

**GIMME DAT END TIMES RELIGION – PART VIII**

*We have traced how during its early centuries, the faith handed down by Christ and his disciples compromised and gave way to a new hybrid religion. Pagan ceremonies were adapted to accommodate the throngs of former pagans that were now entering the Church.<sup>1</sup> At the dawn of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Christianity was factionalized, as false teaching divided the faithful. Under Constantine Christianity was legitimized, unified and ultimately compromised. A new faith replaced it; one that offered the illusion of salvation in that it replaced repentance with ritual.<sup>2</sup> A religion “**having the form of godliness but denying its power**”. (2Timothy 3:5)*

**THE WAY TO GOD**

**“I am the way...No one comes to the Father except through Me”.** (John 14:6)

So let us quickly review the *progress* of the Church in its early years. In the centuries before the coming of Messiah, - centered in the Middle East, - the pagan world had developed a system of worshiping a goddess figure portrayed as the mother of a god come from heaven. Judaism, and certainly early Christianity, - broke from this false, idol-worshipping religion. But as the Church welcomed in throngs of sometimes forced converts, the Church, - now centered in Rome & Constantinople, - took on the trappings of the Babylonian Mystery Religion. Dr Joe Van Koevering explains that it all happened when “heathenism was grafted in”. It was but a natural outcome of this compromising Church policy.<sup>3</sup>

By the early 4<sup>th</sup> century under Constantine, both the Church and Emperor were legitimately interested in the conversion of the pagan masses. Over time the feasts and festivals of paganism were adapted to Christian purposes. And the goddess worship that had hung on since the days of Babylon was replaced by the worship of Mary. Influenced by that growing pagan influence, it was even before Constantine legalized Christianity, - that in some circles, - Mary began to be called “The Mother of God”. Still, even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits that there were no “clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first Christian centuries”.<sup>4</sup> It wasn't until the Council of Ephesus in 431 that Mary was officially found to be the “mother of God”. Over time various Catholic saints began to ascribe to Mary the very attributes of God. St Germanus prayed to her, saying “who can be saved or redeemed but through thee”. St Bernhard wrote we could only approach the Father through Jesus; - and “Jesus Christ only through Mary”.<sup>5</sup>

This was standing Biblical doctrine on its head. It is Christ's death that provides us access to the Father. Jesus assured us in John 6:37 that **“the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out”**. Even the New American Bible, - the official version of the Catholic Church in the US, - speaking of Jesus, states explicitly in Acts 4:12: **“There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved”**. Yet writing in a book fully authorized by the Catholic Church, St Alphonsus de Liguori described Mary as “the salvation of the universe” and “Mediatrice between man and God”.<sup>6</sup> Besides the very notion of ‘saints’ has also been corrupted. Any reading of the Book of Acts clearly shows that the term ‘saints’ referred to all those that had placed their faith in Jesus as Christ & Lord & Savior.

Over time, both the Western branch of the Church ruled from Rome, - and the Eastern, more loosely controlled from Constantinople, - developed a system of Marian veneration that rivaled and many would say surpassed the very worship of God himself. Liguori called her “God, as it were, of this world” and “holy, pure”. Yet Luke 18:19 reads: **“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone”**. Paul reinforced that doctrine in his letter to the Romans writing: **“there is no one who does good, not even one”**. (Romans 3:12) St Alphonsus goes on to warrant that “The Son is under great obligation to Mary” and that she should be afforded a “glory equal to God”. Four hundred pages or so into his book, Liguori effusively spills out with the declaration that this “Divine Mother can be called the Savior of the World”, a term reserved for God alone.<sup>7</sup> Yet it was Mary herself who declared her own need for a Savior. As she celebrated

God's favoring her with the honor of being the mother of the Messiah, Mary declared: **"My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior"**. (Luke 1:46-47) Despite claims to the contrary; - that the "worship" of Mary and the Saints was of a different order, (Catholic Encyclopedia)<sup>8</sup>, one hymn declared of Mary "Queen art thou whom all things worship"<sup>9</sup>. Yet the Bible consistently forbade such honoring of anyone other than God, with Christ Himself quoting Scripture to Satan when tempted in the wilderness: **"You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve"**. (Luke 4:8 a quote of Deuteronomy 6:13)

