishing House



The Remarkable Similarity Between Biblical and Quranic Prophecies

The kingdom of heaven [the Second Advent] is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, “Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner...” But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business.

Christ (Matt. 22:

I

God's Twin Languages

Why do you not understand my language?

Christ (John 8:43 NEB)

Scholars often can tell the works of different authors simply by analyzing their style of writing. We can, in like manner, recognize God's style of speaking simply by examining His ways of thinking and talking, which are distinctly different from ours.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

Isaiah 55:8 NIV

Both the Bible and the Qur'án refer to God's twofold languages—the literal and the spiritual:

It is God who hath sent down to Thee “the Book.” Some of its verses are plain [literal]. These are the basis of the Book. Others are figurative. But those who are inclined toward error, derive from these verses that which their hearts desire. They distort their meaning to cause dissention and discord. Yet none knoweth the meaning of the figurative verses except God, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge.*

Qur'án 3:7

Let us now see an example that demonstrates the use and the abuse of the twofold languages. When God commands the Muslims to pray, the directions are given in plain, literal language. What about the meaning of the title that he bestows on Muhammad: “The seal of the Prophets”? This

* Some interpreters believe that the verse stops with “except God,” and that “those who are firmly grounded in knowledge” belongs to the next verse.

title can be interpreted several ways, because the word “seal” as a noun is a metaphor. How can a person be a “seal”? The word “seal” as a noun, used in relation to people, conveys meanings such as ownership, authority, and approval. Muslim leaders and scholars have taken one step further. They have overstepped even the metaphoric meanings of the word “seal.” They claim that since a “seal” is usually used at the end of a document, it also means “the end.” Therefore, they conclude that Muhammad’s Advent ended a long-standing Sunna (the way God does things or accomplishes His Purpose) of sending new Messengers to humankind. This classic example demonstrates the potentials and the possibilities for abuse, which figurative language provides the human mind. As stated earlier, the figurative word that prevented the Jews from recognizing their Redeemer was “king.” Today for Christians, that word is “sky.”

The following verses from the Qur’án and the Bible further confirm the use of the twin languages:

I will open my mouth in parables. Psalms 78:2

God has revealed the most beautiful Book in parables [metaphoric language] consistent in meaning. Qur’án 39:23

This is a book with verses that convey “firm” [literal] meanings. Qur’án 11:1

And of a truth we have set out to men every kind of parable in this Koran, but most men have refused everything except unbelief. Qur’án 17:89

Also 30:58

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell the house of Israel a parable.”

Ezekiel 17:1-2 NIV

This is what we speak...expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. I Corinthians 2:13 NIV

Note also this statement from Jesus:

Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father.

Christ (John 16:25 NIV)

Why does God speak in symbolic language? For several reasons. Consider these statements from the Gospel and the Qur'án:

This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

Christ (Matt. 13:13 NIV)

Those are the parables We devise for mankind, and only the learned will grasp them.

Qur'án 29:43

Many will He mislead by such parables and many guide: but none will He mislead thereby except the wicked.

Qur'án 2:26

Consider also Bahá'u'lláh's response:

Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books.¹

As a Christian author notes: "Jesus' parables paradoxically conceal and elucidate, depending on the recipient's capabilities for thoughtful and spiritual reflection."²

Almost all the criticism aimed against religion relates to a literal interpretation of the symbolic words of the sacred Scriptures. To see an evidence for this statement, review *Why I am Not a Christian* by Bertrand Russell. This chapter offers many examples to demonstrate that a "literal mind" is in total disharmony with the Word of God.

What would you think if you read about a Redeemer who made the following declaration?

I have come to set fire to the earth. Christ (Luke 12:49 NEB)

Would you take the following verse literally?

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will...drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all... Christ (Mark 16:17-18 NIV)

Many wonderful believers have enjoyed only a short lifespan, and yet the Bible teaches that:

And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life. I Kings 3:14 NIV

What would you think if you heard a public speaker make the following announcement?

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Christ (John 6:54-55 NIV)

Would you not think that the speaker is either joking or is insane? Yet that is what Jesus said, that is how he spoke, and we read it and think nothing of it. Why? Because we know instinctively that God often speaks in spiritual language, unlike ours. At a time when Jesus had only a few followers, He declared:

I have conquered the world. John 16:33 NEB

By God's standard, the statement is true; by human standards, it is not.

Consider the following verses from the Qur'an and the Gospel:

From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a Covenant, but they forgot a good part of the Message that was sent them, so We stirred up enmity

and hatred between them till the Day of Judgment [the time of the Advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh].

Qur'an 5:14 Y

For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.” Matthew 10:35-36

Note how an atheist has interpreted the preceding statement from Jesus:

On yet another public occasion he makes an even more astonishing statement. He says, “Whoever comes to me and doesn’t hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—even life itself—cannot be my disciple.” It seems clear in the above examples (and others) that...Jesus felt little or no affection for—and, it would seem, considerable animosity toward—his family.

What could have been the reason? Might it not be that he knew he was a child born out of wedlock (a so-called illegitimate child) and learning of it in his childhood and perhaps being taunted about it by his siblings or playmates or by some caustic adult...would have come to resent his mother and circumstance of his birth?³

What the preceding statement from the Bible and the Qur'an mean is this: When a new religion appears, it divides people, but later it unites them. Now is the Day of Judgment. Bahá'u'lláh has come to unite the Jews, Christians, Muslims, and the rest of humankind:

We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment...That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this?...Yet so it shall be;

these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the “Most Great Peace” shall come...Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind...⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Everywhere in the Scriptures, we are encouraged to read and understand the Word of God with a spiritual perspective, yet most believers continue to ignore the divine directives. Jesus was misunderstood by the Pharisees and by the literal-minded—both believers and nonbelievers—who have lived since His time. The same holds true with Muhammad. Jesus told the Pharisees:

Ye judge after the flesh. John 8:15

The flesh counts for nothing. John 6:63 NIV

What is the opposite of “the flesh”? The spirit! The flesh, like the letter, is visible, the spirit invisible.

How should we approach the Word of God? With a literal or a spiritual mind? The following verse clearly gives us the guideline:

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

I Corinthians 2:14 NIV

Many of the objections raised by Christian theologians against the Qur’án result from a literal interpretation of that book. The critics adopt and apply double standards—one for the Bible, the other for the Qur’án. If they find a seemingly unreasonable statement in the Bible, they assume a spiritual perspective, when they find a similar statement in the Qur’án they shift to a literal view. Let us now consider some examples. To show that the Qur’án is out of touch with the design of creation, noted Christian scholar Dr. Norman Geisler quotes this verse:

When he [a traveler] reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a spring of murky water...

Qur'án 18:86

Dr. Geisler then states:

Indeed, there is no extreme west, nor can anyone traveling west eventually come to the place where the sun sets.⁵

Should we take the preceding verse from the Qur'án literally? No, the verse quoted is a small segment of a prophecy about the Advent of the Bahá'í Faith. What does the “sun” symbolize? It symbolizes the divine Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh uses the word “Sun” repeatedly to refer to Himself or His Revelation:

The Sun of Truth shineth resplendently, at the bidding of the Lord of the kingdom...⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

At its dawning, religion enlightens the hearts and minds of the believers. What happens at the end of its cycle? It sets in the mud or the murky waters of superstition, ignorance, confusion, and prejudice.

Some critics point to a few apparent contradictions or inconsistencies in the Qur'án. As stated, we must approach the Word of God with a spiritual perspective, otherwise we will find only confusion and contradiction. Consider the following statements from Jesus:

For judgment I have come into this world... John 9:39 NIV

For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

John 12:47-49 NIV

How can Jesus be a judge and not a judge? The following verses resolve the apparent contradiction:

You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.

John 8:15-16 NIV

When Jesus dismisses the role of a judge for Himself, He is referring to Himself—separate from God. When He assumes the role of a judge, He is glorifying God. He wants to show us that without *Him* He can do nothing, but with *Him* He can do all things—He can become the supreme Judge of the universe. A literal mind perceives contradiction in Jesus’ statement; a spiritual mind, perceives harmony by rising from the confines of the “letter” to the vast sphere of the “spirit”—from tunnel vision to total vision.

To denigrate the Qur’án and show its bias against women, some Christian critics cite verses that promise “black-eyed women” to men in paradise. Do such verses contain literal or spiritual message? The Qur’án presents the most glowing descriptions of heaven and the most depressive portrayal of hell. Consider the following example:

You shall find yourself in three groups: those on the right (blessed shall be those on the right!); those on the left (damned shall be those on the left!); and those to the front (foremost shall be those!). Such are they who shall be brought near to their Lord in the gardens of delight; a whole multitude from the men of old, but only a few from the later generations.

They shall recline on jeweled couches face to face, and there shall wait on them immortal youths with bowls and ewers and a cup of purest wine (that will neither pain their heads nor take away their reason); with fruits of their own choice and flesh of fowls that they relish. And theirs shall be the dark-eyed houris [women], chaste as hidden pearls—a reward for their deeds. There

they shall hear no idle talk, no foul speech, but only the greeting, “Peace! Peace!” Qur’án 56:7-26

What does “dark-eyed women” symbolize? In the Gospel, “woman” or “bride” symbolizes the pure Word of God—the divine Revelation in its pristine purity. The same God who spoke through Jesus also spoke through Muhammad. “Black-eyed women” symbolizes the beautiful Word of God offered to true believers. Is this favor bestowed on men only? Are they the favored gender? The Qur’án assures us that God is impartial, that He will reward men and women equally. Consider the following verse among others:

Whoever works righteousness—man or woman—and has faith, verily, to him will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their deeds. Qur’án 16:97 Y
See also 4:124; 5:38

Women and men will, therefore, be entitled to the same blessings. Every soul—whatever its gender—will receive the honor of embracing the pure and beautiful Word of God.

The Qur’án prohibits the drinking of wine to believers on earth, but provides it for them in abundance in heaven.

(Here is) a parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits, and forgiveness from their Lord. Qur’án 47:15 Y

Is the heavenly wine the same as the earthly? Bahá’u’lláh uses the word “wine” abundantly in His Writings. Here is an example:

That hour is now come. The world is illumined with the effulgent glory of His countenance. And yet, behold how

far its peoples have strayed from His path!...The seal of the choice Wine of His Revelation hath, in this Day and in His Name, the Self-Sufficing, been broken. Its grace is being poured out upon men. Fill thy cup, and drink in, in His Name, the Most Holy, the All-Praised.⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Some Muslim leaders abuse the Qur'án. For instance, they tell the male “suicide bombers” that once killed, God will offer them many beautiful wives in heaven! They tell the female “suicide bombers” that because of their sacrifice, God will make them beautiful! Such abuses are not the fault of religion, but that of the wicked and deceptive leaders who sacrifice the spirit of love and harmony at the altar of the “letters” dictated by their selfish desires. A literal mind is the most dangerous weapon concealed inside the head of a zealous and blind believer!

The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

II Corinthians 3:6 NIV

Both the Bible and the Qur'án are the most misunderstood books in all history. It is ironic that Muslims cannot respond to most of the questions or objections Christian theologians raise. The same is true with Christians. They too cannot respond to the objections raised by Muslim theologians. Those who do not understand even their own Scriptures often try to explain the Scriptures of “other religions” to their fellow-believers!

The Bible and the Qur'án were closed books until the Advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Only now do we have an opportunity to understand both books. Consider these verses:

But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge. Daniel 12:4 NIV

They consider a lie the truths about which they have no knowledge, and whose interpretation [Qur'án's interpretation] has not yet come to them. Qur'án 10:39 M

Do they not wait for its [Qur'án's] interpretation, the Day when its interpretation will come? Qur'án 7:53

We are so fortunate to live at a time when God has revealed in plain language the mysteries kept for thousands of years:

The mystic and wondrous Bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favor, been made manifest even as the resplendent light shed by the beauty of the Beloved. I bear witness, O friends! that the favor is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established. Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal. In this wise hath the divine favor been fully vouchsafed unto you and unto them that are in heaven and on earth. All praise to God, the Lord of all Worlds.⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

Let us conclude this chapter with a few metaphoric passages from the Gospel and the Qur'án:

But as to the infidels, their works are like the vapor in a plain which the thirsty dreameth to be water, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth nothing save God who fully payeth him his account. For swift to take account is God. Or like the darkness on the deep sea when covered by billows riding upon billows, above which are clouds, darkness upon darkness. When a man reacheth forth his hand, he can hardly see it! He to whom God shall not give light, no light at all hath he! Qur'án 24:39-40

The following verses enshrine many mysteries:

We will surely cast him in Hell-fire. And who shall teach thee what Hell-fire is? It leaveth naught, it spareth naught, blackening the skin. Over it are nineteen angels. None but angels have we made guardians of the fire, nor have we made this to be their number but to perplex the unbelievers, and that they who possess the Scriptures may be certain of the truth of the Koran, and that they

who believe may increase their faith. And that they to whom the Scriptures have been given, and the believers, may not doubt. And that the infirm of heart and the unbelievers may say, “What meaneth God by this parable?” Thus God misleadeth whom He will, and whom He will doth He guide aright, and none knoweth the armies of thy Lord but Himself, and this is no other than a warning to mankind. Qur’án 74:26-31

The following parable from Jesus contains many mysteries*:

At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: “Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!” Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.” “No,” they replied, “there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.” But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. “Sir! Sir!” they said. “Open the door for us!” But he replied, “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.” Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. Christ (Matt. 25:1-13 NIV)

* For an interpretation of this parable, see *I Shall Come Again*, Chapter 1.

2

Test Everything

I Thess. 5:21

Identical Prophecies of the Bible and the Qur'án About Our Time

Do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything.
Hold on to the good. I Thess. 5:20-21 NIV

This chapter explores another link that binds the Bible and the Qur'án. Specifically, it studies the prophecies in these great Scriptures concerning the events of our time and the signs of the coming of the Redeemer of the last day. These prophecies occupy a large portion of both books. Why do they place so much emphasis on prophecy? This is one more bond that unifies them.

Prophecies are frequently repeated in both the Bible and the Qur'án. It is prudent to assume that there is a purpose in this. What benefits could be gained from it?

- Repetition shows not only harmony within each source but also between the sources.
- Several quotations with slightly different wording may make the meaning more clear.
- Repetition decreases the likelihood of chance. It enhances and strengthens the jigsaw puzzle of prophecy.
- Repetition implies emphasis and significance.

After finishing this chapter, you may wish to go back and reread the verses—not the explanations—several times. You should repeat this periodically until the verses become quite familiar to you. What purpose does this serve? This chapter presents a *new language* spoken by the great Messengers. To master a language, repetition is essential. The more often you read the verses, the more clear and meaningful the new language will become to you.

The Events of the Hour

Both the Bible and the Qur’án predict the advent of new Messengers from God:

I [God] will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth...

Deuteronomy 18:18 NIV

Hereafter shall a Prophet come unto you... Qur’án 3:81

O children of Adam! There shall come Messengers from among yourselves, rehearsing my [God’s] signs to you... Qur’án 7:35

The following verses from the Qur’án clearly foretell the return of Christ in words and expressions similar with those used in the Gospel:

Jesus is...an instance of divine power to the children of Israel...And he [Jesus] shall be a sign of the last hour; doubt not then of it...what wait they but for the hour to come suddenly on them, while they are unaware? [What are they waiting for, but the Hour, which will come upon them suddenly and take them unawares? AH]...And blessed be He [God] whose is the Kingdom of the Heavens and of the Earth and all that is between them; for with Him is the knowledge of the Hour...

Qur’án 43:59-85

Here are some of the common ideas and expressions used in the preceding verses, which can be found also in the Gospel:

- The hour, or the last hour (Matt. 24:36).
- The Son of Man comes suddenly and unexpectedly (Matt. 24:44).
- People remain unaware of the coming of the hour (Luke 21:34).
- Only God has the knowledge of the hour (Matt. 24:36).

Unlike the Bible, each chapter of the Qur'án has a title that is universally accepted and used. The title of one of the chapters in which the prophecy about the coming of Christ appears is *The News*. That chapter begins by announcing “The Big News” or “The Great News.” This also is in harmony with the message of the Gospel, which literally means *The Good News*. Christ also declared that bringing “the good news of the Kingdom of God” was His Mission:

I must give the good news of the Kingdom of God...for that is what I was sent to do.

Luke 4:43 NEB

See also Luke 4:18-19

Note the similarities between the chapter (or Súrih) of *The News* in the Qur'án and the chapters of *the News of Christ's Return* in the Gospel, known as the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24 and 25). All these signs appear together in each of those two sources of the News, except one sign that comes from another chapter of the Qur'án 52:9.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him.

Christ (Matt. 25:31 NEB)

The Day that the Spirit* [the Son of Man] and the
angels will stand forth... Muhammad (Qur'án 78:38 Y)



He [the Son of Man] will separate men into two
groups... Christ (Matt. 25:32 NEB)

[That is] the day of sorting out...
Muhammad (Qur'án 78:17 Y)



All the nations will be gathered before him...
Christ (Matt. 25:32 NIV)

And ye shall come forth in crowds...
Muhammad (Qur'án 78:18 Y)



With a trumpet blast he will send out his angels...
Christ (Matt. 24:31 NEB)

The Day that the Trumpet shall be sounded...
Muhammad (Qur'án 78:18 Y)



The celestial [heavenly] powers shall be shaken...
Christ (Matt. 24:29 NEB)

On that day the Heaven shall reel [stagger, swing]...
Muhammad (Qur'án 52:9)



And all the angels with him [the Son of Man]...
Christ (Matt. 25:31 NEB)

And the angels will stand forth...
Muhammad (Qur'án 78:38 Y)

* The most common title used by Muslims to refer to Jesus is “Rúh’u’lláh,” meaning “*the Spirit of God.*” The Qur’án uses the abbreviated form: *the Spirit.*

We find the same language in the Works of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, for instance:

The Lord of mercy shall come down...with the angels
circling around Him...¹ The Báb

The angels of God are seen descending...² Bahá'u'lláh

The angels have appeared, rank on rank, before Us.³
Bahá'u'lláh

- Both Jesus and Muhammad declare that their Mission is to be the Heralds of a new Day, to give the “good news” of a new age of peace and prosperity—that of God’s Kingdom:

I must give the good news of the kingdom of
God...for that is what I was sent to do. Luke 4:43 NEB

We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad] to give glad
tidings [of the Kingdom]... Qur’án 25:56

The Lord...has sent me [Christ] to announce good
news [of the Kingdom]...to proclaim the year of the
Lord’s favor. Luke 4:18-19 NEB

We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad] to mankind at
large, to announce [the good news of the Kingdom of
God]...But most men understand not. Qur’án 34:28

- The Promised One comes in the name of the Lord or God:

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord...
Psalms 118:26

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Matt. 23:39 NIV

And thy Lord shall come and the angels... Qur’án 89:22

Then the Lord...will come, and all the holy ones...
Zechariah 14:5 NIV

What wait they for, but...the coming of thy Lord
Himself...? Qur’án 6:158

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. Revelation 21:3 NIV

He who is the Lord of all men hath appeared.⁴Bahá'u'lláh

Every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: “The Lord is come in His great glory!”⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

It is explained by Bahá'u'lláh that “the coming of the Lord” does not indicate that God “the Unknowable Essence” Himself has come. The statement points to the appearance of God in His full glory in His Manifestation. Bahá'u'lláh often expresses His humility before God:

This Servant, this Wronged One, is abashed to claim for Himself any existence whatever, how much more those exalted grades of being!⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

How bewildering to me, insignificant as I am, is the attempt to fathom the sacred depths of Thy [God's] knowledge! How futile my efforts to visualize the magnitude of the power inherent in Thine handiwork—the revelation of Thy creative power!⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

- The promised Redeemer is also called *the Spirit (the Spirit of Truth)* or *the Spirit of God*:

When he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. John 16:12-13 NIV

On the day whereon the Spirit and the angels shall be ranged in order...This is the sure day. Qur'án 78:38-39

- The time of His coming is called “that day:”

On that day...the trumpet shall be blown [the Message will be proclaimed] and We shall bring all people together. And on that day, We shall present hell [as the home] for deniers...whose eyes were covered by a veil. [Therefore, they could not see] My

[God's] Remembrance* nor hear Him.

Qur'án 18:99-101⁸

In that day you will say:...“Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

Isaiah 12:4-6 NIV

- The new age, initiated by the promised Redeemer, is called *the day, the time, or the year* of the Lord.

The day of the Lord is coming.

