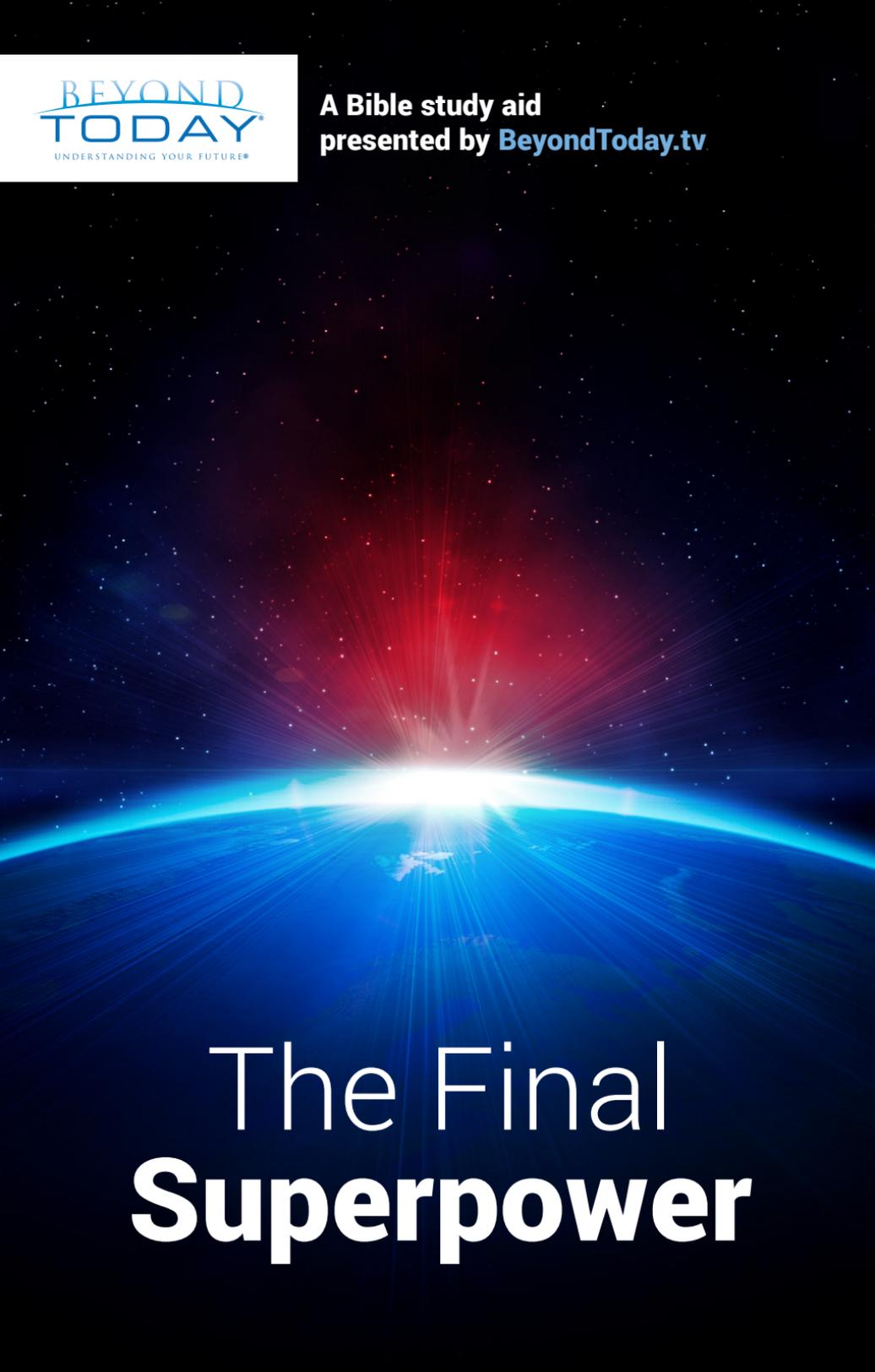


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The Final Superpower



There is only one true superpower in today's world: the United States. At present no other nation can globally project power, in any form, like America. Yet there are many challenges to America maintaining this lofty and important status. Will another power—another true superpower—emerge from the nations and replace the current world order?

China in the last three decades has developed into a regional Asian power that's spreading its influence around the world. It's absorbing oil and other vital resources from the Middle East and Africa. It's a manufacturing center for much of the world, and it's developing a navy with ships that could, in time, challenge the American Navy in the waters of the Indian Ocean or the Persian Gulf. Many wonder if China

will become a large enough power to dominate the world.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has had to redefine itself among the nations. It no longer has the size or reach of the U.S.S.R., but it does have vast supplies of oil and natural gas. Along with a large military and a nuclear arsenal, Russia is still a factor in world affairs.

A recent Stratfor bulletin discussed the potential for Europe to rise to the level of superpower. It said: "Taken as a single geographic entity, Europe has the largest economy in the world. Should it choose to do so, it could become a military rival to the United States. Europe is one of the pillars of the global system, and what happens to Europe is going to define how the world works" (Stratfor, January 2013). A lot would have to change with the current configuration in

Europe, but the potential is there for it to become a replacement to America.

