

## **The Antichrist East vs. West**

By [Britt Gillette](#)

One of the great mysteries concerning bible prophecy and the end times is [the national identity of the Antichrist](#). This is an important topic because it will eventually aid the last days generation of Christians in the correct identification of [the Antichrist](#).

Lately, it seems this subject has created a rift within the community of those who study [bible prophecy](#).

One side believes scripture points to the Antichrist coming from Assyria and the Eastern portion of the ancient Roman Empire, while the other side believes scripture points to the Antichrist coming from Italy and the Western portion of the ancient Roman Empire.

Many, but not all, of those in both camps believe their side is right and the other side is wrong.

Fortunately, the Bible provides us with several details regarding the nationalistic origins of this sinister personality...

### **His Italian Roman Nationality**

Although much debate surrounds the Antichrist's national identity, the Book of Daniel clearly states that the Antichrist will rise from among the people whose armies destroy the Temple.

“A ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple.” Daniel 9:26  
([NLT](#))

The City and the Temple referenced in this passage were destroyed in A.D. 70 by Titus and the Roman legions, but Titus was not the ruler referenced in this verse.

Daniel 9:27 describes the ruler as one who will make a seven-year treaty with Israel, put an end to the sacrifices and offerings, and set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration. These are events that will be fulfilled in the life of the Antichrist.

According to Daniel, the Antichrist will be connected in some way to the people who destroyed the Temple.

Therefore, we can be certain that the Antichrist will rise not only from the resurrected Roman Empire, but from among people connected to the Roman people of the ancient Italian peninsula.

Despite arguments by some that the Roman armies were populated by persons from various ethnic backgrounds, including Assyrians, the fact remains that Titus is the prince who led the siege on the Temple. And the earthly power and authority of Titus came from Rome.

While Assyria may have been a part of the Roman Empire, the directive and the people responsible for the destruction of the Temple came forth from Rome, not Assyria.

So it's rather hasty to dismiss the geopolitical significance of the City of Rome's role in the destruction of the Temple, not to mention the City of Rome's significance in the career of the Antichrist.

**Does This Mean the Antichrist is Not Syrian?**

Absolutely not.

Daniel Chapter 8 provides us with further clues in regard to the life and times of the Antichrist.

The angel Gabriel explains Daniel's vision of a Ram and Goat as events relating to the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. In a claim verified by history, Gabriel states that, following the death of Alexander, the empire will be divided into four parts.

From one of those four parts, the Antichrist will arise:

“The shaggy male goat represents the king of the Greek Empire. The four prominent horns that replaced the one large horn show that the Greek Empire will break into four sections with four kings, none of them as great as the first. At the end of their rule, when their sin is at its height, a fierce king, a master of intrigue, will rise to power. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause a shocking amount of destruction and succeed in everything he does. He will destroy powerful leaders and devastate the holy people.” Daniel 8:21-24 ([NLT](#))

Daniel Chapter 11 provides an in-depth examination of the history of the breakup Alexander's empire, describing historical events relating to the King of the North and the King of the South. The latter part of the chapter describes the Antichrist, identifying him with other historical figures who have held the title “King of the North.”

This, along with the passage cited above, clearly links the Antichrist to the Northern Kingdom of the divided Greek Empire. This kingdom was ruled by one

of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, who ruled the areas of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Antichrist will in some way be linked to this geographic area of the Middle East as well.

### **Isaiah Chapter 10**

In addition to Daniel 8, the prophet Isaiah also offers some interesting insight concerning a "king of Assyria":

"After the Lord has used the king of Assyria to accomplish his purposes in Jerusalem, he will turn against the king of Assyria and punish him – for he is proud and arrogant. He boasts, 'By my own power and wisdom I have won these wars. By my own strength I have captured many lands, destroyed their kings, and carried off their treasures. By my greatness I have robbed their nests of riches and gathered up kingdoms as a farmer gathers eggs. No one can even flap a wing against me or utter a peep of protest.'" Isaiah 10:12-14 ([NLT](#))

Although not directly identified by Isaiah, this king of Assyria bears a striking resemblance to the Antichrist. Both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation describe the Antichrist as proud and arrogant, boasting arrogantly and blaspheming God Himself. His boast that "no one can even flap a wing against me or utter a peep of protest" also fits the description of the Antichrist as given in the Book of Revelation:

"They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they worshiped the beast. 'Is there anyone as great as the beast?' they exclaimed. 'Who is able to fight against him?'" Revelation 13:4 ([NLT](#))

Isaiah 10, coupled with Daniel 8, lends support to the idea that the Antichrist will somehow be connected, either by ethnic origin or political power, to this region of

the world.

