

Sid: You're about to hear of a new documentary from Iran that says the Messiah is ready to appear. Unfortunately, the Iranian Messiah it describes is actually a description of the Antichrist.

Is there a supernatural dimension, a world beyond the one we know? Is there life after death? Do angels exist? Can our dreams contain messages from Heaven? Can we tap into ancient secrets of the supernatural? Are healing miracles real? Sid Roth has spent over 35 years researching the strange world of the supernatural. Join Sid for this edition of It's Supernatural.

Sid: Hello. Sid Roth here. Welcome to my world where it's naturally supernatural. I just breathing in the rarified air of Heaven. But there's a problem I want to point out to you. Many people are beginning to understand the power of God, but so few people understand prophesy. That's why I'm so excited about my guest, Joel Richardson. You see, he's been a guest before on It's Supernatural, but I just saw a video, a top quality movie produced by the nation of Iran and it got me so upset I had to have Joel Richardson as a guest to comment on that. Joel, have you seen that video? What is it called?

Joel: It's called "The Coming is Near" and as you said, it was produced by the top religious Islamic scholars in the nation of Iran. It's been endorsed by the top governmental leaders and it's been shown throughout the country. They're surprised that we got a hold of it and we've translated it, and that we understand what they are looking for.

Sid: What is, why would they do a Hollywood style movie to spread throughout everyone in Iran? What is the intent? What's the purpose of this?

Joel: The purpose is to stir up the masses. One of the primary calls that you see...

Sid: It's so emotional, that film.

Joel: It is a clarion call to embrace Islamic End Time doctrine for the masses of Muslims throughout, not just Iran, but throughout the Islamic world to turn back to their End Time prophesies. And one of the primary calls in the documentary is that millions of martyrs that would set themselves up to invade the land of Israel as martyrs for Allah, they're trying to stir up the masses to fulfill the Islamic End Time prophesies of a final invasion of the land of Israel.

Sid: You know what it reminded me of? Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler wrote a book called "Mein Kampf" and in this book he described exactly what he was going to do and he tried to do it, and he did unfortunately accomplish a great deal of this goal. Well that's what this video is. It explains exactly what Iran wants to do in the last days. And the question that I have is do you understand from the Word of God what's going on? They talk in this video about a Mahdi, which is a description of their Messiah that's coming. I believe he's the twelfth?

Joel: According to the Shia, they believe that the Mahdi, this is the Islamic Messiah figure, is the twelfth male descendent of Mohammed. Now let me just point this out, Sid. It is more than just the Shia that believe in the coming of the Mahdi. This is a universal doctrine that Sunis, the majority sect, 85% of the Muslim world, also believe in the coming of the Mahdi. And so it is

both the radicals in Iran as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, the radicals throughout the greater Arab world that are expecting the coming of this Messiah figure.

Sid: Now the interesting thing is that their Messiah figure is a perfect description of the biblical description of the Antichrist. Would you agree?

Joel: Yeah. In a nutshell, the Antichrist, according to the Bible, he revives an empire. From the Islamic side they believe the Mahdi revives an Islamic empire, that he will unify the Islamic world. The Antichrist leads this coalition in an invasion of Israel. The Mahdi also leads the Islamic world in an invasion of Israel. The Antichrist rules for seven years. Mahdi rules for seven years. Antichrist engages in a peace treaty with Israel. Mahdi also engages in a so-called peace treaty with Israel. These are what I call anti-parallels. When we look at the biblical description of the Antichrist, he is very similar to the Islamic Messiah.

Sid: Now what must happen before their Messiah or our Antichrist comes on the scene, according to the Koran?

Joel: Well similarly to the Bible, they believe that the world must be in a state of chaos, of, you know, all sorts of moral declines and so forth, and they look at the world today and they see all of these signs. But they also believe it will be much greater than even what we're seeing now. There'll be wars and out of all of these, this time of conflict and chaos, their Messiah will emerge and bring the Islamic version of peace and justice to the world.

Sid: But don't they need to have Jerusalem in their possession for him to come?

Joel: This is what's so amazing. They believe, and again, the Antichrist, according to II Thessalonians, "Will set himself up in the Temple of God as if he is God." This is what the Bible says of the Antichrist. They believe that the Mahdi will lead the Islamic nations in an invasion of Israel and take what they call Baitul Maqdis, the Holy House, this is Jerusalem, and they will plant the flags of Islam on the Temple Mount where the Mahdi will rule the world from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Sid: But I have to tell you what upset me the most was it did remind me of Adolf Hitler. He had such a charisma. And when their leader was talking to the masses, Joel, it reminded me of a meeting that Adolf Hitler would have had.

