

# The pope in Germany

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*The recent visit to Germany by the pope has highlighted various issues relating to prophecy. These include his German origins, merchandising, spiritual fornication and friction with Turkey.*

IT IS WRITTEN in Revelation, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (17:8).

The "bottomless pit" (Gk. *abussos*) is an abyss symbolising the uncharted northern lands of Europe that lay beyond the realms of the Roman Empire at the time the book of Revelation was given to John. It marks the final phase of a drift inland that had begun when the beast of the earth, the Holy Roman Empire, emerged to supersede the original beast of the sea, the Roman Empire, based around the Mediterranean basin.

The present pope was born in the village of Markt-am-Inn in Bavaria. He visited this village as part of his visit to Germany. The pope is reported as saying during his visit, "My heart beats Bavarian".<sup>1</sup> The area called Bavaria was part of the *abyss* of John's day. The pope may be based in Rome but his heart lies in the European *abyss*.

## Merchandising the pope

It is written that, when Christ has returned and spiritual Babylon has been destroyed, "the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (Rev. 18:11). At the present time, however, many are making money from the merchandise of the papacy. This has been illustrated in the recent visit of the pope to Bavaria.

The *Sunday Times* commented as follows:

"The papal visit is being marketed with the same determination that the Germans showed during the World Cup. A Regensburg marketing agency won the contract to sell licensed papal souvenirs from key fobs to candles, from beer to baseball caps. Vatican flags for the car are our top seller. Germans want to show they

are as proud of their Pope as they are of their national football team', said Jürgen Wittmann, who runs Six Sigma Merchandising".<sup>2</sup>

According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, the Vatican was hoping to generate 20 million euros from the visit: "the Vatican has embarked on an unprecedented campaign to market the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. By selling official fan paraphernalia, the church plans to turn a profit from the hype surrounding Pope Benedict XVI".<sup>3</sup>

For entrepreneurs, the popularity of the papacy, and the devotion it engenders, provides a massive opportunity for merchandising. It is a similar situation to the silversmiths in Ephesus, who made money from the worship of the goddess Diana. In response to the preaching of the gospel, Demetrius warned them that "our craft is in danger to be set at nought" (Acts 19:27). When Christ returns, those who make money from papal merchandise will find that their trade is "set at nought", and they will "weep and mourn" as a result.

## The pope pen

John also wrote, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Rev. 17:1,2). These verses show that other peoples and religions will join with Rome, and we see this happening today. Even Protestants no longer protest against Rome.

Take, for example, the case of Bishop Wolfgang Huber, the head of the Protestant Church in Berlin. *Der Spiegel* reports that, while visiting the Bavarian town of Altötting, he acquired a "pope ballpoint pen with a built-in, miniature pope mobile". *Der*

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5329756.stm>.
2. Woodhead, M. (2006), "Benedict's home village makes the most of a papal pit stop", *Sunday Times*, Sept. 10, p. 29.
3. <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/spiegel/0,1518,434972,00.html>.

Picture: © Andreas Glossner/Stockphoto.com



**A crowd of an estimated 250,000 pilgrims celebrating mass with Pope Benedict XVI on 12 September 2006 on the Islinger Feld near Regensburg.**

*Spiegel* goes on to say that “Huber raves about his souvenir, saying the pope mobile really does move back and forth when he moves the pen”.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, it does not take much for others to be won over by the Babylonian whore.

### Turkey

Revelation 16, speaking about the time of the end, depicts the River Euphrates as being “dried up” (v. 12), and the dragon, beast and false prophet (v. 13) very much alive. In Revelation 13 the dragon represents the Eastern Roman Empire based in Constantinople. In Revelation 16 it represents a latter-day power who will occupy the territory of the old Eastern Empire. This power, other scriptures show, will be Russia. The Euphrates power is Turkey. This country used to be the centre of the Ottoman Empire. Today, only Turkey itself remains of this once great empire, with its influence stretching only to part of Cyprus. Yet, when Russia invades south, the Euphrates will finally dry up. At the time of the end, the dragon, beast and false prophet will be united. Both the beast and the false prophet will be against the Euphrates power. During a visit to Regensburg University, the pope gave a speech which has brought to the surface the historical tension between the Euphrates power and the beast and false prophet.

In his speech, the pope discussed the philosophical and historical differences between Christianity and Islam. This included a consideration of violence, faith and the concept of holy war. During his speech, he quoted words from the fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologos. According to the pope, the emperor said, “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached”.<sup>5</sup>

These words caused outrage amongst Muslims, particularly in Turkey. The BBC stated that “The Pope is due to visit Turkey in November and the Turkish response was swift and strong”.<sup>6</sup> Apart from the implied criticism of Islam, the reference to an emperor who reigned in Constantinople prior to its fall in 1453 draws attention to the deep historical rifts mentioned above. The speech by the pope, and the reaction to it, manifests attitudes that reflect the way the various powers are disposed in Revelation 16.

4. *Ibid.*

5. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5346480.stm>.

6. *Ibid.*