

8680U

ECHO LAKE STUDY WEEKEND - 2007

FROM EDEN LOST TO EDEN RESTORED

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Study #3: Bold Initiatives for Benedict XVI  
(Who precisely is the False Prophet- Muhammad or the Papacy?)

Let's give a clue, shall we? b&s, as to whom the False Prophet might be in terms of our opening slide.

So our chairman has said that our first session this afternoon is on, 'Bold Initiatives for Benedict XVI, who precisely is the False Prophet - Muhammad or the Papacy? There are all different spellings of the title 'Muhammad', please don't mind if the program differs from the screen, this was finally adopted at the end of the day, but you'll find different spellings in different pieces of literature.

Now what's interesting about our study this afternoon then, again we're going to benchmark it against our framework of bible prophecy; because what happens, people without any framework of reference, will come to something like the False Prophet in Revelation, and think of all sorts of ideas which sound interesting, but what are you going to measure it against? what are you going to test it against? Well, we might just come to Revelation 16 and just see where the phrase comes from in Revelation 16. We're told in chapter 16 that the time of the vial judgment, the outpouring of the vials, these words in verse 13, 'I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles'. So the question raised then is, well, 'perhaps the false prophet is Muhammad or Islam? and that might be the case. In fact, people say, 'what about Islam?' there surely is a lot going on in the world, surely there must be bible prophecy which relates to Islam? Well, we hope by and by to cover all of that, God willing, today and tomorrow. But can I just say one thing, by way of warning; there's about a billion Chinese, why isn't there more about the Chinese in the bible? there's probably a billion Indians? why isn't the bible more explicit about the Hindus and Buddas? and the answer is, because the bible is not the unfolding of world history; remember, the bible is the unfolding of God's purpose, and anything that is outside of or not directly related to the unfolding of God's purpose then it doesn't matter how many people there are! and if Islam is to play any role at the time of the end, it's only because it corelates in some respect to the outworking of God's purpose.

Perhaps a very good and brief illustration of that is this, do you remember how that Daniel tells us that Alexander's great empire fell to his 4 generals after his death, do

you

remember that? 4 wings or 4 heads upon the leopard, so what were the names of the generals for 10 marks? Ptolemy, Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Cassander, who between them broke up essentially the Greek dominion and portioned it out amongst themselves, amongst the 4 generals. Question, why does Daniel 11 not talk about the history of 4 Greek kingdoms? why does he talk about only 2 of the 4? and moreover, why does it call them 'the king of the north', and the 'king of the south'? and the answer is, because the king of the North and the king of the South in relation to what and to whom? and the answer is in relation to Israel and the people of Israel and the land of Palestine; one was north and one was south of Palestine. There's only one reason, b&s, while Daniel 11 talks about the king of the north and the king of the south, i.e. the Seleucids and the Ptolemies and has nothing to say about the Lysimachus and Cassander, because they are not relevant to God's purpose, that's why? But the two that are were relevant because they came across His land and attacked His people; God said, 'I'm interested in that bit there'. So we ought not to imagine because of anything going on in the world that it must necessarily find a place in the bible prophecy, simply because it's current events in the world. That's not a basis for how bible prophecy works. Bible prophecy works in context of with what is relevant to the unfolding of God's purpose.

So let's start at least with this idea! because you see, the suggestion is made that the expression 'false prophet' introduced in Revelation 16 is a new term! Because it's a new term and found for the first time in this chapter, that maybe it suggests some new unity or some force, or some new power, entering in on the scene of the theatre of the book of Revelation. Well, it's quite an interesting idea and perhaps it is! well, the question is, how are we going to test this idea? Well, it's been suggested that maybe it's significant that the first of the five pillars of Islam is the Shahadah which is really like the doctrine of faith, it's also like the Islamic statement of faith, and that is that every good Muslim must be able to say and believe that: 1. there is no god but Allah; and, 2. Muhammad is his prophet.

