

The Theological Purpose of Islam

From the Christian point of view, if the truth be told, there can be little doubt that Islam is, and always was, a violent religion based on spurious distortions of the Old and New Testaments.¹ There are good grounds for regarding Islam as the world's greatest "murder machine" ever.² After presenting the statistics concerning conflicts in the late 20th century, the Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington famously concluded "Islam's borders *are* bloody and so are its innards".³ Although Muslims are told by the Koran to say to Christians: "Our God and your God is one. To him we submit" (Koran 29:46), there are irreconcilable differences in the understanding of the One God, especially regarding the core Christian teachings of the Holy Trinity (cf. 4:171; 5:73) and the Incarnation (2:116; 4:171; 5:17; 5:72.75; 5:116; 6:101; 9:30-31; 10:68; 18:4-5; 19:88; 43:81). Muslims like to describe their God as Compassionate and Merciful, but their conduct towards Christians, and others, is nothing of the sort. With these contrasting differences, the serious and discerning disciple of Jesus Christ is entirely justified in questioning Mohammed's claims to be the "Paraclete" (i.e. the "Ahmad" in 61:6), or "the seal of the prophets" (33:40), or even 'the prophet' (7:157). So Christians are no less justified in asking themselves why the Lord God has allowed Islam, a religion with such dubious credentials, to flourish and spread for so long? This is a theological question, to which the Church offers no answer, except to prevaricate with the following words: "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims: these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."⁴

With the experience of history, this statement is loaded with ecclesiastical irony. If Islam's God is merciful, then why have Muslims fought, conquered, enslaved and killed Christians, along with peoples of other religions, or none, throughout the 1400 years of their history, subjugating and oppressing them in every century and in every land that they control?⁵ What indeed is the meaning of mercy in this context and what precisely is the role of this brutal Islamic conduct in God's plan of salvation? With the recent spread of radical, militant and fundamentalist Islam throughout the world, this issue has resurfaced as a question that demands an immediate and satisfactory answer.⁶ "Why, Oh Lord, have you permitted this religion, which is based on lies and violence, to survive and flourish for so long?" This is a question which Catholic theologians should be able to answer for the Christian faithful who, in increasingly large numbers, still in the 21st century, are suffering

¹ For a factual history of the Islamic conquest of Christian lands and peoples in the Middle East, see "*The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: from Jihad to Dhimmitude; Seventh to Twentieth Century*", by Bat Ye'or (Nom de Plume), Eng Trans. Miriam Kochan and David Littman; Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.

² Cf. http://www.americanthinker.com/2014/05/the_greatest_murder_machine_in_history.html

³ *The Clash of Civilizations*, London: The Free Press, 2002, p. 258.

⁴ Originally in "*The Church's relationship with the Muslims*" (*Lumen Gentium* 16 and *Nostra Aetate* 3), also quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, para. 841.

⁵ Bat Ye'or, op. cit.

⁶ I write this as news arrives of the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) forces' conquest of Mosul (from where all Christians have fled) and Tikrit, and their advance on Baghdad, strong in their desire to reestablish an Islamic Caliphate in this city.

from discrimination, persecution and martyrdom at the hands of faithful Muslims charged with reawakened Islamic fervour.⁷

