

SHAPE OF THE FUTURE



By John Lyall

Shape of the Future

By John Lyall

*Courtesy of
endtimeupgrade.org
Edited by theaudiokey.com
(Password: thekeys)
August 2020*

INDEX OF SHAPE OF THE FUTURE

Chapter	Page
1. ANCIENT PROPHET GLIMPSES MODERN WORLD	6
1.1. Ezekiel 38	7
1.2. Ezekiel 39	61
2.1. DUAL NATURE OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM	91
2.2. Economic Superpower	99
2.3. The Two Superpowers	105
2.4. The Beast from the Earth	110
2.5. The Eighth Head	132
2.6. Geography in Daniel 2	140
2.7. Iron in the Antichrist World	144
2.8. Clay Power	152
2.9. Rise of Clay Power	159
2.10. Clay and the False Prophet	170
2.11. Two Beasts in One	187
2.12 Divided Kingdom	196
2.13 Cultures of Darkness	197
2.14. Technology and the False Prophet	203
2.15. Political and Economic Level	210
2.16. Religious Level	220
2.17. Summary of the Dual Nature	224
3. THE MYSTERY OF THE IMAGE	232
4. THE MYSTERY OF THE ABOMINATION	275
5. THE COMING OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO DANIEL	320

1. ANCIENT PROPHET GLIMPSES MODERN WORLD!

BY JOHN LYALL endtimeupgrade.org

Written on 20 August, 2011

Although it was written some 2,500 years ago, the message in **Ezekiel** 38-39 has proven to be an astonishingly accurate glimpse into our present world situation. In addition to that, the prophecy catapults us into the near future. We can imagine that it was no small task, in the culture of ancient times, to describe modern events, places, or technology using only the names and limited terminology available back then. But because this was such a crucial message for future generations, God did not let that be any kind of obstacle. In this startling prophecy about the future, some place names and terms sound as though they should belong in the past. In these cases, it behooves us to allow some leeway, remembering how difficult it would have been to describe modern realities using the limited vocabulary of ancient times. As we keep this in mind, the prophecy will unfold itself in a straightforward manner; it will be easy to catch the thrust of what the Lord was saying and get the most out of this intriguing message from so long ago. It is truly faith-building to behold the grand foresight of God who knew way back then how history was going to unfold 2,500 years later. It comforts us too, for we can have faith that world events, however chaotic and unsettling they may be now, are still under His control. [All Scriptures from the New King James Version of the Bible.]

1.1. EZEKIEL 38

Verse 1 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezekiel wasn't writing his own words; it was the "*word of the LORD*".

Verse 2 Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

This verse contains some mysterious, but crucial, details that will require some explanation. First of all, we should ask, who does this name "Gog" refer to? To get a full understanding, let us try to answer this question from three different angles – the linguistic, the historical, and the geographical.

From the linguistic angle:

Back in Ezekiel's time, the name of "*Magog*" (a son of Japheth and grandson of Noah) was understood as a sort of collective name for the tribes in southern Russia who dwelt mostly north of the Caucasus Mountain range. The Greek poet Hesiod, who lived around 700 B.C. (close to Ezekiel's time) referred to Magog in this way. It seemed to be a common term, generally used by civilized regions in the ancient world, to designate this northern area wherein dwelt these wild, unknown, barbaric tribes. Thus, "Gog", since it derives from the word Magog, would point towards being the name of a person from this area north of the Mideastern world.

In addition, in the Hebrew language "Gog" carried the meaning of "high" or "supreme", so it was also a title, similar to how the titles Pharaoh or Caesar referred to the kings of Egypt and Rome. In this case, however, the title was not one of respect, but more one of

contempt. In the Jewish culture the name “Gog” was applied to their worst enemies. For example, “Agag”, a title used for the Amalekite kings who had fought against the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land, was referred to as Gog. In the Book of Esther “*Haman the Agagite*”, an Amalekite official in the Persian court, almost succeeded in persuading the emperor to exterminate the entire Jewish population. Other opponents were “Og” king of Bashan, who also fought Israel during their Exodus to the Promised Land. These various avowed enemies of the Jews were sometimes referred to by the cognomen, or nickname, of “Gog”. In fact, some versions of the Old Testament, such as the Septuagint, actually have translated these names in this way. Although this was not, strictly speaking, the correct translation, it does show what the term “Gog” meant to the Jewish people. And since it was a commonly used catch-phrase for the Jews’ enemies, “Gog” proved to be a useful handle, or label, that the Lord could use in Ezekiel’s prophecy about this last and final enemy of the Jews in the Endtime – and not just of the Jews, but of Christians and God-fearing people around the world.

From the historical angle:

Just before Ezekiel’s time, there actually was a northern king from Russia with a name similar to Gog. This was Gaagi, head of the northern tribe of Sakas, or Scythians from Magog, who used to roam in the regions around the Black and Caspian Seas in southern Russia. In the declining years of the Assyrian empire’s glory, the Scythians, led by Gaagi, were swarming across the Caucasus into the northern districts of the empire. Eventually, in the opinion of some historians, the sons of Gaagi confederated with the Babylonians to raze Ninevah to the ground. These unsophisticated barbarian hordes were known for their rugged brutality and were greatly feared amongst the Mideast nations in those days. They had even begun a siege of one of the cities in north Israel until the Egyptians intervened.

“From time to time they [Scythians, or the people from Magog] made irruptions into the south of Asia; and in a great expedition undertaken by the whole nation against the remains of the Cimmerians, they even conquered the Medes about seventy years before Cyrus, kept the whole of Asia Minor [Turkey] in subjection to them for eight and twenty years, and extended their excursions to the borders of Egypt, whose king Psammetichus was obliged to buy them off.” (From *Ancient History*, by Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren – 1833, pg 258)

Since these incursions from the north were happening in or just before the days of Ezekiel, they were fresh in the minds of the people of that time. In fact, Ezekiel was about 10 years old when Ninevah was sacked by the sons of Gaagi and the Babylonians in 606/7 B.C., and it wasn't until 596 B.C. that the Scythians, or Magogians, were finally driven out of the Mideast. These northern tribes – Meshech, Tubal, Rosh – who for centuries had remained in distant lands far north, were at this time in history having some contact with the civilizations of the Mideast. Thus, in the prophecy the Lord could use this contemporary history as a sort of springboard to catapult Ezekiel far away from local, current events and off into the distant future into a time when a king from the same northern territories would once again invade the Mideast. Or like a telescope pointing in the right direction, the prophecy was able to adjust the focus away from the present (of Ezekiel's time) and get a view of events to come in the far distant future.

Not long after Ezekiel's time, another Scythian tribe achieved some prominence. The Massagetae, who lived east of the Caspian Sea, defeated the powerful armies of the Medo-Persian empire and even killed emperor Cyrus the Great in 530 B.C. Their name may have originated from Magog, and they are thought to be the origin of the Alans and Hun tribes, who are usually identified with the Scythians. The name of the country of Mongolia is thought to have derived from Magog, and the Great Wall of China was known by the Arabs as the wall of Magog in ancient times. The Mongolians under Genghis Khan

and his heirs were ruthless conquerors and held sway over China, Central Asia, Russia, and India at various times between 1200 and 1700 A.D. These examples, by way of association at least, show how fearsome these northern, warlike tribes, known generally as the people of Magog, could be, and they make a fitting preview to the equally fearsome armies of the Antichrist who will sweep down from the north in the days of the End. *“Who is able to make war with him?”* (Rev 13:3)

From the geographic angle:

Gog was an ancient name for the people and the land north of the Caucasus Mountains. Up till the 2nd century B.C., “Gogarene” was the name the Greeks used to refer to a kingdom in this area (in present-day Armenia and Georgia). In fact, it is thought by many scholars that the name Caucasus came from the word “Gog-chasan” (meaning “fortress of Gog”), which changed over time to “Gogasus”, and finally to “Caucasus”. Many of the mountains peaks in the Caucasian mountains and land areas there retained the place name “Gog” in medieval European and Armenian maps.

As for “*Magog*”, there are various places in Russia that bore names derived from their ancient forbear. Lake Maeotis, now the Sea of Azov, a section of the Black Sea; a people living on the River Tanais (present-day River Don) called “Magini” or “Magotis”. The highest mountain (probably Mt. Elbrus) in the Caucasus range used to be known as Mugogh. Mugodzhar: a name in modern times of a group of mountains at the southern extent of the Ural Mountain range.

After looking at the question of who this mysterious “Gog” figure might be from these different angles, the answer about his identity seems to come into focus quite easily: “Gog” was a title or label for a fearsome king of some future time (the Antichrist) who, from his stronghold in Russia, would invade the Mideast, persecute, even

slaughter many of the Jewish people in Israel, and, as we know from other Scriptures, persecute Christians and God-fearing people from all over the world.

Continuing with this 2nd verse, “*Gog, of the land of Magog*” is said to be the “*prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal*”. So who are these peoples spoken of here?

In the very beginning Magog, Meshech, and Tubal were sons of Japheth who migrated north into the area that is now occupied by modern Russia. “*Meshech*” became the name for the Meshcherian/Moschi tribe, from whom the city of Moscow got its name and became the main city of European Russia; Tubal’s name was given to the city of Tobolsk and the Tobol River in Siberia. Tobolsk at one time was the major city of Siberia. So there we have two of the principal cities in Russia, representing her two main west and east sections, whose names derive from these two names “*Meshech and Tubal*” mentioned in Ezekiel’s prophecy. That, of course, should indicate clearly enough that this “*Gog*” figure will base out of the land of Russia.

The descendants of Tubal also settled in Georgia, just south of Russia, and gave their name to its capital city Tbilisi. Magog’s descendants lived in the same general areas as those of Meshech and Tubal, that is, north of the Caucasus and eastwards through central Asia.

Now what about “*Rosh*”? In Hebrew this word also means “chief”, which is why some translations say “*chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*” instead of “*prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal*”. It would be a tedious exercise to explain here the technical reasons, but the original grammatical sense of the ancient Hebrew favors the translation “*Rosh*”. “*Rosh*”, the Hebrew word for Russia, was the name of a Scythian tribe that used to roam around in the steppes area

between the Black and Caspian Seas and as far north as Moscow. Surely, it is not just coincidence then for this name to appear in this passage about the northern kingdoms since it pinpoints so well the actual name of the future modern nation in which the descendants of Meshech and Tubal used to headquarter themselves.

Incidentally, the word “*Rosh*” appears not only in some recent Bible translations, but interestingly enough, in a very ancient Greek translation, the Septuagint, made in the 200’s B.C. This suggests that the ancient translators thought “*Rosh*” was the better translation, either because they were aware of the existence of a people by that name; or because of their familiarity with ancient Hebrew, they felt that was the better word to use.

There is an interesting tale about this somewhat obscure tribe, the Rosh, that took place in the 9th century A.D., related by Jon Ruthven in his excellent study on Ezekiel 38-39 called *The Prophecy that is Shaping History*, pg 91-92:

Apparently a delegation from the unknown north appeared at the Byzantine royal court [center of the east Roman empire] on what proved to be a reconnaissance or spying mission.

The Byzantine bureaucrats may well have been anxious—an anxiety that grew as they examined the visitors. Stang summarizes the encounter.

“Being confronted with the appearance of some unknown far-northerners in 839 CE, the Byzantines first carefully interviewed them, noting their name or names; of these there were probably several, and perhaps several variants of the same names too—as these newcomers hailed from a multi-ethnic town in a nondefined region.

“Yet one name caught the Greek fancy. It was recorded with the precision accorded by the Greek alphabet and language.... through the

pen of a Greek scribe, as [Rosh]. It was with trepidation that the name was recorded, being a close call, too close for comfort, to the biblical... name of [Rosh].

“Launched by the Byzantines, the ‘Second Rome’ in European and Mediterranean history, this ‘Third Rome’ known to all as ‘Russia’ received its name some day or days in 839 CE.” (from Stang, Naming of Russia, pgs. 298-299)

After the initial peaceful visit of the Rus’ to Constantinople in 839 CE, the Byzantines had been fearful of an invasion by the “Prince of Rōs” because they fully believed that the Rus’ might soon fulfill Ezekiel’s prophecy...

... the Byzantines consistently identified the specific name, [Rosh], with savage northern invaders who over the centuries threatened the great world center of Constantinople.

This story has significance because it shows that this Bible passage about the “Rosh” had always been understood as referring to a certain northern group of people by that name. They were an obscure tribe up until the time of their encounter with the Byzantines. At this time in the 800’s A.D., they were finally establishing themselves as a kingdom, the “land of the Rus”, centered around the city of Kiev.

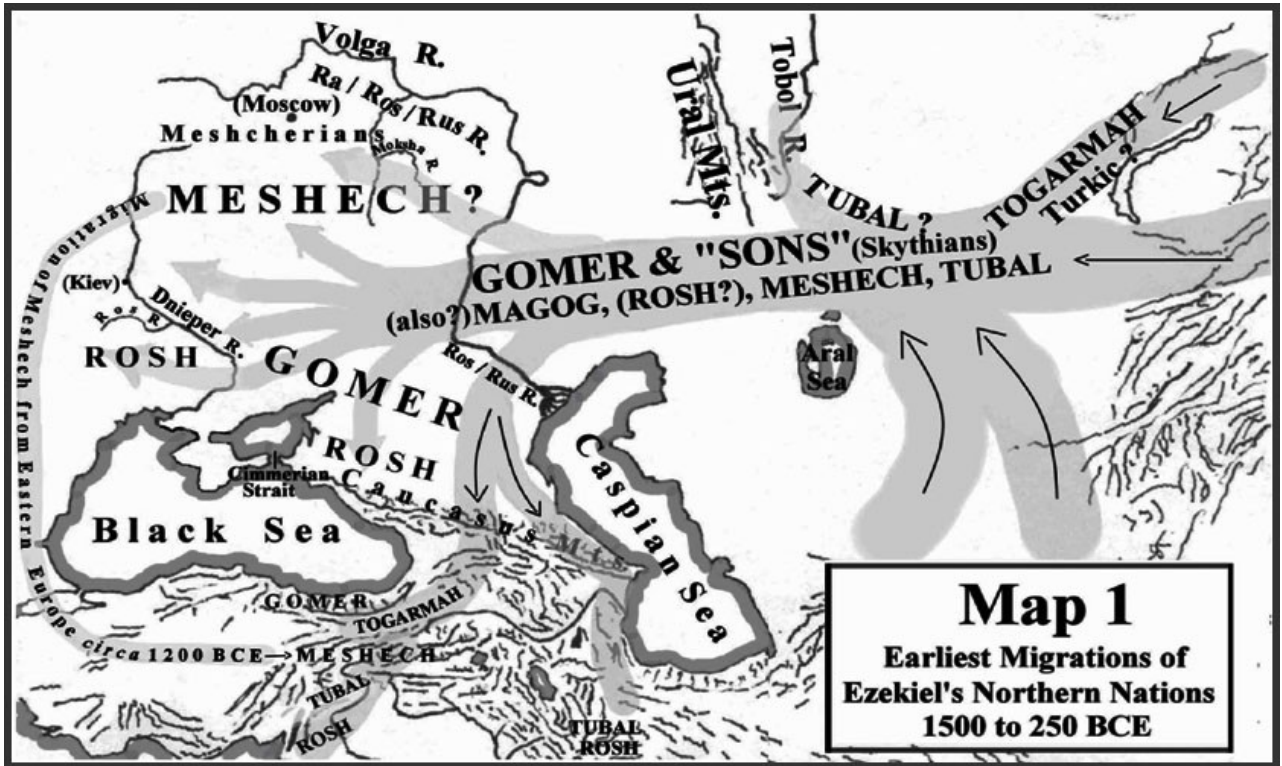
To the ancient Mideast people these tribes of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal were the most northern groups of people they knew of. Some direct acquaintance with them did occur when branches of these wandering tribes moved south into the northern Tigris-Euphrates region. This is why Bible maps often show Meshech and Tubal located much further south from their primary locations in the north. In the sparsely populated world of those days, nomadic living was more common; people could shift around en masse more easily, and these northern, largely cattle-raising tribes had become accustomed to this kind of migratory mode of life.

... At the time of Ezekiel, at least a small percentage of each of his “northern nations” was located in eastern Anatolia (roughly, modern eastern Turkey). Within a few centuries, they seem to have migrated (or, more likely, returned) northward from their locations they occupied during Ezekiel’s ministry. (from *The Prophecy that is Shaping History* by Jon Ruthven, pg. 55)

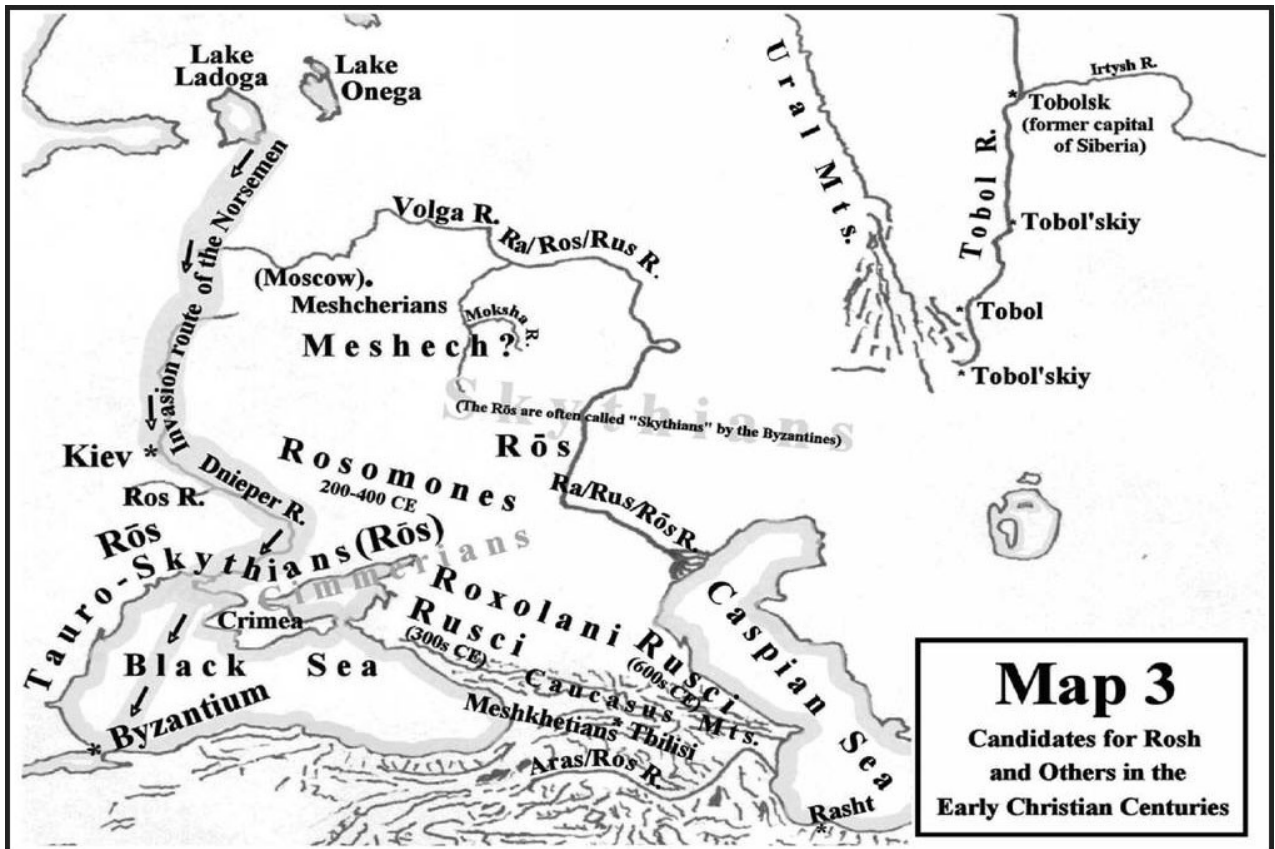
In each case, it seems that some southern branches of Ezekiel’s northern nations seem to have migrated northward from eastern Anatolia (Turkey) where they are usually located in Bible dictionaries and atlases. For these works, this southern location may be only partially accurate within the biblical time frame, but they fail to indicate either that the main body of these nations dwelt north of the Black Sea at the time the prophecy was written, or, as importantly, scholarship has failed to show the locations of these nations over history leading to the time of the fulfillment for Ezekiel’s Gog prophecy. (From *The Prophecy that is Shaping History* by Jon Ruthven, pg. 79)

(For further explanation about the movement of tribes after the Flood, see the section “Early Migration before the Rise of Civilization” in Chapter 2 of the post called “Has the Earth Already had an Endtime?”)

[The following maps are from Jon Mark Ruthven’s remarkable, new research on Ezekiel 38-39, *The Prophecy that is Shaping History – New Research on Ezekiel’s Vision of the End*, published 2003.]



The Skythians (name derived from Ashkenaz, the son of Gomer) were also known as the tribes of Magog and seemed to be quite a mixture of the various descendants of Japheth who migrated northward in the years after the Flood. Because of their nomadic lifestyle, there is evidence of their migration along a belt of grassland that extended from areas north of the Black and Caspian Seas eastward into Siberia and also of their incursions into the Mideast.



This map shows various place names and tribal names north of the Mideast that were known by early historians – evidence that the tribes of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal inhabited these areas that are now part of Russia.

To conclude, it seems obvious enough that this ancient prophecy is referring directly to the land of Russia. Further ahead, Ezekiel was told that this northern power will invade the Mid East during the “*latter days*”, the End Time. We might wonder then how could Russia become powerful enough to carry out such a grand campaign of warfare now that she has become so weakened since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s? Perhaps this situation could be compared to what happened in the last century when Germany lay in shambles after World War I, demoralized and humiliated; such conditions made it easy for a demagogue (Hitler) to rally the people and restore Germany to its former greatness. So it would not be surprising to see history repeat

itself in this way in the land of Russia. Russians haven't forgotten the old glory days of the Soviet Union, and the Antichrist could easily capitalize on that as he re-builds the nation into a great superpower.

Verse 3 And say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.

"I am against you." Perhaps because it was given to a Jewish prophet, this prophetic message starts off with the "good news" first about Gog's defeat. As the prophecy goes on, however, the "bad news" comes to light: the Israeli nation will have brought all this trouble on themselves because of their own misdeeds and unfaithfulness to God. The following portion of the prophetic message, which comes near the end, is actually the first step in the progression of events and, strictly speaking, should have come here at the beginning. But God has to give His messages through human channels, and in this case, probably His Jewish prophet Ezekiel would have found it too difficult to receive right off the bat a message about Israel's part in the process of bringing about her own downfall and destruction:

"The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them..." "I will... have mercy on the whole house of Israel... after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid." (39:23-26)

In the light of current events, it is not difficult to understand why God will eventually have to withdraw His protection from the Israeli people who are now dwelling *"safely in their own land"*. Their mistreatment of the conquered communities within their borders and

provocations against their neighbors outside in the greater Mideast region are two of the bigger reasons why Israel's enemies will be allowed to invade and conquer for a time. (More on this subject coming.)

Verse 4 I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.

Gog the Antichrist is compared to some kind of wild, out-of-control beast. But he is not beyond God's control and cannot cause any more harm than what God allows him to.

Regarding the description of the "*great company*", if this is supposed to be referring to modern warfare, then it sounds rather antiquated. Nowadays, armies don't ride on "*horses*", nor do they use "*swords*" and "*shields*". Perhaps we could compare this to the passage in verses 2 and 3 about Magog, Meshech, and Tubal. There are no groups of people nowadays who have these names. However, we understand that these were ancient terms for peoples who once inhabited the territory of the upcoming superpower now known as Russia, whose inhabitants were descended from these ancient peoples. So it's not too difficult to accept that these terms were the only way that Ezekiel in ancient times could refer to this modern nation.

Likewise, these words "*horses and horsemen, bucklers, shields, swords*" are the ancient terms being used to describe this modern army and its weaponry. The phrase "*splendidly clothed*" does suggest that the army was suited up in a very different and superior fashion. An armored tank, for example, is "*clothed*" in a very different and, in the eyes of someone from ancient times, very splendid fashion compared to its ancient counterparts: a siege tower, or a war horse and its armor. Machine guns, bazookas, cannons, and all the assortment of modern

weapons are a great improvement on their ancient counterparts, the “swords” of yesteryear.

It is worth noting too that in modern armies the old terms are still in use: tank divisions are still called the cavalry; engines are still rated according to their horsepower; helmets are still helmets. Of course, there are many other terms we use nowadays – like machine gun, bazooka, grenade, etc. But the Lord had to confine Himself in this case to wordings that were grounded in the reality that existed in ancient times. Otherwise, the message would have appeared too bizarre, puzzling, and incomprehensible to Ezekiel and the many succeeding generations who would read this prophetic message in later centuries. Basically then, the understanding is that the old terms are representative of modern weapons, just as the ancient names of tribes were representative of modern nations. The main idea the Lord was trying to get across was that Gog would have a great army – “*a great company*” – and that it would be well equipped in some superior way (“*splendidly clothed*”).

There is another theory about this: apparently, there is a new type of weapon known as “EMP” (electromagnetic pulse) in the experimental stage that may come into use in the future. This weapon can disable other weapons that depend on electricity or electronics by shooting out some kind of high-intensity electronic beam. If such a scenario were ever to occur, much modern weaponry would be disabled, and maybe soldiers would have to revert to using swords and shields. This is possible; however, there are still plenty of modern weapons that operate mechanically, i.e. a machine gun, and they would still be preferable to using a sword. Anyway, it’s a possibility, and who knows what the future may hold?

Verse 5-6 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops – many people are with you.

Here Magog's allies are listed, those who will join forces with Russia in this invasion. The order of this list follows a circular pattern around Israel, starting with Persia (now Iran) in the east, then going south to Ethiopia, west to Libya, and north to Gomer and Togarmah. So it looks like poor Israel is going to be totally surrounded by enemies.

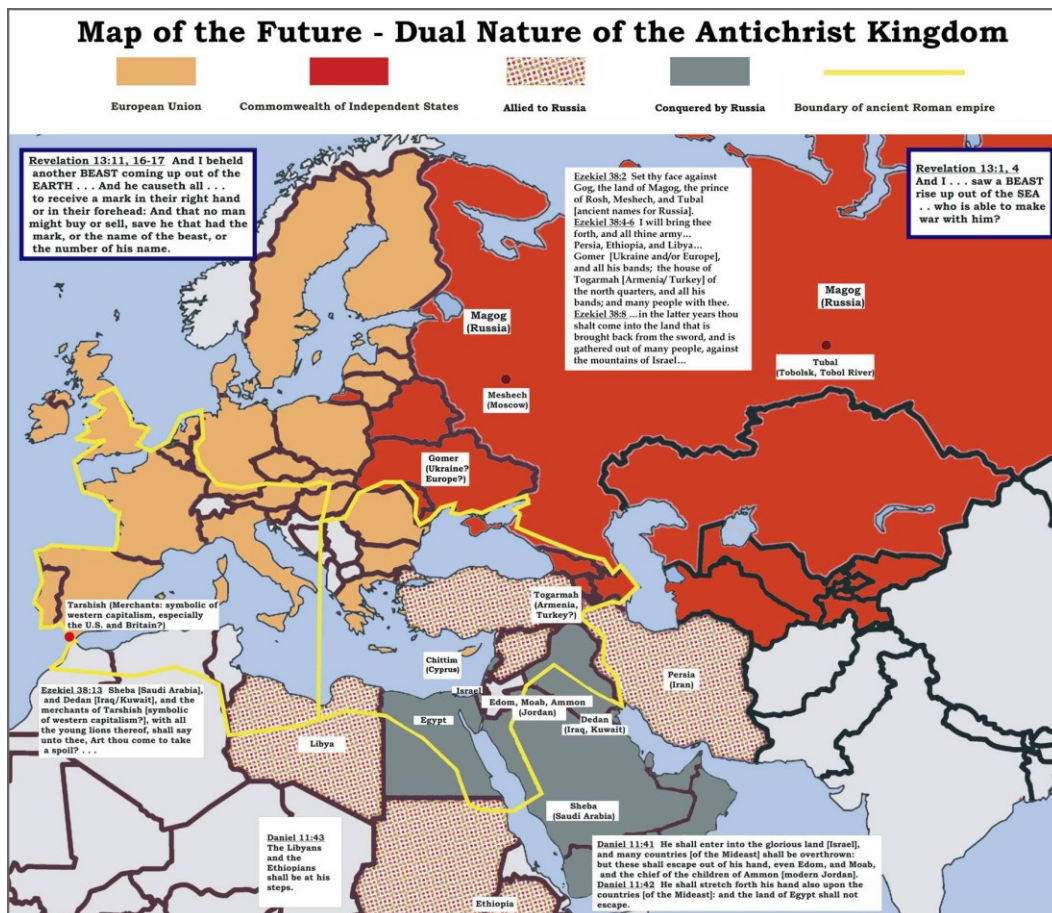
But why such a gathering of nations against one small country, one may wonder? The answer, of course, is that Israel will – in fact already is – tied into an alliance with the U.S. So these nations will have to confront not only Israel, but also the great military might of the American superpower.

Regarding Libya and Ethiopia, these nations were also mentioned in Daniel 11:43. (Daniel 11 is the companion chapter to Ezekiel 38-39; it describes, from a different angle, the invasion of Israel and the Mideast in the Endtime.) "*Ethiopia*" in ancient times was the land south of Egypt. Today that territory is the nation of North Sudan. So these three nations – Iran ("*Persia*"), Libya, and North Sudan ("*Ethiopia*") – who, politically, have been staunch opponents of Israel will join Gog in the invasion.

In current news Qadhafi's Libya has suffered defeat at the hands of the U.S., Britain, and France. Truth be told, leaders of these countries were not all that concerned about Qadhafi's autocratic regime trampling on the rights of Libyans; what really mattered to them was the fact that they could not control Qadhafi and could not get Libya's oil served to them on a silver platter. Qadhafi laid down his own terms and prices, which greatly annoyed these western powers. As a result, when the "Arab Spring" swept through

Libya, they hypocritically hijacked the movement, using it as their excuse to further their own agenda.

As a result Libya may now join the anti-Russian camp for a time. But as the prophecy here indicates, we shouldn't be surprised to see the politics in this region change rapidly, as often happens in this world. To be sure, there will be much burning resentment as a result of this war, not just in Libya but in much of the Mideast, Africa, and even Russia and Germany, nations who are missing out on the new oil bonanzas because of their refusal to participate in the war. Inevitably, this will cause a backlash. If Russia decides to actually do something to re-balance the Mideast equation, it would lead to the scaling back of the power of America and Israel in the Mideast. And this is really what the prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39 is telling us will happen... eventually.



“Gomer and all its troops.” Scholars generally agree that *“Gomer”*, the son of Japheth the son of Noah, settled in what is now Ukraine, just north of the Black Sea. (The Crimea area in Ukraine derived its name from the word Gomer.) Gomer’s descendants (especially Ashkenaz his son) migrated to Scandinavia and Germany, and from there into different parts of Europe. (The name Ashkenaz is the origin for words like Scandinavia or Saxon.) Some ancient Scandinavian tribes like the Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and the land of Gaul (now France) and Galicia in northwest Spain and eastern Germany are all thought to have derived their names from their even more ancient patriarch Gomer.) Anyway, all that to say, it could mean that some European nations, or the European Union, will also join in this war effort. (And certainly Ukraine, since she is a member of the Russia-dominated Commonwealth of Independent states, will contribute her naval and other resources to the conflict.)

A question that may come to mind: Isn’t Gomer also the origin for the name “Germany”? The names do look similar, but some new information about the pre-Roman history of Europe can shed some rather interesting light on this question about the origin of the name Germany:

[Although many of the early Gomerite tribes did settle in what is now Germany, the name itself was actually derived from certain] Semitic peoples [who] also migrated to central Europe (southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland) [at a later date]. These people were the descendants of Asshur, son of Shem, where Germans originated. Asshur is well known as the father of the Assyrians...

The Assyrians occupied a Mesopotamian city on the lower Tigris River called “Kir” and placed captive slaves there (also referred to in 2 Kings 16:9, Is 22:5-6, Amos 1:5, 9:7). The city was populated by the Assyrians for many years, and the inhabitants became known as “Kir-man”. The Assyrians

(Kerman) were driven from their land shortly after their fall about 610 B.C. [when the Babylonians invaded]. They migrated into central Europe where they were called “German” or “Germanni”, a general name used by the Romans to represent all Assyrian tribes...

– from “Table of Nations” by Tim Osterholm

Perhaps because of having come from a more advanced civilization, these newcomers rose to prominence, and this might have been the cause for their name “Kerman” becoming the name for Germans and Germany. Interestingly, Germans also refer to themselves as the “Deutschen”, which is derived from the Saxon word for an “Assyrian”; and their nation is called “Deutschland”.

“The house of Togarmah from the far north.” In their ancient records, the Armenian people revere Togarmah, the son of Gomer, as their ancient ancestor. Strictly speaking, *“Togarmah”* would cover present-day Armenia and eastern Turkey only. But Togarmah is regarded also as the forefather of all the Turkic peoples. (That would include the independent nations of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan.) In relation to Israel, and to the other nations mentioned (Persia, Libya, Ethiopia which lie to the east and south), Turkey and Armenia are located in the *“far north”*. So it may be that the powerful nation of Turkey is the modern *“Togarmah”* that the prophecy is referring to. Strangely enough over the last few years, Turkey’s political orientation has shifted dramatically towards Russia. (Except in the very recent Syrian conflict, Turkey has more or less sided against Russia, so it remains to be seen whether this is only a temporary shift in her foreign policy orientation, or a permanent one.)

At any rate tiny Armenia, the original *“Togarmah”*, since she is tied to the Russian federation through her membership in the Commonwealth of

Independent States and is a staunch ally of Russia already (as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization with Russia and other C.I.S. states), she will almost certainly be part of the invasion force.

As for Turkey, despite her membership in NATO, there is reason to believe these days that she will team up with the Antichrist from Russia, a nation which, historically (since the days of the Ottoman empire), has been a longtime enemy of Turkey. In very recent times Turkey's political orientation has shifted dramatically towards Russia and her neighbors like Syria and Iran. There are several causes behind this:

1) The EU has been reluctant to admit Turkey into its membership, probably out of fear that Muslim extremists might find it too easy to enter Europe from Islamic Turkey. This is forcing Turkey to look elsewhere for trade deals and alliances.

2) In the meantime, Turkey's trade ties with Russia have mushroomed in recent years. Russia's economy, built on the Soviet model of heavy industry, could not supply the consumer goods that her population demanded after the fall of communism. Rather than trading too much with her rival China or importing expensive goods from the U.S., Russia has turned to nearby Turkey who has been more than willing to fill the void for consumer goods in that country; that also has lessened Turkey's interest in the EU as a trading partner.

3) Because of the collapse of communism, Russia no longer poses a threat to the West, and Turkey's membership in NATO is becoming outdated and unnecessary. (NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a military alliance established during the Cold War with the aim of protecting the West against Russian communism.)

4) For decades Turkey's government had a pro-secular orientation, but a new government, elected only in recent times, has shifted to a more pro-Islamic orientation.

5) Over the last few years Israel's foreign policy has greatly offended Turkey: In 2007 Israel conducted air attacks on suspected Syrian nuclear plants; these strikes were flown from Turkish territory, but Israel never bothered to inform the Turks. The next provocation came on December, 2008: Israeli troops marched into the Gaza Strip just as Turkey was trying to mediate indirect peace talks between Israel and Syria; a few days prior to the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert reportedly told Erdogan, the Turkish Prime Minister, that no offensive was planned; infuriated by this breach of trust, Erdogan later denounced the Gaza war as "barbaric" and stormed out of a meeting at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Finally, on 31 May, 2010, Israeli commandos boarded ships of a Turkish-sponsored flotilla trying to cross Israel's blockade and bring much-needed supplies to the war-ravaged Palestinians in the Gaza strip. The commandos killed 10 people, 9 of them Turkish.

Was this the last straw for Turkey? Maybe, and it won't be at all surprising to see a major about-face in Turkey's Mideast alliances. How startling to witness these events that are confirming the truth of Ezekiel's prediction from ancient times. A short time ago there seemed little possibility that Turkey would join in an alliance with Russia and these other nations mentioned in verses 5-6. But now we can more easily predict that is the direction towards which Turkey may be heading.

Some timely news articles on the subject of Turkey and her shifting orientation in world affairs:

[Israel condemned at Turkey summit](#)

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2010/06/201068165042815907.html>

June 8, 2010

Nearly two dozen nations have condemned Israel's deadly raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla at the conclusion of a regional summit in Istanbul.

Abdullah Gul, the Turkish president, released a statement agreed to by 21 of the 22 participants in the conference.

Israel was the 22nd participant, and it refused to sign the document.

Gul said the near-unanimous condemnation showed Israel was isolated and that it "will suffer the consequences for its mistake against Turkey."

Anita McNaught, Al Jazeera's correspondent in Istanbul, said the Turkish government is looking for partners in the region to take action against Israel.

"What this regional security summit is about is Turkey figuring out what partners it has if it moves to try and isolate Israel, politically, economically, militarily, however it can," she said.

Turkey is calling for a jihad against Israel

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jun/08/turkey-jihad-israel-flotilla/print>

June 10, 2010

Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, called the Israeli raid on the Mava Marmaris "murder conducted by a state".

Support for Turkey is at an all-time high in the Arab world. The last time Turkish flags were carried through the streets of Middle Eastern capitals was during the first world war, as people took to the streets in continued support for the Ottoman sultan-caliph against the western entente powers. The sultan-caliph had proclaimed a jihad. Thanks to Turkish government support of a blockade-running mission led by a group of Hamas sympathisers, they

are flying once again. No ruling Arab leader is as popular as the Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose discourse amounts to calls for a jihad against Israel.

One further consideration about this prophecy: it states *“the house of Togarmah ... and all its troops”*. It is possible the prophecy has a wider scope, referring to all the Turkic peoples who stem from the *“house of Togarmah”*. In which case this would mean that the independent Turkic nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan in central Asia might become part of this invasion force. This is not as unlikely as it might sound: four of these nations belong to the Commonwealth of Independent States and are still somewhat dependent on Russia, and three of them are members of a military alliance with Russia known as the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Also, they are all Muslim and may feel obliged to contribute *“troops”* towards the invasion of Israel, a nation whose policies have done much to irritate the Muslim world in these modern times. At any rate Turkey (and Armenia) would still remain as the main focus of the prophecy because, in relation to Israel, it lies in the *“far north”* – along with Gomer (Ukraine); the other nations of Turkic-origin peoples lie to the east. But it may be that, because of Turkey’s influence, these other nations will be encouraged to join in the war effort. The phrase *“many peoples with you”* appears a couple times (in verses 6 and 9), which suggests the invasion force could include other nations besides those mentioned in the prophecy.

So that is quite an assortment of nations that will form this alliance against Israel, and against America. Remarkably, at no time in history have the conditions been anywhere near ready for the fulfillment of this prophecy until very recently. There is no time in the past when Russia ever invaded and conquered Israel, much less with this strange assortment of countries.

But now the political conditions have so transformed to the point where Israel is now surrounded by these nations, most of whom we know are antagonistic towards her and have developed more ties with Russia than with the West. Russia also is a rising superpower now and looks as though she may eventually have the weapons and resources needed to launch such an invasion.

Verse 7 Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.

Strangely, just as happened in verse 4 (*"I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out."*), it sounds as if the Lord is telling Gog what to do. That is because the Antichrist, in the initial stages of his rule, will actually be fulfilling God's will and, without realizing it, working for Him. At this point Gog the Antichrist is acting as a *"guard"* to these nations, protecting them, it would seem, from the belligerent actions of certain other powers. In particular, as we can witness nowadays, Israeli and American forces are waging a rather aggressive campaign in the Mideast to subdue the nations (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria) that are aligned against Israel. Originally, these campaigns were waged under the banner of protecting the world against "terrorism". This excuse has worn pretty thin now, and one wonders, what is the real reason for these war campaigns? Is it really to protect the world against terrorism, or does it have more to do with gaining control in this oil-rich region of the world? Or perhaps it has something to do with protecting Israel's security against her hostile neighbors? Although there is some truth to the need for that, the situation has gone a little off-kilter. As American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are finding out, their military actions are tending to backfire and do more to alienate these peoples than to win their favor, to increase the threat of terrorism than to contain it.

A specific example of Gog's role as a "guard" came up in November-December, 2007. At that time America was threatening to invade Iran, and it looked as if another American/Israeli-inspired war would break out in the Mideast. But then, at a crucial moment the Russian leader Putin paid a timely visit to Iran. It was a diplomatic way of warning that Russia would not be happy if Iran, a nation right on Russia's doorstep, were invaded. Russia would not stand by as she had done in Iraq and Afghanistan but would be willing to protect her. This action forced the U.S. into a standoff for the time being while Russia played the very role described here in verse 7 of being a "guard unto them". It was a sort of glimpse into the future, a mini-version of what Russia is going to do in the Mideast more and more as time goes on.

(This does not mean to suggest that Putin is the Antichrist, by the way. To some extent he is playing the same role, in this case at least, but in other ways he is very different. He does not seem to fit the role of the eloquent, anti-religious world leader that is portrayed in the Scriptures.)

It may seem unusual that God would use a nation like Russia as a sort of check against those who claim themselves to be God-fearing nations. But this is not without precedent. In the Old Testament there are examples of this very thing: whenever ancient Israel fell away from the worship of God and forgot His precepts, or became a poor example to surrounding nations and carried out all sorts of oppression against the poor of her own land, almost always the Lord allowed Israel's enemies to rise up against her. In Isaiah 7:20 the Lord referred to the Assyrians as "a hired razor" that He would use to chastise His wayward people of that time. In similar fashion, about 100 years later, the Lord withdrew His protection from Judah and allowed the Babylonians to invade. "*Because you have not heard My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this*

land.” (Jeremiah 25:8-9) In that passage the Lord even referred to Nebuchadnezzar as His “*servant*”. In the same way this “*Gog*” figure is also God’s “*servant*”, at least in the initial stage of his rule when God will use him to chastise the Israeli regime for their failure to give heed to God’s ways, manifested especially in their oppression of the Palestinian people.

The following news article will shed some light on what is going on within the borders of Israel and Palestine nowadays:

The silent destruction of Palestine

By Rev. Sandra Olewine, *CounterPunch*

So much of the destruction against Palestinians which happens here is silent destruction. News cameras seldom catch the stories of land confiscation, crop destruction, or barrier construction that happens day in and day out across the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Such stories don’t seem to make “exciting” or compelling video segments.

Yet, on and on it goes. More olive trees uprooted, more farmland confiscated, more areas declared “fit for only settler or Israeli military use.” The prison called Palestine gets smaller and smaller each day. The pressure builds and builds.

And with the new system being put in place by the Israeli government, the prison is about to get even smaller. Palestinians will soon need permits to travel between Palestinian areas. If someone from Bethlehem wants to travel to Ramallah, already a journey that takes a couple of hours on a good day, they will have to apply to the Israeli Civil Authority for a permit. The permits will be valid from 6 am to 6 pm only. No traveling at night, no emergency trips, no evening meetings, no weddings or funerals to go to. And in many instances the road will be blocked—one will not be able to take

a private car—but will have to walk through barriers on the road, getting into taxi after taxi trying to get to one's destination. As one of my colleagues said, "This will end our life completely. No one will tolerate this."

There will be no direct delivery of goods either—whether food, medicine, building material—all of it will have to be moved "back-to-back," meaning a truck has to back up to the roadblock and unload to the back of a truck on the other side. This is already the case in most Palestinian areas, increasing the cost of items due to the increased cost of delivery.

Electric gates are being constructed across Palestinian roads. Barbed-wire fences are being put up around Palestinian cities, along with patrol roads for the Israeli military. While the answer to a query about these fences will be that they are in response to suicide attacks inside Israel, they have slowly been constructed throughout the last 20 months. They didn't just appear overnight.

During the Israeli invasion into Bethlehem in early March, a trench was already being dug across the northern edge of Bethlehem from the road into Bethlehem across to the settler bypass road. During the 40-day siege of the city in April and May, work went on 24 hours a day. On one of the instances when I snuck back home during the siege, the family I live with asked me exactly where the trench was being dug. I knew instantly why they were worried. Many of the olive trees between Bethlehem and Tantur Ecumenical Institute are theirs. "They're gone. I'm sorry. The trench and road has cut you off from the trees," was all I could say.

This silent destruction is the creeping hand of occupation. It is what has everyone here held in a death grip. Without removing its stranglehold from the lives of Palestinians, Palestinians and Israelis here will tragically and brutally continue to die.

(Rev. Sandra Olewine is with the United Methodist Liaison in Jerusalem.)

The above news article is referring to events that happened back in 2002. Since then, the situation has only gotten worse. The “silent destruction” of the last several years has erupted recently into some shocking displays of oppression: the massacre of 1,300 Palestinians in Operation Cast Lead in December, 2008, and the killing in May, 2010, of 10 humanitarian aid workers who were trying to cross Israel’s blockade and bring much-needed supplies to the war-ravaged Palestinians in the Gaza strip. The following statement, made all the way back in 1985, could be applied to these recent events:

The whole world has been horrified at some of the things Israel has been doing lately to little defenceless countries like Lebanon and other countries around her, and a poor little handful of Palestinians from whom they stole not only their homes, but their whole country away from them and are still going on arrogantly... the Jews came in and ran the poor Arabs largely out of their land. So the Lord says, “The heathen are going to know that I’m just when I come down & afflict you, Gog, on My people Israel. They’re going to know that was the right thing to do.” [Ezekiel 39:7,21-24] They are going to know Israel deserves it when she gets it! ... (from David Berg lecture, Feb–1985, www.davidberg.org)

The above statement came after the 1982 Lebanon War during which, as a result of the policies of Ariel Sharon the Israeli Defence Minister at the time, a brutal massacre of occupants in two Palestinian refugee camps was carried out. How much more does that statement ring true nowadays when the world has again been horrified to witness such cold-blooded atrocities, even worse than the Sabra and Shatila massacres of 1982.

Cast Lead was an unrestrained assault on a besieged, totally unprotected civilian population which showed almost no signs of resistance during this operation. It should have raised an immediate furor in Israel. It was a Sabra and Chatila, this time carried out by us. But there was a storm of protest in this country following Sabra and Chatila, whereas after Cast Lead mere citations were dished out.

It should have been enough just to look at the horrendous disparity in casualties—100 Palestinians killed for every Israeli—to shake the whole of Israeli society. (from [“Disgrace in the Hague”](#) by Gideon Levy, *Haaretz*)

Back then Israeli citizens were disgusted by these massacres and came out to protest en masse about it. But today? The voices of protest are feeble and unnoticed; Israeli society seems to be hardening itself to the voice of conscience and growing ever more insular and incapable of living peaceably with her neighbors.

One may wonder, what is it that makes Israelis, supposedly a God-fearing people, feel justified in committing such crimes? There are perhaps two main assumptions on which Israelis base their thinking and policies along these lines: first of all, they will always say it is in retaliation for militant attacks that the Palestinians make against them. Idealistically, yes, the non-violent, passive-resistance approach would be the better reaction from the Palestinians. But what the Israeli and international media ignore and fail to mention is the long history of “silent destruction” (as outlined in the above article) that has already transpired. Inevitably, the accumulation of a long string of provocative acts like this will result in the militants finally taking some kind of action, such as suicide bombings or other types of raids. Then whenever the Israelis are met with any of this kind of violent resistance, they latch on to and publicize it, point the finger at the Palestinians, and use it as their excuse to mete out ten times worse punishment on them.

A second justification used by Israelis is their belief that it is God's plan or God's will for them to expand the borders of their nation. The basis for this belief may be found in Ezekiel 47:15-20. Here, certain borders are outlined that would appear to include parts of Syria, Lebanon, the east bank of the Jordan (not to mention the West Bank), and the Mediterranean coast (including the Gaza Strip). To understand these few verses well, it will help to see them in context as an excerpt from a longer passage, chapters 40-48 in the Book of Ezekiel. This passage comes directly after the ones we are now studying about the destruction of Israel at the hands of the Antichrist in the Endtime.

Chronologically, this passage would appear to dwell on the era known as the Millennium that follows the return of Christ, not this present era prior to His return. For example, in chapter 47, just prior to this mention of the new borders of Israel, there is also mention of a river leaving the newly-built temple in Jerusalem. Along its banks grow trees whose *"leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."* (verse 12) Clearly, the setting is not our present day but some future time – namely, the era following the Lord's return when He will re-establish such Eden-like conditions in the earth.

Another clue along this line appears immediately after the passage about Israel's new borders: *"It shall be that you will divide it (the land) by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the tribes of Israel. And it shall be that in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance, says the Lord God."* (verses 22-23)

Judging by their mistreatment of the Palestinians, there seems not to be the slightest hint that the present day Israelis are obeying this admonishment to show consideration to the “*strangers who dwell among you*”. It seems like that won’t happen until the heavy hand of Antichrist persecution has humbled and brought the Israeli nation back into God’s favor. Only then will she learn to adopt her proper role as a wise and benevolent ruler over the territory that apparently God intends to give to her in the future.

Regarding this issue of just and fair dealings with her neighbors, even back in 1929 Israeli policies were heading for trouble. As eminent Jewish physicist and Zionist, Albert Einstein, noted when he caught an ominous glimpse of what could happen in the future,

“Should we be unable to find a way to honest cooperation and honest pacts with the Arabs, then we have learned absolutely nothing during our two thousand years of suffering and deserve all that will come to us.”

The stumblingblock for Israelis, at least in this present era, was that they could not bring themselves to move beyond the moral code of the Old Testament – “*an eye for an eye*”. They have not adopted the moral code introduced by the greatest Israeli of all, Jesus Christ, who taught the principle of loving one’s neighbor as oneself. The Israelis will eventually adopt this code of conduct – in the future after the Battle of Armageddon – at which time they will re-claim their nation from the Antichrist’s occupation. (Well, we’re getting a little ahead of the story here, but more will be explained further ahead on these matters.)

There are other references in the Old Testament to some enlarged borders of Israel – promises given to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua – but these were fulfilled during the reigns of King David and King Solomon around 1000 B.C. During that era, Israel was a powerful nation and held

sway over the territory stretching from the Euphrates River to the “*river of Egypt*” (the river Sihor on the border between Sinai and Israel). “*And he (King Solomon) reigned over all the kings from the river (Euphrates) even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.*” (2 Chronicles 9:26)

To conclude, the idea that Israel is destined to occupy this enlarged territory in our modern times is based on a misinterpretation of certain Biblical passages, a misapplication of them to the wrong historical epoch. But for modern day Israelis, these passages have been a handy justification for much land-grabbing and oppression against their Palestinian neighbors. It certainly would not be the first time in history that God’s so-called “will” has been invoked as justification for all sorts of murderous schemes and oppression. A nation, for a time, may use its own version of “God’s will” as justification for its schemes, but in the end God Himself will have the final say, weigh up the balances, and mete out His judgments accordingly.

It is a sad testimony against the Christian world nowadays to observe how the majority of it, who ought to be standing up against the injustices going on in the Mideast, are instead cheering things on, convinced that all is covered under the umbrella of “God’s will”. They are convinced that Israel has special rights as “God’s chosen people” and is allowed to do whatever it wants. Well, in the days of the Old Testament they were God’s chosen people. Even then however, God didn’t let them get away for too long with disobedience to his rules of conduct. Anyway, we are not living in those days anymore. All nations and peoples are now equal in God’s sight, and no one particular group can claim special priority or think it can be an exception to the New Testament principles of love and fairness.

Verse 8 After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had

long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.

“After many days ... in the_latter years” – In case there’s any doubt, phrases like these make it clear that the fulfillment of these words is a long way off and pinpoint it to the Endtime stage of history.

“You will be visited” – Presumably, this means just what it says: the Lord is going to “visit” this person Gog, the Antichrist. To get an idea of what that means, we can look at what happened in ancient times when the children of Israel were serving as slaves in bondage under the Egyptian Pharaoh, a sort of Antichrist-type figure in those days. Near the end of the children of Israel’s 400-year sojourn, the Lord paid a “visit” to Pharaoh, in the form of His prophets Moses and Aaron. Through them he was given choices to yield to or go against God’s will. It seems most of the time Pharaoh went against what the two prophets were saying. Nevertheless, without realizing it, Pharaoh was actually a tool in God’s hands by which God was able to glorify His Name in the earth. The end result was all the spectacular miracles that God performed to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt: the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and many others. These great exploits became part of the glorious heritage of the Jewish nation and lived on as an inspiration and example to generations of God’s people ever since.

The modern “Pharaoh”, the Antichrist Gog, also *“will be visited”*. He will be a tool in God’s hands – in this case, an instrument of judgment to repel the aggressive and unjust actions in the Mideast of Israel and the U.S. These are the nations whom the world looks to as the representatives of the God of the Bible. But, because of their poor example to the world nowadays, God will have no other recourse but to withdraw from them His protection, just as He had to do sometimes with ancient Israel.

As for the Antichrist, it seems that after his initial victories, his successes will go to his head, and he will try to take on the role of a divine being. (See Daniel 8:25, 11:36-37.) Along with this, he will go far overboard with his wars, destruction, persecution, and slaughter. The Lord will then step in and manifest His great power, bringing the Antichrist to heel in a very supernatural way, as we shall see further ahead in Ezekiel's prophecy.

"The land of those brought back from the sword..." – It is almost eerie how specific the prophecy becomes at this point. How true that the Jews have in very recent times suffered their greatest persecution since the Roman invasion – during the Holocaust – and are truly a people *"brought back from the sword"* to the *"mountains of Israel"*. Furthermore, they were gathered from *"many people"* and *"out of the nations"*. Israel had been re-gathered before, but only from one nation, Babylon. Only in recent history has this great re-gathering taken place from many nations.

"And now all of them dwell safely" – Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the nation has gone somewhat overboard in protecting herself from her neighbors. At any rate Israel, with so much American support, is dwelling safely enough, considering how much she is surrounded by enemies. Had she pursued a more just and fair policy with her neighbors and with the Palestinians within her borders, her security situation could have been even better than it is today.

"The mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate" – During the centuries since the Romans dismantled the Jewish nation, Palestine *"had long been desolate"*. When Jews finally started returning to Israel after the 1917 Balfour Declaration and after World War II, their diligent efforts cultivated what had long been an arid landscape into fruitful, fertile, irrigated farmlands. This even seems to be a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 35:1. *"The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."*

So this verse 8 is quite remarkable, pinpointing so accurately the present day situation in the land of Israel.

Verse 9 You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.

Truly a massive invasion. Daniel 11, companion chapter to Ezekiel 38-39, also refers to this invasion, and in similar terms: *“The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind.”* (verse 40)

Verse 10 Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day it shall also come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan:

Up to this point Gog, the future Antichrist, was actually fulfilling God’s plan to check American-Israeli forces in the Mideast and protect his allies there. But then he begins to veer away from his original lofty purpose and do what no doubt was already in the back of his mind for a long time. He *“will make an evil plan”*, which is explained in the upcoming verses 11-13 as an attempt to plunder the wealth of Israel and neighboring countries. Likely, this coincides with the breaking of the *“holy covenant”* (mentioned in the Book of Daniel). This *“covenant”*, as far as we can tell, is an agreement authored or agreed to by the Antichrist to permit the Jews to build their long-awaited temple. Likely, it will also make provision for religious freedom for Muslims, Jews, and Christians to worship in Jerusalem, a city that is sacred to these three religions. However, at some point after its inception, Daniel 11 tells us, *“his heart shall be against the holy covenant”*, and he will *“have indignation against the holy covenant... and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.”* (verses 28, 30) This traitorous decision to breach the peace agreement called the *“holy covenant”* results in a time of terrible wars and persecution known in the Bible as the *“great tribulation”*. (Mat 24:21)

All this time the Antichrist and his supporters may think that they have operated on their own or are about to outsmart God, to succeed in ignoring what He has to say through his prophets in those future days. But according to this verse of Scripture, God has known all along what the Antichrist would think, and in the following verses, what he would do. This could serve as an ominous warning to those who would align themselves with the Dark forces that God knows perfectly well what is going on and won't let them carry on too long before His divine intervention at the battle of Armageddon. If they would bother to read or believe them, these words in Ezekiel's Book could serve as a warning to the Antichrist and his followers.

Verse 11 You will say, "I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" –

Now here is a remarkable glimpse into the future: "*a land of unwalled villages.*" Up until very recent times, walled fortifications were a standard feature of construction for cities and towns – necessary for their protection in times of war. Even after the invention of gunpowder and cannons, walls were still effective in this way. But nowadays, because of the inventions of airplanes, the walls are of no use; airplanes can just fly over them to drop bombs; in addition, rockets and cannon-fired missiles can be shot over them very easily. So in modern warfare there is no strategic purpose served in building walls around cities.

In all of man's history, only recently have cities and towns and villages been built without walls for protection. And here in these verses it describes how the Jews will have returned to Israel, restored the land, and rebuilt towns and cities without walls. So the setting for Ezekiel's prophetic message has to be our present day and the immediate future. This is the day in which this prophecy is going to be fulfilled! Now is the time that Ezekiel is talking about, because this is

the first time in World history, just within the past 100 years or so that towns have been built without walls!

Verse 12 To take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.

“The waste places that are now inhabited... a people gathered from the nations.” Again the same points are mentioned that came up in verse 8. This highlights and serves once more to locate where and when the events predicted in Ezekiel’s message will take place. It also serves once more to showcase this remarkable event: the rebirth of Israel in the Modern Age.

“Livestock and goods.” Back in those days, how much cattle one owned was a common indication of a person’s wealth. So the word *“livestock”* could have been translated as *“wealth”*. Since its foundation, Israel truly has become a wealthy country, and all the more so because of the billions of dollars of armaments and other forms of aid poured into her by the U.S.

“To take plunder and... booty.” Gog’s original purpose for the invasion, it seems from verse 7, was to protect his Muslim allies, defending them against the attacks of Israel and America. (See Dan 11:40) But now he wants to go further than to just protect himself and his friends. He wants to *“take plunder”*. And from the next verse, we can guess that this *“plunder”* includes more than just the wealth of Israel.

Verse 13 Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, “Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?”

Who are “*Sheba and Dedan*”? Here again we see ancient names substituting for modern ones. In this case, as shown in the map below, the prophecy is pinpointing Saudi Arabia, which, because of its oil resources, just happens to be about the wealthiest piece of real estate in the world today. No wonder “*Sheba and Dedan*” are protesting about Gog’s coming “*to take great plunder*”. They’re probably worried that their “*plunder*” of oil resources will be coming up next on his agenda.

Now the prophecy didn’t say “oil wealth” specifically. The following quote can explain this:

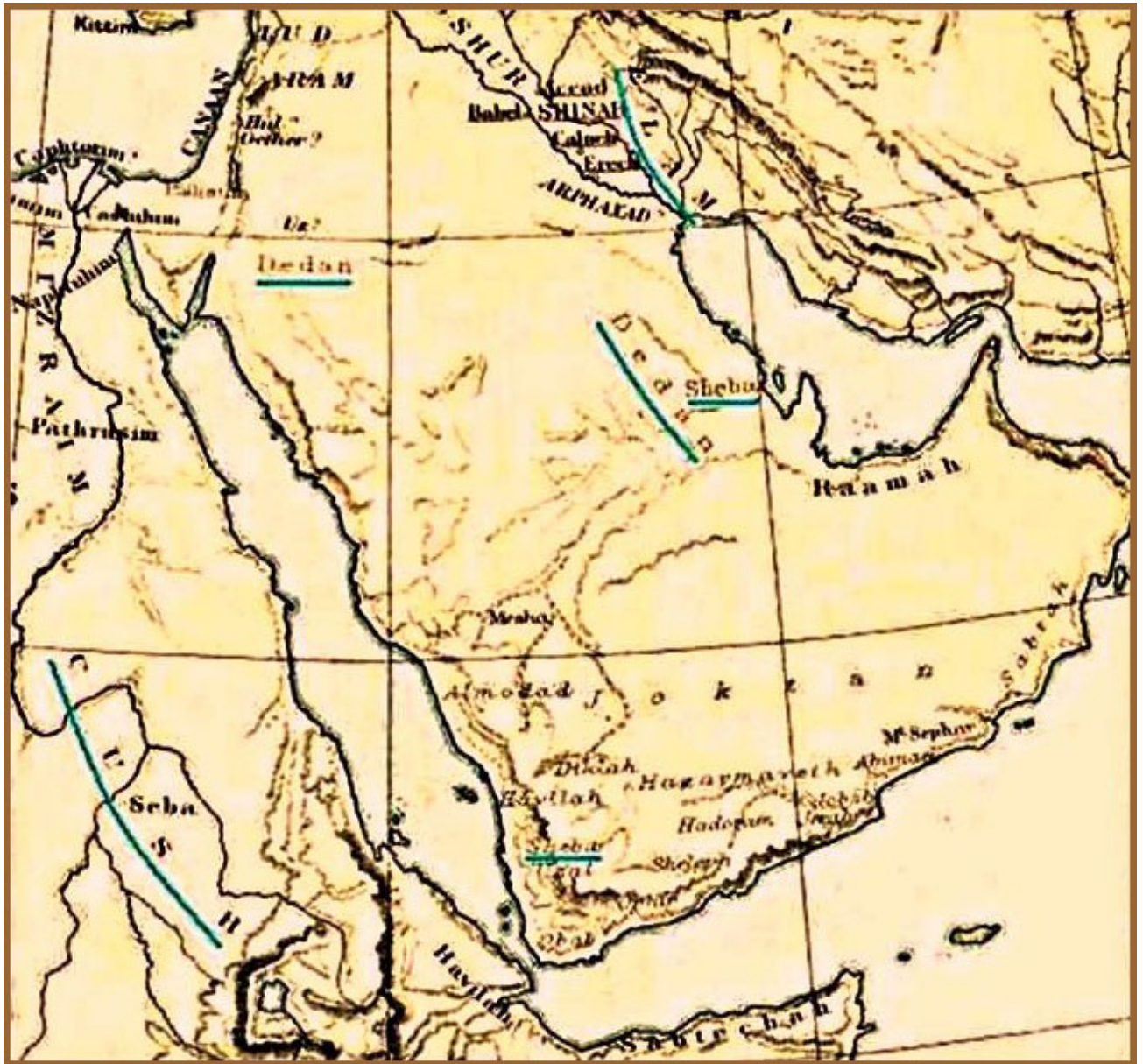
After all, they [the people of Ezekiel’s time] didn’t know anything about oil in those days, they didn’t burn oil, at least not the kind of oil we do today. Their whole civilization was not dependent upon industry run on black-gold oil pumped out of the ground. So how could he be specific? The prophet had never heard of oil, that kind of oil, and he had to just say whatever he could to try to indicate that they were going to get great riches out of that part of the World. (from David Berg lecture, March-1981, www.davidberg.org)

Regarding “*Dedan*”, Easton’s Bible Dictionary gives us this interesting bit of information:

A son of Raamah (Gen. 10:7). His descendants are mentioned in Isa. 21:13, and Ezek. 27:15. They probably settled among the sons of Cush, on the north-west coast of the Persian Gulf.

If this is correct, then the “northwest coast of the Persian Gulf” would include the oil-rich states of Kuwait and Iraq, both of whom, along with Saudi Arabia, happen to be allies of America. And this gives us a clue as to who the other power or powers might be, the ones who are named in the prophecy as the “*merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions*”.

America has her own vested interests to protect in the Mideast and will surely defend them whenever the Antichrist begins his invasion. (The prophecy, at this point, seems to refer to a pre-invasion stage: the diplomatic wars and protests that always precede the actual wars.) From the sounds of it, judging by other Scriptures in Daniel 11:40-42, the Antichrist will likely invade these other oil-wealthy states in the Mideast, referred to there in non-specific terms as *“the countries”* and *“many countries”*. *“Many countries shall be overthrown... He (the Antichrist) shall stretch out his hand upon the countries.”*



So, the question now is, can America truly be identified with the “*merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions*”? Does this ancient term have anything to do with the modern political scene, especially America, whom we can be sure will be infuriated by Gog’s invasion into her client states in the Mideast, especially Israel? To answer this question, we first of all need to go back a bit in time and find out about the original Tarshish.

Tarshish was a great-grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:1-4) and an early pioneer of the post-Flood world. It seems that he migrated to southern Spain according to ancient records which generally assign his name to that particular region of the world. But regardless of what happened in the very ancient time, as far as Ezekiel and the people of his time were concerned, the city and area of Tarshish (also known as Tartessos) meant the far western corner of the Mediterranean, now known as southern Spain.



Tarshish's descendants are also believed to be some of the very earliest inhabitants of the land of Britain after the Flood. There is even some genetic evidence to show that the early Britons were descended from Tarshish, or if not directly from him, then at least from inhabitants of the same land of Spain that was known as Tarshish. On this subject here are some interesting facts:

Britain and the Iberian connection (from the Christian Churches of God website <http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p046f.html>)

It is asserted that among the earliest settlers in Britain, who began to arrive ca. 1600 BCE, were the people known as *Iberi*, some of whom remained in the upper Ebro basin (in northern Spain) and became known later as the Basques. The Roman historian, Tacitus, wrote the following in about 98 CE:

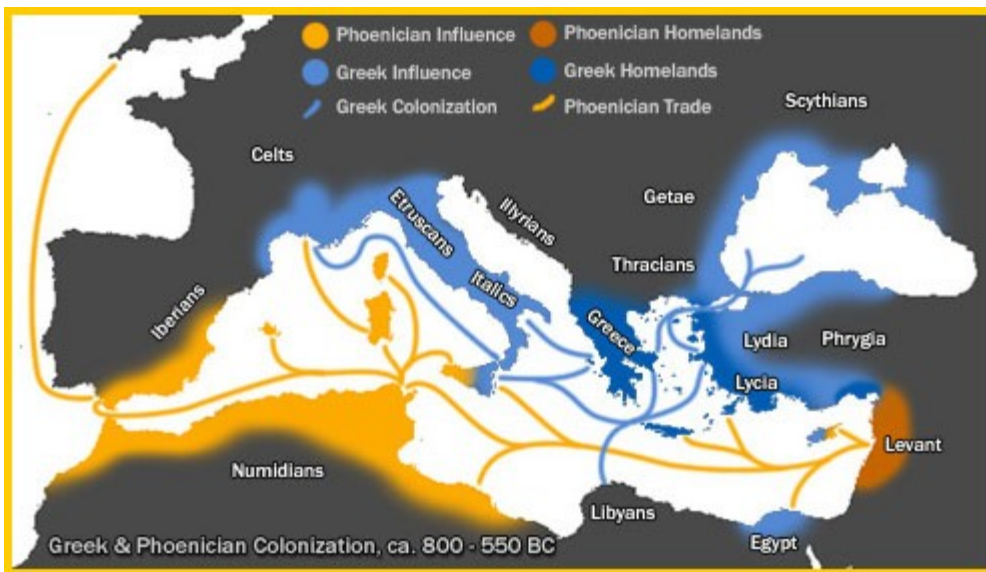
“Who were the original inhabitants of Britain, whether they were indigenous or foreign, is as usual among barbarians, little known. Their physical characteristics are various, and from these conclusions may be drawn. The red hair and large limbs of the inhabitants of Caledonia [old name for Scotland] point clearly to a German origin. The dark complexion of the Silures [a British tribe, now the Welsh], their usually curly hair, and the fact that Spain is the opposite shore to them, are an evidence that **Iberians of a former date crossed over** and occupied these parts.”

Oppenheimer’s theory is that the modern day people of Wales, Ireland and Cornwall are mainly descended from Iberians who did not speak a Celtic language. In *Origins of the British* (2006), Stephen Oppenheimer states (pages 375 and 378):

“By far the majority of male gene types in Britain and Ireland derive from Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal)... On average only 30% of gene types in England derive from north-west Europe. Even without dating the earlier waves of north-west European immigration, this invalidates the Anglo-Saxon wipeout theory [the idea that the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons led to the extermination of the people already living there]...

Further research has traced the British gene map even beyond the Iberians and all the way to the people who now live in the Balkans. This is not surprising. Back in the very early days, the father of Tarshish, Javan, settled in that very location, which is why in ancient times what is now known as Greece was always called the land of Javan. Javan had four sons, one of whom was Tarshish who, as far as we know, migrated from the Balkans to the area of southern Spain. It is rather interesting to see how modern scientific research is confirming what was written so long ago in the Sacred Book, as well as in the writings of scholars from ancient times.

After the early days of post-Flood pioneering, civilizations began to emerge in the ancient world. In the Phoenecian trading empire, Tarshish became its far western outpost. From Tarshish, trade was carried on with even more distant outposts, and this westernmost trading center of the Phoenecian empire became the main route through which goods from Britain, especially tin, made their way into the Mediterranean world. (Tin was vital in those days for it was needed to alloy with copper to produce the much stronger metal of bronze; and Cornwall, England, happened to be one of the few places in the world where tin could be mined.) Noted historian Sir Edward Creasy wrote, “The British mines mainly supplied the glorious adornment of Solomon’s Temple.” (*History of England from the Earliest to the Present Time*, 1869) To conclude, it would seem that, by the time Ezekiel came along, strong ties of trade and culture had long been established between the peoples of Iberia (Spain and Portugal) and Britain.



Map Showing the Extent of the Phoenecian/Tarshish Trading Empire

So, all this to say, Britain too should be considered as one of the “*merchants of Tarshish*”. Tarshish, or the people who lived in

Tarshish, were, after all, some of the ancestors of those who first came to Britain before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. And it could very well be that the inhabitants of Tarshish still had connections with their descendants who had settled in Britain. Also, because of their trade relations, that probably meant a revival of cultural exchange went on as well – a flow of travelers, colonists, and ideas. And it is quite possible that many actual “*merchants of Tarshish*” settled in Britain to better take care of their business interests in that faraway land.

Historically Tarshish was a polity [political entity] based on southwest Spain that had connections with France and Britain and possibly ruled over areas in those countries. <http://britam.org/Questions/QuesTarshish.html>

It should be safe to say then that the phrase “*merchants of Tarshish*” was like an umbrella term, a way of including those peoples of western Europe who were tied together economically and racially, and perhaps even culturally and politically. If then Tarshish was like a mini-empire within the greater empire of Phoenecia, this could explain the peculiar usage of the term “*merchants of Tarshish*” in this passage rather than something like “merchants of Sidon”, the actual center of the Phoenecian empire. The word “*Tarshish*” focuses attention on its location in the western regions of the earth (that were little known in ancient times), while the word “*merchants*” draws attention to its commercial nature.