So there you are, you see! he's the prophet, he's the false prophet! Well, it sounds interesting, but let's see if it fits the framework of bible prophecy. Maybe the first thing to point out is that even though it is a new term in Revelation 16, the role of Muhammad and the power of Islam has already been mentioned in the book of Revelation before chapter 16, and they were introduced in that chapter as the power of the locusts and the scorpions who would execute God's judgment upon the idolatry of the eastern Roman empire. So the power of Islam has already been mentioned in the book of Revelation, so actually if that's the case, it would probably beg this question, wouldn't it? b&s, 'well, if it's already been mentioned as the locusts and scorpions what you would have to explain is, why Islam would be called the false prophet in chapter 16 and a new symbol being given for it to explain that, wouldn't you? if you wanted to make the false prophet, Islam. By the way, you would need to explain with any idea or suggestion, why this symbol is appropriate in the context of the chapter. In fact, what's been suggested by the way, is you remember what it said in Revelation 16, those frog-like spirits came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, and what's been suggested is that these are the great religions: that the dragon is Eastern Orthodox, and the beast is Roman Catholicism and the false prophet is Islam, and you've got the three great religions of

the world. Actually I'm not sure that they're the three great religions in the world; I think Eastern Orthodox is a division of Roman Catholicism, and I'm not sure how many Buddhists, and Hindus and Shintoists there are, but I'm sure there's quite a few really, but they're not mentioned in that rather convenient tri-apartheid summation there from Revelation 16.

I think there's another problem too, another problem with making the false prophet of Revelation 16 to be, in fact, the power of Islam. The problem is this; come to Acts 20 for a moment and let's just remind ourselves of what the apostle said concerning the matter of false prophets. On his journey back to Jerusalem, in Acts 20, when he spoke to the Ephesian elders, you'll remember that the apostle Paul says this in verses 28 to 30. He says, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the ecclesia of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them'. Now let me just show you something interesting about what the apostle says there, and I want you to notice the key words; 'that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in **among you**, also of **your own selves** shall men arise'. By the way, I think the apostle Paul was alluding to the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 7, because didn't Christ say, 'beware of **false prophets** which come in sheep's clothing, they look like the flock but in fact, inwardly they will be ravenous wolves'. They will be grievous wolves, says Paul; so those who Paul was warning would come in Acts 20 must be none other than the false prophets that Jesus warned would come in Matthew 7. So where were prophets to come from? answer - from among them, from within the community, the false prophet would arise, that's the teaching of the apostle Paul.

Now here's some more about false prophets in the days of Peter. So we're told in 2 Peter 2, it says this, 'But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you'. Where would the false prophets come from? from among them, says Peter and Paul. As with Peter and as with Paul, so with John who says, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come', 1 John 4 verses 1 through 3. They've gone out into the world, but the question is, where have they come from if they've gone out into the world? and the answer is, chapter 2 verse 19, 'they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us'. So the testimonies of these apostles then is that the false prophets would arise from within the ecclesia itself, and I think that's one of the very reasons why Muhammad doesn't

qualify as the false prophet of Revelation 16, because Muhammad never came from Christendom. The religion of Islam was not an apostasy from the Christian faith, it wasn't even of the Christian faith. Islam was a clumsy mixture of many things but most certainly was not the leadership of a teacher that started off among the believers of the truth, as Peter and Paul and John warned that the false prophets would. So whoever the false prophet might be, we haven't said yet, or even proved yet, but whoever the false prophet might be, b&s, I don't think it can be Muhammad, he didn't come from among them.

You would never guess, who first suggested the idea that the false prophet might be Islam, and the teaching of Muhammad? Why, the Roman Catholic Church lead by the teaching of the Jesuits. You see, this was the counter reformation! When there was pressure on the Roman Catholic Church, because there seemed to be a lot of bible prophecy about the Papacy, they launched a counter reformation, and they suggested, the Jesuits suggested, well, maybe the false prophet of Revelation could be somebody else, it could be Islam, over there, that chap! he's bad! and they sought to draw attention away from bible prophecy in fulfilment of the Roman Catholic apostasy which was an apostasy from the faith. A falling away from the truth which corrupted from within, and produced the full blown version of the man of sin sitting in the temple of God. In fact, the very fact that the Roman Catholics first suggested the idea that the false prophet might be Islam and Muhammad, I think that would make us very suspicious, wouldn't it? about the integrity of that suggestion. What thinkest thou?

Come to Revelation and let's just look at the three passages that mention to us the false prophet, let's just see if we can put our finger on what it does say about the false prophet, and of course what it doesn't say about it. The first of those we've already seen in Revelation 16, but let's just read it again, in the context of the other two places. Revelation 16 says in verse 13, 'I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty'. So here's the first time that the false prophet appears. Now here's the second one, in Revelation 19 verses 19 and 20 so it says, 'And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before Him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone'. And this is the third one, Revelation 20 verses 9 and 10, 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever'.

