

The Identity of the Antichrist

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A common belief throughout the history of the church has been the notion that Antichrist will be of Jewish origin. This view is still somewhat popular in our own day. However, upon closer examination of prophetic texts dealing with the Antichrist, we find no real Scriptural basis for the view that the Antichrist will be a Jew. In fact, the Bible seems to teach just the opposite. The Antichrist will be of Gentile descent.

Five Proofs that the Antichrist is a Gentile

1. Biblical typology

The Antichrist is seen in the Biblical typology of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a Gentile Syrian ruler, which came out of Alexander's army and empire (Daniel 1:36-45). Since Antiochus was a Gentile ruler, who was typifying (previewing) the coming Antichrist (Dan. 11:21-35), it stands to reason that the prototype of Antiochus, who is the Antichrist, will also be a Gentile ruler (Dan. 11:36-45).

A type is a model and example. The actions and movements of this past Syrian ruler reflect the actions and movements of Antichrist, which are revealed in other texts of Scripture. What the Syrian ruler did the Antichrist will also do as the prophetic texts reveal. Therefore, after speaking historically of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:21-35), the Scriptures immediately speak prophetically of Antichrist (Dan. 11:36-45), without adding any explanation that the text was moving away from history and the past ruler of Antiochus Epiphanes, to prophecy and the personal Antichrist, who will live during the End Times. The typology of a Gentile ruler, which reflects the work of Antichrist, is one convincing argument that the Antichrist will also be a Gentile.

2. Biblical imagery

Whenever the term sea is used symbolically in the Scriptures, it is a symbol of Gentile nations or humanity (Daniel 7:1-7; 13:1-2). In

Daniel's vision the winged lion was representative of the Gentile nation of Babylon (Dan. 7:4), the bear was representative of the next Gentile nation, which would absorb Babylon. This would be Media Persia (Dan. 7:5). The leopard represented the next Gentile world empire that would come into existence, which would be Greece (Dan. 7:6). Finally, the terrible looking beast with iron teeth represents the Gentile nation of Rome (Dan. 7:7).

Of course, each of these Gentile nations had their outstanding rulers and conquerors. Babylon had king Nebuchadnezzar. Media Persia Empire had King Cyrus, who gave the Jews permission to return to the land (Ezra 1:1-3). Then there was Alexander the Great with Greece, who sat down and cried like a baby, after he had no more worlds to conquer. Next came Rome with its ruler Julius Caesar. These world empires, along with their appropriate rulers, were all of Gentile origin. This is because the sea in Daniel's vision was representative of these coming Gentile nations or kingdoms with their corresponding Gentile rulers.

The "sea" represents the sea of Gentile people (nations) through which the great world empires would ultimately evolve. This is the meaning of the term sea and water in other passages of Scripture (Isaiah 17:12-13; 8:7-8). When John in the book of Revelation envisions the beast rising out of the sea (Rev. 13:1-2), he was envisioning a similar occurrence of what Daniel envisioned. Since the beast rises out of the sea (Rev. 13:1) and since the sea represents the nations of Gentile humanity (Rev. 17:15; Matt. 25:32), this points to the Antichrist being of Gentile origin. The seven heads on the beast vision (Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 9-10) reflect Daniel's Gentile interpretation of the kingdoms and kings that would rule throughout history. These Gentile kingdoms and kings are represented in the metallic statue and beast vision (Dan, 2, 7).

The seven heads (Rev. 17:9-10) on the beast vision are representative of the seven consecutive Gentile kingdoms and rulers which have spanned the course of earth's history. They represent the course of world history as it pertains to Gentile kingdoms and rulers - Egypt (Pharaoh), Assyria (Sennacherib), Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), Medo-Persia (Cyrus), Greece (Alexander the Great), Rome (Julius Caesar), and a Revived Roman Empire (Antichrist).

All six previous kingdom and rules that were part of earth's history are revealed as Gentile kingdoms and rulers. This means the final "head" or kingdom and ruler will also be a Gentile kingdom and king, who is the Antichrist. The usurpers and oppressors of Israel have always been Gentile - never Jewish. The same pattern will follow through into the End Times where a Gentile world ruler (not Jewish) will usurp authority over the Jews and the entire earth.

Here is the Biblical imagery. The Antichrist will rise out of the "sea" of Gentile humanity. He will follow in the train of Gentile nations and kingdoms that historically have had all Gentile rulers (Daniel 7:1-4). The past Gentile kingdoms with their appropriate Gentile kings are clearly represented in Daniel 2 and 7. The succession of world powers in the past were all Gentile empires and these empires will eventually merge into the final form of Gentile rule, which is the Antichrist, and his Revived Roman Empire or kingdom. Antichrist is connected with the same line of Gentile world rulers and is actually seen following in a successive or orderly line with these previous Gentile rulers (Dan. 7:17).

The Antichrist will be another Gentile Caesar who emerges out of the previous area of the old Roman Empire (Dan. 7:24 - "out of this kingdom" - the Roman Empire). Antichrist is presented in Scripture as the final link in a chain of Gentile rulers. He is the final successor of Gentile powers that would dominate Israel. He will sit on the throne of a future world empire that will raise its ugly fist in the face of God. Since all the world rulers of the past were Gentiles (Dan. 2, 7), it stands to reason that the Antichrist will be the last ruler of the final form of Gentile world power.

3. Biblical prophecy

According to the prophetic Scriptures of Daniel the Antichrist will be a Roman prince ("the prince that shall come" - Daniel 9:26). This verse identifies the coming Antichrist as a Roman prince (not a Jewish King). His origin and identity is linked to the people who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. Of course, these people were Gentiles. The "people" in Daniel 9:26 were Romans who invaded Jerusalem under the leadership of Titus, the Roman general, which ransacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and who later became the Emperor of Rome.

