

Absolute Truth & Prophecy

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THE FUTURE – PART VI

We ended the last segment in this series by examining some of the Biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled; especially those relating to the rebirth of the nation of Israel. God has ordained certain specific events to prepare the way for the return of His Son; - Satan too is working to prepare the world for the emergence of his chosen one, the “man of sin”. (2Thessalonians 2:3) To this end, he is infiltrating the church, altering the culture and corrupting the hearts of men.

ANTICHRIST CONDITIONING

“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.” (1John 4:1-3)

Let's get specific now, comparing God's Word and the conditions of the world in which we live. We are continuing now with our examination of God's Prophetic Template for the End Times. By the time we are through it should become apparent that His explanation best explains the Age in which we are living.

- **A Godless Age** – 2Timothy 3:1-5,7 describes our age perfectly in the words **“in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power....always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”**. These words strike home. We've become a culture that is in complete revolt. Let's look more closely at the passage above.

“Lovers of themselves”, - we've morphed into a society bent on satisfying our every whim. **“Lovers of money”**, - there exists a prosperity gospel that turns even Christianity into a get-rich-quick scheme. Go down the list and tell me that this does not define our society today. We are completely taken with fulfilling our own selfish desires. **“Lovers of pleasure”**, indeed! We have raised pleasing ourselves above pleasing God. Abortion has become the 'Sacrament of Convenience'. Even life itself will not deter us from pursuing our own self-worship, - and in the case of embryonic stem cells, our pursuit of ersatz immortality. Today we have YouTube, a place where anyone can post their own self-promoting videos to achieve their 15 minutes of fame. Violence, greed, voyeurism and self-absorption reign.

To measure how far we have fallen we need only survey some of the behaviors once dubbed illegal or immoral that are now an accepted part of the culture. The use of mind altering drugs, premarital sex, having babies out of wedlock, homosexual unions are all winked at, approved or reinforced by society. Cohabiting outside of marriage has become not only tolerated but normal. Because we have all become the arbiters of our own truth, - there is no right or wrong, - and all things are accepted.

We no longer **“Strive to enter through the narrow gate”**, but rather seek to justify our sins; - if we recognize the concept of sin at all. (Luke 13:24) Even within the professing church Biblical doctrines are denied and sin is tolerated. Much of the church as well as the culture at large has abandoned the notion of absolute truth in the name of tolerance. The hyper-tolerant post-modernist thinking will tell you that all ways lead to God. We do no favor to the lost by ignoring the reality of sin and evil and the need for salvation. In this warped way of thinking all things are relative. Thus it becomes impossible to **“...come to the knowledge of the truth”**.

- **A Time of Increasing Knowledge** – The Bible says that this time of increasing knowledge is indeed a sign that we are nearing Christ's return. Knowledge in fact is estimated to double every 2 years.¹ Here's how Daniel 12:4 puts it. **“But**

you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

- **A Time of Rampant Immorality** – Matthew 24:12 tells us “**because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold**”. In Luke 17:26 Jesus had said, “**And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man**”. One of the characteristics of the “**days of Noah**” was that it was a time of unbridled sexual lust and immorality. Sodomy was openly practiced and culturally approved. We see today the explosion of the acceptance of Gay Marriage, openly homosexual clergy and the advent of advocates for even sex with children as evidenced by NAMBLA, The North American Man-Boy Love Association. The porn industry is a multi-billion dollar business and standards of decency have plummeted in the media.
- **A Great & Gradual Apostasy** – 1 Timothy 4:1-3 reads: “**Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth**”. This passage describes the gradual falling away that has afflicted the Church almost from the beginning. Then about the middle of the 18th century, the pace of this falling away began to quicken with the onset in European circles of something called ‘Higher Criticism’. As this methodology of Bible interpretation gained steam, it called into question the long accepted and historically sound, foundational doctrines of Christianity. This is especially prevalent among ministers of some of the mainline Protestant denominations. Surveys have shown that a minority of Christian ministers in these bodies believes in the very foundational truths of Christianity as presented by the Scriptures. Segments of the Church are ignoring and sidestepping clear Biblical teaching on the divinity of Jesus, the virgin birth, the reality of the Resurrection, the existence of a hell, and the nature of sin. The Catholic Church has imposed its own man generated doctrines on its adherents, - even where they clearly contradict the dictates of Scripture.

