

Debunking the European Antichrist

by Rodrigo Silva

The increasing popularity of the Assyrian Antichrist is causing some prophecy scholars to try and refute this view. A certain prophecy author writes: *"historical precedence typically dictated that the subservient soldiers of any ruling kingdom or empire became the subjects of that kingdom or empire. In this instance, even though the Roman Empire was known to employ non-Roman troops within its ranks, such as defeated Assyrians, these troops operated solely under the command of their Roman leadership. The legions that destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish temple did not do so out of their own independent accord, but acted solely under the direct authority and instruction of the Roman Empire."* Read full article [here](#)

In fact, the opposite is true. In his work, *The Wars of the Jews* book 6 chapter 4, Josephus who most likely was an eyewitness to these events says that the Roman government DID NOT want the Temple to be destroyed. The Roman soldiers did it out of disobedience to the Roman government simply because they hated the Jews. Josephus writes: *"And now the **soldiers had already put fire** to the gates, and the silver that was over them quickly carried the flames to the wood that was within it, whence it spread itself all on the sudden, and caught hold on the cloisters. Upon the Jews seeing this fire all about them, their spirits sunk together with their bodies, and they were under such astonishment, that not one of them made any haste, either to defend himself or to quench the fire, but they stood as mute spectators of it only. However, they did not so grieve at the loss of what was now burning, as to grow wiser thereby for the time to come; but as though the holy house itself had been on fire already, they whetted their passions against the Romans. This fire prevailed during that day and the next also; for the soldiers were not able to burn all the cloisters that were round about together at one time, but only by pieces.*

But then, on the next day, *Titus commanded part of his army to quench the fire*, and to make a road for the more easy marching up of the legions, while he himself gathered the commanders together. Of those there were assembled the six principal persons: Tiberius Alexander, the commander [under the general] of the whole army; with Sextus Cerealis, the commander of the *fifth legion*; and Larcius Lepidus, the commander of *the tenth legion*; and Titus Frigius, the commander of the *fifteenth legion*: there was also with them Eternius, the leader of the two legions that came from Alexandria; and Marcus Antonius Julianus, procurator of Judea: after these came together all the rest of the procurators and tribunes. *Titus proposed to these that they should give him their advice what should be done about the holy house.*

Now some of these thought it would be the best way to act according to the rules of war, [and demolish it,] because the Jews would never leave off rebelling while that house was standing; at which house it was that they used to get all together. Others of them were of opinion, that in case the Jews would leave it, and none of them would lay their arms up in it, he might save it; but that in case they got upon it, and fought any more, he might burn it; because it must then be looked upon not as a holy house, but as a citadel; and that the impiety of burning it would then belong to those that forced this to be done, and not to them. But Titus said, that "although the Jews should get upon that holy house, and fight us thence, *yet ought we not to revenge ourselves on things that are inanimate, instead of the men themselves;*" and that he was not in any case for *burning*

down so vast a work as that was, because this would be a mischief to the Romans themselves, as it would be an *ornament to their government while it continued*. So Fronto, and Alexander, and Cerealis grew bold upon that declaration, and agreed to the opinion of Titus. Then was this assembly dissolved, when Titus had given orders to the commanders that the rest of their forces should lie still; but that they should make use of such as were most courageous in this attack. So he commanded that the chosen men that were taken out of the cohorts should make their way through the ruins, and quench the fire. . .

And now a certain person came running to Titus, and told him of this fire, as he was resting himself in his tent after the last battle; whereupon he rose up in great haste, and, as he was, *ran to the holy house, in order to have a stop put to the fire*; after him followed all his commanders, and after them followed the several legions, in great astonishment; so there was a great clamor and tumult raised, as was natural upon the disorderly motion of so great an army. Then did *Caesar, both by calling to the soldiers that were fighting, with a loud voice, and by giving a signal to them with his right hand, order them to quench the fire*. But they did not hear what he said, though he spake so loud, having their ears already dimmed by a greater noise another way; nor did they attend to the signal he made with his hand neither, as still some of them were distracted with fighting, and others with passion.

But as for the *legions that came running thither*, neither any persuasions nor any threatenings could restrain their violence, but each one's own passion was his commander at this time; and as they were crowding into the temple together, many of them were trampled on by one another, while a great number fell among the ruins of the cloisters, which were still hot and smoking, and were destroyed in the same miserable way with those whom they had conquered; and when they were come near the holy house, they made as if they did not so much as hear *Caesar's orders to the contrary*; but they encouraged those that were before them to set it on fire. . . And now, since *Caesar was no way able to restrain the enthusiastic fury of the soldiers*, and the fire proceeded on more and more, he went into the holy place of the temple, with his commanders, and saw it, with what was in it, which he found to be far superior to what the relations of foreigners contained, and not inferior to what we ourselves boasted of and believed about it.