Like the Roman people who invaded Jerusalem, the coming Antichrist will be a Gentile man, who arises from within the framework of the historic Roman Empire. His origin and identity are reflected in the previous people that invaded Jerusalem – the Romans. Some conclude that this means he must be of Roman decent but this is not necessarily the case. He may simply be linked to the Roman Empire which annexed many other countries throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Antichrist's Gentile identity is further verified by his emergence from the same geographical location, as the other ten horns (Dan. 7:8), which are stated to be ten future kings and kingdoms, that are somehow linked to the historical Roman Empire (Dan. 7:7, 24). He will arise as another king, within the boundaries of the old Roman Empire, and rule these ten kings (Rev. 17:12, 17), as a Gentile ruler, over the same area where the previous Roman Empire existed (Europe and the Middle East). A Gentile king ruling over the old Roman Empire is what the prophetic Scriptures envision. A new Caesar is on the horizon.

In short, Antichrist will spring to life within the boundaries of the Old Roman Empire. He will arise from one of the lands that existed in the old Roman Empire, a Gentile empire, which historically exercised power and judgment over the nation of Israel and Jews. The “ten horns” on the beast (Dan. 7:7) and “ten toes” connected to the image (Dan. 2:41-42) all point to the future Roman Empire, with its divided Gentile sovereignties and geographical locations, which will be individually ruled by Gentile kings during Daniel’s 70th week (seven-year Tribulation Period), under the Antichrist, during the final countdown of “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

Eventually, the Antichrist will rule this union of Gentile nations and become a final Gentile Caesar that persecutes Israel (Dan. 7:8-24; Rev. 17:12; 17). The prophetic word necessitates a Gentile ruler that will rule over a resurgent Empire of Rome in the End Times.

4. Biblical facts

As mentioned above, the fact that the Antichrist is a prince of the Roman people (Dan. 9:26 – “people of the prince that shall come”)

could indicate that he comes from Rome. However, others suggest this fact only confirms that he will come from some country within the boundaries of the old Roman Empire, where people were considered Romans. In other words, the Antichrist will emerge from another country or land that was part of the historic Roman Empire, when it was at its zenith of power. The Old Roman Empire encompassed a large portion of Europe and the Middle East.



As the map reveals, Antichrist's princely and Roman origin may simply imply that he will arise from within the boundaries of the ancient Roman Empire. This means he could come from a Middle East country. He will be a Gentile Roman prince, only in the sense that he originates from within the boundaries of the old Roman Empire, and rules over this same area, as a Gentile king.

What do we know? It's possible that the Antichrist's European Roman nationality may be confirmed in Daniel 9:26-27. These verses could indicate that Antichrist will be of the same nationality as the people who destroyed the Jewish temple in A.D. 70. We know that the

people and prince were actually full-fledged Romans. Therefore, it's possible that the Antichrist himself will be of Italian or Roman decent. Of course, the nationality of the Antichrist is also a clue to his Gentile origin. The prince who shall come might be the same nationality as the people who destroyed Jerusalem's city and sanctuary – the Romans. One thing is certain, the Antichrist's identity is linked to those people who were historically against the nation of Israel. These were Gentile people who lived in the geographical area of the Roman Empire.

On the other hand, if the Roman prince analogy (Dan. 9:26) reflects his emergence from another country, which was part of the vast domain of the Roman Empire, then his nationality may be something other than Italian. In other words, he could simply be a citizen of the Revived Roman Empire, which historically was an empire that also included what we know today as Europe and the Middle East lands. This means the Antichrist could come from another country from within this vast region and possess a different Gentile nationality. As a citizen of a Revived Roman Empire, he will rise to power, and become a Gentile prince or leader over the vast domain and area of the old Roman Empire.

Many older and recent writers see an Assyrian connection to the nationality of Antichrist with a rebuilt capital in the land of Iraq or Syria (Rev. 17-18). In other words, he might actually be an Arab. When the Bible prefigures Israel's enemies, during the End Times, which precede the Kingdom blessing, it uses the figure "the Assyrian" (Micah 5:4-7). These references have prophetic overtones attached to them and envision a future day, when the world's armies converge together to fight with the Antichrist, in order to destroy the Messiah (Revelation 19:17-20). The leader of this confederacy of powers will be an Assyrian ruler. Antichrist's prophetic connection to the land of Assyria cannot be easily dismissed (Isaiah 30:31; 31:8).

We know that the domain of Syria became part of the Roman Empire in 64 B.C. as a result of Pompeii's conquest. This means that the Antichrist qualifies as Roman, since he is linked to the land of Assyria, which was part of the eastern sector of the old Roman Empire. We also know that Antichrist is linked to his ancient forerunner, who is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian

general and leader (Dan. 8:22-25; 11:36-45). Antiochus emerged from the Grecian Kingdom and settled in what we know as modern Syria and Iraq (Dan. 8:8-9). The same may be true of the coming Antichrist. He may emerge from the ancient land of Syria and reflect the nationality of Antiochus, who was of Greek descent, or he may actually be of Arab descent, since he comes from the ancient area of Assyria. The exact identify of Antichrist cannot be known; however, we do know he will be of Gentile decent and emerge from a country that was originally linked to the Old Roman Empire.

We also can confirm that Iraq, Syria, and Babylon will play a key role in the End-Time scenario (Isaiah 13:17-20, Jer. 51:7-9, 37, 42-42; Zech. 5:5-11; Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17-18). An Assyrian Antichrist, who is of Grecian or Arab descent, with his headquarters in a rebuilt city of Babylon, does fit into the sockets of Bible prophecy. It is not a far-fetched conclusion when studying the link that Antichrist has with the land of Assyria in the End Times.

Once again, the Antichrist's identity is linked to those people who were historically against the nation of Israel. These were Gentile people who lived in the geographical area of the Roman Empire.

