

Could the Antichrist Arise From the 8th Kingdom?

Among the writings of the Old Testament prophets, Moses is named in Scripture 768 times, while Abram or Abraham's name is mentioned 303 times. The one individual who holds more predictions about His appearance and ministry throughout the Scriptures is the promised Messiah. The only other person who receives such attention in the biblical prophetic Scriptures is a person identified as the final prince of darkness called the Antichrist.

There are few Christians in America today who have not heard the term *Antichrist*. The average Christian in the Western Hemisphere who has read prophecy books, watched end-time DVDs or viewed apocalyptic-oriented television specials understands four basic facts revealed in Scripture about the coming Antichrist. They are:

- The Antichrist is a man who will form a final empire at the end of the age.
- The Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel for seven years.
- The Antichrist will eventually set up his kingdom in Jerusalem.
- The Antichrist will be involved in the final battle called Armageddon.

Two biblical prophets, Daniel and the apostle John, give numerous details in their writings and prophetic visions concerning this man's rise to power, his realm of influence and his violent reaction to those who reject his mission. Much of the church's historical understanding of this man comes from two prophetic books, Daniel and Revelation.

After studying this subject for more than 34 years, I have discovered many facts about this topic that are very clear in

prophetic scriptures. I have also concluded that some church teachings from the past were based more on men's traditions or on "private interpretations" handed down from generation to generation. For example, have you ever attended a prophetic conference, read a prophetic book or came across research that taught the following?

- The Antichrist will be a Jew from the tribe of Dan.
- The Antichrist will rebuild a temple for the Jews on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

These theories are based on individual interpretations or traditional theological ideas handed down for generations from a few early church fathers' specific interpretations. I firmly believe the following is an accurate description of coming events related to the Antichrist:

- The Antichrist will be a Gentile (from an Islamic background) and not a Jew from Israel.
- The Antichrist will not rebuild the Jewish temple—the prophet Elijah will initiate that process.
- The Antichrist will control the oil-rich Gulf States and will control much of Europe.

The Antichrist—a Gentile, Not a Jew

During the second and third centuries many early church fathers became quite anti-Semitic in their theological interpretations. Several early fathers like Irenaeus (Heresies, vol. 302) and Hippolytus (De Christo et Antichristo, pp. 14 -15) taught that the Antichrist would be a Jew rising from the tribe of Dan, a teaching based on their interpretation of Jeremiah 8:15-16 and three passages in the Scriptures.

For many years I heard prophetic teachers proclaim that the Antichrist would be a Jewish political/military leader from Israel. This theory puzzled me, because I knew the world's 1.6 billion Muslims would never follow a Jew who, while living in

Israel, would rule and control surrounding Middle East nations, all of which are Islamic. Writers and researchers of eschatology seemed to consistently ignore the importance of the Islamic religion and the Muslims living in the Middle East and Europe.

One explanation was that Islam would be defeated in the war of Gog and Magog. This cannot be true since there are presently 52 nations whose population is predominantly Islamic, and in the war of Gog and Magog, only five major Islamic nations are listed as taking part in the battle. After much study, I believe the prophecies point out that the Antichrist will be a Gentile and not a Jew. I base this on several important prophecies and apocalyptic dreams and visions.

First, in Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a metallic image that prophetically identified all the world empires throughout history. All of the empires represented by the image are Gentile—not one is Jewish. In reality, each empire symbolized by the image has somehow impacted the Jewish people and Israel.

The concept that the final prophetic empire will be Gentile, not Jewish, is also referred to by Christ in Luke 21:24: "They will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led away captive to all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." This prophecy alluding to the fall of Jerusalem to the Gentiles was not just fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed the city. It will occur once more in the future when the Gentile Antichrist will invade Jerusalem, divide the city (Zech. 14:2), and set up an image of himself at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Rev. 13:14-15).

Revelation 11:1-2 also alludes to the Gentile control of Jerusalem. John states: "I was given a reed like a measuring rod. The angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. But exclude

the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations. They will trample on the Holy City for forty-two months.' " Most scholars believe the book of Revelation was written around 95 A.D. The temple in Jerusalem had already been destroyed in the year 70 A.D. Twenty-five years later John was told to "measure the temple." How could John measure the temple and the outer court, which we are told the Gentiles would "trample underfoot for forty-two months," if the temple was already in ruins? The most common answer is that there will be a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation.

Could the Antichrist Be Muslim?

In early 1992, I met a young woman from Iran who shared with me the detailed apocalyptic beliefs of Shiite Muslims. When I compared her information with the prophecies of the Bible, I became convinced that the Antichrist will claim the Islamic religion as his religion and will proclaim himself—and be received as—Islam's final awaited "messiah." He will be a master of war, using weapons of mass destruction to hold entire nations hostage (Rev. 13:4). Those who do not convert to his religion will be beheaded, and others will be forced into starvation (Rev. 13:17; 20:4). Before thinking this is mere prophetic fiction, take a journey with me into the Scriptures to receive a clearer picture of the Antichrist of prophecy.

The Word Antichrist in Scripture

The word *Antichrist* was coined by the apostle John and is found only in the epistles of John. There are four passages where he uses the word (1 John 2:18, 2:22, 4:3; 2 John 7). Because 1 John 2:18 says that "even now there are many antichrists," some teach there is not a future person called the Antichrist, but that the Antichrist is only a spirit that throughout history has rejected the divinity of Christ.

I submit to you that the Antichrist is both a spirit and a person. The spirit (or the attitude) of antichrist was working in John's day. But the Antichrist, the man of end-time prophecy, is yet to come.

What the Early Fathers Believed

There are numerous written statements made by the early fathers concerning the rise and dominion of the Antichrist. At one point some felt that the wicked Roman emperor Nero, a severe persecutor of the Christians, had faked his death and would rise once again from the East as the Antichrist.

There are also those who believe that Judas will once again come back from his confinement in hell and become the Antichrist, basing the belief on passages in John and 2 Thessalonians that call both Judas Iscariot and the coming Antichrist "the son of perdition" (John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3).

The theories of Nero rising again and the return of Judas have one major biblical roadblock: Both of these individuals committed suicide and have already died. There is no biblical record of the Lord allowing a disobedient person to leave hell after years of death and return to live on earth for any reason. From all biblical evidence the Antichrist is a mortal man with an "antichrist spirit" that motivates his teaching, his kingdom and his authority. He will arise at the end of the age and unite an army of followers that make war against any who oppose him.

The Conclusion of the Matter

The book of Daniel presents the same climax in its vision of the time of the end. The kingdom of the beast is defeated and destroyed by the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, identified as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16). I believe you can see that we are certainly in the time of the end. The nations of prophecy are aligning in position for the great battles of prophecy. While there will

be differences of opinion concerning certain parts of this teaching, I believe we have given a large-scale picture of what will occur and how recent events come into play.

Now let's get ready for the final scene in this last-day drama. It's about to get interesting! But at least you know the outcome, and for believers, it is going to be a great day when Messiah returns.

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Joel Richardson shows why the Antichrist and his empire must come from the Middle East and not from Europe at .

More information

Evangelist and author Perry Stone unlocks the mystery behind the eight kingdoms in biblical prophecy in his latest book, *The Eighth Kingdom* (Frontline). Pointing to end-time events, Stone explains the link between Islam and the eighth kingdom. You can find this book wherever Christian books are sold or at or .