But as the flame had not as yet reached to its inward parts, but was still consuming the rooms that were about the holy house, and Titus supposing what the fact was, *that the house itself might yet he saved, he came in haste and endeavored to persuade the soldiers to quench the fire*, and gave order to Liberalius the centurion, and one of those spearmen that were about him, *to beat the soldiers that were refractory with their staves, and to restrain them; yet were their passions too hard for the regards they had for Caesar*, and the dread they had of him who forbade them, as was their *hatred of the Jews*, and a certain vehement inclination to fight them, too hard for them also. Moreover, the hope of plunder induced many to go on, as having this opinion, that all the places within were full of money, and as seeing that all round about it was made of gold. And besides, one of those that went into the place prevented Caesar, when he ran so hastily out *to restrain the soldiers*, and threw the fire upon the hinges of the gate, in the dark; whereby the flame burst out from within the holy house itself immediately, when the commanders retired, and Caesar with them, and when nobody any longer forbade those that were without to set fire to it. *And thus was the holy house burnt down, without Caesar's approbation*."

If you do not have the Work of Josephus at home, you can read this particular chapter online at: <http://www.searchgodsword.org/his/bc/wfj/war/view.cgi?book=6&chapter=4>

It is pretty clear that Titus and Caesar as the rulers of the Roman government did not want the Temple to be destroyed and actually gave the order to stop the fire so the Temple would not be destroyed. It was the soldiers of the Roman legions who hated the Jews that decided to destroy the Temple without the approval of the Roman government.

The Bible makes it very clear that a Roman is not necessarily someone who is born in Rome or in Europe. In the book of Acts we read: "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a **Roman**, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a **Roman**? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him." (Acts 22:17-29)

In this passage we learn that Paul was not condemned by the Roman authorities because he proved to them he was a Roman. This raises the question: Was Paul born in Rome, Italy? Or if not Rome, was he born anywhere in Europe near Rome? Here is the answer given by Paul himself: "But **Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia**, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) am verily a man which am a **Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia**, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." (Acts 21:38-39; 22:1-3)

Paul who calls himself a Roman says he was born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia located in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. Was Paul a European? NO! Then why do people insist that the Romans who destroyed the Temple in AD 70 were Europeans? Another question: How could Paul having been born in Tarsus in Asia Minor be a Roman? The answer is simple. When the Roman Empire conquered a region, it established Roman law and required that from that time on, some privileged ones and those who served for a number of years be considered Roman

citizens. That is why Paul and many Middle Eastern people of that time were considered Romans but this did not mean they had to have European ethnicity. People could be Roman and still be Assyrians ethnically. We have something somewhat similar today. People who are born in Hawaii are considered American citizens since Hawaii is a conquered island of the United States, but the Hawaiian people are not Americans ethnically, they are indigenous Polynesian people of the Hawaiian Islands or their descendants.

The main and only passage used to support this European Antichrist is Daniel 9:26 where we read: "and the **people of the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof [shall be] with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Based on this passage alone, people assume the Antichrist will be a Roman, therefore a European. Even if that was the case, we saw previously that Paul was a Roman but he WAS NOT European.

The Hebrew word translated "people" in the passage in the word **אָמ** `am (Strong's 5971). Strong defines this word as follows:

- 1) nation, people
 - a) people, nation
 - b) persons, members of one's people, compatriots, country-men
- 2) kinsman, kindred

This word appears 1862 times in the King James Bible. It is translated as people 1836 times, as nation 17 times, people + 01121 4 times, as folk 2 times, as Ammi 1 time, and as men 1 time, as each 1 time.

The Hebrew word "am" refers to ethnicity, not to citizenship. Although the Roman soldiers who destroyed the city and the Temple were "Roman citizens", they were Syrians (Assyrians) ethnically. It is the angel Gabriel who is delivering the message to Daniel and from God's perspective it is not the people's allegiance to Rome as a government or their "Roman citizenship" that matters, but their ethnicity.

In an interview with Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Bill Salus asked him about the origin of the Antichrist. Arnold Fruchtenbaum said that the Antichrist must be of the same ethnic group that destroyed the Temple. Fruchtenbaum clearly points to ethnicity in his answer, not to citizenship. Perhaps Fruchtenbaum does not know that the soldiers who destroyed the Temple had Assyrian ethnicity, so he refers to the people as Romans. I sent Fruchtenbaum an e-mail asking him what he means by a Roman and he answered that a Roman is NOT necessarily someone who was born in Rome and anywhere near it.

But how can we prove that the Roman soldiers were Assyrians ethnically?

History tells us that there were four specific Roman legions that attacked and destroyed the Temple. In writing about the destruction of the Temple, the historian Tacitus states: "Early in this year Titus Caesar, who had been selected by his father to complete the subjugation of Judea . He

found in Judea three legions, **the 5th, the 10th, and the 15th**, all old troops of Vespasian's. To these he added the 12th from **Syria**, and some men belonging to the 18th and 3rd, whom had withdrawn from Alexandria (Egypt).

