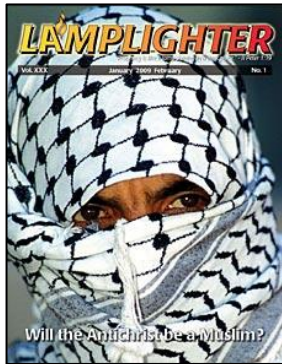


# The Antichrist - Will he be a Muslim?

by Dr. David R. Reagan

<http://www.lamblion.com/articles/articles.php>

*Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: I am frequently asked what I think about Walid Shoebat's contention that the global government of the Antichrist will be a consortium of Muslim nations and that the Antichrist himself will be a Muslim. (Mr. Shoebat is a former Muslim terrorist who now preaches Jesus and has a love for the Jewish people). I was preparing a written response to post on our web site when some friends told me that my position was the same as Dr. Reagan's. They sent me this very well-done exposition on the topic, which eliminates the need for me to write anything new. I have amplified Dr. Reagan's discussion with a few minor comments, inserted in his text below. I hope his teaching will encourage the reader to let all the prophetic Scripture interpret Scripture rather than selecting a few isolated texts to reinforce a particular bias, as Walid and others have done.*



**David Reagan** - The traditional viewpoint has been that the Antichrist will be a European of Roman descent. This view is based on a statement in Daniel 9:26 that the Antichrist, referred to as “the prince who is to come,” will be from “the people who destroy the Temple.” Those people proved to be the Romans who destroyed the Temple in 70 AD.

*Note from Pastor Kevin: It is also clear from the book of Daniel that the final world empire will be global, not limited to a revived Roman (European) Empire. The concept of democracy, which characterizes the Western World, originated with the ancient Roman Empire. Therefore, it is possible that the “traditional viewpoint” should be expanded to consider that the Antichrist will come out of any democratic western nation (not just Europe) that has its roots in the Roman Empire of old.*

## Gentile or Jew?

Scholars have been divided as to whether or not this person of Roman heritage will be a Gentile or a Jew. Many have pointed to John 5:43 to argue that the Antichrist will be a Jew. That verse quotes Jesus as saying, “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him.” The argument drawn from this statement is that the Antichrist must be a Jew in order for the Jews to accept him as their Messiah.

But other prophecies in the Bible make it clear that the Jews will never accept the Antichrist as their Messiah. In fact we are told point blank that when the Antichrist declares himself to be God at the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Jews will be outraged and will reject him, causing him to turn on them in fury with the purpose of annihilating them (Revelation 12:13-17).

*Note from Pastor Kevin: I agree with Dr. Reagan, but he is too brief in his analysis here. The Scriptures are clear that the Antichrist does not declare himself to be God until midway through the seven-year tribulation period. According to Daniel 9:27, the beginning of the tribulation starts with the Antichrist enforcing a seven year covenant*

*(peace treaty) “with many” (nations?). Implied is that this treaty is intended to bring peace between Israel and those of her neighbors who survive the coming wars of Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, and Ezekiel 38 and 39, as Dr. Reagan accurately expounds on below.*

*I have spoken with many orthodox Jews who tell me that the man who brings real peace to the Jewish nation and allows them to rebuild their temple will be their promised Messiah. Gershon Salomon, founder of **The Land of Israel and Temple Mount Faithful** group, stated exactly this in an interview I had with him in Jerusalem in 1999. Most orthodox Jews believe this man-of-peace Messiah will be a Jew, while others say he may be Gentile but will at least be learned in the Laws of Moses.*

*Because of this, I believe the orthodox Jews are now ripe for fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy of John 5:43. That this, they are ready to accept as their Messiah a man (Jewish by blood or by observance of the Law of Moses) who “comes in his own name.” At first, the Jews will accept this man as their Messiah because he brings peace and rejects any notion that he is God. Then, after three and one-half years, he changes his tune, declares himself to be God, and is then rejected by the Jews, just as Dr. Reagan correctly states above.*

*It is also clear (based on the Orthodox Jews’ expectations) that it is impossible for the Jews to embrace a fundamentalist Muslim as their Messiah, because it is impossible for a fundamentalist Muslim to bring peace to the Jewish people or to be learned and respectful of the Jewish way of life under the law of Moses.*

*Dr. Reagan also does not address another verse (Daniel 11:37) that I think also hints to the fact the Antichrist will be a Jew: Dan 11:37 - “He [Antichrist] shall regard neither the God of his fathers [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] nor the desire of women [that they would give birth to the Messiah – i.e, Antichrist shall not have regard for Jesus either], nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.” – brackets mine.*

*There are some who argue against my bracketed interpretation by saying the first part of the verse could be translated as “gods of his father” rather than “God of his fathers” which removes it from a Jewish context. The Hebrew word “Elohim” is translated throughout the Old Testament as God or gods based on the context of the passage, which is hard to determine in this case. But the progression of the text in this verse seems to lean toward “God” rather than “gods.”*

*Some will also argue that “nor the desire of women” means the Antichrist will not have a desire for the physical pleasure of a woman, meaning he will be a homosexual. However, the verse does not state that he will not have a desire FOR women, but rather, that he will not have regard for the DESIRE of women. All Jewish women knew that Moses, Isaiah, Daniel and other Old Testament prophets wrote of how the Jewish Messiah would be born to a Jewish woman and would then crush Satan, deliver the Jewish people from their enemies, and become a light to the Gentiles. Throughout the ages, it was the desire of devout Jewish women to be the one chosen to bring forth this savior. We can see this anticipation and desire in the words of Mary the mother of Jesus in her prayer recorded in Luke chapter 1. Therefore, I think an accurate paraphrase of Daniel 11:37 is:*

“The coming Antichrist shall not have any regard for Yahweh, the God of his Jewish patriarchs, nor will he have any regard for Jesus as being God in flesh, born of a woman as promised by the prophets, nor will he have regard for any other god of the gentile world, for he shall declare himself to be superior to all Jewish or Gentile deities of the past.”

