

The Global Conflict at the End of the Age

ENCOUNTER: TENDING THE FLAME

Gary DePasquale

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ORCHESTRATING A WORLDWIDE WORSHIP CONFLICT

- A. Leading up to the turn of the decade many prophetic people were touting the idea that 2020 would bring about perfect vision for the church (playing on the idea of 20/20 vision). Leading up to the New Year I had a different understanding of what the Holy Spirit was saying. I had announced publicly in several messages that 2020 would begin the toughest decade that we have ever faced. I gave this prophetic word publicly in December of 2019:

“Let me say something strongly but soberly and with a lot of my own conviction and weakness attached to it: 2020 will be one of the most intense, hateful, polarizing years that we have ever seen in America and the main public leaders of the church are not ready to discern it, and will more than likely get swept up in it. This is part of the subtle birth pangs of the great falling away of the church and it is unrecognizable because we have not prepared a generation for it. WE are on the verge of a brand new era of crisis on the earth”

- B. We are now rushing to the end of this decade, and we have truly seen some of the most destructive events to ever hit our country racially, economically, politically, etc. In the church we have seen the continued abuse of the prophetic, false signs, wonders and healings. The entertainment and business culture of worship and the exposure and downfall of many prominent church leaders, a lot of them being champions of the importance of corporate prayer. This is not by accident but is part of the schemes of the devil.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the WILES [schemes] OF THE DEVIL. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:10-11

- C. The Greek word for wiles or schemes is *methodeia* which refers to cunning strategies and calculated methods of deceit with design and long-term strategies. Paul gives the directive in his day that the church will not be called to eliminate the schemes but must stand against them. This means the church will face the schemes of the devil and cannot avoid them. These

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schemes are released into the spiritual atmosphere by principalities and powers and manifested through people and nations that come into agreement with those schemes.

- D. The schemes of the devil are rarely blatant. They are seldom out in the open. They are subtle, calculated, and often concealed in places of weakness, vulnerability, and even apparent innocence. This is why Paul warns us to stand against the schemes of the devil but not through carnal devices although they will be manifested carnally. The flesh-and-blood manifestation of the conflict may be very real, but it is not the ultimate source of the battle.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Cor. 10:3-6)

- E. Behind what we see in the natural, there is a spiritual conflict that cannot be overcome by natural means alone. Where are we told the battle exists? Prayer. Prayer is not simply our response to the battle; prayer is the battlefield where we confront the schemes of the devil.

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful [of his schemes] to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Eph. 6:18)

- F. Although it may appear that the devil is orchestrating the conflict, we must never lose sight of the greater reality: God is in charge and the Holy Spirit is at work arranging things to our favor. The devil will spin his schemes, but God will command His purposes through a praying church. The enemy will seek to wear out the church but the Holy Spirit is preparing a people that will endure by bringing every thought of quitting under the obedience of Jesus' leadership at the end of the age.

the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us [in line with the Father's plans and purposes] with groanings which cannot be uttered [as to shield the information from the enemy]... and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:26-28)

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“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always...(Luke 21:34-36)

G. The American church today is following its own flavor of Christianity increasingly shaped by cultural relevance, social engagement, and attractive entertainment rather than the biblical mandate of watching and praying.

H. Because of the secular strategies the church is engaging in as it grabs for power, influence, ect, believers end up standing at a critical juncture in our nation’s history. The greatest revival and the greatest crisis in history is soon to come. The Holy Spirit is visiting His people with power as darkness increases. The light is getting brighter as the darkness is becoming darker but we look with confidence to God’s promises to pour out His Spirit to empower His people to bring the gospel to all nations.

“Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. “But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (Heb 10:38-39)

Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa. 60:2)

It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...18 I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy... before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. (Acts 2:17-20)

I. The crisis that is emerging across the American church will be a theological crisis that will perplex many who will be unable to discern between truth and deception (1 Tim. 4:1-3) but instead will be lead by emotion and acceptance. The Scriptures are clear that many will fall

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away and depart from the faith in the midst of the crisis, as fear, offense, and deception abound (Mt. 24:9-13; Lk. 21:26; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

II. THE ISLAMIC HOUSE OF PRAYER

- A. The Spirit is raising up a victorious Church that will walk in the values, doctrine, power, purity, unity, and maturity as modeled by the New Testament Church (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 19:7) but will have the added responsibility of unifying in purpose. We have lived divided for too long and it will be the downfall of the church during the great tribulation.