This force was accompanied by twenty cohorts of allied troops and eight squadrons of cavalry, by the two kings Agrippa and Sohemus, by the auxiliary forces of king Antiochus, by a strong contingent of Arabs, who hated the Jews with the usual hatred of neighbors, and lastly, by many persons brought from the capital and from Italy by private hopes of securing the yet unengaged affections of the Prince. With this force Titus entered the enemy's territory, preserving strict order on his march, reconnoitering every spot, and always ready to give battle. At last encamped near Jerusalem." 2 (Emphasis mine)

Josephus writes: "Titus ordered a camp to be fortified for two legions that were to be together; but ordered another camp to be fortified, at three furlongs farther distance behind them, for the fifth legion; for he thought that, by marching in the night, they might be tired, and might deserve to be covered from the enemy, and with less fear might fortify themselves; and as these were now beginning to build, **the tenth legion (Fretensis)**, who came through Jericho, was already come to the place, where a certain party of armed men had formerly lain, to guard that pass into the city, and had been taken before by Vespasian. These legions had orders to encamp at the distance of six furlongs from Jerusalem, at the mount called the Mount of Olives which lies over against the city on the east side, and is parted from it by a deep valley, interposed between them, which is named Cedron." 3 (Emphasis mine)

On 14 April 70, during Passover, Titus laid siege to Jerusalem. To the northeast of the old city, on Mount Scopus, the legions XII Fulminata (a new addition **from Syria**) and XV Apollinaris shared a large camp; V Macedonica was camped at a short distance. When **X Fretensis arrived from Syria**, it occupied the Mount of Olives, in front of the Temple. The soldiers of this legion had a special incentive to fight: they had been defeated by the Zealots in 66 and wanted revenge. The Roman commanders now knew that their enemies would fight for every inch of their city, and understood that the siege of Jerusalem would take a long time. Therefore, Titus changed his plans. There were signs that the supplies of Jerusalem were giving out: some Jews had left the city, hoping to find food in the valleys in front of the walls. Many of them had been caught and crucified - some five hundred every day. (The soldiers had amused themselves by nailing their victims in different postures.) The Romans decided to starve the enemies into surrender. In three days, Jerusalem was surrounded with an eight kilometer long palisade. All trees within fifteen kilometres of the city were cut down. The camps of the legions **V Macedonica, XII Fulminata and XV Apollinaris** were demolished; these troops were billeted on Bezetha. . . The death rate among the besieged increased. Soon, the Kidron valley and the Valley of Hinnom were filled with corpses. One defector told Titus that their number was estimated at 115,880. Desperate people tried to leave Jerusalem. When they had succeeded in passing their own lines and had not been killed by Roman patrols, they reached the palisade. Here they surrendered: as prisoners, they were at last entitled to some bread. Some of them ate so much, that they could not stomach it and died. In that case, their oedemaous bodies were cut open by the **Syrian and Arabian** warders, who knew that some of these people had swallowed coins before they started their ill fated expedition. . . . A couple of days later, on 14 July, prisoners told them that the priests in the Temple had been forced to interrupt the daily sacrifices, which had greatly demoralized the defenders of Jerusalem. The Antonia was demolished. The

stones were used to build a new dam, this time towards the Temple terrace. The Romans used the dam to set fire to the porticoes on the northern and western side of the terrace, but it was impossible to bash through the walls. On the tenth of August, the Temple itself was burning. Six thousand women and children were taken prisoner at the Court of the Gentiles, while the legionaries sacrificed to their standards in the Holy of Holies.⁴

In his book entitled *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.-A.D. 337*, professor of ancient history Fergus Millar writes: "If the successful conclusion of the Roman civil war was Vespasian's major objective, the capture of Jerusalem still remained an immense task, which absorbed a high proportion of the total forces of the empire. This role was left to Titus, who in the winter of 69/70 marched back from Alexandria along the coast and, once again, made Caesaria his main base. His forces, listed by both Tacitus and Josephus, consisted of the same legions as had been under his father, the **V Macedonica**, **X Fretensis**, and **XV Apollinaris** as well as one further from **Syria**, the **XII Fulminata**, the same one which had been routed in 66 at the beginning of the revolt. Added to these were detachment of the two legions stationed in Egypt, the III Cyrenaica and XX Deiotariana, twenty infantry cohorts and eight mounted alae, as well as forces from Agrippa II, Sohaemus of Emesa and Antiochus IV of Commagene, and (in Tacitus' words) 'a strong force of Arabs imbued with the hatred of the Jews customary between neighbors. . . . Josephus clearly states that the X Fretensis before joining Vespasian 66/67; it had presumably now been replaced by the IV Scythica. Three thousand men represented half the strength of the legion. Finally, Josephus mentions again that a large number of irregulars (epikouroi) came **from Syria**. The most immediate lesson drawn by Rome was that Jerusalem, even though now largely destroyed, required to be garrisoned. Consequently, the X Fretensis was left there (to remain in fact for some two centuries) along with some cavalry alae and infantry cohorts." ⁵