Joel 2:1 NIV

See also 3:14

Remind them of the days of God.

Qur'án 14:5

That great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 16:14

The great and glorious day of the Lord.

Acts 2:20 NIV

The set time of God will come.

Qur'án 29:4

He [God] has sent me [Christ] to proclaim...the year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

That Day is indeed an infinitely mighty Day.⁹ The Báb

This is the Day of God Himself...¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

- People can't wait to see the coming of the Lord. They are told to be patient:

Wait quietly for the Lord, be patient till he comes...

Psalms 37:7 NEB

Be patient...unto the coming of the Lord...

James 5:7

And for thy Lord wait thou patiently.

Qur'án 74:7

Wait for the promise of the Father...

Acts 1:4

Blessed are they that wait for Him.

Isaiah 30:18

* The Báb often refers to Himself as *Remembrance of God* or as *Remembrance*. The Qur'án uses this title for the Báb frequently.

- The new Age is a time when people confront “that decision:”

The roar of multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The day of the Lord is at hand... Joel 3:14 NEB

The Day of Decision shall be their appointed time.
Qur’án 44:40

The day of that decision... Qur’án 32:29

- At the appointed time “the stars” (sources of spiritual guidance) fall; they lose their light:

The stars shall fall... Matt. 24:29

The stars shall fall... Qur’án 81:2

The stars of heaven fell unto the earth...
Revelation 6:13

The stars no longer shine... Joel 2:11 NIV

The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light.
Isaiah 13:10 NIV

All the starry host will fall... Isaiah 34:4 NIV

- At the end of the age, “the sun” and “the moon” (sources of spiritual enlightenment) darken:

The...moon [is] darkened... Joel 2:11 NIV

The moon shall be darkened... Qur’án 75:8

The sun will be turned into darkness...before coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Joel 2:31 NIV

In those days...the sun shall be darkened. Mark 13:24

The sun shall be folded up... Qur’án 81:1

I saw...the heavens and their light was gone.
Jeremiah 4:23 NEB

The Day of the Lord...will be darkness, not light.
Amos 5:18 NEB

I will veil the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. Ezekiel 32:7 NEB

The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. Isaiah 13:10 NIV

- The heavens are shaken. The loftiness of “the heavens” symbolizes religion because of its all-encompassing domain and influence. When a new Message comes, old perceptions of religion lose their stability:

I will shake the heavens... Haggai 2:21 NIV

The celestial [heavenly] powers shall be shaken... Matt. 24:29 NEB

The Heaven shall shake and reel... Qur’án 52:9

Thou [Bahá’u’lláh] didst breathe a breath of Thy spirit into Thy Pen, and lo, the entire creation shook to its very foundations...¹¹ Bahá’u’lláh

- The heavens then vanish; they must give way to a **new** heaven. The heavens are “split asunder,” “rolled up,” “folded together,” and “stripped away:”

The heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll... Isaiah 34:4 NEB

And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together... Revelation 6:14

On the resurrection day...[the day of the Lord] shall the Heavens be folded together. Qur’án 39:67

The Heaven shall be cleft asunder. Qur’án 55:37

When the Heaven shall have split asunder...Qur’án 84:1

The first heaven [that of the previous age]...had vanished... Revelation 21:1 NEB
See also II Peter 3:10

The Heaven shall be stripped away... Qur’án 81:11

And the heaven shall cleave asunder, for on that day
it shall be fragile... Qur'án 69:16

The heavens are cleft asunder, and God hath come
down, invested with radiant sovereignty.¹² Bahá'u'lláh

The heaven of every religion hath been rent, and the
earth of human understanding been cleft asunder...¹³
Bahá'u'lláh

I swear by God! That this heaven [of divine Revela-
tion] being cloven asunder is, to the discerning, an act
mightier than the cleaving of the skies!¹⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

- The earth (the old order) is crushed, broken up, or rolled
up to give way to a new earth:

The earth shall be crushed... Qur'án 89:21

The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder...
Isaiah 24:19 NIV

The whole land will be ruined... Jeremiah 4:27 NIV

The earth shall swiftly cleave asunder... Qur'án 50:44

The land mourns and wastes away... Isaiah 33:9 NIV

I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty
[of old and divisive beliefs]. Jeremiah 4:23

The earth and everything in it will be laid bare.
II Peter 3:10 NIV

The whole world will be consumed...
Zephaniah 1:18 NIV

All men and all things have been thrown into
confusion and been sore perplexed...¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Lo, the entire creation hath passed away.¹⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

The day is approaching when We will have rolled up
the world and all that is therein and spread out a new
order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all
things.¹⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

- The mountains (lofty religious leaders, powerful institutions and age-old ideologies that do not foster the welfare of the *whole* human race) are shaken:

I saw the mountains, and they reeled; all the hills
rocked to and fro. Jeremiah 4:24 NEB

The day cometh when...the mountains shall be
shaken... Qur'án 73:14

- The mountains are torn up and turned into dust:

On that day...mountains shall be torn up, the terraced
hills collapse... Ezekiel 38:19-20 NEB

The day cometh when...the mountains shall become a
loose sand heap. Qur'án 73:14

The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills
collapsed. Habakkuk 3:6 NIV

Mountains dissolve like wax before the fire...
Micah 1:4 NEB

The mountains shall...melt into thin vapor. Qur'án 78:20

The mountains...my Lord will scatter them in dust...
Qur'án 20:105

And the mountains could not be found.
Revelation 16:20 NIV
See also 6:14

And thou shalt see the mountains, which thou thinkest
so firm, pass away with the passing of a cloud! 'It is
the work of God, who ordereth all things! Qur'án 27:88
See also 73:14; 18:47; 69:14; 78:19

The mountains have passed away...¹⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

- All nations and peoples are shaken:

All mankind on the face of the earth, all shall be
shaken before me. Ezekiel 38:20 NEB

The earth trembles at his presence, and the world and all who live in it. Nahum 1:5 NIV

I will shake all nations... Haggai 2:7 NEB

The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

All men and all things have been thrown into confusion and been sore perplexed...²⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

- All nations and peoples are “destroyed”. With the advent of the universal Redeemer, the spiritual life sustained by past Revelations comes to an end. It allows for the emergence of “a new race of man” and a new life:

He will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth. Zephaniah 1:18 NIV

I will...wipe out mankind from the earth. Zephaniah 1:3 NEB

Should God punish men for their perverse doings, he would not leave on earth a moving thing! But to an appointed term doth He respite them [until the end of the age]; and when their term is come, they shall not delay or advance it an hour. Qur'án 16:61

He [the promised Redeemer] will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth [word]; with the breath of his lips [judgment] he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. Isaiah 11:4-5 NIV

Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Revelation 2:16 NIV

See also Rev. 6:4; 19:21; 19:15

The time has come...for destroying those who destroy [corrupt AB] the earth [the hearts]... Revelation 11:18 NIV

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty... Isaiah 13:6 NIV

All who are in the Heavens [spiritual leaders] and all who are on the Earth [people at large] shall expire [spiritually], save those who God shall vouchsafe to live [those who accept a new life of faith]. Qur'án 39:68

Be patient, until thou beholdest a new creation.²¹

The Báb

We have caused every soul to expire [die] by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have, then, called into being a new creation...²²

Bahá'u'lláh

The following verse, addressed to the peoples of our time, clarifies the meaning of *life and death*. It clearly shows that God's perception of humans is based on their deeds:

I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Revelation 3:1 NIV

Life is sacred. It is against the wisdom of the All-Knowing and All-Loving Creator to literally slay His own children even if they are misbehaving.

As we have seen, the prophecies of the Bible and the Qur'án predict both the *shaking* and *destroying* of these elements: the earth, the mountains, the heavens, and humans.

The Lord of the last days comes on the clouds (obstacles or misconceptions, and fantasies or false expectations) of heaven (heavenly revelation):

And there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. Daniel 7:13 NIV

And seated on the cloud was one “like a son of man”... Revelation 14:14 NIV

They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven... Matt. 24:30 NEB

He was robed in a cloud with a rainbow above his head... Revelation 10:1 NIV

And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud... Numbers 12:5

The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud... I Kings 8:12 NIV

Will they wait until God comes to them in canopies of clouds...? Qur’án 2:210 Y

The Lord of mercy shall come down unto you in the shadows of the clouds...²³ The Báb

This is the Day whereon the All-Merciful hath come down in the clouds of knowledge, clothed with manifest sovereignty.²⁴ Bahá’u’lláh

The All-Bountiful is come mounted upon the clouds!²⁵ Bahá’u’lláh

- The earth shakes and trembles. “The earth” may symbolize any of the following: people; the hearts of people; human understanding; established traditions that give people a sense of stability; the status quo; the earthly civilization; and the prevailing world order. Shaking away the old order and old perceptions prepares people for a new earthly civilization:

The earth reels like a drunk and, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion... Isaiah 24:20 NIV

The day cometh when the earth...shall be shaken... Qur’án 73:14

The earth is thoroughly shaken... Isaiah 24:19 NIV

It [the earth] shall quake. Qur'án 67:16

Then there came...a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on the earth, so tremendous was the quake.

Revelation 16:18 NIV

Verily, the earthquake of the last Hour will be a tremendous thing! Qur'án 22:1

The Lord will roar from Zion...the earth...will tremble. Joel 3:16 NIV

See also Joel 2:10; Haggai 2:21; Jeremiah 10:10

The earth hath been shaken...²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

The earth hath quaked with a great quaking, and cast forth her burdens.²⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Cause that hath made all your superstitions and idols to tremble....²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

- Only God knows “the day” and “the hour” of the coming of the promised Redeemer:

About that day and hour no one knows...not even the Son; only the Father. Matt. 24:36 NEB

With Him [God] alone is the knowledge of “the Hour.” Qur'án 41:47

The knowledge of it [the Hour] is only with my Lord... Qur'án 7:187

The Hour which we had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favored angels hath come to pass.²⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

- The time of the Advent remains secret until the time of the end:

It is not for you to know the times or dates...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Acts 1:7-8 NIV

The knowledge of it [the Hour] is only with my Lord:
none shall manifest it in its time but He... Qur’án 7:187
See also 33:63

But you, Daniel, *close up and seal the words* of the
scroll [concerning the coming of Michael—i.e. One
Who is like God, the promised One of our time] until
the time of the end.
Daniel 12:4 NEB
See also 12:9; 8:26-27

- The last hour arrives quickly:

The great day of the Lord is...coming quickly.
Zephaniah 1:14 NIV

Behold, I am coming soon... Revelation 22:7

Suddenly, in an instant, the Lord Almighty will
come... Isaiah 29:5-6 NIV

The business of the last hour will be but as the
twinkling of an eye, or even less. Qur’án 16:77

We [the faithful] will all be changed [by the new
knowledge] in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye.
I Corinthians 15:51-52 NIV

The appointed Day of God will indeed be at hand in
less than the twinkling of an eye.³⁰ The Báb

- The trumpet sounds. This symbolizes “the voice” of the
divine Redeemer, which vibrates from His Pen. It is the
declaration of His Message to the peoples of the world:

And in that day a great trumpet will sound.
Isaiah 27:13 NIV

That day will be...a day of trumpet...
Zephaniah 1:15-16 NIV

The sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet...
Zechariah 9:14 NIV

For the trumpet will sound and the [spiritually] dead
will be raised [from the depths of unbelief]

imperishable [by receiving the gift of faith and eternal life]. I Corinthians 15:52 NIV

And he will send his angels [faithful believers] with a loud trumpet call... Matt. 24:31 NIV

On that day there shall be a blast on the trumpet. Qur'án 6:73

For the Lord himself will come...with the trumpet call of God [to resurrect those in need of a new spiritual life]... I Thessalonians 4:16 NIV

Verily We have sounded the Trumpet...³¹ Bahá'u'lláh

By God! The blast hath been blown on the trumpet, and lo, mankind hath swooned away [fainted, become unconscious] before us!³² Bahá'u'lláh

These verses liken the divine voice to a trumpet:

I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches [religions]... Revelation 1:10-11 NIV

The voice...speaking to me like a trumpet... Revelation 4:1 NIV

- That day is “the day of resurrection.” People are raised to a new dimension of knowledge and awareness. When the call of God (the sound of the trumpet) is raised, so are the people to a new spiritual life (rebirth):

[That is] the day of resurrection... Qur'án 75:1

The [spiritually] dead shall be raised [resurrected] incorruptible... I Corinthians 15:52

What! Have they not thought that they shall be raised again for the great day? The day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds. Qur'án 83:4-6

He [man] asketh, “When is this day of Resurrection?” Qur'án 75:6

At that time Michael [Bahá'u'lláh], the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.

Daniel 12:1-4 NIV

Say: The shout hath been raised, and the people have come forth from their graves...Some have made haste to attain the court of God of Mercy, others have fallen down on their faces in the fire of Hell [remoteness from God], while still others are lost in bewilderment.³³

Bahá'u'lláh

These verses clarify the meaning of *resurrection* and *life*:

I [Christ] am the resurrection and the [spiritual] life.

John 11:25 NIV

These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have [spiritual] life.

John 5:39-40 NIV

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10 NIV

Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me...he has crossed over from [spiritual] death to [spiritual] life.

John 5:24 NIV

The Book of Revelation implies that there will be more than one resurrection:

This is the first resurrection [the advent of the Báb].

Revelation 20:5 NIV

The Qur'án confirms this message by predicting that there will be two trumpet blasts; that is, people will be called twice by two great Messengers (the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh):

And there shall be a blast on the trumpet...Then there shall be another blast on it...
Qur'án 39:68

One day, the disturbing trumpet-blast shall disturb it [the old order of things]...the second blast shall follow...
Qur'án 79:6-7

The second blast hath been blown on the trumpet...This is your Lord, the God of Mercy.³⁴
Bahá'u'lláh

- God's call or His "shout" or "roar" stirs the selfless to a new life of faith:

The Lord will roar...
Joel 3:16 NIV

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven [heavenly revelation] with a shout [trumpet call of God NIV]...and the dead in Christ [selfless believers who have killed their egos] shall rise first [to a new spiritual life].
I Thessalonians 4:16

The day when they will hear a Blast. Verily, that will be the day of Resurrection.
Qur'án 50:42 Y

The shout hath been raised...³⁵
Bahá'u'lláh

- The hour arrives unexpectedly:

It shall overtake them...when they look not for it.
Qur'án 29:53

The Son of man will come at the time you least expect him.
Matt. 24:44 NEB

- The hour arrives suddenly:

Are they sure...that that Hour shall not come upon them suddenly...? Qur'án 12:107

When the day that must come shall have come suddenly... Qur'án 56:1

If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping [unaware]. Mark 13:36 NIV

It shall come on them suddenly and shall confound [confuse] them... Qur'án 21:40

See, I [the Lord] will send my messenger [Herald], who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple [to cleanse it]. Malachi 3:1 NIV

Lost are they who deny the meeting with God until “the Hour” cometh suddenly upon them! Qur'án 6:31

He will shine forth suddenly...³⁶ The Báb

The thing that must come hath come suddenly; behold how they flee from it!³⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

- People deny that they will meet the Lord in the last days. They scoff anyone who declares God's promises:

In the last day the scoffers will come... II Peter 3:3 NIV

Yea, they deny that they shall meet their Lord. Qur'án 32:10

Aye, “the Hour” will surely come; there is no doubt of it, but most men believe it not. Qur'án 40:59

A Christian publication states:

The world today continues to ridicule the idea of Christ's return. Nevertheless, this message lies at the very heart and core of the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God...³⁸

- Those who accept the Advent of the Lord are sent to the right, others are sent to the left:

Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
Matt. 25:41 NIV

...those who believe...and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion, such are the people of the right hand. But those who reject Our signs, they are the people of the left hand. The fire will surround them.

Qur’án 90:17-20

- The Hour of or the Day of the Lord comes secretly, like a thief in the night, and people will remain unaware of its arrival. In the Gospel, this message is repeated several ways, among them by the use of the word “thief” six times:

The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
I Thess. 5:2 NIV

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.
II Peter 3:10 NIV

Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.

Revelation 16:15 NEB

See also Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; I Thess. 5:4

What are they waiting for but the Hour, which will...take them unawares?
Qur’án 43:66

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with...cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.
Luke 21:34

Are they sure that the Hour shall not come upon them suddenly, while they are unaware?
Qur’án 12:107³⁹

- People remain unaware of the arrival of the day and hour:

And take heed...lest...that day come upon you unawares.
Luke 21:34

Are they sure...that that Hour shall not come upon them suddenly, while they are unaware? Qur'án 12:107

“The Hour” hath come upon them, while they are disporting themselves [occupying themselves with diversion or amusement].⁴⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

The Qur'án explains why “the day” and “the hour” is kept secret. If the expected Redeemer came from the sky with thousands of angels, even the most complacent and apathetic people would feel forced to become submissive to Him. God's plan of creation is to give us the freedom to reap the harvest of our endeavors:

Verily the Hour is coming. My [God's] design is to keep it hidden, so that every soul will receive its reward by the measure of its endeavor. Qur'án 20:15

- The promised “Hour” undoubtedly comes. God's promise is firm:

They will see the Son of Man coming...Heaven and earth will pass away; my words will never pass away. Matt. 24:30, 35 NEB

Aye, “the Hour” will surely come: there is no doubt of it... Qur'án 40:59
See also 34:3

At the destined hour it will come in breathless haste, it will not fail. Habakkuk 2:3 NEB

“...will the Hour come...!” Say: yea, by my Lord who knoweth the unseen it will surely come... Qur'án 34:3

The inevitable hath come to pass.⁴¹ Bahá'u'lláh

- The coming of the hour causes amazement and confusion:

They will be amazed at one another... Isaiah 13:8 NKJ

...it shall come on them suddenly and shall confound them... Qur'án 21:40

- The day of the Lord is near; it arrives sooner than people think:

The great day of the Lord is near—near...

Zephaniah 1:14 NIV

See also Joel 1:15

A day is near, a day of the Lord is near, a day of clouds, a day of reckoning for the nations.

Ezekiel 30:2-3 NEB

The great day of the Lord...comes with speed.

Zephaniah 1:14 NEB

Yes, I [Christ] am coming soon! Revelation 22:20 NEB

We [God] see it nigh. Qur'án 70:7

For soon the day of the Lord will come on all the nations... Obadiah 1:15 NEB

Verily that which ye are promised is imminent.

Qur'án 77:7

The day of the Lord is at hand... Joel 3:14 NEB

[It] may be close behind you. Qur'án 27:72

- Both the Bible and the Qur'án prophesy that the appointed Hour arrives in the year 1260 A.H. (1844 A.D.) Almost all the date-prophecies appear in codes. But once these codes are broken, their agreement becomes astonishingly clear. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as well as the Qur'án point again and again to the same date. The date is designated at least five times in the Hebrew Scriptures, eleven times in Christian Scriptures, and at least four times in the Qur'án. The Book of Revelation, perhaps the most significant prophetic book of the Bible, reveals even the exact year of the advent by the decoded figure: 1260. With one exception, that book gives all the prophetic dates of the Advent not according to the Christian calendar, but the Islamic. These date-prophecies are so significant—and numerous—they are

presented separately. (See *I Shall Come Again*,⁴² the first of this six-volume series.)

- The appointed time arrives and passes away, but people continue to wait, to expect it to come at some later date. They recognize that the Advent is due or overdue, so they will keep their hopes alive by saying “It could be at any moment.”

[The untrusting servant will say:] My master is staying away a long time. Matt. 24:48-49 NIV

They [the untrusting]...regard that day as distant, but We see it nigh... Qur’án 70:6-7

They who believe not in it [the Hour], challenge its speedy coming. Qur’án 42:18

- The day of the Lord is a thousand years:

For a thousand years in your [God’s] sight are like a day... Psalms 90:4 NIV

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years... II Peter 3:8 NIV

A day with thy Lord is as a thousand years... Qur’án 22:47

- There is no delay in the arrival of the appointed time:

He who is coming will come and will not be late. Hebrews 10:37 NIV

Not for an hour shall ye retard or hasten [the time]. Qur’án 34:30

No word of mine shall be delayed; even as I speak it shall be done. Ezekiel 12:28 NEB

Lo! the day of Severance [separation of the trusting servants from the untrusting] is fixed... Qur’án 78:17

- Both the believers and the scoffers or nonbelievers ask when “the good news” (for the faithful) or “the threat” (for the unfaithful) will come to pass:

“Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”
Matt. 24:3 NIV

And they [scoffers] say, “When will this threat come to pass?”
Qur’án 34:29

In the last days scoffers will come...They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?” II Peter 3:3 NIV

He [man] asketh, “When is this day of Resurrection?”
Qur’án 75:6

When will this threat be made good? Qur’án 21:38

Both Jesus and Muhammad gave a coded response to the above question. The code was broken at about the same time by Christians and Muslims working independently of each other. (See *I Shall Come Again*, Chapter 8.)