### **Is It East or West?**

It is an absolute certainty that the Antichrist will arrive on the world scene as the ruler of a revived Roman empire. However, it is less certain whether or not he will be of actual Italian descent or some other ethnic background. And it's also uncertain whether his central power base will initially be located in the eastern or western portion of the ancient Roman Empire.

Several verses of scripture offer the possibility that he could be Assyrian, Italian, Greek, or Jewish. But none offer us the definitive statement contained in Daniel 9:26.

So how do we rectify these seemingly contradictory prophecies concerning the Antichrist's nationality? Is he Roman? Italian? Jewish? Assyrian? Greek?

Who says the Antichrist has to be exclusively one or the other?

Maybe he's an Assyrian Jew born and raised in Italy, or maybe he's an Italian who brings Assyria to the pinnacle of world political and military power. Any number of possible combinations are possible. We simply don't know for certain.

But history indicates that each of these prophecies will be harmonized when the Antichrist finally appears.

### **The Origins of the Messiah...**

How can I be so sure?

Because two thousand years ago, the seemingly contradictory prophecies of the first coming of the Messiah were all harmonized in the life of one man, Jesus Christ – the Nazarene born in Bethlehem who came out of Egypt.

The Messiah will come out of Bethlehem....

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.” Micah 5:2 ([NLT](#))

The Messiah will come out of Galilee...

“Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will soon be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light – a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.” Isaiah 9:1-2 ([NLT](#))

The Messiah will come out of Egypt...

“When Israel was a child, I loved him as a son, and I called my son out of Egypt.” Hosea 11:1 ([NLT](#))

Before Jesus Christ fulfilled these prophecies, Jewish factions debated the origins of the Messiah. They found it difficult to imagine that one man could fulfill all these prophecies.

With the benefit of hindsight, we now see how this was possible...

But for the Jewish scholars who lived before and during the ministry of Jesus, these prophecies sparked intense debate.

Would the Messiah come from Galilee, Bethlehem, or Egypt?

These differing viewpoints are put on display in the Book of John:

“When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, ‘Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.’ Others said, ‘He is the Messiah.’ Still others said, ‘But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.’ So the crowd was divided about him. Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.”

John 7:40-44 ([NLT](#))

And

“‘Have you been led astray, too?’ the Pharisees mocked. ‘Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s curse is on them!’ Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. ‘Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?’ he asked. They replied, ‘Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself – no prophet ever comes from Galilee!’”

John 7:47-52 ([NLT](#))

The complete answer eluded both the crowds and the Pharisees.

Since each person was absolutely convinced his position was the correct position, all of them failed to recognize the true and complete picture.

In similar fashion, a debate continues today in regard to the prophecies of the Antichrist and his national identity.

But regardless of how much we speculate on the ultimate real-life fulfillment of the scriptures, no one but God will know the absolute truth until it's revealed at the appointed time.

Therefore, it's unwise to establish a hard line position on a particular theory regarding this prophecy's fulfillment – even those theories based on iron clad scriptural references. After all, even though your belief may be 100% accurate, that doesn't mean someone else's belief is false.

In many cases, two viewpoints which seem diametrically opposed, are in fact both true.

Your eyes offer a perfect illustration...

Close your left eye and look at the world through your right.

Now, close your right eye and look at the world through your left.

What did you see?

Both eyes saw the same thing from two different perspectives. But they didn't see exactly the same thing...

Now, what if the left eye argued that the right was wrong; and the right eye argued that the left was wrong?

If that happens, both eyes fail to see that, taken separately or taken together, each viewpoint is correct...

Am I saying that no belief or viewpoint is false?

Absolutely not.

Some things are true, and some things are false.

But this case illustrates that just because one belief is true, that isn't proof in-and-of itself that another belief is false.

So don't become wedded to the idea that the Antichrist is Assyrian, and therefore anyone who says the Antichrist will come from Western Europe is wrong. Likewise, don't become wedded to the idea that the Antichrist is Italian, and therefore anyone who says he'll come from Assyria is wrong.

You might both be right.

But the importance of the matter has nothing to do with who is right and who is



wrong. The importance is in each belief's scriptural origin. For the study of bible prophecy leads people to examine God's Word, and by examining God's Word, people are led to Christ.

So by studying these prophecies and teaching them to others, Christians of the end times generation will be able to positively identify the Antichrist based on the sound Scriptural evidence outlined by those who trod before them.

And the work of that last generation will be much easier if we present them with a unified body of unbiased scriptural references – starting points so they can examine the bible themselves...

This is one of the greatest benefits of studying bible prophecy, and upon His Return, I hope the Lord Jesus Christ finds us actively engaged in spreading knowledge of the truth found in His Word and not our deeply held human beliefs.

In the meantime, may we live with a patient and enduring faith that His Return is soon upon us.