Over ensuing centuries the *glorification* of Mary continued, with the Catholic Church *discovering* new traditions, even up to the present day. All of this was justified and made possible by the declaration of the Council of Trent in 1545, which declared Church Tradition, - as interpreted and enunciated by the Pope and Church Councils, - as having equal authority with the Holy Scriptures. With that in hand, Rome declared Mary to have been born 'free from sin', (Immaculate Conception), in 1854. In 1950 she was proclaimed to have been 'Assumed' into heaven. And in 1965 she was named the Mother of the Church.<sup>10</sup> An Encyclical of Pope Pius XII in 1954 acknowledged her as "the Queen of every creature".<sup>11</sup>

Now Mary was said to have participated in the very act of Redemption itself. Here is how that is said to work. By this doctrine: Upon death, most mortals need to be purified of their sins in order to enter the presence of God. Hence: Purgatory; - where the soul is purified before entering heaven. But Mary, - and the Saints are said to have excess merit - which goes into a '*Treasury of Merit*', - and you can have it applied to your time here on earth through *indulgences*.<sup>12</sup> Now the whole notion of Purgatory was from the pagan cults and had its origin in Babylonian, Greek, Mithraic and Roman religion. Prayers for the dead were a heathen concept that snuck into the church about the same time as other pagan doctrines. This concept of post-mortal purification can be found even in religious beliefs around the world, - save Biblical Christianity. It first entered Judaic thought through Greek influence about the time of the Maccabees in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>13</sup> It has links to "the system of Rome with the system of Tammuz or Zoroaster, the great God of the ancient fire-worshippers".<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, for many of us brought up in that tradition, the doctrine is wholly unscriptural. Psalm 49:6-7 tells us: **"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him"**. There are no second chances. **"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."** (Hebrews 9:27) Christ's work alone is sufficient for our salvation: **"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses"** (Colossians 2:13) You see, none of this comes as a result of our own power. For it was **"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"** (Titus 3:5) And it was a one time thing; - **"we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"**. (Hebrews 10:10) Search the Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Epistles, Revelation and the entire New Testament, - and you will not find reference to this notion of purgatory or prayers for the dead.

Perhaps the full extent of this doctrinal detour can best be summed up by quoting again from the writings of St Alphonsus de Liguori. Taken at face value his words scream out 'Blasphemy!'. As John MacArthur points out, the Queen has become the rival of the true King. Fulfilling the wishes of Semiramis, she has become to some, the very source of salvation. She has taken on the very attributes of God being all knowing, seeing and powerful.<sup>15</sup> The official Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that it is through Mary that we are given the "gifts of eternal salvation".<sup>16</sup> In 1997, Pope John Paul II attributed to her the "role of cooperator in redemption".<sup>17</sup> As St Alphonsus puts it: "At the command of Mary all obey, - even God".<sup>18</sup>

And so we are left with a system where millions revere and love Mary to a greater degree than even the Father or The Son. She is prayed to, - and worshipped as if she were God. Significantly too, she is seen by many Catholic leaders as the force that will unite all religions under the banner of the Catholic Church. In his book, *Crossing The Threshold*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "If victory comes it will be brought by Mary. Christ will conquer through her". The late Bishop Fulton Sheen predicted that the Islamic world would be converted "through the summoning of Muslims to a veneration of the Mother of God".<sup>19</sup> Muslims already honor Mary in the Koran. And there is the connection between the revival of the Divine

Feminine, Goddess Worship and Mary. One writer described her as the “connecting link” between all religions: A non-threatening figure that could unite all the religions of the world.

Next we will look at how all of these forces are coming together under the banner of a Mary that was never presented by Scripture. Will she be the uniting force that will bring about the creation of the One World Religion of Antichrist?