Considering that Ezekiel had no words to use for modern nations, then the Lord could have easily used this odd phrase “*merchants of Tarshish*” as a way of referring to the modern commercial powers from the West who have vested interests in Mideast oil. The following quote will shed some light on this:

After all, what else could he [Ezekiel] say if the mysterious vision was for a future time? He must perforce have used the terms and names of his own day. He probably did not understand the full implication of what he wrote. But he surely would say that, long after his time, a new confederacy of power would arise from the Western Atlantic nations, whose armies, riches and power might also provide the means of a future role in the reservation of Israel. (from *The Antichrist*, pg. 79, by W.S. McBirnie, 1978)

So it seems there was a lot more to Ezekiel's prediction about the "*merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions*" than meets the eye. There exists here a remarkable connection with our present day. Of no small significance is the fact that the first explorers and colonizers of the New World came from, of all places, Spain and Portugal, the area once known as "Tarshish" in ancient times; Christopher Columbus and other explorers from that part of Europe forged a path to the New World. Later on, Britain followed in their footsteps and became the world's next great commercial superpower. (Perhaps it is more than coincidence that the "*lion*" symbolism, the national emblem of Britain, was used in the prophecy – a sort of veiled reference to the British empire.)

Now regarding the phrase "*all their young lions*", here is another quote from W.S. McBirnie:

'Young lions' is, in the Hebrew, 'whelps' or 'cubs'; obviously offspring or colonies. The 'Merchants of Tarshish' were definitely colonizers. This is the plain and logical meaning of the phrase Ezekiel used. (from *The Antichrist*, pg. 79, by W.S. McBirnie, 1978)

So there we have it: Spain, Portugal, and Britain are the latter-day versions of the "*merchants of Tarshish*" who, because of "*all their young lions*", created great colonial empires at the start of the Modern Age. Then it became the turn of "*their young lions*": Britain, having

succeeded Spain and Portugal as the next great commercial superpower, begat her “*young lions*”, the American colonies. Then in the 20th century it became America’s turn to inherit the mantle of great commercial superpower.

Looking at the political situation today, there seems little doubt that America and Britain, and perhaps some of the other “*young lions*” like Canada and Australia, will object to Gog’s incursions into the Mideast. And who knows if the “*young lions*” of Spain and Portugal, the nations of Latin America, won’t also be part of this western power bloc? Anyway that’s a bit far off in the future and difficult to speculate on at the moment. To be sure, once the Antichrist’s juggernaut begins to roll, these are the nations, especially the U.S., who will not fall in line with the generally pro-Russian/EU orientation of much of the rest of the world. The U.S., along with her client states in the Persian Gulf – Sheba and Dedan (modern Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) – will surely object to the Russian invasion of the Mideast.

Well, this passage is quite intriguing, considering how unknown these parts of the world – Britain and the New World – were in Ezekiel’s time, yet isn’t it amazing how the Lord was able to refer to them anyway? And isn’t it amazing how the pattern outlined in Ezekiel 38 seems to be playing itself out so precisely nowadays on the stage of world events?

Verse 14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it?

Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, Israel triumphed in various wars fought with her Arab neighbors, enough to create some buffer zones on her borders. Add to this, the protection and weaponry provided by her staunch ally America, plus the recent American conquest of one of her main enemies, Iraq, and it would

seem that Israel has every reason now to feel that she “dwells safely” in the Mideast. Perhaps it is because of this that Gog makes a strategic move at this time to invade; an unexpected, sudden attack can be very effective when a nation has let down its guard through a false sense of security.

If it were not for America’s protection, Israel, so tiny compared to Russia, could easily be overrun. Of course, how Russia will ever get through or around American military power is a mystery right now. To be sure, it will result in a devastating war in the Middle East, involving many other nations – a war comparable in its scope to the World Wars of the 20th century.

Verses 15-16 Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.

In case there was any doubt, the prophecy again pinpoints for us the setting; the location is “*the far north*” and the time is “*the latter days*”. And there are “*many peoples*”: as we learned earlier, many nations will ally with the Russian forces of Gog. Even Russia herself consists of quite a few nations. Assuming the nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States get drawn more into her sphere of influence, then Russia can expect the forces of these nations to join her in this conflict, along with the other main allies already mentioned.

“*All of them riding on horses*” – It’s difficult to know what is meant here. In olden days such an army, made up entirely of horsemen, would have been quite a fearsome army. And perhaps that is the

intention here: to highlight the power and force of Gog's army – “a great company and a mighty army”.

The word “horses” could also, as mentioned earlier, be the ancient way of referring to the vehicles that transport the soldiers. In modern times armies have little need to make long-distance marches; there are many types of vehicles (the “horses” of today) that can transport troops quickly and easily from one place to another.

Or, one last possibility, this could be taken literally: if somehow vehicles can be disabled by some new invention of the future (such as was mentioned earlier about EMP, the “electromagnetic pulse” effect), then armies might be forced to resort to using horses once more. At the moment we can only toss out a few ideas and speculate on what this phrase means. As the time approaches, no doubt the meaning of this passage will become clearer.

In verse 16 the unusual statement is made about this invasion that it will happen in order that “*the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed[or honored] in you, O Gog, before their eyes.*” There are two sides to how this passage can be understood, and likely both of them are right.

Firstly, let us look at how God is “hallowed”, or glorified, by the restrictions, and suffering, that He will allow Gog to bring upon Israel. Once an afflicted and persecuted people during the Holocaust, the Jewish nation of Israel has transformed into almost the same kind of oppressive regime they had once been the victim of. The co-inhabitants of the land, the Palestinians, have been forced to live as refugees in ghetto-like conditions and have endured much suffering and brutality under the heavy hand of their captors. What is worse, many Israelis claim to have some kind of God-given right to treat their conquered population this way. Surely, the Almighty will not tolerate for too much longer this kind of attitude and policy. A nation like Israel,

whom the world looks to as a representative of the God of the Bible, is responsible to manifest some degree of godly characteristics of fairness, justice, and generosity before the world. Since she is not, the only thing left for her is to lose the blessing and protection of God that she once enjoyed when the Jews were granted permission to return to the land of Palestine, their former home of 2,000 years ago.

Although there are many peace-loving individuals in Israel who are opposed to the government's policy towards the Palestinians, unfortunately their numbers are too few to have enough influence to counter the present direction that Israeli society is moving.

So when the armies of the north fall upon Israel, the world will know that God is righteous. He is fair and just because they can see that Israel deserves it. Those who sow peace shall reap peace, and those who sow war and violence shall reap the same.

One may wonder, well, if God is fair and just, why doesn't he just stop war altogether? Why does the world have to suffer so much violence anyway? He could, of course, do that; He has the power. In fact, it is His plan to do that very thing in the future: the Book of Revelation outlines how an Age of Peace will one day arrive in the earth – the era known as the Millenium. But for now, He has allowed the Dark Forces to rule. Having barred them from the Heavenly domain, ours is the domain that God has allowed them to inhabit. These evil spiritual forces have long ago proven themselves unworthy of their continued presence in the earthly realm, and, as the Revelation Book tells us, they will be ousted eventually and sent to their prison, some region in the netherworld, called in Revelation 20:1 the "*bottomless pit*". Finally then, the earth will be free of the violence, war, pollution, and other evils that were brought upon it through the reign and influence of Satan and his demons.

So, having considered how God is “*hallowed*”, or honored, by what happens to the Israelis, we can look at the other side – at what happens to Gog and his forces. And this will be covered in upcoming verses. Suffice it to say for now, as was mentioned earlier, the Antichrist Gog will go overboard in his wars and slaughter, which will include a worldwide campaign of religious persecution. God will not tolerate for very long these crimes against humanity and against His people, and He will manifest His justice upon Gog and his hordes.

If Gog could manage to confine himself to doing just what God will allow him to do – that is, bring about a fair and just settlement in the Mideast – all would be fine. But such restraint seldom characterizes the reign of the world’s demagogues. For example, Hitler, when he came on the scene, started off well and reversed the injustices that Germany was suffering because of the harsh terms meted out in the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty that was foisted on the nation at the end of World War I. If Hitler could have restrained himself at that point, 20th century history might have followed a very different course. But he wasn’t satisfied with restoring Germany’s place on the world stage but wanted her to go further and lord it over the rest of the world; he got overconfident and foolishly herded Germany into the World War II bloodbath. In post-Soviet Union Russia perhaps a similar scenario will transpire under the Antichrist Gog as he leads Russia out of her deflated position in world affairs. Having achieved that, he will want to go further, and as it happened with Hitler, he will plunge the world into a bloodbath of war and religious persecution.

According to the upcoming verses, the judgment on Gog will happen differently to how it happened in Hitler’s day. It will be such a spectacular and supernatural defeat that it will cause the world to acknowledge, honor, and reverence the God of the universe. In a secular world, with all its scientific mastery over nature, the events to come will overturn completely the materialistic view of the universe that mankind has come to adopt in these modern times. It will be

impossible to ignore or reject the role of the Almighty in those days and in the age to come.

This supernatural intervention into the affairs of mankind is not something new; it has happened before in history in such great events as the Flood, the Tower of Babel, the Exodus, the first coming of Christ. As in those previous events, we are approaching a time in history when mankind's problems have gotten quite out of hand, and to a point where supernatural intervention is called for. Our ability to destroy ourselves through nuclear war, for example, or the never-ending pollution of the environment, these two things alone threaten God's Creation in a way that cannot be tolerated for very long. Add to this, the falling away of those Christian nations who could lead the world to a better future but instead have gotten sidetracked into pursuing their own interests. The time is ripe for God's intervention into the affairs of mankind before we destroy ourselves and before we ruin the natural world that He created for us to inhabit.

Verse 17 Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?

This verse is like a flash-forward, showing the reaction, the surprise that some future generation will have when they realize this invasion by Russia was predicted so long ago – “*in former days*” – by the prophets of ancient Israel. Indeed, the entire prophecy lays much emphasis on the fact that the invasion and its consequences were foreseen long before. “*After many years you will be visited. In the latter years you will come . . .*” (38:8). “*It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land*” (38:16). “*Surely it is coming, and it shall be done,*” says the Lord GOD. *This is the day of which I have spoken.* (39:8).

Verses 18-20 And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, that My fury will show in My face.

For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,

So that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

The passage here and on to verse 23 makes it clear that God will turn against Gog. This will happen, it says, “*at the same time*” as his invasion of Israel. Most likely we should understand this to mean the judgment on Gog comes at some point after the initial invasion which we know God had allowed originally for the purpose of chastening the wayward nation of Israel. But then when Gog and his armies go too far in their slaughter and destruction, God’s “*fury*” is kindled. He says, “*In My jealousy... I have spoken.*” God is jealously concerned over any people or nation that is getting trampled on. Add to this the fact that the Antichrist has been speaking great blasphemies against God and showing himself that he is God, then here is all the more reason for God to be “jealous”.

God’s fury on Gog, we then learn, takes the form of a “*great earthquake*”. Although it starts in Israel, apparently it will affect the whole earth: “*all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence.*” It is most likely the same as what is described in Revelation 16:17-21: “*there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth... and the cities of the nations fell*”. (Rev 16:18-19). Such a grand cataclysm will surely bring to an end the murderous rampage of the Antichrist Gog and his armies. In fact, it will bring an end to the whole present

social order as we know it. Although it seems horribly calamitous, God must know, in His great wisdom, that this will be the only way to get mankind back on track. The civilizations of our present order must be swept away in order to start again from scratch, re-building and re-populating the earth, but this time on a new and better foundation – not unlike what happened in the Great Flood era. (See post “Has the Earth Already Had an Endtime?”)

So more than just putting an end to the regime of a brutal demagogue, the Almighty will be putting a stop to an entire era of history, an era dominated by the forces of Darkness attempting to establish their kingdom in the earth through their proxy agents: various emperors and false prophets, Caesars, dictators, and of course, the final Antichrist Gog figure and his False Prophet.

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken your great power and reigned... and Your wrath has come... And that you should... destroy those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:17-18)

The Antichrist is just the final demagogue in a long succession of demagogues whom Satan has used in hopes of destroying God’s creation: the natural environment and those who inhabit it. Regarding the natural environment, it is worth noting that the passage here exhibits a kind of awareness of it that doesn’t exist so much nowadays. Because of living so closely to it, those in olden time were much more conscious of the natural world, and this is evident in the above passage: *“the fish... birds... beasts... and all creeping things”* are included with mankind as those who *“shall shake at My presence”*. Because of our more urbanized environments and technological mastery over nature, we in modern times have lost some of this connectivity with the natural world about us.

This mastery over nature that we have nowadays is a knowledge that could be used for mankind's benefit – to feed large populations, to de-pollute and clean up the environment, and on and on the list can go – and to some extent those purposes are being achieved. But as long as the Dark forces remain in control, our “knowledge” will always pose too much of a danger to ourselves and the environment we live in. It will take the second coming of Christ to throw off the hindering influences of the Dark Legions. In that day the many useful, beneficial plans and programs that conscientious people have introduced already for society's benefit can at last be fully implemented in the earth.

“The mountains shall be thrown down” – This word could be symbolic language for cities or kingdoms that get *“thrown down”*, and the word *“steep places”* for modern high-rise buildings that *“fall”*.

There are many other references to this *“great earthquake”* that will come at the time of Christ's return to re-claim the world for the Kingdom of God: Isaiah 2:19,21, 6:13, 24:19-20, Jeremiah 4:23-29, Haggai 2:6-7, Joel 2:10, Revelation 6:14.

Verse 21 I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains, says the Lord GOD. Every man's sword will be against his brother.

The word *“mountains”* in the Scriptures often symbolizes governments:

Daniel 2:35 – *“The stone that struck the image [symbolic of man's governments] became a great mountain [symbolic of God's government] and filled the whole earth.”*

Micah 4:1 – *“The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.”* [That is to say, God's government in the Age to come will supersede all other governments.]

Revelation 17:9-10 – *“The seven heads are seven mountains... There are also seven kings”* [*“Mountains”* refers here to seven powerful worldly empires that have, or will have, dominated the Mideast and Israel.]

Very likely then, *“all My mountains”* was meant to symbolize the host of nations who will rise up in rebellion against the new world order of the Antichrist Gog figure; we could call these the anti-Antichrist nations of the world. With this kind of scenario developing in this nuclear age, Earth’s future looks rather grim. But this is merely the plan of the Dark Legions who are bent on destroying what God has created by unleashing another horrible, chaotic World War. Such a war nowadays, but for the second coming of Christ, would leave planet Earth almost uninhabitable. But rather than allow the Dark Legions to succeed in carrying out their dreadful design, the Lord has promised that *“those days will be shortened”*. (Matthew 24:22) And after those final convulsions at the end of our present age of history, Earth will enter into the great golden Age of Peace promised in several places in the Scriptures (Isaiah 11:6-12, Micah 4:1-5, Revelation 20:4 to name just a few). This is the plan that God has in mind, and the plan that will come to pass in spite of all the foolish attempts of Satan and his dark forces to do otherwise.

Verse 22 And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

The passage here and in the preceding verses provides a sort of brief overview of what the Revelation Book describes in much greater detail – what are known as the trumpet judgments of the Great Tribulation followed by the judgments of the Wrath of God.

“Bring to judgment” – The King James Version of the Bible uses the word *“plead”*, a term often heard in court cases. The idea here seems to be that God will enter into judgment with the Antichrist Gog, and this could bear similarity to how He entered into judgment with the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh. At that time God used Moses and Aaron to plead with him, to explain their case and to warn Pharaoh of what was about to happen if he continued to refuse to grant freedom to the Israelites. Thus, the plagues on Pharaoh’s kingdom were not arbitrary judgments done without any fair warning. There are indications (especially in Revelation 11) that two of God’s prophets will, in similar fashion, confront the Antichrist during the time of the Great Tribulation. (Rev 11:3-12)

This future historical situation – the warmongering of Gog the Antichrist – bears some comparison to what happened in Hitler Germany. On the way to achieving his ambitious plan to establish the Third Reich empire in Europe, Hitler had gone way overboard with his genocidal persecutions and caused much mayhem in the earth. Finally, he was stopped by the Allied invasion of Europe. In the case of the Antichrist, he too will encounter much resistance from other nations. The main difference, however, would seem to be that no power or coalition will be strong enough to stop him from his murderous campaign to establish his “Third Reich” – his “brave new world” without God – no power except that of the Messiah. Or perhaps it would be better to say, no power can stop him in time to prevent the destruction of humanity and the environment. Even though there will be much opposition to the Antichrist, it seems that, without the Lord’s intervention, mankind will, with all his mega-destructive weapons, find himself on an inescapable downward spiral to self-extinction. That is most likely why Jesus said, *“Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved.”* (Matthew 24:22)

As God pleaded with Pharaoh through Moses and brought plagues on the Egyptians, so also will He do in the End Time. These plagues

will include “*pestilence and bloodshed... flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone*”. Some of this sounds much like volcanic activity unleashed against the armies of Gog – very likely an offshoot of the earthquake activity also going on at this time. At any rate, whatever it means exactly is difficult to determine right now with any great degree of accuracy. But obviously, as the plagues in Egypt were disastrous for that ancient society, so these future plagues will be disastrous for the welfare of Gog’s armies and for the empire over which he rules.

Verse 23 Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

In the wake of the Antichrist’s foolish attempts to magnify himself before God and mankind, it will be the Lord’s turn to “*magnify Himself*”, to show the world and its modern demagogue Who’s really in charge. Up to this time, the Antichrist demagogue was having his own way, wallowing in an obscene display of self-deification:

“He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper...” “The man of sin... the son of perdition... opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (Daniel 11:36, 2Thessalonians 2:3-4)

According to the above passage, the world then “*shall know that I am the LORD.*” So how is the world going to know this? Well, for one thing they’ll know that probably only God could have done such a thing in such magnitude, in such a magnificent manner, to have the whole Earth shake and the skies rain down fire and brimstone and hailstones and red-hot rocks upon the forces of the Antichrist!

Furthermore, God is going to manifest His justice, His righteousness to mankind. For by this time the world will know that the

Antichrist has gone too far, and if there is a God in Heaven, then he ought to be stopped. Just as the Israelis had gone too far and God used the Antichrist and Russian invasion to stop them, so now when the Antichrist and his forces in their turn have gone too far, then God is going to have to judge them also and punish them. In all this, God is not showing favoritism to one side or the other. As a result the whole World will know then that they are seeing the true, just, righteous, fair judgments of God: *“I will be known in the eyes of many nations.”* Unlike much of the Christian evangelical world, He doesn't say to the Israelis, “Well, you have a big reputation as the so-called people of God, so you can just get off scot-free.” Nor does he say to Gog, “Well, I used you as My ‘hired razor’, so it doesn't matter if you let it all go to your head now and try to grab everything for yourself.” The prophecy said, *“I will sanctify Myself.”* God has His own yardstick, and He will apply it according to what He knows people need or deserve in true fairness and justice.

That is something, by the way, that applies on a personal level too, just as much as it does to the conduct of whole nations and civilizations. It should be mentioned too that, although this passage deals mostly with God's chastisements, God is not only in the business of dealing out punishments and judgment, but is a merciful God and very much in the business of handing out wonderful blessings and rewards to those people and nations who seek to do what is right in His sight.

1.2. EZEKIEL 39

We don't know exactly the cause of the interruption here, but it looks as though Ezekiel had to stop his first session (chapter 38); then, since the message was incomplete, the Lord spoke further during this second session (chapter 39). The first session dwelt heavily on Gog's (the Antichrist's) role in causing the great Mideast debacle. This second session tries to balance the picture somewhat by turning more attention towards Israel and her role in causing hostilities; it also moves ahead into the future and the aftermath of this great final war that will mark the end of our present age of history.

Verse 1 And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;

Chapter 39 starts off with a review of what was said in the beginning of chapter 38 – which makes it clear that this is supposed to be a continuation of the previous message. This particular verse highlights once more the fact that it is God speaking here, it's direct prophecy, and therefore, it must be true.

Verse 2 And I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel.

Again, the passage reviews the first session which said, *"I will turn you around... and lead you out."* (38:4) It almost sounds as if the Lord is enticing Gog to fight it out with Him, similar to what He did in ancient times with the Egyptian Pharaoh. The bully is being challenged by

God, the Defender of His children; and of course, that's one fight where the bully won't come out on top.

“Far north” – extreme north. This is the third time the distant *“north”* is mentioned, pinpointing once more the land of Russia as the invader. (38:6,15) *“Against the mountains of Israel”* – Again this reviews what was said in the previous session. (38:6)

Verses 3-5 When I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken,” says the Lord GOD.

In this passage we read about the legendary Battle of Armageddon. Revelation 19 describes it also – but in more detail with more emphasis on the personage of the Messiah in His role as great supernatural Conqueror:

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”

(Rev 19:11-16,19)

The “*beast*” here in the Revelation Book represents the Antichrist who is the same as the “*Gog*” personage in the Book of Ezekiel. And the grisly aftermath – birds and beasts feasting on the dead carcasses of Gog’s army – is also featured in Revelation:

“An angel... cried... to all the birds... ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings... captains... of all people, free and slave, both small and great’.” (Revelation 19: 17-18)

So what is it, we may ask, that leads up to this great Battle of Armageddon? What is the background to this great final conflict? By piecing together the bits of information that are given in the Bible and learning what we can from history, we could surmise the following scenario: There will be much opposition to the Antichrist, as was mentioned in chapter 38: “*I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains.*” (verse 21) As a result the world is embroiled in a World War – the armies of the Antichrist versus those who oppose him. Although wars are usually fought for reasons of greed and hunger for power, there can often be an underlying religious element. For example, prior to World War 2, Hitler had risen to power and fostered worship of himself, while persecuting those religious groups who refused such an allegiance but desired to continue worshiping God. Some allied leaders, especially Winston Churchill, were convinced they were engaged in a holy war to defeat the forces of spiritual Darkness that were threatening to engulf Europe. He even felt that the survival of Christendom was at stake.

Prior to Armageddon, it will be much the same thing: a charismatic leader fostering worship of himself, persecution of religious groups, war campaigns designed to grab new territory and wealth, a world on the brink of capitulation to an anti-God world order. These things we can gather from the many Scriptures that outline the near future of world history. Here are just a few:

“The man of sin...the son of perdition... opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2Thes 2:4-5)

“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” (Rev 13:7)

“And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev 13:3-4)

“He causes all... to receive a mark... that no one may buy or sell.” (Rev 13:16-17)

Now what more can we learn from history? If we backtrack all the way to the days of the Exodus, there is an interesting account of what the Israelites under Moses experienced when they found themselves in a dire predicament that threatened to bring a quick end to their would-be exodus from Egyptian slavery. The armies of Pharaoh had pursued the unarmed Israelites into the wilderness and were about to pounce on them. But God saved them. How did He do it? By raising up an army from Egypt’s enemies? No. There were no “allied forces” to do that job as in World War 2. Instead, it was a very supernatural deliverance. When it looked as if the Egyptian army would overrun them, the Red Sea miraculously parted, and the children of Israel crossed over it while their enemies, trying to do the same, were drowned. It was a tremendous supernatural deliverance that was recorded and preserved in the history of the Jews for about 3,500 years. (Read the full story in Exodus 14.)

In this last great Battle of Armageddon, the situation will be so terrible, the odds so uneven, the consequences so dire – the near-destruction of planet Earth – that there will be no other recourse but for the Almighty to step in with a great supernatural deliverance, as quoted above in the passage from Revelation 19, and as described here in Ezekiel 39.

Presumably, this last great war starts off as a war between the forces of Gog and the earthly forces opposing him, then somehow transforms into a war between the armies of Gog and the armies of Heaven. How this happens is a mystery, but, as time marches on towards those final days, things will become much clearer. Perhaps it is safe to say that the beleaguered anti-Antichrist forces in those future days will, in the face of certain defeat, need supernatural reinforcements. The intervention of the Messiah and His heavenly forces at some critical juncture during the Battle of Armageddon will rescue the world from the Antichrist Gog's brutal dominion and wars. He saves the day, not only for the forces opposing the Antichrist, but also for the survival of planet Earth's population and environment. As Matthew 24:22 states, *"Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved."* (Now, it should be understood that these are, at best, just speculations right now... but it is interesting to indulge in a bit of speculation sometimes.)

Verse 6 And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

As we learned from the previous session, a World War is going on; the Antichrist is having all kinds of trouble, especially since God had called for ***"a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains"***. God will send fire on Russia, and it sounds quite severe. Whether He will send it by way of volcanoes or just fire straight out of the sky or the fire of war (atomic bombs) or what, we don't know. But

whatever it is, it's of God for the passage says, *"Then they shall know that I am the LORD."*

"Them that dwell carelessly in the isles." In those ancient times, *"the isles"* usually referred to places on the Mediterranean Sea whereto merchant ships would travel. So possibly, it refers to the self-satisfied and comfortable nations of the European Union, many of which will likely be collaborators with Russia and accomplices to the Antichrist's wars and persecution against God's children.

The word *"isles"* is often translated as *"coastlands"*. So it could have a broader meaning to include far away places that could only be reached after crossing the seas. So it could easily include nations from all over the world. *As in the previous World Wars, battles were fought on many different fronts throughout the world. The next one will see the Mideast and Israel as the main theater of war – as Germany and Europe were in World War 2. But the War will not be confined to that area alone.*

There is an ominous passage in the Book of Jeremiah that foretells clearly the onset of these terrible times to come at the end of the Last Days:

"For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city [Jerusalem] which is called by My name... I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the LORD of hosts... For the LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword... Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And at that day [the end of the world as we know it] the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth." (Jeremiah 25:29,31-33)

Not a pretty picture. It helps to keep in mind, though, as the Revelation Book makes very clear in chapter 20, that this horrible

scene of destruction at the end of our present historical age will be followed by the most glorious, wonderful Age of Peace that the earth has not known since the days of the Garden of Eden. It will be Heaven on Earth. The splendor and magnificence of those days to come will more than outweigh the difficulties and desolations that mankind is having to experience now and in the near future.

Verse 7 So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

Up to this point the prophecy has focused on the wrongdoings of Gog and consequent judgments on him and his hordes. But lest Ezekiel's perspective should become too one-sided, the Lord shifts the spotlight briefly on to "*My people Israel*". Ezekiel was, after all, a Jew living as a captive in the foreign, Gentile nation of Babylon, and we can understand that he was more open to receiving a message about the wrongdoings of their enemy Gog and his armies and of the judgments to be heaped upon them. As a result, the prophetic message given through Ezekiel's channel has focused so far on that side of the issue. But as the old saying goes, there are usually two sides to every story.

Now the Jews, and Ezekiel, did understand that their conquest by and captivity in ancient Babylon had been allowed by God for a reason – namely, their own unfaithfulness to adhere to the worship and principles of their God. So now, in this future scenario that God is telling Ezekiel about, the pendulum swings from what was easy for Ezekiel to receive – the wrongdoings and judgments on Gog – over to the other side and starts speaking, for a moment at least, about those aspects of the issue that were not so easy to receive: He says, "*I will not let them profane My holy name anymore.*" We have already explored how the modern Israelis have "profaned God's holy name" and how this will cause the removal of His blessing of protection and

will result in their chastisement at the hands of the Antichrist Gog, so there is no need to elaborate further on that.

As mentioned before, through all of this God demonstrates His fairness and justice to the world, which causes *“the nations”* to *“know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.”* If He is the *“Holy One”* in Israel, and if the Israelis are supposed to be His people, or at least have that reputation, then it is only right that He would seek to purge from them the wrong attitudes, injustices, and cruelties that they have inflicted on those whose lands they have stolen.

Verse 8 Surely it is coming, and it shall be done, says the Lord GOD. This is the day of which I have spoken.

Quite a resounding statement here: *“It shall be done,”* meaning there is no question that these events will come to pass. And then the statement, *“This is the day of which I have spoken.”* Which seems to tie in with a statement in Revelation:

“In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets (such as Ezekiel).”

There are many references in the various Books of the Prophets to the “day of the Lord” – the climactic ending of man’s present age of history. God’s final judgments on the Antichrist and his hordes mark that end. But they also mark the beginning of a glorious new age in man’s history when *“the mystery of God would be finished”*. The reality of God and the marvelous blessings of His presence in the earth, which are somewhat hidden right now, will shine forth in great glory and splendor. It is impossible for us in this present time to grasp the full extent of what this means. But certainly, it is something to look forward to.

Verse 9 Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years.

In the aftermath of any war, there is always a big cleaning-up job to do. Modern warfare includes the use of minefields – these deadly bombs hidden underground – which will surely make the clearing of weapons a much more difficult and time-consuming process, in fact a whole seven years. Whether this “seven” is a symbolic number to indicate the thoroughness of the clean-up, or if it is to be taken literally, is not too clear. At any rate the number does show that it will take a long time. And that will be the main task for Earth’s inhabitants during those beginning years of the Age to come known as the Millennium. And not just in Israel, but we can presume that, throughout the earth, on all the different battlefields of this worldwide war, massive cleanup projects will be going on.

A well known passage that seems to tie in with this one may be found in Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 – *“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”* This will be a major activity for Earth’s inhabitants, especially in the early years of the Age to come – to *“set on fire and burn the weapons”*. And then we could add to this, “melt those weapons down and make farming implements out of them.”

“Both the shields and bucklers [larger shields], the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears” – Again we have the mention of these weapons that are not in use now, which, since Ezekiel had no words to use for modern weaponry, could be understood as referring symbolically to whatever weapons are to be used in this future battle. The passage suggests the idea of a thorough purging of the weapons: *“shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, javelins and spears.”* Nothing is left. All vestiges of warfare are to be

destroyed. For as the Scripture above about the plowshares and pruning hooks goes on to say, *“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”* Anything to do with the past era and its vile practice of warfare is to be purged away. The word used in this and the next verse for *“set on fire”* and *“burn”* was also used in the Old Testament in a religious sense to “put away evil” – to eradicate all vestiges of abominable objects and practices. This suggests that the Age to come will bring a very thorough purge of all these implements of destruction; these abominations, these demonically-inspired instruments that are such a prominent feature of life in our present era, will be swept away completely.

Now, the weapons mentioned in verse 9 were made mostly out of wood and therefore could be burned easily except for the metal parts which could be made into plowshares and pruning hooks and so on. But then, we must consider, in modern warfare, how many weapons are made of wood? Wooden *“shields and bucklers”* have been replaced by metal coverings as we see in armored tanks, war planes, and so on. Wooden *“bows and arrows... javelins and spears”* have been replaced by metal guns and bullets/missiles of all different kinds. Knowing that the future weapons-destruction program will be very thorough – that is, the weapons are not just to be thrown on a scrap heap, but also, melted down to prevent them from ever being used again – then we should be able to safely assume that all the weapons, including those made entirely of metal will also be destroyed. So in our modern reality, there will be a great deal of scrap metal available, and to melt it down will require a great deal of heat. So where does the fuel come from to supply all that heat? The next verse tells us the answer. At least it tells us where the fuel won't come from, which is a clue to suggest where it will come from.

Verse 10 They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons;

and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them, says the Lord GOD.

It has been customary to interpret this verse to mean that the inhabitants of the land would use the discarded weapons for their firewood. The weapons would be combustible enough that they could be burned, and presumably, the heat would be sufficiently intense that it could melt whatever metals the weapons were made of. This may have been the case in olden days, but perhaps it won't hurt to explore an alternative interpretation to this verse that would better fit modern reality. Why? Nowadays, weapons are mostly made out of metal. Even in the old days, metal weapons were common enough, although wood was used a lot more for spears, clubs, shields, bows and arrows, etc. It's difficult to understand how there will be enough wood in the weapons that could be used, not only as firewood for the local population, but also, as fuel for the melting of the weapons.

But another way to translate this passage would be as follows:

“They will not take wood from the field nor cut down any from the forests, yet they shall burn the weapons with fire...” And in the previous verse 9, instead of *“they will make fires with them for seven years”*, it would be just as easy to translate this as **“they will burn them with fire seven years.”**

One thing to keep in mind: The ancient Hebrew language had a limited vocabulary, and words often had to do double-duty, triple-duty, and more, taking on several shades of meaning. In 1611 when the King James Version of the Bible was translated, weapons to some extent were made of wood, and it seemed plausible in those days to translate the Hebrew in such a way that the people spoken of in this verse would use the discarded weaponry for firewood, and for this reason would not need to cut down trees from the forest. (This, by the way, was an issue in those days: forests were steadily diminishing in

the British Isles, and there was much concern, before the advent of coal-mining, about what would become of the forests and about the possibility of running out of fuel.)

But now, what about modern times? We have many other sources of fuel besides firewood that were quite unknown to the translators of the KJV in 1611. Even coal, although it had been discovered, was not a commonly used fuel at the time; no one thought then it could be widely used. So it's quite possible the passage can be taken to mean this: that, in the distant future, weapons would be burned without using wood as fuel; there would be some other type of fuel available. Since the KJV translators didn't know this, they might have thought that the weapons themselves would have to serve as fuel for their burning. Considering their concern in those days about their disappearing forests and where fuel was going to come from, the translators may have felt it necessary to imply that there would be a source of wood fuel available, from the weapons themselves, and not from the forests.

As a result verse 10 starts off with the phrase "*so that*", as if to say that having so many weapons lying around would result in making it unnecessary to use wood from the forests for firewood. As mentioned, in those days before 1611 the problem of depleted forests in England was quite an issue, and that may have influenced the KJV translators. However, the "*so that*" phrase is actually not there in most translations. The New King James, for example, starts, "*They will not take wood etc.*" Others start this verse with the word "and". But then to try to preserve the original idea found in the KJV, the translators of the NKJV have inserted the word "with" in such a way as to suggest that fire will be made with the weapons. The word "with" is not there in the ancient Hebrew but is needed in English in order for the passage to make sense. However, there is some flexibility as to where to stick the word "with" in the passage. And it can easily be positioned to say "the weapons are to be burned with fire" rather than "fire would be

made with the weapons". In fact, the original KJV used the "with fire" version in both verses 9 and 10:

"They shall burn them with fire."

"They shall burn the weapons with fire."

The next phrase to examine is the one that says, "*because they will make fires with the weapons*". A great deal hinges on this word "*because*". In ancient Hebrew, this happens to be one of those catch-all words that could take on several different meanings. And to determine that meaning, it helps to have an accurate understanding of the context or historical circumstances. Nowadays, we have a good deal more of this precious thing called historical hindsight, which can change our view as to how to interpret this phrase. Instead of using the word "*because*" here, the words "*when, but, yet, although*" are all possible substitutions that we could stick in there. Any one of them would change the meaning of the passage significantly. Instead of saying, "they won't cut wood from the forests because they'll use the weapons for burning", the meaning would change to, "they won't cut wood from the forests, yet they shall burn the weapons with fire." This could be what the passage was intending to point out: this peculiar feature of the distant future when there would be no need to use wood for fuel. Well, it would have been hard to believe in 1611, the year the King James Bible was translated, a time when wood was thought to be the only type of fuel that man could use in any great quantity. But we live in the modern age, so perhaps, rather than trying to adjust ourselves to the old translation and the cultural milieu of yesteryear, all we have to do is adjust the translation to suit modern times, our knowledge of modern conditions.

From all of this we see that it can be quite difficult to translate ancient Hebrew without a good knowledge of the context, or the future circumstances about which certain passages are dealing with. And this

is often the crucial element in translation that is needed, especially in prophetic passages about future events.

In the Millennial Age, to make the task of melting down the weapons easier, heat can be supplied from, let's say, hydroelectric power or natural gas, sources of fuel that supply more energy and contribute less to environmental pollution than wood. Although we can imagine that life in the Age to come will get back to basics and simple living, not all modern man's inventions are going to be discarded. It's not as if we're going to revert completely back to the days of blacksmiths and wood fires and no electricity. We are told that in the Age to come, *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."* (Isaiah 11:9, 65:25) Obviously, many modern inventions will have to be done away with – the ones that hurt and destroy, like the weapons of war or those that cause pollution. A world without petrol-powered vehicles may be a hard saying for some motoring enthusiasts, but that doesn't mean there won't be many other useful, non-polluting inventions that, most likely, will continue to be used in those future days.

One last point: This peculiar prediction about the future weapons disposal program starts right off the bat by stating that the people will *"set on fire and burn the weapons."* The emphasis is on the fact that the weapons will be burned with fire, rather than on them being a source of firewood (an unlikely possibility, considering that weapons are made mostly of metal these days). In fact, the particular sense of the Hebrew here goes something like this: "They shall consume the weapons violently with fire." If metals from the weapons are being melted down to make peaceful farming implements and what have you, it would take a pretty strong (violent) fire to do that, especially when there are metal weapons around like armored tanks, airplanes, and so on that will have to be "burned" or melted. That could be then what the passage here is trying to bring out: the fact that in this future day and

age the weapons (most of which are made of metal) will be burned with fire, but they won't use wood out of the forests to do it. And we could add here, neither will they use wood from the weapons themselves. It is hard to imagine, for example, how an armored tank could be melted down with a fire fueled by whatever bits and pieces of wood might be found in modern weapons. In fact, it's doubtful there would be enough to use even for firewood. But, unknown to the KJV translators, there will be other sources of fuel available for this huge task in the early days of the Millennium.

Well, that is a lot of hair-splitting theology on this one small issue about the weapons-burning, but hopefully, it has been worth the effort of checking into it. There are other opinions too about what these verses mean. And another possibility is that maybe there will be enough fuel in the weapons themselves that could be used to burn them. Or another angle could be this – that, because of all the alternative energy sources being utilized in the weapons disposal program, there is plenty of that (non-wood) energy available for the local people to use also for their heating and cooking needs.

Finally, in the second part of the verse, we have the phrase, *“and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them.”* The rulers of the earth have plundered and pillaged their people throughout history in order to splurge extravagantly on their weapons arsenals. But after the glorious Second Coming of Christ, *“the meek shall inherit the earth”*, and then it will be the turn of the meek and the poor to plunder and pillage their former oppressors – by confiscating all this great wealth of metal and converting it into farm implements and many other useful things that will serve peaceful purposes. (Psalm 37:11, Matthew 6:5)

Verses 11-16 It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury

Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog.

For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land.

Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified, says the Lord GOD.

They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search.

The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog.

The name of the city will also be Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land.

What a mess to clean up, all those dead bodies, thousands and thousands of dead soldiers! Jeremiah says, *"They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground"* ... for awhile at least, because it's too much to take care of all at once. (Jeremiah 25:33) That will be one of our biggest jobs then: just mopping-up after the Battle of Armageddon at the start off the Millennium – seven years to burn up all the weapons and seven months to bury the bodies. That's a dirty and huge job the Israelites will have to do in Israel, and in other parts of the world different nationalities will be occupied with whatever clean-up is needed in their territories.



“The valley of those who pass by east of the sea” – “East of the sea” means east of the Mediterranean Sea. Here lies the Valley of Megiddo (battleground for the Battle of Armageddon according to Revelation 16:16). As part of the Jezreel Valley, it stretches southeastwards from the Bay of Haifa, where Israel’s main port city Haifa is located, under the shadow of Mount Carmel, and marks the beginning of the important travel route between Haifa and Jerusalem to the south. Having become the *“burial place”* for Gog and his hordes, the route will be blocked – *“will obstruct travelers”* -because of the mess left in the aftermath of the battle. Even the stench from the great number of dead bodies will be enough to prevent travelers from passing through. Imagine how so many corpses will stink! Within three or four days a dead body starts to stink like mad. So this is one hell of a mess, and Hell made it too! – the Antichrist and his mob!

“There they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog.” – That literally means “the multitude of Gog,” or Gog’s army. They’re all slaughtered there, including Gog himself. The Antichrist himself is slain in this battle and sent straight to the Lake of Fire, along with the False Prophet. (See Revelation 19:20.)

“For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. Indeed all the people of the land will be burying” – It is such a big job that just about everybody who’s left after this terrible war will be busy burying all these dead, piles and piles of dead!

“And they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified, says the Lord GOD” – A more accurate translation for this might be the following: *“and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them.”* (New International Version) And the memory of this great Battle will live on because of this great *“burial place”* in a valley that is to be re-named in commemoration of that Battle. Even nowadays we have such memorials: millions of graves in huge cemeteries all over Europe, which serve as silent, but powerful and sobering reminders of the battles of the 20th Century’s World Wars. And this great cemetery in Israel will also serve as a powerful reminder of the terrible struggles that mankind endured in this last great World War when the Messiah came to the rescue and ushered in the great Era of Peace – an era described in the Sacred Book as a time when *“nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”* (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3)

“On the day that I am glorified” - How is God *“glorified”* by this? Because they know He’s the Messiah and He did it. Is God *“glorified”* in all these dead, stinking bodies? Yes, because they were His enemies! It shows God’s judgment upon the wicked, upon the Antichrist forces that are slaughtered here, those anti-Christ forces that caused so much trouble: persecuting the poor, persecuting peace-loving and God-honoring folks throughout the world, and wreaking havoc on the earth. And here they are lying rotting in the fields of Israel – a fitting end to these anti-Christ forces.

It should be mentioned, however, that there is a distinction made further on (verses 18, 20) as to who are the main guilty ones amongst the forces of Gog, namely the *“princes of the earth”*, *“mighty men”*,

and “*men of war*”; there is hardly any mention of the common foot-soldiers, many of whom allowed themselves, innocently perhaps or in ignorance, to get roped into fighting Gog’s battles.

“*They will set apart men regularly employed*” – By the end of seven months after the main task of burying all the obvious and piled-up corpses, then they will begin to look for whatever is left, using special teams of search parties and buriers. Once the beasts of the field have eaten what they want and the fowls of the air have cleaned off what they can get at, there’s nothing left except the bones. These birds and beasts will have been quite busy because the Lord will invite them (in the next few verses) to scavenge the corpses left from the Battle. Because the quicker they eat as much as they can eat, then the quicker the bugs and worms can finish the rest, leaving nothing except bones, which will be more difficult to find. But even these have to be buried “*in order to cleanse*” the land.

“*When anyone sees a man’s bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it.*” This has been a common practice in times of war. After the battle is over, special teams go out searching for the different dead ones, and when they find them, stick a little sign or flag up over them to attract attention; then the teams that come out later with trucks to gather the dead can easily locate them.

“*In the Valley of Hamon Gog. The name of the city will also be Hamonah*” – Besides renaming the Valley of Megiddo to “*Hamon Gog*”, the city nearby will be named “*Hamonah*” which means “city of the multitude”.

“*Thus shall they cleanse the land.*” What a mess! No doubt the Israelis are going to be thankful when that job is over!

Verses 17-20 And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: assemble yourselves and come; gather together from all sides to

My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood.

You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

You shall eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, at My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you.

You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war, says the Lord GOD.

God hasn't forbidden the beasts of the field or the vultures of the air to drink blood and eat flesh; that's their job. They're the garbage men who clean up the garbage. They get at it first because there aren't going to be enough people around right off the bat to get everybody buried in a hurry. So these garbage men of God, God's garbage men, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, are going to start cleaning up the mess by picking their bones clean until they get them all buried.

Well, this is certainly one dirty, stinking portion of Scripture! God is just telling it like it is, no frills or window-dressing, just the plain, ugly facts of the matter, that's all. It's a dirty, gory story, sickening story, but that's the end of the wicked, a sickening sight!

So God, after the Battle of Armageddon, literally invites the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to come and have a feast! This feast is described again in the 19th Chapter of Revelation, Verses 17-18: *"Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather together for the supper of the great God!..."* This repetition of God's invitation to the carrion-eaters is a common thread that helps to tie the two passages together, Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 19, and therefore to know that they both are describing the same thing. The

former passage provides much information about the earthly political developments, leading up to this great final Battle – who the nations involved are, and so on – while the latter provides much information about the supernatural aspects of the Battle.

These “*mighty princes of the earth*”, who lie dead on the battlefield, are compared to sacrificial offerings. Normally, animals are used as sacrifices to God or to idols. Now it is the animals who are receiving the sacrifice, and it’s humans they get to feed on. It’s as if God is mocking His enemies, especially the leaders and warmongers who are responsible for bringing about all this havoc and carnage in the earth: “Look what high profile delicacies I’m giving you to eat – princes and mighty men!” These are the ones who have been sacrificing the lives of mankind to propitiate their gods of war, greed, and lust for power. Now they are the sacrifices, not to God or even the Devil, but just to satisfy the appetite of birds and beasts. In the end that is all their lives have been worth.

Usually, it’s the young foot-soldiers who must suffer on the fields of battle, while the warmongers, the leaders, the generals find ways to escape if needed. But as the passage emphasizes here, they will not escape. The returning Messiah and his angelic forces will see to it that “*the princes of the earth, mighty men and all the men of war*” receive their just reward during this last great battle for the salvation of planet Earth.

Verses 21-24 I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them.

So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward.

The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of

their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them.

Verses 21-24 explain how God will be glorified in this Battle, not only by manifesting His great power through His judgments on the “*nations*”, but also through what happens to the Israeli nation. They explain, not only the fact that Israel gets rescued, but also why she had to get punished before getting rescued.

So, not only are the “*nations*” going to know God is God, but who else needs to learn that God is God? – The Jewish people! They’re going to get a real manifestation – to see their Messiah whom they rejected long ago descending “*with power and great glory*” into the earthly realm to save them! (Matthew 24:30) They’re going to find out they can’t save themselves; God finally had to come down and have mercy on the remnant of them to save them. “*So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD.*” Then the Jewish people will know that Jesus is the Lord.

“*Israel went into captivity*” – In Ezekiel’s time the Jews were living quite literally as captives in a strange land (Babylon). However, the prophecy here refers to modern Israel being held “captive” by the Antichrist and his forces. And why do they have to go “*into captivity*”? “*Because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies.*” Just as today the Israelis hold captive the people of Palestine, so the Antichrist will come in and turn the tables. The Israelis will become the captives, and there will be a great slaughter from the sounds of it in the next phrase:

“*And they all fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them*” – Here we learn that these woes will come on the

Israelis because of their *“uncleanness and... transgressions”*. Since this subject was dealt with earlier in this study, there is no need to go on about it here. But one thing that it does help to understand is what God says here, *“I have... hidden My face.”* God is not the one who will be afflicting the Israelites. It will be the forces of Gog who are being driven by the powers of Darkness. From certain Scriptures we learn that this world, for the time being, has been given over to Satan. (Luke 4:6, John 12:31, 14:30, Rev 13:2,7) And if it were not for God’s guardian angels holding back the spirits of evil, the earth would be in a much bigger mess than it is already. Until God re-claims dominion over His creation, as will happen at the Battle of Armageddon, Satan and his legions will dominate during this present era. So in this time when the Jewish people are suffering so much, it is the forces of Satan that, we could say, are doing God’s “dirty work”. God has “hidden His face”. That is to say, He has withdrawn His protection, and the forces of evil are only too happy for the license to ride roughshod over a people who have the reputation of being “God’s people”. So, although the forces of God are not carrying out the persecution themselves, nevertheless, indirectly God is responsible. But as the passage states clearly, He has His reasons for allowing it to happen.

Verses 25-29 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name- after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid. When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer.

And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.

Verses 25-29 describe God's mercy on the Israelites who will continue to dwell in their land. That doesn't mean they will become the rulers of the world in the Millennium, but at least they'll be allowed to dwell in the land of Israel, which, from what many Scriptures seem to indicate, will become the world's center of government during the Age to come. The rulers of the world then will be chosen by Christ Himself: *"He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations."* (Revelation 2:26)
The "power" spoken of here is not the power gained through wealth or fame but is simply that which manifests God's Love to the world. Jesus Himself said, *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."* (Matthew 5:5)

"Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel" – This seems to refer to God's reversal of the captivity that the modern Jews will experience under the Antichrist's heavy hand of persecution. Of course, Ezekiel was thinking also of the hoped-for return of his ancient Jews from their captivity in Babylon to the land of Israel, but that is not really what is being spoken of here. But his viewpoint does seem to come through a little bit here.

"And I will be jealous for My holy name" – Although the Jews of today have gone far astray from the ways of God, we still should not forget ancient history entirely and just cast it all aside. They were a chosen people and they were put in a chosen land by God. He did it that way in those days because people didn't understand very well the principle of spiritual worship. Jesus hadn't come yet to promote the understanding that *"the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."* (John 4:23). So He had to have an actual nation of people who worshipped Him. All the other nations had gods, had kings; they each had their religions.

He had to try to get a cluster of people to worship Him, and He started off with just one man (Abraham) and his family, which eventually became the nation of Israel. In light of all this ancient heritage, and while the forces of Gog are trampling all over Israel, and while the Antichrist is there *“showing himself that he is God”*(2Thess2:4), it is no wonder that the Lord says here, *“I will be jealous for My holy name”*.

“After that they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me” – But before Messiah can come to rescue the people in whose land and nation He had once lived long ago, there has to be this time of purging, this humbling, this realization of how far they have strayed from the ways of their God. Through this process – *“after that they have borne their shame”* – they will come to realize that they are no more special than any other people on the earth. And the rest of the peoples on earth will see that too. When that has become obvious through Gog’s persecution, then the Jews will be ready to re-gain the blessings of God, starting with the Messiah’s rescue of them from the Antichrist’s oppression. Of course, it won’t only be the Israelis whom He will come to rescue, but all the anti-Antichrist forces that have arisen during those times.

“When they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid.” – Since 1948 the Jews have been dwelling for the first time in their own country after 1,900 years of being rather insecure and dwelling as strangers in other lands. In Israel now, they haven’t been perfectly safe all the time; they’ve had several wars, but most of the time they’ve been holding their own and dwelling safely enough amongst all the Arabs. They’ve won most of their wars against the Arabs so far. And with the unshakeable backing and guarantee of American might and resources behind them, they have at this present time little to worry about regarding their security.

Paradoxically, it is their present over-concern with security that will prove to be their undoing. Their policy of keeping such a tight lid on the

Palestinians, along with belligerence towards their Arab neighbors, all in the name of security, is only serving to isolate themselves, alienate them from would-be friends, and plant the seeds for the catastrophic war that will eventually come as a result, as Ezekiel foresaw long ago.

“When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands” – The Jews had returned from exile in previous history, but only from Babylon, one nation. Here they are shown, as in previous verses (38:8,12) to have returned from many nations, which only happened in modern times – another little indication that the prophecy was foretelling what would happen in this present day and age. This remarkable return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland in modern times has been a sign of God’s enduring faithfulness to those who were once His chosen people. And He says here, when they are re-gathered like this, that *“I am hallowed [honored] in them in the sight of many nations”*.

But to complete the picture so that God is fully glorified, the world must see that He is not playing favorites and that Israel must suffer retribution for her sins of injustice and cruelty against the strangers in her land (the Palestinians). This, as we learn in Daniel 11, is part of the process of refining and making them worthy of the privilege of being called the people of God: *“they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering... to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end.”* (verses 33, 35) This message, by the way, applies just as much to Christians and any of the peoples of God who will be around during this tumultuous time in Earth’s history.

“Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations (during the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Roman invasions), but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer.” In other words, the Jews were given, after World War 2, a land of their own to go to if they wanted. God *“brought them back to their land;”* they didn’t have to be

left “*captive*” in other lands if they didn’t want to be. They were, of course, captives in the Nazi German empire, but in reality, aside from those few years of European history, most Jews would hardly consider themselves “*captives*” in the lands where they live. But to Ezekiel, who was living as a captive in the land of Babylon, this was how he would look at it, and the prophecy seems to reflect his outlook to some extent here.

“And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.” As with any chastisement, once the lessons have been learned, the Spirit of reconciliation and mercy follows the Spirit of judgment. Once more the Spirit of God will dwell on the “*house of Israel*” as it did long ago in the days of the Old Testament.

APPENDIX

The Ezekiel 38-39 prophecy presents startling evidence that it was talking about modern times and the nation of Russia. Some of the more outstanding, obvious clues along this line are given below:

Russia?

- 1) Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal – ancient names for tribes and places in Russia. (38:2,3, 39:1)
- 2) From the “north” (38:6,15, 39:2)

Modern times?

- 1) Modern era: “*Latter years*” – 38:8, “*Latter days*” – 38:16

2) Modern Israel: The Jews had returned from exile in previous history, but only from Babylon, one nation. Here they are shown to have returned from many nations, which only happened in modern times.

“The land of those brought back from the sword... gathered from many people... brought out of the nations” (38:8)

“a people gathered from the nations” (38:12)

“I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and... brought them back to their land” (39:27-28)

3) Modern conditions:

“The land of unwalled villages” (38:11)

“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya... Togarmah” (38:5, 6) – In ancient times these nations had no relation with Israel (except Persia who permitted the captive Jewish people to return to their own land in ancient times). Only in modern times have they become anti-Israel; only now can we see the possibility that these nations (now called Iran, Sudan, Libya, and Turkey) could at some time in the near future ally with Russia to fight in a war against Israel. Regarding Libya, this nation has been quite anti-Israeli under its former leader Qadhafi. Which direction the new regime will take we don’t know, but in fulfillment of this profound prophecy given through Ezekiel, it wouldn’t be at all surprising to see Libya, after a temporary shift in its foreign policy to a pro-Western orientation, return to its original anti-Israel position.

SHAPE OF THE FUTURE

2.1. DUAL NATURE OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM

It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approach'd the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, -"Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear,
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approach'd the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," -quoth he- "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," -quoth he,-
"Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said- "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," -quoth he,- "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL,
So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean;
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

– based on the famous Indian legend, poetic version by John Godfrey
Saxe (1816-1887)

When it comes to interpreting what the Bible says about the future, it is easy to fall prey to what happened to the “blind men of Indostan”. For we are already “blind” to some extent, simply because the predicted events haven’t happened yet. Or at best we see only a dim outline, and we grope around, guess, and try to come up with reasonable explanations. What really helps in this kind of business is to see the whole “elephant” – that is, get the general, overall picture. Then the specifics, and their relationship to each other and to the whole, will fall into place more easily. What we want to avoid is the tendency to grab ahold of one aspect and insist on visualizing the “elephant” on the basis of that one feature only.

(Note: The following study presupposes that the reader has some basic knowledge of certain portions of Scripture, especially the chapters of [Daniel 2](#) and [Revelation 13](#). If you are not familiar with them, then it may be advisable to go over those two chapters before going any further.)

DUAL NATURE OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM

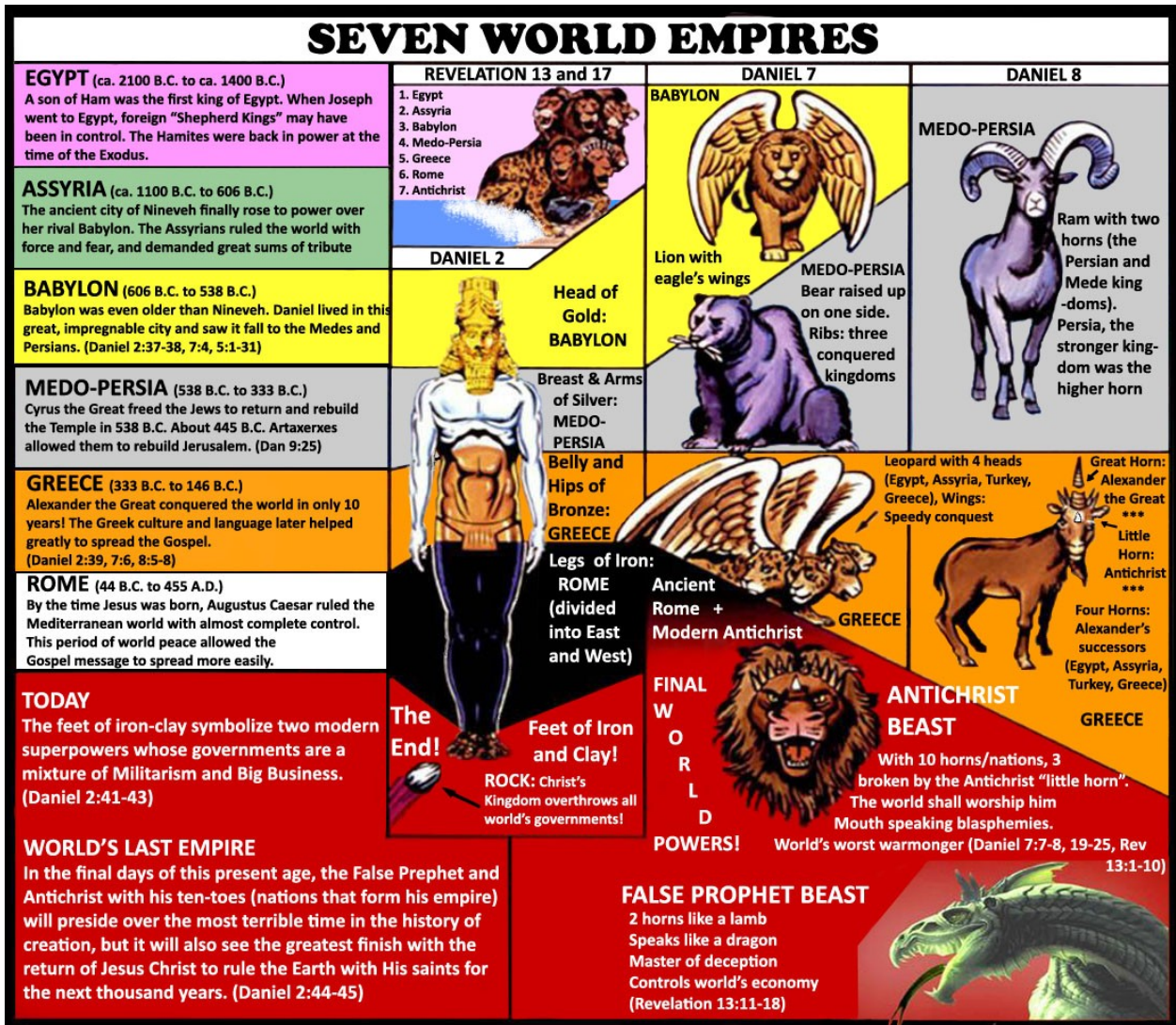


Picture courtesy of <http://angels-watching.com>

The Daniel and Revelation books, in the course of outlining future history, speak of a future “*beast*” who was to rule the world in its final days before the second coming of Christ. Usually, this is understood to symbolize the empire of a world ruler known as the Antichrist. And this is true enough. But if we enlarge the picture a little and look more closely, we’ll find that, instead of one main superpower controlling everything, **there are actually two powerful regimes operating together and comprising this final kingdom.** Following are some indications in the Scriptures that seem to point towards this future historical reality:

- Daniel 2: In the vision of the “*image*”, there are **two “feet”**, symbolizing mankind’s last empire; and the feet are ***made out of two materials (“iron & clay”)***.
- Revelation 13: Another vision that pictures **two “beasts”** ***working together to build the Endtime empire.***
- Revelation 17:11: A more obscure reference here mentions ***the union of two (the 7th and 8th) “heads” or “beasts”.***

So, this dual End Time kingdom was predicted in the Bible, it would seem. And in this way it resembles the dual empires of the past: **Rome was split into East and West Rome**, and **the Medo-Persian empire was the union of two nations, Media and Persia**. The Bible actually portrays the dual feature of these empires in symbolic form in the Book of Daniel – as “*arms of silver*” and “*legs of iron*”. These were components in an awesome-looking “*image*” that appeared in vision form to king Nebuchadnezzar and then Daniel. (Daniel 2) This intriguing vision was surely a clever way to project into the future - an easy-to-understand explanation that God used to illustrate for us in almost child-like terms the future panorama of man’s history and progression of empires that were to control Israel since the time of Babylon, the superpower that controlled Israel in Daniel’s day.



The diagram above (adapted from a publication of The Family International. –see thefamily.org–) illustrates the different visions of empires seen by Daniel the prophet in chapters 2, 7, 8 of the Book of Daniel and similar visions seen by John the Apostle in chapters 13 and 17 of the Book of Revelation. Interestingly, the different visions interconnect with each other and at the same time reveal peculiar features of the empires that came, or will come, to invade the Mideast area, and to conquer the nation of Israel.

Now besides Rome and Medo-Persia, **this awesome image portrays another dual empire (symbolized in the two “feet”). This was to be the last empire**, for as the vision unfolds, it is during the era of the “feet” that **the Lord returns (symbolized as a “stone cut out without hands”).** At that time He destroys the “image” and sets up His Kingdom on earth: “*the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*” (Daniel 2:44-45) So, according to the symbolism, **the empire symbolized by the “feet” was to come in the time of the End, and be a dual empire of some kind.** Although the meaning of this End Time portion of the vision is becoming clearer in recent times, there is still much that remains a mystery. To clear up some of that mystery, it may help to look at how those parts of the “image” that symbolized ancient empires found their fulfillment in history.

In particular, it is generally understood – through the benefit of historical hindsight - that **the “arms of silver” and “legs of iron” symbolized the dual geographical nature of the twin kingdoms of Media and Persia, and East and West Rome. (Daniel 2:32-33)** So, if the same rule applies to the final empire of the “feet”, then **we should expect the Antichrist empire will also be divided into two geographical areas.**

And very likely, these geographical areas would correspond to the dual feature we find in **Revelation 13**, which **describes the rise of two “Beasts” during the End Time era of our history.** In ancient times, ***all the former “beasts” (mentioned in the Book of Daniel) came out of certain land areas and political domains, from which they controlled the rest of the world of their day.*** So, to be consistent with that pattern, **likely the two Beasts (also known as the Antichrist and False Prophet) should each possess a political-geographical domain from which they can control the world of modern times.**

Getting back to the Book of Daniel, some years later after his first vision of the “image”, Daniel had another corresponding vision in which he saw the same empires of man symbolized as “beasts”. This next vision (in Daniel 7)

also ties in with John the Revelator's vision of the two End Time beasts (in Revelation 13). One outstanding feature about these visions is this: the dual empires of **Medo-Persia and Rome** each corresponded to **one "beast" only; each was a "beast" split into two parts.** **But in the Endtime** the situation is unique. For it seems that not only will there be two geographical territories (symbolized by the "feet"), but **this dual empire will be presided over by two "beasts"**. (More explanation about these unusual features of the Endtime empire will be discussed in upcoming posts.)

The main question now is, what two territories do the feet of the image symbolize? **One territory, we can gather from Ezekiel 38 and 39, will base from the land of Russia.** The passage there talks of **a warlike figure** called "*Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal*" - all ancient names for places now in Russia – and he will come from his "*place out of the far north*" to invade the land of Israel "*in the latter years*". (Ezekiel 38:2, 15-16. See "[Ezekiel 38-39](#)" post at endtimeupgrade.org for more information on this subject.) So, in common with the previous sea-Beasts, this "Gog" figure has that one peculiar feature: **he makes a conquest of the Jewish people when they are gathered together in the Mideast.** Therefore, he should qualify as one of the Beasts of the Bible - and particularly, the warlike sea-Beast of Revelation 13, the last one to come in earth's history who is **well known as the Antichrist.**

So that takes care of one foot. But now what about the other foot? There is no mention in the Sacred Book about any other land area, one that would headquarter the other Beast, the False Prophet. But before we delve into that question, let us first take a closer look (in the next post) at **this strange new Beast who came "up out of the earth" and was also known as the "false prophet".** (Revelation 13:11, 19:20, 20:10)

(Scriptures quoted from

NKJV unless noted otherwise)

2.2. ECONOMIC SUPERPOWER

– THE NEW BEAST



The Daniel and Revelation books symbolize **the empires of man** as “**beasts**” who rose out of the “**sea**”. These superpower “**beasts**” conquered, or will conquer, **large portions of the world, including the nation of Israel.** (There have been many beast-like empires through history, but only certain ones are mentioned in the Bible, namely those who had conquered the land of Israel.) The symbolism of the “**sea**” can be understood from Revelation 17:15 – “*The waters which you saw... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*” If the Beasts were pictured as rising out of the **sea**, then likely it means **their strength comes from their influence among the “people”**, their own and those of subjected nations.

It was common in ancient times – in the absence of faith in or knowledge about the true God - for emperors to be worshiped by their peoples as divine beings. In our secular, modern world the same happens - but without the religious trappings - in nations where the Light of Truth has become extinguished by some means, by some popular uprising, such as the reign of Hitler or of some of the communist demagogues of the last century. In its modern guise, such “worship” might be understood better as “secular adulation”. Much of this admiration and worship that history’s demagogues have acquired has been based, not only on their people’s devotion, but also on fear... because of their strength and ability to make war. As it says of the Antichrist in Revelation 13:3-4, *“All the world marveled and followed the beast... and they worshiped the beast, saying... who is able to make war with him?””*

Now, besides these “beasts” who rose out of the “sea”, **there does appear another beast who is different from the rest, one who rose “out of the earth”** (instead of the sea) and **who was to rule in the End Time.** (Revelation 13:11) This one is pictured as **a co-ruler with the other Beast of the End Time** (the one from the “sea” who is well known as the Antichrist). This earth-Beast is also called **the False Prophet.** (Revelation 19:20, 20:10) *

The “earth” symbolism given for this “beast” signifies that his domain of power is somehow different to that of the other “beasts” from the “sea”. Like them, however, he should have the status **of a superpower.** He’s not just **an influential person who** happens to be a member of the Antichrist’s kingdom; he **has a kingdom of his own.** From the symbolic point of view, the word “beast” is like another word for “superpower”. Just as a beast has a complete biological structure of organs, skeletal framework, musculature, limbs, everything needed to form **a fully functioning body,** so a superpower has all the infrastructure of political-military organization, wealth, industry, manpower, weapons, everything that’s needed to form **an empire capable of ruling a large part of the world.**

* **Head = Beast? King = Kingdom?**

The Scriptures in Daniel and Revelation use the terms “*beast*” and “*kingdom*”, “*head*” and “*king*” in several places. A point worth mentioning about these terms is that they are used interchangeably. That is, it’s hard to tell if “*beast*” also means “*head*”, or if “*kingdom*” also means “*king*” – or vice-versa. For example, the Book of Daniel refers to the Mideast superpowers as “*beasts*”, whereas the same powers are symbolized as “*heads*” in the Revelation Book; Revelation 13 speaks of one of the “*heads*” (the Antichrist) being “*mortally wounded*” in verse 3 but in verses 12 and 14 he is referred to as the “*beast whose deadly wound was healed*”; also in Revelation 17, the seventh and eighth “*heads/kings*” are both called the “*beast that was, and is not*”. (Daniel 7:3-7, Revelation 13:1,3,12,14, 17:9-11)

Perhaps using both terms to describe the same thing was the Lord’s way of showing that **a “beast”** (which we would normally think of as **a system, a government, or empire**) **must include the “head” of that empire**, the person. A body without a head isn’t going to get very far; **an empire needs to have a dynamic and strong leader to unify and give it direction, plus be the head that people can look up to**, or even worship. And vice-versa, a head without a body won’t get very far; an emperor cannot call himself that unless he has an empire behind him.

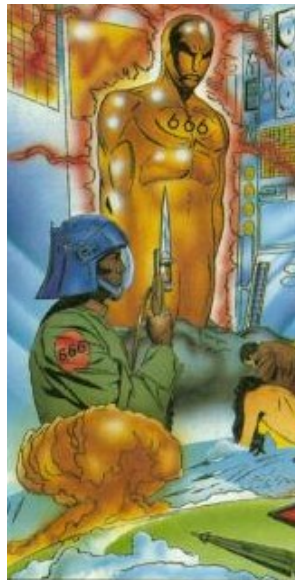
So, to get a complete picture, it may help to keep this in mind about the False Prophet: In his role as a “*head*”, **the False Prophet acts as the Antichrist’s right hand man who will guide the world into following him**; but, to expand this concept a bit, in his role as a “*beast*”, **there exists behind the False Prophet a huge empire - one that**, as will be explained further on, **holds dominion over the world’s economic affairs**.

Throughout history empires established themselves through their military might. Whoever had the strongest, best-organized army became the leading power of the day. **This means of conquest - by force of arms - is typical of all the beasts who "rose out of the sea"**. But in modern times, new domains of power have emerged; especially, financial power has become a force equivalent to, even surpassing, the traditional forces of political & military conquest. And here is where the second Beast in Revelation comes into the picture.

Now **the earth-Beast** is also called **the False Prophet** in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10, and this suggests that he **must operate and rule in the realm of religion**. So we might wonder, does he really exercise that much worldly power? His influence should be mostly spiritual, we would think, not pragmatic or worldly. Well, let's take a closer look at the religion he will be promoting. Revelation 13:12 tells us, **"He... causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast (the Antichrist)."** So he is **promoting worship of the Antichrist** and having thus a **spiritual** influence. But then how is that worship manifested? Further on in verses 16-17, we learn that **"It (the earth-Beast or False Prophet) causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name."** (RSV) This passage describes the soon-coming credit system that the world will be obliged to adopt if it wants to continue buying and selling. But **this act of getting "marked" is also an act of worship** - like receiving a brand **to show that a person has given his allegiance to and belongs to the Antichrist.**

How can we recognize this as an act of worship? We can start to find the answer by looking back into the Old Testament: whenever the word **"worship"** is mentioned there, very often it is accompanied by the phrase **"fall down"** or **"bow down"**. This was the standard way of showing one's worship then. But **in the Revelation Book** we see instead that the phrase **"worship (the beast and/or his image)"** is accompanied by the phrase **"receive the mark"**. Most of the prophecies and visions in the Book of

Revelation were aimed at outlining events and conditions that would arise in the distant future, in particular the future we call modern times. And these statements about the peculiar practice of receiving the mark reflect the soon-coming historical reality, this peculiar futuristic way of showing "worship", or declaring one's allegiance to the Antichrist. "He deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image." **Receiving the mark and worshipping go hand in hand -just as bowing and worshipping did in former times.** (Revelation 19:20. Also, 14:9, 11, 16:2, 20:4)



So, all that to say, the False Prophet, in the course of pushing the Antichrist into a position of great authority, has the capacity to implement a new buying and selling scheme in the markets of the world and use it to coerce the world into worshipping the Antichrist. To be able to wield such power would mean that most of the world's sources and production of wealth, including the financial system especially, have fallen into the hands of this Beast from the earth. And so it would appear that the False Prophet's religious power is rooted in and dependent on worldly economic power. The Antichrist is able to coerce the world into worship of himself because of his military might, but the False Prophet is able to coerce the world

into worshipping the Antichrist because of his control of the world's economy.

Even the symbolism of the “*earth*” suggests this: **Where does wealth come from? From the mines and farms and forests of the “*earth*”** come the resources for manufacturing and industry out of which grow the trading, commercial, and financial systems of exchange. So with the Antichrist wielding power on the military-political level and the False Prophet wielding power on the economic level, that results in fairly widespread coverage. **The symbolism of the Beasts coming from both the sea and the earth suggests this idea of completeness.** Never before in history have the Beasts of both “*sea*” and “*earth*” operated in and ruled over the world simultaneously and in cooperation with each other.

At times, powerful military empires were able to work together for a time as allies, such as the World War II Axis of Germany, Italy, and Japan. But these superpowers ruled their respective territories without interference from each other; whereas the picture **in Revelation 13 seems to be that Antichrist and False Prophet act as co-rulers over the same territory**, that part of the Earth they've managed to get under their direct control. So, **this combination will be unique in history - something that could only be possible in the Modern Age** – although there is reason to believe that behind the scenes it has been in the works for quite some time. Soon then, looming on the horizon of history, we can expect to see the actual appearance of this last dual empire, this powerful union of two “*Beasts*”, just before Christ's return.