*If John 5:43 and Daniel 11:37 are intended to tell us the Antichrist will be a Jewish man, then he cannot be a Muslim nor can the kingdom of the Antichrist be a union of fundamentalist Muslim nations. The rest of Dr. Reagan's reasoning against a Muslim Antichrist concept is based on scriptural insights other than John 5:43 and Daniel 11:37 and stand on their own in discounting the idea of a Muslim Antichrist.*

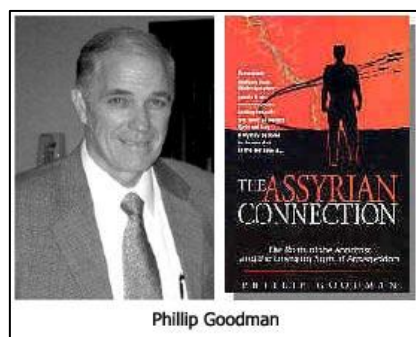
## The Gentile Argument

So what did Jesus mean when He said that "if another shall come in his own name you will receive him?" Those who argue the Antichrist will be a Gentile respond by saying that the Antichrist will be accepted by the Jewish people as their political savior when he implements a treaty that will guarantee their security and enable them to rebuild their Temple ([Daniel 9:27](#)). But the Jews will never receive the Antichrist as their spiritual savior. Thus, when he declares himself to be God, they will reject him.

There is other scriptural evidence that the Antichrist will be a Gentile. For example, [Revelation 13:1](#) pictures him as a beast arising "out of the sea." The sea is used in Scripture to symbolize the Gentile nations ([Daniel 7:3](#) and [Luke 21:25](#)).

In contrast, the Antichrist's right-hand man and spiritual leader is pictured in [Revelation 13:11](#) as rising up out of the land (or the earth, in some translations). This reference to the land is an indication that the False Prophet will be a Jew who will rise out of the Promised Land of Israel.

## Possibly a Muslim?



Could the Antichrist possibly be a Muslim? This is a new idea that seems to be catching fire today due to the awakening of Islam and the revival of its territorial goal of conquering the world for Allah.

I recently read four books that relate to this topic. One lays the biblical foundation without asserting that the Antichrist will actually be a Muslim. The other three use that foundation to make the assertion.

The book that provides the biblical foundation — and the best book of the four — is entitled *The Assyrian Connection*.<sup>1</sup> It was written in 1993 by Phillip Goodman. A revised edition was published in 2003.

Goodman is the director of Thy Kingdom Come Ministries in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a Bible prophecy ministry founded by Dr. Charles Pack. He and Dr. Pack co-host a television program

called "Prophecy Watch." Like his mentor, Dr. Pack, Phillip Goodman is an astute Bible student and gifted teacher who bases all that he writes and says on Scripture.

## **Goodman's Book**

In his book, Goodman argues that the Antichrist will rise from the Eastern wing of the old Roman Empire, coming from the ancient Greek sphere of influence that was incorporated into that empire. Getting even more specific, he argues that the Antichrist will come from the Seleucid area of the Greek sphere — specifically, from Assyria, meaning either modern-day Syria or Iraq. Although he never specifically states that the Antichrist will be a Muslim, he leaves this distinct impression by claiming that he will come from Syria or Iraq.

For scriptural evidence of his thesis, Goodman points to the description of the Antichrist in [Revelation 13:2](#) where he is portrayed symbolically as being like a leopard, with the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. This imagery comes right out of Daniel 7 where the Empire of Babylon is pictured as a lion, the Medo-Persian Empire is depicted as a bear, and the Macedonian or Greek Empire of Alexander the Great is described as a leopard.

Goodman argues that since the dominate feature of the Antichrist in [Revelation 13:2](#) is his leopard body, it is an indication that the Antichrist will rise out of the area of the Greek Empire that was incorporated into the Roman Empire.

Next, he narrows the geographical search by pointing to [Micah 5:5](#) where an end time prophecy refers to "the Assyrian" invading the land of Israel. He argues this is a reference to the Antichrist.

He then buttresses his argument by referencing Daniel 8 where Daniel tells about a vision he was given of a succession of empires. Daniel says he saw a ram representing the Medo-Persian Empire (vs. 3 and 20) and that it was trampled by a male goat, representing the Greek Empire (vs. 5-7 and 21). The male goat had a "conspicuous horn between his eyes" representing Alexander the Great. But then Daniel reports that he saw the large horn "broken" (symbolizing the death of Alexander) and that "in its place there came up four conspicuous horns," representing the four divisions of the Greek Empire that were created after Alexander's death.

Out of one of those four divisions of Alexander's Empire Daniel witnessed the emergence of "a little horn which grew exceedingly great" (verse 9).

## **Antiochus Epiphanes**

Nearly all Bible scholars agree that this little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes, a tyrant who arose out of the Seleucid section of Alexander's Empire. He is described in detail in verses 23-26 in what sounds like a classic depiction of the Antichrist, making it clear that Antiochus was a type of the Antichrist. In fact, this is made rather clear in verses 17 and 19 where Daniel is told by Gabriel that the prophecy will not find its fulfillment until the "time of the end."

So, if the type of the Antichrist — Antiochus Epiphanes — was from Seleucia, then Goodman argues the Antichrist will also come from that same area (Syria/Iraq) and will thus be an Assyrian.