Not much to go on, is there? b&s, just these three brief quotations, the only places where the false prophet is mentioned, and from them we have to work out who he was! So let's do so, shall we? because I think we can! So come back to Revelation 16 and we'll start with that passage there, since we've seen all three; and let's have a more careful look at what the scriptures say about the characteristics of the false prophet. Now do you notice what Revelation 16 starts with, it says in verse 1, 'I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image'. Now we're not going to talk about the vials today, but of course, you realize that the vials are one of the most fascinating fulfilment of scripture in terms of the detail that was fulfilled in the days of Napoleon, to bring out judgments upon the face of Europe. That first vial of verse 2 was about 1790 AD! Verse 3 says, 'And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea' which was about 1795 AD. Verse 4, 'And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers' and that was about 1796 AD. Verse 8, 'And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun' and that was about 1806 AD. The fifth angel in verse 10 poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast which was about 1809 AD; and the sixth angel in verse 12, poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates which began to dissolve the power of Turkey and that was about 1820 AD. And you think, why is he mentioning all that? well, because what we're being told in Revelation 16 verse 13, when the false prophet first appears, he appears at the time of the vial judgments on Europe during the 19th century, that's about the middle of the 1800's.

Question - why is it that the false prophet first appears in the middle of the 1800's? how would you explain that concerning Islam? What's the significance of Islam turning up as the false prophet in the 1800's? Well, I can tell you I've never heard an explanation for that! b&s, ever, but I can tell you what the explanation is as far as the Papacy is concerned, because it's an absolutely remarkable application that happened to the Papacy right in the middle of this very epoch of time, because there was a dramatic event in the history of the Papacy which occurred round about this time and it occurred in 1870. Can anyone tell me what happened in 1870 in terms of a disaster that befell the Papacy? Yes, the Pope lost his temporal dominions, Garibaldi marched through Italy and unified it, and in the process the lands and territories that belonged to the Pope were lost; it was a disaster as far as the Papacy was concerned. The Pope found himself in the Vatican all by himself, with no authority or prestige or influence. By the way, the Papacy used to be referred to before this moment of time as the image of the beast. Now beasts represent kingdoms, and the Papacy was described in chapter 13 as the image of the beast because, well because the Pope did have a little kingdom and a block of land. His own people that paid him money but what happened in 1870 was he lost the lot! But also what happened in that year driven by the spirit of the Jesuits and the black Pope that leads the Jesuits is, they launched a drive which would reconstitute the Papacy as the 'greatest force in living history', in the very year that the Pope lost his dominions. As well the Jesuits launched a new doctrine, and that doctrine was, **Papal**

**Infallibility**, that when the Pope speaks from that magical chair sitting in his temple, he's infallible! It doesn't matter how bad his pronouncements are, they're infallible!

Do you know what happened? it was quite remarkable, you see, this was driven by the Jesuits because they wanted to restore the prestige of the Papacy, even though he had lost his dominions. What happened, b&s, was on the very day that the cardinals assembled so that the proclamation might be read out of papal infallibility; the Pope ascended to his chair, the cardinal stood up to read the document proclaiming the infallibility of the Pope (and you'll never guess what happened). Right across the top of Rome that day, was this enormous thunderstorm and the thunder was so loud that the cardinals couldn't hear the proclamation of Papal infallibility that was read on that day. It was almost as if there was a judgment of the thunder clap of heaven itself signifying its disapproval. I believe, that on that day, preeminently the Papacy declared itself to be the false prophet supreme by virtue of claiming the infallibility of his prophetic announcements, right at the time of vial judgment. I don't think you'll find any application to Islam that will be as satisfying as that, b&s, not at all.

Oh, did you notice this! You see Revelation 16 verse 13 said, 'I saw the spirit coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet', and what we're being told is the false prophet represents a system of religion with teaching authority vested in one man. You see, when the Pope speaks, he speaks on behalf of the entire apparatus of the Catholic church, the false prophet. Now there's something interesting about that, because Peter and Paul and John all warned that false prophets would arise, but that's not what Revelation says. Revelation does not say that I saw the unclean frog-like spirit coming out of the dragon and out of the beast and out of the false prophets; no! he said, false prophet singular. This is the power of religion vested in **one single man**, who speaks with the authority of his church.