So now, the question is, who are these two Beasts? Or, what territories do **the two “*feet*” of Daniel's vision** of the “*image*” symbolize? In the previous post we determined that **one of the Beasts/feet was represented by Russia**, but a question mark still remains about **the identity of the other Beast/foot**. And that will be the subject of the next post.

(Scriptures quoted from NKJV unless noted otherwise)

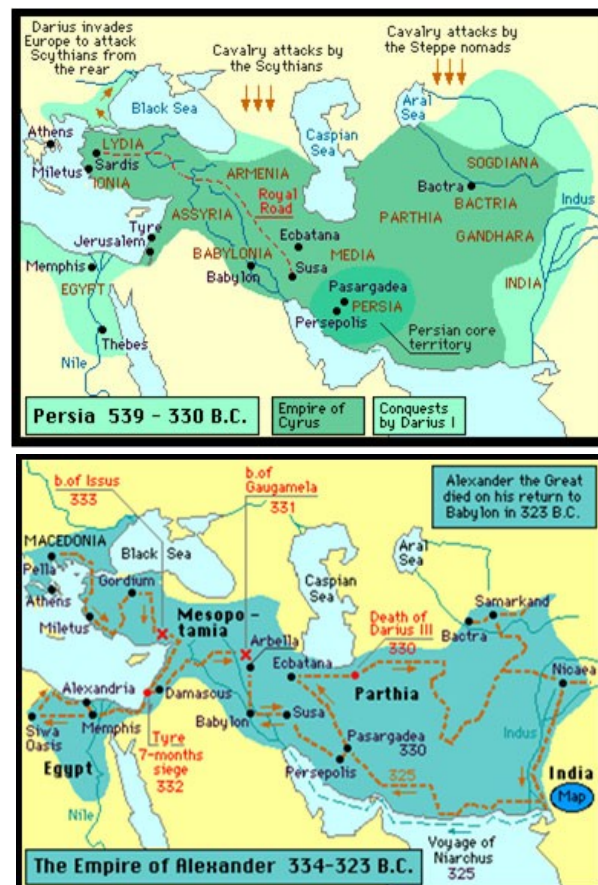
2.3. WHO ARE THE TWO SUPERPOWERS OF THE END?

From the first post we learned that one part (or “foot”) of the dual empire of the Antichrist would be the land of Russia. But a question mark still hovered over how to identify the other part in this dual empire. To start, we could deduce this much: whichever nation or superpower it is, it **would have to be strong enough and commercialized enough to be capable of administering the world economically.** (As mentioned in the previous post, this seems to be the major strong point about **the earth-Beast’s domain.**) Nowadays, that means being a **technologically advanced and fully computerized society.**

At present, the European Union would seem the best candidate to play **the “earth-Beast” role on the End Time stage.** For a number of reasons: 1) **The EU and Russia are natural partners:** they are in close proximity and share a similar culture and heritage. 2) Also, the old barrier of communism has been removed; this has distanced Russia somewhat from her old communist partner, China, and cleared the way for her to enter more into the European orb of democratic nations. 3) China, which is also becoming a great commercial superpower, is more likely to play the role of outsider – a competitive threat that could prod Russia and the EU into joining forces in order to strengthen themselves against the up-and-coming Chinese rival. 4) As for the more distant American empire, it is hard to imagine how this nation, which has generally remained hostile to Russia in spite of communism’s collapse, could ever enter into a close partnership with her.

5) One more compelling reason to identify Russia and the EU as the two territories that comprise the final Antichrist empire can be seen in the symbolic portrayal of the “*image*” in Daniel 2 and its uncanny correlation with the geographical and chronological nature of the Mideast empires.

For example, the symbolism for the empires of Medo-Persia and Greece shows respectively “*arms and breast*”, “*belly and thighs*”. (Incidentally, “*thighs*” should be translated as “*haunches*”, “*hips*”, or “*buttocks*”.) Between breast and belly, there is not much of a separation; they can almost be thought of as one body part. Not surprisingly, **Persia and Greece** seem to reflect this symbolism rather accurately; **each one occupied almost the same territory as the other**.



On the chronology aspect of the “*image*” vision: **the long arms and legs symbolize rather well the lengthy empires of Medo-Persia and Rome.** (The arms and legs also correlate with **the dual nature of those two empires.**) The first and last empires symbolized in the “*image*” are represented by the comparatively short head and feet. Babylon’s rule lasted only 70 years, and

the final Antichrist empire will be even less: *"he (the final Beast) was given authority to continue for forty-two months... and when he (the last king) comes, he must continue a short time."* (Revelation 13:5, 17:10)

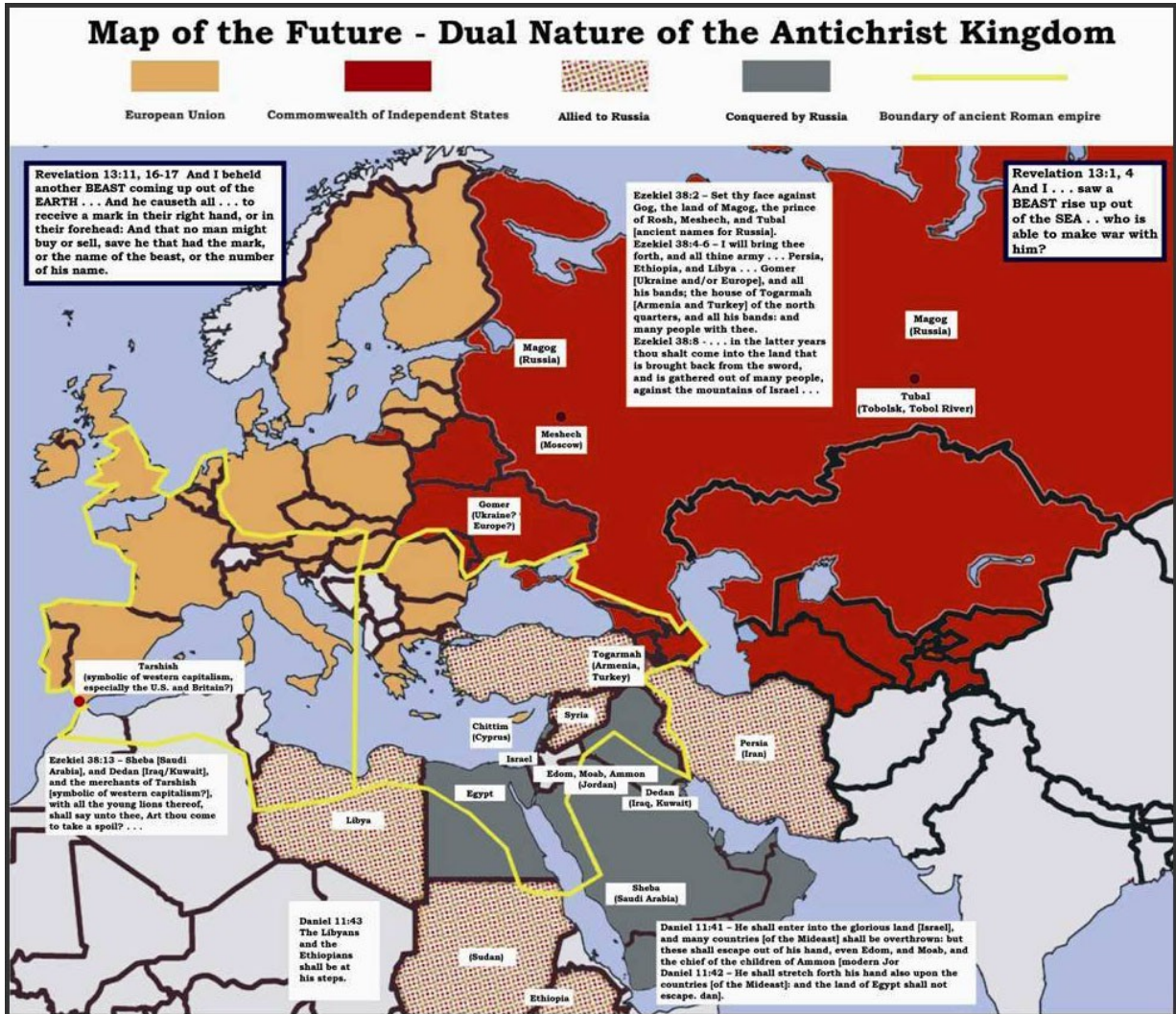
Looking then at the *"feet"* and the *"legs"* of the *"image"*, we can deduce this much: since a foot is part of the leg, **we might expect to find some relationship between the Roman *"legs"* and the modern Antichrist-kingdom *"feet"*.** Do the two legs of East and West Rome divide the world along similar lines - that is, between Europe and Russia, the two superpowers we've deduced will form the Antichrist empire?

Well, we can see how **the EU superpower occupies most of the territory that used to belong to West Rome.** However, the ancient empire of East Rome covered only a tiny corner of the Russian superpower. Perhaps we could say that the culture of East Rome spread into Russia through the Roman Orthodox Church. We can also include the Mideast here and north Africa since these regions, according to the prophecies in Daniel 11 and Ezekiel 38-39, will be conquered by or allied to Russia. So, **the future expanded Russian empire actually will occupy much of the same territory as the ancient East Roman empire.**

⇒The use of the word "Caesar" exemplifies one way that ancient Roman society has left its imprint in both Europe and Russia. **The Russian word "Czar" and the German word "Kaiser" both originated from the ancient Roman word "Caesar".**

To conclude, since we usually think of the foot as being part of the leg, then it is not surprising to find that, from the geographical point of view, what we could foresee as **the territory of the final empire (the *"feet"*) might just happen to occupy much the same**

territory (and in a dual form) as did the ancient Roman empire (the "legs").



According to Ezekiel 38-39 and Daniel 11, the future Russian empire will include the nations of the Mideast, some as conquered territories, others as allies. Assuming all these deductions and conclusions so far are correct, then this expanded Russian empire will constitute one half of the Antichrist kingdom. The European Union will comprise the other half.

Even if the modern land areas are not exactly the same as the ancient ones, they are at least connected. And that's about all that's necessary. **The foot is not the leg, but is only an extension that is connected to it.** The same could be said of the EU: many of its countries were never part of ancient Rome. But still it is connected, at least, to the West Roman empire and is an extension of it. To go even further with this leg-foot symbolism, the fact that **the feet are more spread out than the legs** could be symbolic of how **the modern empire is like a spread-out version of ancient Rome.** And as mentioned, from the chronological point of view, the fact that the feet are shorter than the legs should symbolize the shortness of the Antichrist reign in comparison to the lengthy rule of ancient Rome. The position of the feet also tells us that **this empire comes at the tail end of world history.** (Hopefully, this is not overdoing it with the image's symbolism; it is remarkable, though, how well it all seems to fit together.)

So now we understand what the two feet of Daniel's image appear to symbolize. How then might the two Beasts of Revelation 13 fit into this framework? The Scriptures (in Ezekiel 38-39) point quite specifically to **Russia** as representing **the "beast from the sea"**, but what can we say about identifying **Europe** as **the "beast from the earth"**? That will be the subject of the next post.

(Scriptures quoted from NKJV unless noted otherwise)

2.4. IS MODERN EUROPE THE “BEAST FROM THE EARTH”?



In the previous post we saw how this view of **a dual empire** split into **the EU (European Union)** and **Russia** was foreseen in this symbolic portrayal of the legs and feet of the “*image*” in Daniel 2. As for the dual empire of two “*beasts*” depicted in Revelation 13, **Russia**, we learned, is easily understood as **the “beast from the sea”**. But what about **Europe** as **the “beast from the earth”**, also known as **the False Prophet**?

The modern historical situation does seem to offer some good signposts that might point us in that direction in our thinking. Take, for example,

the fact that **Europe's unity hinges on a monetary union**. Not military or political authority, but **financial authority**, is the foundation of her power. And this, as we've learned, seems to be **one of the strong points about the earth-beast in Revelation 13: his ability to control the buying and selling activities of the world.**

In very recent history the EU was well on its way to becoming the world's dominant economic power. Its members were supposed to be observing strict fiscal guidelines and so build an association established on a firm financial foundation. Had they followed through on these guidelines, the EU by now would have emerged as the world's strongest economy. It would bode well for **the EU in any future role she might take on as the world's next commercial superpower**. And thus, it would have been easy to predict that she would fulfill the role of **the earth-Beast in charge of the world's buying and selling system** as outlined in Revelation 13:16-17. But as it is now, the EU has been undergoing much strain economically, so it remains to be seen how the new superpower will emerge from the present crisis. In the end it may strengthen the Union, by centralizing more authority to itself, or it may cause the weaker members to leave, which also may strengthen what's left of the Union. Anyway, we'll have to wait and see how things pan out. (See [Appendix](#) of this article)

At any rate, as an economic association, the EU stands out as a much different sort of empire to those that have come and gone through history. And this reflects how the “*earth*” symbolism for the Beast in the Revelation 13:11-18 passage differs from the symbolism for the other Beasts in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, all of whom rose “*from the sea*”.

Europe differs from other superpowers in another way too: compared to the warlike Antichrist “*beast from the sea*”, or for that matter to the American superpower, **Europe is far more peaceful and tolerant**. Having suffered through two World Wars, Europe has learned to distrust war and is **far more conciliatory in her ways than other world powers**. Europe's role in world affairs seems to fit

nicely the symbolism of the earth-Beast **having “two horns like a lamb” – a rather un-warlike portrayal** when compared with **the other sea-Beast and his “ten horns” of whom it was said, “Who is able to make war with him?”**

But the fact that **it “spoke like a dragon”** reveals another side to the picture - what this Beast is really up to. Instead of being a warmonger like the Antichrist, **the False Prophet plays the role of deceiver: “he deceives those who dwell on the earth.”**

(Revelation 13:14) But to do that well he has to make himself appear respectable. So, what better way to achieve such an end than to use a peaceful superpower like Europe as a sort of façade? **By projecting an image of righteousness through the EU, the False Prophet can more easily deceive the world into rejecting the ways of faith.** How true it seems to be in this world that no matter how useful a new invention, a new philosophy, or in this case, a new organization of states may be, the forces of Darkness are always right there to seize, corrupt, and use it in some way to serve a harmful design.

The world looks at **this superpower that has become so secular in its ways, yet behaves well on the international scene**, and concludes that God’s way doesn’t work. It sees that Christian America’s self-appointed role as the world’s policeman is not working due to her aggressive, even bullying approach to international relations; it sees that Islamic extremism and Judaism’s belligerence in the Mideast are also not working. So **what are people to conclude? Europe’s way of secularism must be the answer – goodness without God.** It is very sad, of course, that this kind of message is being projected into the world; it undermines faith - just as does the poor example of the above-mentioned religious groups. Their misguided activities on the world scene, supposedly in the name of God, are playing straight into the hands of the forces of Darkness and will give the Antichrist plenty of fuel for his propaganda fire, his *“blasphemy against God”* and *“pompous words against the Most High”*. (Revelation 13:6, Daniel 7:25)

The following prophetic message seems to size up well the dilemma that mankind faces these days in world affairs and how God sees the situation:

“(Jesus:) **Neither the American way nor the European way bears good fruit** in the end, for **neither is My way**. Both work to turn people against Me, whether they do so overtly or more subtly. **The American worldview and way are more physically destructive, and the European worldview and way are more spiritually destructive...** Both work to prepare the way for the Man of Sin [the Antichrist] and for **his** way in the Last Days, when he will declare that he has succeeded where religion has failed, so the world should worship him.” (published by The Family International, April/2006, www.thefamily.org/)

So neither the American way nor the European way is God’s way. **America’s Christianity seems to have forgotten** such basic principles as Jesus’ words in the historic Sermon on the Mount to **“love your enemies”**. And **Europe has forgotten** how much of her history was rooted solidly in the Christian faith, and **how much Christian ideals and practices are woven into the fabric of her culture**, and how much she has benefited from that and from the work, ideas, and inventions of dedicated Christians in the past. But *in this world it will always be rare to find a government that is truly following God’s way of faith, peace, and love. For the most part that is something that will have to wait for Christ’s Second Coming* and intervention into the affairs of mankind, as promised in several passages from the Sacred Book.

Considering then all these different factors, what better location for the “*earth-beast*” than **this odd new superpower**, which **has been taking shape before our eyes over the last 50 years? It has** the financial infrastructure, advanced technology, educated manpower, secular culture - **everything the False Prophet needs**

to carry out his side of operations in the world government of the End Time.

It is well known too that the world is heading towards a cashless society and that the major center of operations has existed **in Brussels** for quite some time. **From there**, great computer surveillance and **information networks have spread out to form this worldwide credit system.** So already, in spite of her present financial struggles, **Europe** is in the rehearsal stages for what looks like could be **her future role as the “earth-beast” in charge of operating the worldwide “mark-number” credit system.** (*Revelation 13:16-17*) Europe has all the advanced technology for it and is perhaps less concerned than the U.S. about government invasions of freedom and privacy. ***Of all places in the world, hardly anywhere has progress toward the “mark” credit system advanced as far as it has in the EU.*** If indeed the earth-Beast is stationed there, then it wouldn't be difficult to imagine that his influence is like a hidden driving force, pushing European society towards welcoming the new system.

It seems then that if the long-foretold “earth-beast” of Revelation 13 has headquartered himself anywhere, it would have to be in the well-ordered superpower of the EU. This transformation of Europe into an economic union showcases this Beast's success in forging a modern, commercial empire out of a group of once-powerful, independent nations. These nations are being herded into their economic union, often for very good reasons. Yet at the same time, if it is true that **the earth-Beast is symbolic of the EU, or at least is using the EU as his base of operations**, then we could assume that ***the powers of Darkness must be operating vigorously behind the scenes to guide the formation of the EU into something that can be used later as a means of ruling the world economically.*** This is a hidden reality, difficult to prove right now perhaps, but in the future **it shouldn't surprise us to**

see the emergence of Europe's worldwide credit system as the new controlling authority on matters to do with allegiance to the rule of the Antichrist and compliance with the “*mark-number*” buying and selling system.

There are, of course, many advantages to the greater unity and economic stability existing now in the EU (although that stability is being shaken somewhat lately). And if that were the end of the story, it would be fine, but behind it all **there does exist a plan to use the EU's resources and organization for world takeover**. To go into more detail about this “plan” is a whole subject in itself, which, hopefully, will be covered in some future post.

Now this mention about “world takeover” does not mean that there is something wrong with the idea of having a world government; this is not bad in itself. The world needs some kind of overall organization and coordination amongst its various nations to manage international crises of war, pollution, food scarcities, etc.; this is what the United Nations is supposed to be for. The problem is that, **no matter how worthwhile and idealistic a new endeavor may be, the Forces of Darkness are always right there to infiltrate, distort, and cause the new plan or invention to serve the wrong purposes**; especially in the sphere of peace-keeping, the U.N. has become rather weak and ineffective so that stronger nations are not restrained enough from pursuing their own selfish agendas. As a result the world has seen a great number of pointless wars and genocidal conflicts since the U.N. was founded in 1945. We can be thankful, however, that **the coming of Christ will set mankind free to pursue worthwhile endeavors and goals unhindered by the interference of Satan and his hordes**; that **God's plan to establish His Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” will be fulfilled.** (*Matthew 6:10*)

Getting back to what is going on in the EU: The ever-growing power of its international government is steadily paralyzing sovereign initiatives from individual states that might interfere with the growth of the new empire. * Once the EU is better established, then the next step to bring in the rest of the world under the Antichrist will be made

easier. It'll just be a matter of following the EU's example, extending operations a bit - perhaps giving outside nations membership or favored nation status. However it happens, **Europe's new unity and financial power would make her the ideal base of operations from which the False Prophet can subject the rest of the world under the future regime of the "mark-number" economic system.** To conclude, it seems safe to say - however things may turn out once the dust settles from the EU's present upheavals - that **the signs are pointing to an up-and-coming federation of European nations that will serve as the future geographical seat of the Earth-Beast's empire.**

* In current news there is at least one state, Greece, that would like to drop out of the Union. The EU has bent over backwards to hold on to Greece, knowing that if Greece goes, it could lead to the breakup of the Union. It will be interesting to see if the EU has become strong enough now that it can force Greece to stay.

And, **besides being a commercial empire, Europe is a media empire as well.** Next to the U.S., Europe is the world's major media center and should be capable of fulfilling what Revelation 13 says about the False Prophet Beast: **He "causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast (the Antichrist)". (verse 12) He causes the lifelike "image" to be broadcast, which will "both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed".** (verse 15) Modern press, TV, movies have influenced Europe, and other nations, to stray from their Christian roots, mainly by promoting so much materialism. Since this Beast is also called **the False Prophet**, then **his main job must be to communicate to the world an anti-God attitude and message.**

And to do this, he must control the media. In the early days of press and TV, these outlets were independent and useful sources of

truth, but nowadays they have fallen under the control of the wishes and whims of big business, those who handle the purse strings. Except for a few small independent outlets (and lately some not-so-small ones like Facebook and Twitter), the mainstream media have become mouthpieces for the status quo or whatever emerging status quo happens to be looming on the horizon – which in the days to come will manifest as the dual empire of the Beasts of earth and sea.

It seems safe to predict that **the Antichrist will make a military conquest of the world through his wars in the Mideast and against America.** (This can be deduced from the following chapters: Ezekiel 38-39, Daniel 11, Revelation 17-18.) *But to complete that conquest, he will need a strong financial base and infrastructure that can provide an alternative to America's Dollar capitalist system. He will also require the support of the media to foster worship of himself.* There will also be a need for an effective surveillance system to keep an eye on the world's vast population. So, who takes care of all that? It would be difficult to picture Russia alone possessing enough of that kind of power to effectively rule the world as she'll need to.

However, looking at the present historical landscape, *it would be easy to picture Europe as the superpower capable of providing those elements necessary for a thorough conquest of the world.* She is already the center of the world's computer surveillance networks and cashless economic system, and a major media broadcasting center. The Euro has become a major alternative to the Dollar's dominance in the world's currency markets, and, depending on how she weathers the present crisis, Europe could emerge as the world's strongest economy. All these features combine to fashion a peculiar new type of world empire - one that happens to fit very well the prophetic description of the False Prophet Beast given in Revelation 13:11-18. Taking all these factors into consideration, **if the False Prophet Beast were to have a geographical headquarters somewhere, then the EU would surely be the best location**, the one that is easily capable of fulfilling the role attributed to the earth-Beast in Revelation 13: **“He**

exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth ... to worship the first beast... He causes all... to receive a mark... that no one may buy or sell... (verses 12, 16, 17)

To sum it up, the Daniel and Revelation Books picture the Antichrist kingdom as consisting of two parts. We know Russia fits as one part. So, we're just trying to complete the picture and figure out who the other part is. We might call **Europe the anti-Christ False Prophet Beast**, and **Russia the anti-Christ Antichrist Beast**. And it is by means of these two that this dual empire is able to conquer a large part of the world in a very thorough manner - militarily & politically by the Antichrist (from Russia), economically and spiritually by the False Prophet (from Europe). That may be a very simple picture, and it's difficult to know accurately how things will pan out in the future, but for now it's a starting point at least.

By the way, this portrayal in Revelation 13 of the *"beast from the sea"* and the *"beast from the earth"* echoes a previous vision in chapter 6 of the Book of Revelations. It describes **the "red horse"** and **"black horse"** who are symbolic of spiritual forces - the powers of **war** and **greed** - that were to be unleashed upon the Earth in these last days. The Revelation 13 chapter seems to look at these same forces from a more down-to-earth viewpoint, describing the actual military and economic strongholds who carry out these Horses' destructive influence in the earthly realm. And going even further with this, Daniel 2 also seems to symbolize from another perspective these same spiritual forces of war and greed - as **"iron and clay"**. So, that's an interesting pattern in the Bible's tapestry that the Lord seems to have woven into the Daniel and Revelation Books.

From what we've learned so far, **the False Prophet presides**, not only **over the religion of Antichrist-worship**, but also, because of his control **over the world's wealth**, he should **also** be regarded as **the one who presides over the religion of Materialism**. And **Materialism is a religion in its own right, and one that has**

persisted throughout history. Along this line, here is an interesting quote:

“The Lord epitomizes or symbolizes it [**Materialism**] by calling it **Mammon**, who was **the god of wealth and things** of the ancient World. Jesus Himself said it, He uses that as a symbol. He uses that god that they were familiar with and **they knew was the god of wealth and things and possessions.** He said, ‘You cannot serve both Mammon and the Lord.’ (Mat 6:24) ...”

“They [Capitalist & Communist governments] all worship this world and this Earth and what it can provide, things and money and wealth and possessions and gadgets and the power that it gives them. **The World has only one really genuine worldwide religion which would be popular with everybody, the worship of materialism, and greater than any other religion, more widespread than any other religion, more general...**”

(from **David Berg** lecture – June/1985, www.davidberg.org)

Just as **the Antichrist**, coming out as the world’s new demagogue, does so by virtue of **commanding a powerful military-political empire**, so **the False Prophet**, coming out as the world’s new promoter of Materialism, **commands enormous power through his control over the world’s economy and wealth** – its finances, industry, natural resources, and so on.

The domains of the two “*beasts*” are very different, and this would make sense: as the Revelation Book pictures it, **these beasts** don’t just co-exist but **are like co-regents**. It would be difficult to do that if both were operating in the same arena of power. Two military

superpowers would come into conflict with each other. But *with the Antichrist as the military superpower, the False Prophet could join forces with him from a different angle as the world's economic superpower (and along with that, be its guiding religious influence).*

So, **in a sense, there are actually two Antichrists.**

This is a very simple picture, and there are more facets to be covered later. But for now, this is a starting point. It will give us a better overall view and will help us better understand this mystery about the dual nature of the Antichrist kingdom.

Perhaps we're not used to thinking of the False Prophet beast as another Antichrist. One is enough. Until the time comes, it's a little difficult to pinpoint exactly how the roles are going to be played out. But the Revelation Book does suggest that **two high-profile personages will play their parts on the Endtime stage.**

Generally, we could say that the False Prophet won't be worshipped like the Antichrist, but his power is probably just as great, and his influence is just as anti-Christ as the Antichrist's, if not more so.

Appendix

News articles about the European Union. The first article brings to light the intention of Europe's planners to forge an empire out of a group of once independent nations. The second exposes how much Europe is being controlled by those who pull the strings of financial power. The third gives an idea of the European Union's potential to dominate the world of the near future. (Significant passages are highlighted in yellow.)

The Greek crisis brings us even closer to the European empire

By Norman Tebbit, Daily Telegraph, June 23rd, 2011

A long time ago, when I spent a lot of time at the Council of Ministers in Brussels, my good friend Otto Graf Lambsdorff and I would wearily

raise our heads and mutter “Beware the Greeks when they come demanding gifts” when confronted by yet another plea for a subsidy from our Greek colleague. It would be very easy to think that current events in Greece are just a continuation of that same problem.

That would be to misunderstand **the grand strategy being pursued in Brussels. It is designed to achieve, without recourse to war, the realization of a dream unfulfilled since the fall of Rome, the first pan-European Empire.** Spain, France and Austro Hungary failed in their attempts to build such an Empire and after yet another destructive European war, **the founding fathers of the EU swore to achieve through politics what warfare had failed to deliver.**

The creation of a common, or to be correct, sole currency, the euro, was not an end in itself, but a weapon to achieve by economic means, a European government. It was about politics, not economics.

Had it been about economics, the Germans would never have closed their eyes and held their noses as the Greek government met the requirement for admission to the currency union only with blatantly falsified statistics. There could never have been any serious doubt that sooner or later there would be a crisis requiring a Greek bailout, default or exit from the eurozone. Nor can there be any doubt that there will be bailout after bailout, with the sums at risk if Greece were to default and exit the zone growing to the level at which it would inflict huge damage to the wider European and world economy. Indeed, there are already whispers that it is our interest to do anything to avoid such a disaster, for if Greece went down Spain might be next.

In short, gradually the Greek escape route out of the euro to reconstruct its economy is being blocked. However, things cannot go on as they are, with drip-feed bailouts while the desperate problems of the Greek people grow worse.

So it will not be long before the would-be collective Emperor in Brussels announces that Tebbit was of course right all those long years

ago when he told Chancellor Clarke that no currency can have two, let alone a couple of dozen chancellors and there must be One Euro, One Chancellor, One Finance Ministry, One Tax Rate and One Europe or the whole European economy, including ours, will be brought down.

Could that be a democratic state? Please do not ask awkward questions like that. Just do as you are told. If not, it will be all the worse for you. You must be ready to pay the price for peace (of a kind) and prosperity (of a sort).

Escaping the Clutches of the Financial Markets

Essay by Dirk Kurbjuweit, Der Spiegel, June 3, 2011

The economy is booming, with 1.5 percent growth in the first quarter. We are as prosperous as we were before the crisis, which has finally been overcome. Congratulations are in order for everyone.

The banks, Deutsche Bank above all, deserve particular congratulations. In the first quarter, it earned €3.5 billion (\$5.1 billion) in pretax profits in its core business, and by the end of the year the bank will likely report a record €10 billion in pretax profits, its best results ever. That number is expected to rise to €11 billion or even €12 billion in two or three years.

Less than three years after the peak of the crisis, it seems as if it never happened. That is true of the economy, but it also true of us as economic subjects. But is that all we are?

No, we are also citizens and participants in a democratic society. As such, we have no reason to be celebrating. Instead, we ought to be sad and outraged. Democracy, after all, is not doing splendidly, or even well. It is gradually becoming a casualty of the financial crisis.

Trouble is brewing all over Europe. Young people with little hope for the future are protesting in Spain. In France, 1.4 million copies were sold of a manifesto titled “Be Outraged.” Young Frenchmen and women are devising utopias that extend well beyond civil society, because they

no longer expect anything from it. A deep depression has descended upon Greece, combined with a rage directed at politicians and at the rest of Europe.

In Germany, this is what politicians are hearing from their citizens today: You spent billions to rescue the banks, and now I'm supposed to be footing the bill? Forget it! Hardly anyone is willing to put up with their politicians any more. And German leaders have lost support—and some of their own legitimacy.

They seem helpless, unable to come to grips with the euro crisis. They meet in Brussels, and they talk, argue and adopt resolutions, and yet nothing improves. Greece isn't getting out of its hole, Ireland and Portugal are teetering on the brink, and Spain and Italy are heavily indebted to a dangerous degree. And no politician is providing leadership.

And then there were the lies. Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of Luxembourg, had his spokesman deny that a meeting of European Union finance ministers on the Greek crisis was taking place, even though that meeting was in fact taking place. It wasn't the kind of lie that frequently crops up in politics: the broken campaign promise. Rather, it was more crass type of untruth: the denial of a reality. Juncker no longer had the courage to speak the truth. He was guided by fear of the financial markets. His lie was a capitulation of politics.

This is what is so disturbing about the current situation, the fact that politicians seem so helpless and powerless. They have been given a new master, and it's not us, the people, who tend to intervene in milder ways. Rather, it's the ruthless financial markets. The markets drive politicians even further into anxiety, weakness, incapacity and lies. Those who govern us are now being governed by the banks. That's the situation.

How has this happened? What are the consequences? And how do we extricate ourselves from this situation?

Would it be erroneous to say that those who are now at the top are the ones who caused the whole disaster in the first place? That would include Deutsche Bank, whose CEO, Josef Ackermann, has just announced such magnificent financial figures. When Ackermann was asked how concrete the banks' willingness is to contribute to solving the crisis, a November article in the German financial daily Handelsblatt says he replied by saying the issue is taking a "very unfortunate turn at the moment." The markets, Ackermann added, have reacted negatively to this debate. His remarks could be seen as a threat: Those who make demands will quickly find themselves up against the banks.

At Deutsche Bank's annual meeting last Thursday, Ackermann crowed that the bank was in the process of "bringing in the harvest." But the harvest of what? And from what seed? Investment banking alone is expected to contribute €6 billion to the anticipated €10 billion in annual profits. Have we already forgotten that excessively greedy investment banking triggered the financial crisis in the first place?

The rating agencies also continue to participate in world politics, seemingly unperturbed as they issue credit ratings on which the fate of entire nations hinges, because the interest rates for government bonds are based on these ratings. Belgium threatens to lose its AA+ rating, and Fitch Ratings has just revised its outlook on Belgium from "stable" to "negative." Have we already forgotten that the big rating agencies were partly responsible for the financial crisis, because of their positive valuations of bundles of assets that contained toxic securities?

So this is what the new masters look like. They were substantially to blame for part one of the financial crisis and is being brazen in part two. They are extremely jumpy, greedy and only interested in numbers. Those numbers inform the way they control and drive politics.

But why do politicians allow themselves to be controlled and driven? Why don't they simply shake off the unforgiving dominance of the financial markets? The answer is that they can't, because **the political**

world is dependent on the banks, and it has only itself to blame.

Greece would not have fallen into the maelstrom of the financial crisis if it hadn't been deeply in debt. Greece has borrowed more money than it can handle, and it constantly needs to borrow even more. It has become addicted to credit because of its own dissolute lifestyle. As a result, the country has become a pawn of rating agencies, interest rates and the calculations of men like Ackermann.

In principle, this applies to all countries in the euro zone, including Germany. **Although the German finance minister can easily service all loans, he too is dependent on ratings, interest rates and Ackermann's calculations. Through the euro, Germany is entangled with Greece, Ireland and Portugal, and its own financial situation isn't sufficiently spectacular to eliminate all concerns. The German government cannot simply do what it thinks best. It must constantly take pains to avoid being pulled into the maelstrom itself.**

Now, policies of immoderation—the urge to impose as few burdens as necessary on citizens while giving them as much as possible—is coming home to roost. **Such policies gave us a high standard of living, but now, partly as a result of the euro, it has delivered us into the clutches of the financial markets.**

As such, it isn't just the banks that are at fault for the current disaster. Politicians also deserve their share of the blame. But that isn't the whole story either. We, the citizens, are also culpable. Don't we expect high returns from financial institutions, and don't we expect a smaller tax burden from the government while receiving generous subsidies and social benefits?

In other words, the financial and euro crisis are a reflection of our own wishes. We play a role in the behavior of banks and politicians, because they also seek to fulfill our wishes so that they can win us over as customers or voters.

The public is becoming mistrustful of politicians. Citizens feel treated unfairly when politicians fulfill the banks' wishes with billions in bailouts, while ignoring the wishes of citizens. Why does the German government buy up 25 percent of ailing Commerzbank, but not 25 percent of a struggling bakery around corner or of that other cash-strapped enterprise, the family with three children? One could say that it's because Commerzbank is so large and important to the financial system—too big to fail—but that doesn't alleviate our discomfort with an unfair situation.

One could see the whole thing as a duel between politicians and the financial markets—but if it is, the politicians aren't looking good.

The economy has all the advantages. Financial companies are not obligated to serve the general good. They are under no pressure to legitimize their actions, they operate in a secretive way, and they pursue a clear goal that they are wildly determined to achieve: high yields.

Politics, by contrast, particularly on the European level, is cumbersome. National leaders must legitimize their actions and reconcile conflicting interests and goals, and they must do so under the watchful eye of the public. They grapple doggedly over the euro, and sometimes things get ugly. But they are almost never successful.

Besides, democracy is based on the word. Without free speech and the open exchange of views and ideas, democracy is impossible. Secrecy is the domain of authoritarian states. But at the moment, European politicians cannot speak openly about one of their most important issues, the euro. All it takes is a few words uttered by a finance minister for the banks to react with extreme sensitivity. They immediately shift billions in assets, often to the detriment of entire nations. Words have become expensive, and that makes them dangerous.

As a result, politicians are watching what they say. Pretty much everyone recognizes that it would be fair to involve the banks in the

rehabilitation of Greece. But hardly any politicians dare to pursue such a course with any consistency.

The banks and investment firms now play the role once held by the gods. Hardly anyone dares to criticize them, and the fear of their wrath guides the behavior of politicians. Many are reluctant to speak frankly, while others seek refuge in lies.

In such conditions, democracy has lost its dignity. And that is dangerous. The foundation of any dictatorship is the tacit or open threat of violence against citizens. Their fear supports the system. The basis of democracy is respect among citizens. Their approval supports the system. If this approval disappears, democracy crumbles.

The Modest Superpower By Stefan Theil, NEWSWEEK, Nov 16, 2009

[Some information in this article may be a little dated; nevertheless, there are some interesting points brought out about Europe's strengths and potential in the future.]

It's become all fashionable in Washington, Moscow, and Beijing these days to dismiss Europe as an aging continent in terminal decline. A June report from a Moscow think tank close to the Kremlin described Europe as weak in the face of Russian might, and last year's U.S. National Intelligence Council assessment of global power shifts called the EU "a hobbled giant" plagued by "internal bickering."

Such broadsides are easy to understand. The EU today is divided on all kinds of issues, from how to deal with Russia to the future of NATO. Europe's banks still have more toxic assets on their books than America's. With Britain, France, and Germany often pursuing separate foreign-policy goals, the idea of an EU able to translate its size and wealth into hard power and common purpose seems as remote as ever.

Yet all these critiques miss a stark reality. Even as America and Russia have been humbled by the economic crisis and China and India remain preoccupied with internal problems, Europe is thriving. Exactly two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the continent has been transformed: it is more united, prosperous, and secure than at any time in history. This year, Europe surpassed the United States in wealth,

according to the Boston Consulting Group. Next year, Europe's population is expected to hit half a billion and its GDP to nearly match that of the U.S. and China combined. The financial crisis has turned Europe's softer, more regulated brand of capitalism into the preferred model for much of the world--even the United States--and a half-dozen countries are now seeking EU membership in order to gain economic shelter from the ongoing storm. The crisis itself, for all its terrible effects on the EU economy, has unexpectedly strengthened the continent's cohesion, as has the just-ratified Lisbon Treaty, which streamlines the way Europe runs its affairs. Overseas, the EU is now responsible for much of the world's development aid and has 71,000 troops stationed beyond its shores, a global footprint second only to America. This is not to say there aren't many areas where Europe is still divided and punches below its weight. But by most measures, the EU looks better and better by the day.

Predictions of Europe's downfall have a long history of refusing to materialize. In the 1980s one often heard talk of Euro-sclerosis, a crippling malaise of low growth and high unemployment. Since then, European countries have embarked on a reform marathon that, mainly by relaxing labor rules and expanding competition, enabled them to create 9 million more jobs than the United States between 2000 and 2008 and to post a lower unemployment rate (8.9 percent in September, compared with 9.5 in the United States). In the 1990s, the collapse of communism and the disappearance of the Soviet threat led some to predict the fall of NATO and the return of old nationalist ghosts. Those ghosts did briefly rear their heads in the Balkans. But even they couldn't stop Europe from launching a vast expansion to the east, more than doubling its membership from 12 countries in 1989 to 27 today, while simultaneously deepening its integration. Just a few years ago, it looked as if the EU's older and younger members had developed irreconcilable differences over ties to the United States, the threat of Russia, and the Iraq War. Now that split is fast disappearing, thanks to ever-tighter economic and other links, including joint military units, and to what Pawel Swieboda, director of the Warsaw-based think tank DemosEuropa, calls Eastern Europe's "big disappointment" with an American administration that seems to have lost interest in it.

The global economic crisis has again shaken confidence in Europe's future. Because it derives more of its wealth from trade than the United States, Europe was hit harder. But with the start of a

recovery, the continental heavyweights, France and Germany, unexpectedly beat America out of the recession, thanks to a rebound in exports and more stable consumer spending. According to the IMF, the United States will experience a stronger recovery than Europe, but only through 2013. After that, U.S. growth will slow to the same rate as the eurozone--2.1 percent--and well below the U.S. average of 3 percent-plus before the crisis. Measured in per-capita terms, the eurozone would grow almost twice as fast as the United States. So much for American parodies of sluggish old Europe.

Many of America's competitive advantages are disappearing. The Wall Street banks and the credit-card culture that did so much to fuel America's boom years are now hobbled, and not likely to recover soon. Government deficits are rising everywhere, but the U.S. deficit is on track to hit 94 percent of GDP next year, compared with 79 percent in the EU. Bob McKee, senior economist at London-based Independent Strategy, says these burdens on the American economy are now long-term strengths for Europe. He also sees Europe's highly globalized companies (five of the world's top ten trading nations are EU members) as better placed than U.S. companies to profit from growth in emerging markets.

On no single issue has Europe rejected rough American capitalism more vehemently than on its treatment of labor. American companies have traditionally enjoyed much more freedom to hire and fire, making them more likely to provide jobs, but also to take them away. U.S. workers had less job security, but also enjoyed much less unemployment. Now that's changing. Columbia University economist Edmund Phelps expects America's "natural" rate of unemployment, long estimated at about 5 percent, to rise to 7 percent or more post-crisis, close to the European "natural" rate of 7.5 percent.

The crisis is also changing perceptions of the EU as incapable of concerted action. When the banking crisis first erupted, the EU's leaders squabbled over bailouts and stimulus measures. Yet at the height of the meltdown this February, as banks and the currencies of smaller EU countries like Hungary and Latvia began to teeter, the European Central Bank stepped in to offer unprecedented emergency credit. And Germany all but guaranteed that richer EU members would prevent any eurozone countries from going bankrupt. That fortified the euro's reputation as the only serious alternative reserve currency, after the dollar, and is a big reason the euro has risen by 17 percent against the dollar since February. The euro now accounts for a record 27

percent of global reserves, according to Barclays Capital, compared with 18 percent ten years ago, and central banks are now putting 50 percent of new reserves in euros versus 37 percent in dollars. Europe has even begun to translate its vast economic power into a broader global role. Over the past decade EU members have begun to lead and organize their own peacekeeping missions in places like Bosnia, Congo, Georgia, and Chad--most of them fully independent of the U.S. According to a 2008 RAND Corporation study, these EU-led peacekeeping operations have a 33 percent higher success rate than efforts led by the U.S., based on whether the subject countries ended up peaceful and democratic. The report's author, James Dobbins, says that's largely because U.S. operations tend to be riskier. But the cliché that Europeans play it safe no longer holds. Last month Brussels extended by 12 months its first-ever naval mission in the waters off Somalia, where a flotilla of European warships has foiled some 100 pirate attacks since the start of the year. And the 21 European states with soldiers in Afghanistan have suffered a third of the Coalition's 1,400 combat deaths. Europe could and should do more there--such as send more soldiers and take a more active role in devising the West's strategy--but here again it's important to see the long-term trend. Just a decade ago it would have been inconceivable that pacifist Germany would be fighting a hot war in Afghanistan. Today, more than 4,000 Bundeswehr troops are doing just that.

Europe got another boost last week when the Czech Republic became the last of the 27 members to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, a quasi constitution. The new pact has been dismissed as 287 pages of dense Eurocratese that make only incremental changes. That's true, but steady and incremental is how the EU always evolves. Key innovations include a new EU president to coordinate the union's affairs and new rules to allow more decisions among member-states to be made by majority rather than unanimous voting. That will make it easier to form coalitions of the willing within the union, with different members moving at different speeds. No longer will obstructionist mini-states like the Greek half of Cyprus be able to hold the union hostage with their veto power. Most important, says Andrew Moravcsik, director of Princeton University's European Union program, the treaty resolves the tug of war between so-called federalists who want the EU to become a superstate and Euro-skeptics who think it is too powerful already. "The EU has reached its final, mature state," says Moravcsik, "like the American constitutional compromise of 1789." European

leaders will no longer be forced to spend time and energy on interminable inner fights over the future of their union.

All this comes just as the world appears to be moving in Europe's direction, according to Mark Leonard, director of the European Council on Foreign Relations and author of *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*. Hard power and military nation building have been discredited and constrained by Iraq and rising deficits. On issues ranging from Iran to nuclear disarmament to climate change, negotiation and multilateralism--at which Europe excels--rule.

Now the EU must capitalize on these trends. It must make sure that its biggest weapon for spreading its influence, prosperity, and values--enlargement--keeps moving forward. So far, the continent's leaders have remained dedicated to this project despite tremendous popular opposition. As a result, Croatia recently resolved its last border dispute with Slovenia in order to keep itself on track for accession in 2012. Montenegro and Macedonia have applied--as has Albania, one of Europe's most backward states, which recently proposed becoming the world's first Muslim-majority country to allow gay marriage, just to prove it can meet Europe's standards on civil rights. Even Turkey's candidacy is still moving forward, albeit glacially. While it's true that Turkey has recently begun looking east instead of west, it's a fundamentally reformed and westernized Turkey that is doing so, thanks to decades of changes aimed at winning EU membership.

In only 20 years, the EU has evolved from a loose free market completely dependent on U.S. protection to an ambitious, new-style, uniquely collective power. For the foreseeable future, it will be the only force that can come close to matching the clout of the United States. The EU's modus operandi--sharing power, hammering out agreements, resolving conflict by endless committee--can be boring and even frustrating to watch. But in an increasingly networked and interdependent world, it has become the global standard. "In ten years we're going to wake up and say, wow, they've just solved more problems," Princeton's Moravcsik says. Enthusiasts may exaggerate when they claim Europe will soon run the century. But the skeptics are much further off the mark.

(Scriptures quoted from NKJV unless noted otherwise)

2.5. EIGHTH HEAD



Picture modified courtesy of waterforsixthgrade.blogspot.com

This concept from the previous posts regarding the rise of two Antichrists, or two Beasts, in the End Time ties in well with the riddle of Revelation 17:11 - *“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven.”* The “seven” here refers to the “seven heads” that were attached to the “beast coming out of the sea” in the Revelation 13 and 17 passages. These “heads” are usually understood to be symbolic of the seven political-military empires who will have ruled over Israel during the course of history: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the final Antichrist empire. The description in Revelation 13 of this “first beast” (from the sea) is actually a combined picture of all the “sea-beasts” that once ruled Israel, some of whom were previously mentioned in a vision given about 600 years earlier to the prophet Daniel and depicted there as separate beasts. (Daniel 7)

As the passage continues in Revelation 17, the guiding angel takes over and starts talking to John the apostle about *“the beast that was, and is not”*. (verse 11) This peculiar phrase was referring to the seven-headed, ten-horned beast that had astonished John earlier (in Revelation 13:3) and is mentioned again here in verse 3; but more specifically, the angel is drawing attention to the End Time *“is-not”* aspect of that Beast (its seventh head) which had not arrived on the world scene in John’s day when these Revelation chapters were written. It says he *“is of the seven”*, meaning he is a sea-beast and thus one of the seven heads of the Revelation 13 Beast, similar to all previous ones that arose in history, these strong, military-political empires (also symbolized as “metal” powers in the vision of the “image” in Daniel 2).

But now back in Revelation 13, in addition to the *“beast from the sea”*, that chapter also depicted another “beast” – a totally new type, one who came “up out of the earth”. Numerically, in the Daniel-Revelation Books’ progression of various *“beasts”*, this one should be categorized then as the eighth “beast” to come along in world history – an economic-religious empire, portrayed as a mysterious “eighth head” attached to the seven-headed “first beast” of Revelation 13.

The 7 + 1 “heads” of the Beasts of Revelation of 13 and 17

From the “sea”

From the “earth”

1) Egypt

--

2) Assyria

--

3) Babylon

--

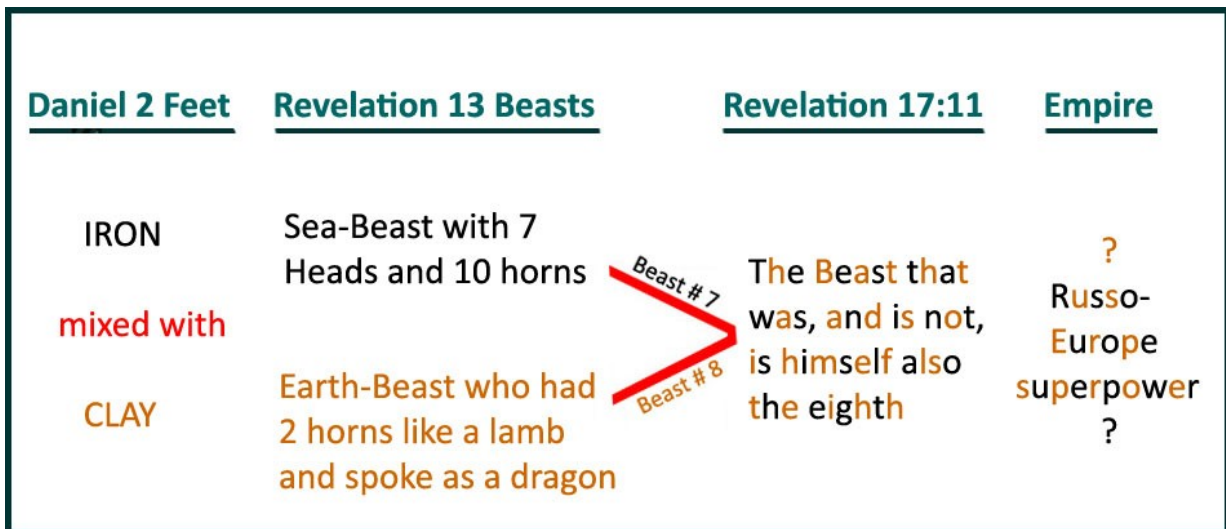
4) Medo-Persia

--

- 5) Greece --
- 6) Rome --
- 7) Russia – Antichrist + 8) European Union - False Prophet

Since **this new Beast** is quite different from the other seven *“heads/mountains/kings”* of verses 9 and 10 in Revelation 17, he isn’t categorized with them. But even though he’s different, **he is still lumped in with them, or at least with the seventh head: “Even he (the seventh) is the eighth.”** In other words, **this last empire of man, the seventh one, the beast that was and is not”, on closer inspection will be found to have another “head”, and it is these two “heads” who work and rule together over the earth in its final hours of history.**

This then seems to answer the riddle of Revelation 17:11 of how on earth does the seventh head manage also to be the eighth? We could ask a similar question about the *“feet”* in the Daniel 2 *“image”*: Why do the iron and clay materials in them do this odd thing of *“mixing”*? Well, it must have something to do with a combining of the two separate kingdoms’ resources or rule, or something of that nature. (By the way, this question about the significance of the *“iron and clay”* in the Daniel 2 *“image”* will be explored more thoroughly later on.) So **the single Antichrist kingdom is actually made up of two parallel empires. They expand into each other’s territory, as well as other parts of the world. They do more than co-exist, but each empire, in a sense, possesses the other. And this could even mean a union of their territories politically.**



To illustrate, consider the influence of a nation’s capital city: Even though it is located in one particular spot, the influence of the government is not limited to that city or state, but extends throughout the entire country. And in many nations, there exist two centers of power: One city is the political capital, while another city has become the unofficial economic capital whose influence also spreads throughout the nation. But even though there may be two centers of power, they’re still part of the same nation. Likewise, **the False Prophet and Antichrist will each have their respective spheres of influence which will not be confined to their borders but will spread into each other’s kingdoms and throughout much of the earth. And at the same time they will be working together as one kingdom.**

To summarize, the earth-Beast is the eighth beast who, in Revelation 13, is mentioned after the seventh, the Antichrist. In Revelation 13, they are portrayed as separate, yet simultaneous, kingdoms who ally together; and Revelation 17:11 merely restates this fact more concisely. (The verse also suggests that the Antichrist “beast” will be regarded as the official “head” of this combined empire.)

It’s interesting how different parts of the Sacred Book tie together and help us get a complete picture: In Daniel 2 **the “iron mixed with clay” and the “feet” give us a picture of a dual empire in the Endtime whose regimes merge together.** Then later, the description of the Revelation 13

“beasts” (the seven-headed one from the sea and the earth-Beast) fills in many details about these two kingdoms. Significantly, it shows that, **although separate kingdoms, they do interact quite a bit**, which seems to reflect the portrayal in the “image” vision of Daniel 2 of “iron and clay” mixing together. We can also understand the identity of the mysterious “eighth beast/head” in Revelation 17:11 that **he is the second of the two Beasts from chapter 13** – the “beast coming up out of the earth”. And **the merging of the seventh and eighth Beasts in Revelation 17:11 helps us to understand that the two separate Beasts of Revelation 13 (or the two separate feet of the “image”)** are, for all intents and purposes, one empire, similar to how the “iron and clay” in Daniel 2 are “mixed” and thereby create one empire.

The following article offers a tantalizing glimpse into the future, a sort of forecast showing how the political situation now is heading towards a unification of the Russian and European superpowers (or, as proposed in this study, the 7th and 8th heads of the Beast):

Putin Envisions a Russia-EU Free Trade Zone

Der Spiegel, 11/25/2010

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin would like to see a free trade agreement between the European Union and Russia. In a Thursday editorial for a German newspaper, he describes his vision of “a unified continental market with a capacity worth trillions of euros.”

No more tariffs. No more visas. **Vastly more economic cooperation between Russia and the European Union.** That’s the vision presented by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in an editorial contribution to the German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Thursday.

“We propose the creation of a harmonious economic community stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok,” Putin writes. “In the future, we could even consider a free trade zone or even more advanced forms of economic integration. The result would be a unified continental market with a capacity worth trillions of euros.”

The proposal comes as Putin travels to Germany on Thursday for a two-day visit, including a Friday meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. On Wednesday, Russia and the EU reached an important agreement on the elimination of tariffs on raw materials such as wood. The deal was an important prerequisite for the EU dropping its opposition to Russian membership in the World Trade Organization.

Moscow is hoping to become a member in 2011.

Putin, though, as his Thursday proposal makes clear, envisions more. “The current state of cooperation between Russia and the EU is not consistent with the challenges that we face,” he writes. “To transform the situation, we need to take advantage of the advantages which already exist and the possibilities for progress in the EU and Russia.”

In addition to the establishment of closer economic ties between the EU and Russia, Putin also envisions close cooperation on industrial policy. “In my view, we need to address the question as to how we can trigger a new wave of industrialization across the European continent.” In particular, Putin mentions ship, automobile and airplane construction, space technology, pharmaceuticals and medical technology and nuclear energy.

Putin also proposes much closer collaboration when it comes to energy. “In recent years, cooperation on energy issues between Russia and the EU has attracted much attention and, to be honest, has been much too politicized.” He would like to see European and Russian firms working together “from exploration and exploitation of energy resources all the way to the delivery to consumers.”

“The renewed principles of our cooperation could be anchored in the partnership agreement between the EU and Russia, an accord which is currently under negotiation. We should approach this treaty from a strategic perspective. We should try to think 20, 30, even 50 years into the future.”

Who Are the Ten Horns?

Now that we have identified **the False Prophet earth-Beast** as possibly symbolic of **the EU**, this can raise the question of who are the “*ten horns*”? **These horns are supposed to join with the Antichrist sea-Beast and help him in the war against the “great whore”.** (Revelation 17-18) The customary viewpoint on these “*ten horns*” is that they represent European nations. But if that were the case, then it would be difficult to see how the EU could fit the role of both earth-Beast and ten horns.

There was a time in the 1980s when the number of nations in the European Economic Community, as it was called then, had reached ten nations. Many Bible teachers were convinced then that this was the fulfillment of the “*ten horns*” mentioned in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17. It was quite natural to think this way, not only because of the number of 10 nations, but also because many could foresee that Europe would have a lot to do with the Antichrist kingdom, which is certainly true. But now that the EU has reached a total of 27 members, it is difficult to see how she can fit into the symbolism of the “*ten horns*”. A little fine-tuning is in order, it would seem.

We have just learned how **the European superpower teaming up with Russia** seems to fit rather well the symbolism in Revelation 13 of **the False Prophet earth-Beast teaming up with the Antichrist sea-Beast**. As such the EU will be very much a part of the Antichrist kingdom, even if she’s not the ten horns.

But that still leaves the question, who are the “*ten horns*”? This is a big question, and it will be covered, hopefully soon, in a future study on Revelation 17, a chapter which goes into some detail about them. Suffice it to say for now, **there are two very good candidates for the “ten horns”** symbolism:

- 1) In **the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.)**, there are (at present) 11 nations, Russia plus 10 smaller ones.
- 2) In Ezekiel 38-39 and Daniel 11, there are references to **nations that will ally themselves with Russia to help her in the invasion of Israel**, Egypt, and other countries of the Mideast.
- 3) So perhaps a grouping of these nations could fit the *“ten horns”* role. Of course, it is always possible that **some grouping of 10 European nations could yet fulfill the symbolism**, and we shouldn't exclude that possibility while considering these other alternatives. As time goes on and with the benefit of more information and hindsight, no doubt it will become clearer, and we won't have to resort to as much guesswork on this question as we do nowadays.

2.6. Physical and Spiritual Geography in Daniel 2



By John Lyall endtimeupgrade.org

The passage in Daniel 2 has always fascinated Bible students. It gives a simple, panoramic view of an enormous subject – the whole of history from Daniel’s time to the present and beyond. The different body parts and metals of the image all symbolize different empires that came along and ruled Israel and much of the world during their time. And it’s a simple picture – that is, until we get down to the empire of the “feet”. At this point, it becomes complicated: there are two “feet”; there are also two materials (“iron and clay”) that “mingle themselves with the seed of men”; they “mix” with each other, yet “shall not cleave one to another”. (verses 41-43) Well, we live in a

complicated age, so it's not surprising that this final part of Daniel's vision reflects the complex nature of modern times.

Thus far, we have considered how the European Union seems to fulfill the role of the "earth-beast" who joins forces with Russia, the "first beast" in the same chapter of Revelation 13. Together they could form a very large empire that would dominate the world in its final days. That sums up, as far as we can tell, what the physical geography of the Endtime empire will be like. And this geographical aspect was symbolized in very simple form as the two feet in the Daniel 2 vision of the image. Now, let us turn our attention to another side of this picture, the more hidden side, what we might call the "spiritual geography". Following is an intriguing prophetic message along this line, one that was trying to pinpoint the relationship between the political and religious boundaries of nations:

(Jesus:) "Open your eyes, and look with spiritual eyes upon the world. You will see a different geography - a spiritual geography. You will see the world differently than those who look with physical eyes at the maps and governments. But you who are spiritual must learn to look with spiritual eyes and discern spiritual boundaries... A country's boundary is a physical manifestation of the spiritual boundary, of spiritual regimes which correspond to the kingdoms of this Earth..."

(published by The Family International – Sept/1996, www.thefamily.org/)

"Spiritual geography" refers then to the spiritual nature of a nation and the influence that nation's culture has on its citizens or on citizens of other nations. Normally, the spiritual geography lies within the political boundaries of a nation, its "physical geography". For example, the nation of ancient Greece possessed a very strong **culture**; it definitely had a strong "**spiritual geography**" – its pantheon of gods, its interest in philosophy, literature and the arts. Until Alexander the Great came along, Greek culture was confined to the borders of Greece. But as her armies swept through the Mideast,

Greek religion and culture also swept through, expanding to the limits of her newly extended borders.

This division between physical and spiritual geography that we can observe in the world is similar to what the vision of the “*image*” portrays: that is, there’s a difference between what the body parts symbolize (the more obvious, physical attributes of geography and chronology) and what the materials of the image symbolize (the more hidden features of the different regimes, the nature of their rule and influence, what we might call the inner dynamics of how they operate, their type of political and religious systems).

For example, in speaking about the “*iron*” part of the image, Daniel was told, “*The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron.*” (Dan 2:40) Its impact or influence upon the world is described thus: “*inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.*” So, the material of iron relates to more intangible features - the inner character and nature of the fourth empire and its influence on the world, whereas the body parts of the image focus on outward features of geography and chronology. This “*fourth kingdom*”, Rome, did indeed possess the characteristics of “*iron*”: a strong, well-organized, military regime that subdued the ancient world in a very thorough manner.

Besides this “administrational” aspect, the materials of the “*image*” also seem to reflect the nature of religious influence on the succeeding regimes. As noted, the empires were symbolized by different types of metals, which seems to reflect, not only their strong, authoritarian influence in the world, but also the fact that they all practiced emperor worship of one kind or another. The fact that the vision was that of an image suggests this religious aspect, and the fact that it was the image of a man suggests, in particular, that the vision was illustrating the religion of emperor worship that has persisted throughout history. (Daniel 3 depicts very well how this use of an image for emperor worship was carried out in ancient times.)

In addition, **the metals were graded according to value**. This probably had something to do with **how much influence the emperors in those kingdoms allowed God's prophets to have**, how receptive they were to God's people and message in their kingdom or in their personal lives: for example, gold and silver symbolized Babylon and Persia; and indeed, some of the kings in those empires (Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Cyrus, Ahasuerus) were yielded to God's prophet Daniel and to queen Esther. In fact, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was one of the rare examples from Old Testament times of someone having a personal salvation experience. Although these empires harbored some very strong religions of darkness, nevertheless, because of these kings' influence, they became valuable by proclaiming throughout their empires that their subjects should honor the God of Israel; they also afforded protection to the Jews, God's people of that time, and in the case of Babylon, needed chastisement.

The next kingdom of brass/bronze was made of a less fine material, but still valuable; Greece paved the way for Jesus' coming through her language and philosophically-minded culture. She, in a less direct manner, pointed the way to the Lord. Her founding king, Alexander, was sympathetic to the people of Israel and left them alone for the most part during his military campaigns. Only later, under one of the Greek kings of the Seleucid empire did persecution arise against the Jewish people.

So, gold, silver, and brass are of finer caliber, and then comes the iron, the least valuable of the metals in the image. But unlike the other metals, iron does possess the virtue of strength, which is valuable in a different way. Rome's political unity and extensive road system made it easier to travel and spread the Gospel in those early days of Christianity. When the Roman empire became officially Christian, that, of course, did much to strengthen the Church. Until that time most of the Caesars had little connection with or sympathy for God's people in those days and became great persecutors of the Christian Church. As was the case in most "metal" empires, emperor worship was practiced, and Christianity was perceived as a major threat to their religious system.

Conclusion: We have seen how the body parts of the image symbolize such outward characteristics as physical geography and chronological sequence. **The metal materials**, on the other hand, appear to **symbolize** the more hidden features of the succeeding empires – their inner nature and structure, **their religious character and spiritual nature**, and consequently the kind of influence they brought into the world.

2.7. “Iron” in Today’s Antichrist’s World



A good question to ask now might be, **what features did ancient Rome possess that we can see operating in the modern world?** Although the

“legs” of the Rome section of the “image” change into something else (**the “feet” - the last empire**), **the “iron”** from the legs doesn’t change into another metal but **just continues on into the feet.** So, even though far apart in time, the ancient and modern empires must possess some kind of basic similarity. **The feet** are even labeled **along with the legs as part of the “fourth kingdom”**. (Daniel 2:40-43) In some way then the Roman empire and the modern Antichrist empire must be identical. **Geographically,** we have learned that **the modern empire will be like an extension of the old Roman empire - a dual one, legs and feet split along lines similar to the ancient one.** However, they’re not identical, just as the foot is not the leg, although it can be considered part of it.

But since **the same “iron” metal continues into the feet**, it is here in this “spiritual geography” dimension where we would expect to find that **the fashion of ancient Rome has continued unchanged into modern times**. Of course, there is one important difference: The “iron” exists in diluted form. The old Roman form of government persisted but then had to mix in with something that tended to weaken it. This is symbolized by the “clay” substance found only in the feet of the image. Nevertheless, the “iron” feature - **the original “strength” of the old empire has remained intact: “yet the strength of the iron shall be in it.”** (Daniel 2:41)

So in what way does that intangible feature of “iron”, seen by Daniel in both legs and feet of the image, manifest itself in today’s world? Well, **one intangible, yet obvious feature common to ancient Rome, and to virtually every modern nation in the world today, is the system of republicanism:** governments not under the rule of hereditary monarchs or family dynasties. That is pretty much how things stand in today’s world where **republicanism has become the standard form of government in almost every nation.** And that could explain why the “image” shows “iron” continuing from the Roman “legs” into the modern day “feet”.

The rise of republican government meant that **the army became a more detached and separate branch of the ruling body** - a continuing, self-perpetuating army of professional soldiers not involved in civilian occupations. Republicanism opened the way for the military to gain more autonomy in government. For as soon as dynastic kingship and rule were abolished, the army's loyalty was no longer tied to a family dynasty, but to the system or state apparatus. This led to the army having much more influence in the formation and operation of governments.

With no family dynasties and a rather frequent turnover of Caesars, government couldn't depend for stability on its head of state or his family. **The army, along with government administration, had to assume responsibility for providing leadership and stability in ancient Rome**, and this proved to be more effective than the family-dynasty form of stability. An example of this happened in Greece not long before: with no heir to succeed Alexander the Great, the army generals had to step in and bring some order out of the confusion that came following his death.

Likewise in Rome, **the army became the real seat of power that held the empire together** instead of a hereditary line of kings. Not surprisingly, **many of the Caesars were former generals with strong connections to the army** - which effectively meant that **army policies and plans dominated Roman political life**. A similar kind of thing happened in Nazi Germany; an "army man" – Hitler – took over with the result that the nation became quite militarized and dominated by army policies.

In ancient Rome even Roman culture and its spread through the Mediterranean world can be attributed to the army; this large body of professional soldiers served, not only in wartime, but in times of peace, building roads, bridges, walls, etc.; and their camps served as centers that spread Roman culture to far-flung districts of the empire.

Besides the army, the other feature that made Rome “*strong*” was her efficient administration. Rome’s unique form of government - representative rule without a hereditary monarch, along with the use of an extensive system of law - removed many of the hindrances and bottlenecks that were common in the kingdoms and empires prior to Rome. This reminds us of what Moses learned in the wilderness: To rule effectively, he had to be willing to delegate authority to others. (Exodus 18) Similarly, the Roman government, with better representation, laws, and counsel in its decision-making bodies, had greater capacity to rule wisely over a large territory.

Interestingly, Rome’s judicial system and representative form of government are still carrying on in today’s world. And this seems like another feature in Rome’s “*iron*” nature that has persisted, more or less unchanged, into modern times. From ancient Rome we have inherited the political system that allows better delegation of power in government, better counsel in decision-making and forming of laws, and greater efficiency in administration. That is how Rome, and modern nations, have acquired the capacity to administer huge empires and populations.

When too much power gets concentrated under one man, the result can be a rather weak government. Such was the situation in Alexander’s time. Although his military exploits were evidence of Greece’s strength, the administration aspect was weak, and as soon as Alexander died, the Greek empire quickly broke up into warring factions. But ancient Rome was truly “*strong*”, combining as it did the resources of military conquest with an administration capable of ruling the vast territory it had conquered. Heads of state might come and go, but the administration was like an abiding force that could continue to function and hold the empire together.

This concentration of power in the hands of the army rather than a hereditary king, along with her efficient manner of representative government and system of laws, made Rome “*different from all the beasts*”

that were before it" (Daniel 7:7) - the strongest of the empires depicted in the "beasts" vision of Daniel 7 and the "image" vision of Daniel 2.

In the monarchical forms of government, the army, being subservient to the king, has less autonomy. But in the Roman government it played a more dominating role in the affairs of state. The advent of Rome thus marked the beginning of efficient, republican rule subservient to the watchful guidance of its powerful military branch of government. Originally, the Caesars (or Consuls) were elected by an assembly, and their powers were limited, and this was designed to prevent the rise of monarchical government. Eventually however, the Caesars began to assume dictatorial powers, especially those who had a strong army background. And since man has that spiritual need to worship a higher power, the Roman Caesars, besides being heads of state, were usually willing to play the role of divine being as well.

Now here is an area where politics and religion interconnect: If Rome did not have a strong administration and army, the Caesars could not have had a big enough platform or pedestal from which to proclaim themselves as gods. But once Rome had achieved supremacy in the world of her day, then it wasn't so improbable in the eyes of the world for the Caesars to claim divine status for themselves. Thus, the "iron", symbolizing the intangible quality of strength, becomes a twofold thing: firstly, it says something about Rome's powerful administrative regime, and secondly, it points to the accompanying religion of emperor worship – a sort of natural by-product of Rome's "*strength of the iron*". All the metal regimes, in fact, had this in common – a strong military regime combined with some form or another of emperor worship.

So, how is this "religious" aspect of the "iron" symbolism being manifested now, we may wonder? Well, that is yet to come when the Antichrist ascends onto the world stage. However, we have seen a taste of this demagoguery in the recent past. Nazi Germany and the communist nations of the 20th century were republican, militarized societies and had leaders who were worshiped (in secular fashion) by their countrymen.

With the rise of Rome the practice of demagoguery took on a new dimension. Since [Jesus the Messiah](#) had come into the world (into the Roman world), [after that any form of emperor worship became a form of anti-Christ worship](#); and this was often [accompanied by persecution of Christians](#). And the same has happened in modern times during the reigns of Hitler and the communist demagogues.

After the fall of Rome, monarchies became the main form of government again, and for a few hundred years Europe had no large standing armies. Landowners organized personal armies on a part-time basis from their subjects. And powerful kings had to depend on their lords and nobility to raise armies for their war campaigns, or hired mercenaries. But the Roman concept of a standing, professional army of fully-trained soldiers had almost ceased. And **the seat of power rested then with the king, not the army.**

During this Middle Age period of man's history, there is a sort of gap in the vision of the Daniel 2 image. The reason for that can be explained thus: the image symbolizes only those empires that had conquered, or would conquer, the nation of Israel. But **there has been no nation of Israel since it was dismantled by the Romans in 70 A.D.** and the Jews scattered throughout the world. As a result there is a sort of break, a span of time that is skipped over, not recorded in the image vision. However, **now that Israel has re-appeared in recent history, then it is time for the last empire to be manifested – the “iron and clay” in the feet of the image. Officially, this historical era is not to start until the Antichrist and his forces have conquered the modern nation of Israel.** However, we can observe plenty of groundwork being laid now in preparation for the rise to power of this final regime.

That preparation began all the way back in the days when the Feudal Age was drawing to a close. As smaller kingdoms united to form large and powerful nations, their armies also grew and became, as in the days of Rome, abiding powers in themselves. As time went on, republicanism revived in the halls of government. Monarchies were deposed or relegated into obscurity.

(The French Revolution was a great catalyst to help bring this about in Europe.) **The fall of the monarchies further increased the need for the army to emerge as a force that could maintain stability in the absence of powerful dynasties.** Thus, **the "iron" style of regime** - complete with **republican government and army** - had made its comeback. What had begun in ancient Rome has reappeared now in the Modern Age.

About the role of the army in Rome, and its renewal in Europe at the dawn of the Modern Age, here is an interesting quote:

*“By Caesar’s time, in the 40’s B.C., most soldiers were professionals in a standing army. This training and discipline made the Roman army one of the greatest forces of all time... During the 1300’s, the Ottoman Turks became the first people since the Romans to build **an army of fulltime professional troops... (who) served in peacetime as well as war.** In 1445 King Charles VII of France hired companies of mercenaries on a permanent basis, and set up the first regular army in Europe since Roman times.”*

(from World Book, 1982 edition - subj: “Army”)

This “iron” feature of government has persisted and grown until **now almost every nation in the world uses the republican form of government;** and most of the remaining monarchies play only a supporting role. In addition, the practice of **government delegation of power** that **Rome established** - **legislative assembly and strong judiciary guided by the executive branch of government** - **has re-emerged in every nation of the modern world.** Not surprisingly, modern government has borrowed several terms used in ancient Rome: “senate, veto, republic”, for example.