Joel: Imagine if in the United States our President was also your pastor. And imagine if all the senators, they were our religious leaders and they produced a movie telling the Christians of the nation that the End Times are here and that they themselves are the leaders and the primary players in this final End Time battle, and calling on Christians of the earth to prepare to give up their lives in a physical battle. That's exactly what's taking place in the nation of Iran today.

Sid: How many martyrs do you believe they're trying to prepare?

Joel: Well the video specifically calls for millions, millions of martyrs. There are obviously 70 million in Iran right now, 70 million citizens. A large percentage of them are very non-religious,

but they are appealing to that percentage of the population that is religious, calling on them to give up their lives in the process of killing. This is important. To give up their lives to kill others.

Sid: Can you image a million people wanting to give up their lives to kill others? When we come back, I want you to see that the popular theology of perhaps the Left Behind series and that type of mentality is not even relevant to the End Times. It's a totally different paradigm. Don't go away. Be right back.

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We now return to It's Supernatural.

Sid: Hello. Sid Roth here with Joel Richardson. And Joel, you were one of the first that I heard teach, although I understand it's not a new teaching, that everything will be centered in the Middle East in the last days and it will be involving the Islamic faith as opposed to the European Union, etc. Explain.

Joel: Obviously as Westerners and as Americans we've had the tendency and we've committed the error of looking to the Bible believing that it's very Western-centric. The fact of the matter is the Bible is Jerusalem, Israel and Middle Eastern-centric. This is really obvious to anybody that just looks at the context of the book. But also what's happened is through a misinterpretation of just a couple key passages. Many of those that have been studying biblical prophecy, they've looked at Daniel 9:26, "The people of the prince to come," Daniel 2, the metallic statue, through a clear misinterpretation of the historical grammatical context of those two passages. The church, many of the leaders have taught that the Antichrist, his empire and his religion would come out of Europe. When we look at those passages afresh and we compare them to the wealth, to the abundance other passages throughout the scriptures, it is clear that the Antichrist, his religion and his empire come from the Middle East and not Europe. And that biblical prophecy is primarily dealing with the Middle East and the empire that will arise in the Middle East. And today we're seeing the beginning of that exact prophecy coming to pass.

Sid: But one of the good things for the world is many of these Islamic nations, they don't want to unify, well they may want to, but when it comes down to it, it is very difficult for them unify. And we know about this from Scripture. Will they unify? Tell me what you see from Scripture?

Joel: They will unify, but the Bible also says this empire will be divided. That from its very inception it will be a kingdom that will be divided. After Mohammed died, the founder of Islam, there was a dispute that broke out between what are called the Sunis and the Shia. And so the Islamic empire, so to speak, from its very beginning has been divided...

Sid: Fractured.

Joel: ...right up until the last moment. When they're in the land of Israel, the armies of the Antichrist, the Bible in Zachariah as well as Ezekiel say that they will turn their swords on each other and the hand of each man will be against his brother and they'll be killing each other. That sectarian violence that we've seen in Iraq, for instance, the past several years, will continue up until the very end. They will put aside their differences for the sake of invading Israel and killing infidels, but that sort of sectarian enmity will last right up until the very end.

Sid: Now you put Turkey in a very unique position. Explain.

Joel: Imagine, Sid, if you are a Suni Arab Muslim. You're there in the Middle East. You desire to see the re-establishment of the Caliphate. The Caliphate is the Islamic government, the Islamic empire. It existed for 1400 years. Eighty years ago, 1923, it was abolished. So now, you know, just say 10 years ago, you're this Suni Muslim, you look out, you say, who are the ones who can lead this? The old order of the Middle East you had the Arab block. That was Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan. You looked at them, you said, these are all Western puppet regimes, corrupt monarchies and dictators. No hope there. You look across the Persian Gulf you see the Iranians. You go they're courageous, they thumb their nose at the West. That's good, but they're Shia. In other words, they're kind of heretical. There was no hope. Now since 2003, there is a new strong force emerging in the Middle East, and that is Turkey, and the affections, the attentions of the Suni world, the majority sect of Islam, are turning to Turkey and they believe that Turkey is the nation that can revive the Islamic empire. And it just so happens that Turkey has been taken over by an Islamist government and they desire to do just that, to revive the Ottoman Empire of old and to rule the Middle East.

Sid: So it's almost like history is going to repeat itself.