Well, let me quote you something interesting about Islam. This is from a little book which is quite good and it's called, 'A Short Introduction to Islam', it's available from the Christadelphian office, by the way, who have a series called A Short introduction to Religions. In A Short Introduction to Islam, page 9, it says this, 'There is no church in Islam, no formally constituted body empowered to supervise or to dictate its agenda, or to articulate an official Islamic view comparable to that of the Papacy'. Now that's an interesting statement! and what it's saying is that there is no one man in Islam that speaks on behalf of the community. There's a multitude of Islamic teachers, and yet we're told here that the power of the system lies in one man who is the false prophet. Who do you think that best applies to?

Then we're told again, in that same chapter and verse 14 that says 'he has a mouth that speaks in the demonic spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity'. But frog-like spirits come out of the mouth of the prophet; now we know that the frogs represent the principles that were unleashed at the time of the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity;

now what's interesting about Papal encyclicals is that they tend to follow modern, social thought. What the church likes to do, what the Roman Catholic church likes to do is, as modern thought changes, you'll find that the Pope always manages to release an encyclical that's somehow mirrors the modern mood so he always seems up to date and with it. Somehow the church is always in tune with what's going on now. The doctrine of liberty, equality and fraternity comes out of the mouth of the Pope all the time, mind you, in a clever guise so he can still get what he wants to get, and do what he wants to do. Now let me tell you something interesting about Islam, I can promise you that Islam has never spoken the words of liberty, equality and fraternity; you'll never hear that spirit coming out of the mouth of Islam. Islam is absolutely intolerant of other religions. Do you know, b&s, just recently Saudi Arabia completed the building of a 65 million dollar Moslem mosque in, guess what city? why the city of Rome. Could you imagine going to Mecca saying, 'we'd like to build a 65 million dollar Christian church here, please'. You won't hear the frog-like spirit saying, 'alright'. You see, they never would allow it, would they? You see, wherever the Muslims go, they demand religious freedom for themselves, what ever they want to do, their fasting days, their head covering, the Mosque arrangement; but you can't get that if you go to a Muslim country, it doesn't go both ways, does it? not ever. You see, Islam doesn't preach liberty or equality, it's intolerant of other religions, because it seeks to dominate the world to Islamic faith. I don't think that Islam fits the theme of the false prophet in Revelation 16, do you?

Now here's another one in Revelation 16 verse 14, which says, 'These are the spirits of devils, working miracles which go forth to the kings of the whole world to gather them together'. Now that word 'world' in Revelation 16 verse 14 is the word 'oikoumene' (3625) and some of you will know that 'oikoumene' means 'the Roman world' or the Roman continent? Well, the Roman continent is Europe where the Roman empire was. Question, how do you see that Islam was able to gather the powers of Europe together? does it have that kind of influence? not in Europe it doesn't! Ah, but guess who does? the answer is the Papacy and it has long been able to call together the kings and queens and leaders of Europe for a 1000 years; when the false prophet of the Papacy calls, the kings and queens of Europe have assembled. Just go and see the pictures of the death of John Paul II and you'll see all of Europe there at the bidding of the Papacy. The false prophet calls and the kings of the 'oikoumene' are gathered together. That's long been the case with the Papacy. How do you explain that with regard to Islam?

Now here's another one in Revelation 19, and let's turn it up, shall we? It says there in verse 20, 'The beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles'. So one of the characteristics of the false prophet is, he's able to perform signs and wonders to authenticate his message. You know, you'll never hear that from Islam, Islam doesn't talk about a lot of signs and wonders, but guess who's famous for them? guess what religion has made a practice making good money out of images, miracles, shrines, relics and saints and statues that weep tears or gush blood miraculously as

long as the people pay. Little pieces of the cross, little slivers in different Catholic churches dotted all over the world, which when gathered together apparently would be large enough to build a ship, so many pieces of the cross that the Roman Catholic church has, all to use supernatural phenomena to bend the will of the people to subservient obedience to the church. Islam doesn't use magic signs like that! the Papacy does and always has, still does even now.

It also says in Revelation 19 verse 20, 'those who had received the mark of the beast by the means of his miracles'. Now we're not going to talk about the 'mark of the beast' in detail today, apart from mentioning one fact, that the beast is associated with Europe and that those who get the mark of the beast live in Europe, and so how the false prophet whoever he is, will influence those who get the mark of the beast, of those who live in Europe. Question - how does Islam particularly deceive the European nations? I have no idea! but we do know, and especially for those that have travelled Europe even today, you'll find the mark of the power of Rome and Catholicism is everywhere upon the mark of those who received the mark of the beast for centuries, it has influenced and been the centre of the false prophet's operations and throughout Europe, he receives those who are marked by the characteristics of that place and the powers that be in that area. Not so, Islam!