*“Rome’s republican form of limited, **representative government** and her reverence for the rule of law became two of her greatest contributions to Western civilization and the foundations for Western political theory and practice.”*

(“World History and Cultures” by A Beka, 1988, pg103)

Every nation now has a military stronghold, or standing army of professional soldiers; and whenever the law and order situation breaks down, it will step in and take over the reins of government if need be. So, in a sense, each nation in today’s world is a replica of ancient Rome’s “iron” style of military-dominated government. The military in many a country has taken over the reins of government whenever conditions were getting too chaotic. We see this kind of situation happen frequently in many less stable governments of the world. *“Yet the strength of the iron shall be in it.”* (Daniel 2:41)

Some nations in recent times have adopted a more militarized version of republican government under a demagogue. Significantly, this always happened when those nations strayed from their Christian roots and slipped into worship of a demagogue. The most striking example would be Hitler Germany - a republican military dictatorship headed by a man who was worshipped by the German people. Likewise, the Communist nations had similar forms of government during the last century; and the final demagogue is soon to come. This “worship” feature, appearing sometimes in modern society, merely echoes the ancient practice of emperor worship – both of the Caesars (from about 50 B.C. to 300 A.D.) and of emperors from the previous “metal” empires.

So, all that to say, this “*iron kingdom*” spoken of in Daniel 2 still exists in almost every country of the world. The “*iron*” features of ancient Rome continue in today’s world. In the hidden dynamics of government, Rome’s modus operandi - her practice of republican government - is operating in almost every nation of our modern world. Rome’s law codes, and the practice of using law extensively, have also carried on into today’s world. And most nations also harbor a semi-autonomous army of professional soldiers that could in a time of crisis take over their governments if need be. Spiritually, this has led some modern nations into man-worship, as it led Rome into emperor worship in ancient times. What’s happened **now,**

however, is that the commercial forces have greater control than in times past, enough to keep the military and civilian government under their thumb to a large extent.

And this brings us now to consider this other substance in the “feet” - **this** peculiar, non-metallic “**clay**” stuff. But that will be the subject of the next post.

2.8. “Clay” Power in Ancient Times

Having looked at the “iron” metal in the “image” vision and its meaning, let us now consider this other substance in the “feet” - **this** peculiar, non-metallic “**clay**” stuff, something we would likely regard as **baser than anything else in the “image”**. It symbolizes a new type of government that differs greatly from the political-military regimes of history and has only come to the fore in modern times. *The previous empires in the vision of the “image” were metallic*, and we can take this to mean they all had something in common. And yes, they **were characterized by strong authoritarian regimes who conquered the world by means of their powerful armies**. But now, what about this clay substance - this stuff that is so different to the rest of the metallic image?

Revelation 13 provides a good clue: following the description of the war-mongering sea-Beast (v1-10), we see **a new beast, “coming up out of the earth”**. (V11) This one, as we’ve learned, conquers the world through wealth... or control of wealth distribution might be a more accurate way of putting it. And just as the “clay” material differs from the rest of the metallic image, so **the “beast from the earth”** also **happens to differ from all the previous superpowers, or “beasts from the sea”**. (Daniel 7:3) It must be

more than coincidence, not only that the *“clay”* symbolism in Daniel 2 resembles the *“earth”* symbolism in Revelation 13, but also that **both differ from previous empires** which were symbolized, either by various metals (as in Daniel 2) or by their emergence from the sea (as in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13).

And that leads us to the following interesting conclusion: The *“clay”* symbolism in the Daniel 2 image can be equated with the *“earth”* symbolism given for the second Beast in Revelation 13 (who, as we’ve learned, represents the business-commercial type of regime that has become so powerful in today's world). Since the *“beast from the earth”* is also called the “false prophet” elsewhere in the Revelation Book (19:20, 20:10), then from here on, the terms *“clay kingdom”*, *“earth-beast”*, and *“false prophet”* will be considered as related terms, standing for the same thing more or less, but viewed from different angles. The same can also be said for the terms *“iron kingdom”*, *“sea-beast”*, and *“antichrist”*.

One unusual feature about this *“clay-earth”* kingdom is the fact that it **works closely with and even merges with the other “iron-sea” kingdom**. They are not totally separate empires, but on some level they do merge: *“thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.”* (Daniel 2:41,43 - KJV) To understand what it is about the separate kingdoms that enables them – paradoxically – to also *“mix”*, it might help to trace the development of the “clay-earth” power through history:

Starting back **in ancient Egypt**, we find the patriarch **Joseph** who had become the wise man and prophet for the Pharaoh. Besides **playing the role of prophet**, Joseph **also** became **chief administrator with full command over ancient Egypt’s economy**: during the seven years of plenty, Joseph collected a great stockpile of **wealth** (Egypt’s grain). Then, during the seven years of famine, he was **able to control and monitor the distribution of it**. And this brought him (and Pharaoh) enormous power - of a benevolent sort - in the land of Egypt. Joseph, of course, was a true prophet, but in some ways the

role he played in ancient Egypt resembled the role that the False Prophet (or earth-Beast) will play on behalf of the Antichrist in the End Time.

The predecessors to the modern clay-earth Beast empire have been hard at work for centuries, collecting the world's wealth (natural resources, industry, money). These “*merchants... the great men of the earth*” (as Revelation 18:23 calls them) are more than just scattered individuals but are organized, cooperating in their quest for power and control in the world. As a result this has led to the formation of an actual empire - the “*beast coming up out of the earth*” in Revelation 13 – **an empire that operates in a behind-the-scenes fashion**, more hidden than the ostentatious military-political empires of history. Like Joseph in ancient Egypt, **the False Prophet, as head of this new empire, will control and monitor the distribution of wealth during the upcoming “lean years” (perhaps following a worldwide financial crash that he will engineer). Through their wealth distribution system of the “mark” and “number”, the False Prophet and Antichrist will accrue to themselves enormous power.** But unlike Joseph and Pharaoh, they do it for the wrong cause.

(By the way, when the term “*merchants*” is mentioned here, it is not referring to those businessmen who make an honest living, working hard to provide needed goods and services to their communities. There is a world of difference between them and the ultra-rich “*merchants*” spoken of in the Revelation Book, those who are deceiving and corrupting the world for the sake of their own greed and hunger for power.)

Like Joseph, **the False Prophet cannot carry out his plan without the patronage and authority of his “Pharaoh”, the Antichrist. The mark-number buying and selling system** manifests this reality: even though the whole thing **is engineered by the False Prophet**, he is still obliged to promote his new system under the name of the other Beast, the Antichrist. (Revelation 13:16-17) In turn, the Antichrist will find himself in dire need of the False Prophet; he provides brains, money, administration, and spiritual expertise - vital mechanisms needed in order for his political rise in the world to succeed.

Getting back to our history of commercialism (of the “*clay-earth*” power), in the ancient Mediterranean and Mideast world, empires were held together by strong military-political administrations (metal-type empires). Merchants did carry out much trade with other Mediterranean nations, and even with Britain, the Far East, and India. Nevertheless, the merchant class, and their power in government, was limited and scattered compared to the power of the emperors and their military juggernauts. The economic system in those days was a version of mercantilism: * Trading ventures were carried on under the watchful eye of the government. **Nowadays**, the tables have turned. **Big business does what it wants, while government policies and programs are carried on under its watchful eye.**

* Mercantilism versus *Laissez-faire* Economics:

Mercantilism economics dominated the European world of the 1500s to the late 1700s. In this system a nation’s government strictly regulated economic affairs to enrich its treasury, especially by ensuring that exports exceeded imports. The system was based very much on the gold standard.

In the 1770s a man named Adam Smith started promoting his *laissez-faire* economic theory. This philosophy brought forward the idea of an open competitive market free of government interference. If workers could pursue their private economic interest in relative freedom, they would be more productive, and the overall economy would function more efficiently. Basically, it was a “hands off” policy toward business. The principles promoted in this philosophy were a needed step of progress in an expanding world where more flexibility and free enterprise were needed to stimulate growth.

However, as often happens, the new policy eventually became misused and played into the hands of the unscrupulous and greedy. *Laissez-faire* economics, without enough government intervention, eventually became the ploy of the capitalist money-makers who, without any restraint on their activities, began to monopolize what had

once come under government control; they grew fabulously rich while poverty and misery continued, even becoming worse than before in some societies.

Although most ancient empires (the “metal” ones in the “*image*” vision) reached supremacy under the leadership of a strong king and his armies, at least one empire was based more on its power of wealth. That was Phoenecia, which could be likened to a “*clay*” regime, the one who dominated commercial trading in the ancient Mediterranean world. Although powerful, Phoenecia was not able to hold out against the attacks of the stronger metal-type powers of her day, Babylon and Greece; and she never conquered the land of Israel. And this historical reality is reflected in the “*image*” vision by the absence of any clay-type material in those parts of it that represent ancient times.

For most of their history, the Phoenecians were actually held under tribute and dominated by the Mediterranean empires that came and went. (Perhaps we could compare this to the situation in modern times with the eastern commercial hub of Hong Kong and its subservient relationship under Britain and China.) When Phoenecia finally did reach supremacy in the Mediterranean world, Israel was a fully independent and powerful nation under her kings, Solomon and David. Although the Phoenecian empire grew quite strong, it never entered into the category of a “*beast*” empire – those who not only dominated the Mideast area but also conquered the nation of Israel. **Not until we get to the final historical era of the “*feet*” does the “*clay*” kingdom finally enter as a component of the “*image*”.**

“[The Phoenecians] were not a military, but essentially a seafaring and commercial people, and were successively conquered by the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, to whom, because of their great wealth, they fulfilled all their obligations by the payment of tribute.” (from *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XII*. Published 1911. New York: Robert Appleton Company)

So how will the “clay” power achieve supremacy in the world? As this modern kingdom grows in strength through its acquisition of wealth, becoming a “beast” in its own right, it will team up with the other “beast” from the sea – not as under tribute, as ancient Phoenecia was, but as a full-fledged partner in cooperation with it. From the Book of Ezekiel, chs. 38-39, we learn that **Russia will conquer Israel and the Mideast**, and thus it would appear that she will be the fulfillment of the prophetic description of **the sea-Beast** (in Revelation 13) whose conquests will echo what the other metal kingdoms in the image vision in Daniel 2 had done in ancient times. That means that **the other earth-Beast, as a close ally, becomes a co-ruler over that same area of the world. And thus “clay” finally enters into the “image” vision of empires that have conquered Israel – but only in the End Time section of it, in the feet of iron and clay.**

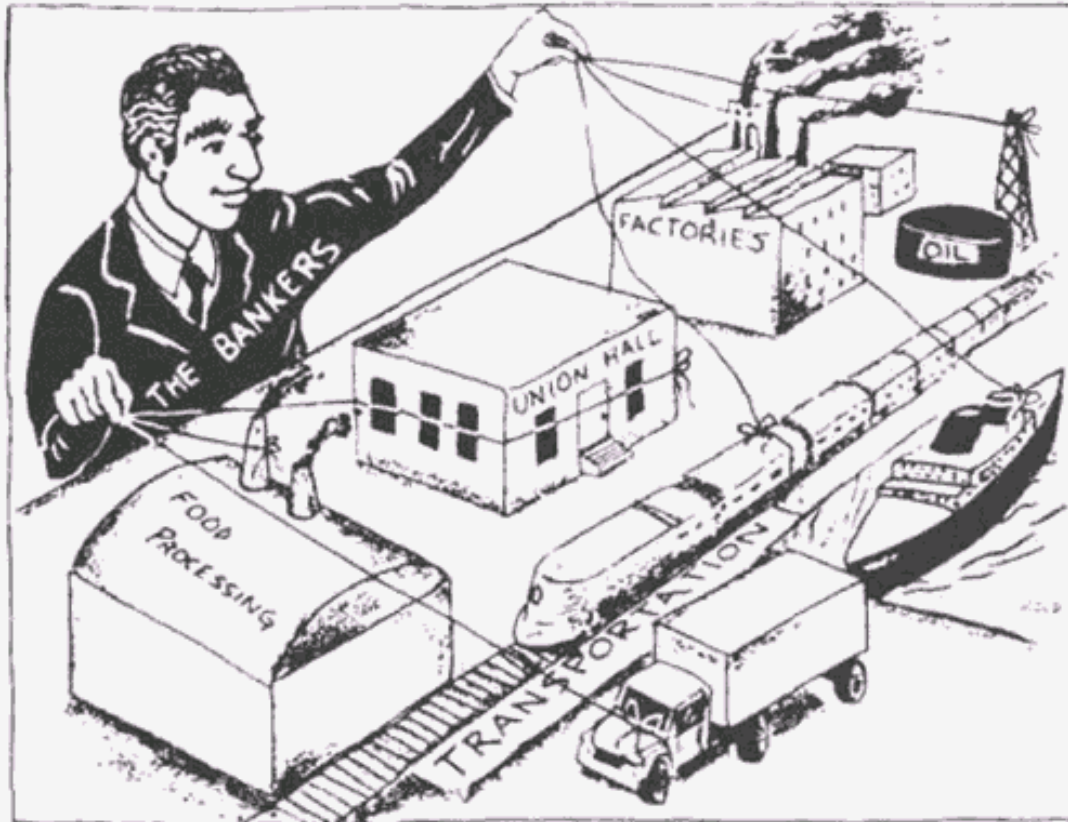
Until the modern day, the “merchants”, or commercial powers, have never officially ruled over the world. Nevertheless, they have had great influence in the military-political governments of the world. Revelation 17 symbolizes these commercial powers as “the great whore” whom the seven-headed “beast” has had to carry throughout history. This “great whore” is pictured as having a corrupting influence in the world: “with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” (Revelation 17:2 - KJV) In the empires of man this corrupting influence of the “great whore” always seemed to show up in their declining years before they were eventually defeated by a new up-and-coming “beast” empire.

But in this modern age the “beast from the earth” will not operate in the same way as the “great whore”, sitting on and oppressing the “first beast”. Instead, **the new commercial regime of the False Prophet will, from the beginning, accompany and support the Antichrist’s rise to power. The earth-Beast will use his wealth and other resources to catapult the “first beast” into authority and to help him rule the world of the future.** The “great whore”, on the other hand, will oppose the rise of the new world order under the two new up-and-coming “beasts”. As a result of this, she will suffer

catastrophic destruction and defeat, as outlined in Revelation 17-18. (But that is another subject, beyond the scope of the present study.)



2.9. Rise of “Clay” Power in the Modern Age



Picture courtesy of <http://www.somagardens.com/billions/b-p13.htm>

So where did this modern version of a “clay” empire actually start? We might figure that the groundwork for it was laid all the way back in the Middle Ages. In the Feudalistic society of that era, a new class of people began to emerge, whose power and influence paralleled that of the upcoming political-military strongholds that were rising to power in Europe at the same time. These were the merchants who had been struggling to free themselves from the restrictions of feudalism.

Later on, the same forces of republicanism that would strengthen the role of the army also set the commercial interests free to ascend to greater power. **Merchants** no longer had to contend against a **powerful monarch**, always the traditional rival in their quest to acquire riches and resources. So, along with the "iron", the "clay" part of the image was also manifesting itself at the dawn of the Modern Age. And it wasn't long before the commercial forces grew strong enough to begin coercing the political-military strongholds of Europe to follow their wishes to a large extent. Here are a couple of examples of what the commercial interests were able to do in Europe during the onset of the Modern Age:

(1) "In 1536, King John III of Portugal introduced the Inquisition to his country. The Portuguese Inquisition especially persecuted the Jews in Portugal, many of whom were involved in Portuguese commerce. As **the Jews** fled the kingdom, **the nation's banking and commercial power** departed with them." (World History and Cultures, Pg. 261 - by A Beka)

(2) Portugal soon declined as a major empire, and **the nations to which these Jewish merchants fled, Holland and Britain, grew prosperous** instead.

(2) **The Rothschild family built a huge banking empire in the 19th Century which enabled them to greatly influence the policies of those European nations who were indebted to them:** "By a system of co-operation and joint counsels, aided by the skillful employment of subordinate agents, they (**Rothschild brothers**) obtained unexampled opportunities of acquiring an accurate knowledge of the condition of the financial market, and practically **embraced the whole of Europe, within their financial network...** [**Nathan Rothschild**] **became the financial agent of nearly every civilized government..** his operations extended to every quarter of the globe." (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, pg. 758, 1910-1911)

After about 1500 A.D. European nations began to expand into vast colonial empires, and this provided the merchant class with a

golden opportunity to gather great storehouses of wealth. And as their wealth increased, so did their influence over the ruling houses of Europe.

This rise of a parallel but largely invisible "empire" seems to have emerged during the 18th century in Europe, with the main center in England. Downtown London became known as the "Crown" or "The City" or "Fleet Street" - a sort of nerve center wherein were located a number of banking houses, Lloyd's of London, the London Stock Exchange, and offices of the leading international trading concerns. The same kind of business districts were established in other European cities as well. Following is a helpful quote on the subject:

From the time of William the Conqueror [1066] until the middle of the 17th Century the British monarchs ruled supreme – their word was law. They truly were sovereign in every sense of the word.

As British strength and influence grew around the world, toward the end of the 1600's the wealth, strength, and influence of the elite merchants in the City also grew – only at a faster rate...

It was at this juncture (1815) that the House of Rothschild seized control of the British economy, the Bank of England, and the City – and, through their other branches, control of the other European nations. [1815 – Battle of Waterloo]

To avoid misunderstanding, it is important that the reader recognize the fact that two separate empires were operating under the guise of the British Empire. One was the Crown Empire [that is, the "City"] and the other was the British Empire.

... "The City" is not part of England. It is not subject to the Sovereign. It is not under the rule of the British Parliament. Like the Vatican in Rome, it is a separate, independent state. It is the Vatican of the commercial world.

(from *Descent into Slavery* by Des Griffin, pgs. 43-45,42)

This division of power in the world that began around the 18th and 19th centuries has continued into our modern day and was expressed long ago in the symbolism of the "image" in Daniel 2 with its two "feet" of "iron and clay" and in the symbolism of the two "beasts" in Revelation 13.

A major turning point that led towards this division of power came **with the French Revolution in 1789**. Having enlarged their fortunes in the Colonial era through overseas trading and devious financial schemes, **the moneylenders of Europe grew powerful enough to effect a great change in the world - engineering the collapse of Europe's Christian monarchies and establishing republican governments in their place.**

The French Revolution was the great catalyst that the growing merchant class needed to increase their influence against the established aristocracy. Of course, there was need for a change; the historical situation was ripe for and demanding a more fair distribution of wealth and power. Unfortunately though, the new power brokers in France were unscrupulous in their methods of bringing this about; they preferred to distance themselves from the Almighty, and this seemed to go hand in hand with their use of unrestricted violence rather than less drastic means of achieving their ends.

Influencing the course of events from behind the scenes at this time was Europe's most powerful banker, **Meyer Rothschild**, who got together **with Adam Weishaupt**, a member of the Masonic order and founder of the Illuminati secret society. Together, through their manipulation of the masses and of the springs of power available to them, **they were able to engineer the French Revolution, which forever deposed their main rival for power, the French king and his heirs.** Later on Napoleon came along and forcibly brought republicanism to other European nations.

Although the brains behind this whole operation was Adam Weishaupt, he was more or less "hired" by his patron Meyer Rothschild. And so it has continued in the Modern Age: the wise men and think-tank societies whom governments rely on tend to serve the interests of

the ultra-rich because they are the ones who established and funded most of those organizations in the first place. Besides overthrowing governments, as happened in the French Revolution, these organizations can also monitor and steer governments into the direction favored by those who hold the financial strings of power.

Similar to what goes on nowadays in the halls of government, **the False Prophet Beast**, when he comes along, will have access to and influence over the great military-political ruler of the Endtime, the Antichrist, through **his spiritual expertise and wisdom and economic strength**. This is nothing more than a continuation of what rulers have always done - surround themselves with various **"wise men, astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, sorcerers"** as they were known in the past. (Daniel 2:27, Acts 12:6-8). Nowadays, different names might be used - "think tank" researchers or "secret society" members or the same term of "astrologers". The difference now, though, is that **these groups of regal advisers are more closely linked to the ultra-rich dynasties of the mega-merchants**; as a result the commercial forces have more control over modern governments than was available to them in times past. Thus we can see that during the days of **the False Prophet**, he will not just be a "head", but lurking behind him there will be **this powerful "beast from the earth", a great financial empire that can hold his "head" solidly in place**.

There are a multitude of conspiracy theories surrounding the rather secretive activities of this powerful group of ultra-rich elite. Although many such theories tend to over-speculate, **there is enough documented evidence to show convincingly that much dirty-dealing goes on behind the scenes**. It should be remembered, of course, that **amongst the ultra-rich many are sincerely working to bring positive change into the world, and it may only be a few who are actually committed to the destabilizing and corruption of society with the goal of bringing**

the world under their subjection. Of these the Revelation Book has this to say: "For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived." (18:23) This statement comes at the end of a lengthy passage about the "great whore... with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication... having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication." (17:2,4) All this symbolic language provides a vivid portrayal of what modern society has become because of the corruption brought into it through the influence of modern Materialism and the "merchants" who, as the passage says, are deceiving the nations through their sorceries (their usage of the powers of Darkness).

Getting back to our history: the collapse of the European monarchies seems to have had a twofold purpose and result.

Without a strong central authority (a king), this opened the door for the military to come to the fore in some countries (like France under Napoleon, and later on, Weimar Germany under Hitler, or the Communist nations). **This revival of ancient Roman republicanism also cleared the way for the power of money (capitalism) to ascend. ***

* This twofold division of power that has appeared in the modern world ties in with an interesting passage in the 5th and 6th chapter of the Revelation Book: that passage reveals how the forces of **Militarism** and **Materialism** (symbolized as the "red horse" and "black horse") would be unleashed in the "last days" at the opening of the "seven sealed book of the future". For centuries since the Revelation Book was written, these forces did not seem to manifest themselves in any greater measure than before - that is, not until recently when technology has begun to cause their destructive power to multiply enormously.

As dreadfully corrupt as some of **the old monarchies** became

sometimes, they **did**, if nothing else, **hold back the power of the Dark Forces of money and militarism**. It was difficult for these forces to make their way around the obstacle of a powerful monarch whose authority among his subjects remained unquestioned. The king, who has cornered the market on his people's loyalty, was able to rule securely on that foundation. And so it was that at the dawn of the Modern Age, the fomenters of **republican movements** like the French Revolution or the Communist Revolution worked to stir up discontent among the people. It was not that they cared so much about the "people". Unlike their many youthful and idealistic followers, these new powerbrokers, more often than not, were just using the "people" to overthrow their kings and tyrants and so gain control and become the new tyrants. In the European monarchies, it was understood that God was the supreme authority, and the king was God's representative. This effectively closed the door against worship of the king and kept the door slightly ajar for the entrance of some bit of godly restraint against the secular forces of Militarism and Materialism (or the Red Horse and the Black Horse). But in many republics there is no, or very little, acknowledgment of God's authority. God is dispensed with, and thus His place in the minds of the people can be usurped easily by a demagogue. Or in the absence of that, the people become distracted into the blind pursuit of **material satisfaction** - the modern form of **Mammon worship**.

And so, because of these various restraining factors, the Christian monarchies of old, however bad they may have been sometimes, seldom sank to the depths of depravity that modern republicanism has led mankind into - the genocidal persecutions of Communism, the ravages of Hitler Germany, the decadence and greed of the conglomerates and their mismanagement of earth's resources. Probably God would like to give more freedom to mankind in the

form of republican society and government. But freedom must be accompanied by responsibility, and true responsibility can only be nourished by faith in and reverence for God. The French writer, Alexis de Tocqueville, expounded on this when visiting America in the early 19th Century:

Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is much more necessary in the republic which they set forth in glowing colors than in the monarchy which they attack; it is more needed in democratic republics than in any others. How is it possible that society should escape destruction if *the moral tie is not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed?* And what can be done with a people who are their own masters if they are not submissive to the Deity?

Our democratic society, with its insistence on freedom and individual rights ("the political tie relaxed"), has become the ideal that the world is striving for. And it is good in principle, but it seems mankind cannot be trusted with it for very long. In time, as godly values slip into the background, the once noble aspirations of freedom transform into ignoble license to pursue selfish instincts. Eventually, such freedom without godly restraint can lead to havoc. This happened on a rapid scale during the French and communist revolutions; God's role in the new societies was greatly diminished, and this had much to do with the unconscionable bloodbaths of those periods of history.

A nation can slip into the same state at a slow pace as well. Sad to say, the American nation, which was once the bastion of freedom and epitome of a Christian, republican society, has evolved into what this perceptive gentleman, Alexis de Tocqueville, warned against long ago: "what can be done with a people who are their own masters if they are not submissive to the Deity?" As a democratic society, **the American nation** has clamored loudly to other nations about freedom from the oppression of tyranny but ignores the fact that **her own people have gotten swept up into the vortex of materialism.** Her prosperity has

come at the expense, even destruction, of poorer nations in the world. The nation that once aspired to freedom from the tyranny of colonial Europe is steadily transforming herself into the very tyrant from which she once sought to escape.

The American nation has suffered in recent times because of the recession and unwise economic policies. In the meantime several nations, like China or Brazil, have acquired considerable wealth and power. How America reacts to this changing world situation may have a great bearing on the course of her future history. Will she live up to her great Christian heritage and humbly accept a diminished role for herself on the world stage? Or will she, out of pride and greed, insist on military action to maintain her place of prominence in the world? If she chooses the latter, if she continues to lash out militarily against her perceived enemies, then it will be a disastrous course of action, both for her and the rest of the world.

Getting back to our history, the European nations, once they had emerged from the Dark Ages, began expanding and built vast commercial empires, exploiting and plundering the wealth of distant, newly discovered territories. This exploration, followed later by great advances in scientific knowledge, unlocked the Earth's natural resources to a degree unheard of in times past. And the dividends from all this new-found wealth have, over the years, found their way into the coffers of the ultra-rich.

For example, in the New World the Astor family managed to dominate the North American fur trade industry. They garnered huge profits at a time when fur clothing had become the fashionable trend in Europe. Meanwhile, in the East, the Rothschild family gained enormous wealth as they ruled and systematically plundered India and surrounding territories through the East India Trading Company. The Revelation Book identifies these, and many other unscrupulous

characters since then, as the leaders of the "great whore", the great commercial system of the Modern Age: "your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived." (18:23)

In ancient times colonial expansion was more of a government enterprise. For example, Rome's armies were the ones who explored and exploited the territories of the empire. And the wealth gained thereby went straight into the coffers of the government. But the Colonial Era was different in that much of the wealth got diverted into the hands of the mega-businessmen of that era.

For example, in 18th century England it was decided that the colonies of dark-skinned peoples would come under the control of the merchant groups while the colonies of white-skinned peoples (Canada, America, Australia) would come under the control of the British government. Accordingly, a nation like India was administered for almost 100 years by the East India Trading Company, not the British government. Probably the merchants got the better of that deal and fished a lot more booty from their share of the world, since they were able to dominate much longer in those nations that were not heavily colonized by Europeans. Besides their overseas ventures, these powerful "merchants" were also adept in the art of wheeling and dealing for influence in the courts of Europe - mainly through their money-lending tactics. Through their scheming, they were able to overthrow or paralyze the monarchies of Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries. And thus, **the dominion of the "clay" (or the "earth-beast") began its rise to supremacy, especially after the French Revolution.**

And so it was that the seeds of an iron-mixed-with-clay type of society were sown as far back as the Middle Ages. And since the dawn of the Modern Age around 1500 A.D., **the seeds have sprouted and grown until now almost every nation in the world has some variation of this iron-and-clay system of rule within its borders.** Thus was laid the groundwork for the historical era of the "feet" empire. Presumably, that era hasn't quite started yet. **At least, it won't reach its peak until the nation of Israel gets conquered by the new, upcoming superpower of the End Time.**

Edited by audioactivated.net

2.10. “Clay” in the 20th Century

Domain of the False Prophet



By John Lyall. Endtimeupgrade.org

Around the turn of the 20th Century, the world saw another dramatic upsurge in the power of money through the introduction of *laissez-faire* capitalism (when restrictions on trade and commercial exchange all but disappeared). The original idea brought forth by Adam Smith in the 18th century provided some useful guidance: break away from rigid, controlled economies and allow more freedom in the economic realm. And the new philosophy did help individuals and nations to prosper. The virtue of free enterprise came to the fore. In this respect, the new system had its advantages. And these virtues are enshrined now in the term “democracy”. Freedom, individualism, universal voting, these began as noble ideals.

But **the new system's fatal weakness** centered around the fact that **the big merchants now had free rein to dominate the economic landscape.** As so often happens, **the forces of Darkness like to usurp mankind's useful ideas and inventions, corrupting and distorting them in such a way so as to harness them into serving a destructive purpose** instead of the constructive one for which they were originally intended. And so, it wasn't long before the seemingly noble ideals of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* degenerated into a greedy scramble for the almighty Dollar and the good life. In like manner, the noble concept of **Democracy**, which was supposed to mean rule by the people and freedom from tyranny, **provided a loophole through which the commercial/capitalist forces could enter into nations and gain the upper hand in controlling world affairs.** Instead of the ideal, republican, democratic system in which authority stems from the people through responsible, elected representatives, **wealth began more and more to override that authority and became the new basis of power in the world.**

Giving so much **power** to the people (in democracies) **has often played into the hands of the money moguls**, for the "people" can be manipulated easily via the media. In theory the "people" are supposed to be in control. In practice **those wealthy enough to guide the thinking of the people through the media** – as well as pay off the politicians - **are the ones really in control.** And so the wealthy have used "people power" time and again to force governments to implement policies favorable to them, or to oust those governments not cooperating with them.

And so the arrival of democracy has made it easier for the "*clay*" regime to ascend to power. The nations where democracy flourishes have acted as a springboard from which the "*clay*" power was able to catapult itself into world supremacy. Just as the military dominated the ancient Roman world, so **the business-commercial forces have grown so strong**

and organized that they also are able to dominate the world in modern times. That doesn't mean that **the influence of "iron"** has petered out; it **still exists everywhere in the modern world.** For as Daniel 2:41 states, *"Yet the strength of the iron shall be in it."*

Looking at the example of America might help us to understand how this interplay of *"iron and clay"* works in modern society. The American superpower can't claim to have a political dominion over very much of the world. Her republican-style government, built along the lines of the ancient Roman government, does have access to a powerful military with bases all over the earth, but it hasn't conquered militarily that much of the modern world. **The "iron" presence in the American government is only a part of the overall power structure and almost seems to play a supporting role for the powers of big business, the "clay".** **The political-military establishment (the "iron") has played its role to fight wars when necessary to make sure America's commercial interests continue to thrive – as it has done in some Latin American countries or even in World War II.** (More on this later.)

Similar to the rise of European colonialism in the former era, this *"clay"* presence is again the power that has led the way to enlarging America's borders - the borders of **her Dollar capitalist empire and media culture.** It is more through this type of conquest (as opposed to the political-military type of conquest) that **has enabled America to dominate the rest of the modern world.** (And this is somewhat different from the ancient Roman conquest, which was accomplished mostly by means of military invasions and occupations.) So **the American empire is an example of one where iron and clay "mix"; the army and big business combine their resources so that, together, they can bear rule over much of the world.**

Now besides the rise of democracy, there is another factor that has boosted the clay earth-Beast's power: as mentioned already, the great expansion of scientific knowledge and technology over the last 150 years or so has unlocked the Earth's resources in ways those in olden time could not have imagined. This greater access to resources has led to a greatly increased flow of wealth in the world of trade and industry. And **through their clever manipulation of the world's purse strings and means of exchange, the financial wheeler-dealers have acquired a disproportionate and tremendous share of this new-found wealth.**

Furthermore, these who have the money have come to own the various new avenues of power that have sprung up as a result of modern technology: rulers now have the capacity to keep a close surveillance over vast populations through the use of omniscient computer information systems; the same computer technology has facilitated financial transactions, making it easier for the ultra-rich to increase their wealth; in addition, modern media systems enable rulers to psychologically manipulate the masses, and this has proven very effective in the game of installing new leaders or deposing them. And so it has come to pass **in the modern world** that, **because of advanced technology, these grand new domains of power are flourishing**, which, in times past, existed only in a very primitive stage.

Judging by what Revelation 13:11-18 says, it looks as if these new avenues of power belong, or are about to belong, under the jurisdiction of **the "beast from the earth", whose leadership is comprised of these mega-businessmen and powerbrokers.** From behind the scenes they pull the strings that can cause certain events to happen according to their wishes on the world stage. The earth-Beast is using these new avenues of power to structure a very modern style of empire, one based on the power of wealth and all that it controls. At the same time, as Revelation 13 outlines, this earth-Beast empire, by combining with the

other one (the Antichrist “*beast from the sea*”), will structure a very modern style of religion – a secular one based on Materialism and demagogic worship of the Antichrist.

In summary, **this unusual figure**, in keeping with the symbolism of him as a “*beast*”, **will head a very powerful regime that rules the world economically**; and along with that (or because of that), he has the ability also **to control and guide the world’s thinking towards giving their allegiance to Materialism and the Antichrist** – which means, essentially, that **his influence is a “religious” one.** And because of this “religious” aspect, the “*beast from the earth*” is referred to elsewhere in the Revelation Book as **the “false prophet”**. So, what we have in Revelation 13 is rather intriguing - a description from an ancient viewpoint of our modern historical reality. Although John the Apostle in ancient times could not express that reality with the proper technical terms, nevertheless he does get across the spiritual side of it well enough: a beast-like “*false prophet*” would deceive the world into worshipping another beast-like anti-Christ figure.

As for the practical side, John expressed it - according to his 1st-century mindset - as a new form of idolatrous emperor worship generated by the False Prophet’s “miraculous” manufacture of a live “*image*” and acknowledged through use of a peculiar “*mark*”, which, along with a 666-“*number*” would also have the unusual capacity to govern buying and selling activity in that distant future age. We now in modern times can see what John was getting at – the practical side of the future historical reality, unfolding now before our eyes in this age of advanced technology: such **scientific “miracles” as worldwide distribution of “living” images through TV broadcasting and cashless commercial transactions using credit cards, implanted chips, and 666 bar codes.** (See post [“Unraveling the Mystery of the Image”](#) for more information on this subject.)

Who Is Behind the Rise of the Earth-Beast?

Although we may sense that a new controlling body, not under the thumb of national or international governments, is rising in today's world, who or what is causing this historical reality to emerge can be difficult to pinpoint. Because of the unsavory nature of their activities, **these mega-“merchants” tend to cover their tracks as best they can.** As a result very little is taught in mainstream history books about their activities. However, some courageous historians have tried to do so. The following quotes, for example, give a lucid explanation of **how these behind-the-scenes powerbrokers influenced the course of history in World War II.** (From *Descent into Slavery* by Des Griffin:)

(Pgs. 156-157, about the course of fighting in the middle of World War II)

Why wasn't the Allies' 'tremendous fighting machine' allowed to continue its powerful advance from northern Italy up through the "soft underbelly" of Europe towards the heart of Hitler's Germany? What was the real reason behind the fact that [German] Kesselring's army, which was reeling in disarray before the onslaught of the Allied Fifth Army, was allowed to regroup, reorganize and rearm so that it could continue the struggle for nearly another two years?

It is generally acknowledged by military experts that, had the Allies taken the logical and direct route to Germany, four important results would have occurred:

- (1) The duration of the war would have been shortened by at least a year.
- (2) The lives of more than 100,000 Allied troops would have been spared;
- (3) The United States National Debt that resulted from the war, would have been greatly reduced, and

(4) The political face of Europe would have been vastly different. [Eastern Europe would have been spared from the oppression of communism; the whole world would have been spared from the Cold War.]

The answers to the above questions are as simple as they are shocking. **The men who were outwardly “leading” the United States – Roosevelt, Marshall and Eisenhower – were under strict orders from their hidden masters** [*“merchants... great men of the earth”* – Rev 18:23] to conduct the concluding stages of the war in the European “theater” in such a manner that [their hidden masters’] goals... would be furthered. It was of no concern to the international power brokers that the delay in finishing the war resulted in hundreds of thousands of needless deaths, and unnecessary expenditure of many billions of dollars. They view humanity as so much cannon fodder to be used in the accomplishment of their Satanic purpose.(Pg. 162)

We have seen clear evidence that the top authorities in Washington forbade the Allied army to strike for the heart of Hitler’s Germany following the victorious Italian campaign in 1943. Dramatic evidence has also been presented to prove that at the same time as huge numbers of Allied troops were being diverted in order to participate in an irrelevant invasion of Southern France, the top officials in Washington refused to pay any attention to repeated German offers to surrender. As a result of those apparently senseless “blunders”, dramatic changes took place in the political make-up of Europe. The course of history was changed!

The reader must grasp the fact that although these amazing and unprecedented events “staggered” and “startled” individuals like Commander Earle, General Mark Clark, General Kesselring and Admiral Canaris, these same decisions made a lot of sense to **the unseen manipulators who were calling the shots and pulling the**

strings behind the scenes. They were working to a definite plan. They had their strategy clearly marked out.

(Pg. 180)

Who was responsible for the barbaric Dresden Massacre which took place when Germany was clearly beaten and when no strategic purpose could be served by such wanton destruction and loss of life? “I can only say,” states Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, the top man in the British Air Force, “that the attack on Dresden was at the time considered a military necessity by much more important people than myself” (Bomber Offensive, 1947, P, 242).

Those “much more important people” were obviously the men who were running the European “theater of war” for their own profit and for their own ends. **They were clearly looking beyond the end of the war, to the vast fortunes that could be picked up in “redevelopment projects”** in such cities as Dresden. The fact that millions of “peasants” were incinerated in such “urban renewal” projects was of no import to them.

The destruction of human life is of little importance to those who would rule the world!

(Pg. 201)

World War II, which had been prolonged for up to two years to permit the Soviets to occupy Eastern Europe, cost the United States a staggering \$400 Billion and raised the National Debt to \$220 Billion. **This forced the United States deeper into the clutches of the international bankers.**

The above quotes mention a few times the term **“hidden masters”**, something which may require some explanation. This term could also describe the **False Prophet**. In Revelation 13:12 we read, **“And he [False Prophet] exercises all the authority of the first beast”**

[Antichrist] *in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast...*” In the original Greek, the word used for “*exercises*” was spelled exactly the same as the word “*causes*” in the second part of the verse, which says he “causes the earth... to worship the first beast”. The exact same spelling is used again in verse 16: “*He causes all... to receive a mark.*” So perhaps a better translation here would say, “he causes all the authority of the first beast”. **The False Prophet will resemble very much the “hidden masters”** (mentioned in the above quotes), who were able to pave the way for certain men to seize power in the U.S., which in turn enabled these “hidden” powerbrokers to influence the decisions of World War II politicians. In similar fashion **the False Prophet will “cause” the power of the Antichrist and consequently, have a great deal of influence over him.**

The same idea is suggested in the first part of Revelation 13, where it states six times that power is given to the Antichrist in various forms: “*The dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority... The dragon who gave authority to the beast... he was given a mouth... he was given authority to continue for forty-two months... it was granted to him to make war with the saints... authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation...*” (verses 4-7) So, **the Antichrist is empowered by the Dragon** (the Devil) who “gives” him his worldwide authority to rule. But **who is the Dragon’s agent in the Earth? The False Prophet**, whom John observed to be speaking “*as a dragon*”, would seem the obvious choice.

So it seems likely **the Dragon works a lot through his agent, the False Prophet, and uses him**, as verse 12 explains, **to establish the Antichrist as the world’s god and ruler - to administer the Antichrist’s kingdom while promoting him as an object of worship.** It is a powerful but largely unseen role that **prophets and priests, magicians and**

soothsayers, the “hidden masters” - some good, some bad - have played throughout history in the halls of government. And **the False Prophet, like the powerbrokers who have operated rather secretly to engineer events in the modern world, he too will be a “hidden master” to engineer much of what happens in the Antichrist’s new world order of the future.** One difference, however, may be that **he will be a more public figure than the false prophets and “hidden masters” of the past,** as suggested in Revelation 13:13. *“He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.”*

Regarding **the historical misdeeds** mentioned in the above quotes, needless to say, these are not much advertised or known to the general public. And such activities didn’t stop with World War II. They **are still going on**; it’s just that **the behind-the-scenes manipulators prefer to remain out of sight, for that makes it easier for them to carry on with their power-broking, while giving the world the impression that governments are the ones in control of things. This façade of political respectability provides a useful cover for all the dirty dealings, corruption, deception, murder, and mayhem they engineer behind the scenes to make sure their plans get carried out.** It can be quite shocking and difficult to grasp the full extent of corruption going on under the veneer of respectability that governments and politicians try to exude on behalf of their hidden masters. Thank God for those brave government officials who do try to stand up for truth, justice, and righteousness. But unfortunately, they are few and far between in our present world system.

In contrast to the “hidden masters” and the “*earth-beast*”, **the “beast” governments “from the sea” are visible superpowers whom the people**

acknowledge, respect, or even worship. And so in addition to the military, this loyalty and patriotism from their people provide a great engine that can strengthen a sea-Beast superpower into a potent, ruling force. We can understand this from the “sea” symbolism in Revelation 13 and 17: **“The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”** (Revelation 17:15 - KJV) The symbolism seems to show us that **the “beasts”, as leaders of their people, rose from the sea** whereas the “whore” mentioned in the above Scripture merely sits on the sea of people and sits on the “beast”. She is like some kind of freeloader, using the people and their governments to make herself rich. (More on this subject coming in a future study.)

As we’ve learned, **the Beast from the earth governs** in a different way than does the Beast from the sea - **almost invisibly and in secret** - and doesn’t have to interact in the same way with the people. A legion of conspiracy advocates have tried to expose the inner workings of this, what amounts to a world government carrying on behind the scenes whose power is based on its control of the world’s wealth. Even if we don’t believe all the conspiracy theories, **there is still such a preponderance of evidence that it would be naïve to deny the existence of a powerful ruling force operating behind the scenes, exercising a considerable degree of control over world affairs through its crafty manipulation of financial resources.**

Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Communist Revolution in Russia, had to admit once how, even though he seemed by all outward appearances to be in charge, yet there was another force operating over which he had no control:

The state does not function as we desired. The car does not obey. **A man is at the wheel and seems to lead it, but the car does not drive in the desired direction. It moves as another force wishes.**

Along with **the politicians, the news media** have done much to cover **the tracks of these connivers and their murky backroom dealings**, either by failing to investigate their activities **or acting as their mouthpiece**. That is no surprise, of course, since **the world's news media are mostly owned and controlled by the extremely wealthy**. Democratic nations often point an accusing finger at nations where government controls the press and media. But the same kind of control is being exercised in the "free" countries by those who provide the advertising revenue. It's just more cleverly disguised.

In spiritual terms, the Revelation Book sums it up well: ***"For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."*** (18:23) From this Scripture we learn that ***"the great men of the earth", these "merchants", exercise control over society through deception and even, it would seem, the use of spiritual power (from the Dark side - "sorcery").*** In that chapter 18 of the Revelation Book **these "merchants" are the leaders of the "great whore"**, a term that was symbolic of **the commercial system that was to rule the world during the Modern Age**. This is another term, by the way, that can be connected to the other terms mentioned earlier - **"clay", "earth-Beast", and "false prophet"**.

The chapters of Revelation 17-18 graphically portray this "whore" as a powerful empire in the Last Days, one which saturates the nations with her shameful, corrupting influence: ***"the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication... having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication... the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury... her sins have reached to heaven... And in her was found the blood of... all who were slain on the earth."*** (verses 17:2,4, 18:3,5,24)

("Fornication" is a term for a type of sexual activity common in the ancient Mediterranean world: sexual favors associated with demon worship. That is, prostitution was a way of canvassing for local pagan temples. Thus, "*fornication*" is used symbolically here to depict how **the modern system of materialism**, like **ancient temple prostitution**, **is aggressively drawing the world away from faith in God and obedience to His ways and into the worship** of things - the modern equivalent to the worship **of the demon god Mammon**.)

Not a very complimentary picture is given then in the Sacred Book of **these backroom powerbrokers** who, as we've learned, caused so much devastation in World War II; and **who knows what havoc they are wreaking nowadays?** It is difficult to know much about their activities because, as the Revelation Scripture tells us, **they are masters of deception.** ("*By thy sorceries were all nations deceived.*") And we seldom learn about how they were the cause of the mayhem until long after it has happened.

Although the earth-Beast exercises great power and even seems to dominate world affairs, the material of "*clay*" whom we've linked to the earth-Beast, seems like a rather weak component in the Daniel 2 "*image*". In addition, the symbolism of the earth-Beast having "*two horns like a lamb*" also conveys the impression of weakness. This could indicate a lack of military power, whereas the sea-Beast, by contrast, has "*ten horns*". Well, it is true that the big financial power brokers do not usually exercise political or military authority directly (although that does happen indirectly). They are not the ones who can rally the aspirations of the world and unite it in a cause (although they support those who do). So "*clay*" is weak in this sense.

But the "*clay*" does contribute greatly to weakening the power of the "*iron*". **World War II** was a good (or bad) example of this. As mentioned

earlier, that war dragged on and on - a series of incredible blunders and poor decisions made because of **the meddling influence of wealthy, behind-the-scenes power brokers who were trying to profit as much as they could from the War**. By way of contrast, ancient Rome, the original “iron” power, fought its wars with much greater efficiency.

Going back to the 19th Century, this struggle by the “clay” power to gain supremacy came to a major head in the U.S. during the rule of **President Andrew Jackson** (1828-1836). Back then, the European money-lenders were conniving to infiltrate the banking system of the resource-rich nation of America. Jackson realized what was going on and fought hard to prevent the money system from falling into the hands of private bankers. His summation of the perils that lay ahead if his opponents should win out is contained in the following statement:

“Controlling our currency, receiving our public moneys, and holding thousands of our citizens in dependence... would be more formidable and dangerous than a military power of the enemy.”

This echoes a similar statement from **Thomas Jefferson** a few decades earlier:

“I sincerely believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. The issuing power should be taken away from the banks and restored to the people to whom it properly belongs.”

As time went on, the American money system eventually did fall to the private bankers in the form of the creation of the Federal Reserve (in 1913). The same has happened in **much of the rest of the world**, which **has surrendered control of its money systems to the rule of these elite bankers** (whom we may consider as belonging to **the “earth-Beast” empire** and/or **the “great whore” empire**).

For an in-depth study of the history of our money system's downward spiral, the documentary *Money Masters* is well worth watching: <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/the-money-masters/>

And the world has seen the sad results in the last century: the unnecessary or prolonged wars, the creation of communism, the Great Depression and recent Recession, the extreme poverty and debt-ridden condition of many Third World countries, and many other woes can be traced back to **the behind-the-scenes meddling of the mega-merchants and bankers.**

Over the last century **the commercial powers seem to have dominated the political landscape**, especially those who are based in America. But the commercial system is destined to suffer decline in the future. This is a whole other subject which is described vividly in Revelation 17-18. These chapters portray the eventual fall of the commercial system, symbolized there as the "*great whore*". To go into this now in detail would be too much of a diversion. Briefly though, **the "*whore*"** stands for **the once-loyal "*bride*", a godly people who had once observed the statutes of their God but then went astray and thus transformed into a "*whore*". She will oppose the Antichrist's rise to power, but because of her own corruption and poor example to the world, God will have to allow her to fail in this and suffer a great collapse.**

However, this does not mean the clay-earth rule will come to an end. For it will continue in the EU and the False Prophet's kingdom. Presumably, the EU will avoid America's fate because she will be helping the other up-and-coming Beast into power rather than hindering him. So, although the **Great Whore** and **the False Prophet Beast** are closely

related as representations of the commercial system, **there are differences.** (This subject will be explored later in another study on Revelation 17-18.)

These **“clay and iron”** forces that ravage the Earth were also portrayed in another form as the **“black horse”** and **“red horse”** in Revelation 6:4-6. And the two work together. **Warmongers and arms merchants connive in cooperation with each other.** They start wars or prolong wars. And as a result the merchants profit from selling weapons to both sides in the conflict or from collecting interest on massive war debts. At the same time the generals have their reward – getting to play with their war toys and receiving generous kickbacks for doing so. **All this deceit and double-dealing, just for the sake of profit. No principles or conscience in this lowly, degraded “clay” part of the “image”, this earth-Beast who “spoke as a dragon”.**

“He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.” (Hosea 12:7 - KJV) These words referred originally to the dishonest traders who were corrupting the nation of ancient Israel, but they echo quite loudly through the ages to describe what is going on in our modern world. **“For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.”** (Revelation 18:23)

Although **“clay”** seems like a weak substance, nevertheless, **the satanic power behind the “clay” rule is plenty strong enough.** Revelation 13:11 says of the **“earth-beast”, “he spoke like a dragon”,** and later on the Book refers to him as **the “false prophet”.** No doubt, the diabolical influence this Beast conveys into the world is another reason why the corresponding substance in Daniel’s **“image”** is portrayed as cheap and undesirable. His work may be less obvious, but it is just as influential, if not more so. **In order for the Antichrist to carry out his side of operations, the world must first get entrapped in the**

False Prophet's web of deceit and delusion. Perhaps even more than the Antichrist, **this Beast is working in diabolical opposition against the forces of Truth and Light.**

This “beast” from the “earth”, who “spoke like a dragon”, this power of “miry clay”, is working hard to get mankind mired into the quicksand of materialism, ensnared into his barren utopia. To win the world's favor, the False Prophet may try to save mankind from economic collapse by bringing about a more even distribution of wealth – at least for those nations willing to give their allegiance to the Antichrist and join the “*mark-number*” system.

It is well to remember, if and when this re-distribution of wealth happens, that in the past this Beast's predecessors have done all they can to squeeze the wealth out of much of the world. **The economic tyranny of western industry and commerce over the poorer nations is no less oppressive than the rule of political superpowers.** The greed of the ultra-rich has caused as much misery and hardship, especially in poorer Third World nations, as have the wars and violence of the warmongering militarists. Any changes that the Antichrist-False Prophet combine might make towards more equitable economic distribution in the world of the future may be helpful for awhile. Such an economic program will, of course, serve to greatly strengthen the hand of these two rulers, and from there things could hurtle downhill quite fast.

Here it would be well to remember another example from history: during the 1930s, Hitler's economic reforms revitalized Germany and confirmed him as undisputed master of the Third Reich. But what happened as a result? World War II and genocidal persecutions against Jews, dissidents, and religious minorities who refused to worship the Fuehrer or go along with his plans. **History has an unfortunate**

tendency to repeat itself once new generations have had time to forget the hard-learned lessons of the past.

Merger:

2.11- Two Separate Beasts Become One ***“Iron and Clay”* Kingdom**



To sum things up so far: **Through** these prophetic visions in **the Books of Daniel and Revelation**, **God was faithful to present to His people a realistic picture of the beast-like kingdoms that have come and gone through history.**

Furthermore, our faith is encouraged to see how well John’s vision of the two End Time empires (in Revelation 13) pictured so far in advance the historical reality that is even now developing in our modern world; and of course, how well Daniel’s vision of the “image” (in chapter 2) portrayed so simply the complex situation of our modern times (and of the near future).

These two visions (in Daniel 2 and Revelation 13) give us a basic outline of the dual nature of the Antichrist kingdom and how it will appear: physically, as a political alliance of two geographical territories, and spiritually, as the union of demagoguery and materialism. The inclusion of the False Prophet's materialism brings in an extra enticement to worship the Antichrist. It's not just a form of emperor worship; but integrated right in with that, **the name of the Antichrist also brings access to the world's material needs. Mammon and emperor worship fuse together** - a powerful combination that will capture the world's allegiance in these Last Days of man's rule on Earth. What a remarkable glimpse into the future were these revelations from so long ago!

From what we've gathered so far, it seems **the End Time stage will feature two separate rulers (and their empires), yet at the same time they manage to operate as one empire.** In ancient times it was simpler. In the Daniel 2 vision of the "image", the dual geographic empires of Medo-Persia and Rome were each symbolized by only one metal material (represented by silver and iron respectively). That meant the same regime, or same type of regime, was ruling in each territory.

But the feet portion of the image is surprisingly different: It is made up of **two materials**, not just one, meaning there are **two types of regimes involved**. And since the two materials are mixed, that suggests something a little more complex, namely, the kind of **union of two Beasts** we learn about in Revelation 13; it goes **beyond just a union of two territories.**

Both the vision of the "image" in Daniel 2 and of the two "beasts" in Revelation 13 reveal the uniqueness of our modern world compared to that of ancient times: besides two geographic territories, there are **two Beasts who each base out of their respective territory yet operate in both.** In today's world, geographic/political expansion is not the only way to conquer, so it is possible for this to happen. The two superpowers ("beasts") needn't confine themselves too much to geographic borders, in other words. The **less visible boundaries of media and economic imperialism (what we might call**

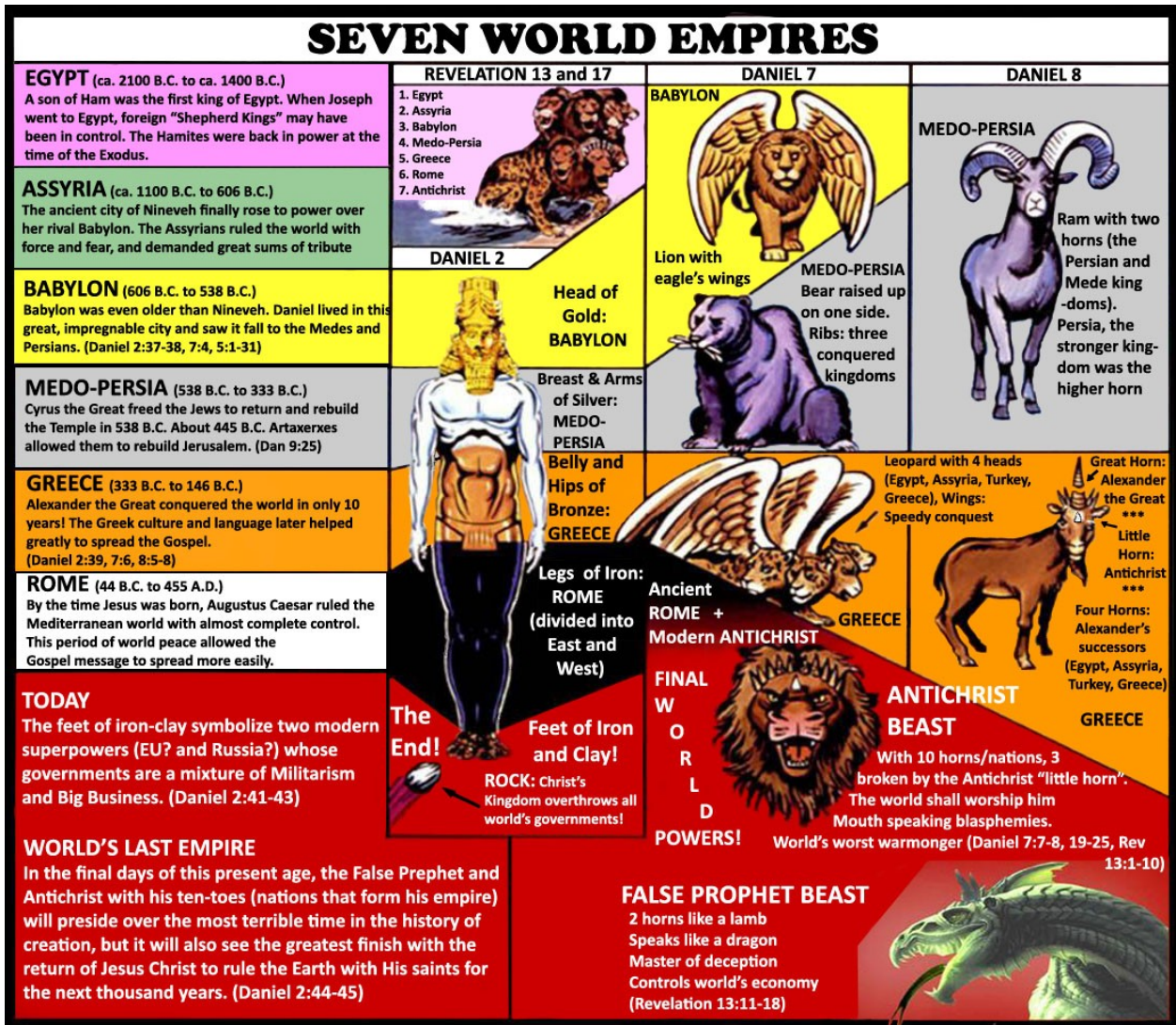
“spiritual geography”) have helped create this unusual state of affairs in our modern world. In this way, the Antichrist won’t rule in Russia only, but in Europe and much of the rest of the world. Likewise, the False Prophet’s kingdom isn’t limited to Europe only but extends all over the world.

So this concept of *“spiritual geography”* has taken on a new twist. Unlike the ancient empires, *the spiritual geography of each modern empire – by means of modern technology - spreads far beyond the boundaries of their physical conquest.* And even more unusual, in addition to this, their “spiritual geographies” mix; they merge together to create this peculiar “religion” that is an offshoot of the alliance between Russia and Europe. (See news article [“EU Leader Calls for Global Governance with Russia”](#).) The land masses themselves, of course, cannot blend together. And **the physical geography is therefore symbolized by the two separate feet of the “image” and the two separate “beasts” of Revelation 13.** But in the “spiritual geography” dimension, they do mix.

Mammon-worship combines with emperor-worship, and together they get a powerful grip on the world. Or, in modern terms, **the world’s two main secular “religions” combine - Materialism (“mark of the beast” cashless society) and secular Demagoguery (Antichrist’s military rule).** In ancient times, this might have been called **the union of the gods of war and wealth, Mars and Mammon;** today, we might call it the union of **Militarism and Materialism.** (And interestingly, they seem to correspond with the activities of **the “red horse” and “black horse”** mentioned in Revelation 6.)

In the following more technical explanation of how all this works, we can look again at the diagram of empires:

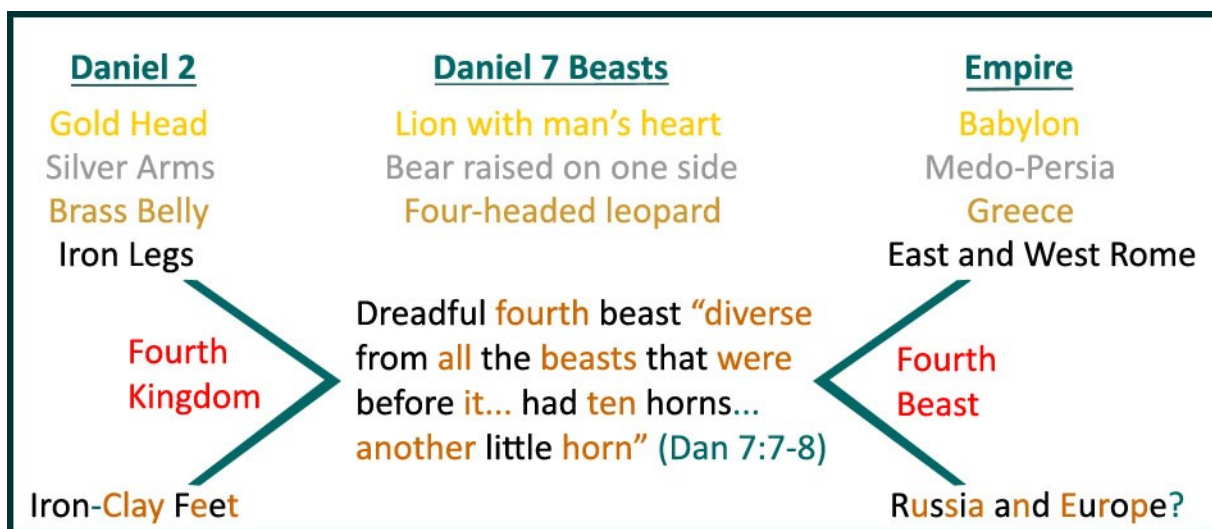
In the below picture the Daniel 2 “image” section of it illustrates the **gold head of Babylon,** the silver arms of Medo-Persia, **the brass belly and haunches of Greece,** and **the “fourth kingdom”,** the iron legs of Rome. **The feet portion** was also considered **part of the “fourth kingdom”,** even though **there is a new substance of clay there mixed in with the iron.** (Daniel 2:40)



In a later vision (Daniel 7 in the above illustration), Daniel saw the same progression of empires symbolized in a different form – as “beasts from the sea”: “And four beasts came up from the sea. These great beasts are four kings, which shall arise.” (Daniel 7:3) In these two chapters of Daniel 2 and 7, the Lord is portraying the same thing from different viewpoints. Thus, in the above diagram **the metallic kingdoms in the Daniel 2 “image” are shown corresponding with the different beasts of Daniel 7.**

And what about the “iron and clay feet”? Well, the passage in **Daniel 7** does make it clear that **the “dreadful fourth beast” (with its ten horns)** represents more than just ancient Rome. **Like a double-image exposure in photography, that “beast” includes also the Endtime empire.** And this

relates also to what the “*image*” shows: how **the iron in the legs continues on into the feet**. Even though *both legs and feet are called the “fourth kingdom”*, we can safely assume that *the “feet” portion of the legs actually represents another empire, coming after the Roman empire and not appearing until the time of the End*. This is that final era when the “iron” nature of government inherited long ago from Rome mixes with another substance - the “*miry clay*”... coming just before that climactic moment in history when the Stone hits the feet and ushers in the Millennial reign of Christ on Earth. So, just as *the Roman “fourth beast” in Daniel 7 includes the End Time kingdom*, so likewise *this “fourth kingdom” in Daniel 2 also includes both ancient Rome and the modern Endtime kingdom*.

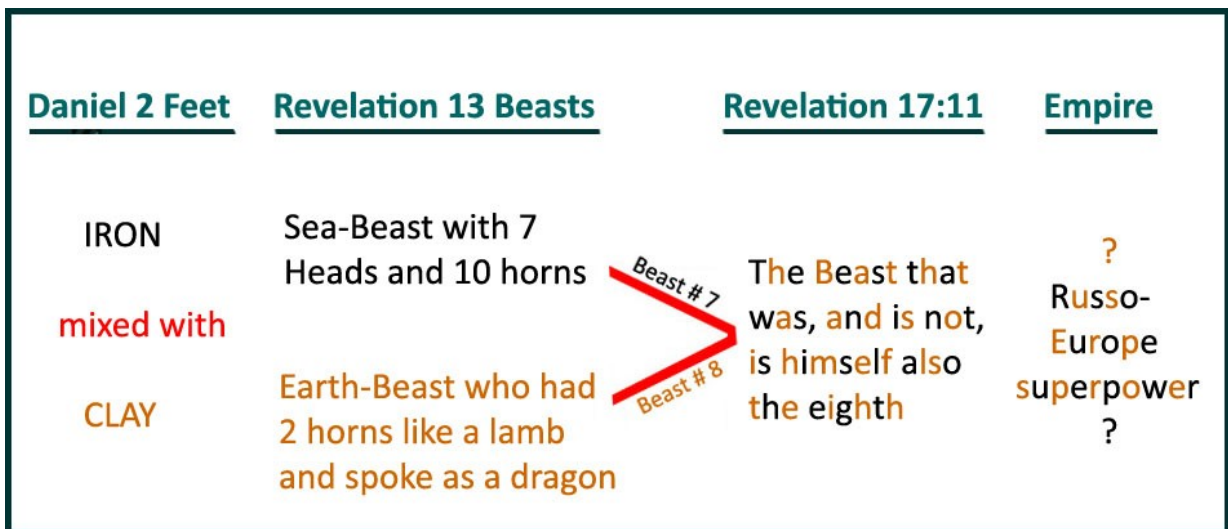


At this point in the ongoing revelation of the future, the distinction between the ancient and modern empires was rather vague and did not get clarified until about six centuries later. When **John the Apostle** received his revelations, he **saw** a vision of **two Beasts** who were to arise **at the Time of the End: a 10-horned “beast from the sea”**, who is a sort of reproduction of the same 10-horned Beast in Daniel 7 (except it has 7 heads), and **a new and very different two-horned “beast from the earth”** (Revelation 13). Since the materials cum body parts in the image of Daniel 2 corresponded to the various beasts in Daniel 7, then it should be safe to add the following entries

to the above chart, which was an attempt to match the "image" body parts/materials with the "beasts":

The "iron" in the "feet" matches with the 7-headed, 10-horned sea-Beast of Revelation 13:1-10.

The "clay" in the "feet" matches with the dragon-like earth-Beast of Revelation 13:11-18.



So that means that **within the "fourth beast/kingdom"**, besides **the iron-only empire of Rome**, there are **two more empires** to be accounted for; they are **the simultaneous kingdoms of the Antichrist and False Prophet**. In Daniel 2 and 7 they are **merged in with the "fourth kingdom" and "fourth beast"**, and the full reality and distinctions don't emerge until later - in the 13th and 17th chapter of the Revelation Book.

As we've learned, **the feet** by themselves symbolize **the geographical division (Russia/EU)** while **the iron and clay mixture symbolizes the less tangible political-economic and religious aspects of the two empires**. Because of the subtle intertwining of money, power, and influence in the modern world, the geographical boundary does not limit **the more intangible domains of economics, culture, religion, and spiritual influence** from spreading into different regions of the world and, most importantly, from

mixing together to form a new religion. This is a reality that was symbolized in Daniel's ancient prophecy as "*iron mixed with miry clay*".

The **Revelation 13** passage also **portrays the modern reality** – but from a different angle – **by describing the activities of two different Beasts and how they work closely together to forge a single Antichrist kingdom**. This situation is coming about largely because **the “clay” power has been working behind the scenes for many centuries and achieved its position of supremacy in the modern world to the point where it has become a Beast in its own right** as portrayed in Revelation 13:11-18. And as *the commercial forces have had to worm their way into the world's courts of power* to survive, so *the military-political systems*, in order to stay afloat, *have been forced to compromise and cooperate with the powers of big business*. In fact, it looks as though **this “clay” power (or “earth-beast” empire) dominates the present historical landscape to a large extent**.

Now if the two different regimes did not mix, or combine, then it would be a situation where the two Endtime Beasts stick to their own territories, and the image might have one clay foot and one iron foot – one regime immersed in the False Prophet's materialism, the other in the Antichrist's demagoguery. This was the situation in World War II; the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan were all pretty much separate cultures. **Hitler was revered, even worshiped** in Germany, but he did not have the same influence in the other two nations. He was a figure who was worshiped by a national people, whereas **the Antichrist will have a more international following. Likely, this is what we can expect to see happen in the religious realm**.

In the realm of economic-political activity also, we can observe even now how things have moved more and more towards this “mixed” iron-clay infrastructure: **Russia has changed from the more authoritarian “iron” society it once was to a more capitalistic one and more influenced by the big business magnates; the EU** was a community built strictly along the lines of economic cooperation – a “clay”-type society; however, occasional military

interventions (as in the Balkans and Libya) do show **a trend developing that could lead to further militarization in European society**. And of course, **the “iron” features of ancient Rome’s republican administration have existed in both regions for quite some time.**

To summarize, the image has **two types of materials**: the various **metals**, and then finally the **clay** material. This symbolic representation shows that **two styles of government** have existed in the world - **the military-political (metal)**, which has dominated for a long time, and **the business-commercial (clay)**, a late bloomer, **coming to full power only in recent history (in the feet of the image)**. Although they have **separate geographical bases (represented by the “feet”)**, nevertheless, because the two kingdoms unite – just as the two *“beasts”* of Revelation 13 unite - their effect upon the world is symbolized as ***“iron mixed with miry clay”***. **Their regime blends the forces of materialism and military demagoguery** - an overwhelming combination that will capture the loyalties of much of the world in its final days.

It is a paradoxical and unique situation in world history: to have two separate empires whose **cultures and religions will be shared in both empires**. To illustrate: imagine if, during World War II, the Axis powers were truly sharing their cultures – the Japanese adopting the “Heil Hitler” slogan and the Germans hanging pictures of the Japanese emperor alongside Hitler’s. But **in the upcoming world order**, something like this will happen: **both the Antichrist and False Prophet personages, and both their systems of rule, will be adopted throughout the two main territories** that will comprise the great superpower of the final days. (And **no doubt, many other nations will be caught up in it as well.**)

So isn’t it intriguing how the ancient revelations in the Daniel and Revelation Books had grasped these peculiar features of modern history so long before they will come to pass and become a reality that we are only now beginning to comprehend? First, it was Daniel’s vision - such a clever, yet simple way for the Lord to illustrate the panorama of history, including the complex economic-political and religious situation of our modern times (*“iron mixed*

with miry clay” in the “feet” - Daniel 2:41) Then later on, John the Apostle saw something similar from a different angle - two “beasts” from the “earth” and “sea” working closely together; and finally, he was given the angel’s explanation about a two-beasts-in-one arrangement: “The beast... even he is the eighth and is of the seven”. (Revelation 13, 17:11)

Bilderberg-picked EU Leader Van Rompuy Calls for Global Governance With Russia

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/56086741?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0>

Dec 27, 2012

While much of the Christian and post-Christian worlds were busy rushing about in last-minute preparations for Christmas celebrations, an important event took place in Brussels, Belgium, that went largely unnoticed and unreported. Leaders of the European Union and **Russia** met in Brussels on December 20 and 21 for the [30th EU-Russia Summit](#), continuing a process of convergence and interdependence that is leading toward political, economic, and social merger.

In his remarks at the conclusion of the summit, Herman Van Rompuy, president of the European Council, made repeated reference to progress toward the goal of “global governance,” which has always been code in globalist circles for world government. Van Rompuy [stated](#):

By working together, **the EU and Russia** can make a decisive contribution to global governance and regional conflict resolution, to global economic governance in the G 8 and G 20, and to a broad range of international and regional issues. **I would like to congratulate President Putin for taking over the presidency of G 20.**

[From this article, are we getting a glimpse, or mini-preview, into the future when **the False Prophet from Europe will forge ties with and build up the Antichrist from Russia?** It should be kept in mind, of course, that in these beginning stages there are many worthwhile goals that the EU and Russia would like to achieve - tackling various world problems, which the present U.S.-dominated world order has proven itself incapable of solving. So at this

stage these recent events should not be viewed in a sinister light, since it is simply a matter of God allowing this merger of superpowers as a means of correcting the injustices and intractable conflicts in the Mid East. Of course, we know that **eventually, the forces of Darkness will hijack the process and try to harness it into serving their own destructive ends.** We get a hint of this in Ezekiel 38 about the invasion of “Gog” from the “*far north*” into Israel and the Mid East: “*On that day it shall come to pass that **thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan.***” (verse 10) But until then, the recent new developments happening between the EU and Russia should be viewed as a welcome and needed re-balancing of power in the world.]