Those who oppose the Arab association of this man do so on the basis that the Jews would never allow an Arab to make a peace pact with them and believe that an Arab leader would actually protect Israel and give her security. It's also inconceivable that an Arab would allow the Jews to build what they consider to be a pagan temple in the holy city of Jerusalem, a holy site for Muslims as well. It's also sites that the Muslim population in the Middle East would never go along with such an agreement. To all these arguments I would agree. But those who make these arguments miss several important Biblical points about the Antichrist.

First, the Antichrist will make a unilateral covenant with the Jewish people. It will not be a bilateral covenant. The understanding of the word "confirm" in Daniel 9:27 is that of a forceful covenant, a firm treaty, a mandatory and prevailing treaty. Israel will have no say in this covenant due to the military rise of this man. It will be a covenant forced upon them.

Dr. Renald Showers states:

“It is indicated that the Antichrist will force or impose a strong covenant upon the many. Apparently this ruler of the Revived Roman Empire in the West will want to have influence or a foothold in the Middle East. In order to accomplish that, he will impose a covenant upon the nation of Israel. That covenant will strongly commit Israel’s loyalty to the Antichrist and his empire. It will bind that nation to him so firmly that Israel will practically be an extension of the Antichrist in the Middle East.”

Second, this man of sin will be unique from all other men and religions. No matter what his nationality, he will despise all previous pagan gods of his ancestors (Dan. 11:37). This means the Antichrist will not be privy to Muslim theology and teaching. Third, the Antichrist will only use religion and his popular peace diplomacy to gain rulership of the world (Rev. 17:3). He has no interest in any other religion – Jewish, Muslim, or Christianity. Fourth, the Antichrist will not have to worry about the Muslim nations surrounding him since many of them will suffer a defeat in the mountains of Israel as the Tribulation period begins (Ezek. 38-39). Fourthly, by the middle of the Tribulation Period he will fight against all those who oppose him, including Muslim nations, and become the sole ruler over earth (Dan. 11:36-45). Even today Muslims fight among themselves all the time and kill their own people.

So the argument that Muslims will not accept this agreement will mean nothing to this Assyrian Antichrist who will have power throughout Europe and the Middle East to make this firm covenant with Israel. Besides, the Antichrist will have no allegiance to the Muslim faith even though the Antichrist might be a Muslim in nationality. He will simply cater to all false religion of the End Times for the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation Period (Rev. 17:3) – not one religion. It’s true that a Muslim claiming to be God would be trashing the Muslim creed – “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.” But again, the Antichrist is not going to favor any one religion over another during the first 3.5 years and by the middle of the Tribulation Period he will say to the Muslim creed and all the other pagan creeds of Christendom, “Who cares what the creeds teach, I’m God” (2 Thess. 2:4) and destroy the harlot church (Rev. 17:16).

5. Biblical teaching

The Bible clearly teaches that the Antichrist will continue a cycle that is termed "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), where as a Gentile ruler, he will persecute the Jews and seek to destroy them. The "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) refer to the Gentile domination over Israel, which began when King Nebuchadnezzar took the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:1-21). Ever since this time, the Jewish people have been under Gentile dominion or lordship.

The image in Daniel chapter two was designed to teach this truth about the times of the Gentiles. This Gentile cycle will be finished at the Second Coming of Christ, when He will crush the final form of Gentile domination over the Jews (Daniel 2:44-45 - note "and the kingdom shall not be left to other people" - a ruling Gentile people). The key to Antichrist's Gentile humanity is found in the nature of the Times of the Gentiles. Since the Bible teaches that the "times of the Gentiles" does not end until the Second Coming of Christ, it must mean that the Antichrist is the final ruler during the Times of the Gentiles.

Since this is true, how can a Jew be a dominant world ruler, when the Gentiles are foretold to hold power over the Jewish people and the entire world? A Jew, leading up a final form of Gentile world power, is an impossible scenario. A Jewish king could not be a supreme ruler in the times of the Gentiles. Instead of this unlikely and illogical scenario, the Antichrist will be in the same line of world rulers, who have historically dominated the Jewish people of God. This line of dominant Gentile rulers is called "the times of the Gentiles" since they are world powers and rulers that were prophesied to dominate the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon), Darius (Persian Empire), Alexander the Great (Greece), and Caesar (Rome) were all Gentiles. The new world Caesar (the Antichrist) will follow in the same train of Gentile world rulers and be a Gentile.

John Walvoord remarked:

"For many reasons the identification of this king as the final Gentile ruler is a superior interpretation. According to Daniel himself, he will be a willful king who will consider himself above every god as well as

above every king. This would not fit a Jewish king who was not the supreme ruler in the times of the Gentiles. It would also be incredible that this ruler would be a Jew inasmuch as he persecuted Jews.”

6. Biblical history

It must also be taken into consideration that the primary activity of the Antichrist will be to persecute the Jews, invade Israel, and desecrate the Jewish temple (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 11:41; 45; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:2; 12:6; 13:7). It seems highly unlikely that a Jew would be the great persecutor of his own people. Gentiles have always led the way in the persecution of the Jews. Both Biblical and recent history has proven this to be true. Who can forget the constant harassment of Gentile nations that were against Israel? Peoples and nations such as the Edomites, Hittites, Amorites, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome, and more recently Germany (Hitler and the holocaust) and the Arab nations have all been Gentile nations.

Why is this? It's because the Bible says we are living in “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), when Gentile world powers will dominate the world scene, and persecute the people of Israel. A Jewish king could not by definition be the supreme ruler during the times of the Gentiles. Jesus' own words identify the Antichrist as being non-Jewish. The pattern of Jewish persecution by Gentile leaders in the past, points to a future Gentile world ruler, who will once again persecute the Jewish people, and continue the cycle of persecution upon the national people of Israel, during a period of time known as “the times of the Gentiles.” The Antichrist's identity is linked to those people who were historically against the nation of Israel. There is no Biblical reason for the Antichrist to be Jewish.