In Revelation 19, verse 20 says, ' he seeks to influence thee so they might worship the beast, actually the image of the beast'. Now the 'image of the beast', by the way, is a prophetic symbol in the book of Revelation, and has to do with the whole power of the Roman Catholic Church, the entire apparatus of the Roman Catholic Church. Just stop and think about this! So the false prophet tries to influence people to worship the Roman Catholic Church; you know that makes quite good sense, that's quite good sense if the false prophet is the Pope, doesn't it? He probably would try and seek to help people to worship the Roman Catholic Church, but why would Islam do that if Islam was the false prophet? Why would Islam seek to cause people to bow down to the Roman Catholic Church if that's the image of the beast. Ah, so if we make the false prophet Islam, then we have to change what we think the image of the beast is as well; so now we're into altering other symbols to try and make something fit with the false prophet. They already fit, b&s, and I think rather well.

Here's one last one found in Revelation 19 verse 20, 'that the false prophet is consistently identified with the beast! Always is! consistently without fail! Every time the false prophet shows up the beast is there, the false prophet and the beast! Now the beast is associated with Europe, so the question is, how is Islam uniquely associated with the beast system of Europe? and of course, there's no answer, because it isn't. How is the Papacy associated with the beast system of Europe? to ask the question is to give the answer, isn't it? It's self evident that one is a tremendous fulfilment and the other is no fulfilment at all! Of course, the other thing to remember as we said in our framework, is that the false prophet that turns up in Revelation isn't actually something that turns up unconnected with the past, he's part of the continuum of prophetic



revelation. What we found in our framework is, there is always a rival system and a rival temple, and a rival leader? from the very beginning.

Well, look at this slide concerning some interesting comments about Nimrod from Alexander Hislop's Two Babylons. He says this, 'A man called Phoroneus lived at a time when mankind was scattered abroad. He is said to have been the first to have gather mankind into a community, the first of mortals that reigned, and the first to adopt idolatrous sacrifices. That character can agree with none other than Nimrod in terms of Genesis 11, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon. The first who gathered men into communities and reigned over mortals was Nimrod, Phoroneus was one of the titles of Nimrod. Now the name given to him in connection with offering idolatrous sacrifices is very significant; Phoroneus is one of its meanings and one of the most natural signifies the 'apostate', and that name had very likely been given him by the uninfected portion of the sons of Noah; all tradition from the earliest time bears testimony to the apostasy of Nimrod and to his success in leading men away from the patriarchal faith'. Question - so who was the first great 'apostate'? and his name is Nimrod. Who's the last great leader of apostasy? and the answer is the false prophet, and he's the inheritor of this system and this spirit, isn't he? in terms of the characteristic of this system; remember what Nimrod means? he will rebel, and here's one of his titles, Phoroneus, 'the apostate one'. You know what 2 Thessalonians said about the 'man of sin'? you will never see the man of sin unless you first see an apostasy, the apostate one will appear. Oh yes, b&s, I think the false prophet is part of a continuum of bible prophecy that began a long time ago, and he's that final champion of the seed of the serpent.

So whereas the story began with Nimrod and Shem, for the purpose of Thessalonians it's the man of sin vs the Lord Jesus, and for the purpose of the Revelation, it's the false prophet vs the faithful and true. But that false prophet, b&s, is the last stage in a long story and the last leader in a long line, he's the latter day inheritor of the mantle of Nimrod, who was the first great false prophet. There's the last one, he's of the same spirit, he's the inheritor of the Babylonish system. So Islam doesn't match the Spirit's own outline of the career and the credentials of the false prophet; it is not a match! b&s, the false prophet and Islam is not a match, but the Papacy is a far more satisfying and convincing application, and did you notice this? it's completely in harmony with our framework of bible prophecy! So now these references take on a much great significance in helping us to understand what might happen at the end concerning the false prophet, now that we've identified that the Papacy is the proper application to those particular prophecies.