## A Succession of Empires

Another argument Goodman uses to substantiate the Assyrian connection of the Antichrist is based on a passage in [Revelation 17:9-11](#) where there is a reference to seven empires. Five are referred to as "fallen" (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece). The sixth is "the one that is" — namely, the one that existed at that time (Rome). The seventh is called the one that "has not yet come" (the empire that will give birth to the Antichrist). [Revelation 13:1-3](#) also refers to these seven empires and states that the Antichrist will arise out of the one that comes back to life in the end times. The traditional interpretation is that this is a reference to a revival of the Roman Empire.

But Goodman says no. He argues that all the kingdoms continued to exist to one degree or another except the Assyrian. He argues it was the only one that totally ceased to exist and therefore, it is the one that will be resurrected from the dead in the end times. To support this conclusion from Scripture, Goodman quotes [Daniel 7:12](#) where Daniel is told that "an extension of life" for "an appointed time" had been granted to the beasts that were symbolic of world empires.

Goodman offers a number of other arguments in behalf of his thesis, but these are the key ones. Let's now evaluate them.

## Responding to Goodman

With regard to the symbolic description of the Antichrist in [Revelation 13:2](#) as being like a leopard with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, I see no reason to seize on the mention of the leopard to conclude that the Antichrist will come out of the Greek sphere of the old Roman Empire. I believe all this passage is saying is that the kingdom of the Antichrist will have characteristics of these three kingdoms — swift as a leopard, strong as a bear, and deadly as a lion.

And surely that will be the case, for keep in mind that the book of Revelation reveals that the Antichrist will conquer the entire world in only three and a half years!

## Micah 5:5

Nor do I believe there is any validity to the use of [Micah 5:5](#) to determine the national identity of the Antichrist. [Micah 5:3-15](#) is entirely about the Millennium. The Antichrist will be dead and gone during that time. [Revelation 19:20-21](#) says that at the Second Coming of Jesus — at the end of the Tribulation — the Antichrist and his False Prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire where they will be tormented eternally (20:10).

I believe that all the prophet is saying in [Micah 5:5-6](#) is that during the Millennium the Lord will protect Israel from all its natural enemies — as symbolized by Assyria (the enemy of Israel at the time the prophet wrote).

## Daniel 8

Regarding Daniel 8, there is no doubt that this chapter is a prophecy that Antiochus Epiphanes, who is a biblical type of the Antichrist, will rise out of one of the four divisions of Alexander's Empire that were created after his death. It is also clear that the chapter states that what is said about the nature of Antiochus applies to the Antichrist in the end times ([Daniel 8:17](#) and [19](#)). But the primary focus of the chapter is on the personality and character of the Antichrist (verses 23-26), not on his origin.

Keep in mind that there are many other symbolic types of the Antichrist in Scripture besides Antiochus. They include such persons as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, King Saul of Israel, David's son, Absalom, and King Herod. Some of these are Jewish, but that doesn't mean the Antichrist will be Jewish. One of the most significant, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, was from Egypt, but that doesn't mean the Antichrist will be an Egyptian.

They, like Antiochus, are types of the Antichrist because of their rebellion against God and because they attempted to exalt themselves above God. Remember also that symbolic types are never exactly the same as what they are symbols of. Joseph, for example, is a symbolic type of Jesus.

But even more important is the fact that Antiochus Epiphanes was of Greek heritage. He was not an Assyrian. So, if the prophecy in Daniel 8 is pointing to the heritage of the Antichrist, it is indicating that he will be a Roman of Greek heritage.

## Revelation 17

The weakest argument Goodman attempts to use is the one he bases on [Revelation 17:9-11](#). His assertion that all the empires included in this passage have continued to this day, except the Assyrian, simply cannot be justified in history. The Babylonian Empire ceased to exist overnight when it was overthrown by the Medo-Persian Empire. Two hundred years later, when Alexander the Great visited the site of the Empire's capital city, there was nothing left but ruins.

The Bible specifically prophesies that Babylon will be overthrown by the Medes, and that thereafter, it will "never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation" ([Isaiah 13:17-20](#)). That prophecy was partially fulfilled in 539 BC when the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon. It was completely fulfilled in the years that followed as the city went into a slow decline, ultimately ending up in ruins. And just as prophesied, the city has remained desolate to this day (despite persistent rumors of it being "rebuilt").

The bottom line is that there is no way around the fact that the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Roman Empires ceased to exist. And there is no way to sensibly argue that all of them have continued to this day except the Assyrian, and therefore it is the one that will be resurrected in the end times. The context of Daniel's succession of world empires as portrayed in chapters 2 and 7 is that the empire of the Antichrist will be a revival of the last of the empires in the series — the Roman Empire.

This discussion reminds me of the Holy Roman Empire that existed from about 800 AD to 1806. It was an attempt by Germanic tribes to keep the Roman Empire alive. But it was very limited in scope and existed primarily on paper, prompting Voltaire to observe, "It is neither holy, Roman, nor an empire."



## A Major Revision

In the 2003 revision of his book, Goodman decided that the seventh empire of Revelation 17 should be changed from a revival of the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923). But he continued to argue that the Antichrist would arise out of the revived Assyrian Empire.<sup>2</sup>

Let's take a careful look at the Revelation 17 passage. It begins by referring to the scarlet beast (the Antichrist) on which a great harlot (the Antichrist's apostate religion) sits. It says the beast has seven heads.

9) Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,

10) and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

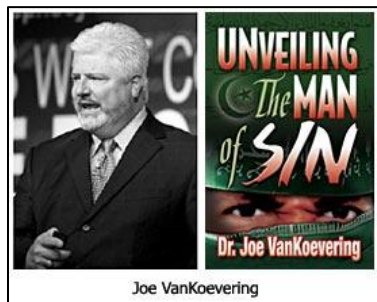
11) And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

Considering the time when this passage was written (95 AD), the five kings "fallen" would be the following empires: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian. The "one is" empire — the one existing at the time Revelation was written — would be the Roman. The one to come would be the revival of the Roman Empire which will give birth to the Antichrist (the European Union). The eighth empire would be the worldwide empire of the Antichrist which he will establish through military conquest during the first half of the Tribulation.

The Ottoman Empire cannot be inserted in this passage. To do so would make it the seventh empire. The eighth, according to Goodman, would be the revival of the Assyrian Empire, making the worldwide empire of the Antichrist the ninth empire. But the passage provides for only eight empires.

Furthermore, to deny that the empire to be revived is the Roman Empire is to deny the significance of the miraculous revival of that empire in our day and time in the form of the European Union — an event that has been predicted by prophecy experts for several hundred years.

## VanKoevering's Book



The second book I consulted that proposes a Muslim Antichrist is one published in 2007 by Dr. Joe VanKoevering. It is titled *Unveiling the Man of Sin*.<sup>3</sup> The author is an eloquent and enthusiastic teacher of Bible prophecy. He serves as the host of a television program called "God's News Behind the News." He also pastors Gateway Christian Center in St. Petersburg, Florida.

VanKoevering begins his quest for the Antichrist by asserting, like Goodman, that he must be of Assyrian heritage. His biblical

basis for this assertion is [Isaiah 10:24](#) — "Therefore, thus says the Lord God of hosts, 'O My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear the Assyrian who strikes you with the rod and lifts up his staff against you, the way Egypt did.'"

Next, he resorts to the same argument as Goodman, claiming that since Antiochus Epiphanes — a type of the Antichrist — came from the Seleucid or Assyrian area of the Grecian Empire (Syria and Iraq), the Antichrist must also come from that area.

He then tries to narrow down the search to one modern day country within the old Assyrian Empire. He does this by pointing out that in Daniel 11 there is a description of the Antichrist's invasion of the Middle East during the Tribulation. Daniel says the Antichrist and his army will conquer Israel and Egypt but will not enter the area of modern day Jordan. This prompts VanKoevering to conclude that the Antichrist will come from Jordan.

## Response to VanKoevering

In response I would point out first of all that [Isaiah 10:24](#) has absolutely nothing to do with end time prophecy. Isaiah 10 is a prophecy that God will use Assyria as His "rod of anger" (verse 5) to judge Israel. He urges Israel in verses 24-25 not to fear the Assyrians because "in a very little while My indignation against you will be spent, and My anger will be directed to their destruction." In other words, God will use Assyria to discipline Israel but He will not allow them to destroy the Jewish people. And furthermore, once He is finished using Assyria as a rod of His discipline, He will destroy the Assyrian Empire.

That's all there is to the passage. Again, it has nothing to do with end time prophecy or the Antichrist.

I have already addressed the argument that the Antichrist must be an Assyrian because his symbolic type — Antiochus Epiphanes — was from Assyria. Again, there are many types of the Antichrist presented in Scripture, like the Pharaoh of the Exodus and King Saul of Israel, but these types do not mean the Antichrist will necessarily come from Egypt or Israel. But the most important fact to keep in mind is that Antiochus was a Greek, not an Assyrian.

As to the argument based on Daniel 11, it is true that the Antichrist and his armies will not enter modern day Jordan. But the reason given is that the area will be "rescued out of his hands" ([Daniel 11:41](#)). That doesn't sound like a voluntary decision to refrain from invading the area. Rather, it sounds like God prevents the Antichrist from invading Jordan — and for good reason, since the Bible indicates this will be the land of refuge for the Jewish remnant when they flee Israel in the middle of the Tribulation ([Revelation 12:13-17](#)).

## Additional Qualifications

Besides asserting that the Antichrist must be an Assyrian, VanKoevering also says he must be a "prince" and "the King of Babylon."

The prince requirement is taken from [Daniel 9:26](#) which says the Antichrist will be a prince. The King of Babylon idea comes from [Isaiah 14:4ff](#) where a taunt against the King of Babylon is

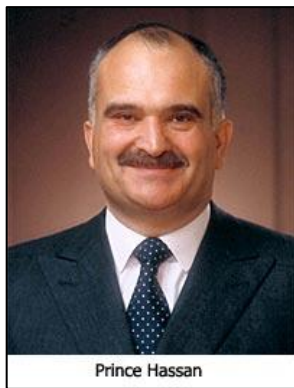


presented. As the King of Babylon is described in detail, he clearly morphs into a description of Satan. VanKoevering claims it is also a description of the Antichrist.

Having established what he believes are three requirements for the Antichrist — that he be an Assyrian from Jordan, that he be a prince, and that he be the King of Babylon — VanKoevering then spends the rest of his book trying to prove that the best candidate for the Antichrist is Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan!<sup>4</sup> Prince Hassan is the brother of former King Hussein and was his designated heir to the throne of Jordan until the king changed his mind on his deathbed and gave the throne, instead, to his son, Abdullah II.

It grieves me that VanKoevering has made this attempt to identify the Antichrist. It is the sort of sensational speculation that has given the whole field of Bible prophecy a bad reputation.