Some do not factor Bible prophecy into predictions of the world economy or power status. That is a mistake. The Bible does have something to say about today's world scene and what the future holds. Revelation and Daniel reveal the future will see a new kind of power to emerge among the nations that will astound everyone. It will have, for a time, the ability to "solve" some big problems that threaten order and stability. Everyone will be amazed and happy that it does. But in time the benevolent mask will be removed to reveal a power with a heart bent on bringing people under its control. This, in the end, will not be well received. But the trap will be shut, and it will be too late back out.

Thankfully, God has revealed that that last and evil superpower of men will only last a short time before Jesus Christ will return. He will establish the final superpower: His Kingdom on Earth.

Considering the prophetic future of the earth, the apostle Peter said, "What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11)? The purpose of prophecy is to give us a glimpse of the future, a hope for God's promises, and so that we may draw close to him *today*.

Read on to understand what the Bible foretells of events to come leading to Jesus Christ's return. But use this understanding to motivate yourself to draw close to God today. Pray, fast, and study the Bible now, so that when these things take place, you may not be caught unaware.

Photo: Martin Falbisoner/Wikimedia Commons

The Dreaming King and the Slave

Daniel's book prophesied events fulfilled many centuries ago as well as major events yet to come. It reveals a history of the region, written in advance, from Daniel's time right up to the return of Jesus Christ.

Among the Jewish captives taken from Judah and exiled to Babylon was a young man whose Hebrew name was Daniel. He was renamed Belteshazzar by the Babylonians (Daniel 1:1-7). Daniel lived in the remarkable times of the downfall of the kingdoms of both

Judah and Babylon. He served as a high official in both the Babylonian government as well as its successor, the Medo-Persian Empire.

At the end of Daniel's book, God instructed him to "shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4). This indicates that certain major prophecies that previously wouldn't have made sense will be understandable as the end approaches.

Daniel's Prophecies of the Coming Superpower

One amazing prophecy recorded by Daniel is his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. In the second year of his reign the Babylonian king had a troubling dream that none of his counselors could explain. Babylonian culture placed considerable emphasis on dreams, and Nebuchadnezzar was convinced that this one was of great importance (Daniel 2:1-3). It turns out he was right: It was a vision of the future, and it was given to Nebuchadnezzar from God Himself.

His dream gives an overview of God's plan beginning then and going through

By inspiration from God, Daniel explained the details of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar without having heard what the dream was about.

until the return of Jesus Christ. It lists and describes a succession of world superpowers that would dominate the lands surrounding Israel until Jesus establishes His Kingdom (*Expositor's*, pp. 39, 46). Looking at things in our time, much of the vision has already been fulfilled, which proves its validity for predicting what's still left to happen before Jesus comes back.

By inspiration from God, Daniel explained the details of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar without having heard what the dream was about: "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image [a large statue]! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of

iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay" (Daniel 2:31-33).

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that his Babylonian Empire was represented by the head of gold (verses 37-38). The silver, bronze and iron components of the image, or statue, represented three powerful empires that were to follow mighty Babylon (verses 39-40).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream occurred and was interpreted by Daniel about 600 B.C. The image represented, in symbolic form, the sequence of great empires that would dominate the region's political scene for centuries.

"The silver empire was to be Medo-Persia, which began with Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon in 539... This silver empire was supreme in the Near and Middle East for about two centuries" (*Expositor's*, p. 47).

"The bronze empire was the Greco-Macedonian Empire established by Alexander the Great... The bronze kingdom lasted for about 260 or 300 years before it was supplanted by the fourth kingdom" (*ibid.*).

"Iron connotes toughness and ruthlessness and describes the Roman Empire that reached its widest extent under the reign of Trajan" (*ibid.*). Trajan reigned as emperor from A.D. 98-117, and the Roman Empire itself ruled for many centuries.

Verse 44 reveals that the Roman Empire will be in power at the time God will set up His Kingdom: "And in the days of these kings 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"

The Roman Empire is not in power

today, so how is it possible that it will be at the time of Christ's return? After it fell in A.D. 476, there have been several phases or resurrections of the Roman Empire down through history, and the final phase will be the one in power when Jesus comes back. More on that later.

The iron legs were described as having feet and toes composed partly of iron and partly of clay, as verse 41 explains. Because it is a mixture of strong (iron) and weak (clay) we can surmise that the final phase of the Roman system will be partly strong and partly weak. But why 10 toes? What do they represent? They represent 10 kings—some of them strong, some of them weak—who make up the final phase of the Roman system. Another prophecy revealed to Daniel as well as a section from Revelation help explain this.

Another Dream Adds Important Details

Additional aspects of this succession of world-ruling empires were revealed to Daniel in a later dream. This time the four empires were represented by four beasts: a lion (Babylonian Empire), a bear (Medo-Persian Empire), a leopard (Greco-Macedonian Empire) and a fourth beast described as "terrible" and unlike the other three (Daniel 7:1-7).

