



Will the Real Antichrist Please Stand Up?

»» KEN RAGGIO | EDITOR

Many major religions are presently looking for their “savior.” In each case, these religions anticipate a divine incarnation—a physical manifestation of eternal wisdom of their perceived god.

- 1 • Jews are looking for “Meshiack,” their messiah.
 - 2 • Christians are looking for Jesus Christ to return.
 - 3 • Muslims are looking for the “Twelfth Mahdi.”
 - 4 • Buddhists are looking for the Fifth Buddha, “Maitreya.”
 - 5 • Hindus are looking for the Tenth Avatar, “Kalki.”
- And who knows what so many other religions are expecting? Even while each religion looks for its long-awaited one, there is a new anticipation emerging from within the world’s ecumenical societies declaring that one single man might actually fulfill ALL these religions’ expectations! That is the alarming sentiment of many people at the United Nations and within the United Religions Organization. Both entities reflect an increasingly universal belief. The coming of a one-size-fits-all messiah is the vogue concept circling the earth right now. World opinion is turning toward one who will bring peace to the earth by bringing all the world’s religions together. One Messiah fits all? This subject can certainly be complicated, since there are countless variations within the many religions. And in all religions, conflicting teachings occur, so we will focus only on the most prominent beliefs.

ONE MESSIAH FITS ALL

“The New World Order crowd plainly intends to answer all the world’s messianic expectations with one man. Who will he be? Christians call him the Antichrist. He will come, and he will fail miserably.”



Buddha courtesy Lindy Roquemore | Dallas, TX

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is loosely comprised of 2.1 billion people—1/3 of the world's population—if you consider the broadest definition of Christianity. Not all these anticipate the arrival of Jesus Christ as Messiah. The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other Orthodox groups, does not teach the Second Return of Jesus Christ, especially the so-called “rapture”, but rather refutes it. In all, probably less than 350 million Christians expect the return of Jesus Christ.

ISLAM

Islam is a religion of almost 1.5 billion people. What do Muslims say about their Mahdi?

- He will be a righteous man.
- He will be a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammed.
- He will come from Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
- He will appear when Muslims are severely oppressed everywhere.
- He will precede the coming of Jesus Christ.
- He will face his own “antichrist.”
- Jesus will destroy Mahdi's antichrist.
- With Allah's help, Mahdi will convert the whole world to Islam.
- He will bring peace and justice to the world.

A Mahdi, or Imam, is a leader. There are many Imams, but only twelve great Imams through history. According to Shia Islam, the Twelfth Mahdi, who is of their tribal lineage, was born in 868 AD and disappeared in 941. They say he was hidden by Allah in what is called “the occultation”, and that he will some day appear again as the great Islamic savior of the world.

Sunni Muslims do not agree with the Shiites on his identity. Sunnis expect a new Imam to appear in Medina, Saudi Arabia at an appointed time. Sunnis believe that mosques built to the last Imam are an idolatrous abomination. They recently bombed and destroyed the highly revered Askariya Mosque in Iraq where the Twelfth Imam disappeared in the tenth century, nearly causing a civil war. Ahmadinejad will surely be tempted to avenge this act.

According to Muslim beliefs, this prophesied redeemer of Islam will change a world of chaos into a perfect world before the day of resurrection. A hadith, or traditional saying of Mohammed, says that one of his descendants will “fill the Earth with peace and justice as it will have been filled with injustice and tyranny before then.” This will be accomplished, they believe, by spreading Islam throughout the world.

Muslims believe that the thing which will precipitate the appearance of the Twelfth Mahdi is a world descended into chaos. They believe that the Twelfth Mahdi will be preceded by a “deputy” who will prepare the way for the Mahdi. This deputy follows in the tradition of many historical deputies who served the great Imam's in their time.

There is at least a suggestion that the current President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has aspirations to be the next deputy of the Twelfth Imam. One of his first official acts in office was to require his ministers and deputies to sign an agreement with the Twelfth Imam, which was then dropped down the Jamarakan Well, which is the likely setting for their “Long Awaited One”.