Joel: Exactly. And people keep asking me, they say, what's next in the Middle East? What does all this mean, this turmoil, this turnover? When we look at the chapters, Daniel, Chapters 8 and 11, we look at these, they tell the story of Alexander the Great burst forth out of Macedonia, out of Europe swept across the Middle East, very quickly conquered, had this vast empire and then he suddenly died. Well then that was, the kingdom was divided up between his generals. They began to fight it out until it really came down to two primary quadrants of his empire. You had the Northern Alliance, this is the King of the North, and then you had the Southern Alliance. The Northern Alliance was essentially today a Turkish, Syrian, Iraqi, Iranian alliance. This was called the Seleucid Empire or the Seleucid Dynasty. Historically, under Antiochus Epiphanes they clashed with Ptolemy, which was an Egyptian Northern African Alliance. So you had the King of the North, the King of the South. The Bible tells us that that historical pattern will be repeated. So what we need to understand...

Sid: Well see, and a lot of people think it's finished. A lot of these Old Testament things are finished. But where does it tell us it will be repeated?

Joel: Well if you go to Daniel 11, it shifts from telling the historical story of what took place, again, with Alexander and his generals, Antiochus Epiphanes, and then in Daniel 11:36, it shifts and it starts speaking of the Antichrist. It says, "The king will do as he pleases." And these are clear references. Scholars are in near universal agreement. This is speaking of the Antichrist because it speaks of things that Antiochus never did. And so it shifts from the historical to the future. And it says, "In the days these things will take place." So it's that historical pattern repeated. What will take place in the next few years, we'll see the emergence, the continued consolidation of the Northern Alliance of the Turkish, Iranian, Syrian alliance, as well as probably Afghanistan and Pakistan, and then the Southern Alliance: Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Turkey and Egypt, they both desire to be the rulers of the Middle East. There will be a military conflict between these two alliances with the Northern Alliance coming out victorious. This is

what happened historically. It will happen again. On the way back from defeating the King of the South, Antiochus invaded the land of Israel.

Sid: Okay. What I want to find out is, you see, you cannot understand the Antichrist unless you understand Islam. For instance, you'll be shocked when you find out what the Mark of the Beast is. We'll be right back after this word.

We'll be right back to It's Supernatural.

We now return to It's Supernatural.

Sid: Hello. Sid Roth here with Joel Richardson. If you do not understand Islam, you will not understand the Antichrist. You will not understand End Times because when you understand Islam and you understand the scriptures, it is the clearest picture. And I can't wait to find out from Joel Richardson because of his knowledge of the scriptures and because of his knowledge of Islam, what the Mark of the Beast really is. What is it, Joel?

Joel: Well what we need to understand first, Sid, is there's been a lot of popular discussion in the church, past a hundred years, what is the Mark of the Beast. And we've heard people talk about things like a tattoo or a microchip. And it's almost as if, you know, someone could just pin you down and give you this microchip, and if you get it, you're going to Hell, because the Bible says, "Whoever receives the Mark of the Beast will be cast into the lake of fire." But what we need to understand is that the Mark of the Beast in the Book of Revelation is intended to be the opposite of the mark of God, which is spoke of in the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel. And so the mark of God is that sign which marks the true believers. The Mark of the Beast is a creedal, it is a doctrinal, it is a statement of faith. It will entail a statement of faith. It will deny the Father, deny the Son. Now when we look at Islam we see that under Islamic theology, under a Caliphate, an Islamic government, there's something called the Bay'ah. The Bay'ah is the pledge of allegiance or submission. Every Muslim is obligated, he is commanded. If there is a Caliph in place that's in Islamic government, they need to make the pledge to the Caliph, and if they don't do that, according to Islamic theology they are to be beheaded. Now Shariah Law...

Sid: A Christian or a Jew would never make an oath like that if they're a real Christian, if they're a real Jew.

Joel: Right. In other words, according to the Bible, people are cast into the lake of fire based on their acceptance or rejection of the Messiah, of Yeshua, of Jesus. And so the Mark of the Beast is not just, you know, some microchip or something like this. It entails a denial or a rejection of Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible. And so under Islamic law, obviously you have Shariah. And so you know, under Shariah Law if you reject the authority of the Caliphate you wouldn't be able to buy or sell. When you look at Islam, it has all of the traits of the biblical system of the Antichrist. Now beyond this, you and I, we've talked about the anti-parallels between biblical and Islamic eschatology. With regard to the Mark of the Beast, what Islam teaches is that at the end of the age they have this character. They call him [Arabic]. That is the Beast from the Earth.