- The Creator keeps certain secrets, but these can be—and will be—decoded by the divine Interpreter. They are truths “kept secret since the world was made” (Matt. 13:35 NEB):

For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, “Read this please,” he will answer, “I can’t; it is sealed.”
Isaiah 29:11 NIV

But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll [pertaining to prophecies] until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.
Daniel 12:4 NIV

None knoweth its interpretation but God. Qur’án 3:7

“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”...“He [the promised Redeemer] is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Revelation 5:2-5 NIV

The leaves of the Book shall be unrolled [by the promised Redeemer]...
Qur’án 81:10

Thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days [the promised Redeemer] took his seat...and the books were opened. Daniel 7:9-10 NIV

Now have we brought them the Book [the Qur'án] ...what are they waiting for except its interpretation? Qur'án 7:52-53⁴³

And on the Day of Judgment He [the promised Redeemer] will certainly make clear to you [the truth of] that wherein ye disagree. Qur'án 16:92

So pass no premature judgment: wait until the Lord comes. For He will bring to light what darkness hides... I Corinthians 4:5

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection [Christ] comes the imperfect disappears. I Corinthians 13:9-10 NIV

O concourse of divines [religious leaders]!...We found you behind the veils...measure not the Book of God with your selfish desires...This is the Cause that hath caused all your superstitions and idols to tremble.⁴⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Cast away...the things ye have composed with the pens of your idle fancies and vain imaginings. By God! The Day-Star of Knowledge hath shown forth...⁴⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The writers of a manual on the study of the Bible, published and distributed by a Christian college, ask:

Why do we find such confusion—such disagreement as to what the Bible says? Why don't the hundreds of differing church denominations and sects agree on what their acknowledged textbook says?

Why do so many individuals, capable of understanding almost any other book, say: "I just can't understand the Bible"?

Take a recognized textbook on biology. Show this book to 10 different biology professors from 10 different colleges and universities. Ask them what it says. They'll all give you basically the same answer. People seldom disagree as to what recognized textbooks say—except when it comes to the most important book of all—the Holy Bible!

But take the Bible to 10 different professors of theology, or ministers of religion, and you'll probably receive 10 *different* answers to just about any question you might ask about it.

Do you know why?...

And so men began, centuries ago, to *interpret* the Bible. As a result, the Word of God has become twisted, wrested, perverted, with almost every false and counterfeit meaning imaginable being read into it...

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write in II Timothy 4:1-4 that the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine. People *have* turned away their ears from the truth and have turned to fables palmed off as the truth of God's Word. Isaiah prophesied that in these *latter days* men would demand: "Prophecy [preach] not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits (Isaiah 30:8-10).^{46*}

Since the dawn of history, countless millions of believers have grappled with the mysteries of their Scriptures, without much success. For *the infallible gift of decoding these mysteries is granted only to the divine Redeemers. No one else can make that claim.* Among the thousands of living or past interpreters can we single out one whose judgment

* For a study of bitter disagreement among Christian scholars concerning the meaning of prophecies, see *The Last Days Handbook* by Dr. Robert Lightner, a professor of theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has devoted his book entirely to this topic.

we can fully trust? These interpreters cannot agree even on some of the fundamental teachings of their faith. For instance, the most emphatic and definitive promise of the Bible and the Qur'án is the return of the Redeemer of our time. Yet many distinguished theologians—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim alike—deny the literal fulfillment of this most glorious promise.

A good way to solve this perennial problem—whose interpretation can we trust?—is to begin with the *literal* prophecies concerning the promised Redeemer of our time, the One who makes claims and can prove to be divine. The reason is that these literal prophecies deal with facts that can be verified: numbers, places, and tangible events. These constitute the main message of the first three volumes: *I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, King of Kings*.

The purpose of presenting symbolic prophecies here in this chapter and the next is not to offer proofs but to show the harmony between the Bible and the Qur'án, so that the prevailing misunderstandings and preconceived notions against Islam may be lessened or eradicated. This step is an essential link to the introduction of Biblical prophecies pointing to the Second Advent. For many of those prophecies involve a study of both Islam and the Bahá'í Faith.

3

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

Malachi 4:5 NEB

Part I

The dawn of the Advent of the great Messengers from God coincides with the gloomiest times in history.

For the break of the morn of divine guidance must needs follow the darkness of the night of error.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

“O unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you?” Matthew 17:17 NIV

The advent of Muhammad also coincided with a time of spiritual decay and decline. Consider the following statement from a Christian author:

The early chapters of Acts are full of accounts of vibrant and dynamic new life. We are introduced to men and women filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God. We learn about the birth of the Christian community and the missionary zeal of the apostles and the other believers...

By the sixth century the church had become a vast organization, but living faith had been largely reduced to adherence to rigid theological formulas. Christianity had lost both her spiritual power and her missionary vision. Her former high level of morality was now hardly ever heard of, something which Paul had already foreseen (Acts 20:29). This situation was an ideal breeding-ground for the birth and growth of Islam.²

The Byzantine Church was very largely a corrupt secular power exhibiting no spiritual life. As a result, the Muslims were regarded as liberators rather than invaders. This was particularly so in Egypt, where the small Christian community had been resisting the Byzantine Church. They welcomed the Islamic forces, and between 638 and 640 A.D. the whole of the Nile Delta was taken by only ten thousand men.³

The theme of this chapter as well as the next two chapters is Biblical and Quranic prophecies concerning the state of our world. Their contents further confirm the message of the previous chapters about Islam: that aside from their cultural or social teachings, the Bible and the Qur'án are not just similar; they are identical.

Aside from showing the harmony between Biblical and Quranic prophecies, this chapter serves another critical purpose. Many Christians believe that when “the day” of the Lord arrives, everything will change instantly and dramatically. They take the words of St. Paul literally that “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye” (I Cor. 15:51-52), everyone will be transformed, that our planet will suddenly turn into a paradise. These chapters show that God’s perception of time and His plan of creation are not, and have never been, in harmony with human understanding and impatience.

Our age is one of extreme contrasts. Prophecies attribute two potentials or possibilities for our age: the most awful and terrible, and the greatest and most glorious.

The two portrayals of our time are of *extreme contrast*, with the overwhelming weight on the side of glory rather than gloom. At this very instant we are experiencing the pangs of a new birth—one that has been the hope of humanity since the dawn of history and will be its crown of glory for countless ages to come. It is the birth of a Kingdom divine, immortal, and everlasting; a Kingdom

patterned after the one in heaven. The pains must be proportionate to the gains.

It would be my preference not to say a single negative word about the state of our world, but this book is not a personal view of the world. It is an attempt to present God's perception of how things are and how they should be. Only God knows our capacities for greatness. Based on *His* standards, He expects from us far more than we do. Therefore, whatever appears here is *His* judgment of us, not mine or anyone else's. It is my purpose neither to exaggerate the problems nor to ignore them, but to state them as objectively as possible.

From Gloom to Glory

This brief verse from Malachi portrays the paradox of our age:

The *great* and *terrible* [dreadful NIV] day of the Lord...

Malachi 4:5 NEB

The two translations of the following verse from Jeremiah cover the full range of the potentials of our day:

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it...

Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV

How awful that day will be! None will be like it.

Jeremiah 30:7 NIV

In the next chapter we will cover prophecies about the future, portraying a magnificent and glorious world; a world wherein love, justice, and peace dominate the hearts of humanity; a world radiant with the glory of God, for everything is under God's rule.

I saw the glory of God...the land was radiant with his glory.

Ezekiel 43:2 NIV

This is the Day in which the earth shineth with the effulgent light of thy Lord...⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The earth was illuminated by his splendor.

Revelation 18:1 NIV

And the earth will shine with the glory [light] of its Lord.

Qur'án 39:69 Y

Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and give him glory!

Revelation 19:7 NIV

Caution Regarding the Implications of the Prophecies

Before reviewing the prophecies about the state of our world, we should note several points so that we will have a deeper understanding of some of God's "threatening words" such as "vengeance," "punishment," "chastisement," "fire," "wrath," and "judgment."

The intention of the verses that declare warnings and the consequences of not heeding them is not to show that humans are by nature depraved or evil. Neither do they intend to imply that all people have strayed from the path of justice, and therefore dedicated, honest, and self-sacrificing individuals are not to be found. What they intend to teach is this: when people are deprived of divine guidance, when they suffer from spiritual starvation, their lower selfish nature dominates their lives. We know all too well that as soon as the light of hope and guidance stirs a person to spiritual life, he becomes a new creation. He begins to see selfishness as a cause for shame, and self-sacrifice and service as a crown of glory.

The key to the change is this: the individual must be convinced that what he is asked to believe is based on ***undeniable proofs. His mind must be satisfied beyond any doubt,*** because the decision he is called on to make is awesome; it is by far the most critical and consequential challenge he may ever encounter. Such a decision should

never be taken lightly. This is why meeting this challenge has been my most urgent goal for more than three decades.

Since humans desire the best for themselves, once they are convinced that God has not left them alone, that they are dearly loved, then they have no reason to deny themselves that love and fellowship; no reason to deprive themselves of the greatest and most glorious gift from heaven, no reason to reject the most enduring hope and happiness, the deepest joy everyone would wish to experience, the worthiest honor a human being can ever claim.

God always “warns” His children of the consequences of not walking in His Ways, of disregarding His Will. However, His warnings, *in comparison with the consequences*, are gentle and kindly. The Qur’án expresses this point quite clearly:

Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and with kindly warning...
Qur’án 16:126

Sometimes humans, because of lack of understanding, carry the warnings to extremes. They develop an intense fear that dominates their lives. This is unjustified and contrary to divine Wisdom.

The purpose of the warnings is not to frighten but to awaken humans to their spiritual responsibility, to teach them concern about their divine destiny. We say: I am afraid you may hurt yourself. In this sense, the warnings are a positive force; they are an expression of love:

He [the Lord] will be the sure foundation of your [our] times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.
Isaiah 33:6 NIV

The Bahá’í Faith teaches that those who fail to grow here will be granted new opportunities hereafter. The difference is this: to the extent that they fail to grow here, they will be behind hereafter, like children born prematurely. The

immature or “evil” souls will never be burned or even scorched, but they will *always* regret their past failures to take advantage of their earthly opportunities for spiritual advancement.

Thus in teaching God’s message, moderation must be observed. We should neither turn the warnings into a phobia nor take them lightly. We should use them for this purpose only: “What if this is true? Should I take chances concerning a question compared to which every other question pales into absolute insignificance?” This attitude motivates us to inquire, and continue to inquire, until we can put the question to rest.

We should also note that the warnings apply only to those who have no regard for truth. All sacred Scriptures testify that God leads the sincere seekers of truth to His way. That those with pure motives receive help and blessings from on high to make this decision with absolute certainty:

So great shall be the discernment of this [true] seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow.⁵

Bahá’u’lláh

The path is unmistakable and the proof is evident.⁶

Bahá’u’lláh

Further, God’s judgment pertains to *all* nations and peoples. As the prophecies reveal, *all* nations suffer from spiritual starvation, yet the symptoms vary according to cultural and socioeconomic conditions.

We should also note that judgment is not imposed by the Creator, *it is self-imposed*.

This, indeed, is a chastisement which ye, of your own will, have inflicted upon yourselves, could ye but perceive it.⁷

Bahá’u’lláh

He who shall accept and believe, shall receive his reward; and he who shall turn away, shall receive none other than his own punishment.⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

Since the rewards and punishments are primarily spiritual, each individual has the freedom to choose one or the other. Thus the negative becomes negative if a person allows that force to dominate him.

We should also note that recognition of God and His Manifestation, and obedience to His commandments should never lead to a feeling of self-satisfaction. A believer who thinks he does *everything* God's way, who receives the highest praise for his good deeds, should never say to himself: "I know God is pleased with me, and am sure my home will be heaven." He should rather say "Only God knows what more I could do and be. I ask for His forgiveness and am ashamed to stand before His glory." Self-satisfaction, *even if it is fully justified*, separates *humans from their Creator*.

And finally, no matter how sure a believer is of the strength of his beliefs and the abundance of his good deeds, he should not look down on others. He should not perceive himself as one of the lucky elect, and another as a lost or depraved soul. That perception must be left to God.

In the following statement Bahá'u'lláh gives the reason why we should not cherish an attitude of superiority over others:

He [a true seeker] must never seek to exalt himself above any one...He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith...And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire.⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

But there are other reasons against assuming an attitude of self-righteousness and superiority:

- Humans have a tendency to overrate themselves. Each person wants to think that he is special.
- Humans have a tendency to magnify other people's faults and do the opposite for themselves.
- God's judgment is not based simply on what we are and what we do, but on what we *could* be and what we *could* do. Only God knows our potentials; only He knows to what extent we have made good use of the special gifts that He has given us.

Therefore comparisons are invalid; they are always based on poor perception and faulty assumptions. Let us now review the prophecies.

The Days of Gloom and Darkness

Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light.

Amos 5:18 NIV

Zephaniah portrays the most complete picture of the dark side of our time:

The great day of the Lord is near—near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry...

Zephaniah 1:14-16 NIV

Other prophets declare the same message:

Woe, woe for the day is near, a day of the Lord is near, a day of cloud...

Ezekiel 30:2-3 NIV

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near...a cruel day...

Isaiah 13:6, 9 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh confirms these prophecies:

This indeed is a grievous Day.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

Why should the great and glorious day of the Lord be a day of gloom and darkness? It is clear that gloom and darkness result from the response of the masses of people who deny their Redeemer. Instead of serving as pure mirror, reflecting His light, they serve as clouds.

- The sacred Scriptures declare that the day of the Lord is good news—a time of grace—for *the faithful*, but bad news—a time of punishment—for *the unfaithful*:

This is the Day that God hath ordained to be...a bounty for the faithful and a fury of His wrath for the faithless...¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Here is the good news:

The Lord...has sent me [Christ] to announce good news [of the Kingdom]...

Luke 4:18 NEB

The Lord has anointed me...to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...

Isaiah 61:1-2 NIV

We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad]...to announce [the good news of the Kingdom]...

Qur'án 34:28

I must give the good news of the kingdom of God...for that is what I was sent to do.

Luke 4:43 NEB

But the news of the coming of the Kingdom is not good news for those who ignore, reject, or try to suppress the news. For them it is the loss of an opportunity, the loss of the greatest gift that heaven may bestow on humans; it is self-imposed punishment:

And We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad] to mankind at large...to threaten [the people of the consequences of denying or disregarding the good

news of the advent of the Lord]. But most men understand not [God's Wisdom and ways of fulfilling His prophecies].
Qur'án 34:27

We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad]...as a...warner [to those who disregard the good news]... Qur'án 25:56

The Lord hath anointed me to...[proclaim] the day of vengeance of our Lord [to those who deny or try to suppress the good news]...
Isaiah 61:1-2

Your God will come, he will come with vengeance,* with divine retribution he will come to save you.
Isaiah 35:4 NIV

For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.
Luke 21:22 NIV

What punishment is greater than having a chance to receive the incomparable honor of knowing the Redeemer of the Age, yet failing to seize that chance? What punishment is greater than being able to gain everlasting life by saying "yes" to the heavenly call, but choosing to say "no!" to that call? What punishment is greater than having a chance to attain "nearness to God" for all eternity, but choosing instead "remoteness from Him" for eons and ages to come? Can any human being impose a greater punishment on himself?

Then suddenly, all in an instant, punishment shall come from the Lord of Hosts...
Isaiah 29:6 NEB

It is the mighty chastisement of God!
Qur'án 22:2

The threat of God...
Qur'án 13:31

A chastisement from thy Lord is imminent...
Qur'án 52:7

* "Vengeance" in these verses implies this message: God treats us the way we treat Him. If we choose remoteness from Him; He will also choose remoteness from us.

What a dreadful day! For the day of the Lord is near...
Joel 1:15 NIV

This is the day of the Lord...a day of vengeance, vengeance on his enemies.
Jeremiah 46:10 NEB

When the Lord Jesus is revealed...He will punish those who do not know God and do not **obey** the gospel...
II Thess. 1:7-8 NIV

The preceding prophecy emphasizes obedience. The most emphatic command of the Gospel that requires unqualified obedience is this: “Watch!” What else can that word mean other than: “Investigate!”? Is this too much to ask?

Do people heed the lessons of history?

O peoples of the earth! I swear by your Lord! Ye shall act as former generations have acted. Warn ye, then, yourselves of the terrible, the most grievous vengeance of God. For God is, verily, potent over all things.¹²
The Báb

- This day is “the day of the Lord’s wrath:”

For the great day of their [Redeemers’] wrath is come, and who can stand?
Revelation 6:17 NIV
See also 11:18

...the day of the Lord’s wrath...
Zephaniah 1:18 NIV

Seek the Lord [the promised Redeemer]...seek a humble heart; it may be that you will find shelter in the day of the Lord’s anger.
Zephaniah 2:3 NEB

Gather together [be united]...before the burning anger of the Lord comes upon you...
Zephaniah 2:2 NEB

See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger...
Isaiah 13:9 NIV

Do they feel secure...of the wrath of God or of the coming...of the Hour all of a sudden while they perceive it not?
Qur'án 12:107 Y

O heedless ones! Though the wonders of My mercy have encompassed all created things, both visible and invisible, and though the revelations of My grace and bounty have permeated every atom of the universe, yet the rod with which I can chastise the wicked is grievous, and the fierceness of Mine anger against them terrible.¹³
Bahá'u'lláh

The same judgment that is passed on the people of our age was also passed on those who lived at the time of the first Advent:

Whoever rejects the Son...God's wrath remains on him.
John 3:36 NIV

- The masses of people reject the Redeemer:

For the Son of Man in his day [of glory] will be like the lightening which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to another. But first He must suffer...Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also it will be in the days of the son of Man.*

Luke 17:24-26 NIV

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah's time.
Matthew 24:37 NAB

The World cannot receive him...
John 14:17 NEB

And he [the promised Redeemer] was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called *the Word of God*.
Revelation 19:13

* For an interpretation of this prophecy, see Volume I, *I Shall Come Again*.

As we noted, both the Bible and the Qur’án call Jesus Christ *the Word of God*, a title assumed also by Bahá’u’lláh.

These verses also point to our time:

And woe, on that day [our day] to those who called the Messengers [the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh] liars, who plunged for pastime [diversion; self-satisfaction] into vain disputes...
Qur’án 52:11-12

Man [mankind] chooses to deny what [the truth that] is before him...
Qur’án 75:5

Say: He [Bahá’u’lláh] is “the Great News” [or “the Great Announcement”^{*}], whom you deny...
Qur’án 38:67-68¹⁴

Woe, that Day, to those that deny——those that deny the Day of Judgment...Verily, from (the light of) their Lord, that Day, will they be veiled.
Qur’án 83:10, 11, 15 Y

- Instead of expressing joy at the news of the coming of the expected Redeemer, people do just the opposite: they wail and mourn.

All kindreds of the earth shall *wail* because of him [the promised Redeemer of our time]. Revelation 1:7

At that time...Hear the cry of the shepherds, *the wailing* of the leaders of the flock, for the Lord is destroying their pasture [taking their powers away from them].
Jeremiah 25:33, 36 NIV

Bahá’u’lláh uses the word “wail” frequently to indicate people’s displeasure with Him and His message:

*The Arabic words can be translated as: *the Great Announcement, the Great News, or the Supreme Message.*

Hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord...Who caused the world to tremble and all its peoples to *wail*...¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

O my God...Thou well knowest what they who love Thee have endured through this trial that hath caused the kindreds of the earth to *wail*...¹⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

People mourn for yet another reason: they fail to find spiritual guidance.

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.

Matthew 24:30 NIV

These words [Matt. 24:30] signify that in those days men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom.¹⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh also uses words such as wail, mourn, and lament to point to the anguish that other beings express for His own sufferings. Such a meaning is confirmed in several translations of Revelation 1:7. *The American Standard Bible* reads: "...and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him." *The New American Bible* reads "And the peoples of the earth shall lament him bitterly."

