

Theory #9

The Anti-Christ's Identity¹

I was standing in my kitchen a few years ago fiddling with my vitamins, not thinking about anything in particular, when out of nowhere, into my head popped this sentence, fully formed. It clearly did not come from me. It had never occurred to me in the slightest. I wasn't even thinking about these issues at the moment although I had been praying consistently for revelation about end-time events for several weeks.

But out of the blue and clear as a bell, the words slipped like an arrow into my mind:

"The Anti-Christ will be a Muslim."

What?!! Where did *that* come from?!

Whoa.

Never heard *that* before.

Lord, is that You?

Though I had been asking for insight, this was in no way what I was expecting. Once I got over the initial shock however, so much more of the prophetic picture began quickly to fall into place.

I had always been taught that the Anti-Christ would be a Roman, based on the usual interpretation of Daniel 9:26, which says: "the people of *the prince who is to come* will destroy the city and the sanctuary." This "destruction of the city" is a prophetic reference² to the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 AD³ under the Roman general Titus, so the "prince" (Anti-Christ) who is to come at the end of time, the theory goes, would need to be a Roman or at least a citizen of Europe. And perhaps this Muslim Anti-

¹ The Anti-Christ is the term the Bible uses to describe the final world ruler who attempts to establish himself as "God" on the earth (and this term indeed describes all who oppose God). This man is energized and ultimately indwelt by Satan, whose goal has always been to usurp God and His plan to redeem this earth and return it to its pre-fallen state as its perfect Ruler. Satan has every intention of keeping that from happening in hopes of continuing to rule it himself.

² Daniel lived during the Babylonian captivity, in the 6th century BC, so this prophecy predates its fulfillment by over 600 years.

³ Over a million Jews died in five months of this siege. The Temple was destroyed. In 136 AD, Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem, calling it Aelia Capitolina, and forbid the Jews to enter on pain of death. That edict was enforced for about 500 years.

Christ *will* hail from Europe. Europe is being flooded with Muslims so one could easily rise to prominence from France, England, Germany or Spain.

The Book of **Daniel** is one of the Old Testament prophetic books. The prophet Daniel was one of the youths of Judah who was taken captive to Babylon in 605 BC when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. Because of his ability to interpret dreams by the Holy Spirit as well as his leadership gifts and wisdom, he became one of the most powerful men in the court of the king and in subsequent reigns. It was Daniel who was thrown into a den of hungry lions and was not harmed. God preserved him because he was a faithful servant in the face of great danger. He particularly prophesies about the last days and world empires leading up to the end. He gets his information from visions given by the angel Gabriel primarily, but also by dream interpretation through the Holy Spirit.

But on the other hand, one thing I *hadn't* clued into from history when studying these prophecies was that the Roman Empire was split into two factions, as obviously anticipated by Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue in Daniel 2,⁴ an eastern leg and a western leg (or a Latin leg and a Greek leg). The statue's two legs of iron picture its first appearance, and the feet of iron and clay depict its revived and somewhat contrived re-appearance in the last days.⁵ (See Daniel 2:32-44.) So perhaps the Anti-Christ will hail from the eastern leg of the Roman Empire, which included present-day Syria and part of Jordan.⁶

Another interesting tidbit from history is that Rome often used mercenaries to fight in foreign wars and the conquest of Jerusalem is a case in point. From what I've read, it was predominantly Syrian conscripts who fought under Titus against the Jews in 70 AD; thus, when the Bible says "the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary," it is accurate. Those people were Syrians and the Bible refers to the Anti-Christ as "the Assyrian."⁷ Assyria covered much more territory than present-day Syria, so the Anti-Christ could come from any part of that kingdom that was also part of the Roman and Greek Empires.

⁴ Nebuchadnezzar's dream pictured a large statue with a head of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron and its feet of iron mixed with common clay. Daniel interprets the dream and tells the king that the head of gold represents him (Babylon) and that the other parts picture subsequent kingdoms. These are believed to be Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and a final 10-king iteration that shows up at the end of history (Dan.2:44). You can read about it in Dan. 2: 31-45 and in Theory #12.

⁵ How do we know that the feet and toes represent a "last-days" kingdom? Because in Daniel 2 we are told that a stone cut without hands will fall on the feet and crush them and that very stone will grow up into a huge mountain (kingdom) and that it will endure forever; so we know it is that last and final kingdom is the reign of Christ and it is preceded by the kingdom of iron and clay.

⁶ The Anti-Christ is referred to as the Assyrian in at least two scriptures.

⁷ See Isaiah 10 and Micah 5.

The Roman Empire covered a lot of territory. The “western leg” is the one we tend to think of when we hear the term “Roman Empire,” perhaps because it comprised most of Europe and we westerners are mostly of European origin. The eastern leg, however, endured much longer than the western leg. A thousand years longer, in fact. It was headquartered in Byzantium, later called Constantinople and included part or all of present-day Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon (besides Greece, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Armenia and more). The western leg began to disintegrate in the late 5th century, but the Byzantine Empire lasted until 1453 AD (though much diminished in size and power) when it was finally overrun by the Ottoman Turks who took Palestine in 1517 AD. Ottoman rule over Palestine came to an end in 1917 AD (exactly 400 years later) during World War 1 when the British took over the region under the British Mandate, which lasted until 1948 AD. At this point Jerusalem was declared by the United Nations an international city (partly because of the magnitude of the Holocaust and the world’s recognition of the need for a Jewish homeland⁸) and Palestine west of the Jordan River was partitioned into two parts, one for Arabs and one for Jews. The Jews agreed to the plan, but the Arabs rejected it and immediately attacked the newly proclaimed state of Israel. Ever since, war after war and intifada after intifada has made peace impossible for Israel.

