The Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scriptures Prepares Believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to Expect Religious Persecution

A Thesis Project Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Divinity in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

by

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December 2019
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The lack of knowledge about the end-time prophetic Scriptures and its inferences to Islamic eschatology appears to be a problem at Northcliffe Baptist Church. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness about the end-time Scriptures and prepare the congregants to expect persecution as normative in the Christian life. Islam is projected to overtake Christianity in a few decades and is proliferating at a rapid pace. The anti-parallel structure between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology is disconcerting. Islam denies Jesus’s divinity and advocates persecuting Christians if they do not convert to Islam. Suffering and persecution for the Lord are expected and desired according to Christian doctrine. Understanding the scriptures also helps believers at the Northcliffe Baptist Church to overcome the coming deception. A Christian Life Development (CLD) class was offered for the congregants as an intervention. Twenty-eight participants were surveyed before and after the three-week class. The results were analyzed and observed for any change in the knowledge of end-time Scriptures and the level of expectancy about religious persecution. This intervention increased the knowledge about the Christian and Islamic eschatology and their inferences by nearly 35 percent and knowledge about persecution by 22 percent. The researcher demonstrates that the intervention increased the awareness that persecution and suffering as part of the Christian life.

Keywords: Eschatology, Persecution, Suffering, End-times, Islam, Perseverance, Knowledge

Abstract Length: 214
Acknowledgements

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 127:1, “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” It is by God’s grace that I started and completed this thesis project. God enabled me to learn more of Him and helped me to draw close to Him during the time I spent on this thesis project.

I want to thank my dear wife, Sujatha, for being alongside of me with her prayers and support throughout this journey. I want to appreciate my sons Joel and Joven for their never-ending questions to stretch my mind. My family is my greatest gift from God, besides my salvation.

I want to acknowledge deep appreciation for my mentor, Dr. Timothy Christ, for providing insightful thoughts and pushing me for greater excellence in my work. I also want to thank my professors, Dr. C. Fred Smith and Dr. Jim Zabloski, for setting me up on the right track with the program and the thesis project.

I also want to thank Lead Pastor Jeff Dye and Pastor Ben Ellis, who helped me in various ways at Northcliffe Baptist Church to conduct my research. I also want to thank our church elder, John Graham, for patiently reviewing some of my drafts and making recommendations.

I also want to specially thank all the participants of this research project for attending the training sessions and completing the survey forms. To God be the glory!
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Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLD</td>
<td>Christian Life Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIN</td>
<td>Doctor of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKJV</td>
<td>New King James Version</td>
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</tbody>
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Preface

One of the most profound pericopes in the Bible is Hebrews 12:1-2:

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Jesus Christ is the perfect example for Christians to follow. To follow His example, one should know about Him and His Word. Satan uses a person’s ignorance of God’s Word to deceive.

Every person’s circumstance or trial is different, but everyone needs to endure and finish the race that was set before them. Jesus promised that there would be trouble in this world (John 16:33). Trials and tribulations can be overcome because He overcame them.

John the Baptist was beheaded when his work on earth was done. He presented Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God to the world. John was faithful in his God-given ministry. He did not flinch when he had to rebuke Herod. In Acts 12, God sent an angel to deliver Peter from the prison and from the hand of Herod. In the same chapter, God allowed the disciple James to be beheaded. God wants everyone to run the race that was set before them with patience. Some may be asked to run a hundred-meter sprint, and others may have to run a marathon. To successfully finish the race, we must fix our eyes on Jesus.

My desire is to run the race with endurance, the race that was set before me, whether it is a sprint or a marathon, and hear my Master say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21).
Chapter 1

Introduction

According to the Pew Research Center, the two major religious groups, Christians and Muslims, make up 55.3% of the world’s population, and Islam will become the world’s largest religion in the next half-century.¹ In the contemporary world, resurgent Islam is one of the most dynamic religious movements.² In less than two decades, the number of babies born to Muslims will exceed the number of babies born to Christians.³ The reason for the projected growth in the Muslim population is that the current median age of Muslims (24) is less than that of Christians (30).⁴ Regarding their religious heritage, both religions claim their lineage to Abraham. Both religions believe in an eschatology that reveals many parallel narratives. Although they both have a somewhat analogous end-time theology, they are opposite in essence.

The followers of the main religions in the world believe in some eschatology, a theology of the end-times. The followers of these religions are concerned about how everything is going to end. Islam and Christianity believe in an apocalyptic eschatology. Such belief contains a “prophetic account of the imminent triple drama of the last times: a present crisis (frequently one of persecution), a coming, decisive divine intervention or judgment, and the final reward of the


³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 14.
just and the punishment of the evil.” The Christian eschatology, in recent days, expanded to include the work of Christ as described in the New Testament as “the fullness of time(s)” (Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10), “these last days” (Heb. 1:2), “at the end of the ages” (Heb. 9:26). The Christian apocalypticism somewhat expresses pessimism about the present with persecution and suffering as normative, but it is profoundly optimistic about the future, whether it brings eternal joy in heaven or a Messianic millennial kingdom on earth.

The followers of the world’s significant religions also believe in an afterlife, although they differ in the pathway how to get there. Christians believe in an afterlife and hope for their souls to spend eternity in heaven by following the One Who said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). Jesus promised his disciples that he would go to the Father and prepare a place for them and come again to take them to be with Him (John 14:3). Paul declared the same message, at an appointed time “in the twinkling of an eye” those who believed in the Lord Jesus will be transformed and will be raised imperishable with a glorified body (1 Cor. 15:52). The Book of Revelation is full of such promises of hope for the future life for those who overcome in this present life.

Some passages in the Bible appear to advocate violence, for instance, Jesus tells his disciples to buy a sword, but Christians are told to love their enemies. Especially in the New Testament, no passage tells a person to kill another person. Islam encourages violence and

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8 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *New American Standard Bible* (Anaheim, CA: Lockman Foundation, 2000).
advocates the killing of unbelievers in Allah if they do not convert to Islam (Qur’an 9:5). Also, Muhammad is held at high esteem for Muslims to follow; one can look at the character of Islam’s founder for his violent acts in Islam. Christians living within Muslim-majority countries often face persecution. The Pew Research Center also estimated, in 2014, 74 percent of the world’s population was living in countries with hostility or high restrictions on religious freedoms.

Figure 1.1. Persecution by the Numbers

Figure 1.1 illustrates the persecution by the numbers in 2018 and 2019, as documented by Open Doors USA. Christians remain one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world.

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One in nine Christians experience high levels of persecution worldwide. Christian persecution takes many forms; it is defined as any hostility experienced because of identification with Christ. Christian torture remains an issue for believers throughout the world, including the risk of incarceration, loss of home and assets, physical torture, rape, and even death because of their faith.

Early Christians were persecuted for worshiping Jesus only. They could have avoided persecution by offering worship to Caesar alongside Jesus. However, they elected to serve only Jesus. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters.” Although Islam and Christianity view themselves as the only true religion that is worthy of being practiced, the former promotes violence (Qur’an 9:5), and the later advocate gentleness in persuasion (2 Tim. 2:25). The striving for the furtherance of Islam and world domination is jihad. Muslims are mandated to participate in this struggle (jihad) to overcome the world by whatever means possible. A war with the main purpose to bring infidels into submission under Islam is considered jihad, a holy war. By tradition, the role of the Islamic Jesus is to kill the anti-Christ, restore the peace, annihilate Christians in their places of worship, break the crosses, slaughter the

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13 Open Door USA, “Christian Persecution.”

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

swine, abolish the tax (*jizya*), establish the Sharia law, and call people to Islam (Qur’an 4:159). Islam also expects Jesus’ return, but Islamic Jesus is different from the Jesus of the Bible. The Bible also warns about the deception that is coming upon the whole world in the end-times. Jesus said, “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them” (Luke 21:8, NIV).

Islam satisfies the description of the spirit of antichrist more than any other religion or belief system. Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. “Something dramatic and revolutionary is happening right before our eyes, and most Western Christians are oblivious to it.” Islam supposedly does not differentiate between religion and politics and is deemed incompatible with secularization and democracy. Most Islamic countries favor Islamic Sharia law. The Muslim community is no longer considering territorial; instead, they consider the Muslim community to be all over the place where Muslims are to be found. The majority of Muslims believe in the Islamic Caliphate in the end-times according to their eschatology and tradition. The revival of the Islamic Caliphate is not confined to any specific territory. This Caliphate can be restored in a short time if every Muslim pledges loyalty to it. The spread of Islam is a wake-up call to all Christians. As Islam is ever-growing its presence in the West, it

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20 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 1.


22 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 1.


24 Ibid., 130.

25 Ibid.

26 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 1.
should be explored.  

The description of the spirit of Antichrist given by the Apostle John fulfills the religion of Islam.  

Richardson writes,

In thinking through the implications of the fact that the biggest bad guy in the Bible, the Antichrist, has transformed into the coming savior of Islam, while the biggest good guy in the Bible, namely Jesus, has transformed into the biggest bad guy in Islamic eschatology, one must be willing to ask the obvious question: Has Satan been specifically involved in the inspiration of Islam’s end-time doctrines?... The specificity, detail, and extent of the parallels demand the acknowledgment of design, while the twisted and cynical nature of these “anti-parallels” clearly point to the malevolent nature of the “person” doing so.  

Mohammed, the founder of Islam, claims he was visited by spirits at least 114 times and resulted in bringing revelations that contradict the Bible. The entire religion of Islam is based on the alleged encounter with Allah through the powers of evil. MacArthur pens,

Apparently, the powers of evil were working through Mohammed to invent one unifying religion that would put an end to polytheism in the Arab world and form the basis of a singular Arab passion that opposed both Judaism and Christianity. While giving lip service to the belief that the Bible is a holy book, Islam undermines and opposes biblical teaching at almost every fundamental point. If any religion qualifies as a “doctrine of demons,” Islam does.  

Hence, the researcher is narrowing the scope of the research to the inferences between Islam and Christian eschatology and the persecution of the Christians from Islam.

Experiencing violence is normative for God’s righteous people throughout history. Christians suffer the denial of religious freedom and substantial discrimination more than the

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28 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7—Detailed explanation in Chapter 2.

29 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap.1.


followers of any other religion.\textsuperscript{33} The persecution ranges from personal attacks to official and unofficial punishments.\textsuperscript{34} Physical abuse and torture are considered acceptable as judicial or extra-judicial punishment by Jewish and Roman authorities.\textsuperscript{35} Persecution of Christians is not new. In the Book of Acts, Stephen was stoned to death for being a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus’s disciples were persecuted for their faith. Priests in Jerusalem, the temple captain, and Sadducees arrested the Apostles Peter and John and imprisoned them.\textsuperscript{36} The administrators and religious leaders ordered the apostles to stop preaching in the name of Jesus Christ and were threatened to take further action if they did not stop proclaiming about Jesus (Acts 4:1-22). Saul, before his conversion, persecuted the followers of Jesus. He was “breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). He did much more harm to the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 9:13). Saul also locked up many saints in prison and “cast his vote” of approval even to put them to death. He punished them at the synagogues, forced them to blaspheme, and pursued them to foreign cities (Acts: 26:10-11). The blasphemies from a Christian point of view would have involved the renunciation of their faith in Jesus and uttering curses against Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{37} “About 80 years later, Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia and Pontus, described that he tried to force Christians to revile (slander, speak ill of, curse) Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{38}

The believers in Christ will overcome suffering and persecution with joy when they


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 4.


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
expect it and place their hope in eternal life and future blessings. A faithful follower of Christ considers the present sufferings not comparable with the glory that will be revealed (Rom. 8:18). Christianity encourages believers to rejoice in the sufferings for Christ as they will be overjoyed when His glory is revealed to all the world (1 Pet. 4:13). Thus, understanding the end-time prophecies is essential for a follower of Jesus Christ. How many Christians know this sort of information?

People are being persecuted for standing up for their religious beliefs. Religious persecution could come from many avenues, and the solutions discussed here could equally apply to all of them, but the religious persecution addressed in this thesis project is solely from Islamic eschatology. The Book of Revelation emphasizes “those who overcome” with extraordinary promises and encourages them to run the race with endurance. When Christians receive education on the end-time prophesies and its inferences to Islam, how is it going to change the level of commitment to their faith? Are they going to persevere hard and become the overcomers they are called to be because of the knowledge about the end-time prophecies imparted to them?

The lack of knowledge about the end-time prophetic Scriptures and its inferences to Islamic eschatology may be a problem at Northcliffe Baptist Church. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness about the end-time Scriptures for the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church. To raise awareness, a unique Christian Life Development (CLD) class is offered for the congregants. The course will run for three 90-minute sessions for three consecutive weeks. The participants will be surveyed before and after the three-week class. The results will be analyzed

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40 “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1).
and observed for any significant change in the knowledge of end-time Scriptures and the level of expectancy about religious persecution. This intervention may increase the awareness about the Christian and Islamic eschatology and their inferences.

The conceptual framework describes the reason for addressing the problem. The conceptual framework also addresses the literature review, theological framework, and theoretical framework. Additional treatment is given for these topics in Chapter 2.

In the literature review, the researcher will evaluate the precedent literature about these themes. The researcher will look for gaps in the precedent literature and address the gaps.

The theological framework for this thesis project is built upon three core foundations: (1) knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, (2) inferences in the eschatology between the Bible and Qur’an, and (3) persecution and suffering as normative.

The theoretical foundation is like building the framework on the foundation of a building. Christian eschatology is not taught adequately at Northcliffe; congregants may not be aware of the end-time events. Educating the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church on the end-time prophecies is one of the ways to build upon the theological foundations. The researcher’s relationship to Northcliffe Baptist Church is as a deacon, Bible teacher, guest speaker, and a small group leader.

Chapter 3, Methodology, describes the resources needed, the method of intervention, and the time required to complete the project successfully. Chapter 4, Results, analyses the data, and provide results. The final chapter, Conclusion, provides the conclusions drawn from the research and how this research can be interpreted and further extended.