Though I am not a theologian, what follows is an attempt to answer that question, based on insights gained from passages in the New Testament, and especially from studies on the Book of Revelation. First, however, I would like to offer a general view of Islam's "mission" harvested from its sacred text, the Koran: Islam was born in about 610 AD from the supernatural communications received by Mohammed, its messenger, or 'prophet'. These communications were written down and later compiled in a book, the Koran. The basic message of this book is that God's Day of Judgment is inevitable and imminent (cf. 7:187; 21:1, 22:7; 27:71-72; 33:63; 40:18; 47:18; 54:1; 70:7; 78:40),⁸ and that to avoid divine condemnation (the "Fire"), people must stop being idolators and unbelievers and become believers in God, his messenger Mohammed and their sacred Book, the Koran. Mohammed began preaching his message in Mecca – a message that is described countless times in the Koran as a "warning" (e.g. 13:40; 18:47; 29:18; 42:7,48). His preaching must have had an impact, because he and his followers, the Muslims, were expelled from Mecca in 622. Settling in the neighbouring city of Medina, they flourished and formed a successful religious movement uniting peoples from the many disparate and warring tribes in the Hijaz region of southern Arabia. But the move from Mecca to Medina seems to have prompted the leader to make a basic change in policy: Mohammed did not remain a passive messenger waiting for, and warning others of, the imminent Judgment of God, but adopted a more active role as sovereign religious and political ruler, judge and military commander. His followers became a highly disciplined fighting force that proved itself superior to their pagan opposition, so over the next 10 years the Muslims came to control Mecca and large parts of Southern Arabia. Although Mohammed died in 632, his men continued to spread their religion, with brutal force, into other areas of the Middle East, Persian Empire and North Africa. They were unstoppable and, in subsequent centuries, advanced even further to the East and West.

What started out, in about 610 AD, as a prophetic message of warning to the people of Mecca, in southern Arabia, concerning the impending Day of Judgment, transformed itself, within the next 20 years, into a zealous missionary force determined to conquer and dominate the world by military force, subjugating the conquered lands and imposing its faith and rule over all peoples. This dramatic transformation seems to have been accompanied by a change in self-understanding,

⁷ There are convincing arguments for claiming that the modern fundamentalist movement in Islam corresponds to the Reform movement in Christianity in the 1500's, through its return to the sacred texts and its rejection of traditional authority. The difference between the character of fundamentalist Islamic reform and the Protestant Reformation can be explained by the fundamental difference between the sacred texts of Islam (Koran and Haddith) and that of the Protestants (The New Testament). For a convincing presentation of the arguments see: <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2014/06/ramond-ibrahim-islams-protestant-reformation>.

⁸ A similar thesis was proposed by Paul Casanova in his study "*Mohammed et la fin du Monde*" completed in 1921. Concerning this study, Ibn Warraq writes: "According to Casanova, Muhammad, under the influence of a Christian sect, put great emphasis on the imminent end of the world in his early proclamations. When the approaching end failed to take place, the early followers of the prophets were forced to refashion or rework the text of the Koran to eliminate that doctrine from it" ("*What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text and Commentary*", edited with translations by Ibn Warraq, New York: Prometheus Books, 2002, 80). Whether through a reworking of the text, or through a change of policy (as presented here), or through both, it appears that Mohammed did indeed change from being a prophet of the imminent Judgment, to being uncertain about that time, but nevertheless active in preparing for it in ways he thought were necessary (see below).

which has left traces in the Koran. No longer is Mohammed going to warn and wait for the divine wrath to come, but he is going to be its agent, or at least one of its agents: “Make war on them, God will chastise them at your hands and humble them” (Koran 9:14); “We are waiting for God’s scourge to smite you direct from Him or at our hands...” (9:52). In other words, from the earliest days, there seems to have been an awareness that the Islamic fighting and killing machine was, itself, preparing for, and participating in, God’s impending Day of Judgment.

This transformative change in the character of Mohammed’s mission, from itinerant prophet of the ‘Hour of Doom’, to God’s agent in his Judgment on all idolaters, and unbelievers, is also reflected in the Koran, where it appears as pure contradiction. For example, the oft quoted verse: “There shall be no compulsion in religion” (2:256, cf. also 2:62; 43:88-89; 50:45; 109) sharply clashes with the many passages that instruct Muslims to fight against the idolaters, hypocrites and unbelievers and to kill them if they do not convert (2:178-193,216; 8:12-17; 8:38-39; 9:5-6,29,37,40,73,121; 47:1,4,34). There is a contradiction also between the statements affirming the subservience of man’s will to God’s Will (54:49; 3:145; 87:2-3; 8:17; 9:51; 13:31; 14:4; 18:101; 22:13; 45:26; 57:22) and those that suggest man has ‘free will’ (12:17; 18:29; 74:54-55; 76:3,29). There is even a contradiction between the simple instruction to avoid wine (2:219) or enjoy wine (16:67). Perhaps the greatest contradiction of all, though, is with the assertion that the Koran is from heaven and is a “transcript of the eternal book in Our keeping” (43:4), which one would expect to be without any contradiction whatsoever.