As history shows, the four legions that were present in the siege of Jerusalem were the legions:

V Macedonica

X Fretensis

XII Fulminata

XV Apollinaris

Concerning the Roman legion X Fretensis we read: "The governor of Syria, Publius Quinctilius Varus, used three of the **four Syrian legions** to suppress the rebellions of the Jewish messianic claimants Judas, Simon, and Athronges after the death of king Herod the Great in 4 BCE. It is likely that X Fretensis was among them, but we are not certain because we do not know the date of the transfer from the Balkans to Syria. Its presence in Syria in 6, however, is a certainty. Our unit, together with III Gallica, VI Ferrata, and XII Fulminata, must have taken part in the campaign led by the famous governor of Syria, Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, to Judaea in 6, which had become restless after the emperor Augustus had exiled Herod Archelaus, added his realm to the Roman empire, and organized the census so well-known from the Gospel of Luke. From 67 onward, X Fretensis fought in the war against the Jews. It was commanded by Marcus Ulpius Trajanus, the father of the future emperor. The supreme commander of the Roman forces

in Judaea was general Vespasian, who was to become emperor during the civil war that broke out after the suicide of Nero in 68.

In 70, **X Fretensis took part in the siege of Jerusalem** (more). After the capture, prisoners of war were sent to Seleucia, where the legionaries forced them to cut the Canal of Titus. Although this was hard labor, these people were lucky they were not sent to Rome to build the Colosseum. X Fretensis was to stay in Judaea for more than a century and a half. Jerusalem became its new base, and several unremarkable archaeological finds in the holy city -bricks and tiles with the name of emblem of the legion- prove its presence. Unfortunately, we do not know the precise location of its fortress. The emblem of the legion, a boar or pig, was visible on several places and must have been intended to humiliate the Jewish population.” 6 (Emphasis mine)

These historical accounts point to the legion X Fretensis also known as one of the four "Syrian" legions as the one responsible for the destruction of the city and the Temple. The soldiers of this legion were Syrians as these historical facts show. *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* states:

The Province of Syria and Judaea – "Syria, once the heart of Seleucid power, was occupied by Tigranes of Armenia in 83 BC and on his defeat was made a province by Pompey in 64/63. He restored limited autonomy to a great number of the Hellenistic cities on the coast and island (Decapolis) that had been conquered by the Hasmoneans. But they were still subject to the governor of Syria, so that the province comprised these cities, the client kingdoms of Commagene and Nabatea, the Jewish ethnarchy, the tetrarchy of the Itureans and many small territories in the north. Under the Principate Syria was until 70 AD an important military command with a consular legate and four legions, often held by outstanding men at the end of their career. All these client kingdoms were gradually annexed to the province. . . After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, it was made a separate province, under a praetorian legate who resided at Caesarea. A legion was withdrawn from Syria and stationed in Jerusalem, the legio X Fretensis. Syria-Palestine, being a rural region, was an important **recruiting ground for local and other legions** and their auxiliary units. After the time of Hadrian the Oriental element in the Roman army increased. Information about the legions' stations in Syria can be obtained from a number of historians and from the military inscriptions found in the area. In AD 23 Tacitus (Ann. IV,5) enumerates four legions: Legio III Galica, Legio VI Ferrata, Legion X Fretensis, and Legio XVII Fulminata. In AD 66, on the eve of the Jewish Revolt, seven legions were stationed there, the three additional ones being the Legio IV Scythica, Legio V Macedonica and Legio XV Apollinaria (Josephus, War II 366ff.) After the destruction of the Temple the legio X Fretensis was stationed at Jerusalem” 7 (Emphasis mine)

All these historical accounts agree that the four legions that besieged Jerusalem were legion V Macedonica, Legion X Fretensis, Legion XVII Fulminata and Legion XV Apollinaria. The legion, in particular, that went through the wall breach and set fire to the Temple was known as X Fretensis or the tenth legion. It was this particular legion that actually pulled down the entire Temple and made the Temple Mount its new base. The historical accounts above indicate that the soldiers of this legion were Syrians. These historical facts also point out that the other legions were from the Syrian province of the Roman Empire and that its recruited soldiers were Syrians ethnically. Josephus confirms this as he writes: "There was also another disturbance at Caesarea, - those Jews who were mixed with the **Syrians** that lived there rising in a tumult against them. The

Jews pretended that the city was theirs, and said that he who built it was a Jew, meaning king Herod. The **Syrians** confessed also that its builder was a Jew; but they still said, however, that the city was a Grecian city; for that he who set up statues and temples in it could not design it for Jews. On which account both parties had a contest with one another; and this contest increased so much, that it came at last to arms, and the bolder sort of them marched out to fight; for the elders of the Jews were not able to put a stop to their own people that were disposed to be tumultuous, and the Greeks thought it a shame for them to be overcome by the Jews. Now these Jews exceeded the others in riches and strength of body; but the Grecian part had the advantage of assistance from the soldiery; for the greatest part of the Roman garrison was raised out of **Syria**; and being thus related to the **Syrian part**, they were ready to assist it.' 8