**Ministry Context**

Northcliffe Baptist Church, Spring Hill, Florida, is the home-church for nearly eight
hundred parishioners. Spring Hill is situated fifty miles north of Tampa and ninety-five miles west of Orlando. The population of Spring Hill is 104,722 with about 87 percent White and about 6 percent Black.\textsuperscript{41} There are 82,366 adults, (24,075 of whom are seniors) in Spring Hill.\textsuperscript{42} The average family size is 3.06, and the average household size is 2.58.\textsuperscript{43} Figure 1.2 depicts the population distribution by race in Spring Hill, Florida.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{population_distribution_races.png}
\caption{Spring Hill Population by Race}
\end{figure}

The number of total households in Spring Hill is 39,999 with about 51 percent married and about 30 percent non-family.\textsuperscript{45} Non-family homes consist of people who share their

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
residence with unrelated individuals. About 6 percent of households who live alone are male, and 13 percent are female.\footnote{Spring Hill FL Population, (2018-06-12).} About 86 percent of the residents speak only English, while 14 percent speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Spanish, which is spoken by 10 percent of the population.\footnote{Ibid.} Figure 1.3 represents the household distribution by type in Spring Hill, Florida.\footnote{Ibid.}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{households.png}
\end{center}

Figure 1.3. Spring Hill Households by Type

Northcliffe grew as a church from a few dozen people almost thirty years ago to where it is now. Northcliffe’s purpose is to lead people to know God personally, to grow in their relationship with God, and to show God’s love to others. At Northcliffe, a member is considered a part of three families: the family of God, the Southern Baptist family, and the Northcliffe

\footnote{Spring Hill FL Population, (2018-06-12).}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
family. The members at Northcliffe believe that God exists in one essence and three persons, more commonly understood as the Trinity. The members also acknowledge the authority of the scripture, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and missions. The church believes in the authority of the Word of God. The church’s mission as described in its mission statement “is to proclaim in the Spring Hill area and around the world the redemptive love of Jesus Christ through worship, witness, education, fellowship, ministry, and mission.” Northcliffe exists “to lead people to KNOW God personally, to GROW in their relationship with God, and to SHOW God’s love to others.”

The worship pastor leads the congregants in singing praise and worship songs. Every Sunday morning, the church offers two styles of worship services: traditional and contemporary. The congregants who attend the traditional worship service are predominantly older adults. Those who attend the traditional service are 55 percent women and 45 percent men. The racial diversity of those who attend the traditional service is predominantly Whites, with around 2 percent Blacks and 5 percent Hispanics. The contemporary style worship service is mainly occupied with young and middle-aged people. Those who attend the contemporary style service are 60 percent women and 40 percent men. The racial diversity of those who attend the second service is predominantly Whites, with around 3 percent Blacks and about 10 percent Hispanics.

Northcliffe is a predominantly white church, with about 7 percent Hispanics and 3 percent Blacks. There are also a couple of people at Northcliffe who came from the Islamic background and are now faithful followers of Christ. The community where the church is located

49 New Members Guide, Northcliffe Baptist Church, 2018, 5.

50 Ibid., 29.

51 Ibid.
has nearly 1 percent Muslim population.\textsuperscript{52}

A thirty-minute sermon follows the worship. An identical sermon is preached in both services. The lead pastor usually shares the sermon. On a typical Sunday, the lead pastor preaches his message from a sermon-series related to a particular topic. In other words, the preaching at Northcliffe is mainly topical.

Northcliffe provides life-groups (small groups) to encourage personal relationships among the congregants to share what God is doing in each other's lives. Some life-groups gather at different times depending on the service they attend. Nearly 35 percent of the congregants attend life-groups, where people in small groups get to know each other better.

In addition to the Sunday services, the church also provides Christian Life Development (CLD) classes on Wednesdays. The CLD classes usually consist of a combination of topical and expository teaching to equip the believers. Each of these classes is designed to help individual believers deepen or ground their faith in a community of believers in Christ.\textsuperscript{53} The congregants can decide the class they wish to attend. The research for the thesis project can be performed as a new CLD class specifically designed for this purpose.

At Northcliffe, the congregants are encouraged to plug into at least one of the following ministries the church offers:

\textit{First Impressions Ministry}—The goal of the first impressions ministry is to greet and welcome each person warmly and help settle into the life of the church.\textsuperscript{54}

\textit{Women's Ministry}—Women are invited into a journey of transformation, building active

\textsuperscript{52} The Association of Religion Data Archives, Hernando County, Florida, 2010.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{New Members Guide}, 41.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 39.
community with each other as they pursue full devotion to Jesus Christ through friendships, activities and adventures, Bible study, and special classes.  

*Men’s Ministry*—It is a place for men to connect with one another in celebrating the triumphs in their lives and sharing the burdens that they face. The purpose is to develop men to be better followers of Christ, better husbands, fathers, and friends.  

*Children’s Ministry*—Northcliffe Kids program is uniquely designed for children ages from Nursery to 5th Grade and helps children learn and obey God’s Word.  

*Student Ministry*—It is made up of 6th to 12th grade students from multiple counties. Students participate in small groups, student worship services, concerts, camps, retreats, mission trips, and many other events throughout the year.  

*Grief Share Ministry*—This ministry is specifically for those experiencing the grief process as a result of the death of a loved one. The purpose of this ministry is to comfort and encourage those who are experiencing heartache, sorrow, and loneliness.  

**Problem Presented**  
The problem this project will address is that a substantial portion of the congregants who attend Northcliffe Baptist Church, Spring Hill, Florida, may not have proper knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam. The Book of Revelation or other end-time prophecies were not taught church-wide in at least the last 

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55 *New Members Guide*, 40.  
56 Ibid.  
57 Ibid.  
58 Ibid.  
59 Ibid.
seven years. The similarities and differences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology were not explained to the congregants. A considerable portion of the parishioners may think the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Qur’an are the same. The mainstream media projects Islam as a peaceful religion contrary to the persecution of Christians in many Islamic countries. When Islam dominates the world, congregants may not be prepared to persevere through the test of their faith during religious persecution. The problem is compounded as the available literature has not satisfactorily addressed the Islamic connection and Christian persecution.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to raise awareness to the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church about eschatology and prepare them to expect religious persecution. This study explores the problem and addresses the same through research. When church members are not prepared for religious persecution, they may walk away from the faith. Educating the congregants about the promised future blessings of those who endure to the end will encourage them to stand for their faith in the midst of persecution. A principal reason this problem exists is that the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophetic Scriptures are not being adequately taught and their inferences to Islamic eschatology are not discussed.

**Basic Assumptions**

The researcher assumes a gap exists in the teaching at Northcliffe Baptist Church concerning the end-time prophecies. The researcher is committed to developing a class curriculum on end-time prophecies and to train the participants for three 90-minute sessions for the purpose of the research at Northcliffe Baptist Church. The researcher will provide the
necessary handouts to the participants. The training will be offered as a Christian Life Development (CLD) class on Wednesday evenings.

The researcher assumes honest feedback from the attendees to the survey questions at the beginning and the end of the three-week CLD class. The researcher expects that there will be at least a minimum of ten participants for the entire three-week study.

The researcher assumes the participants will attend all the three training sessions. The participants with partial attendance will not be considered for the research.

The researcher is not using triangulation at all. The researcher plans to use only surveys to capture data. Identical survey forms are used before and after the intervention to measure any effectiveness. The researcher will not use any other methods for gathering data.

The researcher assumes that his biases will not interfere with the research in form. The researcher plans to keep a reflective journal to bracket out any biases.

The researcher assumes that by educating the participants, the faith of the participants will increase to expect religious persecution as taught in the Scriptures.

The researcher assumes the training sessions will bring more awareness to the participants about the end-time prophecies and help them to live more godly lives.

Definitions

The researcher uses the following terms and definitions as described below:

Antichrist—one who denies or opposes Christ; specifically: a great antagonist expected to fill the world with wickedness but to be conquered forever by Christ at his second coming.\(^{60}\)

Christian Eschatology—deals with the end-time prophetic Scriptures from the Bible.

Christian Life Development (CLD)—CLD class is primarily designed to equip believers to grow in their faith. Although CLDs can be organized anytime, the majority of the CLDs are planned for the Wednesdays between 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Any adult can attend a CLD. The details about the CLDs are published in the church bulletin ahead of time.

Dajjal—Islam’s Antichrist.

Eschatology—a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of humankind.61

Hajj—the pilgrimage to Mecca prescribed as a religious duty for Muslims.62

Hadith—a narrative record of the sayings or customs of Muhammad and his companions.63

Heaven—the dwelling place of the Deity and the blessed dead.64

Hell—a nether world in which the dead continue to exist; a place or state of misery, torment, or wickedness.65

Infidel—an unbeliever with respect to a particular religion.66

Islamic Eschatology—deals with the end-time events as recorded in Qur’an and Hadith.

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Jihad—a holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty.67

Jizya—a capitation tax formerly levied on non-Muslims by an Islamic state.68

Mahdi—the expected messiah of Muslim tradition. A Muslim leader who assumes a messianic role.69

Paradise—an intermediate place or state where the souls of the righteous await resurrection and the final judgment70

Qur’an—the book composed of sacred writings accepted by Muslims as revelations made to Muhammad by Allah through the angel Gabriel. Another variant for Qur’an is Koran.71

Rapture—the final assumption of Christians into heaven during the end-time according to Christian theology.72

Sharia—Islamic law based on the Koran.73

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations place constraints on the researcher on how to conduct the study. These constraints are not imposed by the researcher but by external entities. This section describes the


limitations that the researcher will encounter. Some of the areas of limitation in this study are as follows. The first relates to not having access to conduct the research church-wide as it disrupts regular services and church activities. The group of people available for conducting the research will be limited to the people attending Wednesday CLD classes. The training session can only be done on the church campus. During the summer break, the campus is closed for Wednesday evening activities. The researcher should plan the three-week training sessions when the church is open on Wednesdays. Students programs on Wednesdays will hinder any student from attending the research class. For the effectiveness of the research, a minimum of ten participants are required. The training session will cover only end-time prophecies for the purpose of strengthening one’s faith to expect persecution.

Delimitation is a restriction imposed by the researcher on the thesis project. There may be several topics on which to do research, but the researcher narrowed the focus on to one topic, i.e. knowing the end-time prophecies (not the whole Book of Revelation) and its inferences to Islam, would strengthen the faith of a believer to expect religious persecution. As the available time for training and research is limited, the researcher will select the end-time prophecies that deal with the Antichrist and religious persecution. Also, for the same reason, the researcher chose to accomplish his research only at Northcliffe Baptist Church, rather than doing it in various churches in the Spring Hill area. The researcher plans to conduct a particular CLD class for the purpose of the research. Although the details of the class will be announced to the whole congregation, this study will be limited to those who chose to attend the special CLD class setting. To apply the results of this survey to the whole church or the whole city would be misleading. The researcher plans to use anonymous surveys and questionnaires to capture the data and not to interview participants one-on-one. The researcher plans to conduct training
sessions for the research for three weeks during Wednesday CLD classes. The complete training with a group of participants is limited to three ninety-minute sessions, including the time for filling out the surveys and consent forms. The researcher does not plan to record (audio or video) the participants or take pictures of the participants. The researcher plans to video record only his teaching, without focusing on the participants, for future reference.

Thesis Statement

The knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam, prepares believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to expect religious persecution.
Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework describes the reasons for addressing the research problem. The “research traditions are complex and comprehensive theoretical frameworks and when carefully analyzed, always reveal a network of conceptual, theoretical, and metaphysical commitments that give the research tradition its particular identity.”74 In research, a “Literature Review” or “Related Literature” examines the current knowledge and any significant contributions to a particular topic. Familiarity with the works of others presents an avenue to answer the questions raised in the scholarly community.75 A theological framework examines the Scriptures to support the findings. Sensing suggests not to read back into theology from the assumptions, instead to allow theology to be the foundation from which ministry intervention flows.76 A theoretical framework develops a structure to implement the theological foundation.

The problem stated is that a substantial portion of the congregants who attend Northcliffe Baptist Church, Spring Hill, Florida, may not have proper knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam, and may not be expecting suffering and persecution in their lives and may not be better prepared to deal with it. This chapter develops the literature review, theological framework, and theoretical framework.


76 Ibid.
Literature Review

A literature review describes the current knowledge, substantial findings, and contributions from other scholars on a particular topic. A literature review is a foundational step in any academic research. A literature review also helps to build on what other scholars have grappled on a given topic. The following main topics are included for the literature review for this project: (1) ignorance of eschatology, (2) comparing Islamic and Christian Scriptures, and (3) persecution, suffering, and perseverance of the Saints.

Ignorance of Eschatology

Eschatology is the theology of the end-times. It is a dominant idea in the New Testament (NT) and to properly understand NT eschatology, one must have some grasp with how the NT authors viewed eschatology or the “end times.”77 Karl Barth writes in his commentary on Romans, “A Christianity that does not thoroughly and without remainder consist [sic] of eschatology, would be thoroughly and totally devoid of Christ.”78 N.T. Wright pens that Jesus lived in a climate of “intense eschatological expectation,” probably expecting a “climactic moment in Israel’s history.”79 Pannenberg notes, the present times are considered as apocalyptic times.80 Chow pens, many recent studies on eschatology have described the twentieth century as “the century of eschatology.”81 Newman contends, “Everything on earth is hastening toward its

end, so the world in its failing powers, bent on its own destruction, is oppressed by many troubles and calamities.”

The term *apocalypse* has become a common label for a type of supernatural visionary literature representing the imminent and catastrophic end of the world. A sincere follower of Christ is expected to learn the end-time prophetic Scriptures. Understanding end-time prophecies reveal God’s nature, guards against false teaching, and motivates holy living by believers. Scripture provides a precise understanding of both how to live today and what to hope for in eternity. Anyone who has studied eschatology in the Bible readily admits it is no easy task. Hindson notes, discerning between symbolic and literal is key to interpreting the apocalyptic genre. Interpretation is as much at work in process with “no standing ground, no place for evaluating, judging, and inquiring, apart from that which is provided by some specific tradition or traditions.” People always relate to the world through interpreted experience. Events and situations are interpreted in the context of the Scripture, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and in the framework of the community. “A deliberate attempt to interpret based on sensible and agreed-upon principles becomes the best guarantee that an interpretation will be accurate. When we consciously set out to discover and employ such principles, we investigate

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82 Barbara Newman, “The Burdens of Church History in the Middle Ages,” *Church History* 83, no. 4 (December 2014): 1009.