It seems clear from these prophetic scriptures, then, that the Anti-Christ will arise from the region of Assyria, or the old Seleucid empire (one of the four components of the Greek Empire after Alexander the Great died). It is also interesting to note that this is the same general region that saw the rise of the Tower of Babel and the rebellion of Nimrod (whose name, by the way, means “we rebel”). Might it be that our final “king of the north” will be a return, in one sense, of the mighty Nimrod?

Also, it was a Syrian, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who desecrated the Jewish Temple⁹ (as prophesied by Daniel in the 6th century BC) sparking the Maccabean Revolt in about 168 BC, which eventually threw the Seleucid yoke off Israel.¹⁰ Jesus prophesied a repeat of that Temple desecration at the end of times,

⁸ And perhaps because of the world’s unfortunate antipathy toward Jews in general, they wanted to find a place where Jews could be kept somewhat isolated. Many nations turned away ships laden with Jewish refugees during the Second World War.

⁹ By sacrificing a pig on its altar.

¹⁰ Hanukkah is the Jewish holiday that commemorates the cleansing of the Temple that took place three years after this desecration. Antiochus is often described as a “type” or prophetic picture of the Anti-Christ.

when He warned his disciples to watch for the “abomination of desolation standing in the holy place,” a reference to Daniel 9:27. This abomination will trigger the beginning of the *Great Tribulation*, the last three and a half years of the prophesied seven-year Tribulation, and is the signal for the Jews to flee the city.¹¹

So, for the moment, let’s go back to our question at the end of Theory #8. How do we, the world, solve the problem of the radical Islamic faction and their determination to convert, conquer or kill the rest of us? We cannot selectively target radical Muslims¹² for elimination. First of all, some would argue it’s immoral, even to save the world from destruction or subjugation. Two, even if it *were* moral, they would be impossible to find, identify and liquidate in a sufficiently expeditious manner. Osama bin Laden is a case in point. In addition, such a solution creates it’s own problem. Such a prideful culture that is clearly on the rise would not submit to the thwarting of its agenda without taking half the world with it, by whatever means were at its disposal. One of those means would eventually be ruinous to the entire world.¹³ Iran is reputedly committed to achieving their objective of developing nuclear armaments despite UN protestations, and some would say that is only months, not years, off. Others speculate that, once they have that option, they will not hesitate to use it at their earliest opportunity, provoked or not, certainly at least to annihilate Israel or its capital, Tel Aviv.

MUSLIM MESSIAH

Could Ahmadinejad, the current president of Iran, be, as he says, on the receiving end of other-worldly communications¹⁴ that have informed him that the Islamic (and false) Messiah is to return in the next two years. Could perhaps the 12th Imam, the Mahdi (the Koran-prophesied Muslim Messiah)¹⁵ be that figure? Ahmadinejad has publicly said, “Our revolution’s main mission is to pave the way for the reappearance of

¹¹ See Matt. 24 and Luke 21.

¹² Obviously not all Muslims are radical. Many moderates, however, are so intimidated, and with good reason, by the radicals, that they do not expose them, expel them or otherwise resist them. They often are complicit, even if by their silence, a sad but very understandable human tendency in the face of violence and terror.

¹³ There are multiple indications in the book of Revelation that there will be a global war, probably nuclear. (See Rev. 8 and 9)

¹⁴ How appropriate that a man who espouses indiscriminate violence for the sake of his religious goals would be taken captive by the devil to do his will? Who else is the devil going to use?

¹⁵ The 12th Imam is reputed to be the last direct male descendant of Mohammed’s son-in-law, Ali; is believed to have disappeared in 931 AD (one of several dates that are recorded); and is thought to be awaiting his return in an invisible state of suspended animation at the bottom of a well in Jamkaran, just outside of Qom. Devotees drop written requests into the well to communicate with the Mahdi. His reappearance, it is thought, will usher in a new era of peace after a violent period in which Islam vanquishes all of its enemies.

the 12th Imam, the Mahdi. We should define our economic, cultural and political policies on the policy of the Imam Mahdi's return." In addition, Ahmadinejad has made it clear that he believes he is divinely appointed to herald¹⁶ the imminent arrival of this Mahdi on the heels of worldwide destruction and chaos, tacitly acknowledging his own role in redeeming the world from its troubles.¹⁷ Thus the Iranian president's commitment to nuclear development. How long would it take this Mahdi to establish himself as a credible world leader, if that is even possible? That remains to be seen.

On the other hand, if predictions about this Imam's appearance do not come to fruition in the projected timeframe, might this portend the final vanquishing of Shi'ite Islam (which supposedly constitutes only 10% of the total Muslim populace) and the end of Sunni and Shi'ite rivalry,¹⁸ paving the way for a more mainstream Muslim to take control?