In many recent speeches and actions, President Ahmadinejad threatened to develop nuclear weapons of mass destruction and “wipe Israel off the face of the map” – both acts which he clearly considers to be divinely inspired. Most of the international community views his threats as entirely unacceptable, but many Moslems hold the view that world chaos precipitated by Islamic war is an inevitable prelude to the return of the Twelfth Imam. Non-Muslims should take these threats seriously because they are not likely to diminish, but rather escalate into a longed-for world war. There is evidence that some Muslim powers truly want international chaos to escalate so their Imam will appear.

In September of 2005, President Ahmadinejad delivered an inflammatory speech before the United Nations General Assembly. A reporter for Radio Free Europe wrote on November 29, 2005 that Ahmadinejad believes that his speech at the United Nations was supernaturally empowered.

Ahmadinejad said that someone present at the UN told him that a light surrounded him while he was delivering his speech to the General Assembly.

“One of our group told me that when I started to say ‘In the name of God the almighty and merciful’, he saw a light around me, and I was placed inside this aura. I felt it myself... for those 27 or 28 minutes, the leaders of the world did not blink... and they were rapt. It seemed as if a hand was holding them there and had opened their eyes to receive the message from the Islamic republic... I am not exaggerating when I say they did not blink; it's not an exaggeration, because I was looking,” he says. “They were astonished as if a hand held them there and made them sit.”

The exact length of his speech was seven minutes and fifty-seven seconds, not twenty-seven or twenty-eight minutes as he claimed. Nor was his audience as captivated as he claimed. Nevertheless, that event demonstrated the context of a radical Muslim who feels divinely commissioned to create the chaos, perhaps as Allah's deputy, that will prepare the way for the Twelfth Imam, or Mahdi.

Ahmadinejad closed his UN speech with this statement: “From the beginning of time, humanity has longed for the day when justice, peace, equality and compassion envelop the world. All of us can contribute to the establishment of such a world. When that day comes, the ultimate promise of all divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being who is heir to all prophets and pious men. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace. O mighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the emergence of your last repository, the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one that will fill this world with justice and peace.”

The “last repository” he referred to was the Twelfth Imam, or Mahdi. Most of Ahmadinejad's speeches contain references to the Twelfth Imam. In Christian vernacular, Ahmadinejad perceives himself as a “John the Baptist” for the Mahdi. His antics have probably done more to arouse global Islamic expectations of Mahdi than any other single factor in modern times.

In Iran, a group called the Hojjatieh believes that humans can stir up chaos to encourage the Twelfth Mahdi to return.

According to a Reuters report, Ahmadinejad has clearly articulated his immense respect for Iran's leading Hojjatieh-leaning cleric, and several members of Ahmadinejad's cabinet are said to have Hojjatieh backgrounds. Proponents of this group teach that those who insult their religion be immediately executed, that killing “intellectuals” is sanctioned by Allah himself, and that “pluralism” is satanic trickery.

Ahmadinejad's politics are clearly driven by his desire to use his presidency to usher in Islam's messiah by causing international chaos. An arsenal of nuclear weapons in his hands will be the ultimate religious experience. Nothing is likely to deter his ambitions for war. Let the world beware.

HINDUISM

Hinduism is a vast, complex religion of about 900 million people that did not



Left—Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speaking at the UN. **Right**—The Ten Avatars of Hinduism: Kalki is depicted bottom center on white horse.

evolve from a single person, a single book, or a single point in time. Its written history contains many epic tales that are based on oral traditions, and contain many conflicting concepts. Its teachings are countless and quite diverse, ranging from polytheistic, monotheistic, agnostic, to atheistic.

What do Hindus say about their Tenth Avatar – Kalki? Most believe Vishnu exists as the Creator, but he also dwells within each person's soul. He also incarnates himself in the form of an Avatar whenever his presence is needed. Most teach that there have been nine Avatars in over one million years of history, and the Tenth Avatar will be the last and will reign for over 400,000 years.