If people saw only power and great glory, they would exult and rejoice, not mourn over their Savior. Grief and mourning come as a result of seeing pain and suffering. It is evident that when people become aware of the afflictions of their Savior, they express grief and sorrow. This has already happened among those who have acknowledged the Redeemer of our age. Those mourners can be found among all the kindreds of the earth. Bahá'u'lláh's sufferings have touched not only the heart of humanity in this world, but the heart of heaven as well. As He testifies "the concourse on high and dwellers of the realms above wailed at His lamenting."¹⁸

The above prophecies and the interpretation offered here are in harmony with another of Jesus' predictions, which was quoted earlier. In that prediction Jesus states that when He returns, His new followers will suffer at the hands of deniers and protesters:

Then he [the Redeemer] will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.” They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?” He will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.” Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Matthew 25:41-46 NIV

- Those who deny the divine Message cannot flee from the consequences of their denial. There is no hiding-place and no refuge save in God:

On that day man shall cry, “Where is a place to flee to?” But in vain—there is no refuge. With thy Lord on that day shall be the sole asylum. Qur’án 75:10-13

At that time...The shepherds will have nowhere to flee, the leaders of the flock no place to escape.

Jeremiah 25:33-35 NIV

There is no place of refuge for you, no asylum to which ye can flee, no one to defend or to protect you in this Day from the fury of the wrath of God and from His vehement power, unless and until ye seek the shadow of His Revelation.¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

- The expected Redeemer comes, His light circles the world, but people remain unaware of the dawning of the new day:

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. John 1:5 NIV

The Dawn hath broken, yet the people understand not. The signs have been ushered in, while He Who hath revealed them is overwhelmed with manifest sorrow. Indeed I have endured that which hath caused the world of existence to lament.²⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

Verily the Hour is coming—My design is to keep it hidden—for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its endeavor. Qur'án 20:15 Y

Do they expect other than this: that the Hour will overtake them suddenly, while they are unaware?
Qur'án 43:66²¹

- Believers lose their faith and abandon their beliefs.

My Lord, my people have deserted this Qur'án. Qur'án 25:30

Another translation:

My Lord! My people shy away [or are far away] from this Qur'án. Qur'án 25:30

...when the Son of Man comes, will he find [the] faith on the earth? Luke 18:8 NIV

The Christian scholar Biederwolf, in his *Second Coming Commentary*, states that the literal translation is “the faith.” Which faith? Most likely the Christian faith. Zoroaster, the great Persian Prophet, who appeared 750 years before Jesus, made the same prediction Jesus did. He prophesied that people will so drastically alter the faith of God that the One who founded that faith, when He comes, will not be able to recognize it.

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, in his book, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, quotes this well-known prophecy from Islamic Scriptures:

A day shall be witnessed by My people whereon there will have remained of Islam naught but a name, and of the Qur'án naught but a mere appearance. The doctors of that age shall be the most evil the world hath ever seen. Mischief hath proceeded from them, and on them will it recoil.²²

The following “official acknowledgment” comes from a Muslim denomination:

We believe that Islam today is like a precious jewel that is buried under piles upon piles of man-made innovations.²³

Biblical prophecies that predict the decline of faith and the abundance of hypocrisy in our time are numerous. Consider the following:

...that day will not come...unless the [predicted] great falling away of those who have professed to be Christians has come...
II Thess. 2:3 AB

There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power...They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

II Timothy 3:1-7 NIV
See also 4:3-4

The great day of the Lord is near...and they will walk like blind men...
Zephaniah 1:14, 17

- People are baptized with fire:

The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus [to watch or investigate His advent].

II Thess. 1:8 NIV

Aye, they have treated the coming of “the Hour” [the day of God] as a lie. But a flaming fire have we made ready for those who treat it as a lie. Qur’án 25:11

For see the Lord is coming with fire...many will be slain [spiritually] by [denying] the Lord...

Isaiah 66:15-16 NEB

It is the fire to which they shall be exposed morning and evening, and on the day when “the Hour” shall arrive. Qur’án 40:46

Both the Bible and the Qur’án speak frequently of “fire” and “hell-fire.” We should ask “why?” Why do they emphasize this point? Because of the confusion or the blinding smoke that the “fire” has created in the minds of critical thinkers, many religious leaders have felt that the best response to the confusion is to disregard the issue—to ignore it altogether. This is unjustified, for our whole life should be devoted to understanding divine wisdom. Ignoring any aspect of our beliefs can undermine our faith and prevent us from recognizing our spiritual responsibilities. We are on an eternal journey towards God, and need all the directions we can get to ensure a safe journey, one that should be undertaken with foresight and understanding.

“Fire” symbolizes many meanings, among them is *testing*. As fire separates gold from dross, so tests and trials separate the faithful from the unfaithful:

The Day [of the Lord] will bring it [your hidden motive] to light. It [the hidden motive] will be revealed with fire and fire will test the quality of each man's work. I Corinthians 3:13 NIV

God will bring everything to light, though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed... Qur'án 31:16

I will refine them as silver is refined and assay [test] them as gold is assayed. Zechariah 13:9 NEB

The hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. Revelation 3:10 NIV

“Fire” or “hell-fire” also symbolizes a low state of spiritual development. It declares: You have failed the test of the “fire.” You have refused to separate the pure gold of “soul” from the dross of the “world.” You must remain in the crucible until separation is accomplished. Until then, remoteness from God, which is the natural consequence of attachment to the world, will continue. Until then, the smoldering of dissatisfaction—and the burning but the suppressed desire to attain the presence of the Heart and Hope of the universe—will go on:

They [those who are not faithful to God and His covenant] will be cut off from the presence of the Lord...when on that great Day he [Christ] comes... II Thess. 1:9-10 NEB

They [the unfaithful] shall be shut out as by a veil from their Lord on that day... Qur'án 83:15

In the following passage Bahá'u'lláh equates “fire” with “remoteness from God:”

This is the Day of great rejoicing. It behoveth everyone to hasten toward the court of His nearness with exceeding joy...and to deliver himself from the fire of remoteness [from God].²⁴

Can anyone think of a punishment as sensible and just as this: those who reject the Redeemer deny themselves the pleasure of knowing Him and loving Him?

We should remember that God's justice is a reflection of His mercy and love for human beings, and that His mercy surpasses His justice:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him...As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Psalms 103:8-13 NIV

The use of the "fire" to symbolize a low state of the soul is an evidence of God's wisdom and His love for humans. It makes vivid the enormity of the consequences of failing the test, a test with everlasting consequences. It is a warning, so that humans may not treat the words of their Creator lightly, so that they may move from apathy to action. What would loving parents do if they saw their rebellious children on the brink of a terrible decision with long-lasting consequences? In spite of the strength of the imagery, the response of people to God's promises has always been tinged with apathy and enmity. Apparently, even a vivid and threatening word such as the "fire" has not been strong enough to break the ice of complacency, to lift the fog of fantasy.

The glitters and glamour of the world have an enchanting attraction for most people. Many hesitate to exchange worldly gains for spiritual glories. Their thoughts revolve around the here and now, not the future or the hereafter. Bahá'u'lláh expresses astonishment that

people devote so much time and effort to their earthly home, one in which they live but for a short while, yet they ignore or pay little attention to their heavenly home—one in which they will live *forever*. Are not then the warnings prudent, even essential? Many of those who complain that God’s warnings are too strong, may say later: “I wish they had been stronger.”

For countless centuries “fire” has been taught to be literal. This has placed undue fear in the hearts of those who love God, and a weapon in the hands of others: those who wish to show that the universe is not ruled by justice. They wonder how a loving God could burn humans *for ever*.

Hell, where the fire never goes out. Mark 9:44 NIV

In the fire shall they abide for ever. Qur’án 9:17

What does “for ever” mean? Some Christian writers realize the fallacy of being too literal, but refrain from recognizing the symbolism. They try to soften the meaning of “for ever” by offering a literal explanation. They say fire is so hot that it burns the sinful instantly into ashes. Thus they cannot remain alive in a bellowing lake of fire to suffer an eternal pain. Here is an example of such literal thinking:

How hot will it be? The hell fire of the Bible is immeasurably hotter than the hell fire of popular myth. Those mortals thrown into it are not going to burn forever. But they will be punished. They will be burned up. They shall become “ashes” (Mal. 4:3) The Bible teaches that the penalty for deliberate and willful evildoing is eternal punishment, death for all eternity—not eternal punishing!²⁵

This literal view of “fire” degrades the Creator to a cruel Being who engages in the systematic torture and annihilation of His own children. It is extremely

difficult—if not impossible—to establish an intimate bond with such an uncaring Father. It brings God to a state lower than that of humans, for very few would consent to exposing a person—even a sinful one—to burning fire.

“The fire that does not go out” symbolizes a sense of remorse, a feeling of what could have been. It dramatizes the immortal glories and honors that were lost forever, but could have been gained with a little more love and care, with one step for truth, with one word for justice. It is a burning desire to be what one wishes to be. It is remembering the lost opportunities that would have prepared the soul for a new life—one in which only spiritual talents count.

He [the unprepared or worldly soul] shall say, Oh!
would that I had prepared for this my [new] life.

Qur’án 89:24

Misunderstanding caused by literal thinking has placed a grave obstacle between God and those He loves dearly. Bahá’u’lláh teaches that nothing evil can ever come from the One who is perfect Knowledge, Love, and Justice. Evil comes only from humans.

In recent decades, some Christian leaders and scholars have acknowledged the symbolic meaning of the “fire.” For instance, Dr. Billy Graham in his book *World Aflame* writes:

Many times in the Bible the word “fire” is not the fire of combustion as we commonly know it. The Bible teaches that God uses fire as a cleansing and purifying agent. When we read that the Holy Spirit came as “tongues of fire,” we do not suppose these were literal fires but rather a representation of the character of the Holy Spirit as a cleansing agent. Fire can be considered also as an agent of purification. When the prophets speak of fire in the world’s

judgment, or when Peter mentions fire at the end of the age, it is not likely that they refer to the fire of combustion.²⁶

The prophecy from Peter concerning “the destruction of ungodly men with fire” (II Peter 3:7) is identical with Paul’s prophecy quoted earlier (II Thess. 1:7-8). If “fire” can be symbolic, as Dr. Graham acknowledges, cannot “coming from heaven” be also symbolic? For they are parts of the same prophecy:

The Lord shall be revealed from heaven...in flaming fire...
II Thess. 1:7-8

Cannot the promised One declare His descent from heaven in these words?

Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs?²⁷
Bahá’u’lláh

Cannot the One who in His first Advent had said “I have come down from heaven” (John 6:38 NEB), once again say:

He [the promised Redeemer] verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time.²⁸
Bahá’u’lláh

Spiritual nourishment has always come and will continue to come from heaven:

The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. John 6:33

Lord, send down upon us thy bread from heaven.²⁹
Bahá’u’lláh

I [Christ] am the bread that came down from heaven.
John 6:41 NIV

Let us consider one more reference on “fire:”

Power was given unto him [an angel] to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat [the stress of remoteness from God, lack of spiritual guidance]...and [yet] *they repented not* to give him [the promised Redeemer] glory [to acknowledge His glory].

Revelation 16:8-9

It is evident that if “fire” and “scorching” were literal, people would certainly repent and give glory to their Redeemer to escape from the scorching heat.

If Christian leaders would acknowledge these two points:

- Christ would not engage in an earthly war. That would be both irrational and unnecessary.
- Christ would not literally scorch and burn hundreds of millions of people.

Then they would more readily be able to overcome their third and most favorite obstacle:

- Christ must come from the sky.

If they could do this, then all their other obstacles would fall like dominoes.

In judging the return of Christ in physical terms we must not emphasize or consider only the positive: the coming from the sky with glory and power. We must look at the fairness and feasibility of the negative as well:

- War and bloodshed on a scale never seen before.
- Scorching helpless human beings for eons and ages.

Our ethical standards in the West come from the Bible. On the basis of those standards we condemn any government that tortures its citizens. How can we then expect our loving Father to do what He Himself and all civilized societies have condemned? We call any leader who tortures its people a dictator, a tyrant. How then can

we ascribe such barbarous behavior to the One we call absolute Love and infinite Wisdom? Let us continue with the remaining prophecies.

- Resistance to truth or the fire of tests and trials produces billows of smoke that encompass the earth. “Smoke” like “cloud” or “veil” symbolizes obstacles: fantasy, supposition, human desire, dissension, superstition, dogmatism, attachment to tradition, the humble appearance of the spiritual King, and His physical form. “Smoke” also symbolizes the stress and distress that comes from a lack of spiritual guidance—from failing to glow with the fire of the love of God.

The day when the Heaven shall give out a palpable [clear, evident] smoke, which shall enshroud [encompass] mankind. This will be an afflictive torment.
Qur’án 44:10-11

The covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.
Isaiah 25:7 NKJ

I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.
Acts 2:19 NIV
See also Joel 2:30

The heaven hath given out a palpable smoke.³⁰
Bahá’u’lláh

The smoke of idle fancy.³¹
Bahá’u’lláh

The following verses show that the words “cloud” and “smoke” are interchangeable:

The temple was filled with the cloud, while the radiance of the glory of the Lord filled the court.
Ezekiel 10:4 NEB

I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple [world’s spiritual sphere]...and *the temple was filled with smoke*.
Isaiah 6:1, 4 NIV

After this I looked and in heaven the temple...was opened. And *the temple was filled with smoke* from the glory of God [caused by His awesome claim]...

Revelation 15:5,8

See also Revelation 9:2

Bahá'u'lláh declares:

What smoke more dense and overpowering than the one which hath now enshrouded all the peoples of the world, which hath become a torment unto them, and from which they hopelessly fail to deliver themselves, however much they strive? So fierce is this fire of self burning within them, that at every moment they seem to be afflicted with fresh torments.³²

- The expected Redeemer separates people according to their response to Him. Some He places at His right, others at His left:

He [the promised Redeemer] will separate men into two groups...Then the king will say to those *on his right* hand, “You have my Father’s blessings; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you...Then he will say to those *on his left* hand...go...to the eternal fire [of remoteness or separation from God]...”

Matthew 25:31-41 NEB

And on that day when the Hour shall arrive, shall men be separated one from another... Qur’án 30:14

Oh! How happy shall be the people of *the right* hand!
Qur’án 56:8

They who disbelieve our signs [proofs], shall be the people of *the left*. Around them the fire [of separation] shall close. Qur’án 90:19-20

The believers of that Day are the inmates of Paradise, while the unbelievers are the inmates of the fire [of separation].³³ The Báb

As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams [the obedient] and goats [the disobedient] of the pasture. Ezekiel 34:17 NIV

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth [earthly desires] will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2 NIV

The Valley of Achor [will become] a resting place...for my people who seek me. But as for you who forsake the Lord...I will destine for you the sword...for I called but you did not answer... Isaiah 65:9-12 NIV

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” Malachi 4:1-2 NIV

When a new Messenger comes, He opens new doors; he offers new opportunities, which require new decisions:

Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live...Seek the Lord [the promised Redeemer] while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Isaiah 55:3,6 NIV

Paradise is on your *right hand*, and hath been brought nigh unto you, while hell hath been made to blaze...Haste ye to enter into Paradise, as a token of Our mercy unto you...³⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

[On that day] Hell shall be made to blaze...Paradise shall be brought near... Qur'án 81:12-13

Hell on that day shall be moved up [brought out within close reach]... Qur'án 89:23

The people of *the left hand* sigh and bemoan. The people of *the right* abide in noble habitation...they are verily the blissful.³⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

At the dawn of a new day, opportunities are maximized. The possibilities for both gain and loss reach their very peak. The prevailing order, the status quo suddenly changes:

But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first. Matthew 19:30 NIV

I am against the shepherds [proud and egotistical leaders] and will hold them accountable for my flock...I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak [humble], but the sleek and the strong [egotistical, proud] I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. Ezekiel 34:10,16 NIV

Day that shall abase! Day that shall exalt! Qur'án 56:3

The following verse is part of a parable about the Kingdom of Heaven (on earth). The purpose of the parable is to teach humility and submission to God's will, to inspire trust in Him even if what He does seems contrary to human expectations:

So the last [the humble, who do not put their expectations above God's purpose] will be first, and the first [the self-righteous who put their expectations above God's purpose] will be the last.

Matthew 20:16 NIV

- The new Revelation faces many enemies, one of whom gains prominence as a religious leader. He exalts himself and rebels against the Redeemer of the age. The Gospel calls this man "the lawless one," "that wicked man," "the man of sin," or "the enemy." Christians refer to him and other figures like him as the Antichrist:

That day will not come until the rebellion [against the Redeemer of the age] occurs and the man of

lawlessness is revealed...whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth [word] and destroy by the splendor [glory] of his coming.

II Thess. 2:3,8 NIV

The Qur'án refers to this “man of sin” as “the moon that shall be cleft:”

The hour hath approached and the moon hath been cleft...

Qur'án 54:1

The prophecies of the Gospel and the Qur'án were fulfilled by Azal (a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh), who was invariably assisted by another man of his own caliber, known as Siyyid Muhammad. Thus, the title “the lawless one” and “the man of sin” apply to both of them with perfect precision. They committed every imaginable sin, every conceivable crime, including the murder of the noblest and purest people. Together they spared no efforts to uproot the new Revelation. Several times Azal plotted to have Bahá'u'lláh assassinated.

As the moon receives light from the sun, Azal received knowledge from the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. But he did more than that. He claimed the knowledge to be his very own. He pretended to be the source of enlightenment. Hence, his light was “destroyed by the brightness” (KJV) and the “splendor” (NIV) or glory of the Lord. When the new Sun dazzled in its full glory, the moon disappeared; it was “cleft asunder” and allowed to descend to the depths of darkness.

The Hebrew Scriptures even predict Azal's very title. That prophecy as well as others from the Gospel about him and his instigator appear in Volume III, *King of Kings*, where the subject of the Antichrist is presented.

4

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

Malachi 4:5 NEB

Part II

This chapter is a continuation of the last. It is about human frailty. It shows what happens when humanity refuses the divine remedy. Before examining the harsh verdict that is pronounced against the spiritual state of our time, it is essential to remind ourselves once again that we should try to see everything from God's perspective rather than our own.

We all have a tendency to avoid or escape from the unwelcome reality, the unpleasant intruders. But to be true to our Creator and ourselves, we must face the unpleasant facts with courage, hope, and determination. God's vision is certain and flawless. It accepts no illusion, doubt, distortion, or denial as ours often does. His vision also rests on hope not on cynicism.

Thank God we have God! For behind the dark clouds, the sun reigns with unspeakable splendor. What would the world be like if there were no God?

Now we should be ready to proceed with the remaining prophecies.

Fear Not, Behold Your God Will Come

Isaiah 35:4

Prophecies point to the prevalence of a paralyzing fear in our time on a scale never witnessed before. They declare that:

- The day of the Lord is terrible, fearsome, dreadful. The claim is so mighty and incredible—the long-awaited Kingdom has come!—that people are terrified to hear it. They cannot endure the weight of this awesome message:

He [God] Who was hidden from mortal eyes exclaimeth: Lo! I am the All-Manifest! This is the Word which hath caused the limbs of disbelievers to quake.¹ Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Announcement [Message] that hath caused the limbs of mankind to quake...² Bahá'u'lláh

Men's hearts on that day shall quake... Qur'án 79:8

...the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Joel 2:31 NIV

The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? Joel 2:11 NIV

People experience the stress and distress of a chaotic world order, but are afraid to leave that order behind. They wander in the “valley of decision.” They cling to the past, fearful of losing the security of long-established beliefs and traditions that go with well-recognized names: Muhammad, Islam; Christ, Christianity; Moses, Judaism. The earth, the heavens, and the mountains shake not only because they have lost their strength or stability, but also because of the release of a new Spirit, the awesome outpouring of divine power.

Who can endure the day of his coming? Malachi 3:2 NEB

You shall hear a cry of terror, of fear without relief...
Awful is that day: when has there been its like?

Jeremiah 30:5-7 NEB

We see the people laid low, awed with the dread of
thy Lord...³

Bahá'u'lláh

Sound the alarm upon my holy hill, let all that live on
the earth tremble, for the day of the Lord has come...

Joel 2:1 NEB

The trumpet hath been blown, and lo...the hearts of
all who are in the heavens and on the earth have
trembled...⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

O concourse of bishops! Trembling hath seized all
the kindreds of the earth, and He Who is the
Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and
heaven.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

On that day...all that are in the heavens [spiritual
leaders], and all that are on the earth [people at large]
shall be terror stricken, save him [the faithful] whom
God pleaseth to deliver. He who shall present himself
with good works [such as the courage to investi-
gate]...shall be secure from the terror on that day.