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth [paralleling the iron legs of Daniel 2]; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." This beast represents Rome's great power, which crushed all who opposed it.

Notice that it has 10 horns. In biblical literature, a horn can represent a king or leader. The 10 horns of Revelation 13 coincide with the 10 horns of this prophecy, and they represent revivals of the Roman Empire throughout time, leading up to the return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 17 also helps us in understanding this end-time superpower. In this chapter it's again depicted as a beast. In this description it outright states that it's made up of 10 "kings"—which in modern times could mean presidents, prime ministers or premiers. These leaders collectively "receive authority for one hour" with the ruler of this end-time superpower, an individual the Bible refers to as "the beast" (Revelation 17:12-13). This final revival of the Roman Empire makes war with Jesus Christ upon His return (Revelation 17:14).

All of this concurs with Daniel 2:44,

which obviously indicates that the second coming of Christ will occur in a time during which remnants of the fourth beast or kingdom (the Roman Empire) still exist: "And in the days of these kings 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).

The greater part of these prophetic events, as detailed by the two dreams, has already been fulfilled. Their detailed completion affirms the divine inspiration of the Bible. The odds of any person foreseeing this on his own defy credibility. "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (Daniel 2:28).

The First Superpower

Shortly after the Flood, God divided the earth among the families of Noah (Genesis 10:32). As they journeyed from the east they came to the land of Shinar. At Shinar, Nimrod, a great warrior and hunter, led a rebellion against God's command for the descendants of Noah to re-colonize the earth. He knew that it would be impossible for him to rule over the families of the earth if they were scattered abroad. So he inspired the building of a tower that the people would look to so they would not be scattered abroad (Genesis 11:4). But God intervened and confounded the languages of the people, thus forcing them to be

scattered through the earth.

As the families of Noah settled their lands they eventually developed into nation-states. God is the author of families, tribes and nations. God's historic desire is for nation-states to live according to His laws. The government of nation-states is supposed to serve the people of that nation. Just as a loving father provides for the needs of his family, the nation-state should provide for the needs of all its families. God gave the families of Noah an inheritance in the earth. That inheritance or land was given to those people to sustain them. It was theirs to have and to hold. Thus the nation-state is to maintain sov-

ereignty over its land and people. Sovereignty means that nations have the right to hold their land and govern their people.

Some nation-states developed in a way that allowed freedom for the individual to grow and prosper. Other nation-states developed along dictatorial lines and subjugated their own people. The annals of history stand in silent testimony to the success or failure of nation-states.

Many of the dictators of nation-states gained enough power, resources and control over their people to conquer other nation-states. Names like Alexander the Great and Ghengis Khan come to mind. The

subjugated countries were called empires because they were under one ruler. But empires were built through the conquest of nation-states.

In many ways the Bible is a historical record of a series of superpowers that have come and gone. Many were strong in their day but left no lasting legacy or mark on the world. Others, however, changed the course of history for millennia to follow. The book of Daniel contains a prophecy of both historic and future importance. In it God reveals a sequence of superpowers that have and will continue to shape the world as we approach the time of Jesus Christ's return.

The Great Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

The great image that God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream was interpreted by the prophet Daniel. Each section represents a world-ruling superpower. Each succeeding metal is less valuable, but each succeeding metal is stronger, as each empire was more powerful than the last.

Silver—Chest and Arms

The silver chest with two arms signified the empire of the Medes and Persians, which conquered and supplanted Babylon.

Bronze—Belly and Thighs

This section represented the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, which swallowed up Persia.

Iron—Legs

The two legs of iron represented the Roman Empire. After Alexander's death, his Hellenistic empire continued in a divided form until its divisions were taken over by Rome. The two legs apparently signified the east-west division that characterized the Late Roman Empire.

Iron & Clay—Feet and Toes

Extending from the legs are feet and toes of iron mixed with clay—a brittle and unstable mixture because it would not bond well. These represent the final phase of the Roman Empire, which will be made up of ten kings, some strong and some weak.

Gold—Head

This section represented the empire of Babylon, of which Nebuchadnezzar was king.





Hagia Sophia basilica in Istanbul, which was originally a Christian cathedral, and which was later taken control of by Muslims and converted into a mosque.

The “King of the North” vs. the “King of the South”

In Daniel 10 and 11, there is another prophecy that has end-time implications. It’s important because it reveals the political climate and tensions in the Middle East preceding both the first and second appearances of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. In both instances, Jerusalem is at the center of the political conflicts of the time.

This is a prediction of political intrigue between two powers referred to as the “king of the North” and the “king of the South.” The names are references to their geographic location in relation to the land of Judah. Remember that Daniel was a prince from Jerusalem, and God’s people of Israel are the center of prophecy. So the two powers historically came and in the future will come from regions of the globe that are to the north and south of Jerusalem. It doesn’t necessarily mean from extremely southern or northern regions.