2. 12. “The Kingdom shall be Divided”



“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation... If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?” (Luke 11:17-18)

These Words of Jesus can apply to what Daniel noticed about the “*iron and clay*”: “*Thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay.*” (Daniel 2:41,43A - KJV). Then he turns right around and says the opposite: “*They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*” (verse 43B - KJV)

So how can we understand this paradox? If we backtrack a bit, when tracing the rise of the “*clay*” power in history (in SOTF 9), we saw how **the commercial forces grew exceedingly strong during the Modern Age**. Laissez-faire economics began to replace the long time traditional economics of mercantilism. There came a new independence to the domain of commercialism. In ancient times the commercial empire of Phoenecia also had become quite strong and independent. But unlike her modern counterpart, she did not succeed in truly mixing with the metal powers of her day, especially Babylon and Greece. On the other hand, the new upcoming commercial empire has, over the last couple centuries, forged unbreakable ties with the “*iron*” forces of government and military.

Nevertheless, the collaboration is still only a matter of expediency. **The Antichrist** and **the False Prophet** promote contrasting forces - **militarism** and **materialism**. These forces were symbolized earlier (in Revelation 6) in a different way, as **the “red horse” of war** and **the “black horse” of greed and materialism**. Like the two “*horses*”, the two “*beasts*” are supposed to be on the same team. They also have a mutual interest in bringing on the collapse of the American empire so they can take over the world. It will be expedient then for these two forces to suppress their differences and unite.

As in most worldly kingdoms, **their relationship is based less on trust, and more on coercion, blackmail, deception; it’s all a matter of expediency.** For example, democratic countries will support military dictatorships (despite their ideological differences) in order to further their own agendas. (This was common, for example, among Latin American dictatorships that were supported by American conglomerates.) It’s a forced unity, a marriage of convenience. This tension or animosity exists, not just between countries, but inside countries - between military and civilian leaders, the generals and the businessmen, who would each like to control the other. This kind of situation did not exist **in the empires of ancient times**. Then, **the seat of power rested, for the most part, firmly with the political-military establishment**. And it was a uniform, strong, metallic type of rule.

But now in the End Time a new state of affairs has arisen: although Rome was very “strong” in the “legs” (Dan 2:40), her modern descendants have had to put up with the addition of this new element of “clay”: the history of the “fourth kingdom” has seen the republican dictatorship that characterized ancient Rome transformed into a new type of republican government where civilian and business leaders are calling the shots and the military is kept at bay by them. The “clay” power, instead of being conquered by a metal kingdom (as ancient Phoenecia was), now has infiltrated the “iron” kingdom and exists on equal terms. **“The kingdom shall be divided.”** (v41) That is, the “fourth kingdom” of “iron”, as it moved on into modern times, has become “divided”; **there exists now a sharing of power between the “iron” military and “clay” commercial forces.**

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken.” (v42-KJV) The “fourth kingdom” of “iron” is still “partly strong.” (*“Yet the strength of the iron shall be in it”* – v41.) But because of the influence and interference of the “clay”, the “fourth kingdom”, which originally was “as strong as iron”, has become “partly broken”. In SOTF 10 we learned what happened during World War II. The two centers of power really got in the way of each other, bringing confusion and indecision into the halls of government. The commercial powerbrokers crippled the efforts of military strategists, with the result that World War II dragged on and ended with the triumph of atheist communism after the War.

Nevertheless, *“there shall be in it of the strength of the iron”* - a military strength that can pound a nation, or the world, into submission. But in our world today there’s also **this “clay” element, which, in a more subtle way, is bringing the world into submission - through its financial and media control.** Although not a military power, it is capable of enforcing its rule - by **instigating the other “iron” element to fight wars advantageous to its interests.** By the same token, the “iron” forces coerce the powers of big business to support and promote their cause.

But even though the “iron and clay” are “divided”, the “image” did picture them also as being “mixed”. And this shows that the iron and clay regimes do not war against each other. They abandon their rivalry and cooperate, just as the Antichrist and False Prophet beasts are seen to be cooperating in the Revelation 13 passage.

The world has already been prepared for this kind of forced partnership. Each country contains in itself the iron and clay government infrastructure; **the military and the “merchants” exist in every country in uneasy partnership.** Although obliged to cooperate, they do not “adhere to one another”. (Daniel 2:43) And it is possible this could mean some kind of breakdown in the internal unity of the Antichrist kingdom will happen. But that is a little far in the future and difficult to speculate on right now.

2.13. Modern Day Cultures of Darkness



What about these Beasts of modern times? Their cultures are so secular; can we really say they leave a “religious” impression upon the world? **Do modern industrialized nations practice some form of false religion?** Several decades

ago, probably not; in name at least, they were staunch Christian monarchies and republics. Nowadays however, their relationship with the Almighty has devolved considerably from a purer form into what Revelation 17-18 describes in quite uncomplimentary terms as resembling the wayward ways and character of a **“whore”**. (This was a term applied sometimes to ancient Israel also when she fell away from the worship and ways of her God.) Through history, **once-loyal “brides”** (let us for the moment apply that to Christian nations and their peoples) **have transformed (spiritually) into “whores”**. But that is not quite the same as being transformed into **“beasts”** - meaning that in such nations/empires **the Christian worship system will have been outlawed and/or replaced by a different religious system altogether**.

Of course, once a nation’s Christianity has been weakened, then it is much more susceptible to being taken over by a false religion. A look through 20th century history does indeed show that at times great cultures of Darkness have swept through these modern, industrialized, and Christian regions of the world and could once more sweep away the old landmarks of Christian faith.

Consider, for example, **the “beast from the sea”, the resurrected Soviet Union - Russia plus her 10 horns**. For several decades, the Russian people became conditioned to living under the cloud of atheism and under authoritarian regimes and rulers exalted into the status of demagogues. And it was similar to what existed in all the metallic and sea-Beast empires of the past: an exaltation of the king into divine status, intended by the Devil to usurp the true worship of God. Although **in Russia the pendulum for now has swung away from atheist communism, it could, under a rising tide of nationalism, swing back again to a similar brand of spiritual Darkness** - one without the emphasis on Communism. The old anti-God beliefs and demagoguery, these are the features that could rise up again in the new Russia.

And looking at the other *“beast from the earth”*, whom we have presumed to be **the EU**, over the last century and a half, we can trace how Europe’s great Christian heritage has been uprooted by the philosophies of evolution, humanism, atheism. While undermining Christian faith and conviction, these philosophies, especially evolution theory and eugenics, at the same time offered alternative world views that, during the 1930s and 40s, served as the basis for Nazi policies and demagoguery. Although Nazism is long gone, much of the philosophical heritage that acted as a sort of breeding ground for it has continued to grow and seems now to be paving the way for the rise of a new type of “religion” that Europe now embraces, its own peculiar brand of spiritual Darkness, one we might call **secular Materialism**, or a religion that’s against religion.

Essentially, this “religion” boils down to **the worship of man and the natural world and the things and wealth that it provides**. Once faith in God has been removed, that’s all there is left. Over the last 50 years or so, we have seen this decline in faith happen bit by bit. More and more in modern Europe, official government policies have gradually prohibited the practice of religious faith, especially Christianity. This has happened, not in great waves of obvious persecution, but in more subtle, hidden ways. So again, herein is harbored **a great “culture of darkness” that is already working to cloud the minds and hearts of untold numbers of people – a culture that will eventually culminate in a new form of religion, one based on Materialism and on receiving the “mark of the beast”**.

So, as the EU-Russia combine begins to embrace the world in a unified credit system under a new charismatic leader, their conquest will bring on a new culture of Darkness. This will manifest as both the demagoguery surrounding the Antichrist and the devotion given to material prosperity and survival. It’s like an updated version of the ancient worship of Mammon and emperor worship, adapted to our scientific age without the usual religious trappings associated with idolatry.

But, as we know from the Revelation Book, **a new type of initiation rite will come into vogue, that of receiving the “mark of the beast”**. (Likely, this will be implanted in or on the skin, a tattoo or microchip without which it will be very difficult to buy or sell. But this is a big subject, beyond the scope of the present study.) **So, this modern version of a worship system will spread, not just in Europe and Russia, but over much of the world.** It will be certainly a new “religion”. The difference, however, is that **it will be a religion that doesn’t look like a religion.**

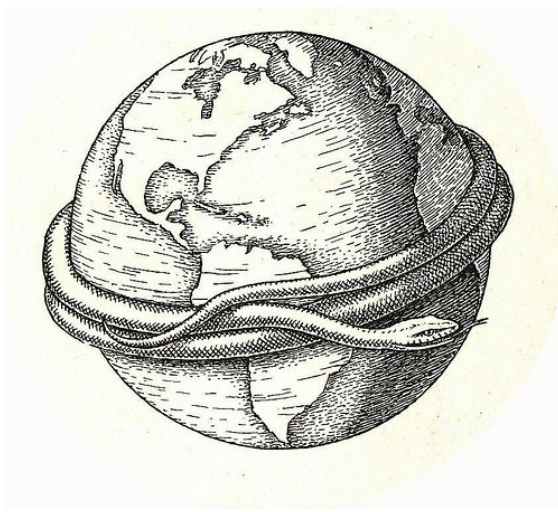
Nevertheless, as happened before in ancient times, **the Antichrist will become an object** of worship – or more accurately, **of political, secular adulation** - not only in Russia, but in much of the rest of the world; and this will come about mainly through the influence of the False Prophet. His promoting the “*image of the beast*” causes the world to worship the Antichrist. (Revelation 13:12, 15) What’s new, however, is that this modern Beast, with the help of the False Prophet, also brings the world’s economic salvation. The Antichrist becomes an almighty benefactor, the source of the world’s material wealth.

The Antichrist empire will thus control the world from two directions. **Nations will feel the pressure to accept the Antichrist - not only to survive his military campaigns, but also, survive economically.** There will be this peculiar interplay of political-military regimes with their big business “managers”. Now that the modern world has built the necessary infrastructure (of weapons, credit systems, media communication, and so on), this will enable the earth and sea “*beasts*” to conquer much of the modern world. They will have a large enough platform from which to launch the new form of emperor worship, the one that ties in with the “*mark of the beast*” system, the modern day version of Mammon-worship,.

Revelation 13 pictures this twofold assault on the world in the symbolism of the two “*beasts*” from the “*sea*” and the “*earth*” (who work together). The vision of the “*image*” in Daniel 2 symbolizes it differently as the “*feet*” of

“iron and clay” (*“mixed”* together). Iron, the strong military-republican rule that ruthlessly crushes all opposition, similar to the rule of ancient Rome. The rule of the Caesar dictators has already re-appeared in modern times – in the form of Communist dictators and the German Fuehrer – and will climax with the rise of the future Antichrist demagogue. Clay: The equally ruthless economic power that forces everyone to ensure his material survival by entering the *“mark-number”* system.

2.14. Role of Technology in the Antichrist and False Prophet’s New World Order



Picture courtesy of <http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/calsidyrose/3644470963>

In previous posts, we learned about how nations exhibit both a physical and a spiritual geography. And how in ancient times the borders of the two geographies normally coincided. It was simpler then. That is, **the culture of the conquering power tended to stay within the boundaries of its military conquest.** For example, the Greek Empire left behind the *“brass”* imprint of its philosophically minded culture everywhere. And Greek temples

honoring her mythological gods continued on and were adopted by the Romans who came later. The Romans in turn imposed their own form of government and emperor worship upon the world of their day. But nowadays, because of modern technology - television, easy travel, electronic funds transfer, instant communication and exchange of information, and so on - **a nation's culture (its "spiritual geography") can expand far beyond its physical borders.**

As for modern technology, the Scriptures do refer to this peculiar feature of modern life in somewhat cryptic terms. For example, the "*beast*" with the "*ten horns*" is pictured as having "*great iron teeth*" and "*nails of brass*", as being able to "*make desolate*" by "*the overspreading of abominations*". (Daniel 7:7,19, 9:27 - KJV) These sound like symbolic references to the peculiar mega-destructive armaments that exist in today's world, which the Antichrist will use to conquer certain nations. "*All the world... worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is able to make war with him?'*" (Revelation 13:3-4)

As for the other "*beast*", the one coming "*out of the earth*", he works to promote worship of the Antichrist through an "*image*" of him and uses that "*image*" to raise persecution against the "non-worshippers". He also organizes the world's economic system by use of a "*mark*" and a "*666-number*". These are all fairly obvious references to modern inventions in media technology, electronics, and computerization. Each **End Time "*beast*" (superpower) seems then to be a technological base from which their respective "*heads*" (Antichrist and False Prophet) can operate.**

The Antichrist's rise to power and adulation before the world requires the combined technological resources of the two superpowers: **From the EU will come the educated manpower, advanced media and computer technology, and money and credit systems** that exist there. **From Russia will come a military society, extensive weapon systems, and a huge supply of natural resources.** These two "*beasts*" and the two geographical "*feet*" that harbor them symbolize these two geographical-technological-political superpowers

that are appearing before our eyes in these last days. So there is the “physical geography” aspect of these kingdoms.

But now, as far as the “spiritual geography” goes, this is where the limits of geographical and political borders seem to vanish. Because of modern technology, cultural influence can be a rather fluid thing in today’s world.

Already we are seeing **the Euro-American version of Materialism**, this new secular religion, spreading in both Russia and the EU, and in most of the rest of the world, because of technological advances in media advertising, credit systems, and money transfer. (Revelation 17-18 expresses in graphic terms this religion or system of Materialism, which is called there **the “great whore”**.)

Regarding this cultural fluidity, we can see how this has worked with the American empire: Although America has military bases all over the world, nevertheless, her political boundaries are confined pretty much to her own territory. Unlike the colonial empires of the 16th to 20th centuries, she does not exercise official, government control in other nations. However, **America’s financial and cultural boundaries do extend all over the world. The “great whore” of Revelation 17-18 symbolizes very well this type of modern empire** - one that has amassed great wealth for herself at the expense of poorer nations and then **spread her cultural decadence all over the world**. Sad to say, these chapters seem to describe the downward spiral of the American empire - the decadent, even oppressive, nature of her influence in the world. Not in days gone by. But in the world of modern times, and probably more so in the near future, America seems to resemble all too well the ominous picture painted in those chapters of the Revelation Book.

In similar fashion, the Antichrist/False Prophet empire will try to spread itself everywhere; and in today’s world much of that conquest can be accomplished financially and culturally without having to cross physical borders. Stock exchanges, the cashless economy and system of electronic funds transfer have made it easier for the money magnates to establish huge

domains of economic influence. With this modern technology it is possible now to link every country and neighborhood around the world in a uniform economic system through cashless transactions, credit systems, and the future “mark of the beast”. So, in this respect, much of the world has already fallen to the low-profile, yet powerful rulers of capitalism-materialism.

As for the demagoguery surrounding the Antichrist, media communication, with its ability to leap across political borders, will easily generate propaganda, worship, and fear of him in the world at large. As soon as he arrives on the scene, this worship-of-the-Beast religion will spread far and wide in a very short time through the False Prophet’s manipulation of modern media technology.

And so, because of the effect of these technologies, this could have a lot to do with the overlapping, or mixture, of the iron and clay symbolism in the feet of the image. These new technologies can extend the dominion of power-hungry men far beyond the range of militarily established borders. In the past, certain demagogues (Napoleon and Hitler), both from Europe, tried to conquer Russia. But in the future the EU and Russia won’t have to conquer each other militarily; but religiously, it could be said that each one will conquer the other. “*You saw iron mixed with miry clay.*” (Daniel 2:41 - RSV) And the result will be the worship of the Antichrist through the “*mark of the beast*”. And with this new religion or culture, the Antichrist and False Prophet can subjugate, or ensnare, the rest of the world. **Many nations will escape the Antichrist’s military-political conquest, but probably very few will be able to avoid surrendering to the economic-spiritual conquest of the new world order.**

This will serve then to paralyze a large portion of the world into submission without any physical conquest. However, even **in spite of all this great power, it seems some nations do rebel, notably the “kings of the east” (Daniel 11:44, Revelation 16:12).** And this eventually sets the stage for a new war, the Battle of Armageddon.

Anyway, that's a bit far in the future. For now, let's backtrack into the past a bit and trace the rise of technology and its effect on the growth of empires: During the Colonial Era, commercial trading houses based in Europe were busy plundering the natural wealth of newly-discovered territories. And the European nations established great colonial empires through this economic imperialism. The benefits of easier, long-distance travel were beginning to be felt. (How much more is this true today through the use of modern warships and air travel.) Thus, an empire could exist in a more scattered form throughout the world rather than being confined to adjoining land areas. The method of conquest, however, still required the use of war and the establishing of political boundaries.

But nowadays, what do we see? Because money can slip back and forth so easily through political boundaries, nations can be made to suffer financial collapse. With very little effort, huge fortunes can be drained off from anywhere in the world into the coffers of the money magnates of the world. Distant foreign masters can subjugate whole nations this way without the use of an army or establishing new political borders. **Easy loans, high interest rates, and other forms of financial trickery have been used with devastating effect on the poorer nations of the world to get them under the control of the western power brokers.** Some Third World governments have managed to escape these economic shackles, but many have collapsed before the subtle, unrelenting force of **this marauding "great whore" of western capitalism.** **Jurisdiction over the economies of many nations has shifted into the hands of this vast commercial empire. And with that comes political control.**

Then with the coming collapse of the "great whore" (as predicted in Revelation 17-18) and the world in economic shambles, it will be an easy matter for the earth-Beast to seize control and to hold nations hostage to **his "mark" credit system. Being part of it will be a matter of survival.** His enormous financial empire will also bring the masses under the watchful eye of computer surveillance and control. Already the infrastructure for this system has been set into place in much of the world.

Besides **financial control**, the False Prophet has another huge domain of influence at his fingertips - in the realm of **media manipulation**. Through satellite broadcasting he can subvert whole cultures and control public opinion in faraway lands. The somewhat decadent influence of television has long been undermining the values and mores of Western culture and has spread itself into the rest of the world as well. **The Russian Beast**, as we understand from Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 11, **will conquer – geographically - the Mideast. But through the media, the Antichrist’s power can extend much further, so that fear of him can be felt all over the world.** In this modern world, people will be well informed about the Beast’s superior military prowess. *“All the world marveled and followed after the beast... and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? who is able to make war with him?’”* (Revelation 13:4) Besides communicating everywhere this fear and propaganda about the Beast, **television can also make him the object of secular worship to people in every nook and cranny of the world.** This is the powerful *“image of the beast”* spoken of in Revelation 13. (For more details on this, see post [“Unraveling the Mystery of the Image”](#).)

So, **modern media imperialism** also turns out to be a form of **religious imperialism** that the False Prophet uses to spread the worship of the other Beast, the Antichrist. And by so doing, the False Prophet can draw the world more easily into his own net - *the “mark-number” system - which, conveniently for him, is done in the name of the Antichrist.* (Revelation 13:16-17)

So, on top of **the Antichrist’s military imperialism**, the world will be “conquered” through **economic and media imperialism**; and, we could add, the imperialism of **computer surveillance**, which is linked to the economic conquest. In this way, the conquest becomes very thorough. Here is how it may work: When a country gets taken over by the Antichrist through war, they are also getting taken over by the False Prophet; they will be forced to adopt his economic system. Or vice-versa, when a country’s economy falls to

the “*mark-number*” system, that is, to the False Prophet Beast, they are forced to give their allegiance to the Antichrist.

This new world order, the one described in Revelation 13, will incorporate more recent inventions in media, computer, and commercial technology. But like its predecessor, Communism, the new totalitarian regime will be hailed in idealistic terms as the “brave new world” of the future, the progressive utopia long dreamed of by humanistic thinkers of the past and promoted by the False Prophet of the near future. **But such a system cannot survive if it tries to leave God out of the picture.** Like the previous communist utopias or Hitler’s Third Reich, **it will only collapse – another utopian dream turned into a nightmare – just before the second coming of Christ to rescue mankind** from what will have become his lowest state, the worst mess the world has ever been dragged into by the forces of Darkness. *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”* (Matthew 24:21)

Edited by audioactivated.net

2.15. Where are We Headed on the Political-Economic Level?



Regarding the state of the modern world (as pictured in the iron-clay symbolism of Daniel 2), it would seem that the power pendulum of the 20th-century has swung towards the “clay” side - due mainly to the rise of western Capitalism. This “clay” influence has spawned a rather self-satisfied and complacent culture in the western world. And to preserve its wealthier way of life, the West has often employed tactics that have brought much hardship to less developed nations in the Third World. And as we have learned previously, instead of diminishing the amount of warfare, the forces of “clay” have actually done much to aggravate and lengthen the wars of the 20th Century.

And so “clay”, being an undesirable substance and without much value, aptly symbolizes this decadent aspect of Western society that is so intoxicated with materialism. Another passage in the Bible dwells on this commercialized culture of materialism in greater detail: “the great whore... with whom the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine

of her fornication." (Revelation 17:1-2) But that is a separate study beyond the scope of the present one.

As for the "iron" type of regime, we can find in both the Russian and EU empires evidence of ancient Rome's heritage: [Russia has emphasized more the military aspects](#), whereas [Europe has emphasized the administrative aspects](#) of ancient Rome. And this pattern will likely continue.

On another level though, the culture and structure of these two superpowers have converged a great deal, especially since the collapse of Communism in recent history. The following article gives a helpful behind-the-scenes look at the origins of **the new and upcoming Euro-Russian "convergency"**:

[Former Soviet Dissident Warns of EU Dictatorship](#) - Paul Belien, The Brussels Journal (Excerpts of article) - 27 Feb, 2006

Vladimir Bukovksy, the 63-year old former Soviet dissident, fears that **the European Union is on its way to becoming another Soviet Union...**

Excerpts of interview with Vladimir Bukovsky

Paul Belien: You were a very famous Soviet dissident and now you are drawing a parallel between the European Union and the Soviet Union. Can you explain this?

Vladimir Bukovsky: I am referring to structures, to certain ideologies being instilled, to the plans, the direction, the inevitable expansion, the obliteration of nations, which was the purpose of the Soviet Union. ... The ultimate purpose of the Soviet Union was to create a new historic entity, the Soviet people, all around the globe. The same is true in **the EU today. They are trying to create a new people. They call this people "Europeans."**

According to Communist doctrine as well as to many forms of Socialist thinking, the national state is supposed to wither away. In Russia, however, the opposite happened. Instead of withering away the Soviet state became a very powerful state, but the nationalities were obliterated. But when the time of the Soviet collapse came these suppressed feelings of national identity came bouncing back and they nearly destroyed the country. It was so frightening.

PB: But all these countries that joined the European Union did so voluntarily.

VB: No, they did not. Look at Denmark which voted against the Maastricht treaty twice. Look at Ireland [which voted against the Nice treaty]. Look at many other countries, they are under enormous pressure. It is almost blackmail. Switzerland had to vote five times in a referendum. All five times they have rejected it, but who knows what will happen the sixth time, the seventh time. It is always the same thing. It is a trick for idiots. **The people have to vote in referendums until the people vote the way that is wanted.** Then they have to stop voting. Why stop? Let us continue voting. [That is, it would only be fair to allow nations the option to vote themselves out of the EU.] **The European Union is what Americans would call a shotgun marriage.**

PB: But we have a European Parliament which is chosen by the people.

VB: The European Parliament is elected on the basis of proportional representation, which is not true representation. And what does it vote on? The percentage of fat in yoghurt, that kind of thing. It is ridiculous. It is given the task of the Supreme Soviet. The average MP can speak for six minutes per year in the Chamber. That is not a real parliament.

In 1992 I had unprecedented access to Politburo and Central Committee secret documents which have been classified, and still are even now, for 30 years. These documents show very clearly that **the whole idea of turning the European common market into a federal state was agreed between the left-wing parties of Europe and Moscow** as a joint project which [Soviet leader Mikhail] Gorbachev in 1988-89 called **our "common European home."**

The idea was very simple. It first came up in 1985-86, when the Italian Communists visited Gorbachev, followed by the German Social-Democrats. They all complained that the changes in the world, particularly after [British Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher introduced privatisation and economic liberalisation, were threatening to wipe out the achievement (as they called it) of generations of Socialists and Social-Democrats—threatening to reverse it completely. Therefore the only way to withstand this onslaught of wild capitalism (as they called it) was to try to introduce the same socialist goals in all countries at once. Prior to that, the left-wing parties and the Soviet Union had opposed European integration very much because they perceived it as a means to block their socialist goals. From 1985 onwards they

completely changed their view. The Soviets came to a conclusion and to an agreement with the left-wing parties that if they worked together they could hijack the whole European project and turn it upside down.

Instead of an open market they would turn it into a federal state.

In January of 1989, for example, a delegation of the Trilateral Commission came to see Gorbachev. It included [former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro] Nakasone, [former French President Valéry] Giscard d'Estaing, [American banker David] Rockefeller and [former US Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger. They had a very nice conversation where they tried to explain to Gorbachev that Soviet Russia had to integrate into the financial institutions of the world, such as Gatt, the IMF and the World Bank.

In the middle of it Giscard d'Estaing suddenly takes the floor and says: "Mr President, I cannot tell you exactly when it will happen—probably within 15 years—but **Europe is going to be a federal state and you have to prepare yourself for that.** You have to work out with us, and the European leaders, how you would react to that, how would you allow the other East European countries to interact with it or how to become a part of it, you have to be prepared."

This was January 1989, at a time when the [1992] Maastricht treaty had not even been drafted. How the hell did **Giscard d'Estaing** know what was going to happen in 15 years time? And surprise, surprise, how did he **become the author of the European constitution [in 2002-03]**? A very good question. **It does smell of conspiracy, doesn't it?**

Luckily for us the Soviet part of this conspiracy collapsed earlier and it did not reach the point where Moscow could influence the course of events. But the original idea was to have what they called a convergency, whereby the Soviet Union would mellow somewhat and become more social-democratic, while Western Europe would become social-democratic and socialist. Then there will be convergency. The structures have to fit each other. This is why **the structures of the European Union were initially built with the purpose of fitting into the Soviet structure.** This is why they are so similar in functioning and in structure.

It is no accident that **the European Parliament**, for example, **reminds me of the Supreme Soviet.** It looks like the Supreme Soviet because it was designed like it. Similarly, when you look at **the European Commission it looks like the Politburo.** I mean it does so exactly, except for the fact that the Commission now has 25 members

and the Politburo usually had 13 or 15 members. Apart from that they are exactly the same, unaccountable to anyone, not directly elected by anyone at all. When you look into all this bizarre activity of the European Union with its 80,000 pages of regulations it looks like Gosplan [state planning committee of the Soviet Union]. **We used to have an organisation which was planning everything in the economy, to the last nut and bolt, five years in advance. Exactly the same thing is happening in the EU.** When you look at **the type of EU corruption, it is exactly the Soviet type of corruption, going from top to bottom rather than going from bottom to top.**

If you go through all the structures and features of this emerging European monster you will notice that it more and more resembles the Soviet Union. Of course, it is a milder version of the Soviet Union. Please, do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that it has a Gulag. It has no KGB—not yet—but I am very carefully watching such structures as **Europol** for example. That really worries me a lot because **this organisation will probably have powers bigger than those of the KGB.** They will have diplomatic immunity. Can you imagine a KGB with diplomatic immunity?

Meanwhile they are introducing more and more ideology. The Soviet Union used to be a state run by ideology. **Today's ideology of the European Union is social-democratic, statist,** and a big part of it is also political correctness. I watch very carefully how **political correctness spreads and becomes an oppressive ideology ...** What you observe, taken into perspective, is a systematic introduction of ideology which could later be enforced with oppressive measures. Apparently that is the whole purpose of Europol. Otherwise why do we need it? **I watch very carefully who is persecuted for what and what is happening,** because that is one field in which I am an expert. I know how Gulags spring up...

From the above article we learn about the behind-the-scenes plans to extinguish the old rivalry between capitalism and communism and to pave the way for the EU and Russia to work together more closely. Eventually, **the goal seems to be to create a successor to the old Soviet Union, a new totalitarian society - the iron-and-clay one of the Endtime. This will be a society that will allow both militarism and materialism to flourish under the banner of the Antichrist.**

In previous posts we studied how the iron-and-clay combination has been around for some time, starting all the way back in feudal times. In today's world all nations are part iron and part clay to varying degrees. They are split between civilian and military rule, the captains of industry and the captains of war, between the "iron" legacy of Rome (republican government backed up by the military) and the more recent commercial interests of "clay" who have guaranteed their own survival by making the iron power dependent on them.

For this reason national leaders are obliged to represent both business community and military establishment. The Antichrist too will have to represent both sides. If there's one thing military and political rulers have come to accept in today's world, it is the necessity of accommodating the interests of big business. *"And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the (fourth) kingdom shall be partly strong (ruled by the army/government), and partly broken (army/government kept in check by business interests)."* (Daniel 2:42 – KJV. For more detailed information on this verse see [Appendix.](#))

As further preparation for the new totalitarian society, the western world – in the EU especially - has come under the sway of **democratic socialism**. In this type of government, found mostly in countries that can afford it, there have emerged **huge welfare systems**. Governments, of course, should be responsible to care for the needy amongst their people. But in many countries the pendulum has swung so far in that direction to the point where **their citizens expect to be pampered by the state without much effort on their part**. But when days of turmoil come, a nation of such docile citizens, depending so heavily on the state to provide security, is not likely to protest against restrictions on freedom. At such a time the Antichrist forces can arrive on the scene to guarantee security and protection - whether against terrorist threats, the economic crash, or whatever emergency might arise – and be welcomed with open arms.

As for Russia, she had once gotten very used to living under totalitarian regimes in the bygone days of communism. Because of this heritage, her citizens too may find it easy to switch to the security of a more controlled society. Probably too, there exists a strong undercurrent of repressed nationalism, a desire to return to superpower status as it was in the glory days of the Soviet Union. So could it be, as the above article suggested, Russia will fall right in step with her neighbor, the EU? Russia can flex its “iron” muscle to Europe’s advantage on the international scene; this will help to spur the implementation of Europe’s “mark-number” system of controlled economy. In the meantime Europe can use her financial and media influence to pave the way for the Antichrist to rise in Russia and exalt him into demagogue status in the eyes of the world.

This partnership of the Antichrist and False Prophet “heads”, accompanied by the Russian and EU “beasts”, has great potential to capture the world’s allegiance and dominion. And that is certainly one major feature we can expect to see coming along in the future.

Another one is the following: because of the growing collapse of the capitalist world’s financial system these days and accompanying disorder, **it looks as though the pendulum will swing more to the middle away from laissez-faire principles to a more controlled and regulated economic system.** (This point was a fairly evident background feature in the above article about a possible future EU dictatorship.) Such an economic system would necessitate the rise to greater prominence of the forces of “iron” while the “clay” influence diminishes. In future the two powers of “iron and clay” will co-exist on a more equal basis than they do at present.

This new world order, which seems to be in the process now of formation, will eventually be presided over by the Antichrist and False Prophet. And it will seem benign for a time. As new regimes often do during their rise to power, this new order too will rectify many of the problems that have been plaguing the world – such as its financial chaos and Mid East turmoil. Hitler Germany was a good example of a regime that started off well, bringing

prosperity and employment, correcting the injustices of the Versailles Treaty; but without the love and wisdom of God, the nation soon began to spiral downwards into a tyranny of hatred, war, and persecution. Likewise, **the new world order of Antichrist and False Prophet, as a regime that glorifies man and denies God's presence, will be drawn by the Dark Forces into a final, horrific tailspin.** Jesus Himself predicted it, that man's final government would usher in a time of *"great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."* (Matthew 24:21)

Appendix:

Close look at Daniel 2:42

The original Hebrew for this verse used a word (*Qetsath*) meaning "the whole" or "the end", which is not found in most Bible translations. Also, the original did not use the words "as" or "so" as is found in most translations. Using those two little words conveys the idea that the "iron" is strong while the "clay" is weak. Perhaps that is correct, but the passage could easily have a slightly different meaning; the original intent could have been to mark the contrast between how the fourth kingdom of iron began ("strong") and how it would end ("partly broken"). A more literal translation of this passage could have gone something like this: "And the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay: at the completion of the kingdom it shall be strong and (yet) partly broken."

The "fourth kingdom" of "iron" becomes partly broken, only in its toes and feet; this happens, not because the "clay" itself is weak, but because the "fourth kingdom", which was once a purely "iron" kingdom and thus very "strong", now has to share power with the "clay" forces and has become "broken" (The words "brittle, fragile" are used in other translations, but the primary meaning of this Hebrew word is "broken" as in "shivered" or "shattered"). So this "broken" feature is mentioned, not necessarily to point out that the "clay" is weak, but rather, to mark the contrast between what

the *“fourth kingdom”* was like in its beginning stages in the *“legs”* – *“strong as iron”* - and what happened to it in the *“feet and toes”* when it became *“partly broken”* because of having to share power with what we might think of as the *“fifth kingdom”* of the *“clay”*.

This *“clay”* feature of the *“fifth kingdom”* aptly symbolizes the complacent, self-satisfied, and less militarized cultures of the richer western societies. In this sense, the *“clay”* is weak. But on the economic-political level, the *“clay”* kingdom has used its wealth to exercise considerable power in the world of today, and no doubt will continue to do so in the world of the near future.

Regarding the *“iron”* kingdom, the previous verse 41 was careful to mention that, in a sense, nothing will have changed – that is, the *“fourth kingdom”* of *“iron”* will still exist: *“the strength of the iron shall be in it”*. But because the *“fourth kingdom”* will have become *“divided”*, then the natural outcome, as the next verse 42 points out, is that the kingdom will become *“partly broken”*. In the *“feet and toes”*, the dominance of the *“iron”* will have been set aside to some extent by another very powerful kingdom, symbolized in the vision by the *“clay”* material.

From the original Hebrew words in this verse 42, it is difficult to determine exactly what is the precise meaning of them, as brought out in the following quote:

“As to the element of "weakness" symbolized too by the clay, it may not be possible to determine, with absolute certainty, what is referred to. Any internal source of weakness; anything in the constitution of the state, whether originally existing and constituting heterogeneous material, or whether springing up in the empire itself, or whether arising from the intermingling of foreign elements that never amalgamated themselves with the state, any one of these suppositions would meet all that is fairly implied in this language.”

(from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by
Biblesoft. Originally published in 1853 by Albert Barnes and James
Murphy)

So in this case, where the Hebrew text is not precise enough (a fairly common pitfall in ancient languages), then, to ascertain the meaning, about all we can do is rely on a knowledge of the historical situation as it has been unfolding in these days, years, and even centuries prior to the Second Coming.

Well, enough on that subject. That's rather a lot of fine-tuning done, but, hopefully, it will help to open up the meaning of this passage a little more.

2.16. Where are We Headed on the Religious Level?



Earlier in SOTF 6, it was proposed that **the materials of the Daniel 2 “image”** were meant to **symbolize the “spiritual geography” of empires**. If that is the case, then it should be possible to see how **the new iron-clay regime** will manifest itself in the sphere of religion. From Revelation 13 we learn that the Dragon, through his two agents (Antichrist and False Prophet), will try to serve up to the world a new religion - a composite version of materialism and militaristic demagoguery. This is not a religion as we usually think of it, but in the modern secular world, since this is what people could easily devote themselves to, then it would qualify as a “religion”.

The clues about this new modern religion are given in the Revelation Book, especially in the phrases, **“worship the beast/dragon”**, **“image of the Beast”** and **“mark of the beast”**. Besides being “religious” terms, these also point to certain aspects of modern technology, which are relevant, not to those in olden time, but to us who are familiar with modern inventions - in this case, **media communications, computerization, cashless buying and selling**. These

inventions provide the infrastructure needed to institute the world's new secular religion; they are the props that facilitate its operation.

Now it so happens that neither **the “mark”** nor **the “image”** is the Antichrist Beast's creation. They **are both engineered by the False Prophet Beast**; but he does promote them in the name of the Antichrist. So there is quite a mixing here of the two Beasts' activities on the religious level, which seems to match what Daniel's prophecy says about the mixing of “iron and clay”.

Because of this combination, the resulting spiritual effect has much greater power to capture the loyalties of mankind than if only one Beast were to dominate. And for this reason it looks as though **the forces of Darkness are working hard to “mix” these two as much as possible**. *“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they (iron and clay) shall mingle (or “mix”, same word in Hebrew) themselves with the seed of men.”* (Daniel 2:43 - KJV)

* The iron and clay mixture happens for an expedient purpose - so that the final world government can more effectively mix in with mankind and rule over the world more completely. It's like a play on words.

*In recent times there has been some speculation about this “mingling” phrase in Daniel 2:43, and many have interpreted this verse as a reference to the mingling of demonic angels with the “*seed of men*”. For more explanation on this point, look up Appendix 5 in [the SOTF post](#) at endtimeupgrade.org.

If “*iron*” only were ruling the world, the masses might feel too much the oppressive weight of dictatorial rule. Hitler Germany might be an example in modern times of a regime that was all government and military under a demagogue - an “*iron*” rule. It worked within the bounds of the German nation, but this type of iron-only rule didn't go over well amongst the other European nations. On the other extreme, if only “*clay*” were ruling the world, the masses might be satisfied materially (in the developed world), immersed in their materialism (busy worshipping Mammon), but such a society would not feel any great need to follow a demagogue. Much of western society

tends in this direction; in its regimes the “clay” forces seem to have the upper hand.

And this “clay” power will act as a useful balance against the “iron”; the Antichrist regime will have to include this other secular religion of materialism. If people aren’t interested in worshiping the Antichrist demagogue, they will give him their allegiance anyway just to be able to continue their pursuit of material wealth. Providing this balanced “iron and clay” religious framework will provide a more thorough means of capturing the world’s spiritual loyalties for awhile.

In preparation for this last short-lived kingdom of the forces of Darkness, the infrastructure has already been set into place in our modern world. But **to bring about this empire, these Dark forces may use the False Prophet to engineer a worldwide economic crash.** This will focus attention on a **demagogue figure who can restore the world’s economy.** Revelation 13 implies this in verse 16: *“He (False Prophet) causes all... to receive a mark... that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark of the beast (the Antichrist).”* However it happens, to engineer such a great re-organization of the world’s commercial system would likely require the trigger of some dire need or emergency situation that has arisen in the world. **Through this upheaval in the world’s economy, the False Prophet could install his new secular religion - materialism combined with demagoguery.** And the nations of the world are well prepared for this. Over the last few centuries, they have built within themselves the iron-clay infrastructure that will allow both the Beast and False Prophet regimes to operate in and rule over them. *“They (the “iron and clay” kings and their kingdoms) shall mingle themselves with the seed of men.”*

Now that the system, or infrastructure, is in place and has been in operation for some time, this sets the stage for the demagogue leaders – Antichrist and False Prophet – to make their debut. As we learned earlier, the “beast” and “head” symbolisms are interchangeable. And now that **the “beast” (the system)** is fully developed, or almost so, then **the “head”** has the needed

platform to make itself known. Right now we seem to be in that crucial in-between stage. The iron and clay infrastructure is already here. But the religion hasn't quite arrived.

However, during the last century these two "*cultures of darkness*" – the secular versions of **materialism** and **militaristic** demagoguery – have manifested themselves and seem to have headquartered themselves in the camps of **Europe/USA** and **Russia**. Then, once the EU and Russia join forces (against their rival, the American superpower), it won't be long before the religion also arrives in its full manifestation. The two "*heads*" (False Prophet and Antichrist) will then come to the fore, leaders of their respective empires presumably, and demagogue figures before the world.

So those are the scenarios that could happen in the future. But, of course, they are based on the assumption that the meaning of the symbolisms in Daniel 2 and Revelation 13 have been interpreted correctly. **As time goes on, the picture will become clearer, and adjustments to the above forecasts will, almost certainly, have to be made.** But for now, this will give a rough, and, hopefully, a reasonably accurate picture of what the future holds.

2.17 - Summary of “Shape of the Future”



In the Daniel and Revelation Books we learn that **two superpowers (“beasts”) unite to form a world government in the End Time.** This unique partnership includes **the “earth-beast” whose power,** unlike that of **the Antichrist “sea-beast”, is based more on wealth** than on **military superiority.** As the historical landscape stretches before our eyes, we can foresee that Europe and Russia are likely the two superpowers in question here. In order to become masters of the world, they work together.

And what enables their rise to supremacy? 1) By operating in different domains of power, it’s easier for them **to combine forces; and they need to in order to thoroughly conquer and rule the kind of world we have today.** 2) Every nation, as symbolized by the iron-clay mixture in the Daniel 2 image, contains within itself a power infrastructure that includes **the military establishment** and **corporate conglomerates.** And in this way, the ground is already prepared for the Antichrist-False Prophet combine to take over. 3) One of the fruits of modern technology is that it can transcend the old limitations of gathering power and influence in the world. Modern means of travel, communication, media influence, funds transfer, computer surveillance enable these two Beasts to spread out further, overcoming geographical limitations, ruling in each other’s territory, as well as subjugating large portions of the rest of the world.

Our study of the **Daniel 2 “image”** has led us to conclude that **nations and empires not only have a “physical geography”, but also a “spiritual geography”**. For the End Time period of history, **the physical geography was represented by the two feet of the image**. And this is reflected also in the symbolism of the two separate Beasts of Revelation 13 and is even now being fulfilled, it would seem, with the rise of **the Russian empire** and **the European Union**.

The spiritual geography for the End Time was **represented by the “iron and clay mixed”** in the feet portion of the image. This type of “geography” does not have to be tied to the physical land masses, especially now in these modern times. And by looking at how nations are ruled in the world today, we have some historical hindsight to guide us in getting some idea of what the passage in Daniel 2 about the “iron and clay” mix was referring to.

Basically, it seems the “iron and clay” symbolism will be manifested on two levels:

- 1) As we’ve learned, **the “iron”** governmental and military traits that characterized ancient Rome have re-appeared in most modern nations, in which also we find **the “clay”** power operating - the world’s commercial conglomerates wielding great influence over governments and peoples. These power blocs are “mixed” together in today’s world and are already functioning in **the political-military-economic infrastructure of nations**.
- 2) And **by the time the Antichrist new world order is complete** and ready to be launched, when the platform gets big enough, **the two power structures will be ready also to launch a new religion: Antichrist worship mixed with the worship of Materialism** - both of which will be expressed in a new secular-religious system featuring the Antichrist’s broadcasted “**image**” and “**mark of the beast**” (needed for **buying and selling**).

The symbolic picture in the “feet” portion of the “image” is a little complicated and reflects the complex situation of our modern times. **Instead of being separate from each other, the Iron and Clay kingdoms are mixed and found in both feet of the “image”**. This reflects rather well the modern

historical situation where we see that **corporate conglomerates and their mega-“merchants”** (of Revelation 18:23) **have entered the political arena and are working in conjunction** with **the political-military regimes of the world**; such a situation did not exist in ancient times, at least not to the extent that it is now. **The mixed iron-clay symbolism also seems to reflect how technology has erased the borders that used to limit the world of ancient times**. This peculiar symbolism in Daniel 2 is echoed later on in the Revelation 13 description of the Antichrist and False Prophet Beasts working closely together.

Our world now is a strange one indeed compared to the world of yesteryear. And the glimpses given of it in the ancient Scriptures foresaw this peculiar, complex environment of modern times. There were dual empires in the past, and as far as physical geography goes, the modern empire, like those of the past, will consist of two geographical territories. One additional peculiarity: it looks as though **the two modern territories can be seen as enlarged outgrowths of the ancient boundaries of East and West Rome**, just as in the symbolic portrayal of the “*image*”, the “*feet*” are outgrowths of the “*legs*”.

As for the spiritual geography, here is where there are some major differences. The “*iron*” continues from ancient times into the “*feet*” portion of the image, meaning that both **the EU and Russia**, in some less visible way, are continuations of ancient Rome: both use **Rome’s style of republican government**; both have **powerful military branches of government**. Democratic-type regimes (like **the EU**) emphasize more **the administration side of government inherited from Rome**, whereas dictatorship-type regimes (like **Russia**) emphasize more **the military side of government inherited from Rome**.

As for the religious angle, this is brought out clearly in Revelation 13: **the sea-Beast demagogue will arise from** his territory (**Russia** according to Ezekiel 38-39), and **the earth-Beast’s religion of Materialism will operate from the EU** (as we surmised earlier). But **as the two Beasts combine operations, their “religions” will combine also – the False Prophet’s Materialism with the**

Antichrist's demagoguery. And this fits in again with the symbolism of iron and clay mixed.

A common viewpoint regarding this “*iron and clay*” symbolism is to see it as representing the division between modern dictatorships and democracies; to some extent this is an accurate assessment. To be a little more comprehensive, though, and according to our study thus far, it might be more precise to view the “*iron and clay*” symbolism thus: the “iron” represents the legacy of Rome where the seat of power rests, not with a hereditary monarch, but with the military and government administration (with its more efficient delegation of power via representative rule and use of extensive law codes). Rome’s government system became the foundation for today’s world, and now every nation has some version of this “iron” style of rule within its borders. Likely, it was because of this continuation of military-republican governing structure that the ancient Roman empire (the “*legs*”) and the Endtime empire (the “*feet*”) were lumped together as the “fourth kingdom” (in Daniel 2:40-41).

And the “clay” represents the commercial-financial system which, under the looser controls of democratic government systems, has managed to worm its way into supremacy in so many nations of the modern world. Working together, the two governing regimes have already created some powerful empires in Europe and America during the Modern Age and will, in the near future, create the ultimate worst - the final Antichrist empire.

This new “*clay*” component in Daniel’s “*image*” marks how the Endtime empire (of the “*feet*”) differs from ancient Rome (the “*legs*”), and from other empires of the past: modern nations, even though they all have some form of “iron” government, are also influenced and controlled by the commercial forces - the “clay” - to varying degrees. And this is across the board: Whether they be democracies or dictatorships, all nations are in some way a mixture of “iron and clay”.

Most nations have two seats of power: One rests with the military and government administration, and the other with the commercial forces that

affect that nation, whether directly from inside or indirectly from outside. We understand then that both Russia and the EU are descendants of the “iron” style of rule that began with ancient Rome; and both are also heavily influenced by the new form of “clay” regime that has been ruling the world with a heavy hand, during the 20th century especially. Even communist Russia, by all appearances an iron-style regime, was sponsored in its beginning and kept afloat afterwards with the help of some of the world’s richest financiers. (Communism had one thing in common with the moguls of Capitalism: the desire to seize and hold on to power and influence by preventing the rise of free enterprise.)

In the past, European nations looked like the “democratic” ones while Russia was the “dictatorial” one. But as time goes on, these distinctions between the two societies are becoming blurred. **As the world grows more unstable – especially because of its seemingly never-ending economic upheavals – likely there will be a call for stronger government.** Looking at Germany after World War I is an interesting example to consider: The Weimar government, which took over from the Kaiser, was trying to exercise democracy. But because of too much indecision, internal squabbling, and lack of charismatic leadership, the German people got fed up with it and turned instead to the Hitler strongman who, decisively in the beginning of his rule, solved many of the problems that had gone unresolved during the reign of the Weimar government.

In similar fashion, we may see a shift in the balance of power between the “iron” and “clay”. What we see now, the present political-economic arrangement, is not exactly how it will appear in the future. **The “iron” military presence will assert itself a lot more in the new “new world order” of the Antichrist and False Prophet. The “clay” forces, who have been sponsoring the Antichrist and his military forces will still be around, of course, very much a part of the new world government.**

It could be said that the democratic system did serve the purpose of allowing these mega-“merchants” to engineer their rise to supremacy in the world

and thereby keep the “*iron*” forces under their thumb to a large extent during the last hundred years or so. In spite of its noble ideals, the advent of democracy has played into the hands of the capitalist owners of wealth; it has enabled them to operate without interference from powerful sovereigns or dictators and thereby catapult themselves into a position of great dominance in the world.

As for the future of democracy, it could be that since the rise of the Antichrist will happen under his sponsorship, the False Prophet Beast won’t need so much freedom or democracy anymore, nor will he need the commercial empire of the “*great whore*”. While she declines, his economic grip on the world will continue under the Antichrist’s protection, as he becomes arbiter of the new world order’s buying and selling system.

Another interesting conclusion from our study thus far has to do with the common thread of dualism intertwining the symbolisms of (1) the “*iron and clay feet*” of the “*image*” (2) the sea and earth “*beasts*” of Revelation 13, and (3) the “*red horse*” and “*black horse*” of Revelation 6. These symbolic portrayals seem to relate to each other, as if they are different ways of expressing the same thing.

This duality also marks another way in which the End Time empire differed from the empires of ancient times. Besides a dual physical geography, which was characteristic of Medo-Persia and Rome, the modern empire has also a dual cultural (or spiritual) geography. For example, East and West Rome had a uniform iron-only type of government, culture, and religion; it was the same metal empire split into two parts. But in the “*feet*” there is this mixed-up iron-clay government and culture – two Beasts, not just one Beast split into two geographical areas. We might call it a double duality: 1) two geographical areas harboring two Beasts, or sources of power, and 2) two less visible infrastructures (“*iron and clay*”) that facilitate the worldwide operation of each Beast regime and its religion.

As these two Beasts join forces, they will transform into a single Endtime kingdom. Each beast ends up occupying the other's territory in a sense. It

may work like this: the Russians will adopt the Europeans' credit system of the "mark of the beast", and the Europeans will give their allegiance to the Russian Antichrist. And the rest of the world, to varying degrees, will be captivated by the joint "religion" promoted by these two superpowers. With its mixed "iron and clay" government and religion, the influence of this soon-to-arrive dual kingdom will be doubly powerful as it attempts to seize control of the world in its dying hours. That may be a very simple picture, but hopefully, it gives at least the general outline.

In order to exercise control over the world, the powers of evil (Red Horse and Black Horse) must first be exercising control in the world. The political, economic, and technological mechanisms through which they can function must be in working order. And so it is that the old Roman "iron" form of republican, military domination over nations has combined now with the "clay" commercial ownership of nations. And this will happen as, not only a combination of two superpowers (two Beasts of Revelation 13), but has already happened **in the subtle intertwining of two "systems" of rule everywhere throughout the earth** (symbolized as "iron and clay" mixed): "iron" which lends itself to **man-worship** (typical of all the metal empires); "clay" which **draws men into materialism, the worship of things and wealth.**

In summary, **the ruling societies of modern times have become partnerships between business community and military establishment** - a type of government system that in ancient times had not come into full bloom. Having this kind of economic-political infrastructure in place in every nation will make it easier for the Antichrist and False Prophet kingdoms to unite and impose their new regime on the world. *"Whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men."* (Daniel 2:43 - KJV) As they unite, **these two political kingdoms become one kingdom that will dominate the world politically, economically, and religiously.** Their unity may only be temporary however; the verse goes on to say, **they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.**" But what this could mean is difficult to speculate on at the moment.

So now we have a rough picture that gives some shape to the future that is coming. As time goes by, the picture will become clearer, and along with that, undoubtedly, some adjustments and fine-tuning will be needed in our understanding of these things. **We “see through a glass darkly” sometimes. But we do have the benefit of some historical hindsight.** And many of the things that were vague before – seen “through a glass darkly” - can be understood more clearly nowadays.

It inspires our faith when **we can appreciate from the Sacred Book God’s amazing foresight.** If He could foresee the future so well from such a long time ago, then **He really knows the score.** And it comforts us to know that **He’s the One really in charge. Right now, the evil forces are being allowed quite a bit of control. But we can be assured to know, according especially to the words of the Daniel and Revelation Books, that their dominance will be short-lived and will crumble forever before the rise of the soon-coming Kingdom of Heaven on earth.** *“And in the days of these kings (or kingdoms of iron and clay in the feet and toes of the image) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”* (Daniel 2:44)

3. UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY OF THE IMAGE

Plight of the Pussy-Cat:

*There once was a cat
Who, by a mirror, sat.
At her image she glared
And, quite puzzled, declared,
“You, stranger in the glass,
Do have a lot of brass,
This following me around,
Your mimicking of my sound.
All sense you defy,
My mind mystify.”*

*Ah, silly cat,
Can't you see that
(After all this inspection)
That stranger in the mirror,
Why, is just your reflection?*

*A prophet named John of old,
Ominous image did behold.
Wrote he, “The image has life,
Does speak and cause strife.
Surely, it is miraculous
For an image to come after us
With flood of lying elocution,
Strange new form of persecution!”*

*‘Twas the Antichrist he saw,
Having in time distant no law,
Save Dark Magician's decree,
Modern day lord of TV.*

*Dear John, it seems,
- Just like our friend the cat -*

*It ne'er dawned on you that
The awful image you did envision
From a mirror came called television!*

A foolish poem perhaps. Nevertheless, it offers a clue that could help to clear away the mystery surrounding a certain perplexing vision seen by John the Apostle many centuries ago – that one recorded by him in the Book of Revelations about the *“image of the beast”*.

That particular 13th chapter of the Book of Revelation presented John the Apostle with an astonishing glimpse into a future world, the very world in which we are now living. This vision of a “future world” came from God, but the understanding of it was filtered through the mind of His apostle. As a result we have in these ancient Scriptures a rather intriguing form of time travel experience. We are able to see our modern world, not only through the eyes of God, but also through the eyes of someone from ancient times. For the present study, we will focus on that aspect of Revelation 13 that deals with the *“image”*.

IMAGE

IMAGE

IMAGE

of the Beast

Revelation 13:12B-15

... And he (the beast from the earth, the False Prophet) causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast (from the sea, the Antichrist) whose deadly wound was healed.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

An awfully tricky passage of Scripture this. In essence, it outlines how this man from ancient times, John the Apostle, understood the False Prophet Beast's attempt to get the world to worship the Antichrist through using some kind of very unusual and powerful "*image*". As we continue to see things through the Apostle's eyes, this will guide us into understanding better what this passage is saying.

The Greek word for "*image*" had the fairly general, almost abstract meaning of "likeness". It can be used for any type of image. Interestingly, it is used in one place to describe a reflection, the kind seen in a "*glass*", or mirror. (2Corinthians 3:18) So, this word "*image*" should not be limited in its scope to refer to idols only but can easily be used to stand for any modern reflection-type of image – photos, xeroxes, faxes, videos, and especially TV. For all its complexity, TV transmission is no more than a sophisticated way of creating the most basic kind of image there is, a mirror image – and of casting those live images over great distances. (And there is also now a new, even more realistic type of mirror

image called the holograph – still in the experimental stages – that may become widely used in the future.)

In modern times Bible teachers have at times suggested that the “*image*” mentioned in the Revelation Book could be talking about television. It has been difficult to accept this, however, because it means sweeping away centuries of past interpretation – what numerous revered Bible scholars have taught for generations (that the image is supposed to be an idol of some kind). Since we, in this generation, do have the benefit of some historical hindsight, having experienced what former Bible scholars had not, we can, and in fact need, to leave behind some of the old mindsets inherited from the past. That doesn’t mean we can’t follow in the footsteps of former teachers – by adopting the same spirit of enquiry that motivated them – but it may mean ditching the baggage of some of their old interpretations. (See [Footnote 1](#) for the exciting story of one person’s struggles along this line.)

Those interpretations were sufficient in their day, but now that we are getting so close to the very End Time, we need to fine-tune things a bit, adopt a better, updated, and clearer understanding about this mysterious vision of John the Apostle’s. It’s time to take a good look at this question about the “*image*” (from a few different angles) and see if we can find some landing gear for what may seem like a rather high-flying idea that the “*image*” could be talking about modern broadcasted images, such as those transmitted through the medium of television.

This much we can say about television and its relation to the anti-Christ forces: television, like any image, communicates a message and does so in a very powerful way. Much of television broadcasting is needed and helpful, but unfortunately, there exists also much corruption, decadence, and deception conveyed to us through it; television can easily be used as a mouthpiece for the realm of dark, spiritual forces. And generally, this is the downward direction toward which modern TV culture has been heading for many years. Now it stands to reason that, once the Antichrist enters the political stage, his image will appear on TV quite frequently; and this then would surely transform the “*image of the beast*” from theoretical possibility into the literal, physical image of

the Antichrist. The general, corrupting influence that television exerts now will be embodied then in the Antichrist himself and his televised image when he “*opens his mouth in blasphemy against God*”. (Revelation 13:6)

The only trouble is – and this is another reason why the image-is-TV doctrine has been hard to swallow – the description of the “*image*” in Revelation 13 sounds more as if it’s talking about an idol, not a TV image. But if we can go on a time travel voyage to the 1st century and perceive this vision through the eyes of the John the Apostle, we’ll see things much differently. The barrier to our understanding will fall away, and it will become evident that John’s description was just the natural result of how someone from an ancient time would react to and try to explain a modern TV image. (Much of the rest of this study will explore that subject more fully.)

Verse 12B

... And he (the beast from the earth) causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast (from the sea, the Antichrist)...

The False Prophet causes “*worship*” of the Antichrist. In ancient times false prophets or priests could do this for political leaders by promoting the use of crafted images. But generating worship through such things, i.e. a lifeless bust of Caesar, wasn’t so easy. It required injecting a heavy dose of superstition into the process. Through superstition (an exaggerated belief in supernatural agency), people would regard their images as actual incarnations of their gods or demagogues, and thus the images themselves became objects of worship.

But in our modern world with its science-oriented outlook, forget about using superstition. Nobody will fall for that anymore. Yet the Revelation Book does make it very clear that the people of the future would indeed worship an image of the Antichrist. How unusual for that to happen in this secular, skeptical age of modern times. Well, nowadays we don’t need superstition because we have, in addition to the original category of crafted

images (paintings, sculptures, and so on), a whole new category of image – reflected images, such as television. These convey exact copies of political leaders, including sound, movement, and personal charisma. The image itself becomes alive, and seeing the image is tantamount to being in the personal presence of the political leader.

It doesn't matter then that the modern world will not respond to religion or superstition. For it is not needed. There's nothing like that electrifying personal presence, transmitted through the media, to generate "worship". It may not be the same as religious worship, but this contact with the Antichrist through television will generate plenty of devotion to and adulation of him; and that would count as "*worship*".

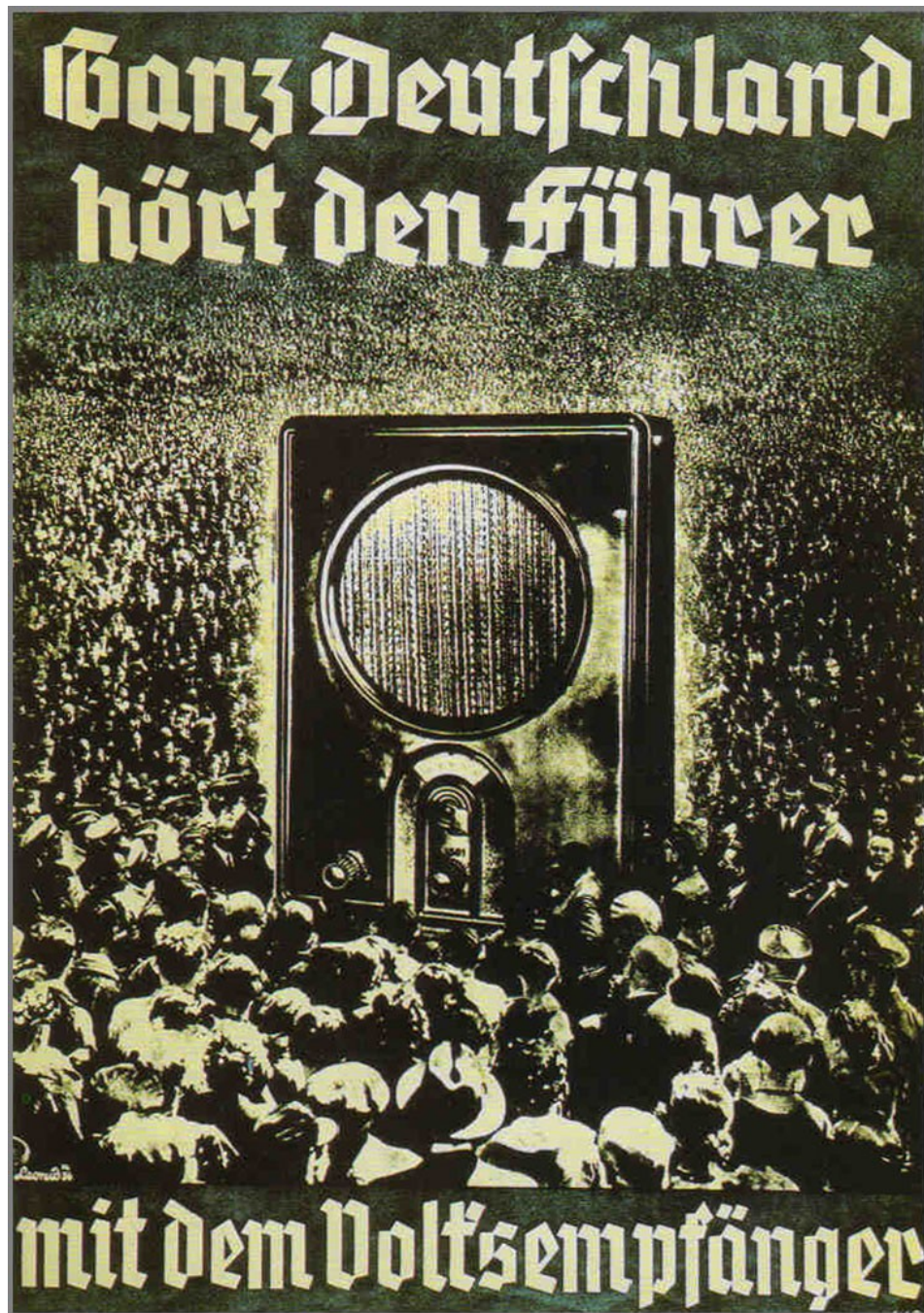
So really, it all boils down to one simple fact: the image is supposed to be **worshiped** (according to Revelation 13:15, 14:9,11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4). Nowadays that would be impossible if the image were any kind of crafted image because mankind, with his scientific orientation, is not superstitious enough to worship such things anymore. But we do know this: modern man can worship a charismatic leader. (We can recall the example of Hitler.)

Therefore, if an image is **not crafted**, but is simply a **reflection** (such as a TV image), that could be "worshiped" because with such an image, image and reality are practically the same. **That would explain then how the secular, skeptical world of modern times will manage – without religion or superstition – to "*worship the image of the beast*".** In fact, TV images will be far more effective to generate worship in a secular, scientific age than crafted images were able to during the age of superstition. (We can think of the example of Hitler who used radio and movie clips to convey worship of himself to the German people.) Just from a common sense, practical point of view, using television broadcasting would surely be the most effective way for the Devil and his False Prophet to generate worship of their man the Antichrist.

Just imagine if, in the days of Roman emperor worship, Caesar Augustus was able to personally visit every household in the empire. That would have been a terrific way to inspire the adoration of his subjects rather than just to deliver a few speeches here and there to the crowds of Rome. But in those days there was no other way of communicating a political leader's personal presence or charisma. Well, in our modern age, a ruler does have the capacity to appear in person before the whole world. He doesn't have to rely on dumb images or idols to generate worship; he can actually visit every household on Earth through the medium of television broadcasting. The Antichrist won't have to travel to every city, town, and village in the world and give speeches in person to a wide range of people. All he has to do is use the media, which has the ability to convey that electrifying charisma of this powerful leader into every household of the world.

Even before television, during the era of radio transmission, the power of the media to sway public sentiment on a broad scale was being felt in full force for the first time in history. In Hitler Germany people only had to switch on the radio to get, at least, a live "voice image" of Hitler. The German propaganda minister of that era, Joseph Goebbels, understood very well the power of this new technology. To insure that Hitler and his message could be heard throughout the land, he introduced radio sets to the German people at bargain prices and installed loudspeakers on street corners.

Poster from Nazi Germany with the caption, "All Germany hears the Fuehrer with the people's receiver."



Goebbels made the following observation: “It is all very well to rule by force, but it is far better to win a nation’s heart.” No doubt, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be guided by the same principle. To win the hearts of the world’s people will require skilful use of the media. Though the technology for it has, since the days of Hitler, greatly improved and streamlined, nevertheless, the same basic principle will remain unchanged; that is, through some form of live broadcasting (like TV) the masses of people will have that personal contact with the future demagogue. And that will be the most effective way of generating worship of him.

And so it happened in the 1930's that radio was used to generate adulation of the Fuehrer, and also to generate a hostile climate against the Jews and other European nations. At last, a device had been invented that could convey the personal presence, charisma, and dynamic personality of a political leader. And this captivated the hearts of the German people for a time. Without realizing it, they were engaging in a form of worship. They were as devoted to Hitler as any "religious" person might have felt towards his god or divine emperor. But, in this case, the object of worship (Hitler) was cloaked in the garb of secular adulation rather than the ancient one of superstitious adoration.

Hitler conveyed his cause through radio by his fiery inspirationalism. But there was another side to the media influence game going on at the same time. While Hitler was ranting and raving in Germany, in the U.S., President Franklin Roosevelt was cozying up to the American people with his famous "fireside chats". These radio broadcasts served to placate them during the Depression years and help further the bankers' plan to bring the money system more under their control; his popularity also provided the cover needed to carry out the anti-Christ plan to propel atheist communism into world power. Roosevelt's traitorous complicity with Russia during World War II eventually resulted in the Cold War and decades of communist oppression in the nations of Eastern Europe. So could it be that the final Antichrist will try to play both roles on the world stage? One uses the calm, soothing voice of reason to persuade, and the other motivates with fiery rhetoric and inspiration.

And so it was that radio became in the earlier part of the 20th century the first medium to demonstrate this uncanny ability to convey to the public the dynamic presence of a political leader. For the first time in history, the barrier of physical distance was overcome; a whole nation became a public auditorium, as the personal presence, charm, and charisma of the Hitler demagogue traveled beyond the podium straight into every household in Germany (and the Roosevelt demagogue into every American household). How much more can TV – with its ability to convey both audio and visual features of a person – be capable of doing the same in the near future with the Antichrist? Or if "television"

seems too limiting, we could instead call it “broadcasting”. And that could include any new inventions that may come along in the future, such as holographic imaging, now in the experimental stages. The main point is this: broadcasted images are really the only ones that can do the trick of generating worship in the world of modern times.

From a strictly practical point of view, we can see then that a TV image of the Antichrist would easily fit the role of an “*image*” that is to be worshiped by the modern world. And of course, in these modern times we have the benefit of historical hindsight, which past generations did not have; we know about the existence of reflection-type images (like TV). But the other criterion that we must look at: How does it fit in with what the Word itself says? From the looks of it, the description of the “*image*” in Revelation 13 doesn’t sound very much like TV. So to resolve this question will require a very nuts-and-bolts approach – a closer inspection of the Scriptures to ascertain more precisely what this passage in Revelation 13 is really saying.

(Question: What about an in-between category of images – those that have been doctored up by computer technology? See [Footnote 2: Computerized Images.](#))

To start with we must understand that to create a television image requires a very different process to how it was done in ancient times because of modern image-making technology. But try and explain that to John the Apostle. He hadn’t a clue about modern technology, and never in his wildest imagination could he have conceived of the kind of broadcasted images that we take so much for granted today. Whatever it was he saw in vision, we can be sure of one thing: his description would have been limited to the terms and understanding of how images were made in his day, not ours. And this is important to understand. For this particular passage in Revelation 13 is not a direct prophecy nor an angel speaking; it is just John himself trying to explain what he saw in vision.

To see things from the Apostle’s point of view, imagine trying to explain the workings of TV technology to someone from the 1st century. To make it understandable to such a person, we might

say it like this: “This thing called TV technology will use certain devices known as cameras that can operate in the presence of anyone whose image is to be made (in this case, the Antichrist’s). These devices will be able to manufacture an exact image of him and distribute thousands, even millions, of replicas of the same image into every corner and household of the world. This amazing feat of distributing the images will be performed by harnessing certain invisible forces in the air. These are known as electromagnetic waves that will carry the images all over the world. Although these ‘waves’ are invisible, this is not a magical process, believe it or not. It is strictly scientific, if you know what I mean. And, mind-boggling as it may seem, TV technology will be able to accomplish this enormous task in only a few seconds. Moreover, the image of the Antichrist will, as in the manner of a reflection, appear to be alive, including having the ability to speak.”

With that our man from the 1st century might get a small handle on understanding this fabulous invention of the future. More likely though, he would think you were crazy and just think of it according to his own understanding about the art of image-making. Looking at it then from his point of view, how might someone from the distant past describe the workings of TV technology if all he had to go on was a vision of a TV image of the Antichrist? Well, could it all be here in Revelation 13? Do we possibly have right here the actual, firsthand account of someone from ancient times trying to explain how he thinks a modern TV image would work?

Verse 13

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Okay, lets take a closer look at the Apostle’s “technical” explanation: John starts off by saying that the False Prophet does great wonders, calling fire down from heaven in the sight of men. This could easily be a “*miracle*” of modern science. There are many ways that we now can “*make fire come down from heaven*”. Even a simple fireworks display might fall into this category. (But from John’s perspective any such modern invention could only be explained in terms of “*miracles*” – a supernatural phenomenon.)

This fire from the sky may be supernatural too – we don't know – but, whatever the case, the main point here seems to be that these spectacular in-the-sight-of-men miracles don't really do the job of deceiving the world. Perhaps modern man is too skeptical and scientifically minded to be much impressed by any dramatic displays, even supernatural ones. He's become too rational to believe in such things anymore, too confined to seeing reality on a one-dimensional plane only.

But then in the next verse along comes a different category of miracle, and these are the ones that actually do the job of deceiving the world.

Verse 14A

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast...[NKJV says, "which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast."]

The apostle may have wondered why the spectacular fire-from-heaven miracles did not contribute towards deceiving the world. After all, in Jewish history it was well known that such dramatic miracles had once convinced the people in Elijah's time about the power of their God. Instead, in this glimpse of a futuristic age, John notices that it is "*those miracles*" done out of sight of the public and "*in the sight of the beast*", that are effective in deceiving the world into following and worshiping the Antichrist. So what can we make of this?

First of all, let's delve a bit into the question of how are images made? (For in the context of the passage, these "*miracles*" done "*in the sight of the beast*" connect with the production in the next two verses of a peculiar and very powerful "*image*".) Usually, an image of someone must be created "*in the sight of*" the person who's getting his image made. Especially for TV images, it's essential. A crafted image, of course, doesn't have to be made "*in the sight of*" the person whose image is being made (although it helps). So that's intriguing. For judging by this "*in the sight of*" phrase, the vision was showing that some

peculiar kind of picture creation involving the Antichrist was going on. According to the next verse 15, these “*miracles*” were to give “*life*” to an “*image*” of the Antichrist, so that clues us in to the fact that these “*in the sight of the beast*” miracles actually do tie in with the “*image*”.

