Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has called for a democratically elected president that will give the European Union clear leadership as it engages with an increasingly competitive world. During an interview with the Times newspaper to mark the publication of the paperback version of his autobiography, Blair said that the rationale for Europe's existence had now changed, and that the EU's focus should be on 'power' and not 'peace'. He added that unless the EU is willing to radically change the way it works, European nations will risk being dominated by the likes of China, India and Brazil, whose economies are rapidly expanding.

Quote: *""If you want to have a debate about the direction of Europe it seems to me very hard to have that on a European-wide basis unless you have some means by which people elect something that is Europe-wide in nature."*

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 paved the way for creation of permanent posts for President and Foreign Minister. The former Prime Minister was at one time tipped to become the European Union's first president following his resignation from Downing Street. But his involvement in the Iraq War went against approval of his nomination, and there were fears that a strong European president would steal the limelight from nation states. Blair himself was also unsure of whether to accept the job, as there was uncertainty as to how much power member states would grant the European president. As a result, two relatively unknown politicians were chosen to be president and foreign minister of the European Union. Former Belgian Prime Minister Van Rompuy, a socialist who favours a federal Europe, would become president, and Labour's Baroness Catherine Ashton would become foreign minister. Both are thought to be simply 'yes men' who wield very little real power, but are controlled by the 'big wigs' in the European Council and European Commission. So following his resignation, the former Prime Minister accepted the position of Special Envoy to the Middle East instead of President of the EU. But many believe he still aspires to the role whether he admits it or not.

Today there is a tug-of-war going on between the European Council (heads of state), the European Parliament (elected by the people but with very little real power), and the European Commission (the executive branch). The presidents of the European Council and the European Commission are at loggerheads as to who really speaks for Europe. An elected president would change all that. The Bible seems to indicate that the way will be prepared for a man to arise out of Europe who will hold the allegiance of all peoples. Several things are 'given' to this man in the book of Revelation. First of all, Revelation indicates that Satan gives this man his power, seat, and great authority (Revelation 13:2). This shows us that rather than there being anything special about the man himself, it is his willingness to accept what Satan offers that enables him to fulfil this role. During the Lord's trial in the wilderness, the Devil once offered to give Him all

the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, if He would only bow down and worship him (Luke 4:6). I do believe they were his to give, as a usurper of Adam's God-given dominion over the earth. But the Lord refused Satan's offer, and would chose instead to redeem the earth by righteousness. Yeshua was later rejected by the nation of Israel, and He prophesied that because they had rejected Him who had come in His Father's name, they would end up accepting one that would come in his own name (John 5:43). The Antichrist will come in his own name (2nd Thessalonians 2:4), and the unbelieving nation of Israel will accept him. And what was once offered to Christ by Satan and refused will become the Antichrist's for a short period of time.

Revelation also tells us that this man will be given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and that he will open his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven (Revelation 13:7). Some of you may remember how European leaders have often called for the EU to speak more effectively on the world stage. It was the dream of former High Representative for the European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana that the EU should speak with ' one voice '. The Lisbon Treaty was heralded as the answer to their prayers, but now it seems that this did not go far enough, and some are calling for the election of a 'super-president'. And the Bible seems to indicate that in a coming day, all global authority will be vested in just one man. Not only will he be able to speak for the entire world, but the entire world will be subject unto him. And again, the offer that Christ refused will be taken up by this man, and power shall be given him over all kindreds, tongues and nations (Revelation 13:7).

Whether this man will be the president that Blair is calling for or not, I do not know, but as you can see from today's news, the fact that people are now asking for a man of authority who can hold such influence over the nations shows us how close the fulfilment of these prophesies are.

Praise God that all of this will be done according to the will of God, and that He is still in complete control of world events. For although the world will have brought all of this on themselves through their rejection of God's Messiah (Psalm 2), He will allow mankind only to go as far as He permits. As it says in Psalm 76:10, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain ”. And in the time of great tribulation, when the Jewish nation has nowhere else to turn, they will recognize Yeshua, the Lord Jesus, as their Messiah and He will He return to deliver them from all their troubles (Luke 13:35). And whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).

Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour? Is He reigning in your heart? Have you given control of your life to Him? He is the only one who is worthy to reign. For He created you and He loves you and He gave His life for you. Trust in Him for salvation today.

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