The prophecy was given to Daniel in

the third year of king Cyrus of Persia (Daniel 10:1). A “man,” no doubt an angel (Daniel 10:5, compare Daniel 9:21), came to tell Daniel what would occur “in the latter days.”

The prophecy that follows is the most detailed in all the Bible. The third year of Cyrus was more than 500 years before the birth of Christ. Yet this prophecy foretells events that began to occur almost immediately at that time and will continue until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Some elements of what follows are intricate, requiring close attention. But a comparison of the prophetic words with the historical record makes them clear.

Protracted Political Intrigue

Daniel 11:1-35 give an account, written years in advance, of the intrigue between the king of the South and the king of the North. In secular history,

the king of the South is often referred to as Ptolemy. The Ptolemaic dynasty ruled from Alexandria in Egypt, which is south of Israel. The king of the North ruled from Antioch in Syria, which is north of Israel, under the name Seleucus, or Antiochus.

With this in mind, let’s examine some of the details of the prophecy. You can find more information on the historical fulfillment of much of this prophecy in resources such as *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, which we quote below, or other reliable reference works. Rather than our quoting the entire scriptural passage, we recommend that you read in your own Bible the verses we cite.

Daniel 11:2: The “three more kings” are Cambyses, the elder son of Cyrus; pseudo-Smerdis, an impostor who passed himself off as Cyrus’s younger son, who had been secretly killed; and

Darius the Persian. “The Persian king who invaded Greece was...Xerxes, who reigned 485-464 B.C.” (*Expositor’s*, p. 128).

Verses 3-4: “Verse 3 introduces us to...the rise of Alexander the Great” (*ibid.*). The language in verse 4 “clearly suggests that this mighty conqueror was going to have a comparatively brief reign...In seven or eight years he accomplished the most dazzling military conquest in human history. But he lived only four years more; and...died of a fever in 323...” (*ibid.*).

Alexander’s kingdom was divided “among four smaller and weaker empires” (*Expositor’s*, p. 129). Alexander’s infant son had been murdered in 310 and an illegitimate brother assassinated in 317. “Thus there were no descendants or blood relatives to succeed Alexander himself” (*ibid.*). So his

Dual Fulfillment in Bible Prophecy

Many prophecies in the Bible are dual. In such cases a prophet speaks under inspiration of God and a first fulfillment of the prophecy comes to pass. Then, later, often at the end of the age before the return of Christ, comes a final, ultimate fulfillment.

An excellent example of duality is found in a prediction Joel made about the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-3:2).

God inspired the apostle Peter to quote from this passage to describe events on the Day of Pentecost, when God founded the Church after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:14-21). Miraculous manifestations of God’s power through the Holy Spirit did indeed occur then (verses 1-12). But these were only the first fulfillment of

Joel’s prophecy. The ultimate fulfillment will come at the time of the end and will involve, among other things, the gathering of the nations to God’s judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. This did not occur on the Day of Pentecost. So we see that prophecies can be dual.

In a similar fashion, God inspired many other prophecies with dual meanings. They applied as warnings to the Israelites at that time and as warnings to the modern descendants of those same people. The people of Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the nations of northwest Europe who represent these people today would do well to heed these warnings.

kingdom was not divided “among his posterity” (verse 4).

Alexander’s generals warred for control of his empire. The ensuing struggles for domination eliminated all but four, who became heads of the four divisions of his empire. The four were Cassander, reigning in Greece and the West, Lysimachus in Thrace and Asia Minor, Ptolemy in Egypt and Seleucus in Syria. Of these four, two—Ptolemy and Seleucus—expanded their rule and territory. These were the kings of Egypt and Syria, respectively.

The machinations that follow relate to these two. They are referred to as the king of the South (Ptolemy) and the king of the North (Seleucus) because of their location relative to Jerusalem.

Verse 5: “The king of the South was to be Ptolemy I” (*Expositor’s*, p. 130). The biblical expression “one of his princes” refers to Seleucus. He had originally served under Ptolemy. In the intrigue after Alexander’s death, Seleucus ultimately gained control over Syria and became king of the North. Seleucus eventually wielded more power than Ptolemy. The dynasty of the Seleucid line was to continue until 64 B.C.

The Laodicean War

Verse 6: A state of tension and hostility existed between the king of the South and the king of the North. Ptolemy I died in 285 B.C. In 252 the two powers attempted a treaty under which Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II, was to marry Antiochus II, the king of the North. Laodice, the first wife of Antiochus II, was angry because he had divorced her. In retaliation, she manipulated a conspiracy from her place of banishment. She had Berenice and her infant son assassinated.

“Not long afterward the king himself [Antiochus II] was poisoned...” (ibid.).

Laodice established herself as queen, because her son Seleucus II was too young to rule. The prophecy “she [Berenice] shall be given up” refers to the coup that Laodice engineered to effect the execution of Berenice. Some nobles who had supported Berenice as queen were also brought down.