From John’s viewpoint, it looked as if somehow the life-power of the Antichrist would get transferred into the images that people had. And in a sense, this would apply well to television broadcasting: when the Antichrist appears, his life-power will get transmitted via the airwaves and appear in the TV “shrines” of every household on Earth. Even now, this seemingly miraculous process that John observed is going on in modern political life. Television has proven to be an extraordinarily easy way for political leaders to gain popularity. (By the way, the mysterious “*make an image*” phrase may seem a little puzzling right now, but that will be addressed further on.)

As for the “miraculous” nature of this process, well, in the mind of a man from the 1st century, as mentioned before, how else would he explain this strange technology that had produced such a marvelous image that had “*life*” other than “*by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast*” ?

At this point it’s worth noting that in ancient times science and magic were both considered as part of the same profession. A scientist or doctor was expected to have more than just technical knowledge. He was supposed to know something about creating magic potions, spells, and incantations, and conjuring up the help of the spirit world. It’s only in modern times that a big division has come up between science and the supernatural. So in John’s time it was normal to think of this advanced technology that he must have witnessed in vision as a form of supernatural manifestation.

So anyway, all that to say, this passage in verse 14A could be paraphrased thus: “And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by the means of those technological miracles which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.” In this case, the “*miracles*” are the modern day wonders of science that have

enabled mankind to perform feats which, to the mind of anyone from an ancient time, could only be categorized as supernatural.

Verse 14B

Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

So what about this “*make*” business? We don’t “*make*” TV images; they’re simply broadcasted to us, and we receive them. To answer this, let’s consider how the words of God came to the prophets in the Bible. In prophecy it is very easy for messages to be “colored” by the channel’s own thoughts and personality, his way of looking at things. This does not mean the prophecies are wrong, but they will have an almost unavoidable slant to them that must be taken into account in the interpretation of them. For example, in Ezekiel 38 the prophet is obviously giving a message about the future wars of the Antichrist in the End Time, and he mentions several place-names that are involved in the conflict. Some of those names obviously refer to modern nations, but other place names sound as if they are referring to territories and tribes that existed only in ancient times; and in this way the prophecy was “colored”. But if we give the prophet some leeway on this score, we can see that he was simply trying to refer to modern territories, unknown in his day, and so had to use terms and names that were familiar to him in his own day and age.

Another example too is the Jewish flavor of many prophecies. The Jews naturally tended to think they were the one and only people of God. As a result many of their prophecies about the future of God’s people sound as if they’re talking about the Jews only and Israel. That was their point of view, but again, giving a little leeway here, it is not difficult to see that these prophecies were intended to apply to the people of all nations who had become “God’s people” through faith in Christ.

So then, if it’s possible for a prophet to “color” his prophecies, then how much more likely will it be for him to do the same when it’s an interpretation – his own thoughts about a prophecy,

revelation, or vision. And in this case, that is what we have here in Revelation 13. It is not a prophecy, or an angel speaking, but it is just John the Apostle's words as he tries to figure out and describe what he saw in vision. The vision itself, of course, came from God, but the interpretation of it was filtered through the mind of someone who lived in the 1st century A.D., someone who, of course, had a very limited understanding about the process of image-making as we know it today.

In this "*image*" vision, John could not grasp how mankind would in the future be able to create the peculiar kind of image he saw. He could only think in terms of how images were made in his day, which usually entailed an arduous process of sculpting, painting, or some other form of craftsmanship; and the more perfect the image, the longer it would take to craft it. So, as far as he was concerned, you had to "*make*" the image first. Then by some hocus-pocus, it could be brought to life in some way by a "*false prophet*". And that sort of thing did happen back then, and even happens nowadays ON OCCASION. (See [Footnote 3: Hindu Milk Miracle](#).)

In ancient times, everyone was expected, even coerced, to make or get his own image of the political leader or divine being. The equivalent in today's world is for everyone to get his own TV "shrine", which can be used to house the only kind of image that people will truly worship – the live image of the Antichrist. The main difference nowadays: We don't get or make the image, but we do still have to get or make the "shrine" for the image – the TV set.

OK, that's fine, but it does say, "*they should make an image*", only one. If we're going to interpret this thing in terms of television, how do we account for such wording, since the use of television would automatically lead to the creation of a multiplicity of images, not just one? The simple answer: The phrase "*an image*" means there will be only one type of image – that of the Antichrist – but it doesn't mean there won't be untold numbers of exact replicas of that one image.

For example, imagine this scenario: a car manufacturer advertises, "We are going to produce a certain model of car." Now

he only said “car” – singular. Does that mean he is going to make only one car of that model that everybody has to use? If he did, that would utterly defeat the purpose of supplying the people’s need for cars, and his own need for making a profit. So of course he builds many many cars of that one particular model.

We know the world is already prepared with multitudes of TV sets; so, when the Antichrist appears, there will also appear along with him countless “*images to the beast*”, one in each household of the world; but they’re all the same image. And having live images like this in every household of the world will be far more effective in generating worship than if (as it is often thought) there is only one image sitting over in Jerusalem.

How does Singular Change into Plural?

Perhaps a little grammar study will help to clarify things: the passage here – “*they should make an image*” – starts with a plural subject “*they*” and ends with the singular word “*image*” as its object. If we compare this to other passages in the New Testament, where the singular word “*image*” is used in conjunction with a plural subject, we will find that, in these cases, the intended result is very plural in nature. For example:

Romans 1:21, 23 – “*They (plural subject) glorified Him not as God. . . And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image (singular object) made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*”

Although it says “*an image*” (singular), that doesn’t mean mankind has only made one of them. It just means there was only one type of image. In actual practice, mankind has made countless multitudes of images that fall into the category of images resembling corruptible man, four-footed beasts, etc. So we could re-word the passage thus:

“They (plural) glorified Him not as God. . . And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into images (plural) of all kinds of men and animals”. (Or, “they each... changed the glory of

the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, etc.”)

1 Corinthians 15:49 – “*And as we (plural) have borne the image (singular) of the earthy, we (plural) shall also bear the image (singular) of the heavenly.*”

Again, the passage isn’t saying that only one person who has the image of the earthy will get to take on the image of the heavenly, but we know millions of people who love Jesus will take, and have taken, on the heavenly image. So here, “*image*” just means one type of image – either “*earthy*” or “*heavenly*”. So, rewording it, we get:

“And we who were images of the earthy shall become images of the heavenly.” (Or, “as we each have borne the image of the earthy, we each shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”)

2 Corinthians 3:18 – “*But we all (plural) with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image (singular) from glory to glory...*”

Again, its not just one person who gets to take on the image of the Lord, but millions of people will and already have. So, “*image*” means one type of image – one that reflects the “*glory of the Lord*”. So, rewording it, we get:

“All we who behold the glory of the Lord become reflected images of His glory.” (Or, each of us who beholds the glory of the Lord becomes a reflected image of His glory.”)

Revelation 13:14 – “*They (plural) should make an image (singular) to the beast.*”

It should be safe to conclude then that the “*image*” referred to in Revelation 13:14 simply means **one type** of image (that of the Antichrist). The image of the Antichrist on one person’s TV “shrine” will be just the same as the image that will appear on somebody else’s. And, of course, there will be plenty more of the one type. So, rewording the passage, we get:

“They should make images to the beast.” (Or, “they should each make an image to the beast.”)

The rule of thumb for interpretation is to take passages of Scripture literally if at all possible. In line with that the usual opinion is that the world (*“them that dwell on the earth”*) will make an image to the beast under the direction of the False Prophet; the trouble is, it sounds a bit strange that the whole world will be engaged in the operation of making just one image that everybody has to use. But as we have learned, it’s quite “literal” (even more so perhaps) to say the False Prophet will ensure that all *“them that dwell on the earth”* will make, or have, their own images of the Beast.

To conclude: This passage - *“saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast”* – is just the apostle’s way of stating the fact that the image was to be distributed everywhere in the earth. Of course, his make-an-image explanation for how that comes about is wrong. But according to his limited understanding of modern image-making, that was about the only explanation he could give.

Verse 15A

Then the next phrase: **And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast...** [Note: *“Power”* not there in the original Greek. Literally, “it was granted him to give life...”]

As far as the Apostle was concerned, here is where the earth-Beast’s magical power manifested itself. Those *“miracles”* done *“in the sight of the beast”* would give *“life”* to the image. Somehow the life-power of the beast would be transferred into the images that people had made of him. And in part, that’s true; it is the Antichrist’s life-power, even spiritual power, that will be transmitted via the air waves. Of course, what John didn’t understand was that those *“miracles”*, those technological miracles, not only brought *“life”* to the image, but also created it and distributed the image into every corner of the world. The whole process was simultaneous and instantaneous – what we call broadcasting a TV

image. But for him, it was impossible to grasp this, to realize how streamlined the whole process was going to be. So he explains it in cumbersome fashion according to his understanding of what the process of creating, distributing, and giving life to an image would entail.

Another point to remember: It isn't necessarily the person, the False Prophet, who gives "*life*" to the image. The "*he*" in this passage refers to the "*beast from the earth*", the system that operates under the leadership of the False Prophet; the actual term "*false prophet*" doesn't appear until chapter 19. However, indirectly, the False Prophet does the miracle; he is influencing the media systems to give favorable coverage to the Antichrist, but it's not as if he himself is doing any kind of hocus-pocus to make images come alive. That "*miracle*" gets delegated to the TV broadcasting systems to perform. Like the other "*beast from the sea*" (the Antichrist), these "*beast*" terms describe both the person and the system that the person is the head of. And it is sometimes difficult to tell in a passage whether it's the person being referred to, or his empire, or both.

An interesting sideline here worth noting: From the vision John could observe that the earth-Beast would have the ability to get everyone in the world to possess an "*image*" of the Antichrist and then is able to "*give life*" to that image (verses 14-15). This suggests then that the earth-Beast, or False Prophet, has considerable control of the television broadcasting industry that the apostle, in his clumsy way, was trying to describe. Transitioning these words into modern times, they would seem to indicate that the great domain of media power in the earth lies mostly under the control of this Beast, the False Prophet. And if he controls it, then he must own it. And if he owns it, then he must be fabulously wealthy. The same can be said about this Beast's power to cause everyone to receive the "*mark*" for buying and selling (verses 16-17). If he's capable of doing that, then it implies that he must control and own the computer credit systems of the financial world, pointing again to the fact that he must be fabulously wealthy. (This feature about the False Prophet's dominion over the world's material wealth is covered more thoroughly in the post "[Shape of the Future: Dual Nature of the Antichrist Kingdom](#)".)

Verse 15B

(Continuing on with verse 15:) ... **that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.**

It seems John noticed that because the “image” had this mysterious capacity of having “*life*”, this enabled it both to “*speak*”, and then to cause death to those who wouldn’t worship the image. Likely, this doesn’t have to be taken too literally. The clue lies in the fact that the speaking ability of the image and its persecution-causing ability are lumped together in the word “*both*”, as if the two are related to each other: “*The image. . . should **both** speak and cause [the non-worshippers] to be killed.*” Simply put, the image’s speaking is just the Antichrist’s propaganda war (which takes place mostly through television); and this has the ripple effect of causing persecution and death to those who refuse to worship. (The image is merely echoing what the Antichrist is doing. In the previous verses 5-7 of Revelation 13, the Antichrist “*beast from the sea*” is pictured as having a big “*mouth*” and engaging in “*war against the saints*”.)

We could compare this to Hitler’s speaking ability in the 1930’s and 40’s by which he was able to whip the German nation into war frenzy. And he could do this on a large scale through the medium of radio. This great new speaking facility both fostered worship of him and made the German people willing to fight against their enemies. The German Fuehrer used radio to foment a propaganda war and create a hostile climate against the Jews and other European nations who didn’t “worship” him. And the end result of this speaking, and hostile climate generated thereby, was the death of millions of people in World War II.

Now, in a sense, the image will literally/physically cause death to the non-worshippers; at least it will appear that way. In reality, the Antichrist is the one who is carrying out the persecution, and when he appears on television, that impression will be conveyed in his TV image. Whether it’s just a spiritual impression, or his actual words, the TV image will convey the impression that the Antichrist is behind the persecution. So what impression would that leave in

the mind of John the Apostle, a man from the 1st century, who would have assumed the image to be a crafted image, and thereby to have its own separate existence? His concept would have been that the power of persecution resided in the image only. Perhaps he thought, “Wow, look what this image is doing; it’s causing persecution and death to those who don’t worship it!” That would have been his impression – like an illusion. He couldn’t tell that, in reality, it was just the Antichrist himself who was causing persecution and death to those who weren’t worshipping him. And the image was just a reflection of the Antichrist – perhaps a broadcast of him while in the course of giving a speech directed against his enemies and those who refused to worship him.

Unlike what happens during the process of creating crafted images, in television broadcasting, there is no real “break” between image and reality. But to John, because of his ancient mindset about crafted images, he thought there was this separation, that somehow the “*image*” had this “*life*” on its own, which in turn means that he thought it was doing the job by itself of persecuting and causing death to the saints. John makes this big distinction between image and reality that isn’t really there. And as a result of the “spin” that he throws at us from 2,000 years ago, his viewpoint may fool us a bit unless we understand where he’s coming from. What was actually a reflection-type of image ended up getting described as if it were a crafted image. As a result, we wind up thinking that the “*image*” is a cleverly contrived robot idol, computer intelligence, computerized image – anything that might fall into the category of being “crafted” in some way by modern technology, as well as have a separate existence – which may seem like an up-to-date way of understanding what the image is.

But that doesn’t really tell the whole story; besides change in technology, modern mankind has also changed his cultural mindset. That is, the power of superstition, by which people could feel an exaggerated reverence for their crafted images, no longer influences us in that way.

But our world of broadcasted images does affect us greatly. Our cultural familiarity, however, causes us to take this modern invention for granted. But for John the Apostle, his glimpse into

modern society astounded him; whatever image he saw in vision was utterly foreign to him. And if it was a broadcasted image, he would not think of it in those terms, but rather as some very unusual kind of crafted image.

Another question that may come to mind: Since the image of the beast causes those who don't worship it to be killed, then the image, or the Antichrist, must know who's worshiping and who isn't. But then, how exactly would they know? In most religions there is some way of showing one's worship – through tattoos, marks, circumcision, yelling "Heil Hitler", or most common in ancient times, bowing before the object of worship. But what about this modern religion of worshiping the Antichrist? Well, that's answered for us in the next two verses of this chapter. Here is described for us the new worship service, especially tailored for the secular and scientifically oriented world of modern times.

Verses 16-17

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

In a nutshell these verses describe the cashless, computerized credit system that will be operating during the reign of the Antichrist and False Prophet. To some extent we are already living in this system. And what is the "*mark*"? No doubt, it will be the product of modern technology. Scientists and computer experts are already toying around with microchips and devices that can fulfill what it says about the "*mark*" – that it will be placed in the hand or forehead and will enable mankind to carry out commercial exchanges without the use of cash. In many places, it will even become mandatory to use this new buying and selling system. And probably in most nations of the world, it will be difficult to get along without it.

So back to the question: How does the image, or the Antichrist, know who's worshiping and who isn't? Well, it's a very simple

matter: The “*mark*” is just the “*name of the beast*”, similar to how a company’s logo represents the name of that company. The mark then is really a sign of ownership – like a brand or logo – and once a person has it, that shows they belong to the Beast. In other words, they have become worshipers of the Antichrist by taking the mark.

Now the moment a person takes the “*mark*”, the computer databases of the world will record that fact. Likewise, if a person refuses to take the “*mark*”, his non-registration will also become evident. Surveillance in this age of computer technology has become more extensive, thorough, and efficient than it has in all of history. (See **Footnote 4**: “The Rise of the Computer State” article.)

So that answers the question of how the “*image*” can know who’s worshiping and who isn’t. It’s this separate agency, the computerized credit system based on the “*mark*”. It knows and passes on the information to the Antichrist who then swings into action and goes around persecuting and killing all those who, by not taking the mark, have shown that they don’t worship the Antichrist or his image (that is, the Antichrist they behold via TV). So these aspects of the image’s worship – the power of surveillance and of persecution – are carried out by separate agencies under the direction of the Antichrist and False Prophet. However, in the mind of the Apostle, who thought the image had its own separate existence, it would have appeared as if the image was doing that all by itself.

For him it was like an illusion. In an illusion you have a false impression about something because of certain things going on that you can’t see the magician doing. And in this case, a lot goes on behind the scenes of a TV image that cannot be seen. We, of course, understand how the modern system works, and for us it would be no great mystery how this TV image is capable of knowing who’s worshiping and who isn’t and can also go about persecuting those who refuse to “*worship*”. But for the Apostle, who could only judge by the surface appearance, it would have looked as if the image was doing all this by itself. Unbeknownst to him, it was nothing more than a broadcast, or reflection, of the Antichrist himself and his words.

Interesting point: In the Old Testament, whenever the word “*worship*” is mentioned, very often it is accompanied by the phrase “*fall down*” or “*bow down*”. This was the standard way of showing your worship, and the moment you entered the presence of a respected person or divine being or sacred spot, you would “*fall down*” to worship. But the Book of Revelation is set in modern times, and this fact is reflected in the phrase “*receive the mark*”; and this phrase (except for the passage in chapter 13) always accompanies the phrase “*worship the beast and/or his image*”. So receiving the mark is the modern form of showing “*worship*” and declaring one’s allegiance to the Antichrist.

It could be compared to an initiation rite. Getting inducted into certain tribal or religious societies can involve receiving a mark of some kind. The Jews, for example, have the mark of circumcision. In this kind of worship the initiation rite is a one-time thing and serves as a way of making someone a permanent member of that tribe or religion. Likewise, the Beast and False Prophet will try to get as much of the world as possible ensnared in their religion of materialism and emperor worship. And of course, this initiation-rite type of worship is advantageous in that, once inducted, the new devotees can’t easily escape it. If it were just a matter of bowing or hand salute or something, such gestures can be faked and/or discontinued, but receiving the mark is a more permanent form of commitment and identification.

One of the striking features about the Revelation 13 description of this modern religion and its special “*mark*” is that, immediately after in the next chapter, there comes the description of God’s people with the “*seal of God in their foreheads*”. This “*seal*” is a special mark of distinction, honor, and privilege, which the saints will receive and enjoy when they enter into the Heavenly Realm. It is something the Devil tries to imitate, and he offers his cheap counterfeit with his “*mark of the beast*” – a temporary privilege given to the world that allows them to indulge in the Antichrist and False Prophet’s barren utopia of Materialism.

Because of the Antichrist’s big “*mouth*” and “*speaking great things and blasphemies*” (Revelation 13:5-6), the world will know well enough, by the time the mark is made mandatory, what he

stands for, and it will be a clear decision for most people: joining the new economic system will mean joining up with the Antichrist and taking a stand against God and His people. It's more than just a simple economic decision. There is some coercion behind it too, the threat, a few decades ago, of losing one's power to buy or sell – comparable, say, to the threat of getting sent to Siberia if one did not swear allegiance to atheist communism.

Now since the "*mark*" is part of the world's buying and selling activities, then it would not be connected in a direct way to its worshiping activities (in the way that bowing to an idol would be). Being in the presence of the Antichrist (via his TV image), and then showing one's worship, are not simultaneous activities. And this modern reality is reflected in Revelation 13:14-18; the passages about the "*image*" and the "*mark*" seem rather disconnected from each other.

? WHERE'S THE CONNECTION ? between

WORSHIP



TV Broadcasting and TV Watching

14. And deceiveth them by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

and

SHOWING WORSHIP



Receiving Mark to Go Shopping

16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17. That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.



In Chapter 13 there is no apparent connection between the separate activities of verses 14-15 and verses 16-17. Not until the next chapter 14, verse 9, is it made clear that they are both part of this futuristic "worship service" to the Beast and his image: *"If any man worship the beast and his image, AND receive his mark..."* (Also in 14:11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4)

It seems then that the arrangement of the Revelation 13 passages about the "image" and the "mark" fits the modern reality rather well. In the case of a person watching the Antichrist on TV, what really happens is this: that person has entered the hallowed

presence of the great leader's image. In ancient times that would have required some act of worship – usually some form of bowing down. In the case of a TV image of the Antichrist, however, a person may love, fear, or hate the Antichrist, but there is no direct surveillance going on at that moment to register their reaction, whether he or she is worshipping or not. Nevertheless, that surveillance still happens – but indirectly – through receiving the mark. But that's a separate activity apart from the TV-watching. Further on, the Scriptures do show the relationship more directly: *“He deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, **and** them that worshiped his image.”* (Revelation 19:20. Also, 14:9,11, 16:2, 20:4) These verses give the overall picture, but as the more detailed, nuts-and-bolts description in Revelation 13 shows, there is no direct, obvious connection between worshipping the image and receiving the mark – because they are, after all, separate activities.

Conclusion about the False Prophet's Miracle “Image”

This passage about the “image” is truly one of the more enigmatic ones in Scripture, and for generations it has been interpreted along the lines of being an idol of some kind. But this legacy came from an era when crafted images (paintings, sculptures, etc.) were most common. No one knew a thing about TV, or even any of the other reflection-type images like photographs, xeroxes, and so on. All they knew were mirror images, which were not used then as objects of worship. So in their day it seemed the only logical possibility that the image should be crafted somehow. In this new day, however, we cannot allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by past viewpoints. We do have the benefit of a lot of historical hindsight, which they did not have. And so we need to upgrade our thinking and not limit ourselves to the mindset or understanding of those from olden time.

Having now the benefit of some historical hindsight, we could paraphrase the passage about the “image” into modern lingo like this: “The TV and movie industry belong under the jurisdiction of the False Prophet and his worldwide business empire. Through his influence, he is able to ensure that the Antichrist receives a lot of

favorable media coverage. The TV cameras film the Antichrist during his speeches. And by this means his image is broadcast into every TV set in every household of the world. The Antichrist, in his speeches, rails against God and His followers, those who don't adulate him and don't join the economic system based on the "mark". The people who show their refusal to worship the Antichrist (whom they can see on TV) by not joining the computerized "mark" system, risk getting spotted by the False Prophet's vast surveillance system, then caught and finally killed by the forces of the Antichrist."

John's description in Revelation 13, however, sounds much different, and it's difficult to think the "image" is not something more elaborate than just a plain old TV image. But, as we've learned, by taking into account John's 1st-century mindset – that he was describing a modern type of image in terms of the ancient ways of image manufacture – then it becomes easier to understand. In fact, his peculiar way of describing it should lend credence to this being a genuine description of modern television as seen through the mind's eye of someone from ancient times. A time-travel trip if ever there was one!

In ancient times, it was impossible to imagine what our modern world would be like – the scientific advances and so on. Even the way people think has changed. In today's world, there is no superstition. To worship any kind of manufactured image, however modern or technological it may be, is not acceptable to the secular, non-superstitious people of modern times.

And how does the False Prophet get around this modern day skepticism? Since the immediate presence of a dynamic personality always has a way of generating worship and adulation, then he simply has to use an image that transmits the Antichrist's persona rather than try to craft it somehow. And thus, the world will fall for the TV image of the Antichrist. And this, just like a religious image, serves to visualize the demagogue, and thereby facilitate and spread worship of him. Of course, the world won't really be worshiping the image, but the man himself; but John the Apostle was not aware of this subtle distinction. So his description makes it sound as if the image itself is the object of worship. In some ways,

however, this is not so different from the idolatrous form of worship, where it is understood that the worship is really that of the god or demagogue whom the image represents.

And so, what better way is there for the False Prophet Beast to fulfill his role of communicating false ideas to the world and causing them to worship the Antichrist than through a picture-making and voice-carrying medium like TV that is already established worldwide, already preparing the masses along this line?

Understanding the vision of the “image” in terms of television seems to fulfill the conditions of Rev 13:14-15 pretty well, and has the advantage of simplicity. For example, the “miracles” done “in the sight of the beast” can easily be understood as the televising technology which must operate in the Antichrist’s presence. There’s no question that television broadcasting could create an “image of the beast”, one that has “life” and can “speak”; the modern secular world will easily “worship” it because they know they’re seeing the real thing; the “causing to be killed” phrase, since it seems to combine with the image’s speaking ability, is easily understood as the destructive influence of the Antichrist’s own speeches when he “opens his mouth in blasphemy against God” as part of his propaganda “war against the saints”; and finally, the technology is already here. All that’s needed is for the Antichrist to show up. And so, from this point of view, the Endtime stage is a lot more ready in some ways than we may have thought.

Mankind will always have a need for religion, a need to look up to and worship a superior being. So, what does the Devil do to supply this undeniable need in the modern, religion-starved world he has created? He promotes worship of the Antichrist, the new savior of their troubled world – not in an obviously religious way; but since the masses have come to admire, fear, or feel great dedication to their new master, then this suffices for worship. And that was the impression that John the Apostle had; the world was indeed groveling in “worship” before the Antichrist.

And what better way to spread this “worship” throughout the world than through the Antichrist’s TV image? That was the

intriguing reality which John the Apostle tried, in his simple way, to convey so long ago in Revelation 13. However, because of our cultural familiarity, we don't always realize what an amazing device TV is – one that can generate worship by bringing the live presence of the Antichrist into every household of the world.

Through television then, the Enemy can accomplish his goal of stealing the world's worship through the person of his man, the Antichrist. And so, the Revelation 13 passage emphasizes the TV image of the Beast rather than TV in general. This climactic tip of the iceberg seems to be what the "image" vision of Revelation 13 was portraying. However, the decadent, deceiving influence of television has been around a long time, preparing the hearts and minds of the world towards the goal of getting them to worship the Antichrist instead of the true Christ. There is still the "iceberg" – the 50-some years of TV technology, the laying of the groundwork of a TV culture indoctrinated with anti-Christian values and perspectives. The "image of the beast" doesn't just pop up out of nowhere. It is necessary that the image's vehicle – television – first comes into common usage by the world before the Antichrist should begin to appear on it. The infrastructure has to be in place.

Seen from this viewpoint, television is certainly a major "sign of the times", a necessary preparatory step to unveiling the "image of the beast", or the revealing of the Antichrist. We don't have to wait for some new invention to come along – two-way TVs, a great computer idol or robot looking like the Beast, a computer intelligence, or whatever kind of crafted image we think it might be. The invention for the "image" is already here; and it is an entrenched technology in use the world over. It only remains for the Antichrist to appear on it. We don't have to distance the arrival of this "image" into a SciFi future. We have, as it were, a now-future. If need be, the "image of the beast" can appear tomorrow.

Revelation 13 portrays the image as an essential component in the operations of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet. Revelation 19:20, making a brief mention of the False Prophet, highlights this fact: "The False Prophet wrought miracles before him (the Antichrist)." (This is referring back to the "miracles" mentioned in Revelation 13 that bring "life to the image of the

beast”).) Translated into today’s world, we know how true this is for modern leaders, how their TV image (these “miracles wrought” before them) greatly magnifies their power and influence. They rely heavily on the miracle of modern TV communication. To us it’s not magic, of course, but in the mind of John the Apostle that was how it looked.

Compared to the idols and images of yesteryear, this vision of a modern image must have looked extraordinary to him. In olden times, images were powerless; and without the use of superstition could do nothing to capture people’s imagination and worship. But now, the magic of TV greatly multiplies the power and influence of leaders, generating “worship” of them among their subjects, in a way that was never possible before. And with television, people don’t have to travel to a public place to hear someone in person (such as the Antichrist) making a speech to a crowd. Now, the whole world is a public auditorium because of this invention. And one day soon, it will beam the Antichrist’s own persona straight into the households of everyone on Earth.

Today, no would-be demagogue is going to get very far if he doesn’t make good use of television. And from the sounds of it in Revelation 13, that looks exactly like what the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet plan to do. They can conquer the world politically through the Antichrist’s military might, make them dependent economically with the “mark” system, but perhaps, more crucial than anything else, they must try to win their hearts through use of the “image”.

From the viewpoint of those in ancient times, this vision of the future amazed them with a glimpse at what they believed would be the world’s supreme and worst example of emperor worship. And it amazes us too to see how the Lord foresaw and envisioned His apostle with a special glimpse across the centuries into our modern world and its peculiar worship system.

This passage about the “*image*” is truly one of the more enigmatic ones in Scripture, and for generations it has been interpreted along the lines of being an idol of some kind. But this legacy came from an era when crafted images (paintings,

sculptures, etc.) were most common. No one knew a thing about TV, or even any of the other reflection-type images like photographs, xeroxes, and so on. All they knew were mirror images, which were not used then as objects of worship. So in their day it seemed the only logical possibility that the image should be crafted somehow. In this new day, however, we cannot allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by past viewpoints. We do have the benefit of a lot of historical hindsight, which they did not have. And so we need to upgrade our thinking and not limit ourselves to the mindset or understanding of those from olden time.

Having now the benefit of some historical hindsight, we could paraphrase the passage about the *“image”* into modern lingo like this: “The TV and movie industry belong under the jurisdiction of the False Prophet and his worldwide business empire. Through his influence, he is able to ensure that the Antichrist receives a lot of favorable media coverage. The TV cameras film the Antichrist during his speeches. And by this means his image is broadcast into every TV set in every household of the world. The Antichrist, in his speeches, rails against God and His followers, those who don’t adulate him and don’t join the economic system based on the *“mark”*. The people who show their refusal to worship the Antichrist (whom they can see on TV) by not joining the computerized *“mark”* system, risk getting spotted by the False Prophet’s vast surveillance system, then caught and finally killed by the forces of the Antichrist.”

John’s description in Revelation 13, however, sounds much different, and it’s difficult to think the *“image”* is not something more elaborate than just a plain old TV image. But, as we’ve learned, by taking into account John’s 1st-century mindset – that he was describing a modern type of image in terms of the ancient ways of image manufacture – then it becomes easier to understand. In fact, his peculiar way of describing it should lend credence to this being a genuine description of modern television as seen through the mind’s eye of someone from ancient times. A time-travel trip if ever there was one!

In ancient times, it was impossible to imagine what our modern world would be like – the scientific advances and so on. Even the way people think has changed. In today's world, there is no superstition. To worship any kind of manufactured image, however modern or technological it may be, is not acceptable to the secular, non-superstitious people of modern times.

And how does the False Prophet get around this modern day skepticism? Since the immediate presence of a dynamic personality always has a way of generating worship and adulation, then he simply has to use an image that transmits the Antichrist's persona rather than try to craft it somehow. And thus, the world will fall for the TV image of the Antichrist. And this, just like a religious image, serves to visualize the demagogue, and thereby facilitate and spread worship of him. Of course, the world won't really be worshiping the image, but the man himself; but John the Apostle was not aware of this subtle distinction. So his description makes it sound as if the image itself is the object of worship. In some ways, however, this is not so different from the idolatrous form of worship, where it is understood that the worship is really that of the god or demagogue whom the image represents.

And so, what better way is there for the False Prophet Beast to fulfill his role of communicating false ideas to the world and causing them to worship the Antichrist than through a picture-making and voice-carrying medium like TV that is already established worldwide, already preparing the masses along this line?

Understanding the vision of the "*image*" in terms of television seems to fulfill the conditions of Rev 13:14-15 pretty well, and has the advantage of simplicity. For example, the "*miracles*" done "*in the sight of the beast*" can easily be understood as the televising technology which must operate in the Antichrist's presence. There's no question that television broadcasting could create an "*image of the beast*", one that has "*life*" and can "*speak*"; the modern secular world will easily "*worship*" it because they know they're seeing the real thing; the "*causing to be killed*" phrase, since it seems to combine with the image's speaking ability, is easily understood as the destructive influence of the Antichrist's

own speeches when he “*opens his mouth in blasphemy against God*” as part of his propaganda “*war against the saints*”; and finally, the technology is already here. All that’s needed is for the Antichrist to show up. And so, from this point of view, the Endtime stage is a lot more ready in some ways than we may have thought.

Mankind will always have a need for religion, a need to look up to and worship a superior being. So, what does the Devil do to supply this undeniable need in the modern, religion-starved world he has created? He promotes worship of the Antichrist, the new savior of their troubled world – not in an obviously religious way; but since the masses have come to admire, fear, or feel great dedication to their new master, then this suffices for worship. And that was the impression that John the Apostle had; the world was indeed groveling in “*worship*” before the Antichrist.

And what better way to spread this “*worship*” throughout the world than through the Antichrist’s TV image? That was the intriguing reality which John the Apostle tried, in his simple way, to convey so long ago in Revelation 13. However, because of our cultural familiarity, we don’t always realize what an amazing device TV is – one that can generate worship by bringing the live presence of the Antichrist into every household of the world.

Through television then, the Enemy can accomplish his goal of stealing the world’s worship through the person of his man, the Antichrist. And so, the Revelation 13 passage emphasizes the TV image of the Beast rather than TV in general. This climactic tip of the iceberg seems to be what the “*image*” vision of Revelation 13 was portraying. However, the decadent, deceiving influence of television has been around a long time, preparing the hearts and minds of the world towards the goal of getting them to worship the Antichrist instead of the true Christ. There is still the “iceberg” – the 50-some years of TV technology, the laying of the groundwork of a TV culture indoctrinated with anti-Christian values and perspectives. The “*image of the beast*” doesn’t just pop up out of nowhere. It is necessary that the image’s vehicle – television – first comes into common usage by the world before the Antichrist should begin to appear on it. The infrastructure has to be in place.

Seen from this viewpoint, television is certainly a major “sign of the times”, a necessary preparatory step to unveiling the “*image of the beast*”, or the revealing of the Antichrist. We don’t have to wait for some new invention to come along – two-way TVs, a great computer idol or robot looking like the Beast, a computer intelligence, or whatever kind of crafted image we think it might be. The invention for the “*image*” is already here; and it is an entrenched technology in use the world over. It only remains for the Antichrist to appear on it. We don’t have to distance the arrival of this “*image*” into a SciFi future. We have, as it were, a now-future. If need be, the “*image of the beast*” can appear tomorrow.

Revelation 13 portrays the image as an essential component in the operations of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet. Revelation 19:20, making a brief mention of the False Prophet, highlights this fact: “*The False Prophet wrought miracles before him (the Antichrist).*” (This is referring back to the “*miracles*” mentioned in Revelation 13 that bring “*life to the image of the beast*”.) Translated into today’s world, we know how true this is for modern leaders, how their TV image (these “*miracles wrought*” before them) greatly magnifies their power and influence. They rely heavily on the miracle of modern TV communication. To us it’s not magic, of course, but in the mind of John the Apostle that was how it looked.

Compared to the idols and images of yesteryear, this vision of a modern image must have looked extraordinary to him. In olden times, images were powerless; and without the use of superstition could do nothing to capture people’s imagination and worship. But now, the magic of TV greatly multiplies the power and influence of leaders, generating “*worship*” of them among their subjects, in a way that was never possible before. And with television, people don’t have to travel to a public place to hear someone in person (such as the Antichrist) making a speech to a crowd. Now, the whole world is a public auditorium because of this invention. And one day soon, it will beam the Antichrist’s own persona straight into the households of everyone on Earth.

Today, no would-be demagogue is going to get very far if he doesn’t make good use of television. And from the sounds of it in

Revelation 13, that looks exactly like what the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet plan to do. They can conquer the world politically through the Antichrist's military might, make them dependent economically with the "*mark*" system, but perhaps, more crucial than anything else, they must try to win their hearts through use of the "*image*".

From the viewpoint of those in ancient times, this vision of the future amazed them with a glimpse at what they believed would be the world's supreme and worst example of emperor worship. And it amazes us too to see how the Lord foresaw and envisioned His apostle with a special glimpse across the centuries into our modern world and its peculiar worship system.

What does All This Mean for the Abomination of Desolation?

It has been customary in Christian teaching to base our concept of what the "*image*" is on the assumption that we can identify it with the "*abomination of desolation*" referred to in several End Time portions of Scripture. But what if they are not the same thing? Now that we've seen how the "*image*" could be talking about the Antichrist's TV image, then it is not so necessary to tie it in with the "*abomination*". If we believe that the Revelation 13 "*image*" is the TV image of the Antichrist, then there's no need to think that another image or idol is needed in the form of the abomination of desolation in the "*holy place*". If the Antichrist is there, that should be sufficient. He himself is the object of worship. And so, understanding the "*image*" in terms of TV begs the question, what really is the "*abomination of desolation*".

Answers to this question may be found in the next post called "Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination of Desolation"...

FOOTNOTES

Footnote 1:

The idea of the “*image*” being a TV image may sound unusual. However, it is not something new. Back in 1986, one dedicated Bible teacher, David Brandt Berg, came forward with the idea in one of his lectures. During the course of that discussion, Mr. Berg received a short, but intense, message from the Lord, as follows: *“Hear ye the words of the Lord that I have given unto My servant David, that thy father has prophesied unto thee these things which are to come to pass, that thou shouldest rise and believe and proclaim them before the people, that thou shouldest hear the words of thy father!”* (from David Berg lecture, June/1986) (To learn more about Mr. Berg and his work, see www.davidberg.org)

Up to this point, Mr. Berg had made a lengthy preamble about prophetic interpretations and schools of thought, etc., plus a few of his own theories. But then, it seems the Lord was trying to get through about something very special. Mr. Berg referred to it humorously as *“the bomb I got this morning on the toilet”* – some new revelation he was trying, but having some difficulty, to get around to proclaiming. He says a little later, *“I don’t know whether you can take this or not. Lord, give me wisdom!TTL! If the Lord hadn’t given me that little word when we started (referring to the prophetic message above), I don’t think I’d have the nerve to tell you! But He commanded me to tell you and He told you to believe it! This is the biggest one I’ve ever asked you to swallow!”* (from David Berg lecture, June/1986)

And what was this “*bomb*”? From here on, Mr. Berg talked about how the Lord had impressed on him how the “*image of the beast*” was actually a reference to modern television. He felt the Lord had given him a revelation that this was the way it should be understood, contrary to his former view of it as an idol of some sort:

“Who has to wait for a computerized image to look just like the Beast? You say, But... TV’s not a statue, it’s not the image of a

man, a statue of a man! Who said it was the statue of a man? Huh? – Me! That’s not what the Bible says, it says it’s the Image of the Beast!... I’m just saying what if? What if this is true? What if television is the Image of the Beast? It’s an image... images on television are quite literal, and it speaks with a voice, a loud voice... and the World are all falling down and worshiping the Image of the Beast...” (from David Berg lecture, June/1986)

So this was surely a strong nudge from the Lord in favor of interpreting the “*image*” in terms of television. Several different proposals were put forth in Mr. Berg’s talk, but this one was the most revelatory, the one that came most directly from the Lord.

In the previous year 1985, Mr. Berg had taught that the image would be some kind of idol. It seems logical to think then that the Lord, knowing this wasn’t really correct, gave the inspiration one year later to present what He knew would be closer to the real thing – the idea of the image having something to do with TV.

Shortly after this lecture, Mr. Berg expressed some caution and didn’t want to proclaim the “*image*” in terms of television until some proof could be given to show that it was true: *“I’m going to stick to my original position and our original interpretation until it’s proved otherwise. . . I am merely suggesting that “what if” some of these things could be slightly differently interpreted? What if?”* (from David Berg lecture, June/1986)

After centuries of church history, it is not easy to sweep away the baggage of past interpretation – what numerous Bible scholars have taught for generations. So Mr. Berg made a huge leap of faith, coming forward as he did with his revelation of the “*image*” being a TV image. Since we, in this generation, do have the benefit of some historical hindsight, having experienced what former Bible scholars had not, we can, and in fact need, to leave behind their centuries-old mindset, and adopt a better, updated, and clearer understanding about this mysterious vision of John the Apostle’s. It’s time to take a good look at this question about the “*image*” (from a few different angles) and see if we can find some landing gear for Mr. Berg’s high-flying revelation of 20-some years ago. And not just Mr. Berg, but other Bible teachers

have also expressed similar opinions about the *“image of the beast”*.

In the remainder of his lecture, Mr. Berg went on to emphasize how television was already the *“image of the beast”* in a spiritual sense because of its ungodly, deceiving influence in the mind of mankind. *“Can you think of anything I ever suggested that is certainly a forerunner of the image of the Beast? – That speaks with the voice of the Beast and is worshiped by almost everybody on Earth right now today and stands in the holy place of their hearts, the spiritual holy place of their affections and their imagination and their worship and their love! It is the very personification of materialism, at whose feet the whole World who are well off enough to have one, sit at least an average of 2 or 3 hours a day!... What am I talking about? (Television!) I suggested this once upon a time, I said television reminds me of the Image of the Beast because it already portrays everything that the Beast stands for! ... Already the World is worshiping and obeying and bowing down before the Antichrist and... everything materialistic, more hours a day than they worship anything else!”* (from David Berg lecture, June/1986)

At the time Mr. Berg felt that, in order to interpret the *“image”* in terms of television, he would have to forego the idea of a literal image in favor of a spiritualised concept of it; and television seemed to fit this spiritual *“image of the beast”* role pretty well. Like any image, television communicates a message and does so in a very powerful way. Some of its broadcasts are good and helpful. But there is also much corruption, decadence, and deception conveyed to us through it, and television can be used easily as a mouthpiece for the realm of dark, spiritual forces. However, Mr. Berg was not too keen on trying to spiritualize his interpretations of Bible prophecy if he could avoid it: *“I found out that spiritualising things and making everything symbolic and not taking anything literally gets you in trouble. If I can take it literally I’ll take it literally.”* (from David Berg lecture, May/1985)

Now it stands to reason that, once the Antichrist enters the political stage, his image will appear on TV quite frequently; and this then would surely transform the *“image of the beast”* into the

literal, physical image of the Antichrist. The general, corrupting influence that television exerts now will be embodied then in the Antichrist himself and his televised image when he “*opens his mouth in blasphemy against God*”. (Revelation 13:6)

Footnote 2: Computerized Images

In the same “What If?” lecture mentioned before, David Brandt Berg said, while expounding on the idea of the “*image*” being TV, “*Who has to wait for a computerized image to look just like the Beast?*” (“What If?”, ML 2211-4, para. 153) In other words, television itself will carry the “*image of the beast*” without any need for fashioning it somehow by computerization or other means.

We could compare computer image-making to the art of forgery. Criminals can make realistic-looking fake passports or counterfeit money. And they often get away with this. But as soon as the forgeries are detected, then they’re useless to the criminals who then stand a good chance of getting caught. In the legal world, photocopies of official documents may be accepted, whereas forgeries, however good they may be, are not. Likewise, with a live TV image of the Antichrist: As long as people know they’re watching the real thing, then that serves the purpose of persuading them to follow the Antichrist. But one could imagine that, if people suspected the image was actually computerized, or had been doctored up in some way, then they would be less inclined to take it seriously. So, if computerized images are to be used, people will still have to think that it’s a live, broadcasted image. But, like the art of forgery, it can be a risky business.

We could imagine the reactions people would have to beholding a special new type of computerized image versus how they would feel beholding the Antichrist himself in the form of a TV image. The former might arouse interest, curiosity, amazement, or maybe amusement. But for the most part, that vital human connection would be missing, and so the spirit that comes across is mechanical and could not generate feelings of devotion or worship. Even just the fact that it’s a made-up thing means the image does not have to be taken seriously. But what feeling would a live TV image generate? Probably, as Hitler’s live appearances and radio

broadcasts were able to cast a spell over the German people, so the Antichrist's TV "*image*" will arouse in people the same kind of devotion, loyalty, desire for service. In short, true worship.

Like computer technology now, TV was once a new and amazing invention. But after time, we have adopted a certain cultural familiarity towards it. TV, we should remember, does convey that live appeal. Even under the fuzziest of broadcasting conditions, it can induce worship in a way that no other type of modern image can, however intricate or realistic it may be. Nothing beats seeing the real live thing.

Footnote 3: Hindu Milk Miracle and Magic Idols

To understand better where John is coming from, imagine, in the Roman world of his time the following scenario: A "prophet" arrives in a certain district to promote the worship of the new Caesar. He begins by proclaiming to the people of the region that it is their religious duty to make an image to the newly installed "divine being". The people, knowing that the Roman garrison is stationed just over the next hill, figure it's in their best interest to do so, and each household dutifully gets or makes its own image. To encourage more devotion to Caesar (and bring in more revenue), our "prophet" might use magical powers, or simple tricks, to make the images appear to be alive in some way. And thus, a wave of interest in the new god has begun. Likely, that kind of thing did happen in those days.

Even in modern times, such things have been known to happen. There are the weeping images of Mary and other manifestations, which God seems to have allowed in the Catholic world. Another example: In India a few years ago (1995), there arose a wave of interest in one of the Hindu gods. The furore was sparked, it seems, by reports that Ganesh idols in different places had been observed to be drinking milk by some miraculous means. And newspaper headlines about it appeared all over India, and even in England. If something like this could happen in modern times, chances are it must have happened, probably more frequently, in ancient times. The priests of old would have had many peculiar ways of persuading people to worship their gods and

demagogues. And these occasional “miracles” – whether real or imagined – where idols could demonstrate limited lifelike powers on a wide scale – must have done a lot to prop up the faith of the people in them. So, this ancient practice may have been John’s reference point and basis for explaining how the image he saw in vision worked.

One interesting point about the Hindu idol mentioned above: The people who still had faith in that kind of worship believed implicitly in this “miracle”. But those who were influenced by modern, scientific thinking were completely skeptical. In our modern world, for any image to have “*life*”, if it comes about by supernatural means, it may not have any impact; people are more likely to brush it off than be inspired to worship. Nowadays, the only thing that will convince people is seeing the real live thing (on television).

That is not to say there won’t be any miraculous manifestations performed by the Devil’s people. *“False christs and false prophets. . . shall show great signs and wonders.”*(Mat 24:24) The forces of Darkness will pull everything out of their bag of tricks. But likely, the “miracle” of being able to spread the Antichrist’s live image far and wide through technological means is the best way of explaining how he persuades the world to worship the Antichrist.

Footnote 4: Rise of the Computer State

To clarify this point about modern surveillance, here are some helpful remarks from a famous newscaster, Walter Cronkite, someone who had a good firsthand knowledge about the shifting trends of recent history.

“In 1948 George Orwell wrote what turned out to be his final work, the classic 1984. It drew a picture of a chilling future... The state was all and to serve it, loyally and unthinkingly, its citizens had been divested of all pretense of privacy, and hence liberty... Thought police monitored behavior patterns to detect possibly deviant attitudes. Sophisticated listening devices tuned in to the most intimate conversation.

“And perhaps the most effective means of control was the two-way television set that looked into every office, factory or home. The individual was never free from the surveillance of the security forces.

“And yet Orwell, with his vivid imagination, was unable to foresee the actual shape of the threat that would exist in 1984. It turns out to be the ubiquitous computer and its auxiliary communication networks. Without the malign intent of any government system or would-be dictator, our privacy is being invaded, and more and more of the experiences which should be solely our own are finding their way into electronic files that the curious can scrutinize at the punch of a button.

“If – or is it when? – these computers are permitted to talk to one another, when they are interlinked, they can spew out a roomful of data on each of us that will leave us naked before whoever gains access to the information.”

(“Forward” by Walter Cronkite to *The Rise of the Computer State* by David Burnham, 1983)

To summarize, what we have now in the way of information-gathering far surpasses anything that was developed in ancient times, or even in recent modern times (Hitler’s gestapo, or KGB informers and their electronic bugs). The latest computer surveillance systems have turned out to be the equivalent of George Orwell’s *“thought police”* and *“two-way TVs”*; or the equivalent, in ancient times, of Nebuchadnezzar’s guards watching to see who would refuse to bow before his idol. Besides its widespread coverage, modern computer surveillance also has the advantage of giving people the illusion that they’re still free because it can get around some of the more obvious aspects of the a “Big-Brother-is-watching-you” type of system. It does this in rather subtle fashion through its ability to stay out of sight and out of mind while it is busy monitoring our pocketbooks and other aspects of our daily lives.

4. UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY OF THE ABOMINATION

Written on 7 September, 2009

What really is the “*abomination of desolation*” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and later by Jesus Himself? One very good possibility that is quite easy to prove: This was just an ancient way of describing a modern weapon or vehicle of war, perhaps an armored tank, helicopter gunship, or some such thing.

That sounds awfully far-fetched, however, because since ancient times it has always been assumed that the “*abomination*” had to be an idol of some god, or of the Antichrist himself. This customary interpretation carries a lot of weight for it bears the stamp of approval of generations of Biblical interpretation. Nevertheless, it may just be an inherited mindset that is only hindering us from seeing this mystery in a whole new light.

There are some good reasons for not limiting ourselves to past explanations, for stepping beyond them in order to discover a brand new viewpoint on this baffling riddle that has come down to us from ancient times. Those reasons are as follows: 1) We live in a secular, modern world; idols are not worshiped in a religious or superstitious way anymore. 2) More historical hindsight now gives us a better handle on how to understand this thing. 3) A thorough investigation of the Scriptures brings to light the fact that the **abomination** of desolation can easily be understood as an ancient way of referring to the weapons of destruction that we are familiar with in this modern day and age.

It should be kept in mind that this is still only a theory, one that seems to explain several of the details provided in the Scriptures that pertain to this mystery of the abomination of desolation that the customary theory of it as an idol of some sort doesn't seem to explain very well. Time will tell, of course, and as events move closer to that actual time, then it will become much clearer what it really is. Anyway, it helps not to be too dogmatic about any one point of view. Then if things don't turn out the way we expected them to, at least it won't come as too much of a surprise. So now, to view this mystery from a whole new perspective, let us consider the following evidence based on Scripture, historical example, and even just plain common sense:

! ABOMINATION !

ABOMINATION

ABOMINATION

of

DESOLATION

CLUE # 1 “*Abomination*” = idol?

This word “*abomination*” doesn’t have to mean “idol”; it’s anything abhorrent to God, i.e. “*a false balance*”, “*he that soweth discord*”, the unclean animals of Lev 11, etc. Jesus Himself said in Luke 16:15, “*That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*” That would certainly include these horrible, death-dealing inventions of modern times, these weapons that are so “*highly esteemed among men*”.

CLUE # 2 “*Desolation*” in the New Testament

Now, it just so happens that the particular form of the Greek Word used here for “desolation” – “*eremosis*” – comes up only three times in the New Testament. In the first two occasions – Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 – we find the phrase “*abomination of desolation*”. And its appearance marks the turning point when all restrictions against the evil forces are swept away, and God’s people will have to flee for safety.

Matthew 24:15 “*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of **desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*”

Mark 13:14 “*But when ye shall see the abomination of **desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:”*

The third reference, Luke 21:20, is a little different. The passage context is pretty much the same (Jesus outlining different signs that will precede His second coming) until the point comes where one would expect to read about the “*abomination of desolation*” (as in Matthew and Mark). The verse starts off just the same – “*when ye shall see...*” – but then, instead of “*abomination of desolation*”, it says, “*Jerusalem compassed with **armies***”.

Luke 21:20 “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with **armies**, then know that the **desolation** thereof is nigh.”

And then the passage continues on in a vein similar to what Matthew 24 and Mark 13 say – about fleeing into the mountains and so on.

Well, this gives us a pretty good clue. The “armies” and “desolation” of Luke 21:20 surely refer to a war setting and the kind of destruction that armies at war bring to a nation or city. And this suggests that the same word “desolation” found in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 could also be referring to violent, physical destruction. And if so, this should leave little doubt as to what kind of “desolation” the “abomination of desolation” is supposed to be capable of doing.

The similarity of these three verses and chapters suggests that the invasion of Jerusalem and its desolation (which would involve the use of many instruments and vehicles of modern warfare) must be linked to the appearance of the abomination of desolation in the “holy place”. Both events must happen around the same time, and also the meaning of “desolation” in all three passages would likely be the same – referring to the kind of physical destruction that happens in wartime.

Conclusion: The “abomination of desolation” is one of many vehicles of war that invade and destroy Jerusalem and is the particular one that happens to storm its way into the Jewish temple.

CLUE # 3 “Make desolate” in the Old Testament

In the ancient Hebrew, the **intensive** form of this word (“to desolate”) was used in Daniel 9:27 and 11:31 in reference to the “abomination that maketh desolate”. Remarkably, these were the only two places (out of 92 altogether) in the entire Old Testament where this intensive form was used. And it means “make desolate **violently**” – certainly an apt descriptive word to use in reference to a modern vehicle of war. (For more explanation see [Footnote 1: Hebrew Conjugations](#))

If we consider that one armored tank, for example, could cause as much damage to a city wall in a few seconds as would take a whole army in ancient times several days to accomplish with their battering rams and other weapons, then we can understand why the Lord used this intensive form of the verb “make desolate” to describe this mysterious invention of the future.

CLUE # 4 Daniel 9:26b-27

“(26) 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. (27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [Hebrew way of saying “seven years”]: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make (it) desolate...”

Briefly, this passage describes the invasion of the Antichrist into Jerusalem in the middle of a seven-year “covenant”, a treaty of some kind that, as far as we know, is supposed to bring peace and religious freedom to the Mideast area for a time. The invasion overlaps with, or springboards from, the ancient invasion of the Romans who in 70 A.D. devastated Jerusalem and the temple. Following are some observations about certain phrases in this passage:

- The phrase “overspreading of abominations” is a peculiar one, and we might wonder what on earth it is actually talking about? Well, the word “overspreading” literally means a bird’s wings. However, it can also be used figuratively to mean **armies**, or **military invasion** (and possibly a veiled reference to aerial bombardment). In Isaiah 8:8, Jeremiah 48:40, and Jeremiah 49:22 the same Hebrew word was used (but translated as “wings”), and in those passages it refers to military invasions. (Interestingly, “wings” has a military connotation in English also; the flank of an army is called a “wing”.) So “military invasion/armies” is the figurative meaning, which, makes more sense, and that’s what the word “overspreading” is supposed to mean here in this passage.

- About this use of the Hebrew word “wings” in a military sense, here is one helpful quote from a reputable source, someone who was considered the foremost Hebrew scholar of his generation:

“Wings are also spoken of as applied to armies (as in Latin).” (from *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, page 406, by H.W.F. Gesenius, first published in 1847)

- “Abominations”: Strangely enough, the plural form is used here rather than the singular.

- **Conclusion:** How then would the Antichrist conduct a “**military invasion**” using “**abominations**” (plural) **that make desolate violently**? In the old days it was a great puzzle trying to figure out what on earth it meant by an army of abominations; armies are composed of soldiers, not things. But now in modern times

it's easy to understand how an invader can do this very thing: send in these abominations of violent destruction – missiles, war planes, tanks, bombs, and what have you. What would have been unthinkable in ancient times, it is now possible to do. If a general wants to, he can bring violent destruction to a whole region without sending in a single soldier to do it; and he can do this, for example, just by sending in an “army” of missiles into his enemy’s territory. And with the latest technology that “army” may consist of unmanned airplanes, called robots, drones, or predator vehicles. [\(See Footnote 2: News Articles\)](#)

Evidently, during the course of the invasion (this “*overspreading of abominations*”), one of these abominable weapons enters the “*holy place*” in Jerusalem. This explains why the singular form is used in other passages referring to the abomination when it enters the “*holy place*” while here the plural form is used for referring to the big invasion force.

These verses in the Old Testament confirm what we learned in Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20: the single “*abomination of desolation*” is only one of many instruments of war used to carry out the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem. And we can easily imagine how this will take place. An invasion of tanks, planes, and missiles enters the city of Jerusalem; but only one of them happens to enter the “*holy place*”. (And as it barges its way in, it changes quickly from being just a secular abomination into a religious one.)

- Note: The word “*it*” (printed in italics) is not there in the original Hebrew but was added by the translators. So what exactly shall the Antichrist “*make desolate*”? In the previous verse, “*the city and the sanctuary*” were destroyed, and the same theme carries over into this verse 26. The ancient invasion of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in verse 26 telescopes into (or pre-figures) the modern invasion of Jerusalem by the Antichrist in verse 27. So the “*it*” should refer again to “*the city and the sanctuary*”. The “*covenant*” too gets destroyed – or rather, brought to an end – during this future “*one week*” (seven-year) time period, but it is the modern “*city and sanctuary*” that will receive physical and violent destruction (similar to what happened in ancient times). And of course, that destruction ties in well with the phrase, “*For the overspreading (armies) of abominations he shall make desolate (violently)*”.

Just as the ancient city and temple got physically destroyed, that probably means something similar will happen in the future scenario. However, the “*war*” that brought about “*desolations*” in ancient times is different (technologically) from the war in modern times and so is expressed differently – with this peculiar “*overspreading of abominations*” phrase.

Final Conclusion:

So, could that possibly be the answer to the riddle Jesus posed about the *“abomination of desolation standing in the holy place”* ? He said, *“Whoso readeth, let him understand”* – because it’s not just some typical kind of religious abomination; it could very well be a military instrument of destruction that becomes a religious abomination by virtue of the fact that it enters the *“holy place”*. It was a way of expressing in ancient times an invention and event of the far distant future – something they couldn’t really comprehend or express in secular or technical terms.

So a definition for *“abomination of desolation”* might be this: it’s a general term for any of our modern weapons or vehicles of war whose destructive power far outmatched anything that was ever used in ancient times.

CLUE # 5 War Setting

The previous verse studied above, Daniel 9:26b-27, is set in a time of war.

This war setting exists also in the descriptions where only one *“abomination of desolation”* is mentioned – namely, Daniel 8:12,15, Daniel 11 and 12, Matthew 24, Mark 13. The whole chapter of Daniel 11 describes the Antichrist’s war campaigns. Then in verse 31 the word *“arms”* is used. (Similar to its use in the previous verses 15 and 22, *“arms”* is intended in a figurative sense to mean *“military forces”*. Interestingly, this double meaning for the word *“arms”* exists in both ancient Hebrew and modern English.) Let’s see what happens then when we substitute the word *“arms”* and its representative pronoun *“they”* with the word *“military forces”* in verse 31:

“And military forces shall stand on his part,

and military forces shall pollute the sanctuary of strength and take away the daily sacrifice,

and military forces shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

So, if the military forces are the ones who carry out this operation of polluting the sanctuary, then it seems likely that one of their vehicles or weapons would be the desolating *“abomination”* that invades the temple.

Matthew 24 and Mark 13 talk about *“wars and rumors of wars”* leading up to the Great Tribulation when *“there should no flesh be saved except those days should be shortened.”* (Mt 24:22) It certainly sounds as though a lot of warfare is being waged at

this time – *“Jerusalem compassed with armies”*, as Luke 21:20 mentions. Judging by the context in these Scriptures – so much warfare going on at the time of the appearance of the *“abomination”* – it seems likely the abomination itself should also have something to do with the war-making.

CLUE # 6 The “God of Forces”

So far, we have looked at this phenomenon of the *“abomination”* mostly from the secular angle. But let’s see it now from a religious viewpoint.

In ancient times most *“abominations”* were abhorrent practices, or objects, that were part of the worship and service of a demon god. So, what *“god”* should the *“abomination of desolation”* be associated with? Where is the clue for this? Well, if we look in Daniel 11:38, there is mention of a *“god of forces”*. So, perhaps we have here the spiritual background behind the Antichrist’s physical act. Could it be that we have here the name of the god who inspires the creation/invention of these abominations of desolation? Back in verse 31 it is said of the Antichrist and his forces that *“they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength”* by placing in it *“the abomination that makes desolate”*. Then here in verse 38, as if by way of explanation for this act of desecration in verse 31, we are given a look into the Antichrist’s spiritual life: he *“shall honor the god of forces”*.

So, who is this *“god of forces”*? In the singular form this phrase could have meant *“God of strength”*. But here the plural form is being used, so it’s not talking in abstract terms about spiritual strength. The passage is obviously not referring to the true God but to the Antichrist’s demon god that he *“shall honour”*, a war god who bestows on kings and nations, not the true strength of God, but merely the strength of the flesh, military strength. In the past this *“god of forces”* was thought by some to be Mars, the Roman god of war. Well, that was close, but the passage was obviously set in a future time – modern times – and so must be referring to a modern style *“god”*, a *“strange god”* as it says in the next verse 39.

In the margin of some Bibles, the alternative translation for *“god of forces”* is given: *“god of munitions”*. If this is the right translation, that would certainly be appropriate for the modern day and age. Unlike the olden days, when walled cities were the main feature of a nation’s military strength, nowadays munitions or weapons are the main feature of any nation’s defence. Walls and fortifications are of no use now, and the modern equivalent of that is to amass a great stockpile of hi-tech weaponry. In modern terms, we would say the Antichrist places great stress on his weapons-building program. Daniel 11:38, however, expresses it in a more spiritual

way: *“He shall honor the god of forces (or munitions). . . with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.”* (The war god, as modern military budgets can tell us, is an extremely expensive god to maintain.)

Other *“beast”* superpowers from ancient times also conquered by means of their military prowess, just as the final Antichrist will do. But nowadays, there’s a new twist – a greater emphasis on weaponry, which could be why this *“god of forces (or munitions)”*, this power of the Antichrist’s, is given a bit of a high profile here in Daniel 11. Nowadays military weapons are extremely important, more so than they have ever been in history. No ancient god of war ever had at his disposal such colossal destructive power as exists now through nuclear weapons. And all this was foreseen by the Lord centuries ago and comprehended here in this phrase about the *“god of forces”*, and more particularly, *“god of munitions”*.

It seems the phrase could be taken either of two ways: as a *“fortress”*, a bastion of military strength, or, since the passage is set in modern times, it can and probably should be taken to mean *“munitions”*. Weapons, not its surrounding walls, are the most vital components in a city’s defense. Nowadays, for a nation to be a *“fortress”*, a military stronghold, it must possess a great arsenal of high-tech weaponry; this is the equivalent of the fortified cities of ancient times. This modern day emphasis on weaponry is suggested also in the next verse 39: the phrase *“the most strongholds”*, in the original Hebrew is a combination of the same word *“forces (munitions)”* and another word meaning *“defenced city”*.

So again, like the *“abomination of desolation”* phrase, this *“god of forces”* phrase was a good way for the Lord to express in an ancient language a historical reality that would not arrive until several centuries into the future: the unique form of warmongering that exists today.

Now, it is often thought that the *“abomination”* should be identified with the *“image”* of Revelation 13; and therefore, it would be some kind of image, or idol, of the Antichrist. But, as we’ve learned, the *“abomination”* is supposed to be capable of *“making desolate”* (as in war); and this links it quite naturally with something like the *“god of forces”*, a military god of war & munitions. So, instead of being an image of the Antichrist, it should rather be viewed as a representation or creation of the *“god of forces”*. The *“god of forces”* then would be the object of worship (at least for the Antichrist and his crew of warmongers). And presumably, the function of its abominations is to help this demon god cause desolation in the earth – whether it be confined to a certain *“holy place”*, or spread out as nuclear devastation over a vast territory.

The *“image”*, on the other hand, as the Revelation Book spells it out, is an object of worship designed for the world at large, something that everybody can use as part of his worship of the Antichrist. And this can be easily understood as the TV image of the Antichrist. (See *“Unraveling the Mystery of the Image”* post for more details.) So, this phrase in verse 38 about the *“god of forces”* is an important clue to show what god the *“abomination”* is supposed to be attached to. And because the Antichrist *“honors the god of forces”*, he is fully engaged in the business of waging war. He opposes anything that might hinder his military campaigns (and self-worship). The *“god of forces”* inspires him to send a destroying abomination into the sanctuary. And that signals the start of all-out war against the religious forces whom the Antichrist knows will oppose his plans for world takeover and worship of himself.

In verses 38-39, the Lord refers to this *“god of forces”* as a *“strange god”* – probably because of its modern day guise – and as a *“god whom his fathers knew not”*. It doesn’t resemble the ancient gods, at least not outwardly. The secular world of modern times does not like to acknowledge the existence of any kind of higher power, or the supernatural, anything that might be construed as superstitious and unscientific. As a result, there cannot be too much official recognition of this god. That in itself would have appeared *“strange”* to Daniel and the people of ancient times. They were accustomed to seeing a lot of outward manifestations in their religious worship. For example, the ancient god of war, Mars, would be represented by an idol, something easy to worship; and in those days idols were the most common type of *“abomination”* around. But in these days when *“religion”* has gone out of fashion, any god the Enemy wants to foist on the world has to appear as if it’s not religious. He has to disguise it with the secular garments of science and technology – a rather *“strange god”*, in other words, a god who is not supposed to be recognizable as a god, as in the old days of idol worship.

And there is another *“strange”* feature about this *“god of forces”* - the destructive *“abominations”* that are attached to it. How peculiar to the minds of those in ancient times – these modern weapons of atomic bombs, war tanks, guns, war planes, etc., inventions totally unimagined back then. Never did such a peculiar, faceless, no-name god like this exist in old time. But with the onset of scientific materialism and inventions of modern weaponry, the ancient gods had to take on a new form. The ancient god of war Mars, for example, has morphed into this *“god of forces”* – *“a strange god”*, and *“a god whom his fathers knew not”* – unknown to former generations, but familiar to us in this last generation. At least we see this god manifested now in all its abominable inventions of destruction. It’s just that modern secular society will not tolerate any publicly recognized form or *“god”* as such. Only in secret behind closed doors will any such worship take place – by the Antichrist and his crew of warmongers.

CLUE # 7 Better perspective on Matthew 24

The three Endtime chapters in the Gospels (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) all start with Jesus telling His disciples that the great temple would be destroyed, which is followed by their question, *“When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”* (Apparently, they were thinking that such a big catastrophe as the temple’s destruction would surely herald His return and the end of the world.) The Lord goes on to describe all kinds of signs leading up to His Coming, but He never really answers their question about the temple destruction. Although the disciples have in mind the temple of their day, the Lord must have felt His Coming couldn’t be linked to that temple’s destruction. But, to show perhaps that He hadn’t forgotten the original question, after listing all the “signs of the times”, the Lord finally ties together the two events that the disciples figured were interconnected, namely, His Second Coming and the temple’s destruction: *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.”*

The vague reference here to a *“holy place”* and its *“desolation”* by some kind of *“abomination”* relates back to the original temple-destruction question, but also gives the hint that it’s not the same temple. His answer let them know that His Coming would not necessarily coincide with the destruction of their temple (in 70 A.D. when the Romans sacked Jerusalem). There would have to be something different about it, something peculiar going on with this *“abomination of desolation”*. And this suggested to His followers that the event of His coming might happen a little further down the line than they were hoping.

Since it was Jesus’ startling prediction about the destruction of the temple that triggered this Endtime discussion, it would only be fitting for the *“abomination of desolation”* to connect in some way with that event – even if it’s referring to the destruction of, or damage to, a future temple; it would suit as an answer, or semi-answer, to the disciples’ original question of *“when shall these things be (the temple destruction)?”* Even if it’s not the same temple or *“holy place”*, it will be located in the same city, maybe even the same exact location, and the same race of people who have returned there now. In the Lord’s eyes, it’s the same scenario, but telescoped into the future, the modernized version of what happens in verse two about the ancient temple. (And this pattern is similar to the one in Daniel 9:26-27 about the invasion of Jerusalem: two events that take place very far apart in time – 70 A.D. and the near future – but because of their similarity, are seen almost as one.)

Thus, to be consistent with what happened in ancient times, the *“abomination of desolation”* should link with the temple’s physical destruction in some way. And what

could be more suitable for this role than the entrance of a destroying machine of some kind? Incidentally, the *“holy place”* may not be completely destroyed at this time, as the old temple was, but only partly. So it would seem anyway, judging from what the verses on this subject say – Daniel 8:11,13, 11:31, 2Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 11:2.

When the *“abomination of desolation”* finally arrives, that right away will more or less answer both questions posed by the disciples: 1) *“When shall these things be (the temple destruction)?* Answer: That will happen when a peculiar *“abomination of desolation”* will enter some kind of future *“holy place”* to destroy it (partially at least). 2) *And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”* Answer: The same appearance of the *“abomination of desolation”* will also signal the beginning of the Great Tribulation (and soon-coming end of the world).

Jesus summed it up thus: *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation... stand in the holy place... then shall be great tribulation.”* (Matt24:15,21) Of course, there are other signs of the End that Jesus mentioned; but this is the one, in fact the only specific event He mentioned which will give the signal for the start of the Great Tribulation; and consequently, that will pinpoint how much time is left before His Coming (the last 3½ years).

(What the Great Tribulation means is a big subject. Without going into too much detail, briefly, according to certain Scriptures, this period marks the last 3½ years before the return of Christ. It starts off with the Antichrist’s breaking of the *“covenant”* by halting religious services in the Jews’ rebuilt temple. This provocative act is followed by much religious persecution and other troubles, wars, and catastrophes. It ends with the return of Christ.)

To review then, the destruction, or partial destruction, of the *“holy place”* in the Endtime is actually part of a larger event – the destruction of Jerusalem – and is like a déjà vu of the events of 70 A.D. Luke 21, the companion chapter to Matthew 24 and Mark 13, makes mention of this tragic event: *“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.”* (verse 20) The “opener” in these three chapters was Jesus’ startling prediction to the disciples of the temple’s destruction; and He doesn’t lose sight of that theme but uses it to pinpoint for them the answer to their big question of when His Second Coming would happen. The Lord uses their questions about the old temple and His second coming as a springboard into His discussion on the signs leading up to the Endtime, which culminates with the destruction of a future *“holy place”* by some kind of futuristic and dreadful *“abomination of desolation”*; this is followed soon after by His Second Coming and Rapture of the saints.

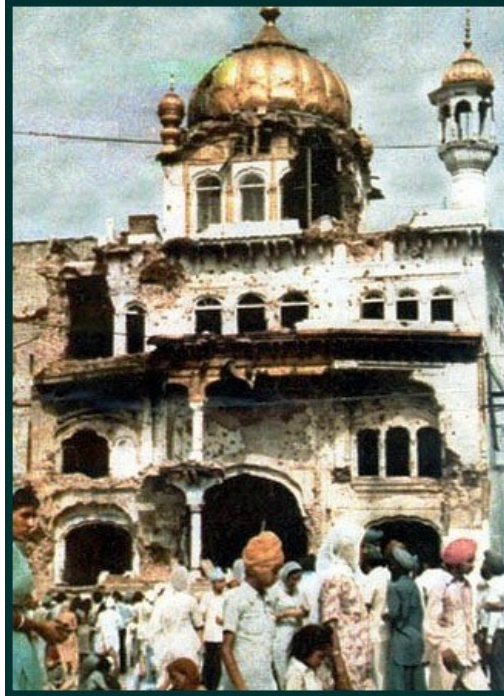
It would appear then that this whole discourse by the Lord about the future ties together better if we understand the *“abomination”* to be a weapon or vehicle of war, storming and pounding its way into the Jews’ temple compound. A scenario like that seems to fit in well with how Jesus was trying to gear his discussion to the disciples’ questions and their preoccupation at that moment with the temple’s destruction.

CLUE # 8 Historical Precedents

The infamous raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, 1993: During that tragic event, an *“abomination that makes desolate”* (a war tank) entered a sort of *“holy place”* (the Branch Davidian compound). Could not this tragic event be viewed as a mini historical preview of things to come – a foreboding forecast of that dreadful day when the *“holy covenant”* is broken?