## WAR WATCH

As the summer goes on the rumors of war continue to fly. Now add the State Department’s Dennis Ross to the voices of those that feel that Israeli-Syrian hostilities are likely imminent. Damascus seems to be the linchpin on which the situation revolves. Syria, with help from Iran is directly responsible for the rearming of Hezbollah.<sup>20</sup> The Syrians have made a number of moves preparatory to war, including entrenching Syrian security forces in part of Lebanon’s Beqaa Valley as well as opening the Quneitra Road to terrorist traffic. The dismantled military checkpoints on the Quneitra Road had been in place since the ’67 War. Their removal has raised concerns in Jerusalem that Syria is making serious war plans. The road leads to Israel across the Golan border. It could give Damascus the cover of ‘plausible deniability’, allowing them to claim that any ensuing terror attacks against Israel occurred without their knowledge. It is not likely that Israel would buy into that explanation making reprisals likely.<sup>21 22 23</sup> Damascus also ordered the evacuation of all of its citizens from Lebanon by July 15<sup>th</sup>, beginning with Syrian university students.<sup>24</sup> The background to all of this may be the UN Security Council session scheduled for July 16<sup>th</sup>, which will take up the Lebanese situation, specifically the failure to put an end to arms smuggling to terror groups. Lebanese Intelligence is reporting that Tehran, Damascus and Hezbollah may be preparing a major military “eruption” around that time to forestall UN action.<sup>25</sup>

For its part, Israel has just completed war games on the Golan Heights bordering Syria, claiming the move was only defensive. Iran meanwhile has moved Shihab-3 and Scud missiles to Syria in order to better target Israel. The missiles are to serve as a deterrent to US or Israeli attacks against Iranian nuclear plants.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Syria has missiles of its own capable of carrying VX gas and other non-conventional warheads to just about all of Israel. Hezbollah wreaked havoc on the Israeli countryside with a much less formidable complement of missiles in last summer’s war. Damascus is also expecting the imminent arrival of a shipment of fighter jets from Russia.<sup>27</sup> In the past, Israel has warned the Syrians of going to far with their assaults. Isaiah 17:1 makes that point. **“Damascus will cease from being a city and be a ruinous heap”**. And Jeremiah 49:24-26 says: **“Damascus has grown feeble; She turns to flee, And fear has seized her... Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, And all the men of war shall be cut off in that day,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, And it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad.’”**

But wait, there’s more. Here are some of the other developments portending war in the near future.

- Iran is scheduled to take delivery of 4 mini subs, supplied by North Korea, sometime in the middle of July. The Iranians already boast Russian made hyper-sonic anti-ship missiles and over a thousand speed boats armed with Chinese technology.<sup>28</sup>
- Two more American aircraft carriers (and support ships) are heading to the Gulf. The USS Enterprise shipped out of Norfolk, while the USS Nimitz left Chennai, India. That means the US will soon have the firepower of 4 carrier groups in theater.<sup>29 30</sup>
- Anticipating sanctions and /or war, Iran continues to stockpile gasoline. They’ve now contracted with Venezuela for gasoline deliveries.<sup>31</sup>
- The Washington Post is among sources reporting that the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon has failed to stop the flow of heavy weapons to Hezbollah and other terror groups in Lebanon.<sup>32</sup>
- The Palestinian terror group Hamas is now believed to possess sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles capable of taking down Israeli aircraft and modern anti-tank weapons that will challenge the IDF’s tank corps.<sup>33</sup>
- From DEBKA: “al Qaeda’s coded messages on internal forums announcing that preparations are now in place for attacks in the US during this summer are appearing with greater frequency than the traffic prior to” the 9/11 attacks.

There have been specific threats of terror attacks in Prague against both the American Embassy and Czech government buildings, as well as a threat of a large-scale strike in the US this summer.<sup>34</sup>

The upshot of all this is that the powers-that-be, believe that war could break out at just about any point this summer. The LA Times speculates that it could come in August.<sup>35</sup> The Syrians think it could come any day.<sup>36</sup> In fact here's the kicker. An aide to Syrian President Bashar Assad is guaranteeing that Israel will capitulate or face war by September. The official claimed that Damascus has pressed Israel through the US, - for return of the Golan, - either through "negotiations or through war". He boasted that Syria has learned from the Hezbollah war last summer and "...can have hundreds of missiles hitting Tel Aviv that will overwhelm Israel's anti-missile batteries".<sup>37</sup> But take heed of Matthew 13:7: **"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."**

