

WILL THE ANTI-CHRIST BE A MUSLIM?

Tom's Perspectives

by Thomas Ice

Joel Richardson and some others have been teaching for about the last decade that the coming Anti-Christ will be a Muslim. He has written a number of books advocating this view. His latest offering is *The Islamic Antichrist*.¹ The bulk of his argument is based upon a comparison of Christian and Islamic eschatology from which he draws certain conclusion. Then he goes secondarily to the Bible in an effort to deal with passages that contradict his conclusion. This is a classic example of newspaper exegesis where an individual see something happening in the world, then goes to the Bible and attempts to make it fit Scripture's prophetic program. I believe that Richardson and those that agree with him are absolutely wrong on this issue since the Book of Daniel clearly teaches that the anti-Christ will come from Rome, not from an Islamic nation.

NEWSPAPER EXEGESIS

Many popular teachers of Bible prophecy today employ newspaper exegesis in their analysis of current events in relation to Bible prophecy. Richardson is one of the most extreme examples of this in our day. The proper approach that all students of Bible prophecy should employ is to first inductively study the Bible to see what it says, not taking into account any current events. One must first learn from a proper interpretation of Scripture what it is that our Lord teaches about future Bible prophecy. Once one has learned what the Bible teaches, then he will be able to layout a framework of God's plan for the future. Our Lord has not told us every detail, however, there is a lot of information that He does tell us. Therefore, we are able to build a fairly extensive picture of what the tribulation period will be like.

Once one has properly handled Scripture in this way, one can then look at current events and in order to see certain trends that may be developing and moving things in the direction the Bible predicts. For example, the Bible has dozens of prophecies about Israel being a nation in her land during the tribulation. We have seen the return of millions of Jews to their homeland and the establishment of the nation of Israel for events that will take place during the tribulation. Hundreds of years before this took place, many Christians learned from the Bible that it would occur and wrote dozens of books explaining such a view. This would not be newspaper exegesis. However, Richardson first got the idea of a Muslim anti-Christ from looking at current events and speculating on his idea. This is a wrong approach to Bible prophecy.

RICHARDSON'S FALSE VIEW

Richardson believes there are so many similarities between Christian eschatology and Islamic eschatology. There may be some similarities since many of the beliefs of Islam were developed from Christian and Jewish sources. Arabia was about 50% Christian at the time when Mohamed lived. There was also a large Jewish presence in Arabia as well, since Christian and Jews were about the only ones who were literate as well. It is said that a Jewish scribe was the primary recorder of the Qu'ran. Further, the Hadith, which is a collection of up to 400,000 says alleged to have been uttered by Mohamed and written down over a 200 year period after Mohamed, contains many contradictory views of the future. So it is not surprising that some Christian and Jewish ideas were borrowed and brought into Islam.

Dave Reagan in a paper delivered at a Pre-Trib Study Group Conference on this topic has noted the following:

According to Richardson's end time scenario, the Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus (the False Prophet) will unite the whole Islamic world, reviving the Ottoman Empire. They will conquer Israel and establish the headquarters of the Caliphate in Jerusalem. Their rule will come to an end with the Battle of Gog and Magog that is portrayed in Ezekiel 38 and 39, which will occur at the end of the Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. And, again, when Jesus returns, the Islamic world will view the true Jesus as the Dajjal, or the Islamic Antichrist.

One glaring problem with this scenario is that Islamic eschatology teaches that the Dajjal, the Antichrist, will come first, and his appearance will signal that the Mahdi is about to arise. Richardson's scenario puts the appearance of the Islamic Dajjal at the end of the Tribulation instead of at the beginning. And so, I ask, "If some person arrives on the scene claiming to be the Mahdi before the appearance of the Dajjal, why would he be accepted by Muslims?"²

ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE ROMAN

In the passage on the 70 weeks of Daniel, Gabriel tells Daniel that the anti-Christ will come from the same people who would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, which happened in A.D. 70. Virtually everyone agrees that it was the Romans who achieved this destruction. The passage refers to "the prince who is to come" in verse 26. "He" in verse 27 refers back to "the prince who is to come" and is a reference to the future anti-Christ during the tribulation. Thus, this passage clearly says that the anti-Christ will come from the revived Roman Empire.

Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (Dan. 9:26-27)

Daniel 7 speaks of the fourth beast (7:7), which is Rome. This is confirmed by the book of Revelation which speaks of the same empires and says, "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 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. And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction" (Rev. 17:9-11). The seven mountains do not refer to Rome, instead the mountains are said in the following verse to refer to seven kings. To whom do they refer? They refer to the seven kings in history that have persecuted the Jewish people. The first is Egypt who enslaved Israel. The second refers to the Assyrians who took the Northern Kingdom into captivity. The book of Daniel picks up with the third king that was Nebuchadnezzar who enslaved the Southern Kingdom. Number four is

the Medo-Persian Empire during which the book of Esther occurred and the Jewish people were delivered. The fifth refers to the Greeks and their attempt to Hellenize the Jews and the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. The six refers to Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple under Roman rule. This is the Empire that Revelation 17:10 says, "now is" since Revelation was written during the time of the Roman Empire. Thus, the seventh king refers to the anti-Christ who will come out of the revived Roman Empire in the future. The seventh king refers to the anti-Christ in the first half of the tribulation, while the eighth is the anti-Christ who is killed at the mid-point, then resurrected and likely indwelt by Satan himself.

Since Islam was not founded until the seventh century A.D., it cannot be part of the revived Roman Empire, especially since Rome has never been part of Islam. There is no way that Richardson can twist history enough to try to ram, cram, and jam his deviant views as somehow including Islam in this biblical framework for the past or the future. The Bible in both the Old and New Testaments support the notion that the anti-Christ will come from some reformation of the Roman Empire. The current European Union is not a fulfillment of these prophecies either. It could be that the EU is setting the stage or preparing the way for a future fulfillment of some form of the revived Roman Empire.

CONCLUSION

There are many other reasons why the anti-Christ will not be a Muslim but must be from the revived Roman Empire. Space does not allow those reasons to be examined here. Richardson also attempts to say that Gog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is the anti-Christ who is from modern day Turkey. He also locates the timing of that even at the second coming. This view is also impossible because the prophecy says that Gog comes from "the remote parts of the north" (Ezek. 38:6). The furthest parts that are north of Israel can only refer to Russia. The anti-Christ will certainly not come from Russia.

When one studies the passages that speak of where the anti-Christ will come from in Daniel and Revelation there is nothing that supports the false notion that he will be Islamic. Islam was never in existence when the Bible was written. How would it speak of such a possibility? It appears that there is nothing in the Bible that specifically anticipates the rise of Islam. Since there is no biblical basis for such a view, then no matter what one thinks of current events or where the trends appear to be headed in relation to Islam, it is not mentioned at all in Bible prophecy and especially it does not speak of an Islamic anti-Christ. Muslims like the rest of the unbelieving world will follow the revived Roman anti-Christ unless they trust Jesus Christ as their Savior during the tribulation. Maranatha!

ENDNOTE

¹ Joel Richardson, *The Islamic Antichrist* (Washington, D.C.: World Net Daily Books, 2015).

² Dave Reagan, "An Evaluation of the Muslim Antichrist Theory," <http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Reagan-AnEvaluationoftheMus1.pdf>. This paper is an excellent rebuttal of the Islamic anti-Christ view that I highly recommend, except for his comments at the end about Psalm 83.