Branch Davidian Compound – Waco, Texas – 1993



Sikhs' Golden Temple - Amritsar, India – 1984

Given the limited time frame and the fact that this event is supposed to happen exactly on the mid-point of what the Scriptures point to as the last seven years of

history, then it will have to be dramatic and quick – something to which a precise date can be easily attached. * There can't be any confusion about it. The moment of the abomination's entry into the "*holy place*" can't be long and drawn out. It'll be a definite, easy-to-mark event on the calendar, a clear signpost, something very obvious for God's people that will mark the beginning of the last 3½ years (1,260 days) of the Great Tribulation. [* The details and timings of these last 7 years or last 3½ years before the return of Christ are a whole extra study in themselves beyond the scope of this one; however, the relevant verses are the following: (about the 3½ years) Daniel 9:27, 12:1,7, 7:25, Revelation 12:14, 11:2, and 13:5, Revelation 11:3 and 12:6; (about the Great Tribulation and Return of Christ) Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:29-31, and Mark 13:24-27]

It's easier to picture this kind of scenario as a dramatic event, such as, for example, a war tank entering the holy place (something the world of believers can easily see and be shocked at and warned by). Nowadays, it is commonly thought that the abomination will be some sort of modern-style idol and/or super computer. This approach is certainly well-meaning and tries to understand, from a literal point of view and from an upgraded, technological point of view, the verses about the "*abomination*" and the "*image*" of Revelation 13.

But from a practical point of view, there are some difficulties; to install something like a robot idol or super-computer would be an awkward, slow process and could encounter some major logistical hurdles: for example, will they try to assemble it in a back room of the temple, hoping that none of the priests will find out what's going on? Or will they pre-fab it outside, manage to wheel it in at the right moment, and then plug it in? Would installing this kind of sensitive equipment in a war-torn area of the world not be too risky because of the weakened infrastructure? There is already a supercomputer in a peaceful location (in Brussels) managing the world's credit systems. Does there need to be another one in Israel? Or even if somehow it is a fairly simple operation, and an idol of the Antichrist, is it something the world will truly feel inspired to worship? (More on this question later.)

This event could be compared to planting a flag on a newly discovered territory. The flag is a rather insignificant thing in itself but is easily seen and has tremendous symbolic significance. So it would be for a vehicle of destruction entering the "*holy place*". It's a simple operation, but it displays before the world the Antichrist's rebellion against God; and for God's people, it's a red flag of warning. For the evil forces it's their triumphant hour, their apparent conquest of God and religion; they've dared to place their abomination of desolation in this internationally recognized sacred spot. "Might is right". Their weapons have overpowered this tangible symbol of religious freedom. It's

not that the Jewish temple has to be any great symbol of God's presence in the earth, but because of the *"holy covenant"* to which the Antichrist has agreed, the issue of religious freedom throughout the world will hinge, it seems, on what happens to that small bit of religious real estate.

When the Waco catastrophe took place, the world could see what was going on through television; everyone knew the exact moment when the "desolating abomination" entered the compound, and how it caused the awful tragedy that ensued. Likewise, a war tank (or some vehicle/weapon of war) entering the *"holy place"* in Jerusalem would be a dramatic news event the whole world could witness via television. (*"Ye shall see the abomination."*) Everyone would know exactly when it happens (and it would happen in one day). Thus, it will be a clear marker for the start of the Antichrist's final stand against the forces of Heaven – the dire warning signal that the Great Tribulation has begun. (Also a signpost to encourage the world of believers that Jesus' return is just around the corner.)

And it's the kind of event that could trigger the Great Tribulation in two ways: Firstly, a provocative incident like this would quickly escalate the level of warring among the nations; and secondly, such an event would, in very obvious fashion, mark the breaking of the *"covenant"* and the start of official, worldwide persecution against the worshipers of God.

To stop the sacrifices and religious worship will require force, and there's no way to do this other than for the Antichrist to send his soldiers and weapons into the temple. And that's what the *"abomination of desolation"* is; it's part of this operation of halting religious worship so he can begin the secular worship of himself. *"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is god."* (2Thess2:4) And, to the evil forces of the world, this opening shot fired against the *"holy place"* and the *"holy covenant"* signals to them the beginning of their all-out *"war against the saints"*.

CLUE # 9 Perspective of Ancient Times

The usual abominations of ancient times were the pagan idols, some of which were designed in such a way that they could gobble up their sacrificial victims – certainly a detestable practice. Perhaps then, in the minds of people in ancient times, the *"abomination of desolation"* was something similar, some awful and sinister invention of the future – what exactly they didn't know, of course – but it seems the Lord was trying to show them it would be something unimaginably powerful and horrible in its destructive capability, and very deserving to be called an *"abomination"*

that maketh desolate (violently)“. Daniel may very well have thought it was some kind of idol, especially since the prophecy says it appears in the *“sanctuary of strength”*. Or, if Daniel didn’t think this, certainly most interpreters after him have conjectured along those lines. Whatever the case, the fact remains it was beyond their imaginations in those days to comprehend this thing. And the term *“abomination”* carries this hint of the unusual, of something beyond the scientific knowledge of those times.

When it comes to weapons of war, there’s nothing so peculiar about them as far as we’re concerned. But for anyone from ancient times, to behold something like, for example, an armored tank rumbling and roaring away, moving by itself, spitting out fire and smoke, death and destruction, this could only be regarded as some kind of great, sinister, sci-fi marvel of the future; it wasn’t just another weapon of war, or *“engine of war”*. (This term was used for ancient weapons like the catapult, or siege tower.) When we consider that one modern warplane, for example, can cause more devastation than a whole army could in ancient times, it hardly falls into the same category as the clumsy, horse-drawn contraptions of old. Although those *“war engines”* were the forerunners of our modern weapons, they were primitive compared to what we have now – self-powered vehicles with internal combustion or jet engines, radar & computer tracking systems, explosive bombs, etc.

So, from the viewpoint of ancient times, what better way could the Lord have of describing a modern instrument of war than as an *“abomination that maketh desolate (violently)”*, especially one that enters into a *“holy place”*. But from our viewpoint, we wouldn’t think of it the same way because of our cultural familiarity with modern inventions. As a result, this term *“abomination that maketh desolate”* leads us into thinking that it must be something else, something that to us would appear unusual, bizarre, out of the ordinary realm of usual inventions, something we haven’t quite seen yet.

But we forget that what’s ordinary to our point of view was something quite extraordinary to the point of view of those in ancient times. Because of our cultural familiarity, modern war machines & weaponry don’t arouse in us any aura of mystery or sense of revulsion and abominableness. But if someone from ancient times were to come into the present and see one, that’s how they would feel about it. And their viewpoint would be well comprehended in that ancient term *“abomination that maketh desolate”*.

We could imagine if someone came from another planet or time era and they happened to come across a CD player, they might call it a *“music device”*, which for them would be about the most accurate way of describing it. They wouldn’t know any

of the terms we use: CD player, hi-fi stereo, i-pod, etc. A clock or watch might be called a “time-piece”. Likewise this term “abomination that maketh desolate (violently)”, for those from the era of ancient times, this was the best term they could use to describe a modern weapon or vehicle of war, especially one that had entered a “*holy place*”.

God’s way of looking at things often differs from man’s, and His Word gives us a deeper spiritual insight – a perception that is generally lacking in the secular mindset of modern times. In the mind of modern man, the weapon that enters the “*holy place*” would be just a collection of nuts, bolts, and metal put together to make an armored tank (or whatever it might be). We might go so far as to call it a military invention inspired by diabolical genius. But unlikely we would think of it in the way the Bible describes – a destroying abomination unleashed against the world by a demon god of war (the “*god of forces*”).

In Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 Jesus said, “*Whoso readeth, let him understand*”. The Lord was saying something to the effect that this “*abomination of desolation*” will have to remain a mystery because it’s so far in the future. So, “*whoso readeth, let him understand*”, as it won’t be too obvious. For those in ancient times, it had to remain a mystery; the technology was just too far advanced, and their language did not have the words to describe it in the kind of secular, technical terms that we could more easily relate to.

Nevertheless, the word used here – “*abomination*” - does get across the spiritual meaning well enough, its diabolical nature. And then, the other word, “*desolation*”, does give us some clue, in practical terms, of what the “*abomination*” is supposed to be capable of doing. Really, when we think about it, this was a clever way for the Lord to express, in an ancient language, the unique form of weaponry that exists today.

CLUE # 10 What about these Wordings in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11?

These verses contain the phrases, “shall place the abomination”, and “the abomination that maketh desolate set up.” Both sound as if an idol is being installed.

Well, here’s the scoop: These words, “*place*” and “*set up*”, were both translated from a very common Hebrew word meaning “to give”. It’s one of those catch-all words that can be used in different ways. This was especially common in ancient languages whose vocabularies were limited compared to modern English. As a result translators usually had to do some guesswork and judge a word’s meaning by its context. For example, in Daniel 11:31 it would be inappropriate to say, “arms. . . shall give the

abomination”. Thus, a translator would normally insert some other word instead. Since the setting for the abomination was the *“holy place”*, the translator must have assumed that the phrase *“abomination that maketh desolate”* was talking about an idol. And so to go along with that assumption he chose the words *“place”* and *“set up”*.

But now here we have to understand that a person’s cultural environment will naturally influence his outlook and choice of words. And way back in 1611 the KJV translators didn’t have access to the information we have now – the benefit of enough historical hindsight – to understand what this phrase really meant. In our modern world we have these engines of destruction, these desolating abominations, and we’ve even seen them enter into *“holy places”*. And so a modern translator could use a word like *“deliver”* or *“send”* instead. *“Arms... shall send the abomination that maketh desolate”*.

Modern translations have not done so, however – probably because of the influence and limitations set down by venerable scholars of the past. It has been too difficult to step *“outside the box”* of past thinking, to escape the boundaries set by former interpreters who had convinced themselves and everyone else that this had to be talking about an idol. But we need to think differently and re-translate some of these ancient words according to an understanding of modern developments and inventions. Our interpretation of certain passages needs to catch up with the realities of our present world, not be stuck in the world of the past so much.

Anyway, getting back to these tricky words, *“place”* and *“set up”*, here are a few helpful facts and figures: * In the original Hebrew the word *“nathan”* meaning *“give”* appears 1,973 times in the Old Testament (King James Version). Out of this number the word was translated as *“give”* 1,023 times, and the rest of the 950 times, the word *“nathan”* was assigned a myriad of 66 varying translations, including the ones in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 – *“place”* (used 4 times) and *“set up”* (used only once). So, all that to say, this word *“nathan”* was a pretty flexible one, and to get the right translation of it requires an accurate knowledge of what the passage is talking about, its proper context. (And way back in 1611 they didn’t have that.)

Some of the words, used in other passages to translate *“nathan”*, could easily describe the arrival of a war engine of destruction into the *“holy place”* - words such as *“send”*, *“deliver”*, *“bring forth”*, *“set forth”*, *“shoot”*, *“thrust”*. To summarize, we do not always have to make our theory conform to the translation; instead, in many cases like this one, we can adjust the translation a bit to suit the modern reality.

One last minor point: In Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 the abomination of desolation is pictured as *“standing in the holy place”*. We might think this carries the

idea that something is going to be installed there. But “standing” can just as easily convey the idea that an object moves to a certain spot, stands there for awhile, and then moves on.

* Information based on *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Section “Index-Lexicon to the Old Testament”).

CLUE # 11 Idol Worship in a Secular World?

“(The son of perdition) opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2Thess 2:4)

The Antichrist will declare war against all religion, especially if it has anything to do with faith in the true God. During the Modern Age we have seen, in preparation for this final conflict, the rise of certain philosophies that exalt man and his world as if that were the ultimate end of all things – what atheism, evolution and scientific materialism, humanism, and communism have been teaching for well over a century. These philosophies all deny the existence of a Higher Power. In other words, they have already been doing what the above Scripture says about the Antichrist – oppose and exalt themselves above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. A related Scripture in Daniel 11 says, *“And the king shall... magnify himself above every god... neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, ... nor regard any god.”* (Verses 36-37)

Throughout history the Devil has hidden himself behind the masks of certain philosophies and religious beliefs in his campaign to sidetrack mankind away from worshiping the true God. If the Devil can’t get people to worship himself – which most people in their right minds would never do – then he has to disguise himself. But in the Endtime all the old masks will be discarded in favor of the final, ultimate “mask”, that of the Antichrist. By posing as the savior of man’s world, the Antichrist will deceive mankind into a sort of secular worship of himself, and, most important to the Devil, this will tie in with some kind of denial of the true God.

An important first step to get people not to worship God, and to worship a man instead, is to persuade them that there is no God. Or if there is, then to persuade them that He is too distant from and unconcerned about humanity, or even that He is their enemy and mankind must get along without Him. Thus, it says of the Antichrist, *“He shall speak great words against the Most High... and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to*

blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”(Dan 7:25, 11:36, Rev 13:6) This war of words by the Antichrist will no doubt highlight the mistakes of mainstream religion. Because of the selfishness, belligerence, and hypocrisy that have infiltrated in recent years the ranks of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, this will deliver all the more ammunition to the cause of the Antichrist and his propaganda war *“against the most High”* and, of course, against those who are following Him, his *“war with the saints”*. (Dan 7:25, Rev 13:7)

Because of this steady stream of anti-Christ propaganda (that has been going on for centuries), agnostic and atheistic beliefs have become very common nowadays. The modern skeptical, scientific world barely tolerates what it considers an antiquated belief system of faith in a loving Creator. And that is bringing us closer to what the prince of Darkness is aiming for during the future Antichrist regime: zero tolerance of religion. No religious beliefs of any kind will be encouraged because that would allow a certain amount of freedom to worship the true God. Since he doesn't want any of that, the prince of Darkness will use his Antichrist to abolish *“religion”* altogether. He will promote the worship of man and man's world instead – with his man the Antichrist as the head of it. *“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers... nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”* (Dan 11:37)

And so 2Thessalonians 4:2 states the Antichrist will be *“shewing himself that he is God.”* This will be the Devil's roundabout way of getting the world to worship himself by using the worship-of-man philosophy and the Antichrist as his mask. If he can at least get people not to worship God in any form – as the communists used to do – and get them to give their allegiance to the Antichrist, the one who has boldly proclaimed his defiance against the true God, then they have strayed into the Devil's camp. If not outright worship of the Devil, it will be the next best thing as far as he's concerned. *“And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast.”* (Rev 13:4)

At some point during his rise to power, the Antichrist will declare all-out war against religion – especially if it has anything to do with faith in the true God. And what better way to launch such a war and challenge all peace-loving and religious people, than by sending in one of his abominable instruments of war into what is supposed to be an internationally recognized *“holy place”*?

In fact, that is the only way he can do it. The covenant has already guaranteed Jews the freedom to worship in their temple, so he can't very well deny the same freedom to Christians and others to practice their faiths. So breaking the covenant will be the crucial starting point for all-out war against the religions. Not unlikely, it will be the

Jews' own behavior in Israel that will prove to be their undoing. They will probably give the Antichrist enough provocation and the excuse he needs to abolish their religious services. And once this happens, it will trigger worldwide persecution against the people of other faiths as well, especially the ones whom he is really after, the Christians.

So this seems to be what it means in Daniel 11:31 – *“they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength”*. The abomination is not the replacement object of worship, an idol or anything like that. It's role is just to put a stop to “religion”. Here is the great sacrilege of modern times, the true defilement that will compel everyone in secular society to choose between any faith at all in a loving God, or faith in man only and in man's world – with the Antichrist at the head, of course.

But the Antichrist can't just get rid of religion without bringing in something to replace it. And for that role, the new object of worship will be himself and his image. It will be a sort of secular usurping of God's place in the hearts of mankind. (Daniel 11:36-37, 2Thes 2:4, Revelation 13:3,4,8,15)

But this *“image”* need not be located in the temple. Since the Antichrist will be sitting there, *“shewing himself that he is God”*, why have a manufactured image or idol of himself there at the same time? It would be too obvious that he's trying to get the world to worship him in a religious way. And the modern world would back off from that sort of thing very quickly.

Unlike the olden days, crafted images and idols are not needed anymore to visualize the demagogue, for nowadays, the Antichrist's *“image”* can be scattered all over the world via TV. And this will succeed, not only in filling the void of man's need to worship something, but also, in spreading that worship (or adulation) far and wide. It will be the ideal sort of image for the modern science-oriented world because there's no superstition involved. And that makes more sense, to understand that the world will worship (or adulate) a real person via his TV image.

Nowadays, a non-living object cannot serve as a reputable incarnation of a deity (or of a demagogue). The only kind of “incarnation” that will work in today's world are live images, such as the kind that are broadcast directly through TV transmission. These are the images that really do the job of generating worship in the secular world of modern times. (We could compare this to how Hitler succeeded in getting the German people to worship him by conveying his live presence through the media of radio and movie clips.)

We have considered how, if the *“abomination”* were an idol in the temple, there would be some difficulty in erecting something like this in a short time or in secret. But

even if it were a simple operation, it still could not serve as a true object of worship – because nobody would worship it. It would seem too “religious” in the world’s eyes for one thing – just replacing one religion with another religion. And secondly, without the force of superstition, a crafted object could not inspire much devotion in the hearts of the scientifically-oriented populace of modern times. It is enough then for the Antichrist just to sit in the temple, *“shewing himself that he is God”*.

Back in the old days though, a ruler could brazenly declare himself to be a god, and by the power of superstition the public were persuaded to worship him and his lifeless images. But nowadays, a more subtle approach is required: the Antichrist can go as far as *“showing himself that he is God”*. But to do more than this might, in the secular world’s eyes, smack too much of “religion” or “superstition” – some kind of throwback to an ancient time.

That doesn’t mean there won’t be a “religion”; it’ll just be a religion that doesn’t look like a religion. The people of the world will show their allegiance to the Antichrist by taking the *“mark of the beast”*. That will be the new initiation rite, and the image they worship will be his TV image. So the whole thing is disguised under a secular cloak and doesn’t look “religious” at all. This is comparable to the “religion” of atheist communism that was rampant in the world during the 20th century. That was a religion of unbelief in God – the worship of man and his world – and it had its demagogues (Marx, Lenin, Mao) who were “worshiped” (in secular fashion) back in those days. Likely, the *“worship of the beast”* religion that the Revelation Book talks about will be modeled along similar lines.

Now, to give his new religion of demagoguery and materialism its kick-start – or by this time it may be more a matter of giving it a boost – the Antichrist will tear up the *“holy covenant”* agreement he has made. He sends a violently destroying *“abomination”* into the *“holy place”*. This will succeed in *“polluting the sanctuary of strength”*, and it would be a deed that carries a lot of religious (or anti-religious) significance in a secular society. It will be the modern equivalent of installing a pagan idol. Such an event will be heralded as man’s great victory over religious superstition. The humanist, secular world will applaud this as marking the beginning of mankind’s entrance into a “brave new world”. God has finally been thrown out, the world will say, and man can now begin to build his own utopia, heaven on earth without God.

So, once the *“abomination”* has entered the *“holy place”*, it’s done its job. All former religions will be abolished; the Antichrist will become the world’s god (but worshiped in secular fashion). And the hoped-for “brave new world” without God will begin.

However, it will soon turn into a complete farce, in fact, a complete catastrophe. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt 24:21) Man and the Antichrist’s attempt to rule the world without God’s help is doomed to end in failure.

But thankfully, that will also bring on the end of our present age of history. Then it will be time for God to usher in the Millennium – a new and glorious Age of Peace and Heaven on Earth. Truly something to look forward to.

CLUE # 12 Any Connection between the “Image” and the “Abomination”?

It is tempting to think that the “image” mentioned in the Revelation Book and the “abomination” must be talking about the same thing. However, that is only an assumption. And it is easy to think that there should be a connection. After all, they both have something to do with religion. The “image” is presented in the Revelation Book as an object of worship. And the “abomination” is going to be found in a place of worship according to several Scriptures. So why shouldn’t they be the same thing? And if they are the same, then that means the abomination would have to be some kind of likeness of the Antichrist, an idol of some sort.

It is a bit like the similarity between man and apes, which has caused evolutionists to jump to the conclusion that there is some kind of link there. But then, under thorough scientific investigation of the genetics and so on, it becomes obvious that there is a wide, unbridgeable gulf between man and apes; and there is no possible way that one could have evolved from the other.

Likewise, in this question about the “image” and the “abomination”, there may be some reasons for thinking they should be the same thing, but a thorough investigation seems to reveal that, actually, they are two very different things. All they have in common is the fact that they are both inventions of modern times.

Summary

Reasons for Understanding the “Abomination of Desolation” as a Modern Instrument or Vehicle of War:

(1) From Daniel 9:27 it is evident that there is a military invasion of several “abominations that make desolate”. Therefore, it seems to follow that the single “abomination of desolation”, which appears in the holy place, is only one of

several used in the invasion. And it's hard to imagine how this could mean anything else but an invasion of modern weapons and vehicles of war, and that it's just a matter of one of them invading the holy place. This explanation has the advantage of accuracy and simplicity.

(2) In recent history we have witnessed similar events – in Waco, Texas, and Amritsar, India. These events were a good illustration – a bit of historical hindsight, as well as foreshadowing of the similar event to happen in the “*holy place*” in Jerusalem. They set a precedent for how to deal with religious squabbles, which increases the likelihood that this type of heavy-handed “solution” will be used again.

(3) Every reference to the abomination of desolation is set in the context of war.

(4) In the original Hebrew and Greek wordings, the term “*desolation*”, in these passages about the “*abomination*”, suggests that it has great destructive capability. And this naturally links the “*abomination of desolation*” to being some kind of instrument of war. Especially significant along this line are the three references in the New Testament – Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20. Understanding “*desolation*” in terms of violent destruction fits well into the context of the different passages where it is found and doesn't require any deviation from the original Hebrew-Greek wordings.

(5) When we strip away our own modern familiarity with these inventions of war and see them spiritually, or see them through the eyes of those from ancient times, people who knew nothing about our modern technology, then the term “*abomination of desolation*” seems a much more reasonable description of a modern instrument of war than we may have thought.

(6) The translation of certain words can be misleading, such as for the words “*place*” and “*set up*” in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, which make it sound like the passages are talking about an idol. However, in these cases, the Hebrew word concerned was not very specific and can easily be changed.

(7) The word “*abomination*” means anything that is abhorrent to God and is not limited to mean an idol, or things connected to idolatry.

(8) On the other hand, if we do want to interpret the “*abomination*” in religious terms, then it seems logical, judging by the context of the Daniel 11 passage, that it should be connected to the “*god of forces*” (a god of war & armaments), rather than to the Antichrist demagogue. And so, a weapon or vehicle of war would seem to be the most likely “*abomination*” it's speaking of here, rather than some kind of image or

likeness of the Antichrist. So, whichever way you look at it, in religious terms or non-religious, the best explanation in both cases is that the abomination is a weapon of war.

(9) If we believe that the Revelation 13 *“image”* is the TV image of the Antichrist, then there’s no need to think that another image or idol is needed in the form of the abomination of desolation in the *“holy place”*. If the Antichrist is there, that should be sufficient. He himself is the object of worship. In modern, secular culture, this adulation of a person through his live TV image is more acceptable than worship via any kind of manufactured image or idol, however realistic or technological it may be.

(10) War and military power are prime features of the Antichrist’s domain of influence. Since he is the one who places the *“abomination of desolation”* in the *“holy place”*, chances are it will be linked to the activities of his warmongering in some way. The False Prophet, on the other hand, rules in the domain of economic power, and spiritually, he deceives the world through the media and with the Antichrist’s *“image”*.

The *“abomination”* and *“image”* are separate inventions, each characteristic of one of the Beasts and his domain of power. So, it doesn’t point very directly to the idea that they are the same thing (as envisioned in the idea of it being some kind of great computer idol). The *“abomination”* should be an invention that merely helps the Antichrist carry out his war campaigns – a weapon or vehicle of war; and the *“image”* should be one that helps the False Prophet carry out his campaign of getting the world to worship the Antichrist through the media.

(11) The beginning of the Great Tribulation is a precise event starting at a precise time. Trying to install a robot idol or super-computer (or both) in the *“holy place”* would be a monumental task that could take quite some time. From a practical point of view, it would be simpler if it were just a war tank or some other war machine that barged its way in. A provocative incident like that would be the kind of spark that could easily set off the explosive era of the Great Tribulation.

(12) Everything is all ready to go. We don’t have to wait for some extraordinary new invention to come along. Thus, there’s no need to delay in our minds the future, thinking the Antichrist can’t come along yet because we have to wait for the *“abomination”* to get invented. As far as the technology goes, everything’s in place ready to roll.

Several *“clues”* have been offered in this study that point towards the idea of the *“abomination of desolation”* being some modern instrument or vehicle of war. Each

clue by itself may not be enough to prove that. But, by putting all the clues and pieces of the puzzle together, we seem to arrive safely enough to that very conclusion. These mysterious passages about the “*abomination*” are like a riddle from ancient times – a secret tucked away in the Scriptures for almost 2,500 years. If now we’re able to unravel this mystery, that’s a good sign we’re in the Endtime – because that’s when the Lord would want to reveal it. And that should be encouraging. We’re seeing now the answers to the disciples’ questions from long ago. We no longer have to wonder, as they did, about this peculiar “*sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world*”. Now we can see what it will be, and how it is looming on the horizon. Knowing we’re on the threshold of these events should also encourage us to prepare earnestly and brace ourselves for the tumultuous days ahead.

FOOTNOTES

Footnote One: Hebrew Conjugations

To appreciate the meaning of the phrase “*make desolate*” in Daniel 9:27 and 11:31, it helps to have a basic knowledge of how Hebrew verbs are conjugated. Not a very exciting subject, but for those who are interested, here is a helpful quote from the “Preparatory Note” to *Robert Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* :

*“Each conjugation has more or less a definite signification of its own. Thus Nos. 1, 3, 5 are active, Nos. 2, 4, 6 are passive, and No. 7 reflexive. * So that if QATAL [Hebrew word for “kill”] in*

the first conjugation is “he killed”,

the second is “he was killed”,

the third “he killed violently”,

the fourth “he was killed violently”,

the fifth “he caused to kill”,

the sixth “he was caused to kill”, and

the seventh “he killed himself”.

Though many exceptions are found, the general formula holds good very distinctly.”

* (The “conjugations” from 1 to 7 are: Kal, Niphal, Piel, Pual, Hiphil, Hophal, Hithpael.)

The “make desolate” phrase is “SHAMEM” in Hebrew and was written in the third conjugation, Piel, in Daniel 9:27 and 11:31. Hence the translation of this intensive form could have, or should have said “make desolate violently.” [\[RETURN\]](#)

Footnote 2: News Articles

Killer Robots and a Revolution in Warfare

Bernd Debusmann, Reuters, 22 Apr 2009

WASHINGTON, April 22 (Reuters)—They have no fear, they never tire, they are not upset when the soldier next to them gets blown to pieces. Their morale doesn’t suffer by having to do, again and again, the jobs known in the military as the Three Ds—dull, dirty and dangerous.

They are military robots and their rapidly increasing numbers and growing sophistication may herald the end of thousands of years of human monopoly on fighting war. “Science fiction is moving to the battlefield. The future is upon us,” as Brookings scholar Peter Singer put it to a conference of experts at the U.S. Army War College in Pennsylvania this month.

Singer just published *Wired For War—the Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, a book that traces the rise of the machines and predicts that in future wars they will not only play greater roles in executing missions but also in planning them.

Numbers reflect the explosive growth of robotic systems. The U.S. forces that stormed into Iraq in 2003 had no robots on the ground. There were none in Afghanistan either. Now those two wars are fought with the help of an estimated 12,000 ground-based robots and 7,000 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the technical term for drone, or robotic aircraft.

Ground-based robots in Iraq have saved hundreds of lives in Iraq, defusing improvised explosive devices, which account for more than 40 percent of U.S. casualties. The first armed robot was deployed in Iraq in 2007 and it is as lethal as its acronym is long: Special Weapons Observation Remote Reconnaissance Direct Action System (SWORDS).

Its mounted M249 machinegun can hit a target more than 3,000 feet away with pinpoint precision.

From the air, the best-known UAV, the Predator, has killed dozens of insurgent leaders—as well as scores of civilians whose death has prompted protests both from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Predators are flown by operators sitting in front of television monitors in cubicles at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, 8,000 miles from Afghanistan and Taliban sanctuaries on the Pakistani side of the border with Afghanistan. The cubicle pilots in Nevada run no physical risks whatever, a novelty for men engaged in war.

Reducing risk, and casualties, is at the heart of the drive for more and better robots. Ultimately, that means “fully autonomous engagement without human intervention,” according to an Army communication to robot designers. In other words, computer programs, not a remote human operator, would decide when to open fire. What worries some experts is that technology is running ahead of deliberations of ethical and legal questions.

How do you get a robot to tell an insurgent from an innocent? Can you program the Laws of War and the Rules of Engagement into a robot? Can you imbue a robot with his country’s culture? If something goes wrong, resulting in the death of civilians, who will be held responsible? The robot’s manufacturer? The designers? Software programmers? The commanding officer in whose unit the robot operates? Or the U.S. president who in some cases authorises attacks? (Barack Obama has given the green light to a string of Predator strikes into Pakistan).

While the United States has deployed more military robots—on land, in the air and at sea—than any other country, it is not alone in building them. More than 40 countries, including potential adversaries such as China, are working on robotics technology. Which leaves one to wonder how the ability to send large numbers of robots, and fewer soldiers, to war will affect political decisions on force versus diplomacy.

You need to be an optimist to think that political leaders will opt for negotiation over war once combat casualties come home not in flag-decked coffins but in packing crates destined for the robot repair shop.

Filling the Skies with Assassins

by Tom Engelhardt, April 08, 2009

Excerpts of long article

In 1984, Skynet, the supercomputer that rules a future Earth, sent a cyborg assassin, a “terminator,” back to our time. His job was to liquidate the woman who would give birth to John Connor, the leader of the underground human resistance of Skynet’s time. You with me so far? That, of course, was the plot of the first Terminator movie and for the multi-millions who saw it, the images of future machine war—of hunter-killer drones flying above a wasted landscape—are unforgettable.

Since then, as Hollywood’s special effects took off, there were two sequels during which the original terminator somehow morphed into a friendlier figure on screen, and even more miraculously, off-screen, into the humanoid governor of California. Now, the fourth film in the series, Terminator Salvation, is about to descend on us. It will hit our multiplexes this May.

Oh, sorry, I don’t mean hit hit. I mean, arrive in.

Meanwhile, hunter-killer drones haven’t waited for Hollywood. As you sit in that movie theater in May, actual unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), pilotless surveillance and assassination drones armed with Hellfire missiles, will be patrolling our expanding global battlefields, hunting down human beings. And in the Pentagon and the labs of defense contractors, UAV supporters are already talking about and working on next-generation machines. Post-2020, according to these dreamers, drones will be able to fly and fight, discern enemies and incinerate them without human decision-making. They’re even wondering about just how to program human ethics, maybe even American ethics, into them.

Okay, it may never happen, but it should still make you blink that out there in America are people eager to bring the fifth iteration of Terminator not to local multiplexes, but to the skies of our perfectly real world—and that the Pentagon is already funding them to do so.

Now, keep our present drones, those MQ-1 Predators and more advanced MQ-9 Reapers, in mind for a moment. Remember that, as you read, they’re cruising Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani skies looking for potential “targets,” and in Pakistan’s tribal borderlands, are employing what CENTCOM commander Gen. David Petraeus calls “the right of last resort” to take out “threats” (as well as tribespeople who just happen to be in the vicinity). And bear with me while I offer you a little potted history of the modern arms race.

Think of it as starting in the early years of the 20th century when Imperial Britain, industrial juggernaut and colonial upstart Germany, and Imperial Japan all began to plan and build new generations of massive battleships or dreadnoughts (followed by “super-dreadnoughts”) and so joined in a fierce naval arms race. That race took a leap onto land and into the skies in World War I when scientists and war planners began churning out techno-marvels of death and destruction meant to break the stalemate of trench warfare on the Western front.

Each year, starting in 1915, new or improved weaponry—poison gas, upgrades of the airplane, the tank and then the improved tank—appeared on or above the battlefield. Even as those marvels arrived, the next generation of weapons was already on the drawing boards. As a result, when World War I ended in 1918, the war machinery of 1919 and 1920 was already being mapped out and developed. The next war, that is, and the weapons that would go with it were already in the mind’s eye of war planners.

From the first years of the 20th century on, an obvious prerequisite for what would prove a never-ending arms race was two to four great powers in potential collision, each of which had the ability to mobilize scientists, engineers, universities, and manufacturing power on a massive scale. World War II was, in these terms, a bonanza for invention as well as destruction. It ended, of course, with the Manhattan Project, that ne plus ultra of industrial-sized invention for destruction, which produced the first atomic bomb, and so the Cold War nuclear arms race that followed.

In that 45-year-long brush with extinction, the United States and the Soviet Union each mobilized a military-industrial complex to build ever newer generations of ever more devastating nuclear weaponry and delivery systems for a MAD (mutually assured destruction) world. At the peak of that two-superpower arms race, the resulting arsenals had the mad capacity to destroy eight or 10 planets our size.

In 1991, after 73 years, the Soviet Union, that Evil Empire, simply evaporated, leaving but a single superpower without rivals astride planet Earth. And then came the unexpected thing: the arms race, which had been almost a century in the making, did not end. Instead, the unimaginable occurred and it simply morphed into a “race” of one with a finish line so distant—the bomber of 2018, Earth-spanning weapons systems, a vast anti-ballistic missile system, and weaponry for the heavens of perhaps 2050—as to imply eternity.

The Pentagon and the military-industrial complex surrounding it—including mega-arms manufacturers, advanced weapons labs, university science centers, and the official or semi-official think-tanks that churned out strategies for future military domination—

went right on. After a brief, post-Cold War blip of time in which “peace dividends” were discussed but not implemented, the “race” actually began to amp up again, and after Sept. 11, 2001, went into overdrive against “Islamofascism” (AKA the Global War on Terror, or the Long War).

In those years, our Evil Empire of the moment, except in the minds of a clutch of influential neocons, was a ragtag terrorist outfit made up of perhaps a few thousand adherents and scattered global wannabes, capable of mounting spectacular-looking but infrequent and surprisingly low-tech attacks on symbolic American (and other) targets. Against this enemy, the Pentagon budget became, for a while, an excuse for anything.

This brings us to our present unbalanced world of military might in which the U.S. accounts for nearly half of all global military spending and the total Pentagon budget is almost six times that of the next contender, China. Recently, the Chinese have announced relatively modest plans to build up their military and create a genuinely offshore navy. Similarly, the Russians have moved to downsize and refinance their tattered armed forces and the industrial complex that goes with them, while upgrading their weapons systems. This could potentially make the country more competitive when it comes to global arms dealing, a market more than half of which has been cornered by the U.S. They are also threatening to upgrade their “strategic nuclear forces,” even as Presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama have agreed to push forward a new round of negotiations for nuclear reductions.

Meanwhile, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has just announced cutbacks in some of the more outré and futuristic military R&D programs inherited from the Cold War era. The Navy’s staggering 11 aircraft-carrier battle groups will over time also be reduced by one. Minor as that may seem, it does signal an imperial downsizing, given that the Navy refers to each of those carriers, essentially floating military bases, as “four and a half acres of sovereign U.S. territory.”

Nonetheless, the Pentagon budget will grow modestly and the U.S. will remain in a futuristic arms race of one, a significant part of which involves reserving the skies as well as the heavens for American power.

Speaking of controlling those skies, let’s get back to UAVs. As futuristic weapons planning went, they started out pretty low-tech in the 1990s. Even today, the most commonplace of the two American armed drones, the Predator, costs only \$4.5 million a pop, while the most advanced model, that Reaper—both are produced by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems of San Diego—comes in at \$15 million. (Compare that to \$350 million for a single F-22 Raptor, which has proved essentially useless in America’s

most recent counterinsurgency wars.) It's lucky UAVs are cheap, since they are also prone to crashing. Think of them as snowmobiles with wings that have received ever more sophisticated optics and powerful weaponry.

They came to life as surveillance tools during the wars over the former Yugoslavia, were armed by February 2001, were hastily pressed into operation in Afghanistan after 9/11, and like many weapons systems, began to evolve generationally. As they did, they developed from surveillance eyes in the sky into something far more sinister and previously restricted to terra firma: assassins. One of the earliest armed acts of a CIA-piloted Predator, back in November 2002, was an assassination mission over Yemen in which a jeep, reputedly transporting six suspected al-Qaeda operatives, was incinerated.

Today, the most advanced UAV, the Reaper, housing up to four Hellfire missiles and two 500-pound bombs, packs the sort of punch once reserved for a jet fighter. Dispatched to the skies over the farthest reaches of the American empire, powered by a 1,000-horsepower turbo prop engine at its rear, the Reaper can fly at up to 21,000 feet for up to 22 hours (until fuel runs short), streaming back live footage from three cameras (or sending it to troops on the ground)—16,000 hours of video a month.

No need to worry about a pilot dozing off during those 22 hours. The human crews “piloting” the drones, often from thousands of miles away, just change shifts when tired. So the planes are left to endlessly cruise Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani skies relentlessly seeking out, like so many terminators, specific enemies whose identities can, under certain circumstances—or so the claims go—be determined even through the walls of houses. When a “target” is found and agreed upon—in Pakistan, the permission of Pakistani officials to fire is no longer considered necessary—and a missile or bomb is unleashed, the cameras are so powerful that “pilots” can watch the facial expressions of those being liquidated on their computer monitors “as the bomb hits.”

Approximately 5,500 UAVs, mostly unarmed—less than 250 of them are Predators and Reapers—now operate over Iraq and the Af-Pak (as in the Afghanistan-Pakistan) theater of operations. Part of the more-than-century-long development of war in the air, drones have become favorites of American military planners. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in particular has demanded increases in their production (and in the training of their “pilots”) and urged that they be rushed in quantity into America's battle zones even before being fully perfected.

And yet, keep in mind that the UAV still remains in its (frightening) infancy. Such machines are not, of course, advanced cyborgs. They are in some ways not even all that

advanced. Because someone now wants publicity for the drone-war program, reporters from the U.S. and elsewhere have recently been given “rare behind-the-scenes” looks at how it works. As a result, and also because the “covert war” in the skies over Pakistan makes Washington’s secret warriors proud enough to regularly leak news of its “successes,” we know something more about how our drone wars work.

We know, for instance, that at least part of the Air Force’s Afghan UAV program runs out of Kandahar Air Base in southern Afghanistan. It turns out that, pilotless as the planes may be, a pilot does have to be nearby to guide them into the air and handle landings. As soon as the drone is up, a two-man team, a pilot and a “sensor monitor,” backed by intelligence experts and meteorologists, takes over the controls either at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz., or at Creech Air Force Base northwest of Las Vegas, some 7,000-odd miles away.

According to Christopher Drew of the New York Times, who visited Davis-Monthan, where Air National Guard members handle the controls, the pilots sit unglamorously “at 1990s-style computer banks filled with screens, inside dimly lit trailers.” Depending on the needs of the moment, they can find themselves “over” either Afghanistan or Iraq, or even both on the same work shift. All of this is remarkably mundane—pilot complaints generally run to problems “transitioning” back to wife and children after a day at the joystick over battle zones—and at the same time, right out of Ali Baba’s One Thousand and One Nights.

In those dimly lit trailers, the UAV teams have taken on an almost godlike power. Their job is to survey a place thousands of miles distant (and completely alien to their lives and experiences), assess what they see, and spot “targets” to eliminate—even if on their somewhat antiquated computer systems it “takes up to 17 steps—including entering data into pull-down windows—to fire a missile” and incinerate those below. They only face danger, other than carpal tunnel syndrome, when they leave the job. A sign at Creech warns a pilot to “drive carefully”; “this, it says, is ‘the most dangerous part of your day.’” Those involved claim that the fear and thrill of battle do not completely escape them, but the descriptions we now have of their world sound uncomfortably like a cross between the far frontiers of sci-fi and a call center in India.

The most intense of our various drone wars, the one on the other side of the Afghan border in Pakistan, is also the most mysterious. We know that some or all of the drones engaged in it take off from Pakistani airfields; that this “covert war” (which regularly makes front-page news) is run by the CIA out of its headquarters in Langley, Va.; that its pilots are also located somewhere in the U.S.; and that at least some of them are hired private contractors.

William Saletan of Slate.com has described our drones as engaged in “a bloodless, all-seeing airborne hunting party.” Of course, what was once an elite activity performed in person has been transformed into a 24/7 industrial activity fit for human drones.

Our drone wars also represent a new chapter in the history of assassination. Once upon a time, to be an assassin for a government was a furtive, shameful thing. In those days, of course, an assassin, if successful, took down a single person, not the targeted individual and anyone in the vicinity (or simply, if targeting intelligence proves wrong, anyone in the vicinity). No more poison-dart-tipped umbrellas, as in past KGB operations, or toxic cigars as in CIA ones—not now that assassination has taken to the skies as an every day, all-year-round activity.

Today, we increasingly display our assassination wares with pride. To us, at least, it seems perfectly normal for assassination aerial operations to be a part of an open discussion in Washington and in the media. Consider this a new definition of “progress” in our world.

This brings us back to arms races. They may be things of the past, but don’t for a minute imagine that those hunter-killer skies won’t someday fill with the drones of other nations. After all, one of the truths of our time is that no weapons system, no matter where first created, can be kept for long as private property. Today, we talk not of arms races, but of “proliferation,” which is what you have once a global arms race of one takes hold.

In drone-world, the Chinese, the Russians, the Israelis, the Pakistanis, the Georgians, and the Iranians, among others, already have drones. In the Lebanon War of 2006, Hezbollah flew drones over Israel. In fact, if you have the skills, you can create your own drone, more or less in your living room. Undoubtedly, the future holds unnerving possibilities for small groups intent on assassination from the air.

Already the skies are growing more crowded. Three weeks ago, President Obama issued what Reuters termed “an unprecedented videotaped appeal to Iran ... offering a ‘new beginning’ of diplomatic engagement to turn the page on decades of U.S. policy toward America’s longtime foe.” It was in the form of a Persian New Year’s greeting. As the New York Times also reported, the U.S. military beat the president to the punch. They sent their own “greetings” to the Iranians a couple of days earlier.

After considering what Times reporters Rod Nordland and Alissa J. Rubin term “the delicacy of the incident at a time when the United States is seeking a thaw in its relations with Iran,” the U.S. military sent out Col. James Hutton to meet the press and

“confirm” that “allied aircraft” had shot down an “Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle” over Iraq on Feb. 25, more than three weeks earlier.

Between that day and mid-March, the relevant Iraqi military and civilian officials were, the Times tells us, not informed. The reason? That drone was intruding on our (borrowed) airspace, not theirs. You probably didn’t know it, but according to an Iraqi Defense Ministry spokesman, “protection of Iraqi airspace remains an American responsibility for the next three years.”

And naturally enough, we don’t want other countries’ drones in “our” airspace, though that’s hardly likely to stop them. The Iranians, for instance, have already announced the development of “a new generation of ‘spy drones’ that provide real-time surveillance over enemy terrain.”

Of course, when you openly control squads of assassination drones patrolling airspace over other countries, you’ve already made a mockery of whatever national sovereignty might once have meant. It’s a precedent that may someday even make us distinctly uncomfortable. But not right now.

If you doubt this, check out the stream of self-congratulatory comments being leaked by Washington officials about our drone assassins. These often lead off news pieces about America’s “covert war” over Pakistan (“An intense, six-month campaign of Predator strikes in Pakistan has taken such a toll on al-Qaeda that militants have begun turning violently on one another out of confusion and distrust, U.S. intelligence and counter-terrorism officials say”); but be sure to read to the end of such pieces. Somewhere in them, after the successes have been touted and toted up, you get the bad news: “In fact, the stepped-up strikes have coincided with a deterioration in the security situation in Pakistan.”

In Pakistan, a war of machine assassins is visibly provoking terror (and terrorism), as well as anger and hatred among people who are by no means fundamentalists. It is part of a larger destabilization of the country.

To those who know their air power history, that shouldn’t be so surprising. Air power has had a remarkably stellar record when it comes to causing death and destruction, but a remarkably poor one when it comes to breaking the will of nations, peoples, or even modest-sized organizations. Our drone wars are destructive, but they are unlikely to achieve Washington’s goals.

If you want to read the single most chilling line yet uttered about drone warfare American-style, it comes at the end of Christopher Drew’s piece. He quotes Brookings

Institution analyst Peter Singer saying of our Predators and Reapers: “[T]hese systems today are very much Model T Fords. These things will only get more advanced.”

In other words, our drone wars are being fought with the airborne equivalent of cars with cranks, but the “race” to the horizon is already underway. By next year, some Reapers will have a far more sophisticated sensor system with 12 cameras capable of filming a two-and-a-half-mile-round area from 12 different angles. That program has been dubbed “Gorgon Stare,” but it doesn’t compare to the future 92-camera Argus program whose initial development is being funded by the Pentagon’s blue-skies outfit, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Soon enough, a single pilot may be capable of handling not one but perhaps three drones, and drone armaments will undoubtedly grow progressively more powerful and “precise.” In the meantime, BAE Systems already has a drone four years into development, the Taranis, that should someday be “completely autonomous”; that is, it theoretically will do without human pilots. Initial trials of a prototype are scheduled for 2010.

By 2020, so claim UAV enthusiasts, drones could be engaging in aerial battle and choosing their victims themselves. As Robert S. Boyd of McClatchy reported recently, “The Defense Department is financing studies of autonomous, or self-governing, armed robots that could find and destroy targets on their own. Onboard computer programs, not flesh-and-blood people, would decide whether to fire their weapons.”

It’s a particular sadness of our world that, in Washington, only the military can dream about the future in this way, and then fund the “arms race” of 2018 or 2035. Rest assured that no one with a governmental red cent is researching the health care system of 2018 or 2035, or the public education system of those years.

In the meantime, the skies of our world are filling with round-the-clock assassins. They will only evolve and proliferate. Of course, when we check ourselves out in the movies, we like to identify with John Connor, the human resister, the good guy of this planet, against the evil machines. Elsewhere, however, as we fight our drone wars ever more openly, as we field mechanical techno-terminators with all-seeing eyes and loose our missiles from thousands of miles away (“Hasta la vista, Baby!”), we undoubtedly look like something other than a nation of John Connors to those living under the Predators. It may not matter if the joysticks and consoles on those advanced machines are somewhat antiquated; to others, we are now the terminators of the planet, implacable machine assassins.

True, we can't send our drones into the past to wipe out the young Ayman al-Zawahiri in Cairo or the teenage Osama bin Laden speeding down some Saudi road in his gray Mercedes sedan. True, the UAV enthusiasts, who are already imagining all-drone wars run by "ethical" machines, may never see anything like their fantasies come to pass. Still, the fact that without the help of a single advanced cyborg we are already in the process of creating a Terminator planet should give us pause for thought.

Israel's Military Avatar: Robots on the Battlefield

By Ora Coren, Haaretz, December 30, 2009

When armies clash in the not-too-distant future, remotely-operated robotic weapons will fight the enemy on land, in the air and at sea, without a human soldier anywhere on the battlefield.

The first robotic systems are already being used by the Israel Defense Forces and other armies across the world, and only budgetary constraints seem to be keeping science fiction from becoming reality.

In places where there is no choice but to send in troops, constantly improving broadband technologies, developed from the civilian communications industry, will serve as an essential part of the infrastructure for all modern military forces.

A helicopter that spots suspicious movement on the ground will, for instance, be able to relay a command to a drone aircraft to photograph the site and transmit the picture in real time to troops on the ground and to the command posts in the rear.

Soldiers will be able to mark their target by its coordinates and with lasers, allowing missiles launched from dozens of kilometers away to be guided by global positioning systems, ensuring accuracy and destruction of the target.

The systems will be coded to prevent enemy interception of the operation. Spy satellites that today weigh several tons will be shrunk down to anything between one and 100 kilograms or less, with engines the size of postage stamps. Infantry rifles will be computerized and fire "smart" rounds telling them when and where to explode. New rockets will also be able to think by themselves to enhance their accuracy.

Israel's military industries, already world leaders in arms technology, are hard at work developing weaponry for the 2020s. Development of new weapons for the IDF is

generally carried out with assistance and in coordination with the Defense Ministry's research and development arm.

The Israeli military's demands are the cornerstone of the local weapons industry, and they can be summed up in two words: miniaturization and accuracy. The former will enable the troops in the field to carry their weapons or communications equipment more easily, and the latter will help avoid civilian casualties.

Military censorship prevents disclosure of the Israeli arms industries' most exciting and futuristic devices, but a good picture of what can be expected can be compiled using what is already in the public domain.

Pin-point accuracy. "The Protector, which we are already marketing, is a vessel that sails all over in all kinds of places without a living soul on board," says Roni Postman, vice president for R&D at Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. "It can get close up to a terrorists' boat, address it through a loudspeaker, and open fire at it. In the past, a thing like this required a boat with seven or eight crewmen who were in constant danger. This type of remote control is one of the clearest characteristics of the future battlefield. It will be a battlefield devoid of troops, with vehicles doing what soldiers have done until now."

Unmanned boats, land vehicles and aircraft will be either controlled remotely or will function autonomously, pre-programmed to carry out a mission from start to finish, such as reaching an enemy bunker, transmitting a photograph back to a command post, launching a projectile at it, and returning, or blowing itself up to destroy the target and the people inside it.

Another characteristic of weapons now undergoing development is pin-point accuracy for urban warfare, especially in a world that has become less accepting of "collateral damage."

Micro-satellites and nanotechnology. The future battlefield will also include outer space. GPS-based technology fed by satellites are already becoming a fundamental element in future military systems. Moreover, the ability to equip satellites with IAI-produced radar that sees through clouds will enable every field commander to obtain, in daylight and at night and in any weather conditions, a picture of his target.

Moreover, space-based weapons, or satellites, will also serve as a component in projects for the destruction of long-range missiles from distant enemies facing Israel, such as Iran. And when satellites become a critical means in military operations, defending them becomes just as critical, making space wars a realistic development.

Israel is one of seven members of the club of countries that have proved their independent ability to put satellites into orbit, alongside the United States, Russia, India, China, Japan and Western Europe—which has a unified space program based on French capabilities. Iran has recently also demonstrated a preliminary capability to launch satellites.

“Within this group, technology-wise, we are second only to the United States, and in certain niches we are even number one, especially in mini-observation satellites,” says Isaac Ben-Israel, chairman of the Israel Space Agency, referring to an observation satellite developed by IAI and Rafael, which also serves espionage purposes and weighs 300 kilograms. The American counterpart weighs three or four tons.

The next generation of satellites, now being developed, will weigh ten kilograms (micro-satellites) or one kilogram (nano-satellites) and some speak of even lighter ones. They will orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometers above the surface of the earth. Ben-Israel says one way of sending up a 100-kilogram orbiter without losing any of its operational capability is to break it into 10 units each weighing 10 kilograms.

But technology must be developed that will be able to enable each part to migrate to the correct place after launch, after which they will continue to orbit together as a cluster.

Small wonders from a small country. Even without any miniaturization, Israel possesses unique technologies that can upgrade future satellites. Elbit Systems is working on an advanced optical system that will be able to transmit multicolored pictures and that will be able to function at night. In addition, IAI radar will improve the resolution of the pictures. Today, satellite pictures can be found on the open market with a resolution of 70 centimeters.

Israel already has technologies for satellite photography at higher resolutions, and they are expected to yet improve.

The soldier of the future. What will the next war look like? Will it be waged on land, tank against tank, like previous wars? Will it be waged against terrorist organizations? Or against the threat of long, medium and short-range missiles?

“From the point of view of Elbit Systems, life is complex and a response must be found for Iran, for terrorists in Gaza and also for Syria,” says Haim Rousso, vice president for technological and engineering excellence at Elbit. “Intelligence will always be necessary, in both peace and wartime, so we at Elbit are constantly working on developments in the sphere, from satellites to tactical systems on the ground.”

He says that the systems are evolving in the direction of giving real time information, with analysis and application capability, making it possible to respond immediately.

To cope with the challenges emanating from Iran, Syria and Lebanon, Elbit is working on perfecting its multispectral camera, Rousso says.

“In the security world what they look for is camouflaged targets; they want to be able to distinguish between what is real and what only looks like a target, to find things that are buried under the ground,” he says. “So we do not ask what the eye can see, but rather what is the color or the combination of colors that is being sought. The great challenge is to build a camera with a reasonable size and price tag that can be carried on an uncomplicated platform and which we can tell precisely which colors to find—first color A, then color B. Another challenge is to build a bank of targets, to understand what we are interested in, and what is the spectral signature of the target. This involves research, collection and construction of databases, because colors change in different weather conditions, for instance. This camera will be able to see things that no other instrument today can see. We expect this to be a key element of the future battlefield.”

“We want to give every soldier the capability to identify targets and other objects, and to communicate with the whole world, and when such large quantities of equipment are involved, the price becomes a significant element,” says Rousso. “Everyone in the world—the United States, Europe, Australia—is busy working on the soldier of the future. In the war on terror, a low-intensity conflict, the individual soldier is given a great deal of weight. He needs the means of talking to the system, to get a picture and to transmit data. Technologically speaking, each soldier is a sensor and a platform.”

Rousso says nanotechnology is on its way. “It was not developed for the military but the anticipated evolution of the next decade could cause a revolution. That’s why we are studying the technology and its military applications. Also of interest to us are the mini-robots that can get into tunnels or buildings and move around mapping the interior and transmitting pictures. It already exists, but in the long term it will be honed and use of it will increase.

In addition to their UAVs, both Elbit and Rafael have developed sea-faring drones, and Elbit and IAI have developed unmanned land vehicles that carry out pre-programmed missions, as distinct from remotely-controlled robots. The goal is to give the vehicles a degree of artificial intelligence that will enable them to react like human drivers in cases where they encounter unanticipated obstacles on the way, such as large puddles of water. These vehicles will also possess an attack capability.

The threat from afar. IAI is currently aiming to give soldiers on the ground capabilities that are today available only to the air force, says the company's vice president for R&D, Dan Peretz, adding that IAI has moved over from producing traditional weaponry to advanced comprehensive systems.

GPS is being used for the first time, through miniaturization, for the next generation of smart rockets, making them more accurate. "Accuracy is no longer a function of range. The same degree of accuracy can be had at 250 kilometers as at 10 kilometers," says Peretz. "And when I have an accurate system, I don't need a large warhead anymore, because I hit the target right on the nail. There are already some accurate missiles, but they are expensive. The introduction of GPS into warfare has already begun in the United States in the sphere known as Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems. It enables forces under fire to return fire without calling in air support, as the Americans did in Iraq."

Lev Tahor ("pure heart") is a smart mortar shell. It carries a GPS computer and can do what until now only missiles could do, but it is 10 times smaller. "We are the first in the world who have taken a laser detector system to rockets, the first in the world to fire mortar shells that are guided by GPS," says Peretz. "We are developing the ability to hit targets with the first shell, without hitting the wrong target."

Peretz says IAI is collaborating with the American company Raytheon to sell the systems to the U.S. military, with the first demonstrations due in 2010.

"In five years' time, this technology will be taken for granted," he says.

Another development that miniaturization has made possible is Refaim ("ghost") which involves fitting a tank's fire-control system onto a rifle, enabling it to gauge the range of a target and to order the projectile that it fires to explode where it will do the most damage.

For example, a grenade could be told to explode at a point above enemy personnel hiding behind a wall.

The Israel Navy is not being left out of planning for the future, and its vessels are to be equipped with a new anti-aircraft missile system that IAI is developing in collaboration with India, integrated with advanced radar and fire control systems. Submarines will also have a key role in future wars, and they will be equipped with technology enabling them to stay underwater for longer periods and with new attack capabilities.

The Age of the Killer Robot is no longer a Sci-fi Fantasy

Johann Hari, The Independent, 22 January 2010

In the dark, in the silence, in a blink, the age of the autonomous killer robot has arrived. It is happening. They are deployed. And—at their current rate of acceleration—they will become the dominant method of war for rich countries in the 21st century. These facts sound, at first, preposterous. The idea of machines that are designed to whirr out into the world and make their own decisions to kill is an old sci-fi fantasy: picture a mechanical Arnold Schwarzenegger blasting a truck and muttering: “Hasta la vista, baby.” But we live in a world of such whooshing technological transformation that the concept has leaped in just five years from the cinema screen to the battlefield—with barely anyone back home noticing.

When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, they had no robots as part of their force. By the end of 2005, they had 2,400. Today, they have 12,000, carrying out 33,000 missions a year. A report by the US Joint Forces Command says autonomous robots will be the norm on the battlefield within 20 years.

The Nato forces now depend on a range of killer robots, largely designed by the British Ministry of Defence labs privatised by Tony Blair in 2001. Every time you hear about a “drone attack” against Afghanistan or Pakistan, that’s an unmanned robot dropping bombs on human beings. Push a button and it flies away, kills, and comes home. Its robot-cousin on the battlefields below is called SWORDS: a human-sized robot that can see 360 degrees around it and fire its machine-guns at any target it “chooses”. Fox News proudly calls it “the GI of the 21st century.” And billions are being spent on the next generation of warbots, which will leave these models looking like the bulky box on which you used to play Pong.

At the moment, most are controlled by a soldier—often 7,500 miles away—with a control panel. But insurgents are always inventing new ways to block the signal from the control centre, which causes the robot to shut down and “die”. So the military is building “autonomy” into the robots: if they lose contact, they start to make their own decisions, in line with a pre-determined code.

This is “one of the most fundamental changes in the history of human warfare,” according to PW Singer, a former analyst for the Pentagon and the CIA, in his must-read book, *Wired For War: The Robotics Revolution and Defence in the Twenty-First Century*. Humans have been developing weapons that enabled us to kill at ever-greater distances

and in ever-greater numbers for millennia, from the longbow to the cannon to the machine-gun to the nuclear bomb. But these robots mark a different stage.

The earlier technologies made it possible for humans to decide to kill in more “sophisticated” ways—but once you programme and unleash an autonomous robot, the war isn’t fought by you any more: it’s fought by the machine. The subject of warfare shifts.

The military claim this is a safer model of combat. Gordon Johnson of the Pentagon’s Joint Forces Command says of the warbots: “They’re not afraid. They don’t forget their orders. They don’t care if the guy next to them has been shot. Will they do a better job than humans? Yes.” Why take a risk with your soldier’s life, if he can stay in Arlington and kill in Kandahar? Think of it as War 4.0.

But the evidence punctures this techno-optimism. We know the programming of robots will regularly go wrong—because all technological programming regularly goes wrong. Look at the place where robots are used most frequently today: factories. Some 4 per cent of US factories have “major robotics accidents” every year—a man having molten aluminium poured over him, or a woman picked up and placed on a conveyor belt to be smashed into the shape of a car. The former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was nearly killed a few years ago after a robot attacked him on a tour of a factory. And remember: these are robots that aren’t designed to kill.

Think about how maddening it is to deal with a robot on the telephone when you want to pay your phone bill. Now imagine that robot had a machine-gun pointed at your chest.

Robots find it almost impossible to distinguish an apple from a tomato: how will they distinguish a combatant from a civilian? You can’t appeal to a robot for mercy; you can’t activate its empathy. And afterwards, who do you punish? Marc Garlasco, of Human Rights Watch, says: “War crimes need a violation and an intent. A machine has no capacity to want to kill civilians.... If they are incapable of intent, are they incapable of war crimes?”

Robots do make war much easier—for the aggressor. You are taking much less physical risk with your people, even as you kill more of theirs. One US report recently claimed they will turn war into “an essentially frictionless engineering exercise”. As Larry Korb, Ronald Reagan’s assistant secretary of defence, put it: “It will make people think, ‘Gee, warfare is easy.’”

If virtually no American forces had died in Vietnam, would the war have stopped when it did—or would the systematic slaughter of the Vietnamese people have continued for many more years? If “we” weren’t losing anyone in Afghanistan or Iraq, would the call for an end to the killing be as loud? I’d like to think we are motivated primarily by compassion for civilians on the other side, but I doubt it. Take “us” safely out of the picture and we will be more willing to kill “them”.

There is some evidence that warbots will also make us less inhibited in our killing. When another human being is standing in front of you, when you can stare into their eyes, it’s hard to kill them. When they are half the world away and little more than an avatar, it’s easy. A young air force lieutenant who fought through a warbot told Singer: “It’s like a video game [with] the ability to kill. It’s like ... freaking cool.”

When the US First Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq was asked in 2006 what kind of robotic support it needed, they said they had an “urgent operational need” for a laser mounted on to an unmanned drone that could cause “instantaneous burst-combustion of insurgent clothing, a rapid death through violent trauma, and more probably a morbid combination of both”. The request said it should be like “long-range blow torches or precision flame-throwers”. They wanted to do with robots things they would find almost unthinkable face-to-face.

While “we” will lose fewer people at first by fighting with warbots, this way of fighting may well catalyse greater attacks on us in the long run. US army staff sergeant Scott Smith boasts warbots create “an almost helpless feeling.... It’s total shock and awe.” But while terror makes some people shut up, it makes many more furious and determined to strike back.

Imagine if the beaches at Dover and the skies over Westminster were filled with robots controlled from Torah Borah, or Beijing, and could shoot us at any time. Some would scuttle away—and many would be determined to kill “their” people in revenge. The Lebanese editor Rami Khouri says that when Lebanon was bombarded by largely unmanned Israeli drones in 2006, it only “enhanced the spirit of defiance” and made more people back Hezbollah.

Is this a rational way to harness our genius for science and spend tens of billions of pounds? The scientists who were essential to developing the nuclear bomb—including Albert Einstein, Robert Oppenheimer, and Andrei Sakharov—turned on their own creations in horror and begged for them to be outlawed. Some distinguished robotics scientists, like Illah Nourbakhsh, are getting in early, and saying the development of autonomous military robots should be outlawed now.

There are some technologies that are so abhorrent to human beings that we forbid them outright. We have banned war-lasers that permanently blind people along with poison gas. The conveyor belt dragging us ever closer to a world of robot wars can be stopped—if we choose to.

All this money and all this effort can be directed towards saving life, not ever-madder ways of taking it. But we have to decide to do it. We have to make the choice to look the warbot in the eye and say, firmly and forever, “Hasta la vista, baby.” [\[RETURN\]](#)

5. WHEN IS THE COMING OF CHRIST AND THE END OF THE WORLD? – FIND OUT FROM THE ANCIENT PROPHET DANIEL!

THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the *Second Coming* is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

– William Butler Yeats, 1919

The mysterious poem above was not written by an ancient prophet but by someone in more recent times, a man who definitely had some prophetic insight into what direction modern man's future was heading. In particular, the poem illustrates in its vivid imagery how the coming of Christ (the Second Coming) will be preceded by the coming of the one known usually as the Antichrist who in the poem represents *Spiritus Mundi* (the spirit of the world). Long ago the prophet Daniel also spoke about the Second Coming of Christ, and in the particular passage that we shall study, the message he received drew the same kind of parallel with the coming of the Antichrist. It also gave some very specific guidelines about the timing of those future events.

It is natural for us in this earthly realm to be curious about such things: when will come the end of the world, or when will Christ return? Jesus' own disciples also were curious about such questions and couldn't restrain themselves from asking Him about it: *"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"* (Matthew 24:3) And recently, there has been much conjecture along these lines in the hype surrounding the idea of 2012 being the date for the end of the world.

So, does anyone really know when will come the *"end of the age"*? Well, the answer to that one is easy... no one does! Jesus Himself said it: *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."* (Matthew 24:36) Of course, some may ask, will there actually be an *"end of the age"* at all? Well, that is a fair question, and will be answered to some extent in this post (and in other posts on this site), but the main focus here will be on the question of when, not if, it will happen. Suffice it to say for now, Jesus, when asked by His disciples about the *"end of the age"*, didn't say, "Oh no, don't be silly; there's no such thing as an *'end of the age'*." Rather, he gave them various signs and clues to watch out for so they (or future generations) would know when the *"end of the age"* was about to come.

Although this question about the exact date for the *"end of the age"* was a total mystery to the early disciples then (and to a lesser extent for us today), that doesn't mean that it is going to forever remain a mystery. For when the time is right, those who are living in those days – and who also understand what the Sacred Book has to say on the subject – they will know the exact date for the *"end of the age"* and for the Second Coming of Christ. So where does this information come from? In the Book of Daniel there exists an ancient, intriguing prophecy outlining certain time spans and signposts to watch out for as the *"end of the age"* draws near. There are other indicators in other parts of the Sacred Book, but in the Book of Daniel we find very specific information on the time spans involved. For those who will be living in those future troublous days that the passage in Daniel refers to, it will be obvious to them how much time is left. For them it will be needed information, useful and practical, to guide them in making decisions, or just to have the comfort of knowing how long the tribulations of those days are going to last. But for us right now, it is mostly a matter of curiosity; it is not something we need to know, and probably it is better that this information is hidden from us right now. *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever..."* (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Unfortunately, many have "jumped the gun", becoming too definite in their predictions and fooling themselves into setting some premature date for the coming of Christ, and later, with some embarrassment, have had to make an awkward climb-down from their mistaken position. In fact, almost every generation since Jesus left this earth has seen different groups become convinced that His return would happen in their lifetime. Even the early Christians, not long after Christ's Ascension, had begun to think the same. (2Thes 2:1-2) This sort of "wishful thinking" seems to be a common pitfall, one that is easy to stumble into – perhaps because it is a normal human desire to seek for a quick end to the many troubles and sorrows that beset us in this earthly life. Because of the long history of miscalculations and misjudgments on this matter, any effort at trying to fix a date for the coming of Christ may,

with good reason, be met with no small amount of skepticism. This study on Daniel chapter 9 will therefore not try to draw any hasty conclusions or predictions on this matter. The aim will be merely to outline what certain ancient Scriptures said – and they are quite specific – what to look out for, the signposts and time spans that those who are living in those very “End of the Age” days will need to know.

[Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the New King James version of the Bible]

DANIEL CHAPTER 9

— DATING THE FIRST AND SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

DANIEL 9:1

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahaseurus” – 539 B.C. The specific dates found in this and other passages in the Bible are evidence of the fact that they are authentic – the original written documents, copied faithfully and accurately as they were passed on from one generation to another.

DANIEL 9:2

in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel was studying “*the books*” – the scrolls – in particular Jeremiah 25:11-12, a prophecy about the length of Jerusalem’s desolation and Captivity of the Jewish people in Babylon. That Captivity had started with the siege of Jerusalem in the year 606-605 B.C., which was also the time of Daniel’s capture when he was hauled off to Babylon and ended up living in king Nebuchadnezzar’s palace. (Daniel 1:1-6) Then seventy years later, just as Jeremiah had predicted, Babylon fell, at which time the Persian conqueror Cyrus made a proclamation allowing the Jews to return to their land.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation ... saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: ... the LORD God of heaven... has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem

which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-3)

At some point after this proclamation made in 538 B.C., Jewish people started migrating from Babylon to Jerusalem, and this marked the end of Jerusalem’s 70-year period of “desolations”. But prior to this marvelous release from Captivity, Daniel, after reading “*the word of the Lord*” from Jeremiah, was moved to pray one of the most heartfelt prayers found in the Bible, confessing and asking the Lord to forgive both his own and his people’s iniquities in the following verses 3-19. At the time Babylon was still the ruling power, and Daniel had fallen out of favor with the current king. So there did not seem to be any glimmer of hope on the horizon that the Jews might ever return to their homeland. Daniel was, we might say, checking in with the Lord to find out what was going on and to show before Him their repentance. Perhaps there was the expectation that this would help to expedite the fulfillment of the promise which he had just been studying from the Book of Jeremiah. And sure enough, within a very short period of time, Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians; a new king favorable to the Jews and to Daniel ascended the throne, and the Jewish people were given permission to return to Jerusalem and Judea.[table id=6 /]

Although it is not recorded, it is very possible that Daniel read certain prophecies to Cyrus, those prophecies that called him by name some 150 years before the Persian king was born. (Isaiah 44:28-45:1) This could very well be what convinced Cyrus to show favor to the Jews and permit them to return to Palestine.

And so it was that the opening of this chapter Daniel 9, with this 70-year time prophecy from Jeremiah, was a natural springboard to a new time prophecy, also involving the number 70, but dwelling on more distant future events. This new time prediction, on a much wider scale, focuses on the “return from captivity” of all of God’s people (not just the Jews) from the “foreign” lands of “*this present evil world*” into their Promised Land, the Kingdom of God on Earth – mankind’s return to the Garden of Eden, his original home. (Galatians 1:4)

DANIEL 9:3-11

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

Obedience was required, not only to God's law ("*Your precepts and... judgments*"), but also to God's "*servants the prophets*" through whom came the "*voice of the LORD our God*".

The "*curse*" mentioned here in verse 11 refers to the warnings of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 concerning what would befall the Israelites if they turned their backs on God and failed to keep His precepts and statutes.

Daniel 9:12-16

And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

The people's failure to follow closely stood out in sharp contrast to the "*mighty hand*" and the great "*name*" of the God whom they claimed to be serving. Not only that, their disobedience had become "*a reproach to all those around us*". Perhaps this was the main area of concern as far as God was concerned. For Him the priority was for His people to be a light to the nations around them.

Daniel 9:17-19

Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.

O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Daniel prays for the restoration of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. These were the physical things, which he and the Jewish people of his day felt were absolutely necessary to have in order to continue the true worship of God. Centuries later, however, Jesus shifted the focus away from this kind of earthly outlook: "*ye will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*" (John 4:21,23) But in Daniel's time that realization had not come, and as a result the soon-coming reply to Daniel's prayer contains some reference to the city of Jerusalem and the temple.

DANIEL 9:20-23

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

The angel Gabriel appears, the angel of the Lord's passion, the same one who, a few centuries later, appeared to Zacharias the father of John the Baptist and to Mary the mother of Jesus. (Luke 1:19, 26) As a matter of interest, the angel Gabriel hasn't stopped trying to influence mankind. In a recent prophetic message he said,

“I am the keeper of the reservoir, the Word of God.” (published by [The Family International](#), March/1997)

That seems to be Gabriel’s responsibility – to see to it that the Word of God gets “downloaded”, we might say, into the earthly realm. Much of the Book of Daniel, in fact, is simply the angel Gabriel himself speaking directly to the prophet Daniel.

For Daniel, it must have been quite an awesome experience to see Gabriel “*fly swiftly*” and then to start talking with him. Gabriel probably appeared human-like enough to Daniel; otherwise, the experience might have been too overwhelming. Yet Daniel knew that he was talking to the angel Gabriel, the same one who had visited him 12 years earlier in 551 B.C. and revealed to him the meaning of the ram/he-goat vision. (See Daniel 8:16.) No doubt, this previous encounter with Gabriel made it easier to interact with him this second time. It seems that the angels, on those rare occasions when they interact with us human beings, try to make the experience easier by becoming more human-like in appearance. (Read an interesting example of how Daniel was comforted along these lines in chapter 10, verses 10-12, 15-19.)