Then there are the segments of the population that have bought into the myths advanced by Dan Brown and the DaVinci Code crowd absolutely denying Christ’s divinity and thereby rejecting the saving power and true purpose of Jesus’ ministry. Others have adopted a ‘Cafeteria Christianity,’ that combines Buddhist beliefs, or yoga or goddess worship, or whatever with some selected Christian beliefs and passages. After all, only sincerity matters! But Christ’s teachings are clear here. “**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me**”. (John 14:6)

- **A Great & Sudden Apostasy** – While the Church has been slip-sliding away from the truth of the Gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2 suggests something else altogether: An event generated, sudden rebellion or apostasy by those who had previously held to at least nominal Christianity. Here’s the passage. “**Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed**” (2Thessalonians 2:3)

Hal Lindsey, - the prophecy scholar that really began to popularize the study of End Times events with his book and movie, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, - addressed this passage in his 1983 book, *The Rapture*. Scripture does teach that there will indeed be a progressive apostasy in the last days, yet the language of *these* verses demands a “*climactic event when the professing church will completely revolt.*”² Chuck Missler chimes in pointing out that the Greek suggests a “*sudden forsaking*” of Biblical Truth.³ So what could possibly cause this?

Let’s look at the context. The passage above tells us that the Day of the Lord can’t come until (1) This great and sudden falling away comes, & (2) The Antichrist is revealed. Some light is shed on this just a little farther down in the chapter. “**He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed**” (2Thessalonians 2:7-8) To many Bible scholars, the “**He who now restrains**”, is the Holy Spirit as expressed in the Church. All believers have, by definition, The Holy Spirit living inside them. So taking Him “**out of the way**” would seem to be referring to the rapture of the believing Church. It is then that the “**lawless one**” will be able to assume power. But how does he come to power? Verses 9&10 give the answer. “**The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**”

Now how this event will manifest itself we cannot know for certain. Without being able to fully develop this let me speculate on its nature by bringing out just these few facts.

1. The late Pope John-Paul II fully expected an End Times vision of Mary to appear before the whole world, preceded by a universal sound, light or smell, - producing an “*engulfing chaos*” that will lead to mass conversion to the Catholic faith.⁴
2. David Bay of Cutting Edge Ministries describes a New Age seminar at which the speaker, Bill Lambert said: “*Minutes before the Antichrist arises, some supernatural sound will be heard and spiritually felt by everybody on the planet, simultaneously...with everyone’s attention aroused, images of Antichrist will appear*”

simultaneously over the entire earth, speaking to each in his own language. The signs and wonders will have begun."⁵ This is consistent with other New Age plans.

3. Peter Lemesurier's Armageddon Script, as we saw, reveals that part of the plan to bring the New Age Christ / Antichrist to power involves Extraterrestrials manifesting a presence that leads to the collapse of the religious beliefs of many around the globe.⁶
4. Jesus put it this way: **"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect"**. (Mark 13:22)

So it seems an amazing deception accomplished **"with all power, signs, and lying wonders"** will precipitate a great and sudden falling away from the faith. Such a reaction would not be unexpected should 'aliens', (actual, artificial or demonic), one day land, demonstrating their power and freedom from the laws of physics, and present the world with a new religious paradigm. The faith of many would certainly fail. The accelerating explosion of UFO sightings, (real or contrived) certainly point to this as possibility. (Already 60% of Americans believe there is life on other planets.)⁷ Then there is the hybrid race of Nephilim written of in Genesis 6, - a cross between the fallen angels and the daughters of men, - and displaying many of the characteristics assigned to aliens. But that's a story we'll have to develop later. In any case, such contact would surely shake the faith of millions not fully grounded in God's word.

