

Absolute Truth & Prophecy

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ISLAM, DECEPTION & THE ANTICHRIST – PART IV

Over the years, Christian scholars have come to a view that the Antichrist will be a European, coming from the revived Roman Empire manifesting itself in modern times in the form of the European Union. In recent years however, some scholars are giving this belief a fresh look. They've noted the incredible similarities between the character and the actions of the Biblical Antichrist and the predicted Islamic end times Messiah, called the Mahdi. Now, events in the Muslim world are preparing the way for the ascension of this Islamic prophet.

A TIME OF FULFILLMENT ?

“And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” (Daniel 12:9-10)

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has a clear prophetic vision. Ahmadinejad believes that the Mahdi, the very Islamic Messiah, - will soon reveal himself to the world. He believes too, that he has been chosen by Allah to help bring that about. The Mahdi will unite the warring factions of Islam, (Shiite and Sunni), conquer Jerusalem and set up a global Islamic Empire. Everything that the Iranian President does is influenced by that belief.¹ The President is a very, (and some would argue should be), committed guy. Amir Taheri, former editor of Iran's largest daily newspaper, tells us that just before making his announcement that Iran had joined the “nuclear club”, Ahmadinejad spent several hours ‘communing’ with Islam's 12th Imam, the “last of the imams (teacher) of Shiism who went into ‘grand occultation’ in 941”. That “12th Imam” is the one-day returning Islamic Messiah, the Mahdi, the “true Sovereign of the World”. Ahmadinejad is one of his chosen disciples. He knows so because of that incident in September 2005 when he addressed the UN General Assembly. On that occasion, he was bathed in a *divine light*, visible only to the Iranian President and other true followers of the Mahdi.² Perhaps to those in the West all this is very strange, but awaiting the Mahdi is actually not so odd at all.

The fact is, President Ahmadinejad's beliefs on the return of the Mahdi are quite mainstream within Islam. They are based on writings taken from the Koran, the Hadith, (Islam's second holiest book), as well as Islamic tradition. Shiites and Sunnis alike are anticipating his appearance. The Mahdi, or ‘Guided One’, is to appear suddenly during a great time of struggle between the forces of good and evil. At the end of history, he will lead the Islamic forces to victory over the unbelieving Christians and Jews. At that time, the whole world will become Muslim. During this Islamic revival, the ‘Prophet Jesus’ will come back to earth, and the two will proceed to Jerusalem, where Jesus will publicly deny that he is the Son of God. Then together they will forcibly destroy both Christians and Jews.³

Of course the similarity between the Islamic Mahdi and the Christian Antichrist is remarkable, as is that between the Muslim's ‘Prophet Jesus’ and the False Prophet of Revelation. Passages from the Islamic commentaries, the Hadith point to even more similarities between the two sets of prophecy. The Hadith says, “Imam Mahdi will...do battle with the forces of evil in one final apocalyptic battle....After the Imam Mahdi has reigned for several years, Jesus Christ will return.” In a companion passage we are told of the Mahdi: “He will rule for seven years”.⁴ This directly corresponds with the length of the reign of the Antichrist as prophesied in Daniel and Revelation.

Now this belief is influencing the actions of the most dynamic Islamic power and sponsor of terror in the world: Iran. Led by Ahmadinejad, Iran seems to be embarking on a course which may indeed result in an epic clash between Islam and the West, represented by the US and Israel. In fact, the Iranian leader believes that he was given the presidency for the divine task of provoking such a “clash of civilizations”.⁵ Ideas beget actions beget consequences. The

consequences of leading this terror-sponsoring, ambitious nation to arrange events to bring about the appearance of a Messianic figure, may just succeed in bringing that clash about. One of the signal events of the near-appearance of the Mahdi may be the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, Iraq in 2006. Built in 944, that is where the 10th and 11th Imams were buried and from where, according to Shiite belief, the 12th Imam, or Mahdi was to appear. Ahmadinejad, (a member of the Shiite sect of Islam, as are nearly all Iranians), has now announced that the Mahdi is already here on earth, that he knows who he is and that he will make his appearance in Iran. Preparations to receive him have begun: Including in such practical areas as railroads, and hotels and crowd control. However, the presence of US troops on the ground in Iraq “hinders the appearance of the Mahdi” and the Last-Days Islamic Empire.⁶ So other preparations are going on too; - military ones.