Nevertheless, there are instructions, in the Koran itself, on how to resolve the contradictions (cf. 2:106; and also 16:101; 22,52), according to the principle of “abrogation”: if one passage contradicts another, the content of the passage that was written at a later time cancels and replaces the former. The consequence of this rule is that the milder passages that are dated to Mohammed’s earlier career as a wandering preacher in Mecca are abrogated and replaced by later passages dated to his period as a successful worldly ruler and military commander based in Medina. The result of applying this rule of abrogation on the hierarchy of instructions found in the Koran has been to replace the merciful passages with the distinctly unmerciful and warlike passages: “tolerance has been abrogated by intolerance.”⁹ So, is it any wonder that Islam is bent on obtaining worldly domination through the use of force? But the question remains: “Why, O Lord, have you permitted this religion, Islam, which is based on lies and violence, to survive and flourish for so long?”

One answer to this question is found in the Gospel of Matthew: “False messiahs and false prophets will arise, and they will perform signs and wonders so great as to deceive, if that were possible, even the elect” (Mt 24,24), which is to say that it was inevitable that there would be people who would be inspired by the enemy of God’s Kingdom, the devil, to cloud and confuse “even the elect” of God, by claiming to be the true Christ and true prophets of God. The blasphemous actions of these false imitators were also very predictable: “...in fact the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you” (Jn 16,2-4). Pope Francis may have had this text in mind during his recent meeting with the Muslim leadership

⁹ For a general discussion of this rule, see “*What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text and Commentary*”, edited with translations by Ibn Warraq, New York: Prometheus Books, 2002, 67-75.

on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, when he asked all communities “to never use the name of God to justify violent practices”.¹⁰

However, although this may explain the start and origin of Islam from a supernatural point of view, it does not explain the more theological question of why the Lord has allowed Islam to continue to grow as a new religion ‘in his name’ and fill the world with adherents after the coming of Christ. By forbidding conversion of its members to any other religion, on pain of death, Islam has not only blocked the acceptance and spread of the Christian message of forgiveness and salvation, but, throughout its history, it has systematically opposed Christianity and oppressed, humiliated and killed Christians, as well as pillaging and destroying countless Christian communities living in the territories it has invaded and controlled.¹¹ One only has to remember that most of Turkey, the Near East and North Africa were fervently Christian until the rise and spread of Islam in the 7th century AD. On the principle of Rabbi Gamaliel, recorded in Acts of the Apostles, one has to assume that such a successful and victorious religion must have a theological purpose: “For if this endeavor or this activity is of human origin, it will destroy itself. But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5,38-39). So, rephrasing the question in a few words, we must seriously consider “what precisely is the theological purpose of Islam in the Lord’s plan for the salvation of the world?”

Is it possible that the Lord himself raised up this new religion in order to be a scourge of historical proportions for the rest of the world, even for those “to whom the Scriptures were given as believe in neither God nor the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His apostle have forbidden, and do not embrace the true Faith, until they pay tribute out of hand and are utterly subdued” (Koran 9:29). So, we ask ourselves, whether, in order to humiliate and forcefully “convert” these non-believers in Islam, the Lord himself raised up a “messenger”, an “apostle”, who combined all political, military, religious and judicial power in himself, such that “He that obeys the Apostle obeys God” (4:80)? Would the Lord raise up a religious reformer claiming to be greater than Christ, supported by an antichristian army, in order to oppress and persecute His own people, so that they would not settle into worldliness and grow cold in their faith? One feels that just to pose the question is offensive to Christians and to their Lord. The Lord has other ways of guiding and correcting his people, and has no need of setting up a rival religion, with competing claims and equipped with brutal military capabilities. So whatever the theological purpose of Islam may be, we reject out of hand the suggestion that it was, or even is, inspired by the Trinitarian God of the Christians. We can say with some certainty that the historical scourge that Islam has become is not its primary divinely-willed purpose, but is peripheral to its true mission, a mere by-product.

