Pope Benedict 16th revealed today that he intends to resign at the end of the month. His succession of John Paul II on the 19 th of April 2005 had not been expected to be a lengthy one due to his advanced years, but news of his resignation still came as a surprise to many.

The last time a pope resigned was in 1378, over 600 years ago. Pope Benedict's deteriorating health has made him feel he is no longer able able to carry out the functions required of his office. Pope Benedict was the 265th pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Speculation is rife as to who will succeed him, and whether this next pope will be the last pope before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to St. Malachy's 'prophecy', there would be a succession of 266 popes up until the time of the great tribulation and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. Malachy lived during the 12th century in my own country of Northern Ireland. During a pilgrimage to the city of Rome, he is said to have received a vision of the succession of popes up *'until the end of the world'*
. His list was written in a coded form, with each pope being described by their character, geographic location or by their coat of arms. Malachy described Pope Benedict as the *'Glory of the Olive'*
. And it is interesting that the order of the Benedictines, from which Cardinal Ratzinger took his name, is also known as the *'Olivetans'*
. But his description of the last pope is most interesting...

Quote: *"In the extreme persecution of the Holy Roman Church, there will sit Peter the Roman, who will nourish the sheep in many tribulations; when they are finished, the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the dreadful judge will judge his people. The end.*

The city of seven hills, and its destruction, is of course mentioned the book of Revelation. There is no doubt that Rome is the city that was built on seven hills. The Bible describes this city as being the headquarters of a false religious system, and gives a detailed account of its subsequent destruction during the tribulation period. In relation to St. Malachy's 'prophecy', it is

also interesting that one of the favourites to succeed Pope Benedict is a man by the name of Peter Turkson
, a cardinal from Ghana.

Quote: *“Turkson was born on 11 October 1948 in Nsuta-Wassaw, a mining hub in Ghana's western region, to a Methodist mother and a Catholic father. He studied and taught in New York and Rome before being ordained to the priesthood in 1975. In 1992 he was appointed archbishop of Cape Coast, the former colonial capital of Ghana and a key diocese. As archbishop, Turkson was known for his human touch, colleagues said. "We love him," said Gabriel Charles Palmer-Buckle, the metropolitan archbishop of Accra, who was made archbishop in Ghana at the same time as Turkson and has known him since school. "For Ghanaians he was our first cardinal, and to be made cardinal in his 50s was a big feather in our cap. Since then he has shown himself to be a church leader and a young cardinal breaking new ground."*

It is interesting that the Muslims also have a 'prophecy' that the city of Rome will one day be destroyed. While these 'prophecies' of St. Malachy, Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri and the Qur'an are intriguing, we do need to remember that the Bible is the only 100% reliable guide to future events. For even if through the power of Satan others are able to tell what might happen in the future, we can be sure that Satan's only intent in allowing that is to deceive people and ultimately lead them away from God. But we know that the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2nd Timothy 3:16), the Word of a God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and whose purpose in revealing future events is so we might come to know Him and trust Him as Lord and Saviour (John 13:19). Have your sins been forgiven? Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation? He is coming back soon. Turn away from your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

John 3:16
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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