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

If Shi'a Islam is discredited, that simplifies matters considerably. Since the more radical Muslims at least seem to be Shi'ite, the world might be more likely to tolerate a moderate-leaning Sunni Muslim bid for power. What if, just humor us here, on perhaps the heels of some worldwide crisis (an exchange of nukes, a worldwide financial collapse, the Rapture or the total destruction of Damascus as prophesied in Isaiah 17),¹⁹ a figure emerged on the world scene who was highly respected in the Islamic world, among radicals and moderates alike. A person of great credibility even among Westerners.²⁰ Perhaps a bin

¹⁶ A modern day Islamic John the Baptist?

¹⁷ By fomenting some kind of nuclear catastrophe, per chance?

¹⁸ Shiite Islam comprises about 10% of the Islamic world and is represented primarily by Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. Hezbollah is in this camp. This sect believes the caliphs must descend from only the bloodline of the 4th caliph after Mohammed. Sunnis, on the other hand, represent 90% of the Muslim world and accept caliphs descended from any of the four successors to Mohammed. Saudi Arabia is in this camp, as is Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt).

¹⁹ "The oracle concerning Damascus. 'Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city, and it will become a fallen ruin.' Damascus is reputed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, with records that extend back more than two millennia before Christ. It has never been destroyed.

²⁰ One name that is being bandied about for this role is Javier Solana, current secretary general of the European Union, a very influential player on the world scene and instrumental in many developments with prophetic significance. Another being suggested is El Hassan bin Talal, brother of the late King Hussein of Jordan. This man is highly influential, president of the Club of Rome (an interesting qualification in that it gives him symbolic and literal ties with Rome), of royal blood (Hashemite dynasty, thus a genuine "prince"), as well as a direct descendant (42nd generation) of Mohammed. He is an author of several books and articles, founder of several societies, is highly respected, wealthy, well-connected (meets with the Pope to discuss international stratagems for Israel), and has his finger on the pulse of Europe and the Middle East. He was recently honored as a 2007 Champion of the Earth by the UN Environment Programme (along with Al Gore and several others). He has received numerous honorary degrees, doctorates, awards and honors and moves in the highest of political and humanitarian circles. You can check

Laden type, but more mainstream. Charismatic. Wealthy. Well connected. Diplomatic. Influential. Spiritual. If Israel decides to take out Iran's nuclear facilities, and is attacked in return by Syria from the Golan, she may decide to just wipe Damascus off the map in a desperate attempt to cripple Hezbollah. A tack such as this might be taken seriously enough by Islam to give rise to a serious bid for peace. At least serious on the surface. Muslims (radicals anyway) respect power and strength, and tend to respond to it more constructively.

Or imagine if the Rapture were to happen soon, that would leave Israel virtually without allies in the world, since Christians are the primary political force operating in Israel's favor. Once we are gone, what's to stop a coalition of nations from saying, "Hey, no one will come to her aid. Let's just take her out now. Who's going to stop us?" Perhaps the war prophesied in Ezekiel 38 will follow, in which Iran, Sudan, Libya, Russia and certain now-Muslim republics of the Old Soviet Union, and possibly Armenia conspire to eradicate Israel, resulting in a devastating retaliation, perhaps nuclear, that takes out Damascus and maybe even Tehran. Whatever the precise scenario, a response of this magnitude would certainly give rise to some kind of serious reaction. It would shake the Islamic world to its core. Perhaps, if Israel deals a painful enough blow, moderate Muslims might be able to put the screws to the radicals somehow, or convince them that there is another faster, less painful way to achieve their objective (world domination), and a much more diplomatic one.

Perhaps some figure from the Islamic world, then, would come forward with a brilliant plan; an offer of peace in our time, for Israel and the world; an offer different from all previous offers or one that "confirms" an earlier treaty or covenant (as Daniel's prophecy intimates). One that is somehow convincing, innovative, shocking. Could he disarm the radicals enough to cause them to stand down? Could he convince them that this was the way Islam would be vindicated and eventually attain worldwide dominance, almost through sleight-of-hand?²¹

out his credentials on his own website, www.elhassan.org. He also has a broad forehead and a prominent nose as reportedly predicted by the Koran of Islam's messiah. However, speculations as to the identity of the Anti-Christ are myriad and have included Henry Kissinger, Mikhail Gorbachev, Vladimir Putin (current Russian president) among others. Just to make it clear, we are not making any accusations or predictions here. Just reporting what is being speculated among prophecy watchers around the globe.

²¹ By "proving" to the world that they are not the intolerant, radical terrorists, as the west has come to view them.

Eventually this “Messiah” (Anti-Christ), though he initially goes along with the one-world religion concept, will profess to *be* God and will demand worship from the entire world. (See Revelation 13.) Daniel says in 11:37 this personage will “not have regard for the god of his fathers.” If he is an Arab Muslim, his “fathers” would include Abraham, and Abraham’s God is Yahweh, not Allah.²² If he is Jordanian, his father is Lot, whose God was also Yahweh. So he will not have regard for the true God, but “will honor a god of fortresses (power?), a god whom his fathers did not know...”²³ (Daniel 11:37-38). If any god can be said to be a “god of power,” it is Allah, who urges his followers to conquer and subdue by the sword and by martyrdom, all who stand in his way.