85 Ibid.


88 Ibid., 214.

"While many have explored the role of eschatology in terms of missions history, few have analysed [sic] the theological developments in world Christianity.""91 "The biblical imagery of a second coming of Christ, of the eternal peace and glory of salvation, and of the banquet in the kingdom of God was not simply the product of an exuberant imagination. Rather, it is structured in ... eschatological outlook."92 Christian eschatology raises topics like the rapture, second-coming, tribulation, persecution, and Antichrist to the forefront. Not every Christian believes the Bible in the same manner. There are Christians who take the Word of God as literal, and there are those who take it as symbolic. Those who believe in the literal interpretation show a renewed interest in the Bible prophecy.93 Christians who believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible believes in an event called rapture. Even those who believe in the rapture cannot agree on the chronology of when the event transpires relating to tribulation. This disagreement about the order of events brings three divisions: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation. Those who are in the pre-tribulation camp believe that the rapture will happen before the seven-year tribulation period. The mid-tribulation thought is that the rapture happens at the middle of the seven-year tribulation. The post-tribulation group believes the rapture will take place at the end of the seven-year tribulation period.

John Darby, the Anglo-Irish Bible teacher, advocated pre-Tribulation rapture after he saw

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92 Pannenberg, “Constructive and Critical Functions of Christian Eschatology,” 120.

the distinction between Israel and the church in his study of the Book of Ephesians.\textsuperscript{94} Keeping a distinction between Israel and the church in the Scriptures is one of the most significant enlightenments to rightly understanding Bible prophecy. The second key is taking the prophetic scriptures literally whenever possible.\textsuperscript{95} “J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield taught that all Christians would be raptured before a time of affliction and persecution known as the Great Tribulation.”\textsuperscript{96} This brief treatment on rapture will suffice, as it is not appropriate not to mention rapture when studying about eschatology. A reasonable treatment about the rapture and which of these three views on the rapture is more biblical is outside the scope of this research.

Richardson speaks against the ignorance in the church about the last days.\textsuperscript{97} It takes some humility, writes John MacArthur, to acknowledge ignorance on this vital topic on eschatology. Some self-styled Bible prophecy gurus speculate on the dates and times contrary to the Word of God.\textsuperscript{98} A person who is ignorant of the end-time prophecies can be deceived easily by the coming deception. The Bible compares living in ignorance of the last days to being drunk and asleep.\textsuperscript{99} Jesus said, no one knows the day or the hour when these things will happen (Mark 13:32).

Besides the expectation of the rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, tribulation and persecution of the saints are commonly considered of utmost essential topics in Christian

\textsuperscript{94} LaHaye, \textit{Who Will Face the Tribulation?} chap. 1.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., chap. 2.
\textsuperscript{96} Chow, “Eschatology and World Christianity,” 205.
\textsuperscript{97} Richardson, \textit{The Islamic Antichrist}, chap. 7.
\textsuperscript{99} Richardson, \textit{The Islamic Antichrist}, Appendix A.
eschatology. Beale also adds new-creation and kingdom as important facets of the plotline to better understand the New Testament theological ideas.\textsuperscript{100} One should reflect on Christ’s life, trials, and his death and resurrection as the dominant events that launched the latter days.\textsuperscript{101} These events are eschatological because of the new creation and kingdom and will significantly change the general scholarly view of the eschatological already-not yet.\textsuperscript{102}

Even in the Old Testament (OT), Beale writes, there are references to an eschatological Adam figure who will be the Messiah and Savior of the world who will rule over the opposition forever.\textsuperscript{103} The OT also reveals that the Messiah will be “cut off” or killed but not for himself (Isa. 53:8; Dan. 9:26). The prophecies in the Book of Daniel also provide a framework for the eschatological timeline. Seventy weeks (of years) are foretold for the people of Daniel (Jews), but the story ends after sixty-nine weeks (Dan. 9:24-27). The Book of Revelation rightly fits into the missing seventieth week of Daniel (Dan. 9:27). Thus, it is essential to have a proper understanding of the OT Scriptures when studying eschatology. Very few scholars have ventured into comparing the Christian eschatology with Islamic eschatology. The next section discusses the parallels and anti-parallels between Christian and Islamic Scriptures concerning the end-times.

Comparing Islamic and Christian Scriptures

The two religions, Christianity and Islam, believe in some apocalypse at the end times and expects the arrival of a leader who will make all things right to usher this world into a utopia.

\textsuperscript{100} Beale, \textit{A New Testament Biblical Theology}, chap. 1.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., chap. 2.
Joel Richardson, in his book *The Islamic Antichrist*, describes in detail about the similarities and dissimilarities between Christianity and Islam. John MacArthur, Larry Poston, Bruce Forrest, Yvonne Haddad, Jane Smith, and other authors have also pointed out the many eschatological parallels between Christianity and Islam. Some of the beliefs about Jesus shared by both religions include the following: God sent Jesus for a particular purpose, the miraculous conception of Jesus through the womb of a virgin named Mary, and He performed many miracles. Islam categorically denies Jesus' divinity. Beaumont argues, against Christian doctrine, because God is One, Christians are wrong in teaching about Trinity. Since God is Spirit and cannot be seen by human eyes, when Jesus said that seeing him was seeing God, Beaumont suggests that Jesus must have meant that God could be heard through his words. Beaumont defends Islam as a rational religion: it is reasonable because Islam sees Jesus as a human who served God, but irrational to believe that he was divine and human.

Both the Islamic and Christian Scriptures also predict a supreme political, military, and religious leader coming on the world stage in the last days. They also expect a secondary figure who will also emerge on the scene assisting the supreme leader. Both these leaders together are going to establish a new world order. Although the two leaders' identities and their offices are different in Christianity and Islam, there are many parallels as they describe the

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104 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 18.

105 These authors are listed in the Bibliography.

106 Fatih Harpci, “Muhammad Speaking of the Messiah: Jesus in the Hadīth Tradition” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2013), PROQUEST Religion Database.


108 Ibid.

109 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 18.
eschatological scene. The eschatological parallels that appear in both religions work with opposite actors in their narratives. What makes it more significant is that the good character in one religion is portrayed as a bad actor in the other and vice-versa. Their identity is significant because Jesus warned His followers not to be deceived by false messiahs (Matt. 24:4). The contradictions about the characters become apparent when both religions point to the same pericope in the Book of Revelation about the rider on the white horse who has a bow, a crown was given to him, who comes out conquering and continues to conquer (Rev. 6:2). In Islam, this rider on the white horse is their Mahdi (the guided one, Islam’s savior); in Christianity, this rider on the white horse is the Antichrist. The biblical Antichrist, who will set himself up in the Jewish Temple, is the Islamic Mahdi, who will establish an Islamic caliphate from Jerusalem.110

The Prophet Muhammad encouraged the spread of Islam by force. The Qur’an and the hadith collections contain multiple exhortations to fight against infidels.111 It instructs Muslims to “fight those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day and do not forbid what Allah and his messenger have forbidden, nor practice the religion of truth, even if they are of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued” (Qur’an 9:29). Christianity does not have a similar goal of fighting against non-Christians but instead presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ with all humility.112 Several passages and verses from the Qur’an and Hadiths reflect the mindset of those who advocate jihad and promotes fighting against unbelievers to further the cause of Islam.113 The Bible reveals that the spirit of Antichrist explicitly denies the central doctrines of Christianity, namely the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the

110 Richardson, The Islamic Antichrist, chap.18.
112 Richardson, The Islamic Antichrist, chap.15.
113 Ibid.
substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross. Richardson writes, Islam doctrinally and spiritually denies the Trinity, the incarnation, and the substitutionary death of Jesus on the Cross.\textsuperscript{114} According to Islam, Jesus is one of the prophets sent by Allah. “Islam is based on lies.”\textsuperscript{115} It is the invention of “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

It seems, the powers of evil were employed through Mohammed to invent one unifying religion that would put an end to polytheism in the Arab world opposing both Judaism and Christianity. Mohammed demanded his followers to recognize only one god, Allah, with Mohammed as his prophet. Islam undermines and opposes biblical teaching at almost every fundamental point.\textsuperscript{116} Mohammed taught that Allah rejected and cursed Jews. He described Christians as polytheists and infidels.\textsuperscript{117} John MacArthur writes the following:

Mohammed claimed the Koran was revealed to him when he was under the control of the spirits. He testified that he himself was not always certain whether the visions were divine or demonic. But his wife urged him to submit to the revelations, because she was convinced they were from Gabriel. So for twenty-two years, from A.D. 610 until his death in A.D. 632, he received revelations from the spirit that controlled him. These were collected, memorized and passed down orally at first. Soon they were compiled by his followers from memory, forming the Koran.\textsuperscript{118}

Persecution, Suffering, and Perseverance of the Saints

The current situations within the post-Christian culture and unstable evangelical church are changing and rapidly declining, insomuch that believers need to be prepared and not caught

\textsuperscript{114} Richardson, \textit{The Islamic Antichrist}, chap. 18.
\textsuperscript{115} MacArthur, \textit{Terrorism, Jihad}, chap. 2.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
by surprise when confronted with persecution and suffering.\footnote{119} Almost 300,000 Christians are martyred each year, and as a Christian, the chance of being a martyr is 1 in 200.\footnote{120} The chance of being persecuted in an Islamic country is even higher. Satan uses the world system to tempt and persecute true Christians.\footnote{121} The world system does not know God and hates believers and opposes them.\footnote{122}

Islamic Oppression fuels Christian persecution in 8 of the top 10 countries. In the 2019 World Watch List reporting period, there were shocking details about the persecution experienced by Christian women. In many places, they experience “double persecution”—one for being a Christian and one for being a woman. Even in the most restricted circumstances, gender-specific persecution is a key means of destroying the minority Christian community. This kind of persecution is difficult to assess because it is complex, violent, and hidden—in many cultures where women are specifically targeted, it is difficult if not impossible to report accurate numbers. In seven out of the top 10 World Watch List countries, the primary cause of persecution is Islamic oppression. This means, for millions of Christians—particularly those who grew up Muslim or were born into Muslim families—openly following Jesus can have painful consequences. They can be treated as second-class citizens, discriminated against for jobs or even violently attacked. While the violent excesses of ISIS and other Islamic militants have mostly disappeared from headlines from the Middle East, their loss of territory there means that fighters have dispersed to a larger number of countries not only in the region but, increasingly, into sub-Saharan Africa. Their radical ideology has inspired or infiltrated, numerous splinter groups such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a deadly group that broke away from Nigeria’s Boko Haram that also enslaves Christian women and girls as an integral part of their strategy.\footnote{123}

Christian suffering is normative, and believers should not be surprised by suffering while in this mortal body. Although a Christian need not seek after suffering, instead the circumstances


\footnote{120} David B. Barrett, ed., \textit{World Christian Encyclopedia} (New York: Oxford University, 1982).

\footnote{121} MacArthur, \textit{The Power of Suffering}, Introduction.

\footnote{122} Ibid., chap. 1.

\footnote{123} Open Door USA, “Christian Persecution.”
are given because of their adoption into God’s family. In recent decades, the “theology of the cross” is sidelined with the “theology of glory and success,” bypassing the reality of suffering, persecution, and martyrdom. Jesus Christ as the focus of Christians’ faith plays the normative role in the believer’s view of suffering, persecution and martyrdom. It is vital how believers interpret his life and death. Gaffin writes the following:

As long as believers are in the mortal body, that is, for the period between the resurrection and return of Christ, with Paul it is difficult to overemphasize the intimate correlation of life and death in the experience of the believer, the interpenetration of suffering and glory, weakness and power. For this period, for as long as we are in the mortal flesh and the sentence of death is written into our existence, resurrection-eschatology is eschatology of the cross, and the theology of the cross is the key signature of all theology that would be truly “practical” theology.

Knowing how it is all going to end helps a believer to persevere through suffering and recognize false Christs. For instance, when Polycarp was threatened with death to blaspheme his Lord, he replied, “How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me? I am a Christian!” Similarly, Pionius said, “I have chosen to die in obedience to my Master, rather than transgress His commands.” True disciples of Jesus Christ will expect suffering and persecution and endure until the end of their lives. The church grows in faith and devotion to her Lord during persecution. Some of the persecuted church members are often found rejoicing, praising, and

124 Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” 23


126 Ibid., 269.

127 Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” 235-236.


129 Ibid.
worshiping in the midst of ruins. Meeting brothers and sisters in Christ during the time of their persecution, challenges and increases one’s faith and commitment. Hindson notes, “the blood of the martyrs was the ‘seed of the church’.”

The Apostle John’s intention in writing the Book of Revelation is to encourage already persecuted Christian churches to remain faithful and prepare them for impending Roman persecution and also to prepare them for a reward from God. John writes multiple times in the Book of Revelation, “He who overcomes…” followed by a promise. These promises are meant to encourage believers to withstand the persecution they may face. The same promises can help a believer in the twenty-first century to overcome persecution. MacArthur notes, those who come to the faith will pay the incredible price in terms of suffering during the tribulation. History reveals that all of the New Testament writers were persecuted. The Apostle John encouraged the early Christians with future promises from God for enduring the persecution. Even though the saints are persecuted and killed for their faith in Jesus, they are nonetheless “free people” in Christ.

Bonhoeffer points out the sayings of Jesus that every Christian has his own cross waiting for him, which is destined and appointed by God. Each must endure his allotted share of suffering and rejection. But each has a different share: some God deems worthy of the highest

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131 Hindson, The Book of Revelation, 36.