Qur'án 27:87-89

Wail for the day of the Lord is near...terror will seize
them...They will look aghast at each other, their faces
aflame.

Isaiah 13:6-8 NIV

This is the Day on which all eyes shall stare up with
terror, the Day in which the hearts of them that dwell
on earth shall tremble, save them whom thy Lord...
pleased to deliver.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

But after the three and a half days [the time of the
advent, see Volume I]...terror struck those who saw
them [God's two Witnesses].

Revelation 11:11 NIV

Verily, the earthquake [the earth-shaking Message] of the last Hour [the Lord has come!] will be a tremendous thing!
Qur'án 22:1

Say: [thus sayeth the Lord] O concourse of Bishops! Trembling hath seized all the kindreds of the earth, and He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven...⁷
Bahá'u'lláh

Whoever comes with a good deed will be rewarded with something better, and be secure from the terrors of that Day...
Qur'án 27:89

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne [Bahá'u'lláh] and from the wrath of the Lamb [the Báb]! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Revelation 6:15-17 NIV

Bahá'u'lláh quotes this verse:

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for the fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.
Isaiah 2:10

The Book of Revelation carries a similar message:

Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.
Revelation 14:7 NIV

The preceding verses do not intend to instill fear, but rather to warn and therefore prepare the people. They declare that most ears are unable to cope with the mighty message of this day.

Will ye not recognize...how the people are sore vexed [disturbed] at the awful majesty of the Cause of God?⁸
Bahá'u'lláh

Such is the greatness of this Day that the Hour itself is seized with perturbation, and all heavenly Scriptures bear evidence to its overpowering majesty.⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

People have been warned not to fear the coming of the Lord:

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart...

Psalms 27:14 NIV

Say to those with fearful hearts, be strong, do not fear; your God will come...

Isaiah 35:4

They have also been comforted again and again with the most blessed news:

They will be my people, and I will be their God...

Jeremiah 24:7 NIV

I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Revelation 21:7

They will be his people and God will be with them and be their God.

Revelation 21:3 NIV

But when they hear the blessed news from their Promised One, Bahá'u'lláh:

This is your Lord the God of Mercy.¹⁰

They lose heart. They like to hear the promise, but cannot bear the news of its fulfillment. The news is awesome; in most people, it triggers fear and avoidance. Instead of responding to an invitation to learn about the new Name—Bahá'u'lláh—they engage in avoidance:

A Name that hath caused the hearts and souls of men to tremble.¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Prophecies indicate that in some people fear climbs to its very crest; they act as if they have seen a lion coming towards them. They run away from the lionlike message as fast as they can:

It [the day of the Lord] will be as when a man runs from a lion...

Amos 5:19 NEB

He [Bahá'u'lláh] was robed in a cloud with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun...he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

Revelation 10:1-3 NIV

The thing that must come hath come suddenly; behold how they flee from it!¹²

Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day whereon every man will fly from himself, how much more from his kindred, could ye but perceive it.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

Some people are afraid that by talking with a follower of Bahá'u'lláh or reading a Bahá'í book they may lose their faith. To calm their fears, Jesus uttered this parable. A man of noble birth [Christ] went to a distant country [heaven] to have himself appointed king and then return. But before leaving, the noble man gave some capital to each of his servants. One of those servants refused to invest his capital for fear of losing it. The master was displeased with his timidity, his unjustified fear, and his shallow faith. Therefore He took away that servant's capital and gave it to one of his daring servants. The master then asked that the fearful servant be taken "outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping, and grinding of teeth [sorrow and anger for lost opportunities] (Matt. 25:30 NIV).

People are asked to investigate the news of the coming of the Master; they are urged not to delay the search and discovery mission even for an instant. Many of them do just the opposite: they run away from it in fear. The fear carries these threatening messages:

- This cannot be true! It has not happened since the dawn of history. Why now?

- What if it turned out to be true? Am I ready to make a commitment?
- Can I trust my own judgment?
- What if I am deceived?
- If this claim is true, why are most people ignoring it?

The fear that these messages generate is so intense that it prevents many people from even conducting a simple investigation, such as reading a single book like this one from cover to cover. This fear is pervasive and paralyzing. It is the first obstacle to the Kingdom of Heaven, for it impels avoidance, depriving the individual of knowledge. No wonder that in the following passage from Revelation it is placed before other major obstacles, including unbelief and abominable acts:

He that overcometh [obstacles] shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But *the fearful*, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire [of remoteness from God]...

Revelation 21:7-8

Many have wondered why a person should be punished for being fearful. It would be unreasonable to punish someone who fears heights, the dark, scary movies, etc. For these fears are emotional responses beyond the control of the individual. But there is a fear whose root cause is not purely emotional; and that is the fear of truth. Here rational powers, volition and determination play a critical role. In this case, we have a choice. It is for this reason that the reward and punishment for overcoming—or not overcoming—the fear are justified.

See, the Sovereign Lord comes...and his recompense accompanies him.

Isaiah 40:10 NIV

The time has come for rewarding...those who reverence your name. Revelation 11:18 NIV

Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. Revelation 22:12 NIV

Verily the Hour is coming—my [God’s] design is to keep it hidden—for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its endeavor. Qur’án 20:15 Y

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory...and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16: 27 NIV

The days of God in which He rewards men according to their deeds. Qur’án 45:14

God promises to bestow the most glorious gifts on those who “overcome” their fears, or whatever prevents them from recognizing their Redeemer.

“To him who overcometh” (Rev. 2:7):

- I will give the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.
- I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.
- I will give him the morning star...
- I will acknowledge his name before my Father...
- I will never erase his name from the book of life...
- I will write on him the name of my God.
- I will write on him...the name of the city of my God.
- I will also give him a white stone with a new name...

- I will also write on him my new name. He who has [a spiritual] ear, let him hear what the Spirit [of God] says to the churches. Revelation 3:12-13

Has not God always rewarded good deeds? What then makes the time of the Advent any different? The difference lies in this: when a new Redeemer comes, the need for good deeds multiplies. For instance, people always benefit from curiosity, courage, and trust in God. But when they face the challenge of accepting a new Teacher, the demand for those virtues grows far beyond the norm. The challenge of investigating a new religion is awesome. For many people, undertaking this challenge is like setting foot in a small plane that has been flown only by a few daring adventurers. Justice demands that rewards be proportionate to effort and achievement. Since at the time of the Advent of a new Redeemer, the required efforts for preserving one's spiritual health reach their highest, so do the rewards for such an achievement. Those who meet the demands of recognizing and accepting God's new Gift receive favors and blessings beyond measure:

The Lord is waiting to show you his favor...Happy are all who wait for him!
Isaiah 30:18 NEB

God has sent me [Christ] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor..
Luke 4:18-19 NIV

The heights which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain, in this Day, are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess the capacity for such a revelation.¹⁴
Bahá'u'lláh

If those who accept God's new gift of guidance knew what rewards and honors are in store for them in the heavenly Kingdom, they would be utterly overwhelmed. That is why Bahá'u'lláh states that in this world no one should know. No human being has capacity for such

knowledge. Can anyone imagine the true meaning of the honor of receiving this heavenly gift?

To him who overcomes [obstacles such as fear] I will give the right to sit with me [Christ or Bahá'u'lláh] on my throne. Revelation 3:21 NIV

I will give you authority...just as I have received authority... Revelation 2:26-27
See also Psalms 2:8-9

To dispel fear and inspire confidence in seekers for truth, Bahá'u'lláh quotes this verse:

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come. Isaiah 35:4

This verse also inspires strength:

O Jerusalem...be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: "Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm [global order or institutions] shall rule for Him." Isaiah 40:10

Let us continue with the list of events associated with "the great and terrible day of the Lord:"

- A mighty storm, a whirlwind (the forces of discord, tests and trials, disturbances of the heart and mind) will spread over the earth.

See, the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly.

Jeremiah 23:19-20 NIV

Are they sure that He who is in Heaven will not send you a stone-charged whirlwind? Then shall you know what my [God's] warning meant! Qur'án 67:17

Then suddenly...the punishment will come from the Lord of Hosts with storm and tempest... Isaiah 29:6 NEB

Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation, a mighty storm [whirlwind, KJV] is rising from the ends of the earth...At that time those slain [spiritually by rejecting the Lord] will be everywhere...

Jeremiah 25:32-33 NIV

And a great gale shall scatter them [mountains and hills, which symbolize the age-old institutions].

Isaiah 41:16 NEB

Bahá'u'lláh declares:

The tempests of trials have encompassed them on every side, and so grievously assailed them that the souls of men have been troubled and the foundations of all beings have trembled...¹⁵

How many the leaves which the tempests of trials have caused to fall...!¹⁶

Encompassed on every side is Thy Lamp by the tempests of discord blowing from every land; where is the globe of Thy graciousness and protection?¹⁷

Behold, then, O my God, how Thy Light hath been compassed with the onrushing winds of Thy decree, how the tempests that blow and beat upon it from every side have added to its brightness and increased its splendor. For all this let Thee be praised.¹⁸

- “That day” is a time of distress and stress because of a lack of spiritual guidance. In this century the barometer of stress has been rising around our planet. Some studies indicate that a large percentage of those who seek medical help suffer from psychological problems. Stress plays a critical role in causing physical symptoms. It is estimated that the cost of stress in one nation alone is 150 billion dollars a year. Hence, seminars, tapes, talks, articles, and books on ways of managing stress are quite popular.

Why are the nations in turmoil?

Psalms 2:1 NEB

That day will be a day of...distress and anguish.
Zephaniah 1:15,16 NIV

That shall be a distressful day... Qur'án 74:9

It will be a time of great distress. Matt. 24:21 NEB
See also 24:29; Mark 13:24

There will be a time of distress such as has never
been... Daniel 12:1 NEB

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near...pain and
anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman
in labor. Isaiah 13:6-7 NIV

Hearts that Day will be in agitation. Qur'án 79:8 Y

But in those days, following that distress [oppression].
Mark 13:24 NIV; Matt. 24:29

Bahá'u'lláh's interpretation of the preceding verse:

What "oppression" [distress NIV] is more grievous
than that a soul seeking the truth, and wishing to
attain unto the knowledge of God, should know not
where to go for it and from whom to seek it? For
opinions have sorely differed, and the ways unto the
attainment of God have multiplied.¹⁹

The following verses confirm Bahá'u'lláh's statement:

The time is coming, says the Lord God when...Men
shall stagger from north to south, they shall range
from east to west, seeking the word of the Lord, but
they shall not find it. Amos 8:12 NEB
See also Isa. 29:8

Men wander about like sheep in distress for lack of a
shepherd. My anger is turned against the shepherds,
and I will visit with punishment the leaders of the
flock... Zechariah 10:2-3 NEB

A similar malaise also afflicted the people at the time of
the first advent:

The sight of the people moved him [Jesus] to pity: they were like sheep without a shepherd, harassed and helpless...
Matthew 9:36 NEB

Who can solve this puzzle? Who can break this cycle? People depend on their religious leaders to guide them, and the religious leaders depend on people to tell them how they should guide them! St. Paul clearly predicted this prevailing cycle of dependency:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.
II Timothy 4:3 NIV

Their religion is but a precept of men, learnt by rote...
Isaiah 29:13 NEB

- The stress of the last days comes mainly from spiritual starvation, not a lack of material means:

Their silver and gold will not be able to save them in the day of the Lord's wrath. They will not satisfy their hunger...
Ezekiel 7:19 NIV

Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath. Zephaniah 1:18 NIV

The following verses from the Qur'án show that the stresses of the last days come from lack of faith and impurity of the heart:

Thy Lord magnify, thy robe [character] purify, and [from] defilement flee!...and be patient unto the coming of thy Lord. For when the Trump [the divine call] is sounded, that day will be a harsh day...
Qur'án 74:4-9 A

That will be—that Day—a Day of distress, far from easy for those without faith.
Qur'án 74:9-10 Y

At that time many will turn away from the faith.

Matthew 24:10 NIV

“*Time* magazine published a short article distilling the responses from the 46,000 letters it had received from its readers the previous year...The letters often reflected a sense of moral backsliding, a kind of national fall from grace. *Readers mourned a lack of direction*” [emphasis added].²⁰

[At that time]...all the nations of the earth will mourn.

Matthew 24:30 NIV

In those days [our age] men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom.²¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Earthquakes [instability, distress, shattered hopes and expectations] have broken loose, and the tribes have lamented...²²

Bahá'u'lláh

The nations were angry...

Revelation 11:18 NIV

Most people are bewildered...and wear on their faces the evidences of anger.²³

Bahá'u'lláh

In these days...the flames of unbelief are burning high and the robe of wisdom [is] rent asunder...tranquility and faithfulness have ebbed away and trials and tribulations have waxed severe...²⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day.²⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

- Family ties are loosened. Violence between family members increases:

On that day shall a man fly from his brother, and his mother, and his father, and his wife, and his children.

Qur'án 80:34

Brother will betray brother to death; and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. Matthew 10:21; Mark 13:12 NIV

The day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion. Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words. For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies are the members of his own household.

Micah 7:4-6 NIV

Men have been torn away, so great hath been the fury of His wrath.²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

The level of domestic violence today is high and people are often killed by relatives and friends rather than by strangers. Child abuse is also quite prevalent. According to one source:

But the harsh truth is that more people are hurt by those they know than they are by those whom they don't. Women are more likely to be battered by their husbands and lovers than by strangers. They are more likely to be raped by someone they know. Social workers and physicians frequently find that when the elderly are neglected and abused, the perpetrators are spouses and children, and not paid caretakers. And when children are abducted, sexually molested, or abused, the culprit is most often a parent, a stepparent, or a trusted relative.²⁷

- Moral values decline:

There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

II Timothy 3:1-4 NIV

Friends on that day shall become foes to one another,
except the God fearing. Qur'án 43:67

Every man's sword will be against his brother.
Ezekiel 38:21 NKJ

- The wise lose their wisdom; a state of unawareness (drunkenness) overtakes people:

The wisdom of their wise men shall vanish and the discernment of the discerning shall be lost.
Isaiah 29:14 NEB

...on that Day the learning of the learned shall prove of no avail...nor the titles of the prominent...²⁸ The Báb

And thou shalt see men drunken [unaware of truth, complacent], yet are they not drunken... Qur'án 22:2

They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. Isaiah 29:9

They will walk like blind men... Zephaniah 1:17 NIV

Their eyes are drunken; they are indeed a blind people.²⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

Drunken are the eyes of those men that have openly refused to behold the face of God, the All-Glorious...³⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

Most people are bewildered in their drunkenness and wear on their faces the evidences of anger.³¹ Bahá'u'lláh

In the following prophecy Jesus has predicted that at the time of His return the masses of people will be asleep, in a state of spiritual unconsciousness:

I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die [the remaining opportunities, faith], for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember,

therefore, what you have received and heard [watch!]; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief... Revelation 3:1-3 NIV

Since the word “if” does not appear in other prophecies, and since elsewhere Jesus unconditionally states that He will come like a thief, the conclusion is that people will indeed remain in the state of spiritual sleep.

The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.³²
Bahá'u'lláh

These are the days which the people in bygone times eagerly expected. What hath befallen you that ye are fast asleep?³³
The Báb

- Worldliness, unawareness of God, and socio-political malaise overcome the peoples of the world:

These days recall for me the days of Noah...Isaiah 54:9 NEB

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah's time. Matthew 24:37 NAB

And many are the signs in the Heavens and on the Earth, yet they will pass them by, and turn aside from them. And most of them believe not in God, without also joining other deities with Him [worshipping the world].
Qur'án 12:105-106

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great [the prevailing political and economic system]. She has become a home for demons...the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries [extreme disparity between the poor and the rich]...her sins are piled up to heaven. Revelation 18:1-5 NIV

Behold, I, the Lord God, have my eyes on this sinful kingdom, and will wipe it off the face of the earth. Amos 9:8 NEB

Then they will call to the Lord, and he will give them no answer; when that time comes he will hide his face from them, so wicked are their deeds.

Micah 3:4 NEB

Great is the wickedness of the nations. The roar of multitudes, multitudes in the Valley of Decision [concerning truth, the divine Message].

Joel 3:13-14 NEB

See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day...

Isaiah 13:9 NIV

His proof hath been manifested, yet they are unaware of it.³⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

So bewildered are they in the drunkenness of their evil desires, that they are powerless to recognize the Lord of all being, Whose voice calleth aloud from every direction: “There is none other God but Me, the Mighty, the All-Wise.”³⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Is not God love? Can love exist without pain? Does not our Creator care for our sufferings? He who cares also suffers.

We all live in our own small world and mostly try to cope with the pressures and pains of our own lives. If we could perceive *for one instant* the total pain that humanity is enduring, then we could estimate God's sufferings for us. If we could be present and perceive the anguish of those thousands of starving children who die every day; if we could perceive the agony and distress of their parents attempting to save them, only to see them die in their arms; and if we could know their miseries, fears, and anxieties for a dark future, then we would get a glimpse of God's pain for human sufferings. To the problem of starving children, we can add hundreds of other problems our world is facing from prejudice, repression, depression, anxiety, crime, suicide, and family disintegration to spiritual starvation and lack of self-fulfillment. If we could see with God's eyes the

ingratitude of humans towards His love, then we would know why He speaks so strongly against us, we would understand the reasons for His wrath.

The wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. Revelation 14:10 NIV

He [Bahá'u'lláh] treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. Revelation 19:16 NIV

By Him Who is the Eternal Truth! The day is approaching when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have taken hold of them.³⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

Still more evidence on the state of this century:

- How is our *planet* being treated? Ozone-depleting chemicals have permanently and significantly damaged the ozone layers, which shield our planet and people from harmful radiation. The air, the land, and the sea have all been contaminated. Our planet is being stripped of much of its rain forests. Some futurists believe that the damage to our planet poses the greatest crisis for the future.
- Many animal and plant species have become extinct. According to an expert:

Extinction is part of evolution, but the present rate is many times the pace that has prevailed since prehistory.³⁷

What on earth are we doing?...This wondrous globe has endured for 4.5 billion years, but its future is clouded by man's reckless ways...³⁸

The earth must indeed mourn her plight:

The earth will mourn... Jeremiah 4:28 NIV

And man shall say, what aileth her [the earth]?
Qur'an 99:3

The land mourns and wastes away...

Isaiah 33:9 NIV

Why has the land become a dead land...It is because they forsook my law... Jeremiah 9:12 NEB

The time has come...for destroying those who destroy the earth. Revelation 11:18 NIV

- Sometimes prophecies convey **both** symbolic and literal messages. This happens when the literal message does not require any change to the laws of the universe, when its realization is in harmony with God's eternal design of creation. The following prophecies about the plight of women are among those with double meanings:

Alas for women with child in those days, and for those who have children at breast. Matthew 24:19 NEB

How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Mark 13:17 NIV

Every suckling woman shall forsake her sucking babe; and every woman that hath a burden in her womb shall cast her burden... Qur'an 22:2

Every woman that hath had a burden in her womb hath cast her burden.³⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

Suffering by mothers and children may imply the following:

- Severe pressures borne by modern families.
- The awesome greatness of our day. The message of the day is so mighty that it causes women to cast their burdens. It is difficult to find someone so attached to another as a mother to her baby. The Advent is so mighty that it impels even mothers to abandon their sucking babies.
- Raising spiritual and well-behaved children is so difficult, that loving mothers filled with hope for

their child's bright future, often give birth to babies who will become sources of much evil and suffering to the world. Bahá'u'lláh alludes to this meaning.

At the dawn of a new age, new potentialities and possibilities—both negative and positive—emerge. Consider being in the position of parents who raise children to serve God, only to find them at war with His new Redeemer. Ponder the ominous feelings of holding a baby in your arms, then suddenly realizing that he may be one of those who will reject God's most glorious blessings, that you are bringing up a son or a daughter for everlasting punishment—remoteness from God! Unfortunately this is not uncommon. It happens at the dawn of the advent of all great Messengers and Redeemers. It happened once again in this age.

Since the word “woman” symbolizes religion, this is yet another message enshrined in the following prophecy:

Every suckling woman [religion] shall forsake her sucking babe [followers who draw spiritual nourishment].
Qur'án 22:2

With the Advent of the new Redeemer, all past dispensations come to an end. When we mature, we need new nourishment.