Verses 7-9: Retaliation followed. A series of military actions, which came to be known as the Laodicean War, resulted. Ptolemy II died soon after Laodice killed his daughter, Berenice. Ptolemy III sought to avenge his sister’s death. He attacked the king of the North and captured the Syrian capital of Antioch. Verse 8 describes the recapture by Ptolemy of “long-lost idols and sacred treasures” (*Expositor’s*, p. 131) that had been stolen from Egypt by Cambyses in 524 B.C.

Peace was concluded between Ptolemy III and Seleucus II in 240, and hostilities ceased until 221, when Ptolemy III died.

Verses 10-12: The sons of Seleucus II attacked the king of the South after their father died. One of these sons, Seleucus III, reigned for only three years. His military activity was relatively minor. He died by poisoning. Another son, Antiochus III (the Great), did “overwhelm and pass through.” He conquered Judea.

Ptolemy IV, the king of the South, retaliated (verse 11) and defeated the larger army of Seleucus III at the Battle of Raphia. After his victory Ptolemy turned to a life of debauchery during which he slaughtered tens of thousands of Jews in Egypt (verse 12). Through all this he weakened his kingdom.

Verses 13-16: The phrase “at the end of some years” refers to an inci-

dent when, 14 years after his defeat, Antiochus III came against Ptolemy V, still a young boy. (Ptolemy IV had died in 203.) The Egyptian provinces were in turmoil because of the wretched rule of Ptolemy IV. Many of the people—including Jews sympathetic to the king of the North—joined with Antiochus against the king of the South. The rebellion was ultimately crushed by the Egyptian general Scopus (verse 14).

Scopus also rebuffed the forces of Antiochus during the winter of 201-200. The king of the North responded with another invasion. He captured the city of Sidon (“a fortified city”), where Scopus surrendered (verse 15). Antiochus acquired complete control of the Holy Land, the “Glorious Land” (verse 16).

Antiochus IV then desecrated the temple by offering a sacrifice to the chief Greek god, Zeus. This outrage was a forerunner of the abomination of desolation that Jesus Christ said would occur in the last days.

Verse 17: The Revised English Bible reads: “He [the king of the North] will resolve to advance with the full might of his kingdom; and, when he has agreed terms with the king of the south, he will give his young daughter in marriage to him, with a view to the destruction of the kingdom; but the treaty will not last nor will it be his purpose which is served.” Having defeated Scopus, Antiochus desired to gain control of Egypt itself. He gave his daughter, Cleopatra, to Ptolemy V in marriage. Antiochus believed she would act in his favor and betray the interests of her husband. But she frustrated his plans by siding with Ptolemy.

Verses 18-19: In his frustration,

Antiochus attacked islands and cities of the Aegean area. He also gave asylum to Rome’s enemy, Hannibal of Carthage, who assisted him in landing in Greece. Rome responded by attacking Antiochus and inflicting defeat on his forces. The Romans deprived him of much of his territory and took several hostages to Rome, including Antiochus’ son. Rome exacted heavy tribute of him (verse 18).

Antiochus returned in disgrace to his stronghold, Antioch. Unable to pay the heavy fees exacted by the Romans, he attempted to plunder a pagan temple. His action so enraged local inhabitants that they killed him, bringing him to an inglorious end (verse 19).

Verse 20: While not part of inspired Scripture, the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees 3:7-40 says that Antiochus’ other son, Seleucus IV, was also unable to pay the taxes. Seleucus sent a Jew, Heliodorus, to plunder the temple at Jerusalem. Heliodorus went to the holy city but obtained nothing. Seleucus was later poisoned by Heliodorus, and so killed, “but not in anger or in battle.”

Antiochus Epiphanes

Daniel 11:21-35: These verses speak of the infamous Antiochus IV (known also as Epiphanes), the brother of Seleucus IV, who had earlier been taken hostage to Rome. He was a “tyrannical oppressor who did his utmost to destroy the Jewish religion altogether” (*Expositor’s*, p. 136).

Antiochus passed laws that forbade the practice of the Jewish religion, under penalty of death. He was a man of incredible cruelty. On his orders “an aged Scribe, Eleazar, was flogged to

death because he refused to eat swine's flesh. A mother and her seven children were successively butchered, in the presence of the governor, for refusing to pay homage to an image. Two mothers who had circumcised their new-born sons were driven through the city and cast headlong from the wall" (Charles Pfeiffer, *Between the Testaments*, 1974, pp. 81-82).

Verse 31: This refers to the momentous events of Dec. 16, 168 B.C., when a crazed Antiochus entered Jerusalem and killed 80,000 men, women and children (2 Maccabees 5:11-14). He then desecrated the temple by offering a sacrifice to the chief Greek god, Zeus. This outrage was a forerunner of a comparable event that Jesus Christ said would occur in the last days (Matthew 24:15).

Verses 32-35: These verses appear to describe, on one level, the indomitable will and courage of the Maccabees, a family of priests who resisted Antiochus and his successors. The Maccabees' revolt against the Syrian king was triggered when "Mattathias, the leading priest in the city of Modein...after killing the officer of Antiochus who had come to enforce the new decree concerning idolatrous worship...led a guerrilla band that fled to the hills..." (*Expositor's*, p. 141).