## **PART OF THE PLAN ?**

Longtime readers of Zew's News may remember a series called *Babylon Rising?*, in which we identified one man that currently fulfills all of the requirements set forth in both Bible and Koran to occupy the dual position of Islamic Mahdi and Scriptural Antichrist. That man would be Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan; - a direct descendant of Mohammed with ties to both the Sunni and Shia lines and next in line for the throne of Iraq, vacated in 1958. The Prince is part of the Hashemite Royal Family and claims legal right as well to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In that series we pointed out that he was proposed by some members of the Bush Administration as well as former Israeli PM Benyamin Netanyahu to ascend that throne and serve as ruler in Iraq.<sup>38 39</sup> That's the background to what follows.

Now the future of Iraq is getting rather interesting. President Bush remains determined to see a united Iraq. But other very powerful forces in the US & Israel are pushing the idea that Iraq should be split into Kurdish, Shiite and Sunni semi-autonomous areas. Representatives of two major think tanks, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the Brookings Institution, are pushing for just that.<sup>40</sup> So is Democratic Senator Joseph Biden. This all comes on the heels of building pressure to *do something*, as Republican lawmakers increasingly abandon the Administration on war policy.

There are further developments. Turkey has massed 140,000 troops on the northern border in preparation for action against Kurdish rebels who want to create their own state from parts of Iraq and Turkey.<sup>41</sup> And DEBKA is reporting that Basra in southern Iraq is trying to cut their own deal, asking for Saudi support for an independent state there.<sup>42</sup> Now as for Prince El Hassan bin Talal: He's doing what he can to thwart those plans and perhaps return to more stable times, say back between 1925 & 1958 when his family occupied the Iraqi throne. The Prince, viewed as a "leading intellectual ...of the Islamic world"<sup>43</sup> came out strongly in a recent interview, against the "fragmentation of Iraq" calling it the "beginning of the end" which would produce "a new 100 years war". In its stead he seemed to offer his own services as ...ahem...reigning monarch perhaps...with suggestions that his rule would begin with the equitable distribution of oil revenues and a vague reference to advance the cause of "a commonwealth of Middle Eastern or West Asian people". In addition he reminded his Muslim audience of his recent talks aimed at breaking down the barriers between religious leaders in Iraq, - Sunni, Shiite and Christian, - stressing his neutrality in the Sunni / Shiite discord, - being as he is, a member of Mohammed's family.<sup>44</sup>

All of this is strangely reminiscent of the rise of the coming Antichrist as prophesied by Scripture, - posing, - as that figure will; - as a man-of-peace, & a prince, & a King of Babylon (Iraq), & an Assyrian (a cause he champions). And then there is this. In 1933, the illuminist British writer, HG Wells, penned a novel called *The Shape of Things to Come*. In it he wrote: "...the plan for the 'Modern World-State' would succeed" after the Third World War which "would come out of something that would occur in Basra, Iraq".<sup>45</sup> Interesting? Yes! Prescient? Perhaps! Still, Amos 3:7 promises: **"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals his secret to His servants the prophets"**.