Well, of course you know what happened! A man got elected to the job in 2005, and of course, when popes begin their pontificate, they're asked to select a name. The name that they choose is because it will symbolize in some way the spirit of what they intend to do during their pontificate; it will be characteristic of their goals and their objectives. So what's interesting about this particular title then? why the name 'Benedict'? Why do

you think Joseph Ratzinger chose this particular name, as the title he would be known as Pope? He was asked at the very first appearance before the public, what the answer was. This is what he said, 'St. Benedict (who by the way, was born in AD.480) the founder of European monasticism; he lived, said Ratzinger, at a time when the empire was collapsing and he saw the role of the church as to preserve the best in human culture throughout the centuries, the whole world crumbling and Benedict helped insure that civilization survived. So when the cardinal said to him, what will you be? what name shall you be? He said, I will be Benedict and this is why, because I think civilization is crumbling and he thought that civilization was being lost to moral relativism, that's what Ratzinger thinks. So he chose a name about the fact that he intends to fight the same battle as St. Benedict of old. So he constitutes a fundamental point of reference for the unity of Europe and the powerful call to the irrefutable Christian roots of European culture and civilization. This is the name that Ratzinger chose as indicative of the spirit of his pontificate.

Did you know that in 1980, Pope John Paul II made St. Benedict the patron saint of Europe. So think about it! he was born in 480 and this is 1980 so this is the 1500 year anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict. In 1980, John Paul said, I think we'll make St. Benedict the patron saint of Europe, and that's the name Ratzinger chose. He who is the patron saint of Europe, in fact, when Joseph Ratzinger grew up, for many years, he took a private annual retreat at a Benedictine monastery; he knows all about the Benedictines, he knows all about the story about St. Benedict! In fact, let me tell you something interesting, do you know, that on the night before John Paul II died, Joseph Ratzinger slipped out of the Vatican and headed off to a little Italian village called, Subiaco. Now there's not much there, but there is a cave where St. Benedict had his first vision, and Ratzinger had been invited down because there's still a Benedictine monastery there and the abbot of the monastery wanted to confer an award upon Joseph Ratzinger. You'll never guess the name of the award that was being conferred on him that day? It was 'the St. Benedict award', and on that day he gave a stirring speech as to the symbol of what St. Benedict meant to Europe and to the survival of Europe, and he went back to the Vatican that night, and the next day John Paul II died, and Ratzinger was plunged into the story of the papal election that soon elected him and he said, 'my name will be Benedict'. So what that tells us, b&s, is that the focus of this man is on things European (we'll come back to the significance of that in a minute as well).

Now this is the coat of arms for Benedict XVI, it's a little bit different to the normal standard papal coat of arms, in as much as the bit at the top isn't actually the papal tiara which is normally there in a papal coat of arms. The bit hanging at the bottom isn't normally there either (I'll come back to those two bits in a minute), In the middle is a shield, a red shield and what's interesting is that across that red shield are draped two golden mantles on either side of the shield. Now those golden mantles are a symbol of monastic spirituality and in particular are a reference to the order of St. Benedict. Surprise, surprise! the two drapes across the shield are a symbol of St. Benedict, order

of St. Benedict monasticism; the shell is a symbol of pilgrimage and inside the drapes you'll notice that on one side is what's called a 'Moor's head from Africa' and on the other side is a bear. Now the Moor's head is a symbol of St. Corbinian who was the founder of the diocese of Freising in Germany. So you think, 'yes, so? You see, that's interesting because that's where Benedict had his first job, Joseph Ratzinger first lectured in theology in Freising university in Germany, and on his arms he took the symbol of St. Corbinian of Freising which was the moor's head; on the other side is the bear and the story about the bear is, that one day, St. Corbinian was travelling to Rome and his horse was killed by a bear, so St. Corbinian turned around and he commanded the bear to bare his burden until he got to the city of Rome. When he got to the city of Rome, he took the pack off the bear and released him to freedom and the bear returned to Bavaria. The legend is to symbolized that Christianity, St. Corbinian, was able to tame and domesticate the ferocity of Paganism (the bear) and that, in fact, lead to the foundation of the great civilization of the Duchy of Bavaria. So this is the story and background of Ratzinger!