Mattathias was aided in his cause by five sons, most notably Judah or Judas, nicknamed Maqqaba (Aramaic for hammer, whence derives the name Maccabees). Many of these patriots died in this cause, but their heroics ultimately drove the Syrian forces from the country.

On another level, these verses could even refer to the New Testament Church, with their references to mighty works, persecution and apostasy.

Historic Fulfillment Switches to Future Fulfillment

At this point Daniel's prophecy definitely takes on a different tone, referring explicitly to "the time of the end" near the end of verse 35. To quote *Expositor's*: "With the conclusion of the preceding pericope [extract] at v. 35, the predictive material that incontestably applies to the Hellenistic empires and the contest between the Seleucids and the Jewish patriots ends. This present section (vv. 36-39) contains some features that hardly apply to Antiochus IV, though most of the details could apply to him as well as to his latter-day antitype, 'the beast.'"

"Both liberal and conservative scholars agree that all of chapter 11 up to this point contains strikingly accurate predictions of the whole sweep of events from the reign of Cyrus...to the unsuccessful effort of Antiochus Epiphanes to stamp out the Jewish faith" (*Expositor's*, p. 143).

From this point forward a little more than a century would pass before the Roman general Pompey would conquer Jerusalem. From then on for many centuries, much of the Middle East passed to the control of the Roman Empire.

The legacy of this north-south conflict is easily seen today. Tension between a traditionally Christian Europe and a deeply Islamic Middle East to the south is at its highest levels since the Ottoman push of the 19th century.

This age-old conflict will likely reignite as the time of the end nears. A revived Holy Roman Empire would seek greater influence in this most vital region. And regional Muslim powers would no doubt retaliate.

For a more in-depth analysis of this prophetic future conflict, read our free study aid *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.



Saint Peter's Basilica, the Vatican.

Roman Revivals of a United Europe

How can we know that the last world superpower will be a modern-day incarnation of the Roman Empire? There are a few Bible indicators that point in that direction.

One is found in Revelation 13:3 and Revelation 13:12, where it is stated that this beast has a "deadly wound" that is healed. Prophetically, what does this mean?

After decades of decline, the Roman Empire indeed received a "deadly wound" in A.D. 476 when Rome's Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by Germanic tribes led by Odoacer. But that was not the end of the Roman Empire. As we will see, that "wound" was indeed healed, and the empire would rise again—and again and again through history.

Photo, opposite page: PennaPazza/iStock/Thinkstock

The description of this beast in Revelation 17 is linked with a powerful and influential entity called a “great harlot” (Revelation 17:1). This woman represents a great false church that persecutes the people of God and sits on “seven hills” (verse 9, NIV). Rome, of course, is famously known as the “City of Seven Hills.”

As stated earlier, hills or mountains can be symbolic of governments or kingdoms, as is the case here.

Revelation 17:10 speaks of seven kings—leaders of governments or

A study of history shows the fulfillment of these remarkable prophecies in the form of successive new leaders of revivals of the Roman Empire.

kingdoms—who will “continue a short time.” Of those seven kings, it says that “five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.” That wording indicates that they rule in succession, one after another. The final seventh king is called “the beast” in Revelation 13:4. He will be allied with 10 other leaders or rulers who will “receive authority for one hour [symbolic of a short time] as kings with the beast” and “give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:12-13).

Verse 14 makes it clear that the seventh king, the “beast,” will be in power until Jesus Christ returns to destroy him: “These [the 10 allied rulers or leaders] will make war with the Lamb [Jesus Christ], and the Lamb will overcome them...” (Revelation 17:14).

A study of history shows the fulfillment of these remarkable prophecies in the form of successive new leaders

of revivals of the Roman Empire after its “deadly wound” of A.D. 476, which was healed. These revivals were in cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church. Let’s see how this was fulfilled in recorded history and what lies ahead yet to be fulfilled.

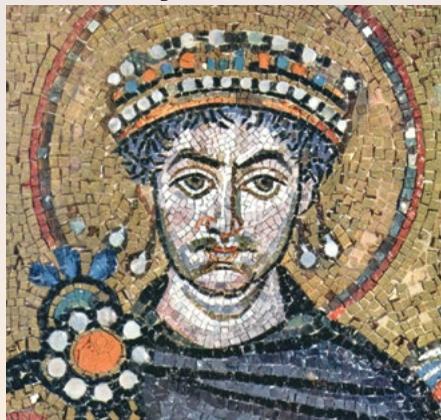
1) Justinian’s Imperial Restoration

After Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed, less than a century passed before Justinian, the Eastern Roman or Byzantine emperor, ruling from

Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), committed himself to restoring the empire in the West, launching what would be known to history as the “Imperial Restoration.”

William Langer’s *An Encyclopedia of World*

History states, “Justinian’s whole policy was directed toward the establishment of the absolute power of the emperor and toward the revival of a universal, Christian Roman Empire” (1960, p. 172). This same work refers to Justinian’s “grandiose reconstruction of the Roman empire.”