So we return to the question of “what precisely is the theological purpose of Islam in the Lord’s plan for the salvation of the world?”¹² At this point, I would like to suggest that the reason why this question is so difficult to answer is precisely

¹⁰ “At the end of the meeting, the Pope launched a call to all people and communities who recognize Abraham, to respect and love each other as brothers and sisters, and to never use the name of God to justify violent practices” (Terra Sancta News 755, of the Franciscan Media Centre, 27.05.2014; <http://www.fmc-terrasanta.org/en/welcome-pope-francis.html?vid=6383>).

¹¹ Bat Ye’or, op. cit.

¹² As stated in CCC 841: “The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims: these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day”.

because it is not yet apparent. In other words, the theological purpose of the Islamic religion relates to events in the future and, since that future has not yet arrived, this purpose is not yet fully evident.¹³ Nevertheless, an understanding of that future, gained from New Testament prophecy, can help to throw light on the question and indicate a form of response that will help us to understand Islam's purpose, its *raison d'être*, much better.

Christian Prophecy speaks mainly of a final and brief period of time, which will be very difficult for the people of God, because the whole world will be ruled by an absolute tyrant, who claims to be Christ, demands worship and offers solutions to the world's problems that add up to a false kind of redemption (cf. Rev 13). In Christian tradition, this terrible time is known as the "Dominion of the Antichrist."¹⁴ Its theological importance lies in the fact that this Antichrist figure, along with his assistant and "religious advisor", called the "false prophet" (Rev 13,12-17; 19,20), and all those who follow them, will be condemned to eternal perdition at the final Judgment and, in this way, they participate tragically and negatively in the judgment process (Rev 3,5; 13,8; 17,8; 20,12).¹⁵ This short period of time will be brought to an end at a final battle that not only leads to the defeat of the Antichrist, his false prophet and all those following him (Rev 16,12-16; 19,11-21), but also marks the second coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment, the event predicted by Mohammed so long ago, in which he and his armies wished to prepare for.

This brings us to suggest that, up to this day, the spirit of Mohammed and his armies of devout Muslim followers are indeed continuing the mission they began nearly 1400 years ago, in preparing for the Day of Judgment, and that this is indeed the theological purpose of their mission.¹⁶ There seem to be three main areas in which they are active in this respect:

1. *Creating conditions favouring the establishment of a "World State" and the "Dominion of the Antichrist", as described in Rev 13:*

Terrorism and militant insurrection by individuals and groups, inspired by fundamentalist Islam, have now extended to many countries in the world, creating disorder, threatening the daily lives of innocent, unsuspecting citizens and

¹³ "Who can hope to obtain proper concepts of the present, without knowing the future?" Johann Georg Hamann, quoted by Josef Pieper in his *"The End of Time: A Meditation on the Philosophy of History"* by Josef Pieper, Eng. Trans. Michael Bullock, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999, title page.

¹⁴ The important biblical references are in agreement: 2Thess 2,1-12; Mk 13,6.14.22; Mt 24,5.15.24; Lk 21,8; Rev 11,7; 13; 17,8-14; 19,11-21. For a broad synthesis, by a modern Thomist theologian, see *"The End of Time: A Meditation on the Philosophy of History"* by Josef Pieper, Eng. Trans. Michael Bullock, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999, Part III, pp.119-144.

¹⁵ 2Thess 2,8-12 is particularly relevant in this context.

¹⁶ It is no longer possible to speak about Islam in the present day without considering "fundamentalist Islam", or Islamism, a particularly pernicious form of Islam that has become dominant over the last half-century, as a reaction to the collapse of the Caliphate in 1924, mainly through the work of Muslim "reformers" such as Hassan Al-Banna, Maulana Maududi and Sayyid Qutb. These writers have managed to combine traditional Islam with elements of the worst totalitarian movements of the West (Nazi Fascism and Russian Communism), to produce a toxic politico-religious movement with absolutist aims of global conquest at any cost, and for however long it takes. For an excellent summary of this movement, see Robert R. Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*, Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2010, chapter 8 ("The Sources of Islamism") 173-195. Their anachronistic aim to return the world to the period of Islamic expansion and dominance, between the 7th and 11th centuries AD, through their return to a literal interpretation of the Koran, with its emphasis on preparations for the Final Judgment, confirm the suspicion proposed here, that devout Muslim followers are indeed continuing the mission they began nearly 1400 years ago, in preparing the world for the Day of Judgment, and that this is indeed the theological purpose of their mission.