All Avatars are supposed to be exactly equal in status, but Krishna seems to be most often discussed. In the 1960s, the Hare Krishna movement introduced these ancient tales into the English language, and with the Beatles' help, it became a major movement in America, Europe, Russia, Africa and South America. Lord Krishna (circa 3102 BC, the "dark one" or the "black one") was supposed to be the Eighth Avatar. He allegedly said, "Whenever there is a decline of religion, and a rise of irreligion, I incarnate myself." Speaking as god, he came to represent Absolute Truth.

Nevertheless, Hinduism now claims to be in the era of the Ninth Avatar, Balarama. Many consider Buddha to be the Ninth Avatar.

The next – Tenth – Avatar is yet to appear. His name, Kalki, varies in meanings: "Eternity," "Time," "Destroyer of Foulness, Confusion and Darkness," "Annihilator of Ignorance." He is popularly expected to be coming on a white horse, brandishing

a flaming sword, to eradicate evil and death and establish dharma (virtue) and righteousness. Kalki's divine mission is to close the current age of darkness and ignorance and usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and harmony. He is to liberate the world from suffering, and enlighten all mankind.

BUDDHISM

There are approximately 375 million Buddhists. What do Buddhists say about Maitreya?

Buddha (623-543 BC) taught that Buddhism would almost perish from the earth because the world would abandon moral conduct and become amoral, but then a new Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or Maitreya would appear. He will achieve complete enlightenment, and teach the pure dharma - "the way of the higher truths."

The XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet states, "This is the time of the fourth Buddha, Buddha Shakyamuni, whose teaching is still existing, and the fifth Buddha will be Maitreya Buddha."

Lord Maitreya Bodhisattva will be the successor of the first and ancient Shakyamuni (Guatama) Buddha. He is predicted to be a "world-ruler," uniting those who he rules over. The prophecy of the arrival of Maitreya is accepted by nearly all Buddhist traditions.

Since 1975, Benjamin Crème of Share International in London has declared that he has found the Maitreya, and claims that he is presently alive. Pictures of this Maitreya were circulated in 1988. As a result, Crème held international attention for several years. However, the Maitreya was never forthcoming.

Much of Crème's teachings sprang from

the 19th century occultist Helen Blavatsky, and her 'Theosophical Society', created to distill the teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. Crème also drew heavily from Alice Bailey, a well-known occultist whose material she claimed was received telepathically from an "ascended master" by the name of Djhwal Khul. Crème's teachings are a hodge-podge of esoteric theosophies – a belief that there is a body of 'divine' wisdom common to all religions. Although he continues to attract media attention around the world, Crème has been heavily discredited on the subject of Maitreya.

More importantly, according to Buddhism, Gautama Buddha anticipated Maitreya and said the following about him: "Now in those days, brethren, there shall arise in the world an Exalted One by name Maitreya (the Kindly One) an Arhat, a Fully Enlightened One, endowed with wisdom and righteousness, a Happy One, a World-knower, the Peerless Charioteer of men to be tamed, a teacher of the devas (angels) and mankind, an Exalted One, a Buddha like myself... He shall make known the wholly perfect life of righteousness in all its purity, both in the spirit and in the letter of it, even as I do now. He shall lead an Order of Brethren numbering many thousands, even as I do now lead an order of Brethren numbering many hundreds," (Gautama Buddha in DIGHA NIKAYA).

JUDAISM

Compared to the major world religions, Judaism is miniscule, with roughly 14 million Jews world-wide. Still, Judaism wields enormous religious influence on the world stage. What do Jews say about their Meshiack?

Jews long for Messiah. They call him "Meshiack," the Anointed King. He must come from the lineage of King David. Obviously, Orthodox Jews do not accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

One of Israel's most quoted sages, Maimonides, wrote the thirteen "Articles of Faith" for Jews. Article Twelve articulated the doctrine of the coming of Messiah. According to Maimonides, Messiah will:

- Restore the Davidic Kingdom
- Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem
- Re-gather the strayed "sheep" of Israel
- Re-institute Torah statutes: sacrifices, Sabbaths, jubilees, etc.
- Defeat Israel's enemies
- Turn all nations to Jehovah
- Resurrect the dead Israelites
- Prosper the land