### VanKoevering's Antichrist Candidate



Prince Hassan

Why does he point to Prince Hassan? First, he argues that "the closest genetic relationship of the Assyrians are with the native populations of Jordan and Iraq."<sup>5</sup> But what he overlooks is the fact that the Hashemite royal family of Jordan is not native to either Jordan or Iraq. The family came, instead, from Saudi Arabia. Members of this family were imposed upon the populations of Iraq and Jordan as kings of these nations by Great Britain after World War I. So, Prince Hassan does not even meet the first criterion stipulated by VanKoevering!

The next qualification of the Antichrist that Hassan is supposed to fulfill is that he carries the title of Prince. This is really irrelevant. When [Daniel 9:26](#) says the Antichrist will be a "prince," all it is saying is that he will be a political leader. The Bible uses two terms for political leaders — prince and king. The biblical authors could not refer to presidents or prime ministers because those forms of ruling power had not yet developed. Thus, when we are told in [Psalm 118:9](#) "it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes," we are being warned against putting our trust in politicians. The warning is not limited to those politicians who literally have the title of prince.

VanKoevering's third qualification for the Antichrist — that he be the King of Babylon — is, of course, unfulfilled in the life of Prince Hassan. But VanKoevering argues it could become a possibility since one of his Hashemite relatives, King Faisal, was installed by the British as King of Iraq in 1921. King Faisal, the brother of Prince Hassan's grandfather, King Abdullah, died in 1933. His son, King Faisal II, and all his family were murdered in 1958 when the Iraqi military mounted a coup d'etat.

VanKoevering believes there is an excellent possibility that the leaders of Iraq will seek to stabilize their nation by inviting Prince Hassan to become king. But that is pure speculation, and there is no indication that the people of Iraq want a king, particularly one that is not even native to their population.

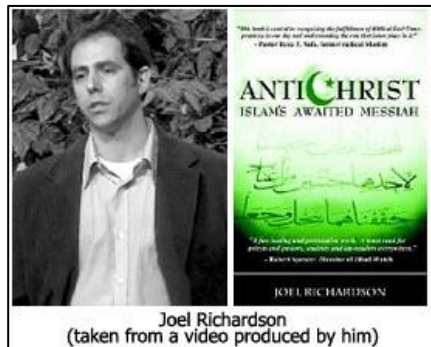
Nor is there any requirement in Scripture that the Antichrist be the King of Babylon. The passage VanKoevering uses to establish this idea is found in Isaiah 14 where the King of Babylon is presented as a type of Satan himself. That there might be a double application to both Satan and

the Antichrist is a real possibility since the Antichrist will be possessed by Satan, but there is no indication in the passage that the Antichrist must be the King of Babylon.

A similar taunt is presented in Ezekiel 28 against the Prince of Tyre. And like the passage in Isaiah 14, the taunt morphs into a description of Satan that could be applied to the Antichrist. Does that mean the Antichrist must also be the King of Tyre? I think not.

One final observation about VanKoevering's book. I believe that [2 Thessalonians 2:1-3](#) teaches that the Antichrist will not be revealed until the beginning of the Tribulation. All attempts to identify him before the Tribulation are a waste of time.

## Richardson's Book



The third book I investigated is one by Joel Richardson entitled *Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah*.<sup>6</sup>

I wish I could tell you something about the author, but he states in the book's introduction that he is using a pen name due to fear of Muslim threats on his life.<sup>7</sup>

I was really turned off by this revelation and almost decided not to read the book. People who speak out publicly on issues should be willing to put their name to their words.

And being motivated by fear is certainly not a biblical attitude ([Psalm 118:6](#)).

Whoever he may be, Joel Richardson is an excellent writer who knows how to craft and present persuasive arguments.

Richardson begins by introducing the reader to the complex and confusing world of Islamic eschatology. One of the reasons it is so confusing is because it has never been systematized, as has been the case with biblical eschatology.

Another reason for the confusion is that there is almost no end time prophecy in the Quran. The prophecies are found, instead, in the Hadith, which is a compilation of sayings by Mohammed that were pulled together from a great variety of sources some two hundred years after his death. Most of these sayings are hearsay and many are contradictory.

I have written a detailed [outline of Islamic eschatology](#).

## Misleading Aspects

Richardson's presentation of what Muslims believe about the end times is very misleading, for what he presents is the Shi'ite version which revolves around the concept of an Islamic Messiah called the Mahdi. He leaves the impression that all the Islamic world is living in breathless anticipation of the appearance of the Mahdi, when the reality is that 90% of all Muslims — the Sunnis — are not looking for a Mahdi. In fact the concept of a Mahdi is not even found in orthodox versions of the Hadith like *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*.

The Sunni Muslims are looking instead for the appearance of the Antichrist, whom they call the Dajjal. If a person were suddenly to appear on the world scene claiming to be the Mahdi, he would be automatically rejected by the vast majority of Muslims.

Another misleading aspect of Richardson's presentation is his constant talk about the "amazing parallels" and "startling similarities" between Islamic and biblical end time prophecies. Actually, there is nothing startling or amazing when you consider the fact that Mohammed borrowed nearly all his key ideas from Bible stories he heard from both Jews and Christians, stories he often got thoroughly confused. This is a well proven fact, and for overwhelming evidence, I would direct you to Dr. Samuel Shahid's book, *The Last Trumpet*.<sup>8</sup>

Also misleading is Richardson's heavy reliance on quotations from the Hadith to establish his scenario for end time events. He treats the Hadith as if it contains inspired prophecy, when, in fact, it is nothing more than the ramblings of a demon-possessed man.

Another problem with Richardson's book is that he states that he got many of his ideas from Walid Shoebat.<sup>9</sup> This man is a former Palestinian terrorist who became a Christian. He is an expert on terrorism, and he is an outstanding speaker on the subject.