prompting the need for increased security surveillance at all times and in all places.¹⁷ The international scale of this problem is leading to a situation of increased social control on a global level, which in turn is leading to increased coordination between governments and centralization of authority, a process that tends towards a controversial “one-world government” or “World State” – a totalitarian state in which there will literally be “nowhere” for these criminals to hide. On the prospect of a “World State” and its historical significance, it is worth quoting Josef Pieper, writing in 1948: “The traditional doctrine of the Antichrist does not include any possibility of knowing the date of the end of time; nor does it state that there can be no world dominion save that of the Antichrist! The establishment of a World State, which is today well within the bounds of historical possibility, may quite possibly come to be looked upon as a legitimate goal of political endeavor. What this doctrine does state is that once this step has been taken, mankind will find itself in a condition in which the Dominion of the Antichrist has become more acutely possible than ever before: “a world organization might become the most deadly and impregnable of tyrannies, the final establishment of the reign of anti-Christ” ...”¹⁸ So the effect of global militant Islamic terrorism and “jihad”, to give it its Islamic title, is to hasten the time when “the Dominion of the Antichrist has become more acutely possible than ever before”, simply because this may appear to offer an appropriate solution to this particular problem. In the New Testament, the “Dominion of the Antichrist” finds its fullest description in the Book of Revelation (Rev 11,7; 13; 19,11-21).

2. *Sending the armed forces from the East to fight the final battle at Armageddon, as described in Rev 16,16 and 19,11-21.*

Having helped to bring about the “World State” and the “Dominion of the Antichrist”, it is unlikely that radical Islam will be totally defeated, never to rise again. It is more probable that sooner or later Islamic fervour and supremacist ideology will cause Islamic forces to unite, including those of the Shiites and the Sunnis, and challenge the rule of the World State and its leader, the Antichrist. United, armed and fully mobilized they can probably be identified with the “Kings of the East” who cross the dried-up River Euphrates to join the battle that leads to the defeat of the world rulers at Armageddon, at the second coming of Christ (Rev 19,11-21). In this respect, the Koran can justifiably be considered the ‘War Scroll’ for the final battle at Armageddon.

3. *The Islamic Presence on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is the historical “restraining force” preventing the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple (cf. 2 Thess 2,6-7) until the time appointed by God.*

Although the name Jerusalem never occurs in the Koran, the Muslims have come to associate the Temple Mount with the “farther Mosque (*al-misjad al-aksa*)” visited by Mohammed one night and related in the Koran (Koran 17,1). This association seems to date from the time, in the late seventh century, when the caliph Omar of Damascus sought to attract pilgrims to Jerusalem, which was under his rule, in order to prevent them from going to the shrines of his rivals in Mecca and Medina. For this purpose he built the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque on the Temple Mount, which are standing to this day. Since then,

¹⁷ For an idea of the scale of the problem and the countries affected, see www.jihadwatch.org

¹⁸ Pieper, op. cit., p. 129

and up to this day, the Muslim presence on the Temple Mount has prevented the Jews from rebuilding their Temple “in its place” – a feat that would enable them to declare the start of their messianic age and reveal the identity of their messiah.¹⁹

In this way, the Muslim presence on the Temple Mount is acting exactly as the “restraining force”, mentioned by St. Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2Thess 2,6-7). In St. Paul’s day this could be identified with the presence of the Roman Army occupying Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, but nowadays the same restraining force is supplied by the Muslim presence there, backed up by the supremacist Islamic beliefs of billions of Muslim adherents worldwide. The Jews will not be able to rebuild their temple “in its place” until the Muslims have suffered a crippling defeat, an event that the Jews may interpret as the “war of Gog and Magog” (cf. Ezek 38 and 39). From the Christian point of view, the restraining force of the Muslim presence on the Temple Mount will continue until such a time as the Lord deems appropriate. According to the Book of Revelation, this will not be until everyone has been warned through the prophetic mission of the two witnesses (Rev 11,3-13). Only then will the Muslim presence be removed and the Jews will be free to rebuild their temple. According to Jewish Law, the person who supervises this will be declared their messiah, and because of this claim he can be identified with the ultimate Antichrist of Christian tradition.²⁰