Now, the fact that the Roman legions that destroyed the city and the Temple (mainly legion X Fretensis) comprised of Syrian soldiers lead us to identify the people of the Antichrist as Syrians, therefore the Antichrist must be a Syrian. There is one problem that must be addressed now which is my opinion is crucial in order to identify the Antichrist's nationality and country of origin. The Syrians of the first century were not Syrians in the modern sense as we know them. The Syrians of today are Arabs of the modern Syrian Arab Republic whereas the Syrians of the first century were not Arabs. Josephus made this distinction when he wrote:

"Yet did another plague seize upon those that were thus preserved; for there was found among the **Syrian** deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews' bellies; for the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold, as we told you before, when they came out, and for these did the seditious search them all; for there was a great quantity of gold in the city, insomuch that as much was now sold [in the Roman camp] for twelve Attic [drachms], as was sold before for twenty-five. But when this contrivance was discovered in one instance, the fame of it filled their several camps that the deserters came to them full of gold. So the multitude of the **Arabians**, with the **Syrians**, cut up those that came as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night's time about two thousand of these deserters were thus dissected." 9

This raises a question: What were the Syrians since they were not Arabs as they are today? Some historical accounts identify the Syrians of the Hellenistic and Roman periods with the Assyrians. In writing about the Assyrian Identity in Hellenistic and Roman Times, Assyrian author Simo Parpola, Helsinki says, "In the second century AD, two prominent writers from **Roman Syria**, Lucian and Tatian, ostentatiously identify themselves as **Assyrians** (Assúrios). This self-identification is commonly misinterpreted to imply nothing more than that these writers were ethnic Syrians (in the modern sense) speaking Aramaic as their mother tongue (Millar 1993, 460). It is perfectly clear from the contexts, however, that they were specifically referring to their native identity and cultural heritage, which they proudly and defiantly contrasted with the Greek culture. That heritage was Assyrian. It is worth emphasizing that while Assúrios in Roman times could refer to an inhabitant of the Roman province of Syria, it basically meant "Assyrian", nothing else. No "Syria" in the modern sense existed in antiquity. In Armenian, Parthian and Egyptian sources of the Roman period, Roman Syria is consistently and unmistakably referred to as "Assyria" (Asorik', 'swry'; 'Išr; see Frye 1992; Steiner 1993)."10

Professor Richard N. Frye of Harvard University writes: "Confusion has existed between the two similar words "Syria" and "Assyria" throughout history almost down to our own day. Several years ago, an article appeared in this Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Vol. 40 [1981]: 139-40), by John A. Tvedtnes, called "The Origin of the Name 'Syria'," in which he rejected the long-accepted statement of Herodotus (7.63) that the Greeks called **Assyrians by the name "Syrian"** without initial **a**-. Tvedtnes proposed that the two terms are completely different and that Syria is derived from Hurri, an old Egyptian word for the Hurrians, which in Coptic would have changed to *Suri. In this article, I suggest that this explanation is most unlikely and that the statement by Herodotus is preferable. It is conceivable, of course, that the Egyptians had a term for the Hurrians which they confused with later Assyria/Syria, but both the vocalization of the word "Syria" and the reconstructed Middle Egyptian word *Suri present problems, while the identification of Assyria with Syria does not." 11 (Emphasis mine)

Herodotus, a Greek historian who lived in the 5th century B.C wrote: "The **Assyrians** served with helmets about their heads made of bronze or plaited in a Barbarian style which it is not easy to describe; and they had shields and spears, and daggers like the Egyptian knives, and moreover they had wooden clubs with knobs of iron, and corslets of linen. These [Assyrians] are by the Hellenes (Greeks) **called Syrians**, but by the Barbarians they have been called **always Assyrians**" 12 (Emphasis mine)

Strabo, a Greek historian, geographer and philosopher who lived between the first century BC and the first century AD wrote: "When those who have written histories about the Syrian empire say that the Medes were overthrown by the Persians and the Syrians by the Medes, they mean by the Syrians no other people than those who built the royal palaces in Babylon and Ninus (Nineveh); and of these Syrians, Ninus was the man who founded Ninus, in Aturia (**Assyria**) and his wife, Semiramis, was the woman who succeeded her husband... Now, the city of Ninus was wiped out immediately after the overthrow of the Syrians. It was much greater than Babylon, and was situated in the plain of Aturia." 13 (Emphasis mine)