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Cor. 1:10)

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. (Jude 1:19)

“That they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” (John 17:21)

That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27)

- B. The Church will not become victorious in the absence of conflict, but through overcoming the resistance of an adversary. Victory requires a battle, overcoming requires opposition, and endurance requires testing. The Lord will use the increasing pressures, persecution, and spiritual conflict of the last days to purify, strengthen, and mature His Church.
- C. Jesus promised that the gates of Hades would not prevail against His Church (Mt. 16:18). The Church will not merely survive the conflict but will emerge victorious through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:37; Eph. 6:12–13; Rev. 12:11; 17:14).

“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (Mt. 16:18)

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” (Rev. 12:11)

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- D. The conflict at the end of the age will be between two “houses of prayer,” or two “global worship” movements. According to Revelation 13, the Antichrist will establish a worldwide worship movement that will demand the allegiance of the nations (Rev. 13:4, 8, 12, 15). The central issue in this conflict will be who is worthy of receiving the devotion, obedience, and allegiance of the nations?
- E. Islam is particularly significant in examining this prophetic conflict because it represents one of the largest and most organized prayer movements in human history. With approximately two billion adherents worldwide, five daily prescribed prayers, End Times narrative, and a shared confession of faith.
- F. More importantly, the Qur'an **explicitly** rejects the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, the trinity and the denial of the crucifixion of Jesus which in turn denies the resurrection. This creates a fundamental theological conflict with the New Testament revelation of the Father and the Son and makes Islamic theology relevant to examining John's description of the spirit of antichrist.

“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” (1 Jn. 2:22–23)

“By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 Jn. 4:2–3)

“Say, He is Allah, One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” (Qur'an 112:1–4)

It is not befitting for Allah to take a son. Exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.” (Qur'an 19:35)

“O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah ... So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, ‘Three’; desist ... Exalted is He above having a son.” (Qur'an 4:171)

“And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but it was made to appear so to them.” (Qur'an 4:157)

Islamic confession of faith: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

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Christian confession of faith: "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9)

1. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God - John 3:16-18

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

2. Jesus Christ is God who became flesh - John 1:1, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1)

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14)

3. Jesus Christ was crucified, died, and rose again - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

4. The Lord is One in essence and three in person- 1 John 5:7

Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'" (Mark 12:29)

I and My Father are one (John 10:30)

"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."

G. These passages demonstrate a fundamental disagreement between the Qur'an and the New Testament concerning the identity of Jesus. Islam recognizes Jesus as the Messiah and a prophet, but rejects His deity and divine Sonship. The theological conflict is therefore centered on the identity of Jesus Christ and the revelation of God as Father and Son.

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When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say...one of the prophets.” (Mt. 16:13-14)

Indeed, I [Jesus or Isa] am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.” (Qur'an 19:30)

Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt 16:16-17)

H. As the years go by, I am convinced now more than ever that the Qur’anic theocratic-political system was created by the devil and has impoverished and subjugated the Muslim people for centuries. I believe it is the beast system of Revelation 13 and in the name of Christian tolerance and American acceptance we have turned a blind eye to its emergence as a political system shrouded in religion.

G. My interpretive framework is futurist and premillennial. I believe the Islamic religious-political system reflects key characteristics of the Beast system in Revelation 13, particularly its union of political authority, religious allegiance, and opposition to the divine Sonship of Jesus. While Revelation does not explicitly identify Islam, I believe these parallels point toward its possible role in the fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:4-8)

1. Worship and submission: Revelation 13:4, 8; Surah 112:1-4.
2. Denial of divine Sonship: Revelation 13:5-6; Surah 4:171 and 9:30.
3. Warfare and religious authority: Revelation 13:7; Surah 9:29 and 8:39.
4. Religious dominion: Revelation 13:7-8; Surah 48:28 and 24:55

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- I. The increasing presence of Islam in major American cities, including the establishment of mosques and Islamic prayer centers, reveals the growing visibility of two distinct expressions of worship within our nation. In some communities, buildings once occupied by churches or synagogues have been converted into mosques, reflecting significant changes in the religious landscape. Yet the Church must always recognize that our conflict is not against Muslims, nor is it ultimately a struggle over buildings, neighborhoods, or territory. The deeper conflict is theological and spiritual, centered on the identity of Jesus Christ and the worship of God.
- J. As competing truth-claims increasingly encounter one another in our cities, the Church must arise as a house of prayer, proclaiming Jesus as the Son of the living God, interceding for the nations, and demonstrating His mercy and power. The battle is not against the people who gather in mosques, but for the hearts of people whom Jesus loves and desires to redeem.