There is enough Biblical evidence to conclude that the Antichrist will not be a Jew. I believe the evidence is convincing. It can be proven that the Antichrist will be a Gentile, as seen from Biblical typology, Biblical imagery, Biblical facts, Biblical teaching, and Biblical history. There is too much evidence to overlook. If we arrive at a Jewish nationality for the Antichrist, instead of assigning a Gentile heritage, origin, and nationality to him, then we must look past many valid arguments. Convincing proofs of his Gentile origin cannot be readily dismissed without ignoring the obvious sense of Scripture.

Five Arguments for the Jewish Nationality of Antichrist

A. W. Pink provides this comment in his well-known work on the Antichrist: "It should, however, be pointed out that there is no express declaration of Scripture which says in so many words that this daring Rebel will be " a Jew;" nevertheless, the hints given are so plain, the conclusions which must be drawn from certain statements of Holy Writ are so obvious, and the requirements of the case are so inevitable, that we are forced to believe he must be a Jew."

Pink's statement reveals his own personal viewpoint, while at the same time, he admits that his view lacks direct Biblical support. This seems to be the general consensus among those writers who teach a Jewish Antichrist.

1. The Jewish Replacement Argument.

This argument goes like this. The name Antichrist means "instead of" or "in place of" Christ. Thus, the Antichrist will naturally be Christ's Jewish replacement on earth and the Jews will believe that he is their long awaited Messiah. For many expositors the term "Antichrist" appears to be the justification for thinking that the Antichrist must also be a Jew. This view is built upon the logic that the Antichrist is just that, an anti-Messiah (a replacement of Christ), and his career must be a counterfeit of Jesus' first coming. In other words, he will ape or try and mimic Christ by becoming His replacement on earth.

Since Jesus was a Jew, then the Antichrist must also be a Jew, who seeks to replace Him on earth. However, this is a hasty conclusion. It is a clear case of circular reasoning or assuming a conclusion by starting at a certain point. We must remember that the prefix ("anti") can also mean opposed to Christ, or an adversary or opponent of Christ (1 John 2:18), instead of an actual replacement for Christ. This is the way the term "Antichrist" appears in John's epistles. He is compared to other "antichrists" (1 John 2:18-22; 4:3; 2 John 7) which are false teachers opposing the personal claims of Jesus Christ – not replacing Christ.

The Bible context where the name Antichrist appears argues for an opponent of Christ, like the previous antichrists, who were the forerunners of the final Antichrist. The previous antichrists opposed those things that Christ said and did. This alone rules out the need for this man to actually present himself as a Jewish Messiah and replace Christ.

The Antichrist may simply be a man who opposes Christ, instead of attempting to express, before the Jews and the entire world, that he is actually Jesus Christ. It's better to see Antichrist opposing Christ, even as his predecessors, opposed the deity of Christ (1 John 2:18). He will oppose the worship of Christ (Rev. 13:8, 12). He will oppose what the Bible says about Christ (Dan. 11:37 – “the desire of women”). He will speak derogatory statements against Christ (Rev. 13:6). He will not honor Christ or exalt Him in any way. He will stand against Christ in every way possible by living a life that is diametrically opposed to Christ's character, conduct, and course (Dan. 11:36-39), which He exhibited, while living on earth. In all of his actions and attitudes the Antichrist will be against Christ. He will be a man of pride, pomp, and pleasures (Dan. 7:8, 25; Rev. 13:5). He will be Christless, carnal, and careless in his living and speech, which was uncharacteristic of the gentle and meek Christ (Matt. 11:28).

Jesus said in John 5:43:

“I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”

Some have taught that this is conclusive evidence that the Jews would in the future accept the Antichrist as their Messiah. They assume that Jesus was talking about the Antichrist. Of course, this is just an assumption. The Jewish Messiah argument is flawed. This is because Jesus was likely referring to many false teachers and prophets (not merely one person), who would arise after Him, and be honored by the nation. This was proven in that the Jews accepted and followed false teachers and spurious leaders such as Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:36–37). The Jews also accepted Barabbas over Jesus at the final trial (Luke 23:18-23). Of course, this would also be true during the coming Tribulation Period when the Jews would potentially be deceived by many “false Christs, and false prophets” (Matt 24:24). Jesus in no way is singling out one false

Messiah – the Antichrist. To interpret this as a reference to only the Antichrist is far-fetched and does not do justice to what Jesus was actually teaching.

Grant Jeffery speaks for many writers, who believe the Antichrist will present himself, as the Jewish Messiah. He states: “Since the prophecies tell us that the Antichrist will present himself to Israel as the Messiah many scholars have concluded that he must be Jewish. Certainly no religious Jew would dream of accepting a Gentile as the Messiah of Israel.”

The problem with this conclusion is that it is built upon the logic that the prophecies of Scripture actually state the Antichrist is going to replace the Messiah, counterfeit Jesus' first coming, and represent Himself as Israel's Messiah. However, there are no prophecies that directly state this, as being true, and confirm that the Antichrist must be a Jew. We must conclude that the Bible, instead of logic, is to be the basis for the teaching on the Antichrist's identity. I believe the specific descriptions given of the Antichrist, during the End Times, are more comparable to a popular Gentile political leader, than a replacement of Jesus Christ.

It may be true that Satan will attempt to secretly counterfeit the Antichrist, as Christ's replacement, to fulfill his own devilish purposes, in his ongoing struggle against Christ and God (Gen. 3:15). Satan may present the Antichrist as a counterfeit Jesus, only as an act of mockery to Jesus Christ and the God of Heaven (Rev. 13:6).

In other words, the Antichrist will take the place of Christ from Satan's perspective but not necessarily from the Jewish perspective. This man will be presented as Satan's man, or masterpiece, but not necessarily a Jewish man and their Messiah. Satan will back this man (Rev. 13:2) and seek to present him as a false Christ, which he can personally empower, to eventually blaspheme the true God of Heaven, and cause mankind to exalt him (Satan) through worship (Rev. 13:3-6).

