

Islamic Eschatology – Dangerous To Your Health

Most Christians have a Biblical position regarding prophecy – the Last Day(s), eschatology or “end times” and the return to Earth of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are different interpretations of Scripture concerning His Second Coming: pre-millennial, post-millennial and a-millennial. There are many dedicated, Bible believing Christians in each of these ‘camps.’

It is generally overlooked by Christians that our Muslim neighbors also have very strong views regarding eschatology. Ignorance of Muslim theology, especially as it deals with the Last Day, can definitely be dangerous to our health!

This eschatological aspect first hit me when I read that Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, after threatening to “wipe Israel off the map,” believes he can hasten the coming of the 12th Imam, the Mahdi, by instigating a widespread conflagration in the Middle East, preferably with nuclear weapons. Sounds like the Iranian president believes that Allah is behind schedule in his march toward the Last Day and that he needs to give the lunar god a little shove.

Who is this “Mahdi” and what is his significance? He is their “Awaited Savior.” He is Islam’s Messiah. His reappearance is central to Islamic eschatological expectations. It is the crowning element of all their end-time narratives and is comparable in importance to them, as the Second Coming of Jesus is to Christians.

All across the Muslim world today there is a call for the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate – an Islamic theocracy complete with Sharia Law. The Caliph in Islam is regarded as the supreme political and religious leader of all Muslims. The Caliph is regarded as the Vice-regent for Allah on earth. When Muslims call for the restoration of the Caliphate, it is ultimately the Mahdi they are calling for. They see him as the future leader of the entire world. As Christians, we need to watch for him as the coming anti-Christ.

It doesn’t matter that we regard Islam as a false religion. The point to emphasize here is that this is the belief system of the world’s second largest and fastest growing religion. What they believe will dramatically affect our lives for many years to come. What then do they believe?

In his book, “**Anti-Christ – Islam’s Awaited Messiah**” Dr. Joel Richardson identifies five basic tenets of Islamic belief. After their fundamental belief in one god, Allah, the next most important tenet concerns the Last Day. There are three Major Signs leading up to this event: the coming of the Muslim Anti-Christ (*ad-Dajjal*) and most importantly, the coming of the Muslim Savior/Messiah figure Al-Mahdi, which in Arabic means the Guided One. These two events are followed by the

return of the “Muslim Jesus” (*Isa Al-Maseeh*).

This “Muslim Jesus” bears no resemblance either in person or program to the Biblical Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The Muslim Jesus returns on a day of prayer (Friday) to a white minaret in a Damascus suburb. He declares himself to be a faithful Muslim, subordinate to the Mahdi and makes the ritual pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. He will endorse and enforce Islamic Shariah law universally and will lead many Christians to convert to Islam while he abolishes Christianity worldwide.

Richardson sees an Islamic Revival underway: “Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, growing at a rate four times faster than Christianity.” (p. 23) It accounts for 20% of the world’s population. “If present trends continue, half of all global births will be in Muslim families by the year 2055.” Also noteworthy is that 85% of American converts to Islam are African-Americans.

The author states clearly, “I believe that Islam is indeed the primary vehicle that will be used by Satan to fulfill the prophecies of the Bible about the future political, religious and military system of the Antichrist that will overwhelm the entire world just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.” (p. 32)

What will be the effect on Christianity if Islam closes the gap and begins to grow exponentially? The author sees “Bandwagon conversions – confusion among faithful Christians will be the rule of the day. We cannot underestimate the power of a worldwide trend.”

Remember, the Bible warns of a *great apostasy* or “falling away” from the faith of our fathers on a significant global scale. II Thessalonians 2:3,4 “Understanding the Islamic perspective regarding the last days and specifically the Major Signs therefore is crucial if we wish to understand the central religious anticipations of the 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide.” (p.39)

Muslim scholars actually apply Bible verses about the Antichrist to their awaited savior, the Mahdi.

Richardson notes, “Several of the most unique and distinguishing aspects of the biblical Antichrist’s person, mission and actions are matched to an amazing degree by the descriptions of the Mahdi as found in Islamic traditions.” (p.70)

To be continued

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Material for this article gleaned from: “**Anti-Christ – Islam’s Awaited Messiah**” by Joel Richardson. Pleasant Word Publishing: a division of Winepress Publishing, 276 pages. ISBN 1-4141-0440-5