“And he (the Anti-Christ) will take action against the strongest of fortresses (the U.S., Israel?) with the help of a foreign god (one not known to Israel; i.e., Allah?); he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many and will parcel out land (Israeli land?) for a price.” (Daniel 11:39) Clearly, the picture of the final world ruler presented in Scripture is not incompatible with this idea of a Muslim Anti-Christ. It is inconceivable in fact, at this point in history, that anyone but a highly regarded Muslim²⁴ could persuade the radical Islamic fascists to give up their violent conquest in favor of the honor they would gain as their supreme idol takes center stage in the world.

Therefore, in summary, arguments supporting a Muslim Anti-Christ are:

- 1) he arises from the territory of the old Roman Empire, eastern leg (or perhaps western, but not likely) (Daniel 9:26);
- 2) he comes up out of the sea (a figure for the Gentile nations and judgment) (Rev. 13:1);
- 3) he is called “the Assyrian” and the “King of the North” in Scripture;
- 4) he will show no regard for the God of his fathers (Abraham, Lot), but will worship a foreign god; (Allah?), a god whom his fathers did not know (Daniel 11:37);

²² Allah is reputed to be the moon god of Middle Eastern paganism and is symbolized by the crescent moon of the Islamic flag. The shrine at Mecca was originally built to honor the moon god.

²³ Islam did not arise until the sixth century AD and thus the angel’s statement. Allah could not have been known by Abraham. Allah is another name for Sin, the pagan moon god of antiquity. Thus the crescent moon of Islam.

²⁴ They are certainly not going to listen to, obey or submit to an American (representing the Great Satan), or even a European. They are so absolutely convinced they are a morally superior people and religion, and they are convinced the Koran gives them the right, even the responsibility to take the world for Allah. How like the devil to create a *religion*, though a false one, to do his bidding, in an attempt to thwart God’s goal of redemption for the human race.

- 5) he will smooth-talk and turn to godlessness (abandonment of their religious convictions) those (liberal Jews?) who act wickedly toward the covenant (Israel, the covenanted land) (Daniel 11:32);
- 6) he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods (Yahweh), which somehow seems consistent with radical Muslim behavior (Daniel 11:36);
- 7) he will honor a god of fortresses (strength?) and will take action against the strongest of fortresses (America?, much hated by Islam as the Great Satan) (Daniel 11:39);
- 8) he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion (who uses tents?²⁵) between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain (in Gaza which has been ceded to the Palestinians?) (Daniel 11:45);
- 9) he utters great boasts, which seems consistent, again, with radical Muslim behavior (Gen.16:12, speaking of Ishmael, father of the 12 Arab tribes: “And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of his brothers (the Jews);
- 10) he hates the Jews and wages war against them (Daniel 7:25);
- 11) he will show no regard for women or perhaps for the desires of women (Daniel 11:37) (Islam is a religion characterized by institutionalized misogyny.);
- 12) he intends to make alterations in times and law (installing Shari’ah Law and the Muslim calendar and feasts),²⁶
- 13) he will use beheading as a form of execution (as radical Muslims do today);²⁷
- 14) and the radical Islamic faction will not listen to anyone but another Muslim.

CONFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT

Most eschatologists promote the idea that the covenant being made or confirmed in Daniel 9:27 is a peace treaty granting Israel legitimate status as a nation among nations. And it may be. But we suggest something else. Might this shocking development, this “confirming of the covenant” in Daniel 9:27,

²⁵ Though this is probably not literally what he will build, the allusion is worth noting. The Bible is making a point.

²⁶ Daniel 7:25: “And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

²⁷ Rev.20:4: “...And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand...”

actually be a concession of even greater magnitude than a mere peace treaty (since so many such treaties have come and gone by the wayside over the years)? Could it mean that the Anti-Christ, perhaps in league with another figure of worldwide influence (the False Prophet, or the Pope?), achieves a diplomatic coup that enables Israel to rebuild its Temple and reinstate its Levitical priesthood and practices;²⁸ per chance even animal sacrifices? Perhaps in this way might he win favor with Israel and Israel's priestly class, by contracting to "share" their Temple Mount with them and allow the rebuilding of that historic edifice? Wouldn't that be an offer of incredible persuasive power? Certain factions in Israel have been gearing up for the rebuilding of the Temple for years (the Sanhedrin is now reconstituted) and are completely ready to go, just waiting for the right opportunity. Past efforts have been thwarted by Islamic unrest, threats, intifadas, political disagreements, and the denial that such a Temple ever existed.

Such a turn of events, though hard to imagine, could be a seduction Israel could not refuse²⁹ and might pave the way for secular Israelis to view this person as their prophesied Messiah even if he were not of the house of Judah. (Or perhaps they will be satisfied with a miracle-working False Prophet who hails from the tribe of Judah.) The majority of Israelis have abandoned the faith of their fathers in all but name only anyway, but the prospect of an agreement of this magnitude might shake many out of their religious skepticism long enough to entice them into a syncretistic brotherhood with their Arab siblings. Could they accept the Islamic assertion that the Bible had been falsified to give the birthright to Isaac rather than Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau? Or, since both Jews and Muslims deny the deity of the Son, perhaps they will eventually see themselves as followers of the same God. Time will tell, but we are on the cusp of a radical shift in world affairs, that is certain.

²⁸ Israel has already identified members of its priestly caste for this task.