133 MacArthur, The Second Coming, chap. 4.

form of suffering and gives them the grace of martyrdom, while others he does not allow to be
tempted above that which they can bear. But in every case, the cross is the same.135 The suffering
of the cross is laid on every Christian, Bonhoeffer continues, which every man must experience
and abandon the attachments of this world.136 “But that cross and that way are both life and
resurrection. ‘‘He that loseth [sic] his life for my sake shall find it.’ In this promise, we hear the
voice of him who holds the keys of death, the Son of God, who goes to the cross and the
resurrection, and with him takes his own.”137 Morgan notes, “Such teaching will produce lives
running contrary to all worldly estimate and custom, and discipleship will mean persecution, and
so the Teacher adds a ‘blessed’ for those who suffer through character.”138 MacArthur and
Richardson agree that believers are beheaded for their faith in Jesus and the Word of God.
Multitudes will be killed for not bowing down to the “image of the beast.”139 The two witnesses
who will appear during the tribulation period, according to the Bible, will also be persecuted and
killed, and the whole world will rejoice and celebrate at their death. The righteous suffer
persecution before they are killed.140 In many Islamic countries, persecution of Christians is
rampant. The radical groups in countries like Kenya and Nigeria are the main perpetrators of
Christian persecution.141 Many Christians have fled the area because of the Islamist groups like

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid., chap. 25, iBooks.
140 Rob Dalrymple, “These Are the Ones... (Rev 7).” Biblica 86, no. 3 (2005): 401, EBSCOhost.
al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, who are unpredictable in their killing sprees and damaging properties of the Christians. On a positive note, when persecution intensifies, denominational barriers come down.\textsuperscript{142}

Islamic fundamentalists regard all non-Muslims, including Christians, to be infidels. Some moderate Muslims regard Jews and Christians as “people of the book,” and consider them somewhat better than gross idolaters. Nevertheless, all non-Muslims, including Christians and Jews, are considered infidels.\textsuperscript{143} The Qur’an authorizes Muslims to “slay the idolaters wherever you find them” (Qur’an 9:5). There is no period in all the history of Islam since its founding that was characterized by large-scale peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{144} Islam dictates submission from non-Muslims either by force or with terror. The founder of Islam on his deathbed muttered, “I have been made victorious with terror (cast in the hearts of the enemy).”\textsuperscript{145}

In conclusion, understanding of eschatology is essential for a Christian. The theological foundation that undergirds the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who died for the sins of humankind on the cross and raised from the dead. Islam categorically denies these essential truths about Christianity. As Islam is spreading, Christians should be aware of such false religion which is founded on jihad, war on non-Muslims. The Apostle John declares whoever denies the Father and the Son is the spirit of Antichrist. Some scholars see no inference to Islam, rather see Rome and the European Union as the kingdom of Antichrist. The Theological Foundations section expounds the inferences between Islam and Christian

\textsuperscript{142} Dowd, “Understanding How Christians Respond to Religious Persecution,” 36.

\textsuperscript{143} MacArthur, Terrorism, Jihad, chap. 2.

\textsuperscript{144} Spencer, The History of Jihad, Introduction.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., chap. 1.
eschatology.

**Theological Foundations**

The theological framework for this thesis project builds upon three core foundations: (1) the importance of knowing end-time prophetic Scriptures, (2) inferences in the eschatology between the Bible and Qur’an, and (3) enduring persecution and suffering.

This section describes how the Bible exhorts a believer not to be ignorant of the Scriptures, especially the end-time prophetic Scriptures. The apostles understood eschatology not as something related to the future, instead, understanding the present within the context of redemptive history.\(^{146}\) Studying Christian eschatology along with Islamic theology shows dreadfully antiparallel narratives with opposite actors. The description of the spirit of Antichrist given by the Apostle John is fulfilled by the religion of Islam. This section also details how Islam is founded on *jihad* (war or struggle) to bring non-Muslims into subjection. Finally, this section explains how persecution is normative in the Christian life.

**The Importance of Knowing End-time Prophetic Scriptures**

To lay a theological foundation is to understand what the Bible has to say about the knowledge and understanding of the Word of God and the end-time prophecies in particular. The Scriptures, in general, exhort believers to be informed concerning the Word of God. The Apostle Paul writes numerous times to not be unaware or ignorant about the Scriptures (Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:1, 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13). He expected the believers to know about the “times and epochs” (1 Thess. 5:1). The Word of God is like a lamp when walking, and it lights up the path, so a person can see clearly and not stumble (Ps. 119:105). The Apostle Peter writes, God’s

Word is confirmed beyond doubt, and one will do well when one pays attention to it. Those who are looking into the eschatology looked for hope beyond the concerns of the present day. In the case of Christian eschatology, Pannenberg writes, “it is not only divine promise, but the anticipatory presence of the eschatological reality in the person of Jesus that has become the basis of Christian hope. In him the divine and the human are already reconciled.”

The Bible bids one to understand the prophetic scriptures. The Apostle John pronounced a special blessing upon those who read the Book of Revelation and heed the things written in it because the end-times are near (Rev. 1:3). Green writes that blessings were promised upon those who read, hear, and heed the prophetic scriptures. The “time is near” shows the urgency in acquiring the knowledge of the prophecy. The prophet Daniel’s “what will be in the latter days,” replaced by John’s “what must soon take place,” brings the sense of urgency for the fulfillment of these end-time prophecies. A believer should live a life of anticipation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus exhorts several times in the Book of Revelation that He is coming soon. Jesus said, “I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown” (Rev. 3:11). Again He said, “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7).

One can also find a similar theme of blessings in relationship with the Scriptures in the

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Old Testament. The Lord told Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Josh. 1:8). “Joshua was commanded to obey the Torah of Moses, so that you may have success wherever you go. This is not necessarily a means to material prosperity—though neither is it necessarily precluded. However, in a spiritual context, the faithful should expect success.”

“The purpose is so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. Obedience is in view, motivated by the promise of success.” The Psalmist writes, blessings will follow when a person meditates on the Scriptures and chooses to obey it (Ps. 1:1-2).

Daniel was told to seal up the book of the prophecy until the end time (Dan. 12:4). John was told not to seal the words of the prophecy as the time is near (Rev. 22:10). Not only do the scriptures put a great emphasis on knowing the Word of God, but it also adds the urgency to do so with the terms like “time is near” and “coming quickly.” Those who heed to the prophecy would receive one of the seven blessings in the Book of Revelation. The Bible also emphasizes putting on extra effort, especially when studying eschatology. Both Matthew and Mark insert a parenthesis, “let the reader understand” when quoting a prophecy from the Book of Daniel (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

The Apostle Paul writes, in the context of end-times, death, and resurrection not to be ignorant of the prophetic scriptures and about the promised blessed hope (1 Thess. 4:13). Paul attributes many of the difficulties of the Christian faith and life to ignorance of the Scriptures,

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152 Ibid.

and he regards knowledge as vital to many blessings.\textsuperscript{154} Paul exhorts the believers to be knowledgeable about the end-times as it may come upon them suddenly like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

Regarding the end-times, Jesus admonished his disciples to recognize the end-times like they identify the seasons by examining a fig tree, as one sees leaves coming on the tree and realizes that summer is near (Luke 21:29-31). The parable of the fig tree is a warning to the disciples of the events Jesus described in the end-times. “Jesus’ point is, ‘When the signs come, they will proceed quickly; they will not drag on for generations. It will happen within a generation.’”\textsuperscript{155} He admonishes the crowds for not analyzing the “present time” and expects them to understand the times they are living in. Jesus said when one sees a cloud rising in the west, immediately one perceives it is going to rain, and so it rains. Also, when one sees a south wind blowing, one says it will be a hot day, and it turns out to be a hot day. “You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?” (Luke 12:54-56). In another instance, Jesus weeps over Jerusalem for the calamity that was coming upon her people because the nation did not recognize the time of God’s visitation (Luke 19:44). In another occasion, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus expects his followers to know and understand the Scriptures, “‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:25-27). He rebuked them for their unbelief and pointed out that all these things were necessary for fulfilling the Scriptures and that they


\textsuperscript{155} Green, “Revelation,” chap. Revelation 1.
should have understood His messianic mission. Jesus chided the Pharisees for not understanding His Word because they did not want to accept His message (John 8:43). In other words, those who are willing to accept and obey God’s Word can better understand it. Although some of the illustrations provided here refer to the already-fulfilled promises, the same principles apply to the future prophecies as well. From all these accounts, a believer is expected to know the prophecies and understand them correctly.

Eschatology, Beale writes, is an essential part of the Old Testament storyline. He notes, “In fact, it is my contention that the definition of eschatology should be refined as the movement toward the new-creational reign, with other associated eschatological concepts being understood as subcategories of this. This eschatological new creation reign is a movement toward a regaining of what was in Eden before sin.” The numerous theological ideas are like the facets of a diamond, which cannot be separated from the diamond itself.

Thus, all Scripture, including the end-time prophetic scripture, is God-breathed and must be carefully studied and obeyed for the edification of the church (2 Tim 3:16-17). Thus, one of the theological foundations for this thesis project is to have the knowledge and understanding of the end-time prophecies.

Inferences in the Eschatology between Bible and Qur’an

The Apostle John writes, the Antichrist is a liar and denies Jesus is the Christ. The true mark of Antichrist is that he denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22). The repetition of the

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158 Ibid., chap. 1.
159 Ibid.
word *denies* makes a strong statement. Everything depends on what a person believes about Jesus Christ. According to Islam, the angel Gabriel delivered the message to the prophet Muhammed (Qur’an 2:97). The message of Islam is contradicting with the gospel of the Bible. The Apostle Paul writes, even if an angel from heaven should preach a gospel that is different from what they preached to them, he is to be accursed (Gal. 1:8). Islam unequivocally denies the Father and the Son (Qur’an 4:171, 19:35).

The Apostle John uses the word Antichrist (*ἀντίχριστος* antichristos) in 1 John and 2 John to warn the believers of the coming deception and persecution. The prefix *Anti-* indicates two meanings. First, it is used as “in place of.” The second usage is to indicate “to oppose.” The Antichrist is the one who will declare himself in place of Christ, and he also opposes Christ. The Bible also describes the spirit of Antichrist, and that spirit is already operating in the world. This spirit of Antichrist is distinct by its denial of some very precise aspects of Jesus’ nature and His relationship to God the Father. The Apostle John writes the following:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world...Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also (1 John 4:1-3; 2:22-23, NKJV).

The spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh from God is the spirit of Antichrist. Islam fulfills the description of the spirit of Antichrist more than any other religion.

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161 Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist*, chap. 12.
or belief system.\textsuperscript{162}

The Prophet Daniel also gives a glimpse about the nature of the Antichrist. Most scholars agree that Daniel is describing the Antichrist without using the word \textit{Antichrist}. “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time” (Dan. 7:25).

There is no mention of the word Islam, Allah, or prophet Muhammed in the Bible. In John’s days, when the Book of Revelation was written, there was no Islam. Islam came into existence around the seventh century. If Islam and Muhammed are not stated in the Bible, how can anyone connect the coming Antichrist to Islam? Many things people believe to be true are not mentioned in the Bible, like the word \textit{Trinity}, yet Christians believe based on the clear concepts revealed in the Scriptures. Similarly, one cannot disregard the inferences to Islam because Islam is not mentioned in its proper terms. John writes what he saw about the rider on a white horse, who has a bow and a crown was given to him. He went on conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:2). A reliable transmitter of Hadith claims, quoting the Christian Scriptures, the rider on the white-horse in Revelation 6:2 as Mahdi.\textsuperscript{163} The majority of the Christian scholars believe the rider on the white-horse in Revelation 6:2 identifies as the Antichrist. The biblical Antichrist is the savior, Mahdi, of Islam.

The task of interpreting the symbols in eschatology becomes even weightier when a person does a comparative study of the end-times between Christianity and Islam. Not all the symbols described in the apocalyptic genre in the Bible are defined, making it harder on the

\textsuperscript{162} Richardson, \textit{The Islamic Antichrist}, chap.12.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., chap. 4.
scholars to come to a consensus. Without the proper understanding of the end-time prophecies, people may believe in the Antichrist thinking he is the true Messiah.

Studying Islamic history reveals how this religion is founded on apparent contradictions to the Bible. At age forty, Mohammed began to see visions. He claimed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him, and through a series of visions over several years, the angel revealed Allah’s word which became the holy book of Islam, the Qur’an.\(^\text{164}\) Paul writes, “there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” (Gal. 1:7-8). “Mohammed built his whole system of religion on these demonic revelations, adapting and merging various forms and features from the idol worship that had always existed in Mecca. Again, his stress on monotheism was the novelty that ultimately unified Islam.” \(^\text{165}\) Mohammed forced his religious views with the sword. He destroyed all the idols at Mecca, only sparing the Kaaba, the black stone, the symbol of Allah.\(^\text{166}\) “From that point on, Islam spread throughout the Arab world by the use of the sword. And within a short time, most of the Arab world was under the control of Islam and has remained so ever since.”\(^\text{167}\)

On the other hand, a significant number of scholars do not see any inferences to Islam when interpreting the end-time prophecies. Hindson envisions a revived Roman (European) empire of the Last Days.\(^\text{168}\) Hindson does not see any inferences to Islam, especially in the Book of Revelation. He identifies the ten nations as European nations and the city that sits on seven

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\(^\text{164}\) MacArthur, *Terrorism, Jihad*, chap. 2.

\(^\text{165}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{166}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{167}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{168}\) Hindson, *The Book of Revelation*, 143.
hills to Rome. Hindson writes, “It is generally assumed that he (Antichrist) represents the revived Roman Empire of the Last Days.” LaHaye and Hindson note, “Both Daniel and Revelation associate the Antichrist with a confederation of ten European nations that correspond in some way to the old Roman Empire.”

The woman riding the beast is very critical in interpreting the Book of Revelation. Dave Hunt records regarding Revelation 17 and 18, “the woman is the central figure in these two important chapters, a major player in the drama of the Last Days. John gives far more attention to her than to the beast she rides. And the fact that she rides the beast—a beast of such importance that it literally holds the central position in Bible prophecy—demands our special attention.” Hindson notes, “However one interprets the woman’s identity, it is clear that she represents the false religion of the Last Days.” This false religion has control of the “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” She is seen as perpetuating and promoting a world religion that engulfs the world political system.

Although Hindson and Hunt did not make any inferences to Islam in their exposition, the above description of the false religion, the woman riding on the beast, is very compelling to see numerous connections this false religion described here has in common with Islam. This false religion is both a religious system and a political system like Islam with its Sharia Law. MacArthur writes, “The truth of the matter is that Islam today is the most powerful system on earth for the destruction of biblical truth and Christianity. Islam is the main persecutor of Christians all over the world. Thousands of Christians are dying under Islamic persecution.”

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169 Hindson, The Book of Revelation, 143.
171 Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides the Beast (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), 14.
172 MacArthur, Terrorism, Jihad, chap. 2.
The Apostle John writes, “So I looked, and behold, a pale (χλωρός chlōros) horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him” (Rev. 6:8, NKJV). The word ‘chlōros’ is translated as ‘green’ elsewhere in the Bible. For instance, Mark 6:39 reads, “Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green (χλωρός chlōros) grass.” A better translation of Revelation 6:8 should have read ‘green horse.’ So, what does the green horse represent? The color green is highly revered in Islam. Muslims are promised to be robed with green clothes in the Paradise. “Upon them are garments of green silk, and satin” (Qur’an 76:21).