All these historical accounts point to the Syrians of Hellenistic (Greek) and Roman times as Assyrians. Since that is indeed the case, then the people of the prince that shall come, namely the Antichrist were Assyrians so the idea that the Antichrist will be a Roman or European is pure speculation based in assumption and not on Biblical and historical facts. The early Church Fathers understood this reality and wrote that the Antichrist would be a Syrian (Assyrian). Some early church writings declare: "When the close of time draws near, a great prophet shall be sent from God to turn men to the knowledge of God, and he shall receive power of doing wonderful things. . . . And when his work shall be accomplished, another king shall arise out of Syria, born from an evil spirit, the overthrower and destroyer of the human race, who shall destroy that which is left by the former evil, together with himself. . . . Now this is he who is called Antichrist; but he shall falsely call himself Christ." 14

The great prophecy scholar Clarence Larkin also understood this reality and wrote: "The "King of the North" was the King of Syria, and his character and conduct is described (Dam. 11:36-39) as similar to that of the "Little Horn" that came out of one of the "Four Horns" it is clear that the Antichrist is to come from Syria. That the "King of the North" spoken of in Dan. 11:21-31 was Antiochus Epiphanes there can be no doubt, but that he was not the "Little Horn," or the Antichrist, who is to come out of Syria in the "latter days" is clear from the remainder of the

chapter from the 35th verse, which describes the conduct of the future Antichrist. The intervening verse, the 32nd to the 35th inclusive fill in the gap between the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the appearance of the Antichrist. There is no intimation that Antiochus Epiphanes is even to be regarded as a 'type' of Antichrist. They are distinct historical personages, each dealt with in his own place, and though they resemble each other in some respects, yet they must not be confounded with each other. The term "North" and "South" are applied to Syria and Egypt because of their geographic relation to Palestine (the Pleasant of Glorious land. Dam. 8:9, 11:16, 41). In the thought of Jehovah, Jerusalem is at once the geographic and moral centre of the earth. We are to understand therefore by the 'King of the North' the King of **Syria, which also included Assyria**. This fixes the **locality from which the Antichrist shall come**, for we read in Isa. 10:12 –

"That when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem (which will not be until Christ comes back), I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria (Antichrist) and the glory of his "high looks","

And we read in Isa. 14:25 – "I will break the Assyrian (the Antichrist) in my land (Palestine), and upon my mountains 'tread him under foot;' then shall his yoke depart from off them (Israel), and his burden depart from off their shoulders."

The context shows that this prophecy is connected with the restoration of Israel to their own land and the time of the downfall of the Antichrist. To recapitulate, we see from three visions of Daniel that –

1. He learned from the "Little Horn" of the Fourth Wild Beast, that a Mysterious and Terrible Personage was to arise in the "Latter Days"
2. He learned from the "Little Horn" that came up on one of the 'Four Notable Horns' that took the place of the 'Great Horn' on the He-Goat, that that "Terrible Personage" was to come out of one of the Kingdoms into which the Grecian Empire was divided as the death of Alexander the Great.
3. He learned from the vision of the "King of the North" that that "Terrible Personage" would come out of the Syrian division of Alexander's Kingdom.'¹⁵

As we can see, early Church fathers of the third and fourth centuries understood the reality of a Syrian (Assyrian) Antichrist. Clarence Larkin who wrote in 1915, before the modern Middle Eastern nations of Syria and Iraq became independent countries also understood this reality until someone stumbled upon this European Antichrist myth and popularized it. It sounds like Satan has created a counterfeit Antichrist so the Church would be misled into believing this European Antichrist myth. Many other good prophecy authors have written on the Assyrian Antichrist. Pastor Joseph Chambers of Paul Creek ministries wrote: "There is no other geographical area on planet Earth where the Antichrist could appear but the Middle East. Those who continue to look only toward the European Common Market as the primary movement toward the Antichrist will soon be disappointed. . . To look for Satan's final activities in any other area than the Middle East is to look in vain and in error. The Scriptures has left no doubt that this beast of a man will

from Assyrian nationality. Three times Isaiah called him by this name. The Islam or Moslem religion provides an excellent covering for the rise of the Antichrist” 16

Author and Evangelist Perry stone in his book *Unleashing the Beast* wrote: "After studying this subject for 25 years, I have discovered that there are many facts in the Bible which allude to this person. I also realize that some teaching is based on tradition or private interpretation handed down from generation to generation and may have little Biblical or historical foundation.

For example, you may have attended a prophetic conference or read research material that taught the following: The Antichrist will be a Jew from the tribe of Dan; he will rebuild the Temple for the Jews on the Temple mount in Jerusalem; and he will be a man of peace and will be the head of the European Union.

These three theories are based on individual interpretations or denominational traditions, and not entirely upon the Scriptures themselves. . . .