There is one thing we should remember. The Antichrist will not want to outwardly associate himself with the Messiah or any other God. He will want to express independence from any other rival god, even the

true God and the Messiah, and ultimately declare that he is the only legitimate God that is alive (Dan. 11:37; 2 Thess. 2:4). So, the fact that he is a replacement of Christ (if we view “anti” as meaning this), may only apply to Satan’s secret presentation of this man to God, as a false Christ, as a form of disrespect and mockery to God’s Son, and as the result of Satan’s ongoing opposition with God’s plans (Gen. 3:15).

It must also be remembered that during the first half of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will not promote himself as God. The orthodox Jews certainly would know that the Messiah is God (Isa. 9:6; Heb. 1:8). Messiah was prophesied to be God. If the Antichrist would present himself to the Jews, as their Messiah and God, then it would come in conflict with his program to exalt all other religions and gods during the first three and one half years of the Tribulation Period, through the harlot church (Rev. 17:1-5). If orthodox Jews would accept Christ as their Messiah, they would certainly know that He would not exalt other gods (Exodus 20:3-5). The true Messiah would not promote other religions and false gods.

Actually, Antichrist will not present himself as God, until the middle of the Tribulation Period (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15; Matt. 24:15), and throughout the second half of the Tribulation Period, when he moves to his zenith of power. Therefore, to portray himself as the Jewish Messiah and the true God, seems to be out of sync, with the goals the Antichrist will have for the first part of the Tribulation Period. He wants to promote himself as a political, military, and religious genius who can solve the world’s political and religious problems, while at the same time, promoting world peace (Rev. 6:2). He will do this by solving the Middle East problem. He will figure out a way for the Jews to erect their temple in close proximity to the Islamic mosque and allow the Jews to reinstate their worship in a rebuilt Tribulation temple (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11:1-2). However, none of these activities of Antichrist, confirm that this demon-possessed man will promote himself, as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah.

Ezekiel 38:11 says:

“And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.”

Ezekiel 38:14 also states:

“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?”

It is often taught that these verses, in Ezekiel, prove that the Jews will actually believe they are living in the promised Millennial Kingdom with their Messiah, who has granted them kingdom peace, through a peace covenant. However, in all honesty, there is nothing in the context of Ezekiel, which would remotely suggest that the Jews will believe their time of safe-dwelling is a fulfillment of living in the Millennial Kingdom with the Messiah. The text of Ezekiel never mentions the word “peace” or that a covenant has actually been made with the Jews at this particular time.

First, one must remember that the peace treaty that is given to Israel will be forced upon them. Daniel 9:27 says, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many” (many Jews). The Hebrew understanding behind the word “confirm” means “to have strength, be strong, be powerful and prevail.” The word speaks of a forceful contract that is imposed upon the Jewish people. The Antichrist will have the political and military clout to enforce or impose this peace treaty on the Jewish nation and other surrounding Islamic/Arab nations. The Antichrist will not ask the Jews or Arabs, if they want to accept his peace pact, but forcibly bring this treaty upon them.

Second, the timing of this passage of Scripture (Dan. 9:27) is post-Rapture, but it must also be considered a pre-tribulational event. In other words, the text must refer to the interval period of time that lies between the Rapture and the commencement of the Tribulation Period. The Antichrist will force this covenant upon the Jews and surrounding nations, and this covenant will actually mark the beginning of the seven years (“one week” or a series of seven - Dan. 9:27). We don’t know how long this interim period will last between the Rapture and commencement of the Tribulation Period, but it will be a preparatory time to set up the seven-year Tribulation Period. See the author’s study entitled “Prophetic Gaps” for more information.

The point is this; just because the Jews are bound to a covenant with the Antichrist in the future (Isa. 28:15; Dan. 9:27) does not mean they

MUST accept him as their Messiah. Furthermore, since they are not accepting him as Messiah, the fact that he is a Gentile peacemaker is irrelevant to them.

Third, the mention of Israel dwelling safely in the land is likely a reference to Israel's safety which is the direct result of the covenant that was forced upon them by the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27). This covenant will ensure protection for the Jewish people from their Arab neighbors for seven years. However, nothing is said, or even implied in the Ezekiel passage, that the Jewish people will think the Antichrist is their Messiah and that he has brought them into the long-awaited Kingdom promised to David's descendents.

In short, Russia and her Islamic allies will come down to the land of Israel, during a time when Israel is dwelling in security and confidence, and attempt to overthrow her. This will likely occur at the very beginning of the Tribulation Period, as the Islamic nations try and contest the peace treaty the Antichrist has made with the Jews. However, God will not allow this northern enemy to destroy Israel (Ezekiel 38:18-23). This is because God has other plans for Israel. He will shatter Israel's self-confidence with the persecution of the Antichrist, during the second half of the Tribulation Period, in a time called "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7).

While considering the Jewish replacement argument, it seems probable that the Antichrist might secretly counterfeit the replacement of Christ, in order to fulfill Satan's purposes to mock Jesus Christ and God (Rev. 13:6). However, he will primarily be against Christ, or opposed to Jesus Christ, in everything that he does and says (2 Thess. 2:4). This seems to be the more probable understanding of the name and prefix associated with Antichrist. His works and ways will be against God and the Messiah. His personal character and career will be diametrically opposed to the true Christ and the way Jesus lived out His days on earth. His life and works will be against everything that the true Messiah has done and stood for while He existed on earth.