John writes the method of execution for those who refuse to worship the Antichrist. John saw the souls beheaded for their testimony of Jesus Christ and their testimony for the Word of God. They are beheaded for their refusal to receive a mark from the Antichrist (Rev. 20:3-4). Islam advocates the beheading of the unbelievers in the path of Allah. Tawhidi writes, “The corrupt ideology of terrorism has existed since the early days of Islam; and it was simply revived in our time. ISIS and its crimes can be explained in one honest sentence: the culture of beheading opponent did not begin with ISIS; it began with our early Islamic caliphs.”173 “Those who disbelieve and repel from the path of Allah—He nullifies their works…. When you encounter those who disbelieve, strike at their necks” (Qur’an 47:1, 4). Richardson notes, the overlapping of beliefs in the two religions and the ways that Islamic eschatology reinforces Christian eschatology are astonishing and unnerving.174 Chow pens, “Eschatology is not only about ‘when’ but also about ‘who’.”175 If an individual is not careful, he may end up focusing on the wrong


174 Richardson, The Islamic Antichrist, chap.1.

175 Chow, “Eschatology and World Christianity,” 212.
“who” and follow the wrong person. Individuals look with expectation about the end-times when their present situation does not make sense.  

Figure 2.1. Iraqi Shiites Throw Dust on their Heads in Grief

One should also pay attention to the geographic location and customs described in the Christian eschatological Scriptures. The description of “the great city, Babylon” does not fit “the great city” Rome as some scholars concluded. One of the reasons for that presupposition is that “Rome has seven hills.” Why would a westerner throw dust upon their heads when weeping and mourning? It is a middle-eastern custom to throw dust upon one’s head when grieving as depicted in Figure 2.1. “This specific action is based on another allusion to Ezek. 27, this time in verse 30, where the mariners and pilots of the sea stand on the shore and look at the ruined

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176 Chow, “Eschatology and World Christianity,” 212.


Tyre, wailing bitterly and throwing dust on their heads. The custom of throwing dust on one's head was an act of mourning or sorrow (Josh. 7:6; Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; 1 Macc. 11:71).”¹⁷⁹ John writes the reaction to the destruction of the great city, “And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’” (Rev. 18:19).

One has to study biblical eschatology with reference to Jerusalem as the center point. Zechariah writes, “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it” (Zech. 12:2-3). The surrounding nations that encircle Israel are the Islamic nations.¹⁸⁰ Though the Bible gives a general prophetic framework of the end-times, many explicit details are yet to be determined.¹⁸¹

After dealing with the inferences between Islamic and Christian eschatology, the next section deals with persecution and suffering from a Christian perspective.

Enduring Persecution and Suffering

The Bible addresses the topic of persecution to give a context and a hope to a believer. “All Christian martyrdom has its basic foundational orientation and footing in Jesus Christ, the ‘faithful and true witness’ (Rev. 1:5; 3:14; cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-24; Heb. 2:14-18; 5:8).”¹⁸² Jesus was persecuted as a young child, and He was resisted and persecuted throughout His ministry. To


¹⁸⁰ Richardson, The Islamic Antichrist, chap.1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Jesus, suffering and the crucifixion was not a tragic failure of his mission, but rather its fulfillment. 183

Jesus promises the kingdom of heaven for those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness (Matt. 5:10). Peter writes that believers are blessed even though if they suffer for the sake of righteousness; “do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled” (1 Pet. 3:14). James encourages by saying those who persevere under trial are blessed; when a man overcomes the test, he will receive a crown of life from the Lord, who promised to give to those who love Him (Jas 1:12). The Apostle Peter writes, a person finds favor when suffered unjustly for the sake of conscience toward God (1 Pet. 2:19). The Apostle James writes, blessed are those who endure sufferings like Job; in the end, the Lord will show compassion and reward them (Jas. 5:11).

Suffering is normative in the Christian life. God's children will suffer in this world. A believer is adopted into God's family, and as fellow heirs with Christ, a believer partakes in the suffering. If a believer suffers with Christ, the believer will be glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17). The suffering in this world is temporary and negligible when compared with the glory that will be revealed to a believer (Rom. 8:18). Gaffin rejects the idea that suffering is only for apostles and, on the contrary, he presents that Romans Chapter 8 plainly includes all believers and is inseparable from their adoption.184

The Apostle John writes, whoever is born of God overcomes the world; it is the faith that gives victory and overcomes the world. The one who overcomes the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5). The end-time prophecies are given in the


184 Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” 236.
Bible to warn and prepare the believers. Therefore, the knowledge of the end-time prophecies is crucial for a believer to persevere in the faith and to overcome the religious persecution.

Jesus promises multiple blessings upon him who is an overcomer. To him who overcomes, He promises to grant him to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God. The second death will not hurt him. To him who overcomes, Jesus promises to give some of the hidden manna, and a white-stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. To the overcomer who keeps God's deeds until the end, Jesus promises to give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, and give him the morning star. To the overcomer, Jesus promises to clothe in white garments and a promise to not erase his name from the book of life. Jesus promises to confess his name before His Father and before His angels. Jesus promises to make him a pillar in the temple of God. Jesus also promises to write the name of God and the name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem, on him who overcomes. Finally, Jesus promises to grant him to sit down on His throne as He sat on His Father's throne after He overcame.\(^{185}\)

The Bible asserts that those who pursue to live godly lives will face persecution. The persecution only gets worse as evil men proceed from bad to worse (2 Tim. 3:12-13). The Apostle Paul, pondering on his suffering and future blessings, wrote that he had fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept his faith. He anticipated for him a crown of righteousness from his Lord and Judge, Jesus Christ. He promised a crown for all those who love the appearing of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 4:7-8). Keeping faith through the persecution, like Paul, is very important. The biographies of the saints and martyrs will encourage the faith of believers.

Bonhoeffer points out the sayings of Jesus in which every Christian would have his own

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cross, destined and appointed by God, waiting for him. Each must endure his allotted share of suffering and rejection. However, each has a different share. Some, God deems worthy of the highest form of suffering and gives them the grace of martyrdom, while others he does not allow to be tempted above that which they can bear. However, in every case, the cross is the same.\textsuperscript{186} The suffering of the cross is laid on every Christian, Bonhoeffer continues, which every man must experience and abandon the attachments of this world.\textsuperscript{187} “But that cross and that way are both life and resurrection. “‘He that loseth [\textit{sic}] his life for my sake shall find it.’ In this promise, we hear the voice of him who holds the keys of death, the Son of God, who goes to the cross and the resurrection, and with him takes his own.”\textsuperscript{188} Morgan notes, “Such teaching will produce lives running contrary to all worldly estimate and custom, and discipleship will mean persecution, and so the Teacher adds a “blessed” for those who suffer through character.”\textsuperscript{189}

The writer of the Hebrews describes how the saints in the Old Testament and intertestament period experienced persecution and suffering and endured it by faith.

Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect (Heb. 11:35-39).

Christians are urged to rejoice in their sufferings as they are meant to partake in Christ’s

\textsuperscript{186} Bonhoeffer, \textit{The Cost of Discipleship}, chap. 4.

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., chap. 25.

\textsuperscript{189} Morgan, \textit{Discipleship}, chap.2.
sufferings, and they shall share in the revelation of eternal glory.\textsuperscript{190} The Apostle Peter assured that the new birth in Jesus would secure their future glory despite present trials.\textsuperscript{191} The believer’s behavior in suffering might be a more accurate identification of the central concern of 1 Peter.\textsuperscript{192}

“The problem of suffering is demonstrated further by the readers’ responses of fear (φοβεομαι, 3:6, 14) and anxiety (μέριμνα, 5:7) to their situation. The atmosphere created by suffering evoked these emotions in the hearts and minds of Peter’s audience and he sought throughout the letter to exhort and encourage them in view of their sentiments.”\textsuperscript{193}

In conclusion, the Bible insists that a believer must learn and understand the Scriptures and especially the end-time prophecies. Special blessings were promised those who heed and meditate on the prophetic Scriptures. There are many parallels to the eschatological narrative between Christianity and Islam. Although the narratives appear parallel, they are quite the opposite in essence. Islam is a false religion that is founded on jihad. Believers should pay attention to the end-time prophetic Scriptures so they will not be deceived. Christians should expect suffering and persecution in this mortal life. The Scriptures exhort believers to rejoice in suffering as they become partakers of Christ’s sufferings when they are adopted as the children of God.

The next section deals with the theoretical foundations and how to build upon the theological foundations reviewed in this section.


\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 83.

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 76.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation is like building the structure on the foundation of a building. One can build a secure building only on a strong foundation. If the foundation is weak, the construction on that foundation is destined to collapse. The theological foundation described in the previous section reveals that the knowledge of the Scriptures and especially the end-time prophecies is essential for a believer. Understanding the Scriptures is biblically warranted.

Theories are formulated to clarify, forecast, and comprehend phenomena and to challenge and extend existing knowledge. The theoretical foundation is the structure that can support a theory of a research study. A theoretical framework consists of concepts, together with their definitions, and existing theories that are used for the specific study. The theoretical framework introduces the practical aspects of the problem statement and how it is addressed.

The problem this project addressed is that a substantial portion of the congregants who attend Northcliff Baptist Church, Spring Hill, Florida, may not have proper knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam. The Theological Foundations section explained from the Bible how it is necessary for a believer “not to be uninformed” about the end-time Scriptures. One of the theories formulated by the researcher advocates that the knowledge of the Scriptures and its proper interpretation helps believers be properly equipped to expect religious persecution and prepares them psychologically and spiritually. The best way to impart that knowledge of eschatology is by teaching the end-time prophetic Scriptures in their proper context and inference to Islam.


195 Ibid.
Believers whose spirits have been regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit long for “more” of the “journey.” Brookfield pens, “Teaching is about making some kind of dent in the world so the world is different than it was before you practiced your craft. Knowing clearly what kind of dent you want to make in the world means you must continually ask yourself the most fundamental evaluative question of all—What effect am I having on students and their learning?” Educating the congregants at the Northcliffe Baptist Church on the end-time prophecies is a way to build upon the theological foundations identified in the previous section.

Disciples spend time learning, soaking up like sponges from the teaching and example of their master. Rabbis like Hillel and Shammai had disciples who learned how to interpret the Scriptures and relate them to life. Jesus and John the Baptist had disciples who learned from their masters. One of the qualifications for true disciples is the obedience to the Word of God and submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. “We have been given the hope of not just improved but transformed living. We were made for and crave to know God.”

Hull mentions a distaste for the teaching that differentiates being a Christian and being a disciple. “The common teaching is that a Christian is someone who by faith accepts Jesus as Savior, receives eternal life, and is safe and secure in the family of God; a disciple is a more serious Christian active in the practice of the spiritual disciplines and engaged in evangelizing


199 Ibid.

200 Gorman, “‘There’s Got to Be More!’, 23.

and training others.” Hull notes, he sees no biblical evidence for such a separation between a Christian and a disciple.

Although there is the Divine Author, the human authors of Scriptures expressed their divine message in a human language. They did not divulge their divine message through secret codes. Like most authors, the writers of the Scriptures wrote in a candid and direct manner so that readers would understand their message and live their lives accordingly.

Confident that the biblical authors adequately communicated the message, we have the obligation to interpret it correctly by following the conventions of language communication. In normal conversation we immediately understand what we hear with hardly a conscious thought. Our mental computer, the mind, automatically processes the information we hear. A lifetime of experience has programmed our memory bank to understand the meanings of words and sentences almost unconsciously. However, alas, this does not necessarily hold true when we read the Bible. For the Bible was originally written in foreign languages to people who lived a long time ago in different parts of the world with different ways of life. Statements that were quite clear to the initial readers may not communicate clearly to us at all. What was almost automatic comprehension for them takes considerably more effort for us.

The Scriptures themselves repeatedly claim that the people glorify God by obeying, in other words, by applying God’s Word to their lives. One cannot obey or apply God’s Word without proper understanding of it. One can learn and understand God’s Word by being a disciple of the Word of God.

Brooks, Schraw, and Crippen suggest classroom approaches to improve cognitive ability,

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203 Ibid.

204 Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 213.

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid., 478.
knowledge base, learning strategy, metacognition, and motivation. After gaining the importance of understanding the Scriptures, a brief examination of the various practices for implementing those theological foundations is presented here. Expository preaching on Sundays is one of the ways to address the problem church-wide. A sermon series can be designed to preach on end-time prophecies to better equip all the congregants. Teaching the books of Daniel and Revelation primarily covers much ground in Christian eschatology.

The Life Groups or Sunday School classes deliver discipleship through Bible teaching and fellowship experiences. In small groups, the members are encouraged to ask questions and get answers from fellow congregants or small-group leaders. This kind of interaction is not possible in the main service. A small-group leader can prepare the end-time prophecies and teach the class. If the small-group leader is not prepared to teach a class, he can use a video series. When using a video series, a lesson can be watched on a large screen followed by group discussion on that topic. The small-groups pastor or lead-pastor can help in selecting the correct course curriculum on eschatology.

Another option is to equip believers who attend Christian Life Development (CLD) classes on Wednesdays. The teaching curriculum should be designed carefully to include end-time prophecies. Attention should be focused to include the inferences between the Islamic and Christian eschatology as recognized in the theological foundations section.

Organizing prophecy conferences and seminars are some other ways to educate believers. By hosting a conference or a seminar and inviting pastors or speakers who studied eschatology extensively can help the congregants to learn about end-time prophecies. Multiple sessions can

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209 Shirley, “It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple,” 221.
be organized to address specific topics in each session. Inviting missionaries, those who worked in Islamic countries, to share their experiences will help believers to grow and mature in their spiritual walk. Sending small groups of congregants on mission trips to assist missionaries in the field also helps the members to learn to understand persecution and mature in faith.

The intervention plan is to educate the congregants at the Northcliffe Baptist Church who will attend an exclusive CLD class on the topic of end-time prophecies and enduring persecution. When church members are not prepared for religious persecution, they may walk away from the faith when they are tested. Educating the congregants about the promised future blessings on those who endure to the end will encourage them to stand for their faith during persecution. A principal reason this problem exists is that the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophetic Scriptures are not being adequately taught and their inferences to Islamic eschatology are not discussed. To address the problem, the researcher will educate the congregants on both Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology and their inferences.