²⁹ Though no self-respecting believing Jew would admit that Islam has a legitimate right to the Temple Mount, they might also agree that any Temple is better than no Temple and acquiesce for that reason alone. At least it gives them a place to practice their religion, although a resumption of animal sacrifices is unlikely in today's strong animal-rights climate, especially right next to an Islamic mosque. Perhaps the Temple will be built elsewhere, such as Shiloh. However, some form of sacrifice will resume because the Bible tells us that the Anti-Christ "will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" in the middle of the week (a figure for the seven-year Tribulation). It may be that the reference in Daniel stating that he (the Anti-Christ) will "confirm the covenant for one week" is a veiled reference to the covenant of blood atonement given by God to Israel and illustrated in the Temple rites of animal sacrifice. That would be a shocking development and one that would not be sustainable for long given increasingly strident animal-rights rhetoric, thus the prophecy that the sacrifices will be "cut off" after 3 1/2 years.

STEMMING THE TIDE

The current Pope is boldly calling Europe back to its Christian roots as Islamic immigration and radical Muslim influence threaten to overwhelm the continent and turn the tide toward Islam. Muslim clerics, too, hear these calls for Europe to return to its Christian roots and are not about to stand idly by while the Pope encourages, and Europe entertains, some kind of Christian revival.

A recent effort to stave off such a development came in the form of an overture by 138 Muslim scholars, clerics and intellectuals representing every denomination and every school of thought in Islam, and indeed every Muslim nation. The point of this effort was, and is, to disarm the West and to convince them that Islam and Christianity are not at such odds after all and may even be compatible. An open letter to the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the heads of other Christian denominations and Christian leaders everywhere, called “A Common Word Between Us and You” attempts to provide a common framework of understanding between the monotheistic faiths (Christianity, Catholicism and Islam) upon which subsequent interfaith dialogue can be built. It does this by claiming that we are all, bottom line, all about love³⁰ and share a common divine origin under the patriarchy of Abraham. You can read about it at www.acommonword.com.

This document was issued in September 2007 at a conference in Jordan under the patronage of King Abdullah II, son of the late King Hussein of Jordan (and nephew of HRH El Hassan bin Talal, president of the Club of Rome, a 2007 UN Champion of Earth and a 42nd generation descendant of Mohammed). The letter was responded to favorably by the Yale Center for Faith and Culture in a written rejoinder signed by 300 prominent Christian leaders applauding this overture; and the Pope has sanctioned a World Catholic-Muslim Forum which began semi-annual meetings in November 2008 to seek even greater common ground between the faiths.³¹ Many other religious leaders have written favorable responses which you can read on A Common Word’s website. This is just the beginning of more of the

³⁰ Hard to believe anyone can say that with a straight face, but they did.

³¹ We say this facetiously, as we do not believe that Islam and Christianity share a common divine origin, nor are they both committed to love or consistent with the faith of Abraham. The Bible says (in Daniel 11:37-38) the Anti-Christ will “show no regard for the God of his fathers,” and if this end-time ruler is to be an Arab Muslim from the region of Jordan as we suspect, his fathers are indeed Abraham and Lot. Thus he will not patronize their God, Yahweh, but will worship a foreign god “whom his fathers did not know.”

same—ecumenical fever—and gives a clue to the watchful that the world is on a collision course with destiny; a destiny foretold millennia ago.

THE APOSTASY

The apostle Paul told us that “the day of the Lord” cannot come until the apostasy, or falling away from the true faith, comes first and the man of lawlessness (Anti-Christ) is revealed. (2 Thess. 2:3) Though we are not told precisely what this apostasy will consist of doctrinally, we believe that it will come in the form of a demotion of Jesus Christ to the level of a prophet, a divisive development to say the least.³² Though hard to fathom, it is likely.³³ Already certain liberal “Christian” seminaries are beginning to adopt this posture as the only hope of uniting the world in peaceful harmony. They tell us we Christians have to get rid of this outdated notion of a returning Messiah and Kingdom of God on earth.³⁴ Paul warned Timothy to hold fast to the doctrine he had been taught because after his departure, “ravening wolves would come in, not sparing the flock” but drawing followers after themselves. This is the goal of Satan, to destroy or camouflage the truth and rob the world of Christianity’s benefits and hope. Every false religion is the work of this rebel and you can see his fingerprints even on the many so-called Christian denominations that have departed from true faith.

Is this possible, that the Catholic Church (or a coalition of denominations) could demote Jesus? I am reminded of my school days. I was raised in Catholic schools for 12 years in the 1950s and 60s, where we attended daily Mass. I can honestly say in all that time, I probably heard Jesus’ name mentioned four or five times. The emphasis was entirely on Mary, and much secondarily on God. That is still the case in many quarters of the Catholic Church, particularly in Latin countries. To this day, when I get alumni

³² Jesus told us that he did not come to bring peace but a sword, and that a man’s enemies would be the members of his own household. This would definitely be the case if some of one’s family accepted the new definition of Christ and others did not.