A Man On A White Horse

“Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, ‘Come and see.’ And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.” (Revelation 6:1-2)

Islamic tradition is very revealing. The Great Mahdi, is predicted to make his appearance riding a white horse. Even Islamic scholars will grant that this is one area where the Bible has not been corrupted. To their way of thinking, the Mahdi will return following the opening of the 1st seal judgment described in Revelation 6:1.⁷ Arab leaders in the Middle East are taking their own prophecies very seriously indeed. Many are said to have white horses on hand, in case they are selected as ‘the One’. Forward thinking indeed!

There is much to read into that short passage of Revelation quoted above. Notice the rider will be on a **“white horse”**, have a **“bow”** and a **“crown”** and go out **“conquering and to conquer”**. The redoubtable Hal Lindsey helps us break that passage down. The first seal, he points out, is broken near the beginning of Daniel’s 70th week, shortly after the believing Church has been raptured. That is when both the Mahdi and the Antichrist are expected to come on the scene. Secondly, the *white horse* and the *bow without arrows* are symbolic of his entre’ as a man of peace. Coming out of a time of turmoil, Daniel 8:25 confirms of the Antichrist: That **“by peace he shall destroy many”**. Even the Greek word for crown used in the passage denotes the crown of a conqueror not royalty. This *Prince* is a usurper. Then there is this. Lindsey sees a clue to the identity of the rider in Genesis 21:20. The first man with a bow mentioned in Scripture is identified there as Ishmael. Now Ishmael is the son of Abraham through Hagar, his servant girl; - and is the father of the Arab race. Interestingly this returning 12th Mahdi is the direct descendant of Mohammed, who is the direct descendant of Kedar, the second son of Ishmael.⁸ There is some scriptural support for the notion that the Antichrist will be indeed be an Arab. Micah 5:5-6 identifies him as **“the Assyrian”** from the **“land of Nimrod”**. Now Assyria encompasses what is now Iran and Iraq and Nimrod, whose name means “rebel”, ruled his empire from Babylon itself, - the very symbol of mankind’s end-time rebellion.⁹ Babylon is of course in Iraq. Saddam himself began to reconstruct the city. Revelation clearly identifies Babylon as the seat of Man’s end times anti-God rebellion. Scripture tells us that in the end, it will be destroyed.

The long-held objection to the notion of an Islamic Antichrist has been the clear understanding that he must come from the revived Roman Empire. Daniel 9:26 tells us that he shall be of **“the people of the prince who is to come [who] Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.”** It was the Roman Army that destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. The general interpretation has been that the Antichrist would come from the European Union, which occupies the territory of what was the Western part of the Roman Empire. In Daniel 2, God gave Daniel a clear understanding of the general outline of history. He showed him King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a large statue, representing the 5 world empires that would rule over Israel: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Alexander’s Greece, Rome, and in the last days, a revived Rome. In fact the legs of the statue represented the Roman Empire. This accurately portrayed the split in the Empire between its Eastern and Western halves. Many forget that there even was an Eastern Roman Empire, ruled from Constantinople, (modern Istanbul), that outlasted the West by about a thousand years. This Eastern leg took in all of the Middle East including the territories now occupied by Syria, Iran and Iraq. This certainly opens up the possibility the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy would be effected through an Arab / Islamic Antichrist. He could still be an agent of a Revived Roman Empire, - but only from the Eastern half of that empire. An Antichrist with these characteristics lines up well with the prophecies of the Prophet Micah (chapter 5) -, quoted above.