The researcher is committed to developing a class curriculum on end-time prophecies and educate the participants for three 90-minute sessions for the purpose of the research at Northcliffe Baptist Church. The actual plan involves providing training for the participants who will attend a special class on Wednesdays. The teaching curriculum should be designed carefully to include end-time prophecies. Attention should be focused to include the interpretations between the Islamic and Christian eschatology as recognized in the theological foundation section. The researcher will provide the necessary handouts to the participants. The training will be offered as a Christian Life Development (CLD) class on Wednesday evenings.

In conclusion, the Theoretical Foundations section builds on the Literature Review and Theological Foundations. The best way to impart that knowledge of eschatology is by teaching.
The congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church will be taught in the end-time prophetic Scriptures and its inferences to Islam. Various methods of training are explored. The researcher elects to teach a Christian Life Development (CLD) class as the method of intervention. The believers will be better equipped to face the test of their faith when the persecution happens. The methodology for this intervention will be described in the next chapter.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The Methodology chapter details the procedure implemented for this thesis research project. The method of intervention selected for this thesis project is to conduct a unique Christian Life Development (CLD) class for three consecutive weeks and survey the participants before and after the intervention.

The purpose of the intervention is to raise the awareness of the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church who attend this exclusive CLD class so they can expect religious persecution and prepare for the same. The topic for the CLD class is about end-time prophetic Scriptures, inferences between Islamic and Christian eschatology, and Christian persecution. When church members are not prepared for religious persecution, they may walk away from the faith when their faith is tested. Educating the congregants about the promised future blessings for those who endure to the end will encourage them to stand for their faith through the persecution. A principal reason this problem exists is that the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophetic Scriptures are not being adequately taught and their inferences to Islamic eschatology are not discussed. To address the problem, the researcher educated the congregants on both Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology and their inferences. The researcher also taught that persecution and suffering are normative in the Christian life. The researcher prepared the teaching material from chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis project.
**Intervention Design**

After getting approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher consulted with the Lead Pastor and the Small-groups Pastor for necessary permissions to conduct the research at the church. After consultation with the Small-groups Pastor, the special CLD class details were printed on the brochure and was made available at the information desk. An announcement about this particular CLD class was made on a Sunday morning during the service to inform the congregants so they could participate in the research. The researcher requested the Small-groups Pastor to send out emails to all the small group leaders to relay the information about the special CLD class. Besides, the researcher personally invited some people at church to participate in the research. An announcement about the CLD class was also posted on the Facebook page.

The researcher expected approximately thirty participants for the study. For the research to be successful, a minimum of ten participants are required. However, thirty-five participants attended the training. Twenty-eight participants attended all the three sessions and completed both the before- and after-surveys. The participants who took only one survey were not included in the research analysis.

For this thesis project, the researcher developed a class curriculum on end-time prophecies and educated the participants for three ninety-minute sessions at the church.

- **Session One:** End-time prophecies and promised blessings.
- **Session Two:** Inferences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology.
- **Session Three:** How to endure persecution.

**Training Outline**

The three sections in the survey form closely align with the three-week classes.
Participants were tested on these topics before and after the intervention. The training material was created from chapters 1 and 2. The following topics were taught during the three sessions:

**Session # 1 [Week 1]: End-time prophecies (eschatology) and promised blessings**

- The Bible insists a believer understands the prophetic scriptures.
- Eschatology helps to look for hope beyond the concerns of the present day.
- The Bible promises special blessings upon those who read, hear, and heed to the prophecies.
- The Prophet Daniel was told to seal up the prophecies until end-time.
- The Apostle John was told not to seal up the prophecies as the time is near.
- The Apostle Paul writes to not be ignorant of the end-times (1. Thess. 4:13).
- All Scripture is God-breathed and must be carefully studied and obeyed (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

**Session # 2 [Week 2]: Inferences in the Christian and Islamic eschatology**

- Survey of Islam and its teachings
- Islamic eschatology (theology of the end-time prophecies)
- Christian eschatology
- Inferences to Islam in the Bible
- Differences between the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Qur’an
- Islamic Sharia Law
- Treatment of Christians under Islamic Sharia Law
- The second coming of Jesus in Islam

**Session # 3 [Week 3]: Religious Persecution as Normative in the Christian Life**

- What is Religious Persecution?
- Is persecution normative in Christian life?
• “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage…” (John 16:33).

• Persecution of the disciples of Jesus Christ

• Persecution of the early Christians

• Persecution of Christians in Islamic countries

• Those who live godly lives in Christ will suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12)

• Blessings of overcoming religious persecution (Rev. 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21)

• How the biographies of the saints and martyrs will encourage the faith of believers

**Christian Persecution in Pictures**

The researcher also included a few pictures and showed to the participants how Christians are targeted and persecuted for their faith in countries like Pakistan, Egypt, Libya, and Iran.

Figure 3.1. Coptic Christians beheaded in Libya 2015

**Removed to comply with copyright**
Figure 3.2. Pakistani Christian Woman set on fire for refusing to convert to Islam

Figure 3.3. Islamist gunman kills 147 Christian students
Figure 3.4. Multiple attacks on Christians in Egypt

Figure 3.5. Illegal to convert, or preach in Iran
Training Implementation

The training was offered to the participants as a Christian Life Development (CLD) class on Wednesday evenings. The teaching curriculum was designed carefully to include the blessings of the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures. Attention was given to include the inferences between the Islamic and Christian eschatology as recognized in the theological foundation section. Also, the researcher taught that persecution and suffering are normative in the Christian life.

The researcher prepared the necessary survey instruments (Appendix A) and the teaching material, mainly from chapters 1 and 2, before starting the first session. The classroom procured for this purpose could accommodate up to forty people. All the participants were seated without congestion to answer the surveys effortlessly. The classroom was equipped with a large
television and a whiteboard. The researcher used a TV connected to a computer to deliver the presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint. The researcher did not take any pictures or record video of the participants. However, the researcher recorded a video of all the teaching sessions, without showing the participants in the video, for future reference and analysis.

Interested congregants signed up voluntarily to attend the class free of charge. On the first day of the class, the researcher explained the purpose of the class and the participants’ involvement in filling the survey forms. Attendees were given an option to walk away and attend a different CLD class on the campus if they are not willing to participate in the research. Participants were told that if a person decides not to participate in the research, he or she is at no obligation to continue the study. They were given other options to attend any other CLD class on the campus, or they can leave the church campus. Those who decided to stay and continue the class signed the attendance sheet as their willingness to continue in the research. The researcher conducted the survey anonymously by assigning a unique number to each participant only known to the participant. Each handout-folder (fig. 3.7), with a unique two-digit number affixed inside the folder at random, was made available for the participants. Each participant picked up a folder as they walked into the class from the shuffled stack of folders. The number inside the folder is not revealed to the researcher. The folder included a recruitment letter (Appendix C) and a consent form (Appendix B) with details about the research. Participants were also told that if they want to drop out in the middle of the three-week study, their survey forms will be discarded and not considered part of the research. At the end of each class, the researcher emailed the slides to the participants who requested them.
Figure 3.7. Participant Handout Folder

The participants were asked to write the number from their folders on the survey instruments in the space provided (fig. 3.8). The same number is used for the surveys taken before and after the three-week training sessions to measure any improvement in the scores. The researcher informed the participants that their responses are kept completely anonymous and were asked to answer all the questions as honestly as possible.

Figure 3.8. Survey Form – Number Box
Survey Form Grading

The researcher used printed survey forms to capture data. The researcher used rating-scale, fixed response, and dual response formats in the survey instrument. Using the survey instruments, the researcher conducted quantitative research. Points were awarded based on the participant’s responses.

The survey form is categorized into three sections. The maximum score for the survey form, including all the three sections, is 100 points. The survey form consists of different kinds of questions, which include rating scale, dichotomous (yes or no) questions, and fill-in-the-blanks. The survey questions, with a rating scale between 1 and 10, are given a score depending on the participant’s choice. For example, if the participant answered 7 for a question with a rating scale between 1 and 10, the score will be seven for that question. The dichotomous question (“Yes” or “No”) answers will carry one point for each correct response. For the questions with fill-in-the-blanks, each blank is given two points for a correct response. Nevertheless, question number 10 is graded differently. For question 10, if a participant answers all the four blanks correctly, they will be awarded five points. Otherwise, each correct response to a blank receives one point. The total points for section one is 33. The total points for section two is 35. The total points for section three is 32. Thus, the total for all the three sections combined is 100 points.

Section 1: End-time Prophecies

Section one from the survey form captures a participant’s general understanding of Christian eschatology. There were ten questions included in the first section. The maximum points allocated for section one is 33. Section one is depicted in figure 3.9.
Figure 3.9. Survey Form – Section 1: End-time Prophecies

**Question 1:**

The selection on the rating scale identifies the knowledge of the participant about Christian end-time prophecies. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 2:**

The selection on the rating scale identifies the knowledge about the current world events related to religious persecution. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 3:**

Do you believe in the Rapture? The expected answer for this question is “Yes.”

**Question 4:**

Christians are expected to recognize the end-times. The expected answer is “Yes.”
Question 5:
All the end-time prophecies are symbolic and are not literal. The expected answer is “No.”

Question 6:
The knowledge of the end-time prophecies is not important for a Christian. The expected answer is “No.”

Question 7:
Can a person believe in Antichrist thinking he is the true Messiah? The answer is “Yes.”

Question 8:
Does receiving the mark of the Beast (Antichrist) forfet eternal life forever? The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 9:
How many years are generally considered as tribulation period? The expected answer is either “seven” or “three and half.”

Question 10:
What are the colors of the four horses described in the Book of Revelation? The four colors are White, Red, Black, Pale / Green.

Section 2: Christian and Islamic Eschatology

Section two from the survey form captures a participant’s general knowledge of the inferences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology. The maximum points allocated for section two is 35. Section two from the Survey form is depicted in figure 3.10.
**Section 2: Christian and Islamic End-time Theology (Eschatology)**

11) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about the world religions?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

Inexpert | Expert

12) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about Islam?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

Inexpert | Expert

---

13) Do you find inferences to Islam in the Bible?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14) The prophet Muhammad is mentioned more times than Jesus (Isa) in Qur'an.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15) Islam also teaches that Jesus died on the cross.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16) Islam also teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17) Islam categorically denies Jesus’ divinity.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18) Does Muslims believe in Antichrist?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19) Does Muslims believe in the second coming of Jesus?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20) The Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Qur'an are one and the same.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21) Islam encourages violence and advocates the killing of unbelievers of Allah.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22) Sharia Law will force Christians to convert to Islam or be killed.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

23) Christians enjoy freedom of religion under Sharia Law.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

24) What is the color that is highly revered in Islam?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

25) How is capital punishment generally carried out under Sharia (Islamic) Law?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Question 11:**

The selection on the rating scale identifies the knowledge of the participant about world religions. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 12:**

The selection on the rating scale identifies the knowledge of the participant about Islam. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 13:**

Do you find inferences to Islam in the Bible? The expected answer is “Yes.”
Question 14:
The prophet Muhammad is mentioned more times than Jesus (Isa) in Qur’an? The expected answer is “No.” Jesus is mentioned more times than prophet Muhammad in Qur’an.

Question 15:
Islam also teaches that Jesus died on the cross. The expected answer is “No.”

Question 16:
Islam also teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin. The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 17:
Islam categorically denies Jesus’ divinity. The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 18:
Does Muslims believe in Antichrist? The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 19:
Does Muslims believe in the second coming of Jesus? The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 20:
The Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Qur’an are one and the same. The expected answer is “No.”

Question 21:
Islam encourages violence and advocates the killing of unbelievers of Allah. The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 22:
Sharia Law will force Christians to convert to Islam or be killed. The expected answer is “Yes.”

Question 23:
Christians enjoy freedom of religion under Sharia Law. The expected answer is “No.”
**Question 24:**

What is the color that is highly revered in Islam? The expected answer is “green.”

**Question 25:**

How is capital punishment generally carried out under Sharia (Islamic) Law? The expected answer is “beheading.”

A detailed explanation for these topics can be found in Chapter 2.

**Section 3: Religious Persecution**

Section three from the survey form captures a participant’s understanding of Christian persecution and suffering. The maximum points allocated for section three is 32. Section three from the Survey form is depicted in figure 3.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26)</td>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10, how normative is persecution in Christian life?</td>
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<tr>
<td>27)</td>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of change in the persecution of Christians you would expect in a decade?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28)</td>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of persecution of Christians you expect from Islam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29)</td>
<td>Those who live godly lives in Christ will not face persecution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30)</td>
<td>Jesus taught His followers to expect persecution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Section 3: Religious Persecution](image)

Figure 3.11. Survey Form: Section 3: Religious Persecution
**Question 26:**
The selection on the rating scale identifies how normative persecution is in Christian life. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 27:**
The selection on the rating scale identifies the level of change in the persecution of Christians in a decade. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 28:**
The selection on the rating scale identifies how normative persecution is in Christian life. The expected answer is a value between 1 and 10.

**Question 29:**
Those who live godly lives in Christ will not face persecution. The expected answer is “No.”

**Question 30:**
Jesus taught His followers to expect persecution. The expected answer is “Yes.”

**Data Capture and Tabulation**

At the beginning of the first session, survey forms were distributed to the participants. A volunteer participant collected the filled-in survey forms from all the participants and gave them to the researcher. Again, at the end of the third session, the survey forms were distributed to the participants and collected by a volunteer after all the participants completed their responses. The researcher graded the survey forms and tabulated the results in an Excel Spreadsheet.

The before and after surveys were matched by the unique number to pair the participants’ responses before and after the three-week class. The pairing of before and after tests helps to analyze the results individually and collectively as a group. The following three categories were also analyzed separately.
• Section One: End-time prophecies and promised blessings
• Section Two: Inferences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology
• Section Three: How to endure persecution

The researcher did not use triangulation. The researcher used only survey forms to capture data. Identical survey forms are used before and after the intervention to measure any effectiveness of the intervention. The researcher did not use any other methods for gathering data.

The data captured were analyzed by comparing the statistical means from two related samples; e.g., observations before and after an intervention on the same participant. The successful outcome in this intervention is to see improvement in scores in the third category and at least one other category, either first or second. All three categories were analyzed for a paired t-test. A paired t-test is used to compare the means of the two samples of related data.