Once again, the goal of the Antichrist during the first half of the Tribulation Period is to promote all false religion (Rev. 17:3). The harlot ecumenical church is seen riding the beast and suggests that

the Antichrist is promoting and advancing false religion during the first half of the Tribulation Period. If the Antichrist were to present himself as the actual Jewish Messiah to Israel, during the first three and one half years of the Tribulation Period, he would not be able to tolerate other false religions, which promotes religious idolatry. All orthodox Jews would expect him to only promote the Jewish faith and religion according to the first three Jewish commandments (Exodus 20:3-4). No true Messiah would embrace the pagan idolatry of Islamic religions, Taoism, Hinduism, or Buddhism.

It would seem that the Antichrist will not be interested in presenting himself to the Jews, as their Messiah and Savior, since many other false Christs will likely present themselves as the Jewish Messiah, throughout the seven-year Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:5, 24 - "for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ"). The Antichrist's outward presentation of Himself, as Israel's Messiah, would not necessarily be unique to this time period, since many will come claiming to be Israel's Messiah. Therefore, this will not be the goal and ambition of Antichrist.

So, during the first half of the Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will not present himself as the Jewish Messiah, like the many other false Messiah's of the End Times. Instead, he will be an antichrist (1 John 2:18), as the Bible says, which contextually means, he will be against Christ, instead of seeking to replace Christ. Rather than replacing Christ, the Antichrist will be viewed as a Gentile political hero and leader, which grants the Jewish people the right to reinstate their worship (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11:1-2), while promoting all religious faiths, as represented by the harlot church riding the beast (Rev. 17:3).

The Antichrist will promote religion across the board, and by doing this, he will gain great popularity, and place himself in a position to eventually receive worship from all mankind (Rev. 13:8). By the middle of the Tribulation, he will take away all religious worship (Rev. 17:16), promote self-deification by "showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4), and proclaiming that there is no other rival to him – not even the Jewish Messiah (Dan. 11:37; Rev. 13:5-6). In other words, he will not want to make the claim that he is replacing Christ; rather, he will want to declare there is no other Christ. Furthermore, his claim to be the unrivaled and only true God, only occurs at the midpoint of

the Tribulation Period (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15). Prior to this time, he will take the religious backseat. He will not demand that mankind worship him, nor will he seek to promote himself, as the Jewish Messiah.

Revelation 17:3 declares:

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

During the first three and one half years of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will support and promote all religious faiths in a great harlot ecumenical church (Rev. 17:5 - “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS”). He will not want to take on the appearance of any superior religious figure, such as the Messiah (Jesus Christ), who would be seen and worshiped as God. He will simply sit in the religious shadows and wait for the time, when he will exalt himself above every god (2 Thess. 2:4), which has been embraced throughout Gentile history. This will occur at the midway point of the seven-year Tribulation Period, the time when he destroys the harlot church (Rev. 17:16), stops Jewish worship in the temple (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15), and replaces all other religions with beast worship (Rev. 13:15).

2. The “god of his fathers” Argument.

Daniel 11:37

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”

The entire argument for a Jewish Antichrist seems to rest on the phrase “neither shall he regard the god of his fathers” (Dan. 11:37). It’s suggested that “god of his fathers” refers to his Jewish fathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and this would provide conclusive evidence for his Jewish ancestry. However, the expression could equally apply to a Gentile man, whose Gentile fathers were linked to many world religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam.

The expression “God of his fathers” can also be translated as “gods of his fathers.” The Bible translates the name Elohim as gods (a

natural plural) hundreds and hundreds of times. This expression can refer to either the true God of Heaven, or to false gods (heathen deities) with a plural meaning (Gen. 3:5 – “ye shall be as gods” and Dan. 11:8 – “And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods”). Thus, the interpretation may simply be that the Antichrist, who is a Gentile, will forsake any pagan deities of his past Gentile heritage, and have no connection with any Gentile gods of the present day in which he is living (“nor regard any god”). In general, this means that Antichrist will have no respect for any religion or religious heritages whether it pertains to Judaism and the Messiah (“the desire of women”) or any Gentile pagan gods.

The true nature of the Antichrist will eventually come out and he will portray himself as an atheist and want no connection with any religious ties or deities.

Note: If the expression in the text would read, “the LORD (Jehovah) God of his fathers” the identification with the Jewish heritage would be unmistakable (Gen. 3:15-16; 4:5; Deut. 1:11, 21; Josh. 18:3; Jud. 2:12; 2 Kings 21:22; 1 Chron. 21:20; 2 Chron. 7:22; Ezra 7:27; 8:28). However, the text speaks of Elohim, which can be used for other Gentile pagan deities, as we have substantiated.

Even though Daniel, at another place, used the expression “God of my fathers” (Dan. 2:23), as reference to His Jewish heritage, the context of Daniel eleven moves from the Gentile, Assyrian ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:21-35), to the Antichrist (Dan. 11:36-45). This may very well place the understanding of Elohim in a Gentile context and the plausible rendering “gods of his fathers” would suggest that Antichrist will totally reject whatever religions and gods his past Gentile heritage has embraced, or practiced, and make himself to be the sole religion and god of the new age (“for he shall magnify himself above all” – Dan. 11:37). He will reject every other form of gods that have been previously embraced within the realm of his Gentile heritage (“the gods of his fathers”) and also any other Gentile god that is worshipped in his day (“nor regard any god”). This man is really a practicing atheist who will want nothing to do with any gods.

It's equally true and probable that the expression "God of his fathers" may actually suggest the true Jewish fathers of Judaism such as Abraham and Isaac from which even the Arabs claim their origin. If the Antichrist is an Arab Gentile, an Assyrian (Micah 5:4-7), this interpretation makes good sense. The Bible would then be teaching that the Antichrist, a Gentile from the land of Assyria, would one day rise to power and have no regard for the God that was loved and served by his forefathers like Abraham and Isaac. In addition, he will have no regard for any other god (Gentile gods) as the text goes on to say. This is because he will eventually want total allegiance and worship (Rev. 13:1-8).