This is the preparation for the entrée of the Antichrist. The End of the Age is being set up even today. In the last part of our Prophetic Template we will look at world events that are seeing fulfillment even in our day.

REAL ISLAM – PART XI

In PART X we continued to consider the case for a Muslim Antichrist. Today we'll summarize those arguments and look at the response from the other side.

AC: MUSLIM or ROMAN ?

When considering Islam, one of the key questions we must ask ourselves is: What is its role in the End Times? With so many prophecies either being fulfilled or lining up for fulfillment, we can know that we are on the edge of that culmination of prophetic history. Just the story of Israel; its rebirth and the restoration testify to that. So what is the place of Islam in the Last Days equation?

Dr Joe Van Koevering has emerged as a strong apologist for the position that the Antichrist will come out of Islam. He points to Revelation 13 to build his case. In the first part of the chapter, John sees **"a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name."** (Revelation 13:1) This is clearly a reference to the Antichrist himself. But a little further down, beginning in verse 11, we see another figure emerge. To Van Koevering, this second beast represents an entirely different people. **"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."** (Revelation 13:11-17)

This passage outlines much of the career of what had come to be known as the False Prophet; which is of course all tied up with that of the Antichrist. Dr Van Koevering finds the clue to the identity of this figure (FP), right there in verse 11. He is described as having **"two horns"** like a **"lamb"**. This is clearly a religious figure. In Scripture, the Lamb of God is clearly Jesus Christ, and he believes that the 2 horns represent Christianity and Islam. This then is the presentation of a False Christ, an imitation of the true role of Jesus. In this scenario, Islam will emerge with a false version of Christianity at the Time of the End. In some ways it is already moving in this direction. Chrislam is fast becoming a religious force. This of course, refers to the emergence of a movement that would in some fashion or another combine the two major monotheistic religious systems. [We don't have room to get into it in detail here, but many Roman Catholic leaders through the ages have offered their opinion that the final pope would be an apostate who would betray the Church of Christ. These thinkers included such luminaries as St Francis of Assisi, Pope Pius X, Cardinal O'Connor and the late Bishop Sheen who warned us to look for a *"religion without a cross."* The unification may center around Mary, who is revered in both Catholicism and Islam.] So it is interesting to note that just earlier this year, Pope Francis arranged for Muslim prayers to be uttered at the Vatican. A watershed moment if ever there was one!⁸

Now the False Prophet will just be the figure that assists the Antichrist to gain and maintain power. But it is Islam that seeks the establishment of a Global Caliphate, running interestingly parallel to the World-wide Kingdom of Antichrist that is spoken of in scripture. There are a few other arguments to be made in its favor. Authors Philip Goodman and Zane Hodges both argue that the Antichrist must be an Assyrian as eluded to in Micah 5:5 – and if Assyrianwell then Muslim. [But this begs the issue that the overwhelming number of Assyrians identify Christian – meaning that just because you are Assyrian does NOT mean that you’ll be a Muslim.]

So now, having built up the notion of an Islamic Antichrist over the last several installments let me usher in the arguments against it. Anchoring these arguments is the prophecy scholar, David Reagan. Reagan calls such efforts to identify the future AC as a Muslim as “*newspaper exegesis*,” – in other words reading today’s headlines and building a theory of eschatology around that. To get specific, Reagan finds “*nothing startling or surprising about*” the similarities in Islamic and Biblical End Times stories. “*Mohammed got most of his ideas concerning the end times from discussions with Christians and Jews. And these ideas were later embellished by his followers who were even better acquainted with biblical prophecies....It is only natural that the Mahdi, like the Antichrist, should be viewed as a great leader who will conquer the world and institute a one world religion. The assertion that the Mahdi will return on a white horse is, of course, borrowed directly from Scripture, as is the idea of the False Prophet.*”⁹