Since the participants were given a random two-digit number from the hand-out folder, the participants’ numbers are not contiguous. When analyzing the data, for the sake of convenience, the researcher assigned a new number for each of those participants with a new sequence from 1 to 28, as depicted in figure 3.12. This new sequence is used in all the subsequent tables and charts.

<table>
<thead>
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The detailed analysis and results with various charts and tables were documented in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Results

The results chapter describes the findings of the intervention plan. The participants were surveyed before and after the training sessions. The before- and after-intervention data (pre- and post-intervention data) is collected from the survey instruments and tabulated in a spreadsheet. The researcher analyzed the data in two different approaches. The first approach is to calculate the statistical mean of the two tests and compute the difference. Although redundant, the second approach is to perform a one-tailed t-test with paired data, pre- and post-test data for any increase. The researcher perceives a significant increase in the knowledge and understanding of the end-time prophetic Scriptures. As a result of this increase, there was a significant improvement in the scores about religious persecution as normative in the Christian life and expectancy of persecution and suffering. The subsequent sections describe the breakdown of these results.

First Approach: Statistical Mean

Twenty-eight participants attended all three classes and turned in both the pre- and post-intervention survey forms. The survey scores of the participants before and after the training are as shown in figure 4.1. In the table below, the first column represents the participants’ numbers. The second column lists participants’ scores before the intervention. The third column represents the scores after the three training sessions. The fourth column represents the difference between the before- and after-intervention scores. The last row in the table provides the statistical mean.
The mean of the pre-intervention scores is 57.07. After the three weeks of training, the mean value raised to 82.86. Evidently, there was a significant increase in the scores by a margin of 25.79 points. Figure 4.1 represents the combined scores of all the three sections in the survey.

The maximum points possible for the survey form is 100.

<table>
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Mean 57.07 82.86 25.79

Figure 4.1. Survey Scores Before and After the Training Table

All participants’ scores increased by an average of 25.79. The maximum improvement is registered by participants 21 and 27, with a difference of 43 out of 100 points between after and
before scores. The intervention made a significant impact on the participants’ understanding of the scriptures. Their knowledge of the end-time scriptures increased after the training.

Figure 4.2. Survey Scores Before and After the Training Table

Figure 4.2 shows the improvement in scores because of the intervention. All the participants’ scores show an increase after the intervention. The minimum improvement of 10 points is noted for the participant number 19, where the scores improved from 68 to 78. The maximum improvement is registered by participants 21 and 27. For participant 21, the scores improved from 32 to 75, a difference of 43 points. For participant 27, the difference is 43 points, the same as participant 21, but the scores moved from 25 to 68.

After analyzing the overall scores, the researcher also analyzed individual sections within the survey form. The researcher also separately analyzed questions 26, 27, and 28 from the survey instrument. Evaluating the subsections and individual questions in the survey form helps the researcher to understand the impact of the intervention better. Explaining the thesis analytically, the researcher contends that the improvement in scores in section 1 and section 2
should increase the scores in section 3.

**Section 1: End-time Prophecies**

The End-time prophecies section deals with the general knowledge of Christian eschatology. By looking at the mean for the first section only, there is an increase in the scores from 20.25 to 26.86 out of 33 points. The difference is 6.61 points, which is a 20 percent increase. The training did help the participants gain more knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures.

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**Mean**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>26.86</td>
<td>6.61</td>
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</table>

Figure 4.3. Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scripture Scores Table
Figure 4.4. Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scripture Scores Chart

Figure 4.4 shows the improvement in scores for the first section because of the intervention. All the participants’ scores show an increase after the intervention. The minimum improvement of 1 point is noted for participant number 5 in this category, where the scores improved from 22 to 23. The maximum improvement is registered by participants 13 and 26. For both participants 13 and 26, the scores improved from 16 to 29, a difference of 13 points.

Section 2: Christian and Islamic Eschatology

Section 2: Christian and Islamic eschatology deals with the knowledge of Christian eschatology and its inferences with Islamic eschatology. By looking at the mean for the second section only, there is an increase in the scores from 14 to 26 out of 35 points. The difference is 12 points, a 34.2% increase, which is the highest mean difference among the three sections in the
survey.

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Figure 4.5. Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scripture Scores Table

Many participants were unaware of the inferences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology before the intervention. In other words, the participants gained more knowledge about Christian and Islamic eschatologies and their anti-parallel narratives and inferences. The increase in the mean value for this section is higher when compared with the other two sections in the survey form.
Section 3: Religious Persecution

Section 3: Religious Persecution deals with the knowledge of the suffering, persecution, and expectancy of persecution in the Christian life. By looking at the mean for the third section only, there was an increase in the scores from 22.82 to 30 out of 32 points. The difference is 7.18 points, a 22 percent increase.

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**Mean** 22.82 30.00 7.18

Figure 4.7. Expectancy of Religious Persecution Table

Figure 4.8. Expectancy of Christian Persecution and Suffering Chart
From figure 4.7 and figure 4.8, the most significant improvement in the scores can be observed for participant 27, where the scores jumped from 0 to 28. The least improvement, rather negative improvement, is observed for participant 4, with scores dropping from 32 to 31. This is the only instance where a drop is observed, and the drop is insignificant. Participant number 4 rated 10 in the pre-intervention survey for question 28, “how normative is persecution in Christian life?” The same participant gave a score of 9 for the same question in the post-intervention. Other than this one instance, all the participants’ scores were improved.

The analysis reveals there was a significant improvement in the expectation of suffering and persecution in the Christian life and the understanding that religious persecution is normative in the Christian life.

Figure 4.9 summarizes the three sections from the survey form. All three sections show an increase in the scores because of the intervention.
The researcher further expanded the analysis down to some of the specific questions that explicitly deal with persecution and suffering.

**Analysis on Question 26**

Question 26: On a scale of 1 to 10, how normative is persecution in Christian life?

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Figure 4.10. Analysis on Question 26 Table

Fourteen percent of the participants gave a score of 10 for this question, even before any
intervention. Among the participants who gave a score of 10 for this question grew from 14 to 67 after the intervention. The mean for this question improved from 5.64 to 9.11 out of 10 points, a difference of 3.46 as depicted in figure 4.10.

Figure 4.11. Analysis on Question 26 Chart

The question about “how normative is persecution in Christian life?” saw nearly 35 percent improvement because of the intervention. This increase can be directly attributed to the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, consequently affirming the thesis statement.

Analysis on Question 27

Question 27: On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of change in the persecution of Christians you would expect in a decade? Nearly 20 percent of the participants gave a score of 10 for this question even before the intervention. After the intervention, nearly 60 percent gave a
score of 10. The mean improvement for this question is 2.14, raised from 7.21 to 9.36 out of 10 points. Figures 4.12 and 4.13 shows participants’ scores for question 27.

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Figure 4.12. Analysis on Question 27 Table

The question about “the level of change in the persecution of Christians you would expect in a decade” saw nearly 21 percent improvement because of the intervention. This increase can be ascribed to the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, thus supporting the thesis.
Question 28: On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of persecution of Christians you expect from Islam? Nearly 50 percent of the participants expected persecution from Islam before the intervention. There is no more improvement possible for the 50 percent who already gave a 10 for this question. The remaining participants’ scores were also improved after the intervention.

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Figure 4.14. Analysis on Question 28 Table

![Figure 4.15. Analysis on Question 28 Chart](image)
The question about “the level of persecution of Christians you expect from Islam” saw nearly 13 percent improvement because of the intervention. This increase can be credited to the intervention. Figures 4.14 and 4.15 shows participants’ scores for question 28.

**Second Approach: t-Test Calculation for Two Dependent Means**

T-tests are convenient hypothesis tests used in statistics when comparing two means for two sets of data. It is used to determine if a “real” difference exists or if it is just a random difference is observed. In other words, did the intervention have any positive outcome?

The t-test for dependent means (also called a repeated-measures t-test, paired-samples t-test, matched pairs t-test, and matched samples t-test) is used to compare the means of two sets of scores that are directly related to each other. So, for example, it could be used to test whether participants’ knowledge improved under two conditions: first, before the training, second, after the three-week training.

**Null Hypothesis (H₀)**

The researcher performed a one-tailed t-test with paired data, pre- and post-intervention data. The hypothesis is that there will be a difference in mean pre- and post-intervention. The researcher assumes there will be a positive effect because of the intervention. The null hypothesis \( H₀: U_D = U_1 - U_2 = 0 \), where \( U_D \) equals the mean of the population of difference scores across the two measurements. The Null hypothesis, often denoted by \( H₀ (H-zero) \), affirms that there will not be any difference. Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and assumes the alternative hypothesis.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H₁)**

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is a statistical hypothesis used in hypothesis testing, which
states that there is a significant difference between the set of variables. It is often referred to as the hypothesis other than the null hypothesis, often denoted by $H_1$ (H-one). It is what the researcher seeks to prove, in an indirect way, by using the test. The acceptance of alternative hypothesis depends on the rejection of the null hypothesis i.e. until and unless the null hypothesis is rejected, an alternative hypothesis cannot be accepted.

**t-Test Calculation for one-tailed Test**

The formula to calculate the value of $t$ is shown below. \(^{210}\)

$$t = \frac{(\sum D)/N}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2/N}{N - 1}(N)}}$$

**Difference Scores Calculations**

*Mean Difference:* 25.79

$\mu = 0$

$S^2 = SS/df = 1582.71/(28-1) = 58.62$

$S^2_M = S^2/N = 58.62/28 = 2.09$

$S_M = \sqrt{S^2_M} = \sqrt{2.09} = 1.45$

**T-value Calculation**

$t = (M - \mu)/S_M = (25.79 - 0)/1.45 = 17.82$

Significance Level: 0.05

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the understanding of the end-time Scriptures of participants pre- and post-intervention. The value of $t$ is 17.821276. The value of $p$ \(^{210}\) A Statistical t-Test calculator. https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ttestdependent/default2.aspx.
is < .00001. The result is significant at p < .05. Based on the t and p values there is a significant increase in the scores because of the intervention, thus affirming the alternative hypothesis.

SD – Standard Deviation

df – Degrees of freedom (Total Participants - 1) = (28 -1) = 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Before SD</th>
<th>After SD</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>57.07</td>
<td>82.86</td>
<td>25.79</td>
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<td>Variance</td>
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<tr>
<td>df - Degrees of freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.16. t-Test Results Table

The scores of the participants were hypothesized to increase after intervention. Scores increased after the training from M=57.43 (SD=11.72) to M=82.86 (SD=5.29) Sample N =28. The change was significant, t(28) = 17.821276, p < .00001. The result is significant at p < .05.

These results suggest that the training does improve the knowledge and expectancy of persecution. Specifically, the knowledge of eschatology. The second approach (t-Test) also agrees with the first method.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to raise awareness to the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church, Spring Hill, Florida, about Christian and Islamic eschatology and their inferences and prepare them to expect religious persecution. The researcher perceives a gap in the precedent literature about the Islamic connection and Christian persecution. When church members are not prepared for religious persecution, they may walk away from the faith. Educating the congregants about the promised future blessings to those who endure to the end will encourage them to stand for their faith in the midst of persecution.

The problem this project addressed is that a substantial portion of the congregants may not have proper knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam. A principal reason this problem exists is that the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophetic Scriptures are not being adequately taught, and their inferences to Islamic eschatology are not discussed.

The researcher educated the participants on Christian and Islamic eschatology, so they are not caught off guard with the religious persecution for being a Christian. The participants were given survey forms to fill before and after the intervention. The researcher observed from the surveys, the training provided to the participants increased their knowledge of eschatology (both Christian and Islamic) and expectancy of religious persecution. The intervention helped the
participants to gain an understanding of religious persecution and suffering for Christ as normative in the Christian life.

**Overview**

This thesis project examined the importance of the end-time prophetic Scriptures and their inferences to Islam. Islam is proliferating and will have more followers than any other religion in the next half-century. Contrary to popular belief that Islam is a peaceful religion, its scriptures, tradition, and history show otherwise. There are many anti-parallels between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology. The precedence literature does not sufficiently address the Islamic connection with Christian persecution. The researcher asserts that by training the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church, they will grow in understanding of eschatology and expect religious persecution as normative in the Christian life. The training also helps participants not to get deceived but to discern the spirit of antichrist. Beale notes, “the prophecy of the antichrist has begun fulfillment in that his spirit has begun to come and inspire his false teachers to do their deceiving work.” Understanding of eschatology, Gaffin writes, had a far-reaching impact in the past century.

Those who are irritated or puzzled by the word *eschatology* in the vocabulary of Bible studies, Gaffin notes, have not read the New Testament carefully or not able to perceive what it says.

In Chapter 1, the researcher identified the problem presented, purpose statement, underlying assumptions, definition, limitations, delimitations, thesis statement, and an overview of the ministry context, where the research was conducted.

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214 Ibid.
In Chapter 2, the researcher stressed from the precedent literature the importance of applying hermeneutical principles the Scriptures correctly. Having a solid understanding of the framework of all the Scriptures helps a believer to apply the Scriptures in the proper context. For example, those who have the knowledge of the seventy-week prophecies in the Book of Daniel can correctly place the Book of Revelation and its seven-year tribulation in the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy. This understanding brings clarity and helps to differentiate between the Jewish nation and the Church age.

Religious persecution of the believers could come from many venues, but the focus of this research is narrowed down to Islam because of many anti-parallel accounts in both Christian and Islamic eschatology and gaps in precedent literature. Islam claimed to be the only true religion and was mandated to bring non-Muslims (infidels) into subjugation under Islamic law by any means (Qur’an 8:38-39; 9:29). Some Muslim leaders advocate violence against Christians. Tawhidi, who is a Muslim Imam, pens, “The irony here is that the present-day Islamic scholars …have issued fatwas (verdicts) ordering the killing and beheading of Christians by describing them as polytheists who believe in a material God, Jesus.” A brief survey of Islam in the context of anti-parallels with Christian eschatology was covered in Chapter 2. Also, in Chapter 2, the researcher described the literature review, theoretical foundations, and theological foundations pertinent to this study.

In Chapter 3, the researcher described the methodology used for this research. The researcher developed a curriculum from theoretical and theological foundations sections and educated the participants for three 90-minute sessions at the church over three weeks.