But when it comes to Bible prophecy, his ideas are very unorthodox, as Richardson's book clearly reveals. One irritating point that Shoebat keeps making in his public presentations is that one must have an Eastern mindset in order to understand Bible prophecy. He claims that all of us in the Western world have completely misunderstood Bible prophecy because we interpret it from a Western mentality.

This is not only a prideful viewpoint, it is also unbiblical. The Bible was not written in such a way so that only those with a particular mindset can understand it. It was written for all people to understand. There certainly are guidelines to interpretation (such as accepting the plain sense meaning), but any mindset can use those guidelines to understand what the Bible says, as long as the person is indwelt with God's Holy Spirit.

## **The Central Concept**

The heart of Richardson's thesis (and Shoebat's) is that the Antichrist will be a Muslim who will lead a Middle Eastern coalition of Muslim nations against Israel in the end times. In short, the empire of the Antichrist will be a regional one confined to the Middle East!

Like Goodman, Richardson asserts that the seventh empire of [Revelation 17:9-11](#) is the Ottoman Empire, but unlike Goodman, he claims that the eighth and final empire will be a revival of the Ottoman and not the Assyrian. This scheme works better than Goodman's because there is no need for a ninth empire since Richardson denies that the Antichrist will use the revived Ottoman Empire to build a worldwide empire. The revived Ottoman Empire will be the final Gentile empire.

## Regional or World Empire?

In order to sustain this totally revisionist interpretation of end time prophecy, Richardson goes to great pains to deny the clear meaning of [Revelation 13:7](#) which reads as follows: "And it was given to him [the Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him."

Let me ask you a question: What more would God have to say to convince us that the Antichrist will have a worldwide kingdom?

Yet, Richardson tries to dismiss this verse as nothing but hyperbole. He does so by quoting [Daniel 5:18-19](#) where it states that Nebuchadnezzar, was feared by "all peoples and nations and men of every language." Richardson then asks, "Did every single nation in the earth fear Nebuchadnezzar?"<sup>10</sup> My answer would be, "Yes, all nations that were aware of him." That's all the statement means in its context.

Richardson then quotes [1 Kings 4:34](#) which says that men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, "sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom." He then asks derisively, "Was Solomon's wisdom so impressive that not a single king in all the earth failed to hear of it?"<sup>11</sup> That's not what the verse says. Read it again. It says the kings *who had heard of his wisdom* sent representatives — not *all* kings.

Context determines meaning, and the context of [Revelation 13:7](#) clearly means that the Antichrist kingdom will be worldwide, not just a regional coalition of Muslim nations.

## The Ezekiel 38 War

Richardson denies that the war described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 will be led by Russia or that Russia will even have a part in it. He favors Turkey as the leader.<sup>12</sup> Yet, Ezekiel 38 clearly states that the invasion will be led by the Prince of Rosh coming from "the remote parts of the north" ([Ezekiel 38:15](#)). There is no way that Turkey could be considered a nation located in "the remote parts of the north."

Richardson never reveals when he believes the Ezekiel 38 invasion of Israel will occur, but it must be at the end of the Tribulation since the invading army will be the army of the Antichrist and will be destroyed by God. Thus, he must equate the battle of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 with the Battle of Armageddon. But these are not the same battles.

The battle of Gog and Magog involves Russia and certain specified allies who come against Israel either at the beginning of the Tribulation or, most likely, before it begins. One of the tipoffs as to the timing of this invasion is the statement that following the defeat of the invading armies, the Israelis will spend seven years cleaning up the battle field and burning the leftover weapons ([Ezekiel 39:9](#)).

Many have equated this seven years with the Tribulation, thus putting the invasion at the start of that period of time. But we know that in the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist is going to turn on the Jews and try to annihilate them, making it impossible for them to continue the clean-

up during the last half of that terrible period. So, most likely, the battle will occur before the Tribulation begins.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, the Battle of Armageddon occurs at the end of the Tribulation. And there really is no battle at all. The armies of the Antichrist are destroyed in an instant when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives and speaks a supernatural word, causing their flesh to drop from their bodies ([Zechariah 14:1-13](#)). In the Gog and Magog battle, the invading armies will be destroyed on the "mountains of Israel" ([Ezekiel 39:4](#)), not in the Valley of Armageddon, and they will be destroyed by pestilence, hailstones, fire and brimstone ([Ezekiel 38:22](#)).

Another serious problem with placing the Gog and Magog war at the end of the Tribulation is that Ezekiel 38 says the invasion will occur at a time when Israel is living in peace with unwallled cities ([Ezekiel 38:11](#)). That will not be the case at the end of the Tribulation. The land of Israel will be in absolute chaos at that time.

## Psalm 83

When I finished reading the book, I found myself wanting to ask Richardson and Shoebat what they are going to do with Psalm 83? This psalm portrays an attack on Israel by a Muslim coalition consisting of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Gaza, Saudi Arabia and Assyria (Syria and Iraq). The Bible clearly teaches that God will protect Israel against all such attacks in the end times ([Zechariah 12:6](#) and [Amos 9:15](#)).

The outcome of this war most likely is detailed in [Zephaniah 2:4-5](#). These verses indicate that the attacking nations will be devastated by Israel. It is during this war that Damascus, the capital of Syria, will probably be destroyed completely, never to be rebuilt again ([Isaiah 17:1-14](#) and [Jeremiah 49:23-27](#)). That is why Syria is not mentioned in Ezekiel 38 as one of the Russian allies.<sup>14</sup>

The outcome of the Psalm 83 war is what will produce peace for Israel, the peace that it is prophesied to be enjoying when Russia and its allies decide to launch the Ezekiel 38 invasion.