³³ Many religions have prophets: Islam has Mohammed; Mormonism has Joseph Smith; Buddhism has Buddha; Hare Krishna has Krishna; Unification Church has Sun Myung Moon; Jehovah’s Witnesses have Charles Taze Russell; 7th Day Adventists have Ellen G. White; Christian Scientists have Mary Baker Eddy; Scientologists have L. Ron Hubbard; Jews have Abraham and Moses. But for the sake of averting war in Europe over religion, we are mostly concerned about how to blur the differences between Islam and Catholicism and Christianity. (Judaism will come onboard briefly later.) And demoting Jesus to the level of a prophet, as He is regarded in Islam, would go a long way toward that end.

³⁴ This is another reason to suspect a Pre-Trib Rapture (see Theory #13). How many true, born-again Christians will stand for or accept a demotion of Christ to the level of Mohammed?

newsletters from the sisters who ran our schools, there is hardly a mention of Jesus. Mary, the “Queen of Heaven,” “Mother of God,” “Our Lady of Peace” is heralded as our hope for the future. Sad, but true.

In any case, today we are watching the resurgence of the militant Muslim conquest of Europe and the Middle East that had threatened the world for centuries, using terror, murderous violence and hysteria, intimidation and threats, intrigue, pseudo-compliance, and other tactics. It makes it easier to understand out of what soil the Crusades erupted. Though multi-faceted in terms of objective, they were initially an effort to liberate Palestine from Islamic domination. We can see now why those wars were fought with such passion. One must meet passion with equal passion or suffer the consequences. (Not that we sanction murder and mayhem in the name of Christ, by any stretch. But how does one survive an enemy that is determined and committed to wiping you off the face of the earth?³⁵)

We are rapidly moving toward a crisis in history. Will the world shift toward Islam to avert a world war? Or will war precede such a shift? Certainly the threats that surround us birthed by religious fervor are noxious in the extreme and must be dealt with. And there is no doubt that they will be addressed in a way that exalts man and Satan rather than the one true God.

THE FALSE PROPHET

A figure that the Bible says will be instrumental in this exaltation of Satan (in the person of the Anti-Christ) in the last days is called the False Prophet. The Bible describes the Anti-Christ as a “Beast” in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13-20 that comes up out of the sea (Gentile nations), but Revelation also speaks of

³⁵ This is, of course, a huge and multi-layered question. Jesus told us to “turn the other cheek” and to “not return evil for evil.” He told us if we are persecuted for righteousness sake, we are blessed and that if He was persecuted, we would be also. But He also told us that if we did not care for our own, we were worse than the heathen. That we should care for orphans and widows in their distress. He sent Israel to wipe out the pagan, child-sacrificing worshipers of Moloch. Is God a pacifist? Apparently not. Should we be? Should we stand silently by while Islamic terrorists blow up our school buses and our children’s play yards? Is that love? Shall we keep silent when they assault the innocent, Christian or not, because they happen to live in a free country where Islam is not ascendant? Shall we not defend our wives and children from terrorism and Satanic deception? Shall we allow Islam to grow roots into our society, pervert our youth and subjugate our women? Is it virtuous to stand by while one’s children are being raped and tortured, just because it’s coming from the hands of militant Islamic imperialists? Are these any different than Communist imperialists? Or Nazi imperialists? Or Catholic imperialists? No. Veiling their conquest for world domination in religious garb confuses those who want to please God, which is their very intent. Satan is no idiot. He knows we Christians will be conflicted between pacifism (which we errantly construe as love) and the responsibility of standing for truth and righteousness even if it costs us our lives. These are complex questions, and ones we must seek God diligently to resolve. But I cannot imagine myself seeing as love the passive refusal to help those victims who are being assaulted by the forces of Satan. That said, if it is just one’s own flesh that is at risk, one may decide to suffer the loss of all things to gain Christ, and that is a noble response. But if one’s entire society is at risk, including women and children, can godly men not lift a finger to help them?

“another beast (the False Prophet) coming up *out of the earth* (a figure for Israel); and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon (devil, deceiver). And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast...And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on the their right hand or their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. “ (See Theory #10 for more on this.)

So this False Prophet wields unprecedented power on behalf of the Anti-Christ. We see basically three options for who this False Prophet might be:

#1: ISRAELI HIGH PRIEST

Perhaps a new Israeli high priest will link arms with the new Muslim “king of the north,” recognizing a tremendous personal opportunity to gain unprecedented power himself in Israel—and scripturally, right in line with the typology of Syrian king Antiochus IV who supposedly colluded with Jason, the illegitimate Hellenized high priest³⁶ during the Maccabbean revolt (circa 168 BC). Because the False Prophet comes up “out of the earth,” a Jewish high priest seems most in keeping with prophetic typology. We would even expect that he hails from the tribe of Judah, thus confusing the Jews: is this our Messiah (since he seems to have center stage for much of what transpires) or the herald prophesied to come before the Messiah and prepare the way?

³⁶ Jason, a pro-Hellenist priest (likely a Sadducee, bought his position from Antiochus Epiphanes for 360 talents of silver.