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

I Corinthians 3:2 NIV

“Casting one's burden in one's womb” also implies manifesting one's inner capacities. On hearing the Greatest News, people's response reveals their spiritual potential. Their hidden motives come to light:

...wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts.
I Cor. 4:5

We will certainly put you to the test, in order to distinguish those among you who strive, and steadfastly persevere. We must expose your true qualities. Qur'án 47:31

Verily, God will bring everything to light, though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and hidden in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is Subtile, informed of all.⁴⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him. Christ (Luke 8:17-18)

These prophecies should not be taken only literally, yet they do present a literal message that is not only possible, but to some extent has already come true. In our age, family ties are strained and are often broken. Similarly, abortion has become more widely practiced. There are many millions of abortions every year. Changes of values, medical advances, and a desire to keep the family unit small have partly contributed to this practice. Many women must deal with the stress of loneliness, a demanding job, and the task of raising their children alone. They must leave their “sucking babies” to go to work. As one writer observes:

The typical victim of burnout is a woman with children and a job and more things to do than time to do them in...⁴¹

The word “burden” carries yet other messages:

And when Earth...shall have cast forth what was in her and become empty...Then verily, O man, who desireth to reach thy Lord, shalt thou meet Him.

Qur'án 84:3-6

The Earth shall cast forth her burdens...On that day shall she tell out her tidings...
Qur'án 99:2-4

This is the Day whereon the earth shall tell out her tidings.⁴²
Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day whereon the earth hath told out her tidings and hath laid bare her treasures...⁴³ Bahá'u'lláh

Here also the message is primarily symbolic. Divine secrets are kept within the womb of the mother earth as a fetus is preserved within a mother. The burden is the secrets she keeps, the truths she must not disclose, the tidings she is anxious to tell, yet cannot, because of people's lack of receptivity. (See, for instance: John 15:12-13; Daniel 7:9; 12:4; Qur'án 81:10; 16:9.) The Qur'án states that the knowledge of the time of the Advent is the burden of the heavens and the earth:

They ask thee of the Hour...it is the burden of the Heavens and the Earth...
Qur'án 7:187

That burden is now cast; it is disclosed and delivered. "The casting of burden" symbolizes not only the dawning of good news but also the appearance of negative forces—the deniers of the good news. That is how those who are the first become the last.

The workers of iniquity are her [the earth's] burdens, could ye but perceive it.⁴⁴
Bahá'u'lláh

But the prophecy about the earth casting her burden conveys a literal message as well, one totally in harmony with the laws of nature. Literally, it may refer to the vast resources that are discovered and dug out of the heart of the earth, including the releasing of nuclear power. With the aid of science, all earthly things are manifesting their potentials. The creative Power of a divine Messenger stirs life into all things:

Nothing is secret which shall not be made manifest.
Luke 8:17

Ours is the age of maturity; through the power released by God all hidden potentials will be realized:

The whole earth...is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings...Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen!⁴⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Ours is a time when “the mystery of God” (Rev. 10:7 NIV) is revealed, a time when:

The hidden purpose of God will have been fulfilled as he promised to his servants the prophets.

Revelation 10:7 NEB

Through Him hath appeared that which had been hidden from time immemorial and been veiled from the eyes of men.⁴⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

5

The Times Spoken of by all Holy Prophets

Acts 3:21

Time Prophecies of the Qur'án

It is intriguing to note that the sacred Scriptures of several religions, especially Judeo-Christian and Islamic, refer to 1844 or 1260 as the time of the Advent of a great Messenger from God. We should note that the year 1844 in Christian calendar corresponds to the year 1260 in Islamic calendar. The Bible contains as many as 16 prophecies pointing to this date. The Book of Revelation gives the date of the Second Advent not according to Christian Calendar, but Islamic. The prophecies recorded in that marvelous Book validate not only the Bahá'í Faith but also Islam. For a review of these prophecies, see *I Shall Come Again*. The prime purpose of this book is to show similarity between the prophetic language of the Bible and the Qur'án.

The Bible and the Qur'án contain two sets of identical time prophecies concerning the time of the Advent, expressed through similar codes, such as “the days of creation” and “the last day of the days of creation.”

As it is explored in great detail in *In the Clouds of Glory*, prophecies are as a rule expressed in codes. Several reasons account for this. Consider these two:

- If people know the true meaning of prophecies, some of them will try to fulfill them in their own or their children's lives. For instance, if the prophecies had

declared that the Messiah of the Jews would be born in...in the year...with the name...etc., many people would try to have a child matching the designated conditions with the hope that their child would be the one selected for the honor. In that case, instead of guiding the sincere seekers, prophecies would only confuse them.

- History shows that most people, especially the powerful, are the enemies of their Savior. If all the facts were known, people would not allow their Savior to attain adulthood. For instance, based on certain clues provided by the three wise men, King Herod tried to accomplish this very goal. He failed because he did not have *all* the clues.

The Days of Creation

In terms of the social and spiritual development of humankind, the numbers 6 and 7 seem to play a prominent role. For the stages, days, or eras of preparation or growth are predicted, both in the Bible and in the Qur'án, to be 6. After this, it is predicted that God Himself will assume authority and sovereignty. We who are living in this glorious age, enjoy the unmatched blessing of being born at the dawn of the 7th Day, the Day of the Lord Himself:

Verily your Lord is God who hath made the heavens [the heavenly civilization] and the earth [the earthly civilization] in six days—then mounted His throne to rule all things.

Qur'án 10:3

See also 50:38; 32:4; 25:59; 7:54

In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and on the seventh day he rested [on His throne].

Exodus 20:11 NEB

According to Bahá'í teachings, the preceding prophecies do not convey literal messages. They point to a segment of

human history known as the Adamic Cycle. They describe the stages of the spiritual and social development of humanity, rather than the creation of the universe.

The first code we need to break is the length of a Day *in God's sight*:

For a thousand years in your [God's] sight are like a day...
Psalms 90:4 NIV

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years...
II Peter 3:8 NIV

A day with thy Lord is as a thousand years... Qur'án 22:47

We should note that the verses from both the Bible and the Qur'án specifically indicate that this code (a thousand years are like a day) applies to God. It is so in *His* sight, and therefore the code does not pertain to humans.

The above prophecies indicate that the Creator took “six days” to prepare the world for His Kingdom. During this period He set the stage for a new heaven (heavenly civilization) and a new earth (earthly civilization) by shaping the world indirectly through the influence of His many Messengers. He laid the ground work for His glorious Throne.

Why did God not establish His Kingdom at the beginning of the first day? According to divine Wisdom, every being is endowed with a potential, and everything goes through cycles. The potential unfolds gradually; the cycle does not *begin and end* simultaneously. It is for the same reason that humans are born as helpless babies, and not as mature beings. At the beginning of the first “day” the world was not ready for the Kingdom. Further, humans were to be tested and proved wanting in directing the affairs of their world.

During the six days or stages of preparation, God's Plan was kept secret behind a veil of codes or symbols. Then at

the end of the sixth day, the Angel or the Redeemer of the seventh day came to unveil the Plan:

But in the days when the seventh angel [the angel of the seventh day] is about to sound his trumpet [declare the new message], the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants, the prophets.

Revelation 10:7 NIV

Another translation of the same verse:

When the days come that the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God's mystery—His secret design, His hidden purpose—as He had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets should be fulfilled.

Revelation 10:7 AB

We should note that the prophecies assign a period of a thousand years to the 6th day and to the 7th day. They do not assign any specific period to the previous “days of creation”—days 1 to 5. We should not, therefore assume that those days also lasted a thousand years each.

We feel more at ease with absolute or fixed numbers like 2,000, 3,000, or 6,000. But the spiritual life of humankind does not necessarily follow rounded or fixed figures. The number “6 days” should not, therefore, be taken literally. It represents stages of growth rather than specific years. Just as a child goes through various phases of development, so does the human race. The number “seven” symbolizes perfection, or readiness to enter the stage of maturity—the last stage of social development of humankind.

The following is a prophecy from the Qur'án on the “days of creation” but with an additional message both at the beginning and the closing of the verse:

We have sent thee [Muhammad] as a herald [of the Kingdom]...Put thou thy trust in Him...who in six days created the Heavens and the Earth...then mounted His Throne—the God of mercy! Ask now of the wise

concerning Him [who comes to rule at the end of the six days].
Qur'án 25:56-59

That six “days” or stages were intended as *a period of trial and error* to test the ability of humans to rule is confirmed by this verse from the Qur'án:

He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six Days—and His Throne [during this period] was on water [masses of people]—that He might try [test] you...
Qur'án 11:7

“Water” symbolizes several meanings. Here it seems to refer to:

- Spiritual life, divine knowledge and wisdom
- The masses of people

Both meanings seem relevant to the prophecy. Consider the following verse as a reference to spiritual life and heavenly wisdom:

To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. Revelation 21:6 NIV
See also Revelation 22:1, 7; John 3:5

God has always guided humanity by His Word and Wisdom, and will continue to do so in the future. The difference between this age and previous ages is this: out of the waters of God's Word and Wisdom will eventually emerge a heavenly island, a solid ground on which God will set His Throne. At that time belief will rest not only on inner vision and strength but also on the evidences of the Creator's visible power and glory—His Kingdom. But until then, inner vision is the only foundation on which we can build our beliefs. In the following passage addressed to a disciple, Bahá'u'lláh alludes to this point:

Thus have We established for thee, through the waters of Our wisdom and utterance, the foundations of thy belief. This [wisdom and utterance], verily, is the water

whereon the Throne of thy Lord hath been raised “His Throne had stood upon the waters.” Ponder this in thine heart, that thou mayest comprehend its meaning.¹

Water also symbolizes “people and nations:”

Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute [the corrupted, distorted, and misused word of God] sits [governs], are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. Revelation 17:15 NIV

On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea [restless masses of humankind]. Luke 21:25 NIV

Thus for the first six days, God’s Kingdom has rested on people who, despite their good intentions, often have behaved like water. They have moved with the winds of time, with uncertainty and self-interest. There has been no structure or system to keep the sea calm and stable, to help its drops to stay together and work together for a common cause.

The “Bride” symbolizes the beautiful and pure Word of God that descends from heaven (Rev. 21:2); “prostitute” symbolizes “the unfaithful” but glamorous doctrines of false teachers and leaders who seduce people away from the Bride. Similarly, “bridegroom” or “husband” stands for the divine Redeemer who adorns Himself with the beautiful “bride” of divine truths.

I promised you to one husband, to Christ..

II Corinthians 11:2 NIV

The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them...

Matthew 9:15 NIV

In the following prophecy, the use of the word “sea” further clarifies the symbolism of “water:”

Then I saw a new heaven [heavenly order] and a new earth [earthly order], for the first heaven and the first

earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea [unstable worldly systems]...for the old order of things had passed away. He who was seated on the throne [Bahá'u'lláh] said, “I am making everything new.”

Revelation 21:1, 4, 5 NIV

This example clearly demonstrates that each sacred scripture clarifies the other. The word “water” is not explained in the Qur’án but is clearly defined in the Book of Revelation. Just like solving a jigsaw puzzle, the more pieces we find, the easier it becomes to decode the grand mysteries portrayed progressively since the dawn of history. No wonder the Qur’án says:

This Qur’án...is a clearing up of the past Scriptures...

Qur’án 10:37

Let us consider another example. The Bible declares that on the 7th day God “rested.” Some Muslim theologians raise objections about this statement. They declare that God has infinite power and energy. He does not need “rest.” In the light of the knowledge revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, we can readily resolve this question. The word “rest” should not be taken literally. It implies that God “rested” on His Throne, that He Himself began to rule.

It is helpful to see the prophecies from the Book of Revelation and the Qur’án side by side. They are so closely interrelated as to appear to be continuing verses from the same chapter:

He it is who created the [first] heaven and the [first] earth in six days—and His Throne [during this period] was on waters [God’s Word and Wisdom as understood and practiced by masses of people]—that He might try [test] you...

Qur’án 11:7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea [instability]...He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more [spiritual]

death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Revelation 21:1, 4, 5 NIV

The above prophecy from the Qur’án indicates that during the first six days God’s Throne rested on waters. It is evident that a throne cannot stand firmly on waters. The instability of worldly governments through six thousand years of recorded history is a testimony to the fulfillment of this prophecy. Since during this period God’s rule has been mostly spiritual, from above, humans have had an opportunity to test their governing powers. The Qur’án testifies to the nature of God’s rule prior to the “seventh day:”

He [God] directs the affairs of the earth [or His Cause] from heaven...

Qur’án 32:5²

The preceding passage is the first part of perhaps the most important time prophecy of the Qur’án. The passage points to the days of creation before God rests on His throne. The whole verse is explained in more detail later in this chapter.

The following passage by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the word “sea” indicates that the instability of human life on this planet will be replaced by stability inspired by divine teachings:

The teachings and the Law of God will entirely spread over the earth...the earth will be completely inhabited by believers; therefore there will be no more sea...³

The message concerning “the week of creation” is repeated seven times in the Qur’án. In one instance, soon after this message, the date of the advent (1260 A.H.) is also specified. Similarly, the prophecies of the Book of Revelation that point to 1260 are also repeated seven times. (For details, see Volume I, *I Shall Come Again*.)

The Sixth Day

The other set of prophecies point to the time of the Advent by linking the end of the 6th day to the end of the dispensation of the angel of the sixth day, namely Muhammad.

He [God] directs the affairs from heaven to earth [this refers to the period of revelation which began with Muhammad and ended in 260 A.H.], then it goes up to Him in one day, whose measure is a thousand years of your counting. Qur'án 32:5

The preceding prophecy requires some explanation. The period of revelation or divine guidance in Islam began with Muhammad and continued without interruption through eleven Imáms. The last of these Imáms died in 260 A.H. without leaving an heir. This ended the period of revelation in Islam.

Now, during the period of revelation (from the birth of Islam up to the year 260), God directed the affairs of the Muslims by inspiring Muhammad and the eleven Imáms who succeeded Him. Then He gave them a maximum period of one day (equal to a thousand years) to live under the guidance of the revealed Words. Thus the total dispensation of Islam was extended to the year 1260 A.H.

To use an analogy, we might say that the Light of Divine Guidance continued to shine from the time of Muhammad until the year 260. Then, after the lapse of a thousand years, the Light disappeared (returned to the Revealer). That is, the dispensation of Islam reached its very end when the Báb proclaimed His Mission in 1260 A.H.

Because of its significance, the preceding prophecy should be studied further. This is another translation of the same prophecy, this one by the author:

He [God] directs [manages] “the Cause” [His Faith] from heaven. Then “the Cause” ascends to Him in a Day of a thousand years...
Qur’án 32:5

The Arabic word “Amr” translated here as “Cause” does not have a perfect equivalent in English. The Arabic word has several meanings, among them: command, affair, and cause (religion). All these meanings seem relevant to the intention of the verse. Arabic and Persian-speaking Bahá’ís commonly use the word “Amr” to mean *the Faith of God*, or *the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh*.

The first part of the prophecy (God directs “the affairs” or “His Cause” from heaven) refers generally to the way God has always directed or guided the world: from heaven. It also refers specifically to the interval in which God directed Islam through Muhammad and the inspired Imáms (prophets) who succeeded Him.

The second part of the statement (“Then ‘the Cause’ ascends to Him in a day...”) refers to the last of the “six days of the social and spiritual creation of humanity” during which God continued His rule from heaven. That last day was assigned to Islam. That is one reason why Muhammad is called “the seal of prophets.” He concluded the time when prophets prophesied the coming of the Kingdom. And that is why both the Islamic and Judeo-Christian prophecies refer to our age as “the last day,” when God Himself rules meaning the end of “the six days of creation, and the beginning of the seventh day.” When the dispensation of Islam ended, so did the dispensation of every other religion. That point marked the end of the age of *all* past revelations:

Verily that which ye are promised is imminent...[it will come] when the *Messengers* shall have [fulfilled] a time assigned to them.
Qur’án 77:7, 11

Here is a simpler translation of the above verse:

Verily that which ye are promised [the Advent] is imminent...[it arrives when] the times assigned to the **Messengers** have come to pass.

Note the similarity between the following prophecy and the preceding one:

And they asked Him, Teacher, when will this happen, and what sign will there be when this is about to occur? And He said...Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled—completed... And then they will see **the Son of man coming**...
Luke 21:7, 8, 24, 27 AB*

The preceding prophecies point to **Messengers** or their **times** (their dispensations) in the plural. In the following passage, Jesus promises to continue His spiritual fellowship with Christians uninterrupted until “the end of the age:”

And surely I will be with you always [constantly] to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:20 NIV

It is evident that when the end of the age arrives, the fellowship also ends. As the Qur’án declares, when God’s promise is fulfilled, so will the times assigned to previous Messengers.

During that “day of a thousand years” Muslims had no direct connection with God except through their Scriptures. God’s rule over the earth was through His Word. As stated, the death of the last Imám, or divinely inspired leader, in 260 A.H. brought the period of direct revelation to a close.

The prophecies of “the week of creation” quoted earlier, complement the prophecies that specify the time when the last of the six days comes to an end. Together they declare that after the last (or sixth day) has expired, God enters the human affairs more directly. From then on, He does not

* To see how “the times of the Gentiles” were fulfilled, or ended with the Advent of the Báb, see ***I Shall Come Again***, Chapter 12.

merely “direct the affairs” of humans from heaven; He brings His heavenly Throne to the earth. Everything belongs to God, but literally up to now our planet was not ruled by God. Only *now* can we say:

On this Day the Kingdom is God’s.⁴ Bahá’u’lláh

The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice... Psalms 97:1

Verily it is He Himself Who is established upon His mighty Throne.⁵ Bahá’u’lláh

As stated in *Lord of Lords* and *King of Kings*, the *Book of Revelation* refers repeatedly to Bahá’u’lláh as *he who sits on the Throne*. That Book alone uses the word *throne* in reference to Bahá’u’lláh forty times.

As we noted, many Biblical and Quranic prophecies refer to the time of the Advent as “the day of chastisement, vengeance, or punishment:”

For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. Luke 21:22 NIV

The day of the vengeance of our God... Isaiah 61:2 NIV

Your God will come, he will come with vengeance... Isaiah 35:4 NIV

See also Jer. 46:10; Qur’án 52:7

The following time-prophecy from the Qur’án subtly links “the coming of the time of chastisement” to the end of the day of a thousand years:

And they [people] will bid Thee [Muhammad] to hasten *the chastisement*. But God cannot fail His [timely] threat. And verily, a day [must pass before that time arrives, which] with thy Lord is as a thousand years, as ye reckon them!...And they who believe and do the things that are right, shall have forgiveness and an honorable provision; but those who strive to invalidate our signs [proofs] shall be inmates of hell.

Qur’án 22:47, 50, 51

Another prophecy from Muhammad refers to “a day of a thousand years” in yet another way:

If my people are righteous* they will have one day and if unrighteous they will have half a day. And a day in the sight of your Lord is equal to a thousand years, according to your reckoning.⁶

The following is yet another prophecy from the Qur’án pointing to the appointed time (tryst) of a day:

Say: ‘Our Lord will bring us together [world unity], then will deliver us by the truth. He is the Deliverer [Savior], the All-Knowing...’ We [God] have sent thee [Muhammad] not, except to mankind entire, good tidings to bear, and warning; but most men do not know it [the purpose of your mission]. They [people] say, ‘When shall this promise [of the good tidings of the Kingdom or the threat of punishment] come to pass, if you speak the truth?’ Say: ‘You have the appointment of a day that shall not be delayed nor advanced by a single hour’ Qur’án 34:26-30

As stated, the two sets of prophecies, (those pointing to the week of creation, and those pointing to the last day assigned to Islam) are interrelated. To show this relationship, in one instance the Qur’án puts them together:

God it is who hath created the Heavens [spiritual civilization] and all that is between them in six days; then [on the seventh day, He] ascended His throne [established His Kingdom]...Will ye not then reflect? From the Heaven to the Earth He governeth all things [during the first six days], thereafter [after the advent of Islam] shall they [the affairs that have been governed from heaven] come up [return or ascend] to Him [God]

*Much of the time the Muslims were dominated by deviant rulers. Despite this handicap, Islam elevated the nomads of Arabia to such heights as to become the founders of one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever known.

on [during] a day [the sixth day] whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon. Qur'án 32:4-5

It is astonishing to note that the Bible and the Qur'án share not only the message of the Days of Creation, but also the message that points to the one day assigned to the sixth Angel. Compare, for instance, these prophecies:

They say, 'When shall this promise of the Kingdom come to pass...?' Say: you have the appointment of a day that shall not be delayed nor advanced by a single hour... Qur'án 34:29-30 A

A day with thy Lord is as a thousand years... Qur'án 22:47

With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise [of the Second Advent].

