

## Prelude to the Final Crusade

The descent of Jesus to Olivet, at the first invasion of Jerusalem, will be accompanied by seismic activity - *"the Mount of Olives shall be split in two"* - **Zechariah 14:4**. And at the second invasion there will be further movement of the earth's crust, when *"... The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground"* - **Ezekiel 38:20**. The **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem may well be damaged by this tectonic activity, and the new Prince will forbid its repair. In response, the prince of Rosh - **Ezekiel 38-39**, champion of Eastern Orthodoxy, will attempt, but fail, to overthrow the Prince of Israel who rules with his twelve apostles in Jerusalem - **Matthew 19:28**. But Rome will also want this shrine, which has attracted millions of pilgrims, to be restored.

Beginning in AD 1095, at the urging of Urban II for holy war, the First Crusade was launched by four European armies for the recovery of Jerusalem from Muslim occupation. This was followed by seven more Crusades, with many failures, until 1291 when the Muslims finally drove out the Christian occupiers. The invasion led by the prince of Rosh may be regarded as a ninth Crusade, ending in another failure. Yet one more Crusade is to be launched, led by armies from western Europe.

Damage of **ancient shrines** has already become a growing problem confronting the Roman church. At 3:36 am on August 24, 2016 a magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck 10 km from Norcia in central Italy, destroying many medieval buildings. The shaking was felt 112 km away in Rome. This was followed by aftershocks until Sunday, October 30 when a magnitude 6.6 earthquake struck Norcia and **many of the town's churches**, including a historic **basilica**, **monasteries** and **chapels** were left in ruins. This tremor was felt strongly in Rome. The loss of the **basilica** at Norcia is considered the most notable since 1997 when an earthquake in the same region damaged 80,000 homes and brought down the ceiling of a **basilica in Assisi**.

Italy in general has long been earthquake-prone. More than 400 destructive earthquakes have occurred over the last 2,000 years. But central Italy, where the Apennine Mountains intersect with the boundary between the Eurasian and African tectonic plates, is particularly vulnerable. And offshore from Rome, the Tyrrhenian basin of the Mediterranean Sea is gradually opening up. The United States Geological Survey has concluded that earthquakes like the one in October occur because the Tyrrhenian basin is spreading more quickly than Eurasia and Africa are colliding - a promise of more seismic activity for central Italy. Given these geological features, it is not impossible that damage may begin to move right into Rome, forcing some hard choices - seismic upgrade or relocate? But to where? Rome, together with Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholic, Swedish Lutheran, and some other Christian churches accepts the doctrine of apostolic succession. According to this doctrine, bishops possess certain special powers handed down to them from the Apostles, whose base was in Jerusalem. The twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem, even when most believers had been driven from there by persecution - **Acts 8:1**. What better location for the new headquarters of the successors of the apostles than Jerusalem?

But first they will want to remove what they regard as the *"man of sin"* - **2 Thessalonians 2:3** from Jerusalem. A common expectation is the end-time appearance of the Antichrist, who is to set up his power in Jerusalem, claim to be the Messiah, abolish the Jewish religion, and build a Temple. In fact, the Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to accomplish just these things. Jesus will set up his power in Jerusalem, demand the allegiance of mankind, and build a Temple for the universal worship he will establish. Seeing these things, the greater part of Christendom will take Jesus to be the antichrist and willingly join in this Crusade.