Still not convinced, then look at this. Look again at Daniel 9:26. **“And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”**. The Scriptures seem clear. It’s the **“people of the prince”**, that destroy Jerusalem and level the second Temple. That occurred in 70 AD. Jesus himself had predicted it, telling his disciples **“not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down”**. (Luke 21:6) And it happened just as he said. According to the ancient Historian Josephus, an eyewitness to events, as the Roman legions were conquering Jerusalem the legion sent to secure that area of Jerusalem set fire to the Temple against General Titus’ orders.¹⁰ In an effort to recover the melted gold, the Romans tore down the remains, stone by stone, until not one was **“left on another”**.¹¹ There is no doubt that it was soldiers of the Roman Empire that destroyed Jerusalem and tore down the Temple. But here’s where it gets interesting. Rome was of course an empire, with many nationalities under its control. Specifically it was Legion X that destroyed the Temple and occupied Jerusalem. This Legion however was not made up of Europeans but came instead from regions that would later become almost exclusively Muslim. (A cursory glance at Scripture shows that when Scripture records God calling judgment on specific nations it is always on countries that today are Muslim.) Legion X was composed of 4 cohorts; - one each from Syria, Turkey, Arabia and Petra, - in Jordan. The Coming Prince then is not Titus but Satan’s ultimate man; the **“man of sin”**, the Antichrist.¹²

Now according to Islamic tradition, when the Mahdi comes, he is to initiate a war that will result in the destruction of one-fourth of mankind.¹³ Again, just look at what Scripture has to say. The opening of the Second Seal produces **“Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.”** Along with the riders of the next two horses, **“power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.”** (Revelation 6:4,8) It is instructive that Islamic tradition again agrees with the Bible here, telling us that the war which the Mahdi will wage will kill a fourth of mankind. With that by way of introduction next time we’ll take a comparative look at what Islam and Christianity teach about their respective Messiahs.

US & THEM

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

These stories are getting a little too common. Still they are quite enlightening when it comes to understanding just what is happening in our world. In the US, millions call themselves Christian, - yet they can’t seem to agree on much of anything. All of this begs the question: **“Just what does it mean to be Christian?”**. Now for instance; - Should a claim to share ‘Christian’ beliefs mean that we share at least somewhat of the same views when it comes to social, cultural and even political issues? Well the latest study conducted by the Bliss Institute of the University of Akron tells us: Not so indeed! Christians do not share a common worldview. And the lines are clearly and deeply drawn.

Conservative Christians, - the Christian Right, - as it were, - focuses their energies on issues in those areas that the Bible defines as sin; - abortion, and same sex marriage for instance. While those identifying as Christian liberals or progressives see poverty, health care and the environment as being essential issues. As expected, the study showed that the Christian Left primarily comes from the old mainline Protestant denominations, - (Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal etc) – with a good sprinkling of Catholics mixed in. Conservative Christians were made up mostly of Evangelical Protestants again with a large number of Catholics joining their ranks. Both groups said that religion was very important in their lives, - yet when it came to specific issues, - the differences couldn’t be larger. Take just abortion for instance. A full 95% of the conservative Christians said that abortion should be illegal in just about every case. Conversely, 80% of the progressives thought that abortion should be legal in just about every case. The pattern holds when it comes to same-sex marriage too. 82% of conservatives opposed the concept while 59% called for its legalization. Yet each side claims the Christian mantle.

The difference seems to lie in the way that the two groups view the Bible, the Word of God. Among conservatives, 84% believe that the Bible is either the **“literal Word of God”** or at least the **“Word of God”**. Only 22% of the liberal Christians thought the same way. Of these, 36% said the Bible **“contains”** the Word of God, and one-fifth called the

Bible just “one important source of wisdom”. But God takes His Word very seriously. Absolute Truth is an essential teaching of Scripture, - and John 14:6 defines Jesus, - the Son of God, - as **“truth”** itself. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of the sacred nature of the Scriptures. **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”** (Matthew 5:17-18) Yet holding that kind of worldview, it is little wonder that progressive Christians see man as the solution to the world’s problems, with over two-thirds calling for an increased government role in society.¹⁴