To summarize, then, it appears that radical Islam, on the one hand, through its terrorist activities on a global scale, is helping to bring about a “World State”, which at some point, just before the end of history, will be led in a totalitarian manner by a leader, whom Christians will recognize as the Antichrist. On the other hand, it is clear that the established Muslim presence on the Temple Mount is currently restraining the full realization of that empire, elsewhere called the “Dominion of the Antichrist”. The Antichrist cannot be revealed as long as the Muslims maintain their presence on the Temple Mount. Muslims are not only “*agents provocateurs*” in the creation of a centralized authority that can transform into the “Dominion of the Antichrist”, but they are also restraining the full realization of that empire, until a certain time. Although these two roles appear to be contradictory, they are in fact carefully balanced: The centralized global authority that arises to meet the challenge of Islamic terrorism will have to be strong enough to defeat and weaken Islamic forces to such an extent that it can then, without a backlash, remove their presence from the Temple Mount, and only then will it become the “Dominion of the Antichrist”.

Furthermore, when that empire is finally realized, Islamic forces will reunite and take up the invitation to engage its armies in battle – the final battle of Armageddon, just before the Final Judgment (Rev 16:13-14.16). It is difficult to underestimate the role of Islam in the end-historical events leading up to the final “Day of Judgment”.

In conclusion, Islam certainly does have an important role in the divine plan of Salvation: it is nothing less than the driving force behind the terrible events prophesied in the Book of Revelation for the final and brief period of history, during which the people of God will be persecuted and killed by the global leader known traditionally as the Antichrist. This period is brought to an end by the Second Coming

¹⁹ In the Halacha defined by Maimonides, in fact, the rebuilding of the temple in its place is the act that definitively identifies Judaism’s messiah and the inauguration of its messianic age (*The Code [Mishneh Torah]*, Book 14: Judges; Treatise 5: Kings and Wars, chs. 11-12, 238-42).

²⁰ Ibid.

of Christ, the final Judgment and the total transformation of life on earth in the “New Heaven and New Earth”.²¹

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²¹ What is particularly interesting is that very few Muslims are aware of the Book of Revelation. The Koran speaks of the Gospels (*injl*) and does not appear to recognize anything else in the New Testament as Sacred Scripture. And yet the Book of Revelation and the Koran have a great deal in common: they are both mainly concerned with the end of history and final Judgment; both make extensive use of vivid apocalyptic imagery; both are revelations given by God through an angel to a chosen prophet; both trace their origin to the “heavenly tablets”; both speak about eternal rewards and punishments; both refer back to the Scriptures of the Old Testament; both contain considerable amounts of exhortatory material. However, to the eye of the scholars, no literary dependence can be detected between the seventh century Koran and the Book of Revelation written at least five centuries earlier (Cf. “The Book of Revelation and the Qur’an: Is there a possible literary relationship?”, David Brady, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1978, vol 23, pp. 216-255). Maybe it is no coincidence that the Koran became a sacred text in the East at a time and in an area where the various Churches had not yet accepted the Book of Revelation into their New Testament Canon. As a Scripture concerned with God’s Judgment, it may have filled the vacuum left by omitting the Book of Revelation from the Christian Canon. However, Islam recognizes Jesus as a prophet. The Book of Revelation presents itself as the prophecy of Jesus Christ. In theory, therefore, the Muslims should be willing to accept the prophecy of the Book of Revelation in a way that will bring them closer to Christians, offering grounds for a true dialogue between these two religions, especially if it helps to throw light on the role of Islam in the divine plan of salvation. At the end of the day, many Muslims may discover that, in truth, the title “seal of the prophets” belongs to Jesus, and to his servant John, the author of the Book of Revelation.