III. YAHWEY'S HOUSE OF PRAYER: THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE WILL SAY COME

- A. As the spirit of Islam looms like a dark storm we are witnessing something taking place in real time. Major public leaders in the house of prayer movement have fallen, ministries have been shaken, as well as the voices that once carried the message of the end times.
 1. Consider what happened with Mike Bickle and the International House of Prayer in Kansas City. The scandal did not simply remove one influential leader. Its consequences reached people who defended him, people who challenged him, and an entire community of teachers, singers, musicians, and intercessors. Many who had spent decades teaching the end-time message are now scattered.
- B. I am not suggesting that wrongdoing should be overlooked or that accountability is somehow the work of the enemy. But I do believe the devil would love nothing more than to turn the failure of a leader into the scattering of an entire movement; to use the resulting confusion, disillusionment, and division to silence the message of the praying Church.

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Cor. 2:11)

Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” (Luke 22:31)

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

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Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered. (Mat. 26:31; cf Zech 13:7)

- C. Satan’s job is to sideline individuals and silence the voices of those declaring the end time identity of the church to keep the people of God from proclaiming corporately the worthiness of Jesus to principalities and powers. His plan is to take out shepherds so the sheep will scatter. But the house of prayer is HIS FATHERS HOUSE and is not built upon the worthiness of a fallen human or the situations of a fallen world but upon the greatness and exaltation of the exalted Lamb!

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” (Rev. 5:12)

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:11)

- D. More than two decades ago the Lord called for a people to establish a place of night and day prayer in this region. We believed then that the Church would one day need places where believers could gather, worship, intercede, receive healing, prophetic words and prepare for the return of Jesus. That calling has more and more relevance as we continue forward.
- E. The Church cannot afford to remain silent while competing declarations of worship and allegiance are proclaimed throughout the earth. But our response is not hostility toward those who believe differently. Our response is to exalt Jesus Christ and proclaim the gospel with greater clarity, love, and boldness. The answer is not a louder political voice but a recovered priestly voice.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezk. 22:30)

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us? Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Isa. 6:8)

- F. The church today is very busy either ignoring what’s going on to maintain its empire of popularity and riches or infusing itself into a political force wanting to move culture by sheer force. Man, always looks for something that is either complicated, clever or impressive to prove relevance when the Lord has a remedy that is totally other than: THE NEW SONG

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Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment-this honor have all His saints. (Psalm 149)

- G. Notice that Psalm 149 begins with the new song and ends with the judgment of the nations. Between these two realities are the high praises of God in the mouths of His saints. We may appear weak. We may be broken. We may barely be making ends meet. Our leader may be limping, and our singers may be lagging. We may not have the numbers, the finances, the influence, or the strength that others possess. But we have an assignment. SING!
- H. From little prayer rooms to great gatherings, from cities to remote villages, from the nations of the West to the nations of the Middle East, the Bride will lift her voice. And in the midst of what Islamic tradition describes as “the house of Islam but first the house of war” (Dar al-Islam Dar al-Harb) there will be a new song. Not a song of hatred toward Muslims, but a song of love for the Lamb. Not a call to earthly warfare, but a declaration of the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise in the coastlands. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies. (Isa. 42:10-13)

- I. There was a song written a number of years ago called “Break the Chains” that ended with this phrase: “woe to the enemy of the King on his wedding day”. Jesus is not coming to rescue a people, He’s coming to marry a bride and when the song of love rises and calls for the bridegroom HE WILL CRY OUT, YES SHOUT ALOUD AND HE WILL PREVAIL AGAINST HIS ENEMIES!
- J. This is why the enemy would seek to discourage, divide, and silence the praying Church. Because when the Church understands who she is, she will then agree with what the Holy Spirit is saying and that agreement will become a cry that rises from the ends of the earth and He will respond.

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“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Rev. 22:16-17)

- K. The hour is here when the sound of two houses of prayer is rising across America, but only one will be found in agreement with the throne of heaven! And in the midst of the shaking, when the strength of men has failed and the confidence of the Church has been stripped away, a sound will emerge from the wilderness: a new song! It will rise from the weak, the broken, the hidden, and the forgotten. It will rise from little prayer rooms that the world never noticed, from trembling voices and weary intercessors who refused to abandon their watch. And the Lord will awaken His Bride, and she will lift her voice from the ends of the earth!
- L. The Spirit will say, COME! And the Bride will answer, COME! And the nations will hear the testimony of the Lamb who was slain! For the Bridegroom is coming, and He will not surrender His inheritance! The King will arise, and every kingdom that exalts itself against His throne will be brought low. Woe to the enemies of the King on His wedding day! Let the singers sing! Let the intercessors cry aloud! Let the house of prayer arise from the dust! For the hour of the Bride is approaching, the new song is breaking forth, and the Spirit and the Bride say, COME, LORD JESUS!