This latest survey is just another snapshot that confirms the emerging picture of American culture. Earlier this year, Barna Surveys found that only 9% of Americans had a Biblical worldview. They defined a Biblical worldview as the belief that: absolute moral truth exists, - that the Bible is totally accurate, - Satan is a real person – not just a force, - that we can’t earn our way to heaven through good works, - that Jesus lived a sinless life, - and that God the Father is the “all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the world who still rules the universe today”. All of that is just basic Christianity. So what’s most scary is what they found about those claiming to be born-again Christians. Only 19% of those had that same very basic Biblical worldview.¹⁵ As pollster George Barna wrote in a piece that accompanied a 2001 survey he took, “The Christian body in America is immersed in a crisis of biblical illiteracy”. The American church sees “no need to evangelize, believe that good works are one of the keys to persuading God to forgive their sins, and describe their commitment to Christianity as moderate or even less firm”.¹⁶

But sadly its not just those sitting in the pews. It’s the leadership, - the pastors. Only 51% of Protestant Pastors are found to have a Biblical worldview. If they have a seminary education, that number drops to 45%. Among mainline Protestants the number drops to 28%, - among Methodists it’s 27%. A 2003 poll saw only 2% of mainline Protestant congregants as having a Biblical worldview, - and less than one-half of one percent of Catholics.^{17 18} No matter how you crunch the numbers, - it is all very scary. But as we approach the time of the end, Scripture tells us that a time of division is coming; - a time of wheat and tares, - of the false and true church. Here again is Jesus on the subject. **“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!... Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”** (Luke 12:49, 51-53)

JUST A TOUCH OF INSANITY

We can always depend on the Middle East to provide just a little bit of insanity to punctuate our day. Just take for instance the fact that Israel is being asked to give up a large chunk of its territory to an artificially created people (the Palestinians) who are committed to Israel’s destruction. It took only hours after occupying Gaza for these Palestinians to start lobbing shells and rockets into Israel from their new forward bases. Now there are even children’s shows, - with furry bunnies and other loveable animals, - that are the “slaughter of Jews” if they do not give up the Land. This, to 4 & 5 year olds! The show is produced and broadcast by the terror group Hamas.¹⁹ This is without doubt, a culture of death. Yet the pressure mounts on Israel to make peace by creating a Palestinian State – that would be contiguous, - meaning of course, that Israel itself must be divided. There’s a piece of insanity for you. And as part of that puzzle, hundreds of radicalized Palestinian Muslims are rioting and launching bottles and rocks from the Temple Mount on religious Jews below. DEBKA reports that counterterrorism forces have found that both Iran and Syria are behind the recent troubles.²⁰ Then there’s this. Mohammed El Baradei head of the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency has fingered Israel as the danger spot, not the emerging atomic power of the Mahdi-crazed Iran. “Israel is the number one threat to the Middle East given the nuclear arms it possesses.” Now he is encouraged by the efforts of President Obama to force Israel to allow the UN to “gain access to its power plants”.²¹ Israel has never threatened anyone. That’s just plain crazy!

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 - ⁴ Quotes from the Hadith taken from; Jerry Robinson, Calling Al Mahdi, Understanding The Antichrist – Part II, WIR
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 - ⁷ Jack Kinsella, Mahdi Rising..., Omega Letter, April 6, 2006
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 - ¹³ Jack Kinsella, Mahdi Rising..., Omega Letter, April 6, 2006
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 - ¹⁵ Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians over the Past 13 Years, Barna.org, March 6, 2009
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 - ¹⁸ The Barna Update, January 12, 2004
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 - ²⁰ Tehran, Damascus stir up Hamas-Israel Muslim riots on Temple Mount, DEBKAFfile, October 4, 2009
 - ²¹ El Baradei says nuclear Israel number one threat to Mideast: report, Chinaview, October 4, 2009