#2: CATHOLIC POPE

It has long been thought by some of the more radical elements of Protestantism that a future Pope would be the False Prophet of Revelation 13. (However, as we said, the False Prophet is said to come up “out of the earth,”³⁷ believed by eschatologists to be symbolic of Israel, just as “the sea” is symbolic of the Gentile nations. This would imply that the False Prophet must be Jewish, an unlikely scenario for a Catholic Pope. On the other hand, it’s hard to imagine a Jew, any Jew, having favor and influence with the world during the end days, when Israel itself will be roundly despised, as it already is. But the False Prophet *is* highly influential.) The Vatican has long-held ambitions of reviving its role in European politics, however, and desires to reunite all of Christendom, including the Eastern wing, under its banner once more, as alluded to by the current Pope (Benedict XVI) in his inaugural sermon. This, too, is a seduction of incredible proportions, giving, as it does, such tremendous sway to the Catholic Church over the affairs of a revived Roman Empire (the EU?). Might there even be a move to finally implement the concept of Jerusalem as an international city in actual practice, for the use and enjoyment of all religions, and to thus forever dispense with the need to war over it? Various Popes have made this suggestion in the past, beginning in 1912.

A movement is afoot, and has been for decades now among leading Roman Catholics and Protestants, to reunify the various factions of post-reformation Christianity. A document called Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) and ECT II, signed by prominent Evangelicals and Catholics, puts forth the concepts of ecumenism³⁸ espoused by these leaders. However, the ultimate end (though the participants may not realize it yet) is not just the reunification of these long-separated wings of Christianity, including the Eastern Orthodox wing. It is the unification of all religions, but primarily “the three great monotheistic faiths:” Judaism, Christianity and Islam.³⁹ The reunification of Christendom is just Step One.

³⁷ Rev. 13:11

³⁸ Ecumenism is a term that refers to the idea of bringing together the various factions of Christianity.

³⁹ Past Popes have extended the hand of fellowship to leaders of other non-Christian religions, such as the Dalai Lama and African shamans, in World Peace Day activities, even to the point of joining them in public syncretistic religious ceremonies. Go to www.theberean.org/Newsletter/html/1990/mar90.php+Pope.+World+Peace+Day.+Dalai+Lama&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=10&gl=us for more on this subject. Remember, for our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. Satan has designs on the Church of Jesus Christ and he aims to commandeer it (and in many cases has) for his own purposes.

If you read the 1994 Catholic catechism, or body of law, you will see that the Catholic Church considers Islam to profess belief in the self-same Creator, if for no other reason than that they descend from Father Abraham (via Ishmael). Note Paragraph 841: “*The Church’s relationship with the Muslims*: The plan of salvation also includes [besides bona-fide Catholics and separated Christians] those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims. These profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.”⁴⁰

Though generous, this assertion belies a naiveté that is stunning and ignores profoundly substantive differences between the faiths (i.e., most notably that in Islam, Allah emphatically has no Son).⁴¹ Nevertheless, though radical Muslims may balk, moderate Arabs may be easily lured into this seduction of worldwide acceptability and welcome the opportunity to distance from the radical wing of their religion, especially once proselytizing is outlawed and those who engage in it are criminalized. If and when the followers of Mohammed are invited to reunite with a reunified Catholic/Protestant/Orthodox Church under the allure of world peace, it is highly likely that the appeal of world acceptance will motivate many to sign on. (This will most likely occur after the Rapture, and as we said earlier, it is conceivable that the Muslims will have gained the upper hand at that juncture and be spearheading the unification of faiths.) That “signing on” may require a repudiation of violence and possibly a submission to the Papacy and/or ultimately the Anti-Christ or world-governing body. But if the Anti-Christ happens to be a Muslim, so much the simpler.⁴² In fact, installing a moderate Muslim in the role of world leader, alongside a non-Muslim miracle-working prophet, would accomplish many objectives:

- pacify and mollify radical Muslims who insist on Muslim hegemony;
- legitimize and normalize this religion in the eyes of non-Muslims;
- facilitate the unification of all monotheistic faiths (with a demoted Jesus);

⁴⁰ But who else acknowledges the Creator and holds to the faith of Abraham? The Jews.

⁴¹ This catechetical statement alone opens the door to the denial of Christ’s deity by the Roman Church, a trend that is also gaining momentum among liberal seminaries and denominations in Protestantism as we speak. If Muslims worship the same creator, but their creator says he has no son, and ours says He does have a Son, then how can this be reconciled without a redefinition of that sonship? Unity with Jews requires the same compromise as they cannot sanction the doctrine of the Trinity and a divine son. Along the same lines, there is a move to unload as antiquated and divisive the concept of a coming kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth. Believe it or not, this is being discussed seriously in liberal circles within the Church (the apostate Church, that is).

⁴² In addition, non-practicing and more-or-less atheistic Jews might easily come onboard with a generic God concept, leading to a willingness to share the Temple Mount with other faiths, rebuild the Temple there, and perhaps allow a Christian church as well.

- facilitate the reestablishment of the Roman Empire in its full strength (Eastern and Western legs);
- possibly put an end to terrorism, especially if some more moderate form of Shari'ah Law were ultimately imposed;
- and create a climate that fosters religious unity and the brotherhood of man (which will never happen as long as Muslims do not have the preeminence⁴³).

