

## An Interview with the Author...

**Q: What is your first novel, *River of Eden*, about?**

**A:** *River of Eden* is an edgy, fast-paced political/supernatural thriller. Set in 2024, it opens with shocking news that Kuwait has unleashed a horrendous biological attack upon neighboring Iraq, leaving millions dead in its wake. But what appears on the surface to be a brutal, much-belated act of revenge for the 1991 invasion might actually be the culmination of a media conspiracy thousands of years in the making. In the aftermath of this cataclysmic event, multi-national conglomerates, governments and major religious groups find themselves at odds with each other as the global struggle escalates into a showdown between the demon emperor of a resurrected, technologically-superior 'New Babylon' and the reluctant, but determined minister who heads up the world's most influential Christian movement.

**Q: Sounds interesting. What inspired you to write this novel?**

**A:** About fifteen years ago, I became very interested in eschatology, which is a big word that simply means the study of 'end time' beliefs, from both religious and secular viewpoints. As you might imagine, this pursuit raised a bunch of fundamental questions in my own mind. For example, does the Bible *really* classify seemingly tragic or heinous crimes against humanity as necessary and natural occurrences within a much grander, divine plan that operates on a scale that is unfathomable to us mere mortals? Or is Paul telling us something entirely different in *Romans 8:28*? Although I admittedly don't have the answers to those weighty issues, the novel provided a canvas for me to explore and expand upon the many theological and philosophical musings I had been thinking about for years. The search for answers led me to a greater understanding and closer personal relationship with Christ; which is a reward of incalculable value...and another story in itself. But I'd like to think that what I learned along the way has contributed to a compelling and believable narrative for the book. In a very real sense, I view my creative writing as a natural outlet for ministry.

**Q: Ministry? If that's the case, is your writing intended to appeal to a Christian or a non-Christian audience?**

**A:** Both...let me explain. There are two distinct filters that I run my words through. First, the people, places and events of any well-written story must be credible, engaging and believable enough to entertain and delight just about any reader of its particular genre, no matter what their religious or political beliefs may be. To accomplish this, it's essential to present all supporting statements and rationales in an objective, matter-of-fact style. For example, the numerous biblical prophecies and corresponding conspiracy theories contained in *River of Eden* are carefully balanced to appeal to agnostics, atheists and believers alike...without being patently offensive, superficial or 'preachy' to any particular group.

The second, but most important filter is to remain faithful to a core message of spiritual truth and triumph. Even when the storyline itself gets a bit rough, desperate or even provocative, the underlying current must remain positive, consistent and steadfast to the end of the novel. I haven't done my job properly unless I've left a believer with a little deeper level of understanding and edification from my words than the casual reader might walk away with. Oh, and let's not forget that those *casual* readers certainly need something substantial to ponder as they are entertained; they may simply be believers in waiting!

**Q: *What do you hope folks will gain from reading your book?***

**A:** Apart from the sheer fun and entertainment value offered by *River of Eden*, I hope that readers will also stop and think about how even the small choices they make in their daily lives have a measurable impact on the lives of those around them and may well determine their final destination. The inescapable truth is that we are all part of a larger family, one church, with Jesus Christ at the helm.

**Q: *How were you personally impacted by working on the book?***

**A:** As I said before, my creative writing provides me with an unbiased outlet to explore some fundamental faith questions that have always confounded me, such as why do bad things happen to so many seemingly good and innocent people, or why is it so difficult for people to recognize Jesus as the obvious creator and finisher of our faith? To be honest, my search for straightforward answers only creates even deeper, more complex questions... especially given the many theological, political and cultural views that compete for our attention today. But on the plus side, these reflections also produce a lot of great ideas to use in my writing!

**Q: *How much time did you spend to research and check your facts?***

**A:** The short answer is: as much time as it took to insure that the work was as accurate, credible and thought-provoking as possible. I did my homework. But it was certainly time well spent; the long, tedious months spent in the library, online or on the phone yielded a solid, well-documented manuscript. The work draws upon numerous scriptural, historical and political references from Jewish, Christian, Islamic and secular texts to create a mosaic of thought-provoking scenarios that should challenge readers to grow in their understanding and faith. As a spirit-filled Christian, I make every effort to temper my creative writing with truthful confessions that evoke positive responses from believers and non-believers alike. Even the most skeptical reader should be able to learn something new, or at least become perplexed enough to go check out a fact or two for themselves. And to be honest, reader engagement at that level is probably the highest praise I can think of.

**Q: *You said earlier that your novel was conceived about a decade ago. Did historical events force you to go back and revise any part of it?***

**A:** That would definitely be an understatement. Even though the story takes place in the near future, its roots are firmly planted in today's geo-political arena. Much of the action takes place in the Middle East, which is a pretty volatile place to begin with. To be honest, regime changes, shifting policies and other instabilities in that part of the world—most notably the fall of Saddam Hussein's government—forced me to rewrite or simply trash nearly *half* of the original manuscript.

**Q: *Who are your favorite authors?***

**A:** Some Christian authors in my genre that I greatly admire include Frank Peretti, Ted Dekker and Joel C. Rosenberg. Other sci-fi and fantasy favorites are Frank Herbert, Terry Brooks, J. R. R. Tolkien and Stephen King.

**Q: What makes *River of Eden* unique, in your opinion?**

**A:** People ask me that question frequently. *River of Eden* postulates just how far the media can go to control our thoughts and belief systems before the public realizes that they are being manipulated. While that alone may not be a new concept, the novel explores what might happen if *demonic* forces were the ones setting those wheels in motion, using tools as diverse as the internet, mass media and even sacred texts such as the Bible, Talmud and Qur'an to slowly accomplish their nefarious goals over a span of millennia. In the process, major religious groups, multi-national conglomerates and government agencies that once maintained a ragged balance of power are suddenly at odds with each other. But before those entities can act—or even comprehend the scope of their newly-stirred suspicions and hatred—they find themselves sitting on the sidelines of a 'forever war' raging between beings of unimaginable power...*or is there something entirely different going on, something that they can face and overcome?*

With that, I hope you pick up the book and find out for yourself!

*June 5, 2010*

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