After much study, I believe the best and most Biblical area for the Antichrist to arise is the area of ancient Assyria. This encompasses Lebanon, Syrian and Iraq or the region of the old Babylonian Empire” 17

Perry Stone goes on to identify the Assyrian Antichrist as a fanatical Muslim leader who will seek to destroy Israel. In their book entitled *What is the Antichrist-Islam Connection?* Roland Back and Michael Back write the following concerning the end of Daniel 11: "This section clearly and undeniably lists the Antichrist as the last “king of the north.” All previous “kings of the north” ruled in the **Syrian division** of the Grecian Empire. Not one came from some other area of the world. That means the Antichrist CANNOT come from Rome, America, Europe, Africa, the European Common Market, or any other place on the planet **EXCEPT the Syrian division** of the Grecian Empire. The only possible candidates are any modern countries that were within that division (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan” 18

Prophecy author Chuck Missler writes: "It is noteworthy that in both Daniel 8 and 11, prophecies highlighting the final world leader emerge from the passages involving the sequence of the leaders of the Seleucid Empire: the region now known as Syria and Iraq. The seven empires are also the focus of Revelation 17: And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. - Revelation 17:10

The "five are fallen" would seem to refer to the five kingdoms that had preceded John's day: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The "one is" would seem to be the one existing when John was writing: Rome, in its "first phase." The "other is not yet come" would seem to point to that final world empire that will be taken over by the "11th horn." The following verse also focuses on this final empire: And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. -Revelation 17:11

It would seem that this final "eighth" empire is one "that was, and is not," and yet is among the list of seven. The only empire among the seven that doesn't exist in some form today is **Assyria**. It strangely disappeared from history until the sensational discoveries of Henry Layard in 1849." 19

We could go on and mention many other prophecy writers who refer to the Antichrist as a Syrian (Assyrian) such as Finis Jennings Dake, author of the *Dake Annotated Reference Bible* who referred to the Antichrist as a Syrian and many other who have written articles online referring to the Antichrist as an Assyrian. You can read many articles by other authors referring to the Antichrist as an Assyrian by going to my web site at: <http://www.beastfromtheeast.org/>

Daniel calls the Antichrist the little horn. Horns refer to kings of nations and the little horn expression refers to the Antichrist as the leader of a small, insignificant nation that will rise among the 10 nations that will form the beast kingdom of Revelation 13. It is my belief that this small country destined to rise in the Middle East will be a new Assyrian independent state in the region of Syria and Iraq. The idea of a new Assyrian independent state is nothing new.

In 1931 and 1932, the League of Nations received at least five petitions from Assyrian groups. The first two petitions were dated October 20th and 23rd, 1931. These came from representatives of Assyrians in Iraq including Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, the Patriarch of the Church of the East. They requested that the Assyrians in Iraq be transported to land under the rule of one of the Western nations or, failing that, to Syria, which was still a French Mandate. Neither Britain nor Iraq objected to this idea, but no country volunteered to take the Assyrians. Britain argued that creation of a homeland was unnecessary because once Assyrians abandoned their quest for an autonomous homeland; they would become an integrated and "useful" part of Iraq. The third petition sought the recognition of Assyrians as a millet (nation) within Iraq and the creation of an Assyrian region within Iraq by redrawing Iraq's border with Turkey to include within Iraq the Turkish regions that Assyrian refugees in Iraq had lived in prior to their expulsion from Turkey. Failing this, the petition requested a special homeland within the existing borders of Iraq, made up of the whole of the district of Amedia plus adjacent parts of Zakho, Dohuk and Aqra, for the Assyrian refugees from Turkey then in Iraq. The fourth petition, dated September 21, 1932, was signed by 58 people claiming to represent 2,395 families. The final petition, dated September 22, 1932, is another from Mar Shimun. It alleges that the Assyrians have a right to claim their original homes or suitable substitutes from the United Kingdom, for whom the Assyrians fought in the First World War. It requests the return of the Hakkari province or resettlement along the lines sought in the third petition. The petition noted that the Assyrians had voted for Iraq in the plebiscite for the Mosul Liwa based on the League's 1925 recommendation that the Assyrians be given local autonomy. 20

I am not the only who believes that Assyria will become an independent state in Iraq to produce the Antichrist. Pastor Joseph Chambers also believes this based on prophetic revelation. In his article entitled *The Rebirth of the Assyrians*, pastor Chambers writes: "It is breathtaking to watch a culture that almost everyone perceived to be dead to suddenly experience a rebirth. There is no question but this is presently happening to the ancient Assyrians. It is happening because it had to happen by prophetic design. There are two prophetic facts that demand an Assyrian presence in this world and especially in Iraq. The Antichrist will be an Assyrian and will be known to the world by that identification. Second, the Assyrian culture will progressively rise to dominance in Northern Iraq until during the Millennium of Jesus Christ on this earth.