Justinian I



Charlemagne

The Roman church hierarchy played a key role in this revival. As historian Will Durant points out, “In 554 Justinian promulgated a decree requiring that ‘fit and proper persons, able to administer local government, be chosen as governors of the provinces by the bishops and chief persons of each province’ (*The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 4: *The Age of Faith*, 1950, pp. 519-520, emphasis in original).

The Roman Empire was alive again, having experienced its first of several revivals in league with the church. However, in the process of time, this imperial revival waned and gradually fell apart. Six more revivals were to follow Justinian’s restoration.

2) Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor

The second of these prophesied revivals or resurrections of the Roman Empire occurred at the time of Charlemagne—Charles the Great—who was crowned by Pope Leo III in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome in A.D. 800. This act was indicative of the power and influence the Roman church would hold over the empire in future years, when emperors would receive the title

Holy Roman Emperor.

Langer’s *Encyclopedia of World History* refers to this time as the “Revival of the Roman Empire in the West” (p. 155), adding that “Charlemagne’s rule was a *theocracy*.”

If there is any doubt that the Roman Empire was very much alive through Charlemagne’s revival, he adopted as his official title, “Charles, the most serene Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific emperor, governing the Roman Empire.”

3) Otto I, “The Great Emperor”

After Charlemagne’s death, his empire was divided among his grandsons, and although the imperial title continued, the empire disintegrated and remained weak and divided until the time of Otto the Great.



Otto I

The new emperor of the German nation united the imperial realm mostly by conquest. He received the title of Roman emperor in A.D. 962 when he was crowned by Pope John XII. This marked the third of seven prophesied revivals or resurrections of the original Roman Empire.

According to Langer's *Encyclopedia of World History*, Otto's "coronation by the pope as Roman Emperor marked the revival of the Roman Empire" (p. 216). His Latin-inscribed seal read *Otto Imperator Augustus*—"Otto the Great Emperor."

The German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, in a 2007 special edition on history, made the following observation about the German emperor: "Otto called himself...ruler of the Roman Empire, even though it came to an end a few centuries earlier. Charlemagne had already carried such a title.

"A belief spread about by Christians was that *the Roman Empire would last until the end of the world*. The prophet Daniel from the Old Testament prophesied of four world empires; then the anti-Christ would come. According to the configuration of the time, the Roman Empire would be the fourth empire. According to this interpretation, Otto saved the people and as such highlighted the claim to be over all other rulers in Europe" (p. 28).

Although the medieval concept of prophetic events as noted here was somewhat muddled, it does show that *the idea of the Roman Empire as a contemporary power, and one that would exist at the time of the end of this age*, was a well-established concept.

4) Charles V, On Whose Empire the Sun Never Set

Although Otto passed from the scene, his empire lasted for almost three centuries before being divided by rival factions.

This was followed, after nearly two decades without an emperor, by Rudolph I of the Habsburg family becoming "King of the Romans" in 1273—this distinction being used for

those assuming the imperial throne without official coronation in Rome by the pope (as circumstances often prevented this from happening right away or at all). This title gave way in 1508 to Elected Emperor of the Romans, and emperors ceased making the journey to Rome. Only one was crowned by the pope—Charles V of the house of Habsburg in 1530 (all the elected emperors between 1438 and 1740 being of this royal family).



Charles V

From his father, Charles inherited the vast Habsburg possessions of Central Europe, Germany and Italy. From his mother, daughter of the famed Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, he inherited Spain and its American possessions. Ruling over an empire on which the sun never set—an empire even larger than ancient Rome's—he was the most powerful man in the world.

Determined to realize the age-old dream of a unified Europe, Charles V's reign was the pinnacle of the fourth prophesied revival of the Roman Empire. "One of the greatest of the kings of Spain and Holy Roman emperor, [Charles V] was perhaps the last

emperor to attempt *to realize the medieval idea of a unified empire embracing the entire Christian world*" (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Micropaedia, Vol. 2, "Charles V").

However, major challenges thwarted his vision. In the course of his reign he fought against France, the Ottoman Empire of Suleiman the Magnificent, Protestants, and even forces of the pope. He eventually abdicated in 1556, leaving his Spanish possessions to his son Philip II and his Central European holdings to his brother Ferdinand.

5) Napoleon, Rival of Charlemagne and Alexander

One of history's most famous figures, Napoleon Bonaparte, was to lead the fifth prophesied attempt to resurrect the Roman Empire with the endorsement of the Roman church. As Will Durant observed, Napoleon "dreamt of rivaling Charlemagne and uniting Western Europe...then of following Constantine...to the capture of Constantinople...and proposed to rival Alexander by conquering India" (*The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 11: *The Age of Napoleon*, 1975, pp. 242-243). At the height of his power he ruled 70 million subjects across the European continent.

Born on the Mediterranean island of Corsica, Napoleon began to make a name for himself in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Having received a military education in France, he quickly proved himself a military genius in campaign after campaign.

