

# Perspective

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## When the Last Crusader Returns

During the Middle Ages, when the wars of the religious Crusades were initiated, they were supported and, at times, directed by the papacy. They intended to regain the Holy Land and Jerusalem from Muslim rule. Jerusalem was recaptured in 1099. The Crusades ended in 1291 as the Ottoman Empire was emerging in the world. The Ottoman empire acquired considerable territory in the Balkans, which it ruled for the next 300 years, as well as areas of Hungary, Poland and Greece. Ottoman expansion into Europe began as the Christian reconquest of Spain ended. In Europe, there were historic battles fought between these rival faiths. A Europe, more divided then, had to battle against the constant threat of the Ottoman Empire's ambitions in the region. Fast forward to modern times, Europe for quite some time, under unwise leadership, dropped its guard, and with open arms welcomed millions of Muslims, many of which still have undiminished long-term ambitions to conquer the European continent. Will this great influx of Muslims into Europe create a violent clash of cultures in the near future?

### Migrants bring their cultures with them

Immigrants have historically contributed to the cultural fabric of Europe, the U.S. and other countries, enriching a nation through various aspects, such as, cuisine, arts, and language. The U.S. has been called a "melting pot," which stems from the thought that cultural differences of those immigrating to America melded together to become stronger. As immigrants came to the United States, they brought pieces of their own culture with them. They most often blended in with the American culture by learning the language, and they sought the American dream.

There is a different kind of migration these days, which does not seek to blend in, but stubbornly refuse to integrate; rather than integrate, they keep their own ways and strive to change the culture to their ways. The *Koran* suggests that Islam aims for global dominance through the establishment of its principles and teachings; there are various verses which emphasize that it is the duty of all Muslims to spread Islam. While many Muslims are certainly peace-loving and nonviolent, a tiny fraction is fiercely radical. That small percentage can number into the hundreds of thousands when one considers there are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world.

In May 1998, Jonathan Miller, a reporter with ABC News, interviewed Osama bin Laden, founder of the terrorist group, Al Qaeda. Bin Laden was killed by U.S. Navy Seals in Pakistan in 2011. In the interview Osama bin Laden said, "I am one of the servants of Allah. We do our duty of fighting for the sake of the religion of Allah. It is also our duty to send a call to all the people of the world to enjoy this great light and to embrace Islam and experience the happiness in Islam. Our primary mission is nothing but the furthering of this religion..."

That is why there is a danger when immigration gets out of control and goes unchecked, and the numbers of aliens multiplies to gain a majority in a country. God warned ancient Israel in Deuteronomy 28:43: "*The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.*

The number of adherents to Islam is growing so rapidly in Europe that people predict Muslims will form a majority in several EU countries; Belgium heads the list. The Islamic religion is a religion that aims to eliminate all other religions, and take over cultures.

The first wave of migrants streaming into Europe began in 2015-2016, with two million asylum-seekers migrating, mainly from Syria. More recently, 2022-2023, migration to Europe has more than doubled. In 2016, 4.9% Europe's population was Muslim, but it is projected that its share of population will increase— even with no future migration.

### The culture of Islam is to behead criminals

The Bible contains several scriptures that mention about being beheaded as a testimony to God, which indicates a strong influence of Islam. France beheaded its last criminal in 1977, and it abolished death by guillotine in 1981.

The Bible records instances where beheading was used to punish those who defy God or committed other serious sins, though that isn't our focus here. During the time of John the Baptist, he chastened King Herod for marrying the wife of his own brother, Phillip (Matthew 14:4). Herod had John thrown in prison, and later had him beheaded. The Baptist died in righteous service to God, setting an example of boldness for future saints to never compromise (Matthew 14:10). The apostle Paul was tortured and then beheaded by the evil Emperor Nero in Rome in about 65 AD. There are traditions about the other apostles as well, but nothing that is provable by history. The Bible warns of a time coming when many of the servants of God will be beheaded for a witness for Jesus Christ.

Revelation 6:11 states, “*Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*”

This verse speaks of a great martyrdom of the saints, those who demonstrate their resolve to hold fast to the faith and show their dedication to Jesus Christ in the face of fierce persecution. Beheading here represents the genuine conviction of their faith and trust in Christ, reminding us that even death cannot extinguish the light of faith and truth. Consider what the apostle John saw was in store for end-of-the-age followers of Christ, Revelation 20:4: “*...Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands...*”

### **The times of the Gentiles**

The prophesied “times of the Gentiles” that Jesus prophesied has not yet been fulfilled (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25). Incidentally, the word “Gentile” is not meant to be racial, but merely delineates Israelites from other nations. Jerusalem has been in the crossroads of the world! Many nations have fought for its control and trodden it underfoot. Canaanites, Amorites, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, Crusaders, Turks, the British, and of course, the Jews have all fought there. Now Hamas, the proxy fighters for Iran, would like to gain control of it, but Israel has kicked them out of Gaza.

When Christ foretold Jerusalem's future, it was populated mainly by Jews. In 70 A.D., the Roman Empire invaded the city, slaughtered many thousands of its inhabitants or sold them into slavery, burned the temple, and leveled most of the city to the ground. In about 129-130 A.D., Hadrian built a city on the ruins of Jerusalem that he renamed Aelia Capitolina. It was a pagan city dedicated to Jupiter and the Jews were forbidden to enter it. The city became predominantly Gentile populated.

When the Jews in Palestine became a nation in 1948, they did not occupy the old city of Jerusalem. The Old City of Jerusalem is located in East Jerusalem, which is part of the West Bank. Instead, they occupied only the new city of Jerusalem, which is an entirely different site next to the original site of ancient Jerusalem. Old Jerusalem on the original site was, and still is today, populated by gentiles, not Jews or any other tribe of Israel! While Israel has de facto control over East Jerusalem, the Old City itself is formally part of the West Bank. Israel does not rule the West Bank of Jerusalem. Since June 7, 1967, it has been under military occupation. Israeli forces captured the territory during the Six-Day War. They have allowed Arabs to continue to remain on all the conquered territories. All Israel has is a flimsy, tenuous political control over the old city.

Clearly, the “times of the Gentiles” haven’t ended! Gentiles continue to occupy the streets of Old Jerusalem, and it is still a predominately Gentile city! Prophecy reveals that the Jews will even lose political control over the city and be taken captive by Gentile European nations of the beast who will tread underfoot Jerusalem and the Holy Land!

### **When the last Crusader returns there will be real peace!**

When Jesus returns, He will come to a world in which two great false religions, “Christianity” and Islam, will still be fighting it out---even as the Antichrist invades the Holy Land (Daniel 11:41, 45; Revelation 17:1-5, 15-16). All false religions will be destroyed upon His return, and there will no longer be idol worship. He will return to truly make Jerusalem free. Zechariah 14 clearly shows when Christ returns again, He will deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the Gentiles, and only then will the “times of the Gentiles” end. Jerusalem and all surrounding territory will be returned to its rightful recipients when Jesus Christ sets up His throne in Jerusalem; He will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords over all the nations of the entire world. Jesus will then also restrict who may enter the city of Jerusalem. It speaks of this time in Joel 3:17: “*So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.*”

It will be a glorious time! “*And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias. ‘Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.’*” (Joel 3:18-20)

When Jesus Christ rules from Jerusalem, it will be a time of tranquility and a pleasant atmosphere of safety, and no war will ever be fought there again. No hostile person may enter it. It will dwell in peace and no one will fear (Zechariah 14:11). Its streets will no longer be trodden down by the heels of conquering Gentile armies bent on war and fighting. Zechariah 8:4-5 speaks of this simple bucolic time: “*Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.’*”