Sid: Revelations talk about him, too.

Joel: The Beast from the Earth in Revelation is the Antichrist and his empire. Now it's symbolic. It's not a real beast. It's an empire. In Islamic theology, it is a real beast that comes up out of the earth. And according to their traditions it says that, "He will have with him the staff of Moses, that he will mark the faces of all true Muslim believers and their faces will glow," and that will be an identifier that they are true believers. So according to Islamic theology, Muslims would desire to receive the Mark of the Beast from the earth. Again, that which the Bible says is bad and demonic, Islamic tradition has twisted and said, no, this is good. This is something to be yearned for.

Sid: At the same time, there is such a move of God among Muslims turning to Jesus. For instance, Joel, what's going on in Iran?

Joel: Iran right now over the past 10 years has seen the most significant revival in the Islamic world in history. You have roughly 70 million citizens in Iran and reports coming out, and they're varied, anywhere from one to as many as several million Iranians have converted to Christianity. They have become followers of Jesus because they've become so disenchanted with the radical regime, the radical Ayatollahs that have been reigning over them and crushing the life right out of them, that they have turned the scriptures.

Sid: Why do you believe that this is happening right now? Why are there so many Muslims turning to Jesus?

Joel: Sid, biblically throughout history, whenever the Lord uses a people to chastise or judge the earth, or His people, Israel, that's exactly what He's going to do with the Islamic. He is using his Islamic world as his rod of chastisement against an unrepentant world. But whenever the Lord uses a rod of chastisement, when He's done, He breaks that rod over His knee. And He will judge the Islamic world after He has used them. But before He judges a people, He calls out a remnant. Sid, right now the Lord is calling a remnant of sincere, passionate believers out of the Islamic world. He's calling them to Himself and He's making them willing martyrs for Jesus.

Sid: And they're going to be real believers. I mean, do the stuff the Bible says, for instance, I found out there's an entire city in the Middle East of Muslims that have turned to Jesus. Tell me about them, Joel.

Joel: Yeah. There's so many fantastic stories coming out from out of the missionary community. There's one story, it's a village and there was a missionary that was going to show the Jesus film in the village. When they showed the Jesus film, when they got to the point where he was being crucified, the village began to weep and wail, and then they said, "This man had been in our village for the past couple of weeks preaching to us." They said, "That's the guy that was here." It was Jesus that had appeared to them, preaching to them. They saw the Jesus film. The whole village converted.

Sid: Did you hear that? The whole village became believers in Jesus. We really are in the end of the End Days. As a matter of fact, Jesus told us to look for certain signs, and Joel they're happening. What's going on in the realm of, say, earthquakes and tornadoes?

Joel: Jesus told us to watch all of these natural events as if they were birth pains. Birth pains increase in frequency and intensity. So I mean, we were just having record tornadoes here in the United States. We've had earthquakes destroying Japan, you know, all across the world. Some statistics. Let me just throw these out because these are what we are to watch for. In 2000 to 2008, there were 127 major earthquakes, 7.0 or higher. That's one major earthquake every 28 days. Then in 2009, there were 17 major earthquakes, 7.0 or higher. That's one every 26 days. A small increase. In 2010, there were 20. That's one every 18 days. And then thus far, at the time of this recording, 2011, we've had what would amount to one every 13 days. That's a double in the amount of massive earthquakes since the beginning of this millennium. They're increasing. The Lord commanded us to watch these events as signs of His soon coming.

Sid: Do you believe that the things we're talking about on this show, the emergence of Turkey, the emergence of the Mark of the Beast, the emergence of the Antichrist, the invasion of Jerusalem is going to happen in our lifetime?

Joel: Absolutely, absolutely. These things are happening. They're happening quick. Believers are to watch for them. Much of the church today, Sid, has turned off the subject of the End Times. They've said this is irrelevant. Now is the time that the church needs to wake up, needs to start paying attention to things. The prophetic church, as you said at the beginning of the show, needs to understand the foundation, capital "P" prophecy throughout the scriptures as they try to and desire to speak with relevance and prophecy into the world. They need to understand the foundation. These things need to go hand in hand. It's time for the church to return to biblical prophecy.

Sid: You do not know. You know we're coming to the wrap-up. But you don't know when your end is going to come. You don't know when you'll breathe your last breath. If there's ever been a time to get right with God, if there's ever been a time to know God, if there's ever been a time to have your sins cleaned and be able to be a new creation by Jesus being your Lord and living inside of you, it's now. Now.