But military power wasn't enough to satisfy his ambitions. In 1799 Napoleon maneuvered himself into France's top political position. In 1804 he crowned himself emperor of France, and later that year was crowned Emperor Napoleon I by Pope Pius II at Notre



Napoleon

Dame Cathedral in Paris. Before long his military conquests led him to rule Europe from the Elbe River on the east side of Germany to the Atlantic Ocean, as well as over Spanish and French territories in the New World—the greater part of the Americas.

Looking to Rome and Charlemagne for inspiration, Napoleon determined to unify Europe under his reign. However, his great ambitions proved his undoing. Plans to invade Britain fell apart after his navy was defeated by Admiral Lord Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805. In 1812 his invasion of Russia proved disastrous, with the loss of more than half a million men. Forced to abdicate his throne, he was sent into exile in 1814.

With this, the fifth revival of the Roman Empire drew to a close. But this was not the end of imperialist attempts to unify Europe.

6) German and Italian Dreams

Germany as we know it is a relatively modern creation. Before Napoleon, there were literally hundreds of small German states, each ruled by its own prince, duke or king. Austria and Prussia were the most dominant. In the 19th century Otto von Bismarck



Mussolini and Hitler

Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany. Both these men signed agreements with the Roman church that gave legitimacy to their fascist regimes.

Declaring the reappearance of the Roman Empire, Mussolini formed an alliance with Hitler, bringing about the Rome-Berlin Axis. Adolf Hitler proudly proclaimed Germany's *Third Reich*, envisioning a new German empire that would rival the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation established by Otto the Great. The sixth of the seven imperial revivals foretold in Revelation 17

was under way.

From 1939 until 1945 the Allied and Axis powers fought the Second World War, battling and bloodying each other across Europe, Africa, Asia

and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Germany's dream of a Europe united under a new empire almost succeeded, and at a horrendous cost. As in World War I, millions perished and Europe was again left in ruins.

Adolf Hitler proudly proclaimed Germany's Third Reich, envisioning a new German empire that would rival the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation established by Otto the Great.

managed to unite most German territories under the Prussian Hohenzollern dynasty, with others allied with Austria.

In 1870 both groups of German states fought together against France, and in 1871 Prussia's King William (or Wilhelm) was proclaimed emperor of Germany in the French palace of Versailles. His title, *kaiser*, harkened back to the Roman title *Caesar*. Centuries earlier Otto the Great had established the first great German empire—the First Reich. Now Germany had its *Second Reich*.

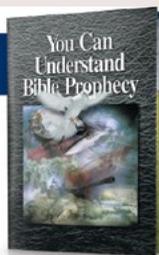
German dreams of a greater empire inevitably led to more war. In 1914 the First World War broke out, a conflagration that took the lives of millions and transformed the face of Europe. But when it ended four years later, major problems remained. In the coming years two new strongmen would arise with new dreams to unite Europe and expand beyond—Benito Mussolini in

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The EU: A Seventh Roman Revival in the Making?

In the devastated aftermath of World War II, it seemed unimaginable that Europe could rise again. Many venerable cities had been bombed into rubble. The dead were counted in the tens of millions. Old institutions and organizations ceased to exist.

What happened next, fueled by U.S. dollars supplied under the Marshall Plan, was an economic miracle:

Western Europe rebuilt and retooled its industry.

Modernized from the ground up, in the 1950s and 60s many of defeated Germany's factories began to outclass the factories of its national benefactor, the United States. The old dream of a peaceful European union led to an organization known as the European Common Market.

In the last half of the 20th century the Common Market gave way to the European Union, a powerful alliance with old enemies France and Germany at the center. The amount of international integration achieved under the European Union is staggering.

But it is not in the form that it will be when Jesus Christ returns.

Returning to Revelation 17, we see that John “marveled with great amazement” at the vision he had seen of the woman and the beast (Revelation

A seventh revival of the Roman Empire, called “the beast” and linked in prophecy to God’s intervention in human affairs with Christ’s return, lies ahead.

17:6). An angel then explained to John that “the beast that you saw *was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit...*” When they see it, people “will marvel...when they see the beast *that was, and is not, and yet is*” (Revelation 17:8).

What does such unusual wording mean?

Having gone through this historical background, we can now understand how an empire *could once exist, then disappear, then reappear* in a somewhat different form. The fact that this beast, symbolic of an empire, “*was, and is not, and yet is*” tells us that the Roman Empire, which does not exist at this time as such, *will be restored yet again* in the near future.

It “*was,*” meaning it existed in the past, it currently “*is not,*” meaning it doesn’t exist at this moment, and “*yet is,*” for it remains an undercurrent in European politics, and “*will ascend out*

of the bottomless pit”—meaning it is destined to rise yet again.

Revelation 17:10 prophesies that there would be seven kings or rulers who would lead resurrections of the Roman Empire in cooperation with the Roman church. We’ve seen that so far, there have been six. A seventh revival, called “the beast