The Antichrist – I have documented in other articles that the antichrist will be of Assyrian nationality. Bible prophecy leaves no doubt for those who take prophecy literally. Probably the reason this idea has been rejected by almost every prophecy teacher is that most teachers wait for

the facts to begin to unfold before they dare to speak. The Word of God can be trusted when there is not one proof in sight. Prophecy is history written in advance. This fact by no means suggests or accuses the Assyrian people as a culture of being Antichrist themselves. In fact, the opposite is true.” 21

Despite all these Biblical and historical facts pointing to the Assyrians in the Roman legions as the people who destroyed the Temple, people still try to find arguments that "prove" their point. In his article which I referred in the beginning the author wrote the following: *"Daniel calls this individual by several names like the beast, representing his hostile disposition, and the horn, alluding to his authority; however, he **never labels him the "Assyrian"**. Similarly, Daniel issues numerous telling descriptions of him; like he speaks pompous words and declares himself above all that is called God, but the one who hails from Assyria, is **never referenced among Daniel's defining terms.**"* 22

In the book of Daniel, it is not Daniel who speaks anything concerning the Antichrist, but an angel. In all of the passages concerning the Antichrist such as Daniel 7, 8, 9:26-27 and 11:36-45 and continuing in chapter 12, it is an angel who is talking, not Daniel. The angel did not have to use the term "Assyrian" because the angel knew that Daniel as a Jew who was familiar with prophets before him already knew that Isaiah used the term "Assyrian" many times and used that term a few times to refer to the Antichrist. The angel did not have to use the term "Assyrian" since Daniel was already familiar with it. Besides, Daniel himself says in those references that he did not understand the revelations concerning the Antichrist. They were symbolic and the angel said that these revelations were not to be understood by Daniel, but by the generation of the time of the end when the book would be unsealed: **"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end"** (Daniel 12:8-9)

Daniel himself says that he did not understand anything concerning the visions about the Antichrist which began in chapter 7 and the angel said that the words would be sealed and would only be understood at the time of the end.

The angel also referred to the Antichrist in Daniel 11:36-45 as the last king of the north. The north in Daniel 11 is a reference to the Seleucid or Syrian division of the Grecian Empire which as pointed out by great scholar Clarence Larkin was the region of ancient Syria which included Assyria. One can only see a European Antichrist in Daniel 9:26 if he ignores Daniel 11:36-45 which refers to the Antichrist as the last ruler of the Seleucid Syrian division of the Grecian Empire which was headquartered in ancient Syria. The Seleucid dynasty included Assyria and Babylon and both are within the borders of Iraq today and that can be seen in any map of the Seleucid Empire.

Some might argue that the Seleucid Dynasty does not exist today and it has not existed since the Romans conquered the remains of the Grecian Empire. The political entity Seleucid Dynasty does not exist, but the geographic realm does (Syria & North Iraq) and that is why the angel in Daniel 11 uses geographic terms such as the king of the "north" and not political terms such as the king of the "Seleucid Dynasty" to refer to the Antichrist.

Another poor argument presented by the author I referred to above is that Daniel starts with the Babylonian Empire excluding Egypt and Assyria from his scope of prophecy. Assyria had been absorbed by the Babylonian Empire at the time of Daniel, so when Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that he is the head of gold, Assyria was included. Later Egypt was absorbed by the Grecian Empire which later on was divided into four sections. By 175 B.C., the two major divisions which had influence over the land of Israel were the Seleucid Dynasty in Syria and the Ptolemaic Dynasty in Egypt, therefore, Egypt was one of the major divisions of the Grecian Empire. Does the prophecy of Daniel 2 exclude Egypt just because the image of Daniel 2 starts with the Babylonian Empire, centuries after the Egyptian Empire had fallen? Of course not! Egypt was right there in the thighs of brass of the metallic image and so was Assyria in the head of gold.

One last thing I would like to address. I have written in other articles that the Antichrist will be a Muslim. The Assyrians of Northern Iraq are orthodox Christians, not Muslims and this creates a problem with the Assyrian Muslim Antichrist theory. I would like to suggest a possible scenario.

Daniel 11:36-39 says the Antichrist will not honor the God or gods of his fathers and that he will honor a god of forces (war?). The Antichrist only becomes the beast halfway through the seventieth week of Daniel so he can rule for forty two months or three and a half years according to Revelation 13. I say all that to say this:

It is possible the Antichrist could appear on the scene to confirm a 7 year covenant with Israel as a "Christian" politician since his fathers or ancestors have been and are orthodox Christians. Half way through his covenant with Israel, he converts to the god of forces who his fathers did not know: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers. . . But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his **fathers knew not** shall he honour" (Dan 11:37-38)

It is only after three and a half years that the prince who confirms a covenant with Israel becomes the beast, so his conversion to this god of forces might take place somewhere prior to the middle of his 7 year covenant with the nation of Israel. At this point he will give up orthodox Syriac Christianity and embrace Islam as his new religion. This will cause him to follow Islamic policy and will seek to destroy Israel along with the other ten kings of the beast who in my opinion will be ten Islamic leaders of ten Islamic nations as mentioned in my article entitled: **The 10 Kings of the Beast: They Come From the East** which you can read at:

http://www.beastfromtheeast.org/10_kings.html

God bless you!

Rodrigo Silva

Endnotes

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