As we said earlier, the current Pope has made statements in which he declared his intent and desire to see the rest of the Christian community brought back into the fold of Catholicism. This would be such an incredible coup for his papacy that there is no lack of motivation to see it accomplished.⁴⁴ Could the Pope, then, be the False Prophet mentioned in Revelation 13, who, by performing various miracles, gives the Anti-Christ the legitimacy he needs to impose his rule on the world? Could the Pope, together with the Anti-Christ, bring the world into a temporary harmonious fellowship and unity? It is not hard to imagine that a Pope (given the official Catholic view of Islam) and a Muslim Anti-Christ could link arms in a worldwide bid to simultaneously grip the reigns of both the political and religious global agenda, perhaps with this suggestion of making Jerusalem, in actual fact, an international city under the auspices and control of the United Nations or the Vatican. Perhaps even the Vatican headquarters could be moved there, or at least a satellite office.⁴⁵ Should a future (liberal) Israeli high priest join the plan, it is also not hard to envision a one-world religion arising out of this mix. One which would perhaps allow the addition of a "World-Christian" Church and a rebuilt Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount and which would seduce all nations to participate in the final great solution: the brotherhood of man under one generic God.^{46 47 48} Would not a Muslim hero,

⁴³ This is also a good argument for the pre-Trib Rapture (see Theory #13), as the presence of true Christians would be a roadblock to any amalgamation of the faiths.

⁴⁴ "Even as the French and Dutch electorate voted down the European Union constitution, putting on hold the process of European integration, Pope Benedict XVI was calling for the reunification of Eastern and Western Christendom. In his first papal trip, to the Italian seaport of Bari, Benedict reinforced the theme of his sermon at his inauguration Mass, in which he called for Christian unity, pledging to make the cause of reunification a "fundamental" commitment of his papacy." Quoted from the National Catholic Reporter, Sept. 2, 2005, by Christopher Merrill.

⁴⁵ Somehow it is also not hard to imagine that a Muslim Anti-Christ and Jewish high priest might grow weary of the Vatican's control and meddling and presumption and decide to strike at its heart, ultimately destroying the Vatican and the Pope in one moment of aggravated and jealous ire. Dave Hunt's book, "A Woman Rides the Beast" proposes the Vatican as "Mystery Babylon" of Rev. 17 and 18, who is destroyed by the Anti-Christ and the final ten kings who rule the endtime world.

⁴⁶ President Bush has on at least two occasions made statements suggesting that all religions, after all, worship the same God...that Allah and Yahweh are the same deity. In addition, 150 religious leaders in the U.S. have signed a document to that effect recently, among them Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church (author of the *40 Days of Purpose* blockbuster book). This, too, belies a tremendous ignorance, most notably of the fact that Allah emphatically "has no Son." One can only make this claim if one is willing to discard Jesus' and Scripture's claim to His unique Sonship.

who gained the respect and gratefulness of a war- and terror-weary world by his unprecedented offer of peace, also be able to deliver at least mainstream Muslims, and perhaps the whole Islamic world, into the fold of this one-world religion?⁴⁹ Of course such an offer would come with a price: the ascendancy of this Muslim to a recognized position of world-dominating rule. Otherwise, the Koran would have to be tossed overboard, and no legitimate, self-respecting (especially radical) Muslim would agree to that.

Clearly either the Pope (particularly if he has some Jewish blood) or the Jewish High Priest are possible candidates for this end-time False Prophet role, though we think the latter is much more likely given the foreshadowing events of Israel's history.⁵⁰

#3: "ISA," A MUSLIM JESUS

But an additional twist is added when one considers that Ahmadinejad says that the Mahdi, or Islamic messiah, will be accompanied by Jesus himself ("Isa" in Arabic), who will instruct the world to join arms with Islam. So this figure, this imposter, whoever he is, may be the False Prophet as well and, if so, surely will perform miracles to validate his identity.

In any case, Satan knows the Scripture, and he is not oblivious to the need for prophetic events to have a scriptural rationale. No self-respecting Jew will receive a Messiah that cannot be given scriptural backing of some kind.

⁴⁷ Liberal Jews are not that fond of their orthodox brothers and there is wide disparity between their "faiths." Many would say that the majority of modern Jews living in Israel are virtual atheists. Though it's hard to imagine Jews or Muslims accepting any religion that postulates any kind of Trinitarian theological view, adjustments may be made to enable them to sign on to the generic religion of Anti-Christ, one that follows a trend (to dump the deity of Christ) already making headway in liberal Christian academic circles. Even orthodox Jews may be temporarily deceived by the Anti-Christ's claims to Messiahship, at least until they witness the desecration of the Temple, a wake-up call to all those who have "eyes to see and ears to hear" that this is not the biblically prophesied Deliverer.

⁴⁸ Thanks to Oprah Winfrey, this concept is gaining popular acceptance. With 22 million viewers, her "classes" with Eckhart Tolle are having a dramatic impact along with the books she recommends. She, a former Baptist, has become the preeminent high priestess of the "many paths to God" philosophy of New Age enlightenment.

⁴⁹ It is hard to conceive of anyone *but* a Muslim convincing the radical Muslims to stand down. They are not going to listen to a westerner.

⁵⁰ Again referring to Jason the high priest of Israel who colluded with Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid monarch who ruled Palestine in the second century BC and ultimately built an altar to Zeus on top of the Jewish altar in the Temple, reputedly sacrificing a pig in a vicious affront to the Jewish people.

Whatever the case, expect these developments to escalate rapidly as soon as they begin to unfold on the world stage. Due to the powerful appeal of unity and the innate cry of man's heart for brotherhood, restoration and peace, once this ball gets rolling it will be impossible to stop. And woe to those who try to stand in its path.