II Peter 3:8-9 NIV

As we can see, all the time prophecies are concealed in codes. Some of their connective words are also omitted. One way to conceal a message is to drop some of the connective words. God in His Wisdom devises codes, symbols, and expressions that no one can decipher until the appointed time. History bears this out.

Other Islamic Time Prophecies

The following prophecy from one of the Imáms (minor prophets) specifies the last two figures of the date:

In the year sixty, His Cause shall be manifest and His Remembrance shall be proclaimed.⁷ Imám Ja'far-i-Sádiq

In the preceding prophecy "His Remembrance" refers to the Báb. As we noted, ***Remembrance*** is one of the titles of the Báb.

Fear ye God...lest ye remain afar from Him Who is His
Remembrance...⁸ The Báb

Another prophecy from another Imám equates the time of the Advent with the numerical value of ***ghars***, an Arabic word meaning ***planting***. (In Arabic, each letter has a numerical value. For instance, A=1, B=2, R=200, etc.; see ***gemetrical*** in the dictionary.)

In ***Ghars***, the Tree of Divine guidance shall be planted.⁹
Imám ‘Alí

The following shows how the calculation of the word ***ghars*** would appear in Arabic:

<u>Gh</u>	1000
r	200
s	<u>60</u>
	1,260

Another prophecy offers another clue:

He will not come in an odd year.¹⁰

The Advent Movement Among the Muslims

As thousands of Christians expected the return of Christ in 1844, some Muslims also set their hope on the same year. They made the discovery from their own Scriptures. Even some Christians of that time learned about this. The following passage, written in the first half of the 19th century, prior to the Advent of the Báb, by John Fry—one of the participants in the Advent Movement of the West—testifies to such knowledge:

The Mohammedans in various parts of the world, have their expectation fixed on the same year, A.D. 1844.¹¹

In the historical records of the East, we find a number of seekers proclaiming the dawning of the Advent of the Lord of the age. Two of them lived in the Russian Empire:

Mullá Sádeq of Urdúbád on the river Aras had been preaching the Advent of the Lord of the Age in the Caucasus, and had collected several thousand followers in the area. This had caused disturbances which resulted in Mullá Sádiq being exiled to Warsaw by the Russian authorities. However, Mullá Sádiq's pupil, Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Urdúbádí, took up the leadership of the movement. Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Karím was in Iraq when he heard of the teaching of the Báb; and it is said that he became a Bábí, returned to the Caucasus and succeeded in converting a number of people before the Russian Government arrested him and exiled him to Smolensk.¹²

Bahá'u'lláh, in one of His Tablets, refers to 'Abdu'l-Karím, and confirms both his mission and his acceptance of the new Revelation.

A Bahá'í author in *Glad Tidings of the Sacred Scriptures* provides brief biographies of sixteen other seekers, saints, and scholars from the East who predicted or proclaimed the nearness of the time of the end. Some of them were able to discover the exact time of the Advent of the Báb.¹³

Harmony Between Christian and Islamic Prophecies

In judging Islamic prophecies, the important point to remember is their remarkable harmony, not only with each other but also with the Biblical prophecies. The more we examine various Scriptures, the more we recognize their similarity and interrelationships. For instance, both the Biblical and the Islamic prophecies link the coming of the Lord with the Day of Judgment, the Day of Resurrection, and the Day of Punishment and Tribulation. Both the

Islamic and the Christian prophecies speak of the End of the Age, of the coming of the Lord, or the Glory of the Lord, from the East, and His journey to the Holy Land. Both the Christian and the Islamic Scriptures provide numerous signs followed by statements of warnings and blessings—warnings to those who deny the proofs and disregard the signs, and blessings and rewards for those who search with an open mind and honor the prophecies.

A Glimpse into the Future

The 7th “day” as well as the succeeding “days” of God are also predicted to be about a thousand years. These prophecies confirm Bahá’u’lláh’s prediction of the duration of the 7th day:

They [the faithful believers]...reigned with Christ a thousand years. Revelation 20:4 NIV

I am going to bring my servant, the Branch[‡]...and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day [the day of cleansing and renewal]. Zechariah 3:8-9 NIV

Bahá’u’lláh predicts that His dispensation will last at least a thousand years:

Once in about a thousand years shall this City [of God, or divine Revelation] be renewed and re-adorned.¹⁴

Bahá’u’lláh

The onset of “the week of creation” inaugurated a new chapter in the spiritual and social evolution of humanity. That week is now reaching its consummation. We are on the verge of by far the greatest and most glorious accomplishment our planet may ever witness. We have waited for “six days,” we need to be patient yet a little longer: wait

[‡] ‘Abdu’l-Bahá called Himself “Servant of Glory.” Bahá’u’lláh called Him “the Most Great Branch.”

two or three more “hours” (according to God’s perception of time) before this divine dream comes true.

The Bahá’í Faith is destined to grow basically in the same way that Christianity grew during its childhood. So far its growth has varied from nation to nation. The response of some nations has been phenomenal. As the Qur’án has predicted, they are entering “the religion of God by troops” (110:2). The response of others has been more cautious and gradual.

In the following passage Bahá’u’lláh refers to a critical point, which will come upon humanity *suddenly*, like pains preceding the birth of a child. Following that point, the Nightingale of Paradise will warble the glad tidings of the realization of the Kingdom:

The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.¹⁵

Judging from human nature and from the way people have responded in the past, it will be quite a while before the Message of Bahá’u’lláh will be accepted by all humanity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states¹⁶ that teaching the Bahá’í Faith should receive high priority for two centuries from His time. If we assume that He made the statement around 1900 A.D. His deadline will arrive close to 2100 A.D. In other words, from the dawning of the Bahá’í Faith to the critical point (“critical mass”) mentioned by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, it will have taken at least two and a half centuries. It is well to remember that the universal recognition of Christianity arrived after the lapse of about three centuries. The main

difference in this comparison is this: Christianity was intended for a segment of humanity; the Bahá'í Faith is intended for *all* humanity. The latter goal is obviously more difficult to achieve.

The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only. Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty. The whole earth is illuminated with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation.¹⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

Babylon, the chaotic City of Man, is falling; in its place, the new Jerusalem, the City of God, is dawning with immortal glory. Ours is the unmatched privilege of serving as God's angels in building this celestial City—the choicest hope of humanity since the dawn of history and its greatest glory for countless ages to come.

Woe, Woe, O great city...O Babylon [the prevailing political and economic system], city of power! In one hour [the Hour] your doom has come! The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her [the city] because no one buys their cargoes any more...All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered. The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her [the old economic system] will weep and mourn and cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city...In one hour she has been brought to ruin!"...Then I heard what sounded...like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!"

Revelation 18:10-24; 19:6-7 NIV

How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter.¹⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

The Great Announcement, and the Remembrance

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise...

Psalms 96:1-4 NIV

The Qur'anic prophecies refer to Bahá'u'lláh as “the Great News” (also translated as “the Great Announcement” or “the Great Message”), and to the Báb as “the Remembrance” and “the Remembrance of the Merciful” (also translated as the Reminder...). Each of these titles has been adopted respectively by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. The titles by which the Báb most frequently refers to Himself are *the Remembrance, the Remembrance of God, the Most Great Remembrance, and Our [God's] Remembrance*. These titles describe His chief Mission: to remind people of God, the fulfillment of His promises, and specifically of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

When *this Remembrance* came suddenly upon them, they turned aside...¹⁹

The Báb

In the following passage, God speaks through the Báb:

Verily, I am God, no God is there but Me. I have singled Thee out for Myself and have chosen Thee as *the Remembrance*.²⁰

To show His oneness with Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb has bestowed this title on Him as well:

Ere long the veil shall be lifted from your eyes at the appointed time. Ye shall then behold the sublime *Remembrance of God*, unclouded...²¹

Similarly Bahá'u'lláh refers both to the Báb and to Himself as the Remembrance, the Remembrance of God, or the Most Great Remembrance.*

However, Bahá'u'lláh's *specific* title in the Qur'án is **Great News** or **Great Announcement**. He frequently refers to Himself as “the Great Announcement,” “the Most Great Announcement,” “The Mighty Announcement” or “Announcement.” (News, Message, and Announcement are all translations of the same Arabic word.)

Amongst the Concourse on High [the heavenly kingdom] He [Bahá'u'lláh] is known as the Most Great Announcement and in the Realms of Eternity as the Ancient Beauty, and before the Throne by this Name [Bahá or Bahá'u'lláh].²²

Bahá'u'lláh

Fear ye God, then observe equity in your judgment of this Great Announcement.²³

Bahá'u'lláh

Let us now examine the Quranic prophecies. In relation to these prophecies, the English translations of the Qur'án suffer from two weaknesses. First, the prophecies of **the Great Announcement (the Great Message)**, and **the Remembrance** refer to **human beings**, but the translators have assumed that these words point to ideas, to the Qur'án, for instance, or to some other divine truths. We should sympathize with their dilemma, for it is somewhat unusual to call a human being **the Great News** or **the Remembrance**. Yet that is exactly how the Qur'án refers to these great Beings. Second, because of this misunderstanding, the translators have been inconsistent in rendering the Arabic word for Remembrance (*Dhikr*). To make sense out of the verses, they have used words such as **admonition**

* See *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 7, and *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 190. For other references, see *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 79; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 296, 303; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 115; *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 131, 141, 178, 336.

and *message*. It seems more logical, for instance, to deny a message than a remembrance. Perhaps the main reason for using such an unconventional expression (calling a person a message) is to conceal the prophecy. Let us now proceed with the prophecies:

Hold fast to Him Who brings a Revelation to you. Verily, you are on a straight path. He is indeed *the Remembrance* for you and for your people and soon you shall be asked for your doings [for your responses to Him].
Qur'án 43:43-44²⁴

In His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh quotes parts of the following two prophecies from the Qur'án, without stating that they contain His and His Herald's title:

Surely guidance will come from Me. And whoever follows my guidance will not be lost, nor fall into misery. And whoever turns away from *My Remembrance*, he will have a constraint life, and We will raise him up [spiritually] blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say, "Lord I had sight, why hast thou raised me up blind?" He will answer "when our signs [proofs] came to you, you forgot them. Likewise you are forgotten today."
Qur'án 20:123-126²⁵

Whoever turns away from *the Remembrance of* [God] *the Merciful*, We will link him to Satan. One will be the companion of the other. The Satan is he who misleads people from the Way, and makes them think they are on the Way.
Qur'án 43:36-37²⁶

This prophecy refers to both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh:

By the Qur'án, which contains [prophecies concerning] *the Remembrance* [the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh]...Say: He [Bahá'u'lláh] is "*the Great News*," whom you deny... and He [the Báb] is *the Remembrance* to all the peoples of the worlds. And you shall certainly learn about the News of "*the Great News*" [Bahá'u'lláh] after a while.
Qur'án 38:1, 67, 68, 87, 88²⁷

As we noted, the time of the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh is concealed in the phrase “*after a while*.” The phrase not only points to the coming of Bahá'u'lláh shortly after the Báb: it designates the time of His coming as well.

Another chapter of the Qur'án called *the News* refers again to Bahá'u'lláh. It introduces Him (the Great News) as the One about whom people disagree and argue. Bahá'u'lláh sometimes refers to this prophecy:

About Whom are they disputing? About the Great News. He is the One about Whom they disagree. No, this they should not! Soon they will know [the truth]! No, this they should not do! Soon they will know [the truth]!

Qur'án 78:1-5²⁸

A little later, the same chapter presents this prophecy:

The day when there shall be a blast on the trumpet...On the day whereon *the Spirit* [Christ] and the angels shall be ranged in order...This is the sure day...

Qur'án 78:18,38-39

The following prophecy declares that people will argue not only about Bahá'u'lláh but the Báb as well:

And woe, on that day [our day] to those who called *the Messengers* [the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh] liars, who plunged for pastime [diversion; self-satisfaction] into vain disputes [arguments]...

Qur'án 52:11-12

The Book of Revelation implies that there will be more than one resurrection:

This is the first resurrection [the Advent of the Báb].

Revelation 20:5 NIV

The Qur'án confirms this message by predicting that there will be two trumpet blasts; that is, people will be called twice by two great Messengers (the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh):

And there shall be a blast on the trumpet...Then there shall be another blast on it...

Qur'án 39:68

One day, the disturbing trumpet-blast shall disturb it [the old order of things]...the second blast shall follow...

Qur'án 79:6-7

The second blast hath been blown on the trumpet...This is your Lord, the God of Mercy.²⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

Spirit is one of the most common titles used in the Islamic Scriptures to refer to Christ. The following prophecies from the Qur'án call the twin Messengers of our age by the titles ***the Spirit*** (Christ) and ***the Lord***:

And thy ***Lord*** [the Báb] shall come and the angels...

Qur'án 89:22*

The Day that the ***Spirit*** [Bahá'u'lláh] and the angels will stand forth...

Qur'án 78:38 Y*

Both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures confirm the preceding titles:

The kings of the earth stand ready, and the rulers conspire against ***the Lord*** and his ***anointed*** [Christ] ***king***.

Psalms 2:1-2 NEB

The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our ***Lord*** and of his ***Christ***.

Revelation 11:15 NIV

As we noted, the prophecies indicate that everything old will pass away; everything will be made new, including the sun and the moon (sources of spiritual enlightenment):

The earth [the old order or perceptions] shall be crushed with ***crushing*** [by the teachings of the Báb], ***crushing*** [by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh]...

Qur'án 89:22*

Here are a few other prophecies:

* I would like to give credit to Na'ím, the great Bahá'í poet, for recognizing the relevance of these three prophecies to the twin Messengers of our time.

* A reference to the twin Messengers of our time.

For those who dread the majesty of their Lord there shall be *two gardens* [Revelations]. Qur'án 55:46

Say, this [Revelation] of a certainty is the Garden of Repose...³⁰ The Báb

And the sun [Bahá'u'lláh] and the moon [the Báb] will be together. Qur'án 75:9

Let us explore in the next chapter prophecies from the Islamic traditions (*Hadith*) concerning the Advent of the twin Redeemers of our time—the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

The Twin Deceivers

Many Biblical prophecies predict the appearance of two deceptive figures. Those prophecies are introduced in the course of two chapters in *King of Kings* (see chapters 4 and 5). Just like the Bible, the Qur'án also predicts the appearance of these two figures.

It seems everything exists in pairs. For instance, in the Bahá'í Faith, we have the twin Redeemers (the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh), and the twin Interpreters ('Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi). At the other extreme, we find another set of twins: Azal and Siyyid Muhammad, two notorious figures who inflicted much suffering on Bahá'u'lláh and His followers.

According to the Qur'án, human beings also fit into two classes: “humans” and “jinns.” What seems to separate the two groups more than anything else is the quality of their faith—firmness and openness versus vacillation and secrecy, honesty versus deception, frankness versus hypocrisy. In this context, “humans” tend toward openness and firmness; “jinns” tend toward secrecy, vacillation and hypocrisy. Each group contains a wide range of people. Some of the jinns keep moving from denial to faith and from faith to denial. Others are sheer pretenders and

hypocrites (Qur'án 46:29; 34:41). Those called “humans” can also be deceptive, but they work from without. As enemies, they do not wear the garb of a friend. “Jinns” may confess their faith in God’s covenant without having any intention of honoring it. Covenant breaking is often their way of life.

Consider the following passages as parts of a jigsaw puzzle:

And they regard the jinn [Azal and Siyyid Muhammad]* to be partners with God, though He created them...

Qur'án 6:100

The word “jinn,” used in the preceding verse and many others, has puzzled Muslim commentators for centuries. The most common and accepted feature of a “jinn” is his ability to disguise himself. Literally, the word means “to be covered or hidden.”³¹ (The word genie has the same root.)

The most distinct characteristic of Azal and his followers was secrecy. They developed and practiced this skill to perfection. They were superb actors of deception in the divine drama. The previous verse provides us with two clues: “a claim to equality with God” and “secrecy”—the thoughts that dominated Azal’s life and the strategy he used to protect himself and attain his dreams of grandeur.

Consider also this verse:

Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs. But he passed them by. So Satan followed him up, and he went astray.

Qur'án 7:175

Who was the man who received the signs of God, and witnessed the Glory of God in Bahá'u'lláh? Who was the man who rejected those signs? Who was the man with a follower titled “Satan”? And who was the man who went

* Azal and Siyyid Muhammad were two beings, yet acted as if they were one.

astray mostly after the Satan followed him? Azal and Siyyid Muhammad fulfilled all four conditions.

The Qur'án continues:

If it had been Our Will, We should have elevated him with Our signs. But he inclined to the earth, and followed his own vain desires...Many are the jinns [Azal and his followers] and humans [other deniers of truth] that We have made for hell. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle—nay more misguided, for they are heedless (of warning).
Qur'án 7:175-176, 179

Consider also this verse:

Behold! We said to the angels, “Bow down to Adam [the Spirit of God in Bahá'u'lláh and all great Messengers].” They bowed down except Iblís [the fallen angel]. He was one of the Jinns, and he broke the Command of his Lord. Will ye then take him and his progeny as protectors rather than Me? And they are enemies to you! Evil would be the exchange for the wrongdoers!

Qur'án 18:50

“Iblís” is the title of the fallen angel who, like Lucifer, showed pride before God:

Then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblís. He refused to be of those who bow down.
Qur'án 7:11

As we just noted, the Qur'án 18:50 clearly links the fallen angel, Iblís, to “the jinns.” Azal was given a supreme station by the Báb, that of an angel, but he refused to bow down before his Lord, Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.

Azal was Iblís, the fallen angel; Siyyid Muhammad was Satan; and their followers were jinns or hypocrites. They pretended to be faithful supporters of the Báb, while acting

as His enemies, just as Pharisees who pretended to be followers of Moses but acted as His enemies.

The Qur'án declares that “the jinns” are made of “fire,” but “humans” are made of “clay” (55:14-15). The Báb describes the jinns as people in whom “the fire of negation” lies hidden. What meanings lie behind these metaphors? Clay is a neutral and inactive substance. Fire is an active force with the potential to destroy. The quality of deception—the chief weapon used by jinns—combined with blind zeal, is as destructive as a raging fire. Unchecked, it can destroy even the Faith of God, if that is possible. All religious wars have been waged with that fire—deception and hypocrisy fueled by blind zeal and selfish desires.

In one of His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh declares:

Be thou of the people of hell-fire,
but be not a hypocrite.
Be thou an unbeliever,
but be not a plotter.
Make thy home in taverns,
but tread not the path
of the mischief-maker.³²

That is how dangerous deception is. No wonder, Jesus warned us against false prophets who are in essence wolves (outsiders), but appear in the church as sheep (insiders). Every religion has been destroyed not by outsiders, but by insiders, by believers who claimed to be doing everything for the Lord. That is how they gain people's trust. And that is the strategy the twin deceivers—Azal and Siyyid Muhammad—adopted and applied.

The last Surah or Chapter of the Qur'án consists of only six verses. It seems to prophesy the dawning of the light as well as the emergence of darkness that seeks to extinguish that light. As we noted, the Qur'án, like the Bible, refers repeatedly to the coming of Bahá'u'lláh as the advent of the Lord or God. The last chapter of the Qur'án bestows

three titles on Bahá'u'lláh. It calls Him *the Lord, the King*, and *the God of humankind*. It refers to Azal as “the Whisperer”—a word that carries the connotation of secrecy:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Powerful. Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the God of mankind, from the mischief of the Whisperer [Azal] who withdraws (after his whisper), the one who whispers into the hearts of mankind—among jinns [Azal's followers] and among humans [Bahá'u'lláh's followers].

Qur'án 114:1-6

6

Rejoice In What I Will Create

Isaiah 65:18 NIV

The previous chapter focused mainly on the world as it is; this chapter focuses on the world as it will be.

Be patient, until thou beholdest a new creation.¹ The Báb

Be glad and rejoice in what I will create. Isaiah 65:18 NIV

This is the Day of great rejoicing. It behoveth everyone to hasten towards the court of His nearness with exceeding joy...² Bahá'u'lláh

The panorama of our planet's future is breathtaking, but we need not wait for the future. In the midst of the prevailing darkness, at this very instant a light glows with dazzling intensity:

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you...Then you will...be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy...
Isaiah 60:1, 2, 5 NIV

As the prophecies repeatedly declare and Bahá'u'lláh confirms, it is a greater blessing to be alive in this age than any other in history—past or future. For no bounty, no blessing compares with that of being the builders of a Kingdom that will last for eternity. Serving as God's instrument and spreading the light of His knowledge to a darksome world brings deep joy and attracts unmatched blessings.