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- <sup>1</sup> Roger Foster, How Were Original Biblical Practices Replaced in Christianity, GN Magazine, April 2005
  - <sup>2</sup> The Rise of Counterfeit Christianity, The Church Jesus Built, GN Magazine
  - <sup>3</sup> Dr Joe Van Koevering, From a lecture entitled: The Pope, The Prophecy and The Promise, given at the International Prophecy Conference 2007
  - <sup>4</sup> The Virgin Mary, Catholic Encyclopedia,
  - <sup>5</sup> Perry Stone, The Pope, The Eagle And The Iron Sickle, Voice of Evangelism, 2006, pgs 112-113
  - <sup>6</sup> Alphonsus de Liguori, The Glories of Mary, as quoted by John MacArthur, in a sermon series entitled: The Idolatry of Mary Worship
  - <sup>7</sup> Alphonsus de Liguori, The Glories of Mary, pgs 23, 402
  - <sup>8</sup> Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Catholic Encyclopedia online
  - <sup>9</sup> John MacArthur, in a sermon series entitled: The Idolatry of Mary Worship
  - <sup>10</sup> Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, Reformed Publishing, 1962 pg 8, - as quoted by Tim F LaHaye, Revelation: Illustrated and Made Plain, 1973, pg 68
  - <sup>11</sup> Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on proclaiming the Queenship Of Mary, 11 October 1954
  - <sup>12</sup> John MacArthur, in a sermon series entitled: The Idolatry of Mary Worship
  - <sup>13</sup> Maccabees, Wikipedia
  - <sup>14</sup> Adapted from: Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons, 1858
  - <sup>15</sup> John MacArthur, in a sermon series entitled: The Idolatry of Mary Worship
  - <sup>16</sup> The New Catholic Chatechism, # 969
  - <sup>17</sup> Dr Joe Van Koevering, From a lecture entitled: The Pope, The Prophecy and The Promise, given at the International Prophecy Conference 2007
  - <sup>18</sup> Alphonsus de Liguori, The Glories of Mary, pg 566
  - <sup>19</sup> Dr Joe Van Koevering, From a lecture entitled: The Pope, The Prophecy and The Promise, given at the International Prophecy Conference 2007
  - <sup>20</sup> Stan Goodenough, Israel-Syria war rumors rise, Jerusalem Newswire, July 6, 2007
  - <sup>21</sup> Syrian troops enter Lebanon, DEBKAFfile, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>22</sup> Syria quietly opens Damascus road to Quneitra, DEBKAFfile, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>23</sup> Syria removing military checkpoints in Golan, Jerusalem Post, July 7, 2007
  - <sup>24</sup> Syria concerned for students in Lebanon, Jerusalem Post, July 7, 2007
  - <sup>25</sup> Syria calls on citizens to leave Lebanon ahead of a military “eruption” ..., DEBKAFfile, July 9, 2007
  - <sup>26</sup> Hillel Fendel, Iranian Missiles Could Threaten Israel from Syria, Arutz Sheva, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>27</sup> Stan Goodenough, Israel-Syria war rumors rise, Jerusalem Newswire, July 6, 2007
  - <sup>28</sup> North Korea to supply 4 mini-subts to Iran, Japan Today, July 4, 2007
  - <sup>29</sup> Enterprise strike group leaving Norfolk, AP, July 6, 2007
  - <sup>30</sup> Nimitz leaves Chennai, Express India, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>31</sup> Nazila Fathi, Iran Low on Gasoline, to be Supplied by Venezuela, New York Times, July 4, 2007
  - <sup>32</sup> Buildup In Lebanon, Washington Post, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>33</sup> Hamas has rockets than can hit IDF planes, Alex Fishman, YNET News, July 6, 2007
  - <sup>34</sup> US counter-terror authorities fear major campaign in Europe, DEBKAFfile, July 3, 2007
  - <sup>35</sup> The guns of August, LA Times, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>36</sup> Government-run Syrian daily anticipates war with Israel, Kuwait News Agency, July 3, 2007
  - <sup>37</sup> Aaron Klein, ‘Mideast war this summer’, World Net Daily, July 8, 2007, , Kuwait News Agency, July 3, 2007
  - <sup>38</sup> Neos Want The King of Iraq Back, Tude, November 5, 2003
  - <sup>39</sup> A Clean Break, Richard Perle, James Colbert et al, as quoted in Neos Want The King of Iraq Back, Tude, November 5, 2003
  - <sup>40</sup> Barry Schwied, Think Tank Scholars Urge: Divide Iraq Into 3 Regions, The Guardian, July 5, 2007
  - <sup>41</sup> Turkey Has Massed 140,000 Troops On Iraq Border, Drudge Report, July 9, 2007
  - <sup>42</sup> Basra Is Poised to Secede from Iraq Under Saudi Protection, DEBKAFfile, July 6, 2007
  - <sup>43</sup> Prince Hassan: Neocons and Israel Plan “New 100 Years War” in the Middle East, Another Day in the Empire, March 26, 2007
  - <sup>44</sup> Interview With Prince Hassan, Today’s Zaman, March 2, 2007
  - <sup>45</sup> Dr Dennis Cuddy, The Globalists, 2001, pg 50