Regarding the hoped-for return from Captivity, that event was only about a year away, and the answer Daniel received to his desperate prayer touched on that to some extent. But the message Gabriel gave him also stretched far into the future, covering the time periods that would pass before the dawn of the Millennium, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. His message also contains some amazing, exact predictions about Jesus’ first coming and then the final seven years of world history before His Second Coming.

DANIEL 9:24

“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

“*Seventy weeks are determined*” – The Hebrew word (*shabua*) used here for “week” means “seven”. We could compare this to how we use the word “dozen” to mean 12. It can be 12 of anything – eggs, years, sheep, whatever. Similarly, the word “decade” can actually mean ten of anything, although it is usually used to refer to a time span of ten years. The word “week” is supposed to mean “seven” – but because we associate “week” to mean seven days, it can be confusing. A better translation might have said “seventy sevens” – meaning seventy sevens of years, that is, 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$).

Unfortunately, the King James translators didn’t use some other word here, and it sounds as if the prophecy is talking about seven-day weeks, which would not make any sense. The

time span would come out to only a little over a year, and none of the events mentioned in the prophecy could have happened in such a short time.

Genesis 29:27 gives an example of this peculiar usage of the word “week”: “*Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years.*” (This verse is talking about the deal Laban made with Jacob by which Laban would give him his daughter Rachel’s hand in marriage.)

Continuing with his discourse, the angel Gabriel goes on to explain the glorious outcome that will be ushered into the world of mankind at the completion of this “70 weeks” time span:

1) “*Finish the transgression*” – It was the “*transgression*” of the Jews, their departure from God’s ways that led to the loss of God’s blessing of protection and the consequent invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, followed by their captivity in Babylon. Although this was probably the starting point, Gabriel’s message does not have the same narrow focus of Daniel who, quite naturally, was thinking only of the fate of his Jewish brethren; he was concerned in his prayer about the sins of His own people which had brought on them the “curse” of the Babylonian Captivity. But the angel has a far wider viewpoint in mind, and his words – not just here, but in the rest of the prophecy – go far beyond the local situation that Daniel was embroiled in; they encompass “transgression” in general, the transgression of all mankind that began all the way back in the Garden of Eden – and the eventual liberation of mankind from their “captivity” in that transgression. This universal application becomes all the more evident as the message continues. For the 70 weeks will also...

2) “*Make an end of sins*” – Jesus once said, “*whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.*” He said this to some who said, “*We... have never been in bondage to anyone.*” (John 8:33-34) So, what the angel Gabriel is trying to do here is steer Daniel’s attention away from the minor matter of the Jews’ physical bondage – minor in God’s way of looking at things – to the far more serious issue of spiritual bondage. In essence, the prophecy here becomes like a springboard, catapulting us from the physical captivity in Babylon that the Jews were longing to be freed from to the spiritual captivity in sin out of which mankind so desperately needs deliverance.

3) “*Make reconciliation for iniquity*” – Or to pardon or make atonement for wrongdoing. This is probably the most important step in the process of finishing and making an end of wrongdoing. If it were only a matter of judgment and justice and accountability without any mercy or forgiveness, there would be lacking that most vital component: the inspiration and desire in the heart of mankind to want to change and live righteously.

So there are three words here: “*transgression, sins, iniquity*”, which cover the various levels of “wrongdoing” that are to be forgiven and, in the Age to come, not allowed to function or thrive as they are nowadays. Does that mean a perpetual “wet blanket” is going to descend on the world? No, hardly. God has created us to enjoy life, and the Age to come will be full of pleasures, excitements, fulfillment, freedom, and thrills that we can barely imagine

right now. It will be a world where the rule of Love will reign supreme. And that really is the antidote for wrongdoing. After all, what are the sins, transgressions, or iniquities spoken of here but the various attitudes, words, and deeds that violate the rule of Love? A lack of love for God and lack of concern for others is the fundamental cause of the hurt that we bring upon our fellow man.

The first three phrases – *“finish the transgression... make an end of sins... make reconciliation for iniquity”* – seem to dwell on the negative side, the business of corralling and getting rid of the world’s corruption and wickedness. This process got started when Jesus first came to introduce the Law of Love, then made the ultimate sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. This could be understood as *“reconciliation for iniquity”*, or atonement for iniquity. By His sacrifice He has offered forgiveness, once and for all, for sin. But that hasn’t stopped the world from engaging in wrongdoing; obviously, there is plenty of evil and wickedness still going on. To truly *“finish the transgression, and make an end of sins”* will require the forceful intervention of Christ. His return will bring great change in how the world is governed. Right now, it is dominated by ruthless and unprincipled rulers, and there is much war, bloodshed, injustice, poverty, and pollution in the earth as a result. But that great event of the Second Coming will see the forces of spiritual Darkness cast into prison and the rule of Christ established on earth, along with the principles of love, truth, and justice. Then, *“the meek shall inherit the earth.”* (Psalm 37:11, Mat 5:12) Then we truly will see *“everlasting righteousness”*.

“When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9) *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”* (Isaiah 11:9)

The return of Christ will also *“seal up vision and prophecy”*. To *“seal up”* usually means to keep something secret or hidden. But here the meaning is slightly different. *“Vision and prophecy”* will be sealed because they will be finished – just as one would close a book when one is finished reading it. What the prophets, including Daniel especially, saw in *“vision”* or heard in *“prophecy”* about the *“day of the Lord”* was unsealed – mysteries that were open to be studied and examined. But at the close of the *“seventy weeks”*, *“vision and prophecy”* would finally find their fulfillments. With the mysteries thus solved, it will be *“case closed”*, and it will be time then for *“vision and prophecy”* to be sealed. They can, of course, be *“opened”* for the sake of our curiosity or investigation, but as far as the fulfillment is concerned, they will have been finished (or *“sealed”*).

And then *“to anoint the Most Holy”*: Is this talking about Christ the Messiah? Yes, it would certainly seem so. *“Messiah the Prince”* is mentioned twice in the next verses 25-26. He is the key figure, and the prophecy obviously was given with the intent of predicting the time of His first coming. And the Second Coming? When Christ returns, He will take on His full anointing as *“the Most Holy”* - a great, powerful, and supernatural Being who will conquer the earth and re-claim it for the Kingdom of God.

Regarding this anointing of the “*Most Holy*”, the process actually began during Christ’s first coming amongst the Israeli people. “Christ” is the Greek word for “Messiah” in Hebrew, and “Messiah” means “anointed one”. Jesus received this anointing in part during His first coming into the earth. He Himself said once, “*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me because He has anointed Me...*” (Luke 4:18) In the Old Testament, an anointing ceremony was done for persons when they were to take on the role of becoming king over the nation. At Christ’s second coming, the world “*will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*”. (Matt 24:30) When Christ adopts fully His role as King over planet Earth at this time, then certainly this prophecy about the “*Most Holy*” being anointed will be fulfilled completely. It marks the big turning point, the end of Satan’s rule in the Earth and the ushering in of a whole new era of God’s Kingdom. Up to this time everything has gone mostly the Devil’s way; “*the power of the holy people has been completely shattered,*” according to Daniel 12:7. But then suddenly, “*the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven*”, and that marks the beginning of the end for the Devil and his kingdom on earth. (Mat 24:30) And it also marks the end of the “captivity” of God’s people in the world system, and for that matter, the end of all mankind’s captivity in the bondage of sin. And of course, it marks the end of the 70-weeks time span declared by the angel Gabriel as the length of time that will pass before this great final moment in mankind’s history arrives.

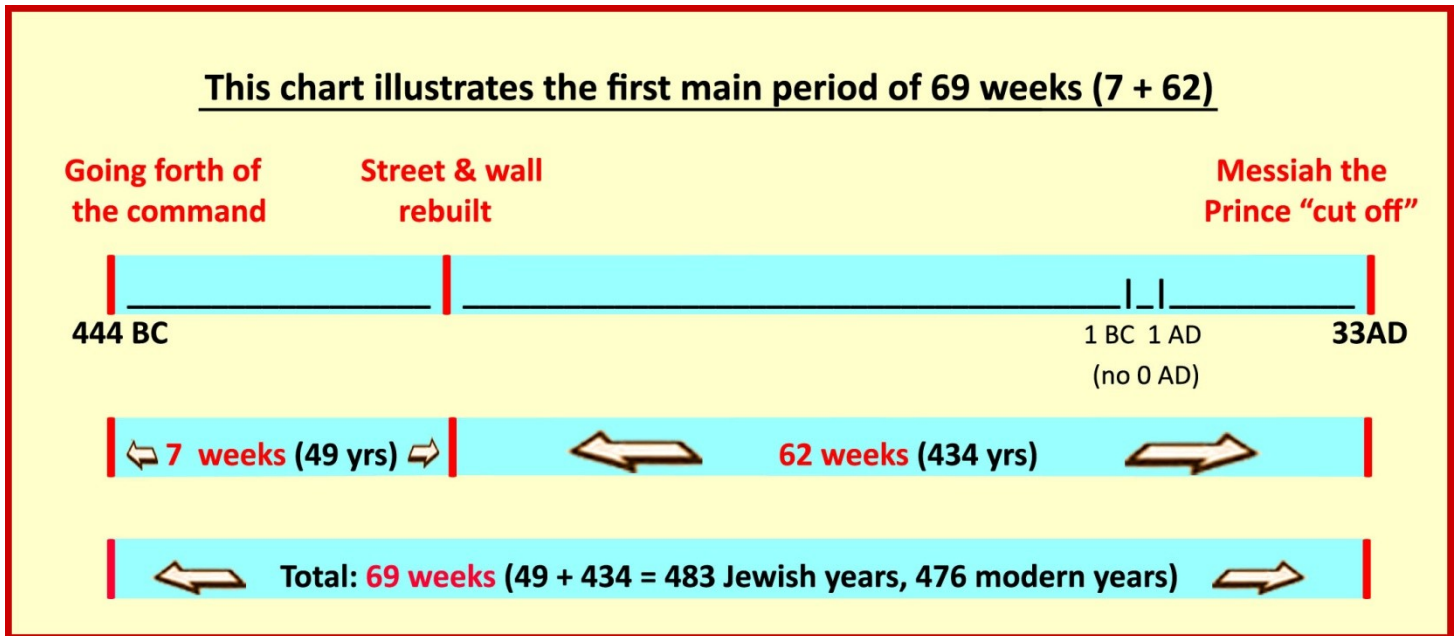
DANIEL 9:25

“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

“*The going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” – For Daniel this was welcome news, just what he wanted to hear. And it was not long afterwards that the next Persian king Cyrus made the initial proclamation, giving the Jewish people permission to return to Jerusalem and re-build their temple. However, the angel Gabriel here was referring to something different – the re-building of the city of Jerusalem and its wall. That edict was not given until almost 100 years later during the reign of Artaxerxes, a future Persian king. It came exactly “*in the month of Nisan (March or April), in the twentieth year of king Artaxerxes*” who ruled 464-423 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1) Interestingly, this is the same month when the Jewish feast of Passover occurs, and hence it was also the same month of the Crucifixion a few centuries later. The 20th year of Artaxerxes’ reign would put it in the year 444 B.C.

“*Until Messiah the Prince*” – Gabriel is about to reveal to Daniel the most precious bit of information imaginable: the actual timing for the coming of the Messiah, whom the Jewish people had known was to come and whose arrival they had been longing to see for many generations.

“There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” – The “seven weeks” was the 49 years it took to rebuild Jerusalem: “the street shall be built again, and the wall.” And from then on it was “sixty-two weeks”, or 434 years. That, plus the first 49 years, make a total of 483 years from the “going forth of the command” until the coming of “Messiah the Prince” – an amazingly accurate prediction of the time that was to elapse between these two historical events (as we shall see further on).



“The street shall be built again, and the wall” – Again, more welcome news for Daniel. As far as the overall prophecy is concerned, these details weren’t such an important aspect. But it was important to Daniel, so the angel Gabriel makes sure to make mention of it. The re-building of Jerusalem, and especially the wall, was a big step as far as the fortunes of the Jewish people were concerned at that time. For without proper defence (a wall), there would be little hope that very many Jews would want to emigrate to an unprotected city. And Jerusalem, despite having a re-built temple 100 years after Cyrus’ initial proclamation, still remained in the broken-down state that Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion had left it in some 170 years before. The Persians may have preferred to keep the city unprotected and thus easier to keep under subjection. But the result was that Jerusalem’s future prominence, even survival, was coming into question. And this was a major issue that was begging for a solution in the days of Nehemiah, a Jewish leader of that time. (Read the full story of Jerusalem’s restoration in the Book of Nehemiah.)

“In ancient times the ‘gates’ of a city were not just large swinging doors. They were more than this. They were also alcoved rooms attached to the entryway in the walls of the city. These were places for travelers to ‘check in’ with city authorities as they prepared to enter the city. Like our town halls today the gates of the city were the place of governmental power, the place in which resided the city elders. The city gates housed the offices of the magistrates who were the city’s rulers and the guardians of the city’s sovereignty. As well as being the portal of entry into the city they were also the place where the city elders sat to make judgment in matters of law. Like today’s city hall it was here at the city gates where the

laws protecting the integrity of the city were enacted and the place where commerce was regulated. The gates were the nerve center of a city and the seat of its civic authority. So when Nehemiah went to the king he was asking for more than just architectural repairs. He was asking for permission to restore all the governmental workings of a city-state.”

(from “Nehemiah and the 70 Weeks of Daniel” by Gavin McKinley)

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE, BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL. 19

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THE Book of Nehemiah, we have already noticed, is in some versions termed the Second Book of Ezra or Esdras, from an opinion which anciently obtained, and was adopted by Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom and other eminent fathers of the Church, that Ezra was the author of this book. In the modern Hebrew Bibles it has the name of Nehemiah prefixed to it, which is also retained in our English Bibles. The author of this book was not the Nehemiah who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Zerubbabel. That Nehemiah, whose name this book bears, and who was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, was the author of it, there cannot be any reasonable doubt, the whole of it being written in his name, and, what is very unusual when compared with the preceding sacred historians, being written in the first person. The insertion of the greater part of the register in chap. xii. 1-25 (which is supposed to militate against this generally-received opinion) may be accounted for by supposing it either to have been added by some subsequent author, or perhaps by the authority of the great synagogue, for it seems to be unconnected with the narrative of Nehemiah, and, if genuine, must ascribe to him a degree of longevity which appears scarcely creditable. According to some writers, Nehemiah was of the tribe of Levi, while others are of opinion that he was of the royal house of Judah.

This book may be divided into four parts, namely: I. The departure of Nehemiah from Shushan, with a royal commission to build the walls Jerusalem, and his first arrival there (ch. i., ii. 1-11). II. An account of the building of the walls, notwithstanding the obstacles interposed by Sanballat (ch. ii. 12-20; iii-vii. 4). III. The first reformation accomplished by Nehemiah (ch. vi. 5; xii. 47). IV. The second reformation accomplished by Nehemiah on his second return to Jerusalem, and his correction of the abuses which had crept in during his absence (ch. xiii). The administration of this pious and truly patriotic governor lasted about thirty six years, to the year of the world 3374.

The interesting account of what actually took place when “*the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” was made may be found in the passage of Nehemiah 2:1-8: The event took place in the palace of the Persian emperor and relates the story of how Nehemiah, a prominent Jewish leader who had risen to a position of influence, made his request to the king: It so happened that on a certain day Nehemiah was distressing over the fact that the re-population of Jerusalem had made so little progress, and the king couldn’t help but notice his unease. When the king questioned why he was “*sad in his presence*”, Nehemiah became “*dreadfully afraid*”. (For if one was not obviously happy in the presence of the king, then this could be taken as a sign of dissatisfaction with the king’s rule – a matter of serious concern and apt to have serious consequences to Nehemiah.) Of course, his “*sad face*” was not any fault of the king; but then to reveal the true reason for his “*sorrow of heart*” was also a delicate and dangerous matter. To request the re-building of Jerusalem was about the same as demanding a degree of political autonomy from the Persian empire, not a light matter at all.

However, Artaxerxes, the son of Ahasuerus, was the stepson of his Jewish mother queen Esther. In the days of his father’s rule, she had intervened courageously to protect the Jewish people from persecution, the record of which may be found in the Book of Esther. And very likely her lingering influence among her royal descendants was continuing to bring favor to the Jewish people. Furthermore, Nehemiah, as a cupbearer, was a much trusted official who daily risked his life for the king; it was his job to taste and make sure the king’s wine had not been poisoned. For these various reasons Artaxerxes responded graciously to Nehemiah’s request and granted him permission to rebuild Jerusalem and its wall and even provided the needed materials to do so.

“*Even in troublesome times*” – During the re-building of Jerusalem, the Jews faced many difficulties from local chieftains who fought a war of attrition, trying in various ways to hinder and subvert the rebuilding of the city. At one point Nehemiah refused an invitation to get embroiled in so-called peace talks, telling his enemies, “*I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?*” (Nehemiah 6:3)

Prediction about the Date of Christ’s First Coming

“*Going forth of the command... until Messiah the Prince... shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*”

These words contain one of the more interesting and amazing time predictions in the Bible, which we will now look into in more detail since it is a sort of foundation for the next time prediction about the Second Coming. We have already looked at the phrase, “*the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*”, the starting point of the prediction that took place in the year 444 B.C. Then comes the next phrase “*until Messiah the Prince*” – This need not be seen as a single event but could refer to any point of time between Jesus’ proclamation at the start of His ministry in Luke 4:18 of Himself as the “Anointed One” to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, three and a half years later, when the throngs of

Jerusalemites proclaimed Him as the Messiah. (Matthew 21:8-9) Since this latter event happened a week before the Crucifixion in A.D. 33 (the moment when He was “cut off”), it is usually considered the best ending date for the 69 weeks.

Regarding the date of A.D. 33 for the Crucifixion, this would require some explanation: As far as is known, the date of the Crucifixion was never recorded; however, we can get a fairly good idea of when it was by looking at another recorded event of secular history that is mentioned in Luke 3:1-2. “*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar... the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias.*” This date – the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry – then is like a marker coming some reasonable time before Jesus began His public ministry (or we could say His Messiahship). The actual start of Tiberias’ reign is where the question mark comes up. Because he was a co-regent with his father-in-law Augustus Caesar for two years, there is some confusion as to whether his reign began in A.D. 11 or A.D. 14 when Augustus Caesar died. But 14 A.D. seems the more likely time as that was the “official” start of his reign. (For more information see [Appendix 1](#), “A Brief History of Tiberias”) Anyway, “*the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar*” would mean that John started his ministry in A.D. 29. Depending on which theory about the beginning of Tiberias’ reign is used, Jesus’ Crucifixion would have taken place in either A.D. 30 or A.D. 32/33. In our calculations we shall assume the date of A.D. 33. If John the Baptist started his preaching in A.D. 29, then Jesus would have started His work a short time later. Jesus’ public ministry is known to have lasted 3½ years. The date of A.D. 32 for the Crucifixion doesn’t seem to allow enough time between the start of John’s ministry and the start of Jesus’ ministry which came after, whereas the date of A.D. 33 seems to allow a reasonable amount of time. (There are various theories regarding the date of the Crucifixion. For some information on why the 33 A.D. date has been selected for this study, see [Appendix 2](#), “Dating the Crucifixion”, excerpt of article from www.bethlehemstar.net)

Now, let’s do the math, keeping in mind the fact that the years mentioned in the Bible are Jewish years (or lunar years), which are only 360 days long; also, in reckoning years from B.C. to A.D., one year must be omitted; from 1 B.C. to A.D. 1 was not two years, but one year only. So, one year before A.D. 1 would be 1 B.C. Thus, from the “*going forth of the command... until Messiah the Prince*” could be expressed like this: $444 + 33 - 1 = 476$ solar years (but not Jewish lunar years).

The important result of these calculations and the thing to remember is this: the time span that we can gather from the actual chronicles of secular history (measured in terms of 365¼-day solar years*) matches accurately with the angel Gabriel’s prediction of “70 weeks” (measured in terms of 360-day Jewish years). In simple terms, 483 solar years = 476 Jewish years. (See math table below.) How remarkable! An accurate prediction of the passage of time that would elapse between the date of Artaxerxes’ proclamation and the date of Jesus’ Messiahship! This truly attests to the marvelous foresight and unseen hand of the Almighty working behind the scenes on the stage of world history. (*In our calendar system every fourth year, or leap year, one day is added, meaning that the years are actually 365¼ days in length.)

Jewish (Lunar) Years

(360 days each)

69 “weeks”

x 7 years in a “week”

483 Jewish years

x 360 days in one year

173,880 days (= 483 years)

Modern (Solar) Years

(365 ¼ days each)

- based on known historical dates -

444 years (444 - 0 BC in solar years)

+ 33 years (0-33 AD in solar years)

- 1 (non-existent year of 0 A.D.)

476 solar years

x 365¼ days in one year

173,859 days (divided by 360 = 483 Jewish years, rounded from 482.94166...)

Even the number of days in 483 Jewish years is almost the same as the number of days in 476 solar years – only 21 days’ difference. Who knows? There are certain other factors not taken into account, such as the exact day of the month Nisan when the commandment went forth, which is not known with any great certainty, and certain small discrepancies in the Julian calendar regarding leap years and some other inaccuracies. Some scholars claim to have taken all these factors into account and come up, through a painstaking study of Biblical and secular history, with the exact same number of 173,880 days (69 Jewish years) for the historical time span between “*the going forth of the commandment*” and Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Well, it wouldn’t be surprising. God is quite capable of engineering his timetables to pinpoint accuracy if He wants to.

However, the prophecy about the 69 weeks doesn’t seem to demand such total accuracy. It merely says that once the time span of 69 weeks has been reached, then “*Messiah the Prince*” will have come: This doesn’t have to land us right at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (although that would be the ideal time), but it could land us at any time during Jesus’ public ministry. Then some time after the end of that 69 weeks He was to be killed. The next verse 26 states, “*And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.*” If by chance then the 444 B.C. date for the command to restore Jerusalem is incorrect (and many believe the date is one year earlier in 445 B.C.), then that would fit also; the 70 weeks would finish at some time during Jesus’ public ministry.

In many older teachings on this subject, the date of the “*going forth of the command*” (the beginning of the “*seventy weeks*”) was thought to have occurred in 454 B.C., nine or ten years earlier than 444 or 445 B.C. This former way of reckoning went along with the chronology worked out by Irish Bishop James Ussher in 1650. His calculations actually work out pretty well, but only if the lengthier solar year of 365¼ days and a date for the Crucifixion of 30 A.D. are used. (This date was based on the belief mentioned earlier that the reign of Tiberius Caesar began in 11 A.D.) However, since historians do have a better knowledge now of the true dates, it is better to go by their updated information. And as we

have seen, using the shorter Jewish year of 360 days makes the calculation of this time span between the “*going forth of the command*” (in 444/5 B.C. rather than 454 B.C.) to “*Messiah the Prince*” very precise. As for why it is preferable not to employ the 365¼-day year, there are specific examples in the Scriptures to show that the 360-day year (of 30-day months) was the standard way of measuring time spans:

1) The duration of what is known as the Great Tribulation (a period of time that comes at the very End, right before the Return of Christ) spans 1,260 days according to two Scriptures (Revelation 11:3, 12:6,). The same period of time is also said to span 42 months according to two other Scriptures (Revelation 11:2, 13:5). Mathematically, 1,260 days works out to 42 months of 30 days each. And lastly, this time span is also said to span 3½ years. (Daniel 7:25, 12:7, Revelation 12:14) If the 360-day Jewish year is used, then it all works out very nicely: Three and a half years works out to exactly 1,260 days, or exactly 42 months (of 30 days each).

2) During the Great Flood of Noah’s time, Noah recorded the dates from the time that the Flood began until the Ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat: from the 17th day of the second month of the year until the 17th day of the 7th month is a period of exactly 5 months and was recorded as a time span of 150 days. (Genesis 7:11,24, and 8:3-4) That means that the months were 30 days long and the years would have been 360 days.

To be consistent then with how time and years were measured in other parts of the Bible, it would seem better to conclude that the “*seventy weeks*” should also be measured in 360-day years. And it could be, as some scholars claim, using 360-day years works out perfectly, giving a time span accurate to the exact day, “*from the going forth of the command*” to Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

“All nations, before the just length of the solar year was known, reckoned months by the course of the moon, and years by the return of winter and summer, spring and autumn; and in making calendars for their festivals, they reckoned thirty days to a lunar month, and twelve lunar months to a year, taking the nearest round numbers, whence came the division of the ecliptic [path of the sun's annual rotation] into 360 degrees” (quote from Sir Isaac Newton, 1642-1727, found in *The Coming Prince*, 1894, by Robert Anderson, page 68).

It’s easy to get lost in all the details of the years, days, calendars, etc. and lose sight of the overall picture. In trying to figure out some of these historical dates, there are about five calendar systems that have to be coordinated: the Roman calendar starting from the founding of Rome around 750 B.C., the Julian calendar (which corrected the Roman calendar by introducing the leap year), the Jewish calendar dating from the Creation, the Persian calendar, and the one we use now called the Gregorian calendar, which is based on the Julian calendar. Each of these has its own peculiar means of measuring the progress of time, and it is a daunting task to try to properly line up all the dates and facts and figures. Well, we don’t want to get bogged down in too much scheming and calculating about these dates. So, to keep it simple, we need only remember that the main point here was the accurate prediction of when Jesus, during His lifetime on Earth, would reveal Himself as the Messiah, which

time came to an end at the Crucifixion. God's foreknowledge of events is truly amazing. And, of course, if God can know so far ahead of time those future events, then the rest of the time prophecy about the last seven years of world history (the final 70th "week") must be accurate as well.

A point to keep in mind: the first part of the prophecy (covering the era of 7 weeks and 62 weeks) was geared more for the people of those ancient times prior to Jesus' first coming. This was information they needed to know. In fact, there is some indication that the people, including perhaps the "wise men from the East" (Matthew 2:1), were expecting the Messiah because of this prophecy: "Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and eager to know whether or not John was He. This was the question of the hour and was being discussed everywhere." (Luke 3:15 – The Living Bible) Because of their familiarity with their own calendar system and the Persian calendar and dates of those kings' reigns, the understanding of the prophecy's timing presented less difficulty for people back then. For us however, it is much more difficult to wend our way through the labyrinth of dates and calendars and uncertainties of events that transpired 2,000 and more years ago. Of course, this first part of the 70-weeks prophecy is a great inspiration to our faith, knowing that God's Word did predict Jesus' first coming so accurately (even if it's difficult to pinpoint the exact dates). But it is this second part of the prophecy that really pertains to us. This is the information in the prophecy that we in our day need to understand fully. And this is also the point at which people nowadays are most curious... When is the "end of the age"? When will we see the Second Coming of Christ?

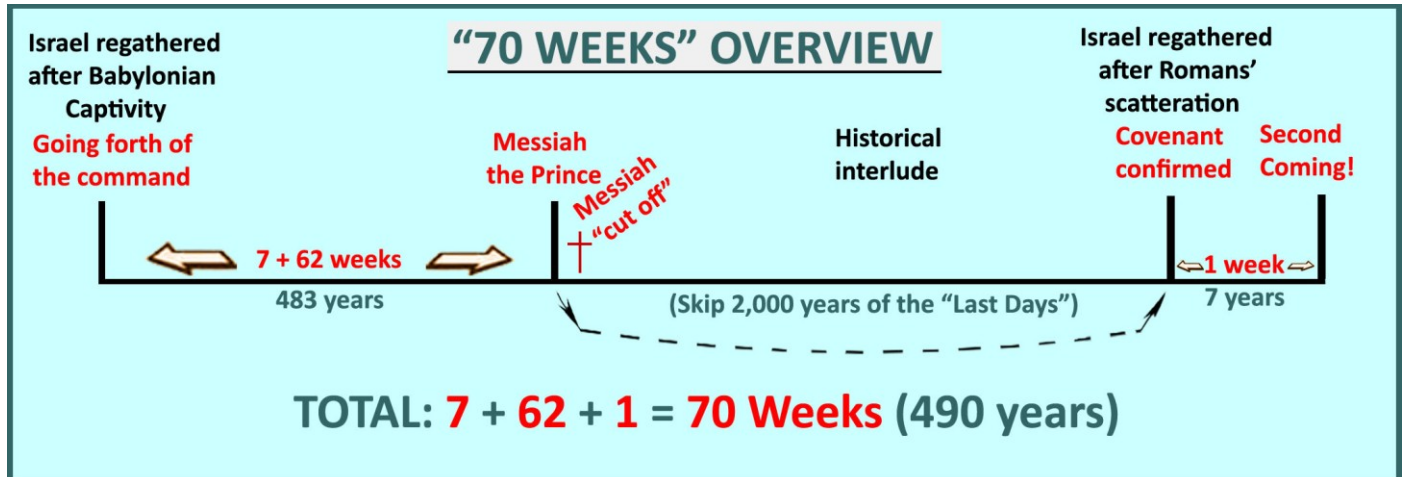
As we get closer to the End, God is getting His people ready in various ways. One of those preparations is just to have a better understanding of what His ancient words in the Bible have to say about the near future. During those desperate days of confusion and perplexity, there will be a great spiritual famine, a desperate desire to find out what is going on, to know what God has to say about the future of the world that everyone will see crumbling around them.

DANIEL 9:26

**“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.**

“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.” The previous verse 25 mentioned the appearance of Messiah the Prince. This marked the end of the first period of 69 weeks (“seven weeks and sixty-two weeks”); and now in this verse 26 comes the beginning of a long interlude, or break, in the 70 weeks' time span. The first main event in this long interlude was Jesus' execution, followed by the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple (followed by a couple thousand more years of history); then finally, the 70 weeks

resumes once more (in the next verse 27) with the start of its 70th week, the soon-coming last seven years of our present age of history. But that does sound strange, and one may wonder why this interruption? How are we to understand this “70 weeks” time prediction as a two-stage era with such a lengthy interval between its two stages? As we continue our study, this perplexing issue should resolve itself.



Although the prophecy doesn’t say so, we know from the many other Scriptures on the subject that it is by Christ’s coming that “*an end of sins... everlasting righteousness*” and all such wonderful changes to come will be introduced into the world. But it would almost seem that an abortive attempt along these lines has already happened, but it came to an abrupt end at the Crucifixion of Christ. Perhaps “abortive” is the wrong word; Christ’s crucifixion was the expected, predicted outcome, and it was not abortive as such. At any rate verse 26 tells us that “*Messiah shall be cut off*”, referring to the Crucifixion and His own people’s rejection of Him. This betrayal of their own Messiah led to the Jews falling into the hands of a rival “*prince*”, one who brought great devastation to Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (as this verse 26 will go on to explain).

“*Messiah shall be cut off*” – The Jewish people tended to think that once the 70 years of Jeremiah’s prophecy was finished that their Messiah would come in great supernatural power to deliver them from the Babylonians. Well, the Lord did use a powerful and benevolent king, Cyrus, to throw off the Babylonian yoke, but he wasn’t the Messiah. So this phrase in Daniel’s “70 weeks” prophecy about Messiah being “*cut off*” helps to set the record straight in the wake of Jeremiah’s prophecy, namely, that their Messiah’s first coming would not result in some kind of great political deliverance. There was really much more to it than that, and the “70 weeks” prophecy elaborates on what the process of deliverance really meant: not just deliverance from captivity in a strange land, but also deliverance from sin and this present evil world. And to bring about this “*everlasting righteousness*” (and all the other things mentioned in verse 24) would require the death of the Messiah as a sacrificial offering for sin: “*Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.*” And the deliverance and beneficiaries of Messiah’s sacrificial offering were to extend far beyond the boundaries of the Jewish nation.

And here is where a little fine-tuning of this passage might be helpful. In several Bible versions (NIV, NASU, RSV, NAS, ASV), the following translation is used: “*Messiah will be cut off and have nothing*” – which is closer to the original Hebrew wording apparently. Two other versions give the following translations: “the people that shall deny him shall not be His.” (Douay-Rheims) “*The Anointed One will be killed, His kingdom still unrealized.*” (The Living Bible) The general idea here seems to be this: the crucifixion when Messiah was “*cut off*” not only brought an end to Jesus’ earthly life, but it also meant the great Messianic “kingdom” – at least from Daniel and the Jewish people’s point of view – would be “*cut off*”, or unrealized. That is, Jesus was “*cut off*” from being a Messiah to the Jewish nation. Instead He became the Messiah for the whole world – and, of course, also to those Jews who would honor and receive Him.

In other words, Gabriel was telling Daniel that the “*70 weeks*” had a much wider application than what he was probably thinking. In order for their Jewish Messiah to become the Savior of the whole world, there would have to be a sort of “cutting-off” process to distance Him from the Jewish kingdom so that His spiritual Kingdom could extend worldwide. This shift towards including non-Jews under Messiah’s dominion signified a huge extension of His range of influence that, of course, would require extra time to implement and prepare for. There followed then a sort of “intermission” in the 70 weeks – a time when the Israeli nation would be shunted out of the mainstream of history. During this rather lengthy postponement, known as the Gospel Age, the “*gospel of the kingdom*” was to be “*preached in all the world*”, as Jesus had predicted in Matthew 24:14. And once this had happened, “*then the end will come,*” He said. Once the Good News had reached every nation, only then would the time be right to make the transition from a worldwide spiritual kingdom to a literal earthly Kingdom of Heaven on earth – the fulfillment of what Daniel’s “*70 weeks*” prophecy had foretold so long ago. So once the time becomes ripe for Jesus’ Second Coming, only then will Israel be brought back into the mainstream of history; and only then can the “*70 weeks*” prophecy start up again and be completed in the events of its last 70th “*week*” – events which had to center once more on the city of Jerusalem, just as they had many centuries before.

The first coming of Christ brought on the creation of the New Testament, a document which, among many other things, re-wrote the guidelines given in the Old Testament. In particular, it introduced a whole new set of principles about what it meant to be a citizen in God’s Kingdom. (See especially the “Sermon on the Mount”, Matthew 5-7.) Such citizenship would be based, not on flesh-and-blood ancestry, but on spiritual values – righteousness, concern for others, and, of course, willingness to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Being a descendant of Abraham might grant citizenship in the earthly Jewish kingdom, but it had very little to do with belonging to God’s Heavenly Kingdom. God’s purpose then for the Gospel Age has been to seek out those in every nation who wish to be His representatives on earth now and future citizens in His Heavenly Kingdom.

“*The people of the prince who is to come.*” In the previous 25th verse where it mentions “*Messiah the Prince*”, the word “*Prince*” was capitalized because it was referring to Jesus the Messiah, but here in verse 26 the same word is not capitalized because it is referring to a

different “*prince*” – the Roman emperor Vespasian who, as we know from secular history, sent his armies (led by his general Titus) to descend on Israel and destroyed “*the city and the sanctuary*”. This was a fairly obvious fulfillment of the prediction made here in this verse. So, because they had rejected the true “*Prince*”, the Jews lost the blessing of God’s protection, and another “*prince*” came along with an entirely different agenda to that of their now vanished “*Prince of Peace*”.

Jesus had predicted Jerusalem’s fate almost 40 years earlier: “*As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.’*” (Luke 19:41-44, NIV)

This verse 26 about the invasion of the Romans to “*destroy the city and the sanctuary*”, this section is not actually part of the 70-week time span, coming as it does “*after the sixty-two weeks*” and *before* the “*one week*” which starts with an event known as the confirming of the “*covenant*”. However, it does pre-figure very well what the Antichrist will do in the more distant future. And thus, it seems to overlap with the following verse about the Antichrist. For instance, “*the prince that shall come*” in this verse 26 carries on as the same subject of the next verse 27 – “*Then he shall confirm etc.*” - the events of which actually take place some 2,000 years later. So in this verse 26, and the next verse 27, we are getting a sort of economical presentation of future history (future to Daniel’s time, that is), a composite picture of two separate historical events: the invasion in 70 A.D. by the Romans and, some 2,000 years later, a similar invasion by the modern Antichrist from Russia. (By the way, the outstanding prophetic message in Ezekiel 38-39 predicts with uncanny clarity this invasion that is to come from the northern land of Russia, a study of which may be found in the post “[Ezekiel 38-39: Ancient Prophet Glimpses Modern History!](#)”.)

What we have here could be compared to a double exposure in photography. That is, the prophecy is referring to two different armies and two different “*antichrists*” from two different time periods, and the two “*snapshots*” have been superimposed on one another. This may sound a little odd, but this way of looking at future history had already cropped up in two previous revelations that Daniel had:

In Daniel 2:40-41 mention is made of the “*fourth kingdom*”, and in Daniel 7:7-8,19-25 of the “*fourth beast*”. In both chapters it is very clear that this “*fourth kingdom/beast*” actually symbolizes two kingdoms – the ancient Roman empire and the modern Antichrist empire. But, like a double exposure in photography, they are merged into one “*fourth kingdom*” / “*fourth beast*”. Both the Roman and later Antichrist kingdoms were rather distant from Daniel’s time. We could compare this to how mountain ranges, from a distance, can appear to the observer as a single range. Likewise, these revelations about the distant future appeared in the visions as one “*range*”, that is, as one “*fourth kingdom*”, or one “*fourth beast*”. But in reality, they were two separate ranges, two separate empires. (By the way,

these points are covered more thoroughly in the post “Shape of the Future: Dual Nature of the Antichrist Kingdom”).

Although the two empires are very different – the Roman Caesar and the Russian demagogue invade Israel from two different geographical locations and in two very different time periods (ancient and modern) – yet in many ways they are quite similar. For example, both ancient and modern leaders cause the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (the “*city and the sanctuary*”). That the Roman armies did this is historical fact; as for the Antichrist of the future, certain prophetic Scriptures indicate the same more or less: “*And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*” (Revelation 11:2) “*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.*” (Luke 21:20) The Romans also carried out a great slaughter and persecution of the Jewish people. And as we can gather from certain Scriptures, the Antichrist will do somewhat the same thing. (See Ezekiel 38:8-17.) In addition, both the Roman Caesar and the Antichrist demagogue are objects of worship to the world and stand in opposition to the true worship of God. In Roman times Caesar-worship was practiced throughout the empire; as for the future Antichrist, there are several Scriptures that indicate he will be worshiped also – in the modern guise of secular adulation. (Daniel 11:36-37, Revelation 13:3,4,8,15, and others) In addition, both “*princes*” represent empires that were rather different from the empires that had preceded Rome: for example, both feature republican government without hereditary kingship; both carry on organized persecution against Christians; and both belong to the Last Days – the Christian era.

But, of course, there are some differences between the two “antichrists” and their invasions, which we will look into as we study more closely the wording in these two verses. At any rate it seems the closer we get to the Endtime, the easier it becomes to differentiate the mountain ranges. What looked like one mountain range to Daniel easily separates into two ranges: the ancient invasion of Israel by the Romans and the modern one by the Antichrist from Russia.

“*The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*” During the Jewish Wars (rebellions that began in 66 AD), the Romans were forced to vacate Jerusalem – an event that infuriated the Roman high command. Needless to say, it wasn’t long before the might of Rome’s legions descended upon Israel. During the horrific war that followed, over a million Jewish people died from starvation, disease, or slaughter – according to Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian of that era. Whoever survived the Roman onslaught was driven out of Israel in what became known as the great Diaspora, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the empire. Israel ceased to be a nation.

[From Wikipedia, “Siege of Jerusalem”:](#)

Josephus had acted as a mediator for the Romans and, when negotiations failed, witnessed the siege and aftermath. He wrote:

“Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), [Titus] Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple... all the rest of the wall [surrounding Jerusalem], it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.”

(Flavius Josephus. *The Wars of the Jews or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*. Containing The Interval Of About Three Years. From The Taking Of Jerusalem By Titus To The Sedition At Cyrene. Book VII. Chapter 1.1)

“And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing; for those places which were adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become desolate country every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste. Nor had anyone who had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again. But though he [a foreigner] were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it.”

(Flavius Josephus. *The Wars of the Jews or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*. Containing The Interval Of About One Month. From The Great Extremity To Which The Jews Were Reduced To The Taking Of Jerusalem By Titus. Book VI. Chapter 1.1)

Just as Gabriel’s message had foretold, the end of Jerusalem came “*with a flood*”. Great “*desolations*” befell the city “*till the end of the war*”. Whether that was supposed to mean the end of the war with the Romans or not, isn’t too clear. In a sense the “*war*” has continued: Jerusalem has seen plenty of trouble since then under various rulers – the Muslim caliphates, the Crusaders, the Ottoman Turks – but certainly nothing as dreadful as what took place at that time when the Romans reacted in fury against Israel’s rebellion (or what will take place in the future).

Daniel 9:27

“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”

Gabriel’s prophecy to Daniel began by specifying that “*your people and... your holy city*” – the Jewish nation and Jerusalem – would be in existence during the course of the “70

weeks". At the start of this time span Jerusalem lay in a state of destruction and in the very End Jerusalem will again lie in a state of destruction. There was another destruction in 70 A.D., but that lay outside the limits set by the "70 weeks", coming between the 69th and 70th week. Nevertheless, that destruction pre-figured what is to come in the future, as we'll find out in this verse 27.

Incidentally, it is obvious that this last 70th week is still future; it hasn't finished (nor begun) yet, because some of the other conditions – "everlasting righteousness" especially – have not arrived. Although the process for bringing in "everlasting righteousness" began with Jesus' sacrifice at His first coming (when "Messiah the Prince" was "cut off"), the world on its own, under Satan's influence, will never reach that kind of paradise-like state. It will take nothing less than the Second Coming of Christ – His forceful intervention into the affairs of mankind and the ensuing imprisonment of the forces of Darkness – "to finish the transgression" and "to make an end of sins" and "to bring in everlasting righteousness". Jesus Christ's example, teachings, and sacrificial offering of Himself started the process towards those goals. In a sense, what He did was the biggest, most difficult stage in that process and has laid the groundwork and foundation for the soon-coming Kingdom of God on Earth. But for now it exists in our hearts, which is why Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) But physically, in the world system it hasn't arrived yet, obviously. Since the end of the 69 weeks and Christ's first coming, conditions in the world haven't improved very much – and certainly not enough to prevent it from stumbling eventually into total calamity ... as many forecasters have predicted:

The whole thing is coming to a head soon, Hell-bent on a crash course to catastrophe & the end of man's foolish, wasteful, wanton, destructive rule on Earth! – Waste, pollution, overpopulation, starvation, monetary crises, energy crises, economic disaster, political chaos, the Great Confusion, the Arab-Israeli War, the collapse &/or destruction of America, the rise of the Antichrist one-World government, the invasion & conquest of Israel, WW III, the Great Tribulation, ending with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish His loving, Heavenly Kingdom on Earth!

It's all right there in the Bible! – And it has to be soon, because none of these situations can last much longer! ... listen to what just a few of the World's many non-religious secular humanists have to say – some of the highest-ranking members of this planet's managerial class, who have the weight of scientific data & statistics to back them up:

"I think human life is now threatened as never before in the history of this planet! Not just by one peril, but by many perils that are all working together & coming to a head at the same time. And that time lies very close to the year 2000. I am one of those scientists who find it hard to see how the human race is to bring itself much past the year 2000." — Dr. George Wald, Nobel Prize-winning scientist, Harvard University.

"We are aboard a train which is gathering speed, racing down a track in which there is an unknown number of switches leading to unknown destinations. No single scientist is in the

engine cab & there may be demons at the switch! Most of society is in the caboose – looking backward!” — Scientist member of the prestigious “Club of Rome” socio-economic group.

Kurt Waldheim, while Secretary General of the U.N., said, “I do not wish to seem overdramatic, but I can only conclude from the information that is available to me as Secretary General that the members of the United Nations have perhaps 10 years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels & launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to diffuse the population explosion, & to supply the required momentum to World development efforts. The alternative is a situation beyond our capacity to control!”

(published by The Family International, April/1983)

Obviously then, the world has not arrived at a state of “*everlasting righteousness*” but rather is headed in the opposite direction as foreseen by the perceptive gentlemen quoted above . Thus, the prophecy has tacked on this last 70th “*week*” as the time of preparation for Jesus’ return, that great event which will save mankind from destroying himself and will bring in true “*everlasting righteousness*”. That cataclysmic event of the Second Coming will bring the dramatic reversal of the dire problems and perils that plague present human society. The world will at last see the promises that Gabriel’s ancient prophecy to Daniel had said would come at the end of the “*70 weeks*”.

As we’ve learned, the “*seventy weeks*” prophecy can be divided into two main time periods: the first period, outlined in verses 25-26, is the longer era of 69 weeks, or 483 years; it starts with “*the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” and ends with “*Messiah the Prince*”. The second time period is the 70th week, only seven years: “*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.*” The first time period (starting after the Jews’ return from their captivity in Babylon) leads up to Jesus’ first coming, and the second period in modern times (starting at some point after their return from the many lands to where they had been scattered by the Romans) leads up to His Second Coming. And between these, there is, we might say, a third time period: an interruption in the 70-week span of time – a rather lengthy interlude, in fact, of some 2,000 years when Daniel’s “*people*” were dispersed and the “*holy city*” lay destroyed or inhabited by other people. This “interlude” of the Jews’ Diaspora, or scattation by the Romans, could be compared to the former era of their “Babylonian captivity”.

Now that the second re-gathering of the Jewish people has taken place, we have a surprising duplication, as it were, of the former scenario. So, despite the wide historical gap between these two time periods, the uncanny similarity in the historical situations, ancient and modern, does seem to bridge the gap quite well. It is as if the historical scene from the past has mysteriously re-surfaced: Israel has again become a nation with the same race of people living there – a very peculiar thing to happen after 2,000 years’ time. No nation, once it had been dismantled and dispersed, ever re-gathered itself back into its old territory,

especially not after such a long time. Only Israel has done so... by the will and plan of God, no doubt. So that's a fairly strong indicator that the conditions are ripe for the "70 weeks" prophecy to start up again. After a long "intermission", the "movie" is about to continue once more, this time towards its climactic grand finale. And just as Christ made His first appearance in the Earth after the re-gathering of the Jewish people from Babylon, so we can expect His Second Coming now after their modern day re-gathering into the land of Israel.

Considering these parallel events between ancient and modern history helps to answer the question, who is the "he" referred to at the beginning of verse 27? Evidently, the "he" refers back to the "prince" in the previous verse 26, but, more particularly, the "prince" in verse 27 is, or will be, the modern day version of the ancient Roman "Antichrist". Like the ancient Caesar who was worshiped by the unbelieving world of that time and engaged in heavy-handed harassment of the Israeli nation, we can expect these to carry on (in a modern guise) with the future Antichrist.

"Then he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."

Whereas in the previous verse 26, the term "prince" (about the ancient Roman Caesar) seemed to foreshadow the activities of the future Antichrist demagogue, it is clear in this verse 27 that the focus has narrowed and dwells exclusively on the Antichrist "prince" of the Endtime. How do we know this? Perhaps the biggest clue lies in this phrase "on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate". It is easy to understand this as a cryptic allusion to the peculiar type of warfare that modern technology has enabled mankind to practice nowadays. To go into more detail on this subject would be a whole separate study in itself, which may be found in the post "[Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination](#)".

However, a brief explanation here may suffice: the word "wing" is a figurative term for "military invasion". So by means of a military invasion of "abominations", the Antichrist "makes desolate". The KJV translation here seems to say it more clearly: "For the overspreading (military invasion) of abominations he (the Antichrist) will make it (Jerusalem) desolate." It is not hard to see this as an allusion – using terminology from an ancient time – to the type of remote control warfare that is possible nowadays. Anyone from an ancient era, if he could time-travel himself into our modern times, would say that the warmongers of today have gained the most remarkable capability: they are able to invade a whole region without sending in a single soldier on the ground to do it. Instead of that, they launch a great variety of death-dealing "abominations" that are stashed away in their arsenals: whether it is by launching heat-seeking missiles, or by flying over head in bomb-dropping planes, or in very recent times, by sending various types of remote-controlled UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles). On the ground too soldiers can invade a territory by riding in those desolating abominations known as war tanks. Such means of destruction were completely unknown to those who waged war in the days of yesteryear. And that is the reality that the phrases in this verse 27 about abominations making desolate are trying to convey... in terms that may seem, to our minds at least, rather cryptic. But that was the best Gabriel could do in an ancient language and with Daniel's total lack of understanding about future technology.

Another major distinction from the ancient scenario: the future Antichrist will not destroy the temple completely. (This we can gather from certain verses like Revelation 11:2 and 2Thessalonians 2:4.) And then, of course, there is also the one “*week (7-year) covenant*” – a peculiar feature in this Endtime period of history that did not happen in Roman times.

Also called the “*holy covenant*” (Dan 11:28,30), this agreement probably has something to do with allowing religious freedom. And if the Antichrist gives that freedom to the Jews, he has to give it to everybody, including the Christians. Probably that won’t sit too well, neither with him nor his backers, those who belong to the domain of the False Prophet, the arch-enemy of all the true worshipers of God.

The wording here says that “*he will confirm the covenant*”. Whether he is behind it all the way, or if he just goes along with it, perhaps for the sake of some political expediency, we don’t know. But one thing does seem clear: the “*covenant*” could not happen without his approval. The agreement also takes place “*with many*”, meaning probably that there is a wide consensus amongst the various influential people, leaders, and nations involved. As a rising world leader himself, it sounds as though the Antichrist will have become highly respected by this time and succeeded where many have failed in the past – bringing about a workable solution in the Mideast to the never-ending struggles there amongst Arabs, Jews, and Palestinians. Well, these are mostly speculations, and it is difficult right now to know with any great certainty exactly how things will turn out in the future when this prediction about the covenant being confirmed actually happens.

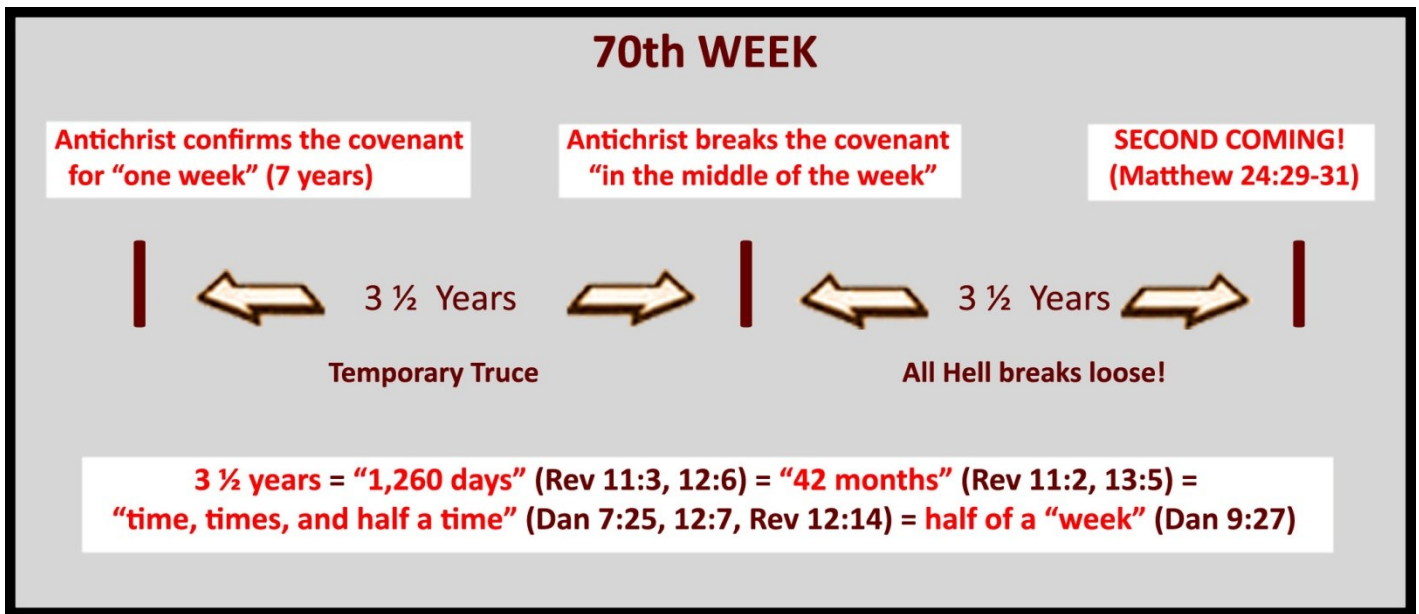
“But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”

This phrase about “*sacrifice and offering*” confirms the idea that the “*covenant*” will have something to do with religious freedom, which up to this point – “*in the middle of the week*”- the Antichrist had been willing to tolerate. But then, something happens to get him upset and break the agreement: “*he shall be grieved... against the holy covenant*”; “*he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering*”. (Daniel 11:30, 9:27) One thing that is implied here, but not mentioned, is the fact that there should be a temple, a place where the Jewish priests can make their sacrifices and offerings. There is reference to this in Daniel 8:11,13, 11:31 as the “*sanctuary*”, in Matthew 24:15 as a “*holy place*” and in 2Thessalonians 2:4 as a “*temple*”. Right now, however, this is a missing piece in the historical puzzle that yet needs to show up: the rebuilding of the temple – perhaps during this 70th week.

Apparently, getting ready for the temple is something Israel has been doing for quite some time. Various preparations have been in the works: review of the ancient rituals, architectural designs for the temple building, and even, according to some sources, building materials ready and set aside for construction whenever the auspicious time arrives. So it seems this temple building project has been on the verge of getting started for a number of years. The main obstacle at the moment is the fact that the Muslim Dome of the Rock mosque – third holiest shrine in Islam – happens to stand right where the Israelis would like to build their temple. This is an extraordinarily sensitive region – sacred to both Jews and Muslims – and how the Israelis will ever build on, or even near, that site is a mystery right

now. But the predictions are there in the Sacred Book, so we shouldn't be too surprised some day to see it happen – the appearance of the Jewish temple. And this would be certainly a major sign that the End is not far away. But how it will happen we don't know right now. Maybe this is one of those complex issues that will take the genius of the Antichrist to sort out.

When the temple will get re-built is not known; at any rate it will have to be ready before the “*middle of the week*”. Whether that means before the last seven years starts, or afterwards, is not too clear right now. To be sure, once the temple is there, we can know that the End can't be too far away. But to get more definite about the question of the time left before the “end of the world” or the Second Coming, we will know that only when this Covenant gets confirmed; then the countdown can begin – the last 7 years. Or if that starting date is not too clear for some reason, then when the Antichrist breaks the covenant by desecrating the temple with the “*abomination of desolation*”, that will signify the start of the last 3½ years (42 months or 1,260 days) till the End. (Daniel 11:31, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14)



This will be a fairly obvious marker, the one that will kick off the time of Great Tribulation, an era that Jesus Himself foretold: “*Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*” (Matthew 24:15, 21) This entrance of the “*abomination of desolation*” is the event that causes or coincides with what Daniel 9:27 is talking about: the breaking of the covenant “*in the middle of the week*” and bringing “*an end to sacrifice and offering*”. That event also triggers the Great Tribulation: a great military invasion of Israel, this time by the Russians, and perhaps for reasons similar to why the Romans came down so heavily on the Jews in that former era. (In ancient times Jewish rebels had succeeded in gaining Israel's independence from Rome, and their example threatened the stability of the Roman empire.) What the Jews will do in the future to upset the Antichrist and his empire we don't know, but

because of their strong-willed nature and powerful influence, we can be sure that they won't be easy for the Antichrist to have to rule over. Perhaps, rather than try to continue haggling over the new agreement of the "*covenant*", the Antichrist will decide to opt for the simpler, heavy-handed solution of military action to just squash it altogether.

Perhaps this event of the abomination's entry into the "*holy place*" could be compared to something like the assassination of the Austrian Duke Ferdinand in 1914, an incident that became known as the "shot that was heard around the world". Because of the complex alliances and tensions already existing in Europe at that time, it only took a provocative little spark to light the conflagration of World War I. Likewise, World War III will likely "blast off" from this provocative incident of the abomination of desolation's desecration of the Jews' "*holy place*" ... in the midst of the Mideast powder keg. The Book of Daniel (12:1) describes this last half of the 70th week as "*a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.*" But the next sentence states, "*And at that time your people shall be delivered.*" The Second Coming of Christ will be the intervention into mankind's affairs that will bring deliverance to all God-fearing people and save planet Earth from total desolation.

"Even until the consummation" – In other words, because the Antichrist continues to "*make desolate*" right to the End, Jerusalem, and much of the rest of the world as well, will have to suffer much devastation.

"Which is determined" – The phrase is basically repeating what was said in the previous verse: "*unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*" The idea seems to be that of getting across the unwelcome news that there will be destruction, and plenty of it, not unlike what happened to Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

"Poured out on the desolate" – As the 70 weeks began (with Jerusalem in ruins in the 6th century B.C.), so it ends with the same scene of desolation. As Jerusalem was destroyed in times past by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and then again by the Romans, so it will be in a future time when the Antichrist invades from Russia.

There is some question regarding this phrase as to whether the translation should imply that all these troubles are to be poured on the Jewish people or upon the Antichrist, whether the translation should say "*poured out on the desolate*" or "on the desolator". To be sure, the Antichrist is going to receive his punishment in the lake of fire according to Revelation 20:9. However, the original Hebrew wording here seems to support more this meaning of "*the desolate*" as referring to "that which is desolate" rather than "the one who causes desolation". And that is more consistent with the phrase in the previous verse, "*till the end of the war desolations are determined*". The two verses are meant to be parallel descriptions, speaking of the same thing more or less.

SUMMARY: We in modern times are living on the verge of a very special time in history – those years preceding the start of the final "*week*" of the angel Gabriel's remarkable prediction to Daniel about the "70 weeks" time span of future history. The first part of his prediction has already seen fulfillment in Christ's first appearance in ancient Israel. And

what about the second part – Christ’s Second Coming? We are already seeing the build-up: the astonishing return once more of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and nation of Israel. So the conditions are ripe and ready: the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem are again in position; the needed conditions are there for the last “*one week*” countdown, the last seven years of the prophecy, to finish its course.

The last 7 years will begin with the confirming of a “*covenant*”, followed by the desecration of the covenant in the middle of it, followed by a 3½ year period known as the Great Tribulation which, presumably, will include the destruction of Jerusalem, and will end with “*the consummation*” at the end of the 7 years. Regarding Jerusalem, this verse 27 explains, “*on the wing of abominations*” the Antichrist “*makes desolate*”, which, as foreshadowed in verse 26, refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke 21:20 brings this out as well: “*When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*” Then finally, with the second coming of Christ and the end of the 70th week, will come the “*consummation*”, the complete fulfillment of the wonderful promises that were given at the beginning of this outstanding prophetic message.

So it’s the same basic scenario of an invasion of Israel happening all over again, but in a different time period, involving a different empire. In addition, another difference is that the modern period will feature a 7-year “*covenant*”, which never happened in ancient times; there will also be this peculiar “*wing [military invasion] of abominations*” by which the Antichrist “*makes desolate*”, alluding to the peculiar type of warfare that is practiced nowadays. Another difference: The temple will get destroyed, but not completely as it was during the Roman invasion. (See Dan 11:31, 2Thes 2:4, Rev 11:2.) These features about the 70th week are helpful indicators that this last seven years did not happen in ancient times and is yet to be fulfilled. They point to the modern character and timing of this crucial ending period of man’s history.

And then finally, when the “70 weeks” have finished their course, human society will at last enter into that glorious and wonderful era known as the Millenium, the golden Age of Peace on earth, when there truly will be an “*end of sins*” and “*everlasting righteousness*” – just as the angel Gabriel, in this most profound prophecy about mankind’s future history, had predicted would finally come to pass.

A FINAL NOTE: The remarkable prediction in the “*seventy weeks*” prophecy about the first arrival of the Messiah helps to validate the many other predictions in the Bible about His glorious return. That return will re-orient the course of human history, pulling mankind out of the unsolvable mess that our poor world seems to be getting itself into. We learn also from Gabriel’s prophecy that God is truly the One in control. He knows the future and has a plan. His plans work, not just in the realm of world history, but also in our own personal histories. If He can cause the tumultuous and ever-changing events of history to work according to this plan of the “*seventy weeks*” timeline, then He can certainly straighten out the problems and difficulties we experience personally as we follow His plan for our lives.

Appendix 1

A Brief History of Tiberias

Tiberius Caesar took over as Emperor after the death of Augustus. Augustus was a title placed on Octavian, the step father of Tiberius. Octavian had been born September 23, 63 BC, and lived until his death August 19, 14 A.D. Tiberius was confirmed by the Senate upon the death of Augustus and Tiberius thus took over as the new Caesar.

Tiberius' first full year of reign began **January 1, 15 AD** on a year that would have been known at the time as **768 AUC** [from the foundation of the city, Rome].

Note how the years of reign of kings, both in Roman times and earlier Biblical times, are measured from the first day of the *next year*. The deceased king is credited with the remaining months of the current calendar year. In general, this allows for planning a public coronation event on or near the start of the year. (In the Biblical era the coronations would thus have made sense when the nation assembled in Jerusalem for the Passover.)

Tiberias was thus acting Caesar from August 19, 14 AD, through the first of the next year. For Romans this would happen January 1 of the next year.

Recall that the switch to Christian year numbers happened formally over 500 years later, historical records are transferred to the Christian year system as they are reported to us. As far as they were recorded, the AUC system would have been used.

The quote from the Book of Luke tells the year of John's call is the 15th year of this same reign. Year 1 would have been the year 768 AUC. [AUC stands for *Ab urbe condita* - Latin for "from the founding of the city (Rome)"] To determine the 15th year we can build a table where each row represents 1 year of Tiberias' reign. The following is such a table:

Tiberias' Known Years of Reign

Roman Year	Modern Year	Year of Reign
768 AUC	15 AD	Year 1 of Tiberias
769 AUC	16 AD	Year 2 of Tiberias
770 AUC	17 AD	Year 3 of Tiberias
771 AUC	18 AD	Year 4 of Tiberias
772 AUC	19 AD	Year 5 of Tiberias
773 AUC	20 AD	Year 6 of Tiberias
774 AUC	21 AD	Year 7 of Tiberias
775 AUC	22 AD	Year 8 of Tiberias
776 AUC	23 AD	Year 9 of Tiberias
777 AUC	24 AD	Year 10 of Tiberias
778 AUC	25 AD	Year 11 of Tiberias
779 AUC	26 AD	Year 12 of Tiberias
780 AUC	27 AD	Year 13 of Tiberias
781 AUC	28 AD	Year 14 of Tiberias
782 AUC	29 AD	Year 15 of Tiberias

By inspection, the 15th year of the reign of Tiberias' reign would be the year 782 AUC or **29 AD** as we identify the years now.

29 AD Roman is the year that John the Baptist was called.

Jesus was baptized in January of 30 AD. John's call in 29 AD fits well. It suggests that John had not been baptizing all that long when he met Jesus. It is possible to limit the time within the year 29 AD when John was called.

– By Phil Stone, Bible Time Press • Box 1071 • Enumclaw WA, 98022

Appendix 2

Excerpt from <http://www.bethlehemstar.net/day/day.htm#dating>

Dating the Crucifixion

Yes, there is more in the sky which declares “Messiah has come.” But to see these things, we must know when to look up. Peter used the sky as a proof that Messiah had come, but *which* sky did he use? A body of scholarly work addresses the date of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. This body of work, together with Roman and Jewish histories, archaeoastronomy and the words of the Bible allow us to identify the day and almost the moment of his death. That is an extraordinary claim. You must judge it for yourself. Consider the evidence.

What can we learn from the Jewish calendar? Quite a lot, if we assemble the puzzle pieces. By law and custom, the Jewish people of Jesus’ day took the Sabbath as a day of complete rest.¹ Because no work could be done on the Sabbath, which we call Saturday, Friday came to be known as Preparation Day.² It was a day when food and other things needed for Saturday were prepared in advance. This is our first clue to the date of the crucifixion, because all four Gospels state that Jesus was crucified on Preparation Day, a Friday.³ This is also the common consensus of the Church Fathers and scholars throughout church history.⁴

¹ The Book of Jeremiah, Chapter 17: “22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.” See also, The Book of Exodus, Chapter 16.22-30.

² Josephus, Antiquities, Book XVI, Chapter 6.

³ The Book of Matthew, Chapter 27: “62 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.”

The Book of Mark, Chapter 15: “42 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath)...”

The Book of Luke, Chapter 23: “54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.”

The Book of John, Chapter 19: “14 It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.”

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Chapter IV: “The Day of Christ’s Crucifixion” (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1977) ISBN 0-310-26211-9.

If you are interested in scholarly analysis of the date of the execution, Hoehner is an excellent reference.

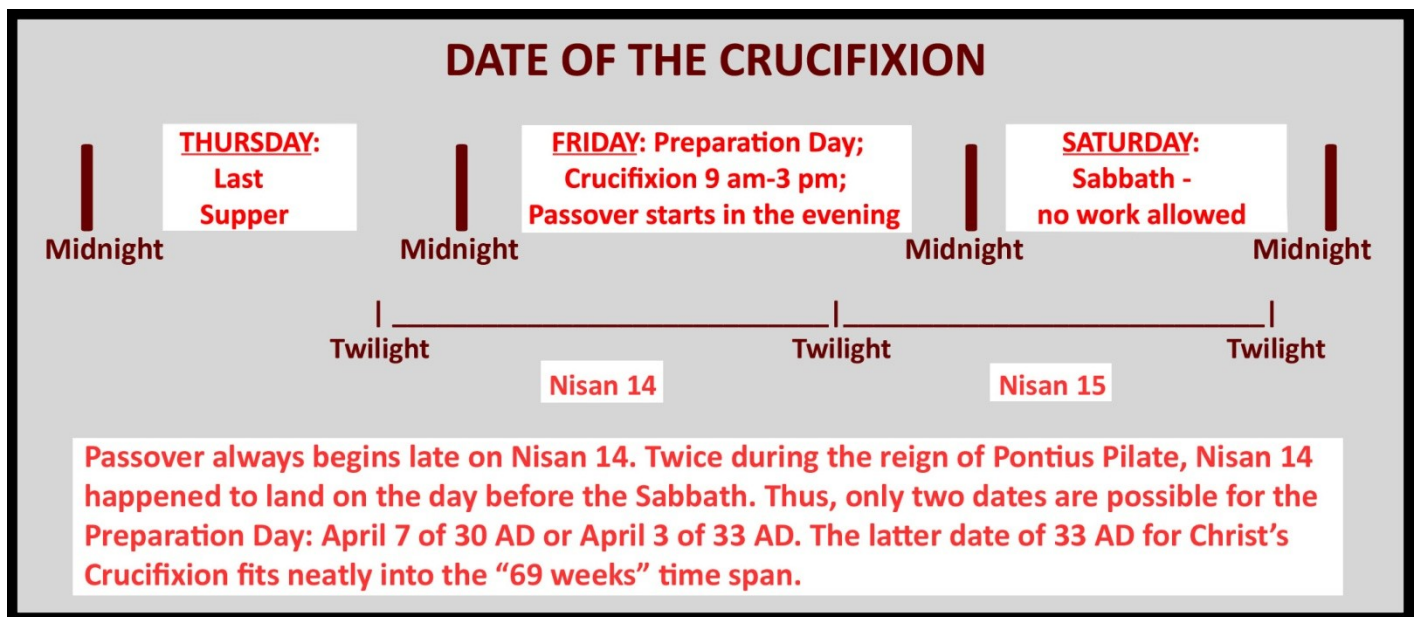
The Gospels also record that the crucifixion occurred the day before the Passover festival.⁵ This is a second important clue, because it gives us a solid connection with the ancient Jewish calendar system. Passover always begins on the 14th day of the Jewish lunar month

of Nisan. (Nisan 14 is in the Spring, which is why Easter is celebrated then). By Judean tradition, Passover begins at twilight, the dividing line between Nisan 14 and 15.⁶

5 The Book of John, Chapter 13: “1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.”

6 Judeans reckoned the 24-hour day from sunset-to-sunset. The Book of Leviticus, Chapter 23: “5 The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month..” Gallileans, like Jesus, apparently reckoned the 24-hour day from sunrise-to-sunrise. This is the day-reckoning of the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus and the disciples ate the Passover meal on the Thursday preceding the crucifixion, at what we call the Last Supper. See, Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Chapter IV: “The Day of Christ’s Crucifixion” (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1977) ISBN 0-310-26211-9.

On the Jewish calendar (and on ours) a numbered day of the month may fall on any day of the week. For example, in one year your birthday might fall on Tuesday, in the next year it might fall on Thursday. This “float” among days of the week is why this second clue is so powerful. Putting these two Biblical puzzle pieces together, we see that the crucifixion must have occurred in a year when Nisan 14 happened to fall on a Friday, Preparation Day. That narrows things down considerably.



The Year. Ancient non-Biblical historians record that Jesus was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate.⁷ Pilate was Roman procurator of Judea during the years 26 AD through 36 AD.⁸ This limits our search for a date to those years. In “Setting the Stage” we found that Jesus was born in 3/2 BC. And there are also important Biblical clues: the *Book of Luke* records that Jesus began his public ministry when he “was about 30 years old”,⁹ and the *Book of John* records three annual Passovers during Jesus’ ministry.¹⁰ Taken together, these puzzle pieces add to a crucifixion date in the early 30’s, AD. During those years, Nisan 14 fell on a Friday, Preparation Day, twice: on April 7 of 30 AD and April 3 of 33 AD.¹¹ To help us choose between those two dates, there is ample and fascinating evidence.

7 As examples, Tacitus states in The Annals, Book XV that “Christus, from whom the name ['Christian'] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus.

Josephus records in Antiquities, Book XVIII that “...Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned [Christ] to the cross...”

8 Josephus records in Antiquities, Book XVIII that “...Pilate, when he had tarried ten years in Judea, made haste to Rome, and this in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, which he durst not contradict; but before he could get to Rome Tiberius was dead.” Tiberius died on March 16, 37 AD See also, section 620, Jack Finegan, The Handbook of Biblical Chronology (Revised Edition; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998) ISBN 1-56563-143-9.

9 The Book of Luke, Chapter 3, verse 23.

10 The Book of John, Chapter 2: “23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name.” Chapter 6: “4 The Jewish Passover Feast was near.” And Chapter 13: “(John 13:1, NIV) 1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.”

11 Table 179, Jack Finegan, The Handbook of Biblical Chronology (Revised Edition; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998) ISBN 1-56563-143-9.

The Bethlehem Star site goes on to list some clues as to why the A.D. 33 date is preferable to A.D. 30: certain political events that had just taken place in Rome (from October, A.D. 31 onwards) and were influencing Pontius Pilate to please the elite Jews by allowing Christ to be executed; the ending of the time span of 483 years in the year A.D. 33; an unusual astronomical sign – a blood-red moon, a lunar eclipse – at the time of Jesus’ death. To learn more about these clues and signs, go to

<http://www.bethlehemstar.net/day/day.htm#dating>