This is God's appointed Day which the merciful Lord hath promised you...³ an infinitely Mighty Day...⁴ The Báb
This is the day of universal peace for which the human race has been waiting thousands of years.

Though the mountains move and the hills shake...my love shall be immovable and never fail, and my covenant of peace shall not be shaken. Isaiah 54:10 NEB

I will make a covenant with them to ensure prosperity; I will rid the land of wild beasts and men shall live in peace of mind on the open pasture [universal peace]...
Ezekiel 34:25 NEB

I will break bow and sword and weapon of war and sweep them off the earth. Hosea 2:18 NEB

- Prophecies declare the dawning of a new age, the emergence of a new world. The earth becomes one country, the human race one unified family:

Behold, I will make new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice in what I will create. Isaiah 65:17-18 NIV

Even as We produced the first Creation, so shall we produce a new one; a promise We have undertaken. Qur'án 21:104 Y

Then I saw a new heaven [a heavenly civilization] and a new earth [an earthly civilization], for the first heaven [the age of all past Revelations] and the first earth [the old social order] had vanished...Behold! I am making all things new [new world order].

Revelation 21:1, 5 NEB
See also II Peter 3:13

Think not then that God will fail his promise to his Messengers...On the day when the Earth shall be changed into another Earth, and the Heavens also, men shall come forth unto God...This is a message

for mankind, that they may thereby be warned...and that men of understanding may ponder it.

Qur'an 14:47, 48, 52

The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord...the times of restitution of all things spoken by...all his holy prophets...

Acts 3:19-21

When that time comes...I will gather all the nations together [political unity]...

Joel 3:2 NEB

That shall be a day unto which mankind shall be gathered together* [world unity]...

Qur'an 11:103

And thou seest men entering the religion of God by troops [religious unity], then utter the praise of thy Lord.

Qur'an 110:2

I will save my flock, and they shall be ravaged no more...Then I will set over them one shepherd to take care of them [religious unity]...

Ezekiel 34:22-23 NEB

I removed the boundaries of nations...as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries [world unity]...

Isaiah 10:13-14 NIV

I will give them one heart [spiritual unity] and one way of life [common values].

Jeremiah 32:39 NEB

This is the plan prepared for the whole earth [global order]. This is the hand [of God] stretched out over all the nations. For the Lord of Hosts has prepared his plan [of world unity]; who shall frustrate it? His is the hand stretched out, and who shall return it back?

Isaiah 14:26-27 NEB

*This prophecy contains a symbolic message as well. At the time of the Advent (1844) all humanity were “gathered together” spiritually before the court of divine judgment. (The time has come for judging the dead...Rev. 11:18 NIV). See *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.

- The flood gates of heavenly blessings are opened:

The flood gates of the heavens are opened...

Isaiah 24:18 NIV

The heaven [of a new religion] shall be opened and be full of portals...

Qur'án 78:20

I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.

Ezekiel 34:26 NIV

In this Day showers of wisdom and utterance are pouring down from the clouds of divine mercy...⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

The whole duty of man in this Day is to attain that share of the flood of grace which God poureth forth for him.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

- Then everyone will know the Lord and the Glory of the Lord:

“No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declared the Lord.

Jeremiah 31:34 NIV

And call to mind the day when...we will gather mankind together, and not leave of them any one [untouched by the outpouring of the Spirit].

Qur'án 18:47

The day shall come when I will pour out my spirit on all mankind...

Joel 2:28 NEB

See also Acts 2:17

On the day when the Hour shall arrive...thou shalt see every nation kneeling; to its own book shall every nation be summoned...

Qur'án 45:27-28

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him...All the rich of the earth will feast

and worship; all who go down to the dust [mortals]
will kneel before him... Psalms 22:27, 29 NIV

The Lord alone will be exalted in that day.
Isaiah 2:11 NIV

As the waters fill the sea, so shall the land be filled
with the knowledge of the Lord... Isaiah 11:9 NEB

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the
glory of the Lord [Bahá'u'lláh]... Habakkuk 2:14

As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the
glory of the Lord. Numbers 14:21

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole
earth is full of his glory. Isaiah 6:3 NIV

The Lord their God will save them on that day...how
attractive and beautiful they [people] will be!
[Heavenly] Grain will make the young men thrive
and new [spiritual] wine the young women.
Zechariah 9:16-17 NIV

- And the world will shine with the light and glory of the
Lord (*Bahá'u'lláh* means both *the Glory of God*, and
the Light of God):

I beheld the glory of Israel coming from the east...and
the earth *shone with his glory*. Ezekiel 43:1-2 NEB

And the earth shall shine with *the light of the Lord*...
Qur'án 39:69

I saw another angel come down from heaven, having
great power; and the earth was *lighted with his glory*.
Revelation 18:1

The Holy City...shone with the glory of God...The
city does not need the sun or the moon, for *the glory
of God gives it light*... Revelation 21:10,11,23 NIV

The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine upon you, for **the Lord** will be your everlasting **light**. Isaiah 60:19 NIV

They [nations] will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the Sun, for **the Lord** God will give them **light**. Revelation 22:5 NIV

For the Son of Man in his day [of glory] will be like the **lightening**, which **lights up** the sky from one end to another. Luke 17:24 NIV

The nations will see your righteousness, and the kings **your glory**; you will be called by **a new name**... Isaiah 62:2 NIV

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb [the Báb]...will be their shepherd [guide]...And God [as manifested in Bahá'u'lláh] will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:16-17 NIV
See also Psalms 121:5-8

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion over them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. Isaiah 49:10 NIV

The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people... Isaiah 30:26 NIV

Then will descend the Spirit of God, Jesus...and the earth will **shine with the light of her Lord**.⁷ Muhammad

Arise, shine, for **your light has come**, and the **glory of the Lord** rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the people, but the Lord rises upon you and **his glory** appears over you... Isaiah 60:1-2 NIV

The whole earth is illumined with the resplendent ***glory of God's*** Revelation.⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day in which the earth shineth with the effulgent ***light of thy Lord***, but the people...have been shut out as by a veil.⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

This is...a Day which hath been made bright by ***the radiant light of the countenance of its Lord...***¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

The glory of God gives it light and the Lamb [the Báb] is its lamp. Nations will walk by ***its light...***
Revelation 21:23-24 NIV

Come...let us walk in ***the light of the Lord.***
Isaiah 2:5 NIV

Since one meaning of “Bahá” is “Light” ***the Light of the Lord*** is an equivalent of ***Bahá'u'lláh***. And the ***Light*** of Bahá'u'lláh is ***the Bahá'í Faith***, which means ***the glorious and enlightened Faith***.

Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; ***let this be known to all the world.***
Isaiah 12:5 NIV

- A Kingdom will be established that is God's, based on His design:

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Matthew 6:10

The God of heaven will establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...
Daniel 2:44 NEB

For Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!
Revelation 19:6-7 NIV

On that day shall all dominion [sovereignty] be...with the God of mercy...
Qur'an 25:26

The kingly power, sovereignty, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High [Bahá'u'lláh].

Their kingly power is everlasting power and all
sovereigns shall serve them and obey them.

Daniel 7:27 NEB

The government will be on his shoulders...of the
increase of his government and peace there will be no
end.

Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV

Dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the
nations.

Psalms 22:28 NIV

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom
of our Lord [The Báb] and His Christ [Bahá'u'lláh]...

Revelation 11:15 NIV

His [is] the kingdom, on the day when there shall be
a blast on the trumpet...

Qur'án 6:73

Sovereignty and glory and kingly power were given
him, so that all people and nations of every language
should serve him...

Daniel 7:14 NEB

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver,
the Lord is our king...

Isaiah 33:22 NIV

The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that
day there will be one Lord, and his name the only
name.

Zechariah 14:9 NIV

See also Micah 4:7

All created things are exclaiming: "The Kingdom is
God's, the Almighty, the All-Knowing..."¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh

Verily it is He Himself Who is established upon His
mighty Throne.¹²

Bahá'u'lláh

The day is approaching when the victory of thy
Lord...will be proclaimed.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh

The hour is approaching when ye will witness the
power of the one true God triumphing over all
created things and the signs of His sovereignty
encompassing all creation.¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The Book of Revelation uses the word *throne* forty times to identify the King of the new age, “He who sits on the throne.” It is because of the uniqueness of our age—God’s rule in place of human rule—that all the past Messengers were given two missions.

First, a mission as Herald:

The Lord...has sent me [Christ] to announce good news [of the Kingdom]...to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. Luke 4:18-19 NEB

Second, a mission as Teacher:

The Lord...has sent me [Christ] to proclaim release of [spiritual] prisoners and recovery of sight for the [spiritually] blind, to let the broken victim [of self] go free... Luke 4:18-19 NEB

- According to God’s Wisdom, everything is in a state of change, motion, or development. Could God’s Kingdom, a unified global society, be born suddenly without pain and preparation?

Shall a nation be born at once? Isaiah 66:8

The Kingdom of Heaven (on earth) grows gradually:

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants... Matthew 13:31-32 NIV

A seed does not suddenly become a blooming flower or a tree laden with fruits. Similarly, before the earth becomes illumined with the glory of the Lord, humanity must pass through various stages or eras of development. These stages or eras are called “the days of creation.” These “days” provide a reference point, a lesson for countless generations to come. Before partaking of heavenly fruits, humanity must struggle,

must test its own ability to govern without divine guidance:

See for yourself how bitter a thing it is and how evil
to forsake the Lord your God... Jeremiah 2:19 NEB

This period of trial and error, of experimentation is as essential for society as it is for a growing child. A child may say to his parents, “Let *me* do it.” If they do not allow him to learn his limits, his strengths and weaknesses, he may never mature.

Sacred Scriptures divide human history into two ages or eras. We are living at the dividing point of these two ages—a critical point that will be remembered and talked about as long as humans live. The Book of Revelation refers to the first age as *the first heaven and earth*:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the
first heaven and the first earth had passed away...
Revelation 21:1 NIV

The Qur’án calls it *the first Creation*:

Even as We produced the first Creation, so shall We
produce a new one... Qur’án 21:104 Y

The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day
by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and
unbelief. Such shall be its plight, that to disclose it
now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity
will long continue. And when the appointed hour is
come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall
cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only
then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the
Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.¹⁵

Bahá’u’lláh

For a review of Biblical and Quranic prophecies that point to the Advent of The Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, examine the following volumes:

- *I Shall Come Again*, 520 pages
- *Lord of Lords*, 629 pages
- *King of Kings*, 508 pages
- *Bahá'u'lláh in the Qur'án*, 930 pages

Appendix

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

According to a Christian publication:

Prior to His coming and the end of the age, Jesus said that “iniquity shall abound.” “imposters” in the church, wrote St. Paul to Timothy “will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13, RSV). It is a painful thing to have to point out the fulfillments around us of these predictions.¹

If you find the prophecies about the state of our world unsettling, then consider the following statements:

- At present millions of dollars are spent *every minute* on wars and weapons.
- Millions of people live in a luxury that is far beyond what is reasonable. At present, 1% of people own over 99% of the wealth of the world.*
- Child abuse has reached epidemic proportions. The number is in the millions. In one country alone in a given year hundreds of children are tortured or treated so viciously as to die. Many others are disfigured or crippled for life. All this at the hands of those they love and trust.

* The countries are not named to show that the spiritual diseases afflicting humanity are universal. Only the symptoms vary. The statistics offered here change constantly.

- In one country, one out of every five girls (the future mothers and foremost educators of the new generation) is sexually assaulted or abused.
- In the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were killed by their own governments because of religious or political differences.
- The number of people killed in wars in the 20th century is staggering. It has been estimated that in that century more people were killed than in all the wars since the dawn of history.
- In one country, every day about 2,000 youths run away from their families, are abandoned, or abducted.
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that at present thousands of children die from the effects of malnutrition every day.
- Because of war and violence, millions of families have become refugees.

As we have noted, prophecies declare that the last days are dark, cloudy, and filled with smoke, and that the people who live in those days are asleep, drunk, and blind! Does not the dismal state of the world testify to the fulfillment of these prophecies?

Christian writers and scholars are keenly aware of the titanic dilemmas of our time, but they feel powerless against the impending tides. Doctors Chant and Pratney, in their book *The Return*, declare:

William Booth pointed out a century ago that the greatest dangers of the 20th Century would be religion without the Holy Spirit, Heaven without Hell, faith without repentance, salvation without Lordship, and Christianity without Christ.²

A renowned Christian writer and orator, in an article entitled “Has America Passed the Point of No Return?” states:

In the midst of incredible wealth we see a growing mountain of debt, poverty, failed education, crumbling marriages, an epidemic of drug addiction and alcoholism, abortion, the increased prevalence of homosexuality...

How long can a nation endure, which forbids its children to acknowledge God in its classrooms, but gives these same children free information about premarital sex and where to obtain abortions for the resulting pregnancies?

Like an airplane going into a spin, there comes a time for a society when it goes out of control. Corrective actions no longer work and a crash becomes inevitable.³

He concludes with these words:

We must realize that although the outcome is in God's hand, the choice is very much with us...“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their evil way, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.”⁴

In an article entitled “Thinking About the Illusion,” a noted Christian writer and orator declares:

Things are not as they seem. The thought keeps coming around. Things are not as they seem...not as they seem. Behind the faces, front doors, and casual relationships of our neighborhoods, workplaces, and churches is an underworld of personal pain and embarrassment. Untold stories of alcoholism, anger, anxiety, addiction, abortion, affairs, alienation, and abuse are epidemic. Under the surface we are fast becoming a people like those of Isaiah's day: beaten and bruised in heart, mind, and body, from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet (Isaiah 1:1-6).

But there are other ways in which “things are not as they seem.” The Bible cites case after case of other kinds of illusion. It tells of people who seem lost to the worst possible circumstances before being suddenly and dramatically rescued by God...It tells about people who look alive but are dead inside, and about others who while dying are actually full of life. The Bible gives us every reason to believe that, yes, it's true: Things are not as they seem. Things are only as God says they are.

Father, don't let us succumb either to the illusion of well-being or to the illusion of hopelessness.⁵



*Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples.*⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

*The world is in great turmoil, and the minds of its people are in a state of utter confusion. We entreat the Almighty that He may graciously illuminate them with the glory of His Justice, and enable them to discover that which will be profitable unto them at all times and under all conditions. He, verily is the All-Possessing, the Most High.*⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

References

Chapter 1

1. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 49.
2. Phipps, William E. *Muhammad and Jesus*, New York: Paragon House, 1996, p. 98.
3. Templeton, Charles. *Farewell to God*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996, p.96.
4. *The Compilation of Compilations*, Volume II, p. 157.
5. Geisler, Norman, L., Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam* (second edition), Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002, p. 205.
6. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 119.
7. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12.
8. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*. pp. 51-52.

Chapter 2

1. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 56.
2. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
3. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
4. Shoghi Effendi. *The Promised Day Is Come*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1951, p. 101.
5. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 13.
6. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 44.
7. Shoghi Effendi. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 113.
8. Translated by the author.
9. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 78.
10. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 241.
11. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 15.
12. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 42.
13. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
14. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 44.
15. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 144.

16. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 29.
17. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 313.
18. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
19. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 136.
20. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 144.
21. Shoghi Effendi. *God Passes By*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust. 1957, p. 29.
22. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 29.
23. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 56.
24. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
25. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 57.
26. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
27. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
28. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 75.
29. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 11.
30. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 69.
31. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 61.
32. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
33. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 41-42.
34. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
35. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
36. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 92.
37. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
38. Tkach, Joseph (ed.). *The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, 1983, p. 4.
39. Translated by the author.
40. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
41. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
42. Motlagh, Hushidar. *I Shall Come Again* (second edition), Mt. Pleasant, MI: Global Perspective, 2000.
43. Translated by the author.
44. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 74-75.
45. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 211.

46. Tkach, Joseph (ed.). *The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, 1983, p. 9.

Chapter 3

1. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 31.
2. Davidson, Elishua. *Islam, Israel and the Last Days*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, pp. 23-24.
3. Davidson, Elishua. *Islam, Israel and the Last Days*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, p. 34.
4. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 244.
5. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 197.
6. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
7. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 209.
8. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 339.
9. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 193-195.
10. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
11. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 103.
12. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 72.
13. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 325.
14. Translated by the author.
15. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 210.
16. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35.
17. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 66.
18. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 91.
19. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 257.
20. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 75.
21. Translated by the author.
22. Shoghi Effendi. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 179.
23. *Submitter's Perspective*, Vol. 10, No. 6, p. 3.
24. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 78-79.
25. *Plain Truth*, September 1989, p. 25.
26. Graham, Billy. *World Aflame*, Minneapolis: The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1965, p. 225.
27. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.

28. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 11.
29. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 23.
30. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
31. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
32. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 76-77.
33. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 82.
34. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
35. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 40-41.

Chapter 4

1. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 258.
2. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 143-144.
3. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
4. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
5. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 93.
6. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
7. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 93.
8. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 44-45.
9. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 237.
10. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
11. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 121.
12. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
13. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
14. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 214.
15. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 304.
16. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 77.
17. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 115.
18. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12.
19. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 31.
20. *Plain Truth*, Nov./Dec., 1988, p. 4.
21. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 66.
22. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 117.
23. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
24. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 137-138.

25. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 118.
26. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
27. *Newsweek*, October 31, 1988, p. 10.
28. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 165.
29. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
30. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
31. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41.
32. *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 14.
33. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 161.
34. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 42.
35. *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 14-15.
36. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 208.
37. *Time Magazine*, January 2, 1989, p. 2.
38. *Time Magazine*, January 2, 1989, p. 3.
39. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 45.
40. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 107.
41. *Plain Truth*, January 1989, p. 4.
42. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
43. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 107.
44. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.
45. Shoghi Effendi. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, p. 169.
46. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 47.

Chapter 5

1. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 46.
2. Translated by the author
3. *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 67-68.
4. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35.
5. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 263.
6. Nuqabá'í, H. *Bishárát-i-Kutub-i-Ásmání*, (Persian), p. 85.
7. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 253-254.
8. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 63.

9. *The Dawn-Breakers*, New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1953, p. 50.
10. Momen, Moojan. *An Introduction to Shi'í Islam*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1985, p. 169.
11. Froom, Leroy. *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946, vol. 3, p. 495.
12. Momen, Moojan. *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1981, p. 14.
13. Nuqabá'í, H. *Bishárát-i-Kutub-i-Ásmání*, (Persian), (revised edition), pp. 239-282.
14. *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 199.
15. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 118-119.
16. *Bahá'í Writings on Teaching* (In Persian and Arabic) compiled by M. A. Faizi, p. 85.
17. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 96.
18. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 84.
19. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 45.
20. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 73.
21. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 46.
22. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 182.
23. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 248.
24. Translated by the author.
25. Translated by the author.
26. Translated by the author.
27. Translated by the author.
28. Translated by the author.
29. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44.
30. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 155.
31. Yúsuf 'Alí, 'Abdullah. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'án*, Beltsville, MD, 1989, p. 323.
32. *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 337.

Chapter 6

1. Shoghi Effendi. *God Passes By*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1957, p. 29.
2. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 78-79.

3. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 72.
4. *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 78.
5. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 85.
6. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 8.
7. Nuqabá'í, H. *Glad Tidings of Sacred Scriptures* (Persian), Tehran, Iran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Iran, 124 Bahá'í Era, p. 226.
8. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 96.
9. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 244.
10. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 244.
11. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 42.
12. *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 263.
13. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43.
14. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 73.
15. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 118-119.

Appendix

1. White, John Wesley. *Re-entry*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971, p. 115.
2. Pratney, Winkie, and Barry Chant. *The Return*, Chichester, England: Sovereign World, 1988, p. 27.
3. Robertson, Pat. "Has America Passed The Point Of No Return?" *The Flame* (A Christian Broadcasting Network Publication), September 1989, p. 2.
4. Robertson, Pat. "Has America Passed The Point Of No Return?" *The Flame* (A Christian Broadcasting Network Publication), September 1989, p. 2.
5. De Haan, Martin. "Been Thinking About The Illusion," *Radio Bible Class News*, October, 1989.
6. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 92.
7. *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 97-98.