Of course, the Arab race was a descendent of Abraham and Isaac through the sons of Ishmael and Esau. First, Ishmael was the son of Abraham's illicit relationship with Hagar (his wife's handmaid). Second, Esau was Isaac's son, the twin brother of Jacob (Genesis 16:11-12; 25:19-26). Both of these sons were born in the line of Jewish blessing. However, both Ishmael and Esau intermarried with Gentile wives and produced a race of people that were no longer considered to be God's chosen Jewish race. They produced a Gentile nation of people, which we now know as the Arab peoples of the Middle East. Arab people like to talk about their past ties with Abraham through Ishmael or with Isaac through Esau but must face the reality that they are not God's chosen people.

Here is the point; not only will the Antichrist disregard the false gods of his Gentile fathers ("neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers" – Dan. 11:37) or the God that his ancestors worshipped ("God of his fathers"), the coming king (Antichrist) will also oppose the messianic hope, which was still future, when Daniel was writing ("the desire of women" – Dan. 11:37). In other words, he would not only disregard all the religious Gentile gods of the past, or the true God of his forefathers, as a ruling Gentile of Arabic descent, but also disregard the Son of God, who was predicted to come into the world, as the Jewish Savior.

This is why he is called the Antichrist (1 John 2:18), where the context means, he is against Christ. Daniel was saying that this coming "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3) will be against Christ. He will have no interest in the desire of the Jewish women, or the messianic hope

of Israel. He will be against the true Christ and want nothing to do with Him. He will be antichrist. This is because he wants to eventually deify himself, as the old Caesars of the Roman Empire did, and “magnify himself above all” (Dan. 11:37). This includes Jesus Christ, who is the true God and King.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 says:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The Antichrist will actually be an atheist who will have no regard for any pagan gods of the Gentiles (“gods of his fathers” – Dan. 11:37) or the true God of Heaven (“God of his fathers”) and he will also have total disregard for the Messiah (“the desire of women” – Dan. 11:37), which came from the Jewish nation. He will be a man who is against Jesus Christ in every way and will eventually claim to be above every god that man has ever known, including Jesus Christ. During the first half of the Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will actually be a man of neutrality, when it comes to religion. He will not want to directly appeal to any religion (Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity).

The Antichrist will certainly not reveal himself as the Jewish Messiah during this time. Rather, he will be an ecumenical atheist (Rev. 17:1-5), embracing and using all religions, to gain popularity and power for three and one half years. He will use different beliefs in different deities, as a stepping-stone, to bring people to a place where they will actually worship him, as the only deity. Eventually, he will destroy all world religion (Rev. 17:16) in order to orchestrate a unified and universal worship of himself (Rev. 13:8).

Here is the point; the Antichrist will not impose any beliefs about religion on the Jews or the world, until the second half of the Tribulation Period, when he mandates world worship (2 Thess. 2:4). Up to this time he will be religiously neutral - not a Jewish Messiah.

We must conclude that the Jews will not attempt to embrace the Antichrist, as their true Messiah, until the Second Coming of Christ, when they call upon the Messiah for His help and deliverance (Matt. 23:37-39; Hosea 6:1-3; Zech. 12:10). During the first half of the

Tribulation Period the Antichrist will simply be viewed as an international, political genius, who desires world peace, temporarily settles the Middle East crisis, and allows the Jews to practice their ancient religion in their homeland. A covenant will be imposed upon the Jews and Middle East nations (Dan. 9:27), so an alleged time of world peace can begin (1 Thess. 5:3), but it does not follow textually, or logically, that the orthodox Jewish people must accept him as their Messiah.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the Jewish dispensationalist, who loves his people, and is serving them faithfully with the truth, states: "The argument is that the Jews will accept him as the Messiah. The Scriptures make no such claim. While the Bible teaches that Israel enters into a covenant relationship with the Antichrist, this in no way means that they will accept him as the Messiah."

It would seem that the Jews and world community will view the Antichrist as a powerful and persuasive Gentile ruler, which has forced a covenant upon them, and given them the right to practice their ancient Jewish religion, alongside the Islamic religion (Dan. 9:27). The Jews will not view this covenant as the prophetic fulfillment of the promised Millennial Kingdom (Luke 1:32-33). Rather, this covenant that the Antichrist forces upon the European and Middle East nations, including Israel, will actually be a political move, which is designed to lull the world into a sense of false peace and security, during a time when wars and rumors of wars will begin to take place (Matt. 24:6).

Israel does not have many friends today and the situation will be no different during the Tribulation Period. Many Jews, approaching the war stricken times of the Tribulation Period (Rev. 6:3-4), will be so bent on having peace that they will look for a friend, or political savior, from any race and nationality. With Israel surrounded by enemies on all sides, and in desperate need for security, they may begin to look for any man, which can promise them national stability and peace. The Jews will simply be looking for someone to get them out of their present-day world crisis and troubles. It would seem that the Antichrist will promise this needed security in the Middle East, and enforce this peace covenant upon Israel and likely other nations in

the area of the old Roman Empire, which he begins to control (Rev. 17:17).

We must also remember that many Jews living today are not orthodox Jews. They are actually atheistic in their belief system. The Jews are not looking for any spiritual Messiah or Deliverer (John 1:11). What they want is peace and security from war and violence and they are willing to look outside Jewry for this peace. A survey was taken in Israel recently where Israelis were asked how much confidence they have in their leaders. A startling 51% responded by saying that they did not have confidence in their Jewish government to deal with their present day problems and crises.

This shows the attitude of the Jews to their own government, and also indicates the possibility of Jews looking for someone outside of their nation, and national Jewish background for political help and military assistance. A Gentile Antichrist fits this scenario. A man that can promise security and stability to a land of war and violence will take control of Europe and the Middle East (Dan. 7:24). All people, including the Jews, will be mesmerized by his abilities to unite all of Europe and the Middle East (the old Roman Empire).