- Session One: End-time prophecies and promised blessings

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• Session Two: Inferences between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology
• Session Three: How to endure persecution

The researcher emphasized that the knowledge and understanding of all the Scriptures are essential, as “All Scripture is inspired by God…” (2 Tim. 3:16). It is also essential to study the end-time prophetic Scriptures, like the Book of Revelation, as special blessings are pronounced. “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Rev. 1:3). The researcher surveyed the participants before and after the intervention.

There were three sections in the survey form that corresponds to the three-week training. The three sections are (1) End-time Prophecies, (2) Christian and Islamic Eschatology, and (3) Religious Persecution. The first two sections deal with the knowledge and understanding of eschatology. The third section deals with persecution and suffering as normative in the Christian life. Each of these sections saw an improvement in the scores after the intervention. The researcher hypothesized accurately that the increase in the scores in the first two sections would increase the scores in the third section. In other words, the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures would increase the expectation of persecution and suffering in the Christian life.

In Chapter 4, the participants’ scores from the surveys were tabulated, analyzed, and published. The researcher attached tables and charts to depict the results. Although redundant, a t-Test was also used to determine if a “real” difference exists or if it is just a random difference was observed. A t-Test is used in statistics when comparing two means for two sets of data is also used to observe a real difference.

**About the Research**

The research intervention with the participants took place at the church from August 21
to September 4, 2019 and included adults eighteen years of age or older. The surveys were conducted before the first class and after the last training session. Out of thirty-five participants who attended the study, twenty-eight participants attended all the three sessions and completed both surveys.

Comparison with the Published Work

The precedent literature did not reveal an adequate correlation between understanding the scriptures and expectancy of persecution, which is the main focus of this study. This study affirms that knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures increases the expectation of persecution and suffering in the Christian life. The study also enhanced the understanding of persecution and suffering as normative in the Christian life. According to Open Doors USA, “Islamic oppression fuels Christian persecution in 8 of the top 10 countries.”216 Gaffin describes, “Christian suffering is not merely or only suffering for Christ but the ‘sufferings of Christ.’”217

The researcher sees a gap in the precedent literature about the link between knowledge of eschatology and persecution, and thus no direct comparison can be made with the previous studies. However, published work pointed out the importance of knowing both Christian and Islamic eschatology. It also highlighted the persecution that exists in Islamic countries. These topics were addressed separately in the precedent literature. This study asserts that the knowledge of end-time prophetic Scriptures will enhance the expectation of persecution and suffering in the Christian life.

Lessons Learned

One of the lessons the researcher learned during the study is that 95 percent of the

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216 Open Door USA, “Christian Persecution.”

217 Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” 234.
participants in the research typically attend other Bible classes at church, although the details about the research were announced to the whole church and the particulars were published in the Sunday church bulletins. If the participants had been from the general population of the church, the results would be different, and the improvement in the scores would have been much higher. This group of participants, who would generally attend Christian Life Development (CLD) classes, would skew the results when applied to the whole church, where many congregants may not have the same knowledge of the Bible.

The researcher also learned that the participants were uninformed about Islam and its inferences to the Bible. Nevertheless, at least 50 percent of the participants believed that Islam persecutes Christians even before the intervention. These numbers may not apply to the congregants in the church who do not attend other Bible studies or Christian Life Development (CLD) classes.

It appears some of the congregants do not have time to attend CLD classes or Bible study groups except an hour on Sunday mornings. This trend is not limited to the local church but applies to the global church in general. This phenomenon is higher in the younger generation. Some young Christians are even ignoring the Sunday morning services. “A worldwide decline in the number of young adults that attend services is also evident. Younger members of society have enormous work pressure and, with it, abundant choice for leisure, relaxation and social activities, which could be distracting them from attending church.”²¹⁸ The researcher believes, for the majority of the congregants, Sunday morning sermons are the only chance to hear God’s Word. Thus, eschatology should be preached not only in the CLD classes but on Sunday.

mornings as well.

**Comparing Results in Other Settings**

A significant number of participants of this research attended other small group Bible Studies and CLD classes. In other words, these participants were already exposed to some Bible training other than the Sunday morning sermons. There will be a much higher margin of improvement in the scores if the research were conducted on a general population in the church. This study could be further extended to congregants of certain age groups to know how different age groups would perform. The research can be extended to other churches in the area, comparing the knowledge of eschatology among different churches.

This research can also be extended to different geographic locations and compare the results. The researcher would be curious to compare the results with a church in an Islamic country where Christians are persecuted for their faith. In such a scenario, the expectancy of persecution will not be meaningful as they face persecution routinely. The survey forms may have to be updated to change the verbiage to endurance instead of expectancy. The research in those areas may even require face-to-face interviews, instead of just using survey instruments with the believers those who are going through persecution.

**Effectiveness of the Project**

The project was very effective even among the participants who regularly attend other Christian Life Development (CLD) classes. The results of this research might be similar in any church setting. Outside the church, people may not believe in the authority of the Bible and may dismiss the need to learn the Scriptures. Hence the study results cannot be applied to skeptics.
outside the church. This study showed promising results to expect and prepare for religious persecution.

The researcher strongly advocates churches to teach all the scriptures, including end-time prophetic Scriptures, which will prepare believers to “take up one’s cross” to follow Jesus with the “blessed hope.” The effectiveness of the project could be improved when more time is allocated to interact with the participants to answer any questions after each training session. The researcher could have conducted some face to face interviews to compare the results from the surveys.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations is the inability to conduct the study in a full church setting, to have a mix of congregants, instead of having the participants that typically attend CLD classes. The church schedule and logistics would not allow conducting the research on Sunday mornings.

The second limitation is that although the researcher trusts the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures would make a believer endure persecution and suffering, measuring the endurance of a participant is difficult if not impractical. Gauging the endurance of persecution requires interviews with believers who have experienced persecution first-hand. Because of the limited resources, time, and scope, the hypothesis is revised to measure expectancy rather than endurance. The question “how normative is persecution in Christian life?” saw nearly 35 percent improvement because of the intervention. This increase can be directly attributed to the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, consequently affirming the thesis statement.

Another limitation is that the researcher used an identical questionnaire for surveying the participants before and after the training. The drawback in this situation would be that some passionate participants could prepare on their own before taking the second survey, which could
skew the results when the preparation is done outside the intervention process. The advantage with this approach of using an identical questionnaire is that the results can be compared more evenly. If a different questionnaire were to be used, it would be hard to grasp the results if there was an improvement in the scores when comparing before and after training.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This research focused only on a few eschatological scriptures for inferences between Islamic and Christian literature. The research can be extended to include other passages in the Bible that have these inferences. This research can also be further extended to various age groups and the results compared. The results from this research can be used as a general measurement, but results could vary in different settings. The researcher conducted this training for three weeks. The researcher recommends increasing the intervention to at least six weeks for future study. The current research unintentionally included ninety-five percent participants who usually attend special CLD classes. The researcher assumes the improvement in scores would be similar if not better for the congregants who does not attend any CLD classes and only attends the Sunday morning service.

The research can also be extended to study the persecuted Church and get answers to the following questions: (1) How did they endure persecution and remained in their faith? (2) Did the expectation of persecution in Christian life help them to prepare for persecution? The connotation of persecution differs from country to country. This research can be further extended to churches in different countries and compare the results.

**Implementation**

The researcher recommends that the Lead Pastor and the Small Group Pastor at
Northcliffe Baptist Church make plans to educate the congregants at a much deeper level on the end-time prophecies. When the believers are taught persecution is normative in the Christian life, they will be better equipped to face the test of their faith when the persecution happens. The researcher recommends teaching a sermon series on Sunday mornings about the end-time prophecies and enduring persecution when most of the congregants are present.

The researcher also recommends organizing prophetic conferences in conjunction with local churches to better equip more people from the community who may not normally attend the CLD classes on Wednesday evenings.

The researcher recommends training the small-group leaders on eschatology. In turn, these leaders will train their small groups on the end-time prophetic Scriptures. If the small-group leaders are not comfortable teaching a class on eschatology, they can use video series training materials on these topics to lead their small groups.

Some of the volunteers at the church could not attend the CLD class on Wednesdays, and it is recommended to have some CLD classes on other days of the week on these topics. The church can equip some leaders to go on mission trips to train people in different parts of the globe. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

**Thesis Restatement**

The knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures, especially the Book of Revelation and its inference to Islam, prepares believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to expect religious persecution.
Conclusion

The researcher affirms from this study that the participants’ expectancy of religious persecution increased because of the knowledge of the end-time prophetic Scriptures.

Abiding in God’s Word is essential to the Christian life. Jesus said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me” (John 15:4). Praying always, not only when life gets hard but also even in good times, is essential. “God desires that beyond mere head knowledge, our hearts would be changed and our lives and actions would be affected by what we learn.”219 The knowledge of the Word of God brings expectation, and expectation prepares a believer to overcome. The saints will overcome persecution and suffering because of the “blessed hope” in Jesus Christ. “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death” (Rev. 12:11). The scriptures put a great emphasis on knowing the Word of God on a believer. It also adds the urgency to do so with the terms like “time is near” and “coming quickly.” The researcher’s prayer is that everyone who reads this paper remains faithful until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

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Appendix A: Survey Form

Please write your number from your packet / folder: 
The packets, with a unique number, are distributed at random.

Knowledge of the End-times: Survey Form

Note to the participants:
Please answer the following questions with utmost honesty as you see yourself at present. Your responses are kept completely anonymous. The researcher or anyone else cannot connect the responses back to a person.

Section 1: End-time prophecies (Eschatology) and promised blessings

1) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about Christian end-time prophecies?

[ ] 1  [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7  [ ] 8  [ ] 9  [ ] 10

Inexpert              Expert

2) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about current world events related to religious persecution?

[ ] 1  [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7  [ ] 8  [ ] 9  [ ] 10

Inexpert              Expert

3) Do you believe in the Rapture (believers will be taken away to join Christ)?
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

4) Christians are expected to recognize the end-times.
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

5) All the end-time prophecies are symbolic and are not literal.
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

6) The knowledge of the end-time prophecies is not important for a Christian.
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

7) Can a person believe in Antichrist thinking he is the true Messiah?
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

8) Does receiving the Mark of the Beast (Antichrist), forfeit eternal life forever?
   [ ] Yes | [ ] No

9) How many years are generally considered as Tribulation period?

10) What are the colors of the four horses described in the book of Revelation?

[ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]

Section 2: Christian and Islamic End-time Theology (Eschatology)

11) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about the world religions?

[ ] 1  [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7  [ ] 8  [ ] 9  [ ] 10

Inexpert              Expert

12) On the scale below, how knowledgeable are you about Islam?

[ ] 1  [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7  [ ] 8  [ ] 9  [ ] 10

Inexpert              Expert
13) Do you find inferences to Islam in the Bible? □ Yes | □ No
14) The prophet Muhammad is mentioned more times than Jesus (Isa) in Qur'an. □ Yes | □ No
15) Islam also teaches that Jesus died on the cross. □ Yes | □ No
16) Islam also teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin. □ Yes | □ No
17) Islam categorically denies Jesus' divinity. □ Yes | □ No
18) Does Muslims believe in Antichrist? □ Yes | □ No
19) Does Muslims believe in the second coming of Jesus? □ Yes | □ No
20) The Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of Qur’an are one and the same. □ Yes | □ No
21) Islam encourages violence and advocates the killing of unbelievers of Allah. □ Yes | □ No
22) Sharia Law will force Christians to convert to Islam or be killed. □ Yes | □ No
23) Christians enjoy freedom of religion under Sharia Law. □ Yes | □ No
24) What is the color that is highly revered in Islam? 
25) How is capital punishment generally carried out under Sharia (Islamic) Law? 

Section 3: Religious Persecution

26) On a scale of 1 to 10, how normative is persecution in Christian life? □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10
Abnormal (Not Expected) Normal (Expected)

27) On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of change in the persecution of Christians you would expect in a decade? □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10
Decrease Increase

28) On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of persecution of Christians you expect from Islam? □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10
No Persecution Severe Persecution

29) Those who live godly lives in Christ will not face persecution. □ Yes | □ No
30) Jesus taught His followers to expect persecution. □ Yes | □ No

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix B: Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 7/15/2019 to -- Protocol # 3842.071519

CONSENT FORM

The Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scriptures Prepares Believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to Expect Religious Persecution.

John Reddy
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study titled “The Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scriptures Prepares Believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to Expect Religious Persecution.” Participation in this study is voluntary. Adult Congregants (18 years of age or older) of Northcliffe Baptist Church are selected to participate in this study. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

John Reddy, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to raise the awareness of the congregants at Northcliffe Baptist Church about eschatology and prepare them to expect religious persecution.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Complete a Survey Form. (10 minutes).
2. Attend Training Session 1 – Week 1 (80 minutes).
3. Attend Training Session 2 – Week 2 (90 minutes)
4. Attend Training Session 3 – Week 3 (80 minutes)
5. Complete a Survey Form (10 minutes).

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: The direct benefit participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study is the knowledge of end-time prophecies in both a Christian and Islamic context.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. The researcher will not be able to link your survey responses to the specific participants who provided the data. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Northcliffe Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.
How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation prior to submitting your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is John Reddy. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [contact information]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Timothy Christ, at [contact information].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

August 21, 2019

Dear friend:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to raise the awareness of the congregants of Northcliffe Baptist Church about eschatology and prepare them to expect religious persecution, and I invite you to participate in my study.

If you are an adult congregant of Northcliffe Baptist Church, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey and attend three training sessions. The surveys will be taken twice, once before and once after the three training sessions. It should take approximately 90 minutes for each session for three weeks to complete the training. Your participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, you can pre-register at the information desk or simply walk in to the Christian Life Development (CLD) class at Northcliffe Baptist Church.

A consent document will be given to you at the time of the study. The consent document contains additional information about my research, but you will not need to sign and return it.

Sincerely,

John Reddy
Deacon / Bible Teacher
Northcliffe Baptist Church
Spring Hill, FL 34608
Bibliography


IRB APPROVAL / EXEMPTION

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 15, 2019

John Reddy
IRB Exemption 3842.071519: The Knowledge of End-time Prophetic Scriptures Prepares Believers at Northcliffe Baptist Church to Expect Religious Persecution

Dear John Reddy,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if . . . the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971