Another problem that must be addressed by the Islamic Antichrist crowd concerns the passages found in Daniel, chapter 2 & 7 that describes the four major world empires in chronological order. From oldest to youngest they are: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Daniel 9 clearly lets us know that it is the people of this last empire, Rome, that will be the driving force behind the Antichrist’s Empire. Verse 26 reads: “**Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.**” (NASB) That turned out to be the Romans, who in 70 AD destroyed both Jerusalem and the Temple. The End Times role of the Antichrist is defined in Daniel 9:27. “**Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.**” Thus the Antichrist must somehow have a connection to the Roman Empire. But...say the Islamic Antichrist crowd...the Legions that destroyed Rome came from the Eastern part of the Empire – nations that are now Islamic. Perhaps! Other scholars say this is not so. Sean Osborne writes that the V, X & XV Legions that destroyed Jerusalem hailed from Macedonia, Austria / Slovenia and the Italian mainland.¹⁰ And with no point of agreement, the debate rages.

Another more salient point lies in the question: Could the modern-day Israeli population ever accept as Messiah someone from the world of Islam? On the surface at least it seems not. And finally I’d like to bring up the issue of the prophesied Psalm 83 War. This along with other related prophecies puts a strong test to the Islamic Antichrist theory. Here’s Dr David Reagan’s reasoning.

“This psalm portrays an attack on Israel by a Muslim coalition consisting of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Gaza, Saudi Arabia and Assyria (Syria). The Bible clearly teaches that God will protect Israel against all such attacks in the end times (Zechariah 12:6). The outcome of this war most likely is detailed in Zephaniah 2:4-5. These verses indicate that the attacking nations will be devastated by Israel. It is during this war that Damascus, the capital of Syria, will probably be destroyed completely, never to be rebuilt again (Isaiah 17:1-14 and Jeremiah 49:23-27). That is most likely why Syria is not mentioned in Ezekiel 38 as one of the Russian allies. The outcome of the Psalm 83 war is what will most likely produce peace for Israel, the peace that it is prophesied to be enjoying when Russia and its allies decide to launch the Ezekiel 38 invasion. The war of Psalm 83 followed by the war of Ezekiel 38 will result in the annihilation of nearly all the armies of the Muslim nations of the Middle East, and these wars are most likely going to occur before the Tribulation begins! Thus, if the Antichrist is a Muslim who is going to rule a Muslim empire in the Middle East during the Tribulation, then he is going to rule over an empire that has been reduced to ashes!”¹¹

So there you have it; the arguments for and against. Islam’s role may well be to produce the Antichrist. Or it may be to usher in the wars (Psalm 83 & Ezekiel 38 (Gog / Magog) that set the table for ACs arrival on the world scene. One cannot know for certain. Through all of this it is best to realize that we do not have all the answers – but God does. We may not know the exact details of all that will follow, but we can clearly see the foreshadowing of future prophetic events in the unfolding of today’s headlines. And we know the One who holds not only our future – but that of the entire world in His hands. “**Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.’”** (Isaiah 46:9-10)

¹ Quoted from Ohio State University commencement speech given March 21, 2003

² Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture*, 1983, pgs 148-149

³ Chuck Missler & Mark Eastman, *Alien Encounters*, Koinia House, 1997, pg 267

⁴ This idea was revealed and developed by Malachi Martin, the former Vatican Jesuit, in his book, *The Keys to This Blood*, 1990

⁵ David Bay, *Cutting Edge Ministries*

⁶ Peter Lemeurier, *The Armageddon Script*, 1981 pg 223 & following,

⁷ *Do Americans Actually Believe*, PR Newswire, May 26, 2006

⁸ *Historic First: Islamic Prayers Held at the Vatican*, CBN, June 10, 2014

⁹ Dr David R Reagan, *The Muslim Antichrist Theory*, Lamb & Lion Ministries, December 2010

¹⁰ Sean Osborne as quoted by Chris Schang, *The Myth of an Islamic Antichrist*, viewed November 7, 2014

¹¹ Dr David R Reagan, *The Muslim Antichrist Theory*, Lamb & Lion Ministries, December 2010