3. The Tribe of Dan Argument.

The argument that the Antichrist is going to spring forth from the tribe of Dan has been promoted for many years. Support for this argument is inappropriately derived from the passages of Genesis 49:17; Deuteronomy 33:22, Jeremiah 8:16; and Revelation 7:4-8. The mention of Dan as a serpent in Genesis 49:17 and the absence of Dan in Revelation 7:4-8 is supposed to be conclusive evidence that the Antichrist emerges as a Jew from this tribe. However, these verses are taken out of their immediate context and have nothing to say about the personal Antichrist. Therefore, the argument that the Antichrist comes from the tribe of Dan becomes an argument from silence and not Scripture.

It's true that Dan is called a serpent biting at the heels of an enemy's horse in Genesis 49:17. This may represent that Dan was a dangerous adversary to enemy troops and how this particular tribe was well able to protect the northern boundary against invaders. This

serpent name may also be applied to Dan because during the time of the Judges the first major practice of idolatry appeared in this tribe (Judges 18:30-31). It was the tribe of Dan that introduced idolatry into the land of Israel on a regular and official basis. As a result of punishment, this tribe would be given the smallest land allotment of all the tribes.

It's also true that the tribe of Dan is not promised blessing and participation with the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation Period (Rev. 7:4-8). This omission may look back to the idolatrous history of the tribe of Dan and be an important reason why this tribe is not included in the list of the Jewish evangelists of Revelation chapter seven. Nevertheless, later during the Millennium, Dan will be reinstated to the place of blessing (Ezek. 48:32).

4. The Judas Iscariot Argument.

Some have promoted that the Antichrist will be the late Judas Iscariot who will be raised from the dead. This is another argument from silence and becomes a fanciful and improper conclusion concerning the identity of the Antichrist. The argument goes like this. Since Judas Iscariot was called the son of perdition (John 17:12) and the Antichrist was called the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3), then the conclusion must be drawn that the Antichrist will actually be Judas Iscariot, reborn or resurrected from the dead, in order to fulfill the role of the End-Time world ruler. It's further claimed that since Judas went to his own place (Acts 1:25) that this becomes further evidence that he is in a special place awaiting resurrection for the End Times.

These conclusions are not the result of sound exegesis. The entire theory of Judas being resurrected for the end-times can be debunked for several reasons. First, the passage in John 17:12 says that Judas was called the son of perdition so that the prophecy of Psalm 41:9 might be fulfilled – not a prophecy about Antichrist. This was not a prophecy dealing with the Antichrist but a prophecy speaking of Judas himself. Second, all unsaved people are headed toward perdition or the judgment of God – not just Judas (Phil. 1:28).

The Bible speaks about other sons of perdition (1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Pet. 3:7; Heb. 10:39). The definite article is used “the son of perdition” to

simply add to the force of the statement, and also indicate, that because of the wickedness of Judas' heart, he was marching straight to perdition. Judas would be damned because of his awful sin of betraying the Son of God. Third, the term son in John 17:12 may be used in a generic sense and simply be referring to a person who is part of the offspring of the human race. The fact is this. All unsaved people are sons of the devil and they are doomed for perdition (John 8:44), even as Paul told Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:10 – "thou child of the devil"). Fourth, the Bible does not speak about unsaved people being resurrected until the day of the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:12-15).

Conclusion

When all the Biblical data is gathered and interpreted grammatically, historically, literally, and prophetically, one can conclude that the Antichrist will be a man of Gentile origin, who is primarily against Jesus Christ. He is labeled Antichrist because he is opposed or against Christ. He will be against Christ doctrinally (rejecting His deity) and against Christ's veneration (people worshipping Christ). This is why earth dwellers living during the Tribulation Period will be persecuted and martyred for their faith in Christ (Rev. 20:4). His character, course, and career will be against everything that Christ is and stands for as the true God and Messiah (Dan. 7:25). His person, purposes, and practices will all be opposed to Jesus Christ and His holiness.

Then too, Satan's scheme may also be to present the Antichrist, as a counterpart to God's Son, so he can shake his fist in the face of God, in a devilish attempt to replace the true Christ with the false Christ. While this is Satan's secret scheme, we should not presuppose that the Antichrist will actually present himself to the Jews, as their long awaited Messiah. Antichrist will be Satan's replacement for the true Christ in his ongoing "seed" war with God (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:7), but the Antichrist will be primarily opposed to Jesus Christ in respect to his overall character, actions, and lifestyle.

His goal is not to outwardly present himself as the Jewish Messiah (Christ's replacement on earth), during the first half of the Tribulation Period, since this would clash with his goal to elevate the harlot

ecumenical church with all of her idolatrous teachings (Rev. 17:1-5). The true Messiah would never do this and every orthodox Jew would know this. Then, during the second half of the Tribulation Period, his goal is to exalt himself above any rival god, even the true God, and declare himself to be the only true deity and God (2 Thess. 2:9). At no time does the Antichrist want to outwardly mimic or claim that He is the actual Messiah of Israel.

When speaking about the Antichrist, Ed Hinson made this comment: "Only time will reveal his true identity." We respectfully disagree with this conclusion. We may not know his name but the Bible gives substantial evidence for Antichrist's Gentile origins and nationality.

Biblical typology, Biblical imagery, Biblical facts, Biblical teaching, and Biblical history all confirm that the Antichrist will be of Gentile descent and nationality. Yes, only the future Tribulation Period will bring forth the personal name and revelation of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3 – "and that man of sin be revealed"). However, the Bible does reveal where he will come from and what his basic identity will be. He will be the final Gentile world ruler who will oppress Israel (Luke 21:24), until the true Jewish Messiah returns to destroy him, and set up the promised Millennial Kingdom (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:19-20; 20:1-6).

Let us conclude with what Thomas Ice said:

"A widely-held belief throughout the history of the church has been the notion that Antichrist will be of Jewish origin. Upon closer examination, there is no real scriptural basis for such a view."