Now what's interesting is the bit at the top and the bit at the bottom, because what he's got at the top is not the Pope's tiara but what's called the Silver mitre; now the bishop's mitre is a symbol of the bishop as a teacher. 'I'm going to be a teacher', says Ratzinger; and the bit at the bottom, hanging at the bottom is what's called a 'wool pallium', and it represents the bishop's roll as the pastor of the flock (it's a woollen pallium) he's the pastor of the flock. So what Benedict has said is this, 'what's my pontifical going to be about? He says, 'I'm going to win back the power of Catholicism but I'm going to win it by being a teacher and a pastor. I can't get my people and my lands back by war any more, but I'll get them back by intellectual debate; I going to win them back to Catholicism by the power of my argument'. You know, it's very interesting, it's probably (and I can't remember the name of this particular cardinal) but the cardinal that's deemed the most astute of all the American cardinals (whatever that might mean) was asked immediately after the election, 'why do you think that people elected Ratzinger?' What he said was quite interesting, and he said this, 'well, when we elected John Paul II, he said, the church had a crisis in the east (what he meant was the unravelling of the Soviet power for the east of Europe). But we the cardinals elected this man, Joseph Ratzinger, to face a crisis in the west. Do you know what he meant by that? he meant this, that during the time that John Paul II who had travelled the whole world and became famous for it, the actual numbers of Catholics in Europe have been declining and they said, 'we're going to anoint Joseph Ratzinger to recover the power of the Papacy in Europe, it's the old home stamping ground'. That's what we elected him for, to face the crisis in the west; he's a scholar and he's an intellect, he's been regarded as the most formidable thinker that's been elected to the Papacy for over a century of time. He's a man of the west, who understands European culture and European thinking, he's a very, very competent man!

Now just think of this in terms of our biblical expectations, you see! because I think we expect to see, therefore, the increasing influence of the Pope on European politics and

in particular, the Catholic heritage of European union. You know what happened is, there was a celebration earlier this year (2007) of the 50th anniversary of what? the treaty of Rome, you're absolutely right, but for 10 marks, do you know what day it was signed? that's tricky! well, it was signed on 25th of March, 1957, it was signed by the 6 leaders of the 6 initial European countries that sat down to sign it, because the 25th of March is a feast to our lady of Europe, none other than Mary. The Papacy made sure that not only was it signed in the Vatican, but signed on a day of a feast for Mary and on the 25th of March 2007, they had a celebration of the 50th anniversary and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, who was at that time, actually president of the European system for the next 6 months, invited a German pontiff into a German city, to come and lecture the European parliament. So he did, and blasted them for apostasy, having been written into the European constitution some reference to their Christian heritage, by which, of course, he means Roman Catholic Christian heritage.

You might know that the Pope gave a rather interesting address very early on in his pontificate, he gave what was called the 'lecture at Regensburg university' and you'll remember he said some words about Islam (it was reported in the paper, certainly in New Zealand, and I presume you heard about it in America) because Islam was getting upset around the world, Italian nuns got murdered and effigies of the Pope were being burnt in protest and there were Muslim riots because why? because the Pope had given a lecture in Regensburg and called into question the spirit of Islam! What he said was that Islam was a violent religion and that the only notable thing that had come out of it, is that it converts by violence and by militant approach. Of course, the Muslims threw up their hands in horror and proceeded to be violent all around the world to protest the Pope's words. Of course, the Pope folded his hands and said, 'I rest my case'. Now let me assure you of this one thing, b&s, this Pope is not George Bush, this man doesn't make mistakes with his words, this man knows exactly what he's saying. That lecture was rehearsed and prepared for months, the Pope knew exactly what he was about; when he threw the gauntlet down to Islam, he meant to do that, and he meant to do it on purpose, and do you know why? because he wanted to challenge the European nations, you do not let Turkey into Europe - it's Islam and not part of our faith and heritage. Leave it alone it's not part of us! we've got to get back the Roman Catholic heritage! It was a deliberate lecture on that day, make no mistake, it wasn't a verbal gaffe as others are want to do.

Here's the next thing! I think we expect to see the increasing focus of the Pope on Catholic doctrinal purity to strengthen the faith of the church adherents; the false prophet is interested in those that have the mark of the beast. You know, this Pope has gone on record as saying, 'he doesn't mind if the Roman Catholic Church gets smaller, as long as its pure and more intense in its zeal'. It's quite interesting really, this is a man who's been described as one of epic ambition, he's already 80; he's on a charge before he runs out of time!

Here's another thing! I think we expect to see the increasing voice of the Pope in

promoting Catholic social doctrine by speech and by encyclicals; well, he's pretty good at doing that, he's being doing that for a long time!

Here's another one! I think we expect to see the drive of the Pope to facilitate union with the Eastern Orthodox rite, to create a truly Catholic influence across the face of all Europe. This man is able to gather all the kings of the 'oikoumene'. If you look at the 'oikoumene' you'll find it includes all the Eastern Orthodox nations; the false prophet calls them and they come! Now you'll know, of course, that of all the Eastern Orthodox churches (because there's a whole raft of them) which one has the most difficulty in seeking reconciliation with the Papacy? which one is holding out the most? the Russian Orthodox! You know, John Paul II dreamed all his lifetime that he could make a visit to Moscow, but the man in charge of the Russian Orthodox church said, 'no you can't', and his name is Alexis II, and do you know what Alexis II said, the man who held out John Paul II and said you can't come; but as soon as Joseph Ratzinger was elected to the pontificate, Alexis II said, 'this is a man we can do business with!' Now that's interesting, isn't it? Of course, you do realize that we've got a German pope, and Alexis II who leads the Russian Orthodox church is a German; I think we're going to see some interesting developments there at the time of the end.

Finally, we expect to see the increasing power of the Pope to position Catholic Europe for the final great controversy against our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes! All of those assumptions or implications, by the way, we've taken from those 2 or 3 verses about the false prophet. You've got to read it very carefully, there's a lot in them when you start to think about it, in terms of what we may expect.

So why is that important to us, b&s, at the time of the end? Well, just have a look at this! You see, Revelation 14 verses 11 and 12 says, 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus'. Clearly what we're being told, those who are the seed of the woman have no part of the system of the false prophet, who causeth people to worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. The saints stand aside from that, says Revelation, and they will have nothing to do with that! There's another one like unto it, it says in Revelation 15 verse 2, 'I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God'. The seed of the woman are set in contrast to the seed of the serpent who are associated with this false prophet power. And lastly, in Revelation 20 verse 4, 'I saw thrones and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God. But their spirit was that they had not worshipped the beast neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands. But they lived and reigned with Him for one thousand years' says Revelation 20. So the seed of the woman will have no part of this

seed of serpent power and that false prophet which heads that religious system at the time of the end.

Now, true, b&s, if the seed of the woman have got nothing to do with the false prophet, do you think that the Christadelphians ought to be debating who the false prophet might be or who it might not be? or perhaps having no opinion at all? The bible says, 'when Christ comes, those who have stood aside from that system will receive the kingdom of our Lord. You see, prophecy isn't really something that we can say, 'well, let's just have different views, shall we, it doesn't really matter?' I think it does for this reason, because what we're being told in the book of Revelation is that those associated with the false prophet receive the mark of the beast. It's mention in Revelation 13 verse 16, Revelation 14 verse 19 and Revelation 20 verse 4, the mark of the beast, the false prophet. Those associated with the false prophet receive the mark of the beast! That mark dooms them to extinction by God's judgment, they're part of the seed of the serpent power, that's the mark! Do you know where that mark is? b&s, do you know where it says the mark of the beast is made upon them? in their forehead, it's where they think, the seed of the serpent thinking, manifested in the false prophet system. It dooms those people to ultimate destruction because the 'red line' is going to be destroyed one day, that's the framework of bible prophecy. But in contrast, those associated with the man called the Faithful and True in Revelation 20, who rides out to do battle with the false prophet, well, they've got the seal of God, and that seal of God guarantees them immortality by God's mercy; and that seal is mentioned in Revelation 7 verse 3 and chapter 9 verse 4 and chapter 22 verse 4. Do you know where the seal of God is? do you know where the seal of God is placed upon them? in their foreheads - that seed of the woman thinking - spiritual mindedness. The one is the mark of the beast which dooms to death, the other is the seal of God that promises life. It's **life and death**, b&s, to know about this and where we stand and what we keep separate from and what we abhor, repudiate, what we preach against, what we witness for and against; because there are two different colours and we need to know which side we belong to. So when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, b&s, to do battle with that whole system, the power of the serpent manifested in all sorts of different ways at the time of the end, the false prophet, says the book of Revelation, will be one power that He takes, by casting him alive into the lake of fire.

So let's be thankful, shall we? for bible prophecy and let's be warned and ready, so that when Christ comes we'll know exactly where we stand and what we're doing! and we'll be thankful to be part of being with Him who is described thankfully, in such wonderful contrast to the false prophet, as the man called Faithful and True!