The war of Psalm 83 followed by the war of Ezekiel 38 will result in the annihilation of nearly all the armies of the Muslim nations of the Middle East, and these wars are most likely going to occur before the Tribulation begins! Thus, if the Antichrist is a Muslim who is going to rule a Muslim empire in the Middle East during the Tribulation, then he is going to rule over an empire that has been reduced to ashes!

## Final Arguments

Richardson wraps up his arguments with the observation that the Antichrist will be a Muslim because Islam is the most perfect incarnation of the antichrist spirit,<sup>15</sup> because it practices beheading as a form of execution,<sup>16</sup> and because it observes a calendar that is different from the rest of the world.<sup>17</sup>

The first point simply is not true. The most perfect incarnation of the antichrist spirit is, and always has been, Humanism in all its various forms. Islam points people toward a god, even

though he is a false god. Humanism encourages people to worship Man. God is denied. Man is exalted. And the rejection of God, together with the exaltation of self, is the ultimate antichrist spirit.

The point about beheading is based on the statement in [Revelation 20:4](#) that the Tribulation martyrs will be executed by beheading. Richardson says this is proof that the religion of the Antichrist will be Islam because Muslims are the only people in the world today who practice beheading. This is flimsy evidence at best. Beheading is not a unique characteristic of Islam. It was one of the stellar characteristics of the French Revolution, and is just the type of horror the Antichrist would institute, regardless of his nationality or religion.

Regarding the calendar, Richardson's point here is based on [Daniel 7:25](#) where it says the Antichrist will alter "the times and the law." It is true that the Muslims have a calendar different from the Western world, and it is true that if they ever could gain control of the world, they would enforce the observance of their calendar. But the Antichrist is going to change the calendar regardless of who he is. That's because the calendar followed by most of the world dates from the birth of Jesus.

## Other Problems

At the end of his book, Richardson acknowledges that there is a major problem with his interpretation of end time events.<sup>18</sup> The Bible says that the Antichrist will exalt himself above all gods and will display himself as being God ([2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#)). Richardson admits that it is almost impossible to imagine that any Muslim would ever claim to be God. Such a declaration would violate the very heart of Islamic theology.

But just as he explains away the meaning of [Revelation 13:7](#) in a cavalier manner, Richardson proceeds to say that he thinks that the Islamic world will just simply be deceived into believing the Muslim Antichrist is God! To me, that is like saying night is day and day is night. There is a limit to deception. A person would have to cease being a Muslim in order to believe that any man could be God.

I believe the behavior of the Antichrist described in [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#) rules out any possibility that the Antichrist might prove to be a Muslim.

An equally important fact that I think rules out the possibility of a Muslim Antichrist is that prophecy states the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel that will guarantee the nation's security ([Daniel 9:27](#) and [Isaiah 28:14-22](#)). It is preposterous to believe that Israel would ever trust its security to a Muslim leader.

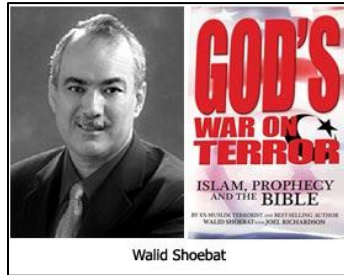
There are other serious problems with Richardson's scenario that he does not acknowledge. How, for example, does he explain the miraculous resurrection of the Roman Empire in the form of the European Union? It's a development that prophecy experts have been telling us to watch for, and those alerts go back several hundred years. Is the revival of the Roman Empire just an accident of history? I think not. It is going to serve as the platform for the ascension of the Antichrist.

Another problem Richardson must deal with is the worldwide destruction that Revelation describes in chapters 6-9. Those chapters reveal that one-half of the world's population is going



to die during the first half of the Tribulation. Is this going to happen as a result of a regional conflict? Or, is all this just more "biblical hyperbole"?

## The Fourth Book



As this essay was being completed a new book was published on the subject that is co-authored by Richardson and Shoebat. It is titled *God's War on Terror: Islam, Prophecy and the Bible*.<sup>19</sup>

This is a very expensive book (\$29.95) and a very long one (512 pages). The writing is very tedious and difficult to follow. Even worse, the organizational format is chaotic and confusing. It is very clear that it was not written by Joel Richardson, who is an excellent

writer. I can only conclude that Richardson must have helped with the research and Shoebat was the writer.

The book rehashes Richardson's arguments, but in much greater detail. One of the maddening things about the book is that it resorts throughout to convoluted reasoning and scripture misapplication.

## Mis-applying Scripture

An example of the latter can be found in Shoebat's explanation of Psalm 83 — a topic ignored in Richardson's book.<sup>20</sup> He attempts to prove that the war described in this psalm between Israel and its close Arab neighbors is one that will occur at the end of the Tribulation, after the Second Coming of the Messiah. Thus, he argues it will be a conflict between forces led by Jesus and those led by the Antichrist. I was astonished to read this interpretation because I have studied this psalm in detail, and there is not one verse in it that even implies that Jesus will be present on this earth when the battle occurs.

So, I looked for Shoebat's scriptural proof of Jesus' presence. Believe it or not, the proof he provided was quotes from two other psalms:<sup>21</sup>

- 1) [Psalm 82:8](#) — "Arise, O God, judge the earth!"
- 2) [Psalm 80:14](#) — "Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts."

Neither one of the psalms are related to Psalm 83. Both are prayers by Asaph for the Lord to return to the earth to bring justice. Neither one states that the Messiah is on the earth.

This kind of incredibly sloppy proof-texting can be found throughout Shoebat's book. Whenever he wants to make a point, he goes fishing for a verse. When he finds it, he reels it in and applies it to the passage under consideration, whether it is related to that passage or not.

Another example can be found in the second argument he gives for placing the Psalm 83 war at the end of the Tribulation. He says it must occur at that time because it is a war triggered by the Antichrist's desecration of the Jewish Temple — a temple that will be rebuilt during the first half

of the Tribulation. And what is his evidence? He quotes [Psalm 79:1](#) — "O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance; they have defiled Your holy temple." Once again, he tries to prove a point about Psalm 83 by quoting a verse from an unrelated psalm.

## Strange and Strained Logic

A good example of Shoebat's tortuous logic can be found in his attempt to explain away the meaning of [Daniel 9:26](#). The plain sense meaning of this passage is that the Antichrist will come from the people who will destroy the Temple.

Shoebat and Richardson argue that the Roman legions that carried out the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD were composed primarily of Arabs, mainly Syrians and Turks.<sup>22</sup> They therefore conclude that the Antichrist will arise from the Syrians or Turks and will be a Muslim.

This is really grasping at straws in the wind! It doesn't matter whether or not the legions were composed of Australian Aborigines, it was the Roman government that decided to destroy Jerusalem, it was the Roman government that gave the orders, and it was Roman generals who carried out the destruction. Rome was the rod of God's judgment and it is from the Roman people that the Antichrist will arise.

## Something Correct

Shoebat and Richardson have gotten one thing right: the Muslim world is going to suffer a devastating fate in the end times, but not at the end of the Tribulation as a result of a conflict between armies commanded by a Muslim Antichrist and Jesus.

The Middle Eastern Muslim nations will suffer overwhelming defeats in the Psalm 83 War and the Ezekiel 38 War before the Tribulation begins and before the Antichrist comes on the scene. The Antichrist, who will arise out of the revived Roman Empire will then launch a world war to conquer all nations, and during that war, he will be used of God to annihilate the remaining Muslim nations outside the Middle East.

## Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, I want to emphasize once more that the behavior of the Antichrist described in [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#) rules out his being a Muslim. This has to be one of the key stumbling blocks for the whole theory.

I would also like to answer a question that Shoebat poses throughout his book and seems always to mention in his public presentations. He asks, "Besides the argument over whether Magog is Russia, can you cite any literal reference to a nation that God destroys in the End-Times that is not Muslim?" Yes, I can. It is Babylon, whose destruction is described in detail in Revelation 18. I say that because I am convinced that the "mystery" Babylon that is mentioned in [Revelation 17:5](#) is the end time worldwide empire of the Antichrist that will be headquartered in Rome. I have written extensively on this point, and you can find an [essay](#) about it.

Two final observations. First, beware of Lone Ranger interpretations of prophecy that are not widely shared. God does not reveal the meaning of prophecy only to a person or two.

[2 Peter 1:20](#) says, "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation." Private and peculiar interpretations like the recent "Pre-Wrath Rapture," usually make a big initial splash and then fade quickly when submitted to critical review.

Second, I think the current rush to identify the Antichrist as a Muslim is a classic example of newspaper exegesis — of reading the news headlines into the Bible rather than letting the Bible speak for itself. It would be good to keep in mind a comment made by the great Bible teacher Ray Stedman: "What determines the future is what God has done in the past and what He has promised to do in the future. So don't look horizontally at current events."<sup>23</sup>

## Notice

I want to thank Daymond Duck and Arnold Fruchtenbaum for the insights they shared with me concerning this topic. Both are Bible prophecy experts and authors of several books about prophecy. I also want to thank another Bible prophecy expert, Lambert Dolphin, for providing me with the quote from the writings of Ray Stedman.

## Notes

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Phillip Goodman, <i>The Assyrian Connection</i> (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Prophecy Watch Books, 1993 — revised edition in 2003), 136 pages.</li><li>2. Ibid., pp. 124-130.</li><li>3. Joe VanKoevering, <i>Unveiling The Man of Sin</i> (St. Petersburg, FL: God's News Publishing, 2007), 175 pages.</li><li>4. Ibid., p. 78.</li><li>5. Ibid., p. 93.</li><li>6. Joel Richardson, <i>Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah</i>, (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2006), 276 pages.</li><li>7. Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.</li><li>8. Dr. Samuel Shahid, <i>The Last Trumpet: A Comparative Study in Christian-Islamic Eschatology</i> (Xulon Press, 2005).</li><li>9. Richardson, p. 110.</li><li>10. Ibid., p. 215.</li><li>11. Ibid., p. 216.</li><li>12. Ibid., p. 109.</li><li>13. A great book concerning the timing of the Gog and Magog invasion is <i>Northern Storm Rising</i> by Ron Rhodes (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2008), 246 pages.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>14. For an in-depth discussion of the end time prophetic implications of Psalm 83, see <i>Israelestine</i> by Bill Salhus (Crane, Missouri: Anomalos Publishing House, 2008), 342 pages.</li><li>15. Richardson, pp. 121-128.</li><li>16. Ibid., pp. 136-154.</li><li>17. Ibid., pp. 67-68.</li><li>18. Ibid., p. 197.</li><li>19. Walid Shoebat and Joel Richardson, <i>God's War on Terror: Islam, Prophecy and the Bible</i>, (Top Executive Media, 2008), 512 pages.</li><li>20. Ibid., pp. 240-249.</li><li>21. Ibid., p. 241.</li><li>22. Ibid., pp. 349-353.</li><li>23. Quote supplied by Lambert Dolphin (<a href="http://ldolphin.org">http://ldolphin.org</a>).</li></ol> |
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