

# Prophecy in Perspective

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An Email Newsletter

**Our Times** - *Prophecy in current events*

## The New Pope, Center of the World's Focus

There is a great deal of biblical prophetic information that relates to the events that are unfolding before the world today. As we look at some of this we need to first focus on an important passage from Colossians written by the Apostle Paul. With all of the media hype about the New Pope, former Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, first Jesuit pope, first south American pope, the following words of Scripture will help us to put current events in the right perspective as Christians:

**"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."** (3:13-17)

For the Bible believing Christian, the focus on the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church is a real distraction from what the Scriptures teach should be our true center of attention. This is especially true in view of the reality that the new Pope, like his two predecessors, has announced that the focus of his tenure as Pope will be the Virgin Mary. Immediately after being presented to the world, Pope Francis, which title he has chosen for himself, led his church in the "Hail Mary" prayer recitation. While I am impressed with his apparent humility and strong stand against abortion and same-sex marriage, I will certainly be in prayer that the Lord will lead this new Pope to a true and saving knowledge of the one and only Lord, Jesus Christ, **"He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords"** (1 Timothy 6:15).



Jesus warned us that in the latter days **"Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many"** (Matthew 24:11). As Christians we should stay focused on the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ. There is not a word in the Scriptures that direct us to pray to Mary. We need to take very seriously the Scripture's warnings that **"in the last days perilous times shall come"** (2 Timothy 3:1). The Roman Catholic office of "Pope," is a creation of the Catholic Church itself. It is based on the view that Peter was the first Pope. But, in reality, there is nothing in the pages of the New Testament that even hints at this idea. Peter himself

never assumed this, as his own writings in First and Second Peter testify to his always pointing to the Lord Jesus, and never to himself as a "Pope" or as a leader over the Church that was at Rome. Whether Peter was ever in Rome is still debated today. Paul, in His personal letter to the Church that was at Rome never mentions Peter, even though he personally greets at least 25 persons in the Roman Church by name. None of the Biblical authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, or Jude ever point to Peter as being the first Pope. The office of Pope is founded on Roman Catholic Church tradition, not the Bible. I can see that Pope Francis is humble, and this is certainly a good thing. But he still needs our prayers since neither sincerity nor humility, nor any amount of good works can guarantee that we believe the truth about Jesus Christ Himself. John 14:6 says: ***"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"***

We should pray for Pope Francis and millions of Roman Catholics around the world, as well as any and all, who have never heard a clear presentation of the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9). It is so easy for people to become believers in "Churchianity" and to focus on church traditions and teachings of men and to miss the basic truths about Jesus Christ Himself. This can be true in any denomination of the Church. Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9 shows us the simple way to be saved, not through church, or good works, or church traditions, but by personal faith alone in Jesus Christ alone:

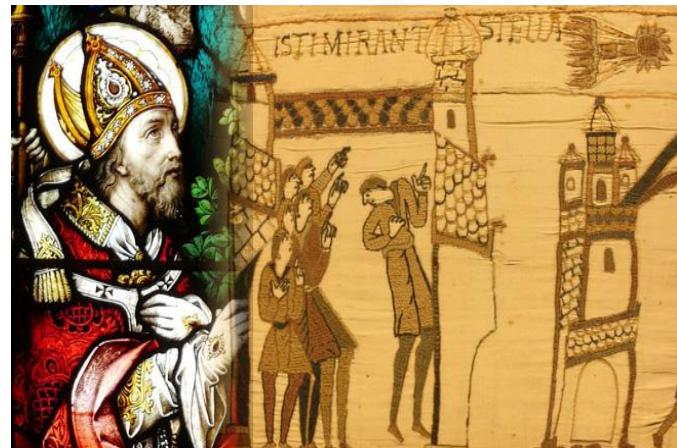
***"For by His loving-favor you have been saved from the punishment of sin through faith. It is not by anything you have done. It is a gift of God. It is not given to you because you worked for it. If you could work for it, you would be proud." (NLV)***

### **Will Pope Francis be the "Last Pope?"**

In the last *Prophecy in Perspective* Newsletter I described an ancient prophecy that came through an eleventh century Roman Catholic Monk by the name of Saint Malachy. The following article from *My News 24*, states some interesting information for us to consider:

It is the writings of Saint Malachy, an archbishop of the 1100s, which definitively states this will be the pope of the end times. A Benedictine monk claimed to have discovered in 1595 a collection of the Saint's papers where he had purportedly secretly written down 112 brief but vague prophecies. Each is associated with the reign of an individual pope. The last phrase applies to Pope Francis:

#### **Verse 112:**



***"In the final persecution of the Holy Roman Church, there will sit Peter the Roman, who will pasture his sheep in many tribulations, and when these things are finished, the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the dreadful judge will judge his people. The End."***

So let's put some of these pieces together shall we? According to Malachy the Final Pope would be known as Peter the Roman, who will pasture his sheep in many tribulations, and when these things are finished, the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the dreadful judge will judge his people.

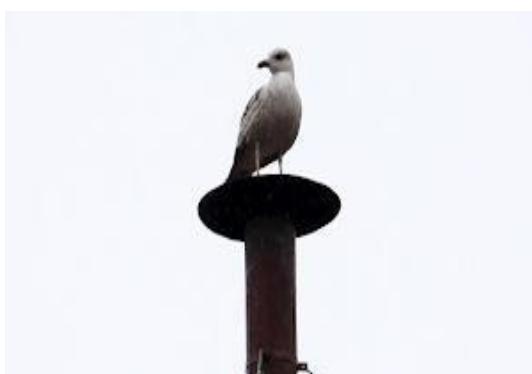
1- His chosen name is Francis in honor of St Francis of Assisi. What is so interesting about this name and its history is Saint Francis of Assisi, Italian San Francesco d'Assisi, baptized Giovanni, renamed Francesco, original name Francesco di Pietro ( PETER ) di Bernardone whom consequently enough shortly before he died, St. Francis of Assisi called together his followers and warned them of the coming troubles, saying, The time is fast approaching in which there will be great trials and afflictions; perplexities and dissensions, both spiritual and temporal, will abound; the charity of many will grow cold, and the malice of the wicked will increase.

2- He has an Italian Bloodline with both parents.

3- The name Jorge is a Portuguese and Spanish given name, equivalent to the English George. It is derived from the Greek (georgos), meaning "farmer."

4- His arrival is on 3-13-13 at 8:13pm – The number 13 represents rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea. Many Bible Scholars identify the False Prophet of Revelation 13 as a "Defective" Pope who will merge two major religions together under the guise of a "One World Religion"

5- Comet Panstarrs is streaking thru the Heavens during this same time frame in which history points out the Comets and the warnings they signify to the World of coming Wars and Disasters. (*"And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." [Luke 21:11]*)



6- Weeks before the resignation of Pope Benedict the 16th a dove which represents "Peace" upon the Earth was released and was attacked by a seagull. Many took this as a sign of pending doom or distress that would take Peace from the Earth. (*It is worth noting that a seagull, declared an unclean bird in Deuteronomy 14:15, was seen perched for extended periods atop the smoke pipe above the Vatican before the Pope was selected. Could this also point us to the sea shore vision of the rising of the four beasts in Daniel 7:2 and of the Great Tribulation Beast of Revelation 13:1?*)

7- Benedict the 16th officially resigned on the 11th of February making him the 6th Pope in history in 600 years.

I have compiled as much information as I have at this point and now it is up to you to draw your conclusion... Is this the Last Pope? (Highlighted portions have been added by myself) (<http://m.news24.com/news24/MyNews24/Papal-Prophecy-for-Athiests-to-verify-7years-20130314>)

This kind of information should not bind us to believe that this or any other, extra-biblical prophecy is true. These types of so-called prophecies, not being inspired by the Holy Spirit in the same way as the clear and specific prophecies of the Bible, should only serve to alert us as to the unfolding of the times we are living in today. The Word of God will direct us, through the leading of the Holy Spirit to "***know the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error***" (***I John 4:6***). On the significance of extra-biblical prophecies for believers, at least to take note of them to assist them in relating to God's truth is the statement by the Apostle Paul in Titus 1:12-13 where he quotes a Greek writer whom he calls a prophet from among the Cretians. This was Epimenides who wrote around 600 B.C. Paul writes: "***One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'*** *This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*" Here Paul is actually using an

unbeliever's writings to affirm a point of truth to the Church. But he next says: "***not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth***" (***Titus 1:14***). Therefore, we would do well to examine some prophecies in the light of the inerrant and clear truth of the Bible and never accept prophecies or teachings of man, or councils of men, as inerrantly inspired by the Holy Spirit and authoritative.

We know from Revelation 13 that the Beast will have a False Prophet who will require everyone to worship the Beast and to make an image to him and to take his mark: 666 (Read Revelation 13 in its entirety). Time will tell if Pope Francis will be the last Pope that will lead into the times of the Great Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ. It would be important to note from an article from the on-line publication, *Newser* that:

Although responses to Pope Francis have been chiefly positive one dark stain in church history is raising serious questions about the new pope—the church's role during the dictatorship in Argentina, reports the *Guardian*. The church backed the dictatorship during its rule from 1976 to 1983, urging its followers to be patriotic and support the regime, too, even as thousands of people were abducted and murdered by the government, including many progressive priests. As the head of the Jesuit order in Argentina from 1973 to 1979, Jorge Bergoglio was part of the church hierarchy and has been accused of working with the dictatorship.

(<http://www.newser.com/story/164401/dark-cloud-in-francis-past-the-dirty-war.>)

As the Church, the Bride of Christ, we know that we will not be here to witness the Great Tribulation, also known as Daniel's 70th week, when the "***Prince who shall come shall confirm the covenant with many (Israel) for one week,***" or, seven years (Daniel 9:27). But we are looking for the coming of Jesus Christ in the clouds to call up the Church to heaven, leaving the false global Church and global world government to finish forming on the earth. These, and their followers, God will judge during the seven year Great Tribulation period while He continues calling His people, the Jews back to Israel. Remember that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until the true Church is raptured to heaven (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7). Are you watching for the Lord's appearing?

## ***The Church Today - Doctrine and Prophecy***

### ***The Importance of a Bible Believing, Christ Honoring Church***

It is vitally important to know how to identify a church that is true to God's Word. To grow in discernment as to how to identify the true church, we need to grow in our understanding of the Bible. The letters of the Apostle Paul are indispensable in this regard. One key passage is found in 1 Timothy 3:15-16 where Paul writes:

***"but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory."***

Here is a simple statement of the character and purpose of the Church. C.I. Scofield offers a simple summary as to what the visible Church is:

(This passage, 1 Timothy 3:15-16) refers to that visible body of professed believers called, collectively, "the Church," of which history takes account as such, though it exists under many names and divisions based upon differences in doctrine or in government. Within, for the most part, this historical "Church" has existed the true Church, "which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 12:23), like the believing Remnant within Israel (Romans 11:5). The predicted future of the visible Church is apostasy (Luke 18: 2 Timothy 3:1-8); of the true Church, glory (Matthew 13:36-43; Romans 8:18-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

(Scofield Reference Bible, 1917 ed., p. 1276)

In another insightful note under Hebrews 12:22, regarding the Church, Scofield writes:

The true church, composed of the whole number of regenerate persons from Pentecost to the first resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:52), united together and to Christ by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13), is the body of Christ of which He is the Head (Ephesians 1:22, 23). As such, it is a holy temple for the habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:21, 22); is "one flesh" with Christ (Ephesians 5:30, 31); and espoused to Him as a chaste virgin to one husband (2 Corinthians 11:2-4). (IBID, p. 1304)

God has been so gracious to leave us on earth to witness for the Lord and to serve Him through the Church. If you are a part of Jesus Christ through personal faith in Him then you are a member already of His body. Yet He calls us, not only to believe on Him to be forgiven of our sins, (John 1:12; 3:16) but then also to serve Him through becoming identified with a local church fellowship (Acts 2:41-47; 5:14-16; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2, etc.). I believe that an understanding of the Word of God will guide you to know which of the many denominations are closer to the Bible in their beliefs and which are farther from the Bible.



In seeking a biblical church, look for several important things: **(1)** This would be a church that preaches that the Bible is God's only authoritative Word above the councils or traditions of man. **(2)** It should teach that Jesus Christ is God incarnate Who lived a sinless life and Who came as the only true Savior (John 1:1, 14:6; Hebrews 4:15). **(3)** That He died upon the cross in our place and rose bodily from the dead the third day. **(4)** It should further teach that the Lord promised that He would go to prepare a place for us in His Father's house, called heaven (John 14:1-6). **(5)** And that we will go immediately to heaven when we die in the Lord (Philippians 1:21-24). **(6)** Meanwhile, we can be assured that Jesus will live in us as believers today and everyday through His indwelling Holy Spirit. **(7)** Further, a Bible teaching church will stress our direct access to God for prayer through the One and Only Mediator and High Priest between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16, 9:25-28; 1 Timothy 2:5-6). **(8)** Then you should also seek a fellowship that believes and teaches the "any moment personal return of the Lord to rapture His Church to heaven" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The Scriptures tell us to seek fellowship with other believers who also seek to follow the teachings of the Bible (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). John said in his third letter: ***"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:3).*** Jesus assured His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be faithful to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). So, trust the Lord and His Word, more than the teachings or traditions of man, no matter how ancient. The Lord will lead you to a Bible believing and Christ honoring church that He desires you to join with other Christians. There He will enable you to grow in spiritual maturity, to witness for Christ and to serve Him until He appears in the clouds to rapture us to heaven.

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*(Note: If you would like to interact with Dr. Downing concerning this newsletter, views, etc. you can "blog" with him at [prophecyinperspective.com](http://prophecyinperspective.com). If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter at no charge, please send your email address to: [sgdowning@bellsouth.net](mailto:sgdowning@bellsouth.net). Also, you can purchase his book, "Good News From a Far Country", a study in the book of Daniel [\$15]; "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Revelation's Prophecies" [\$10]; or his latest book, "Becoming Mighty in Spirit...through Developing a Prophetic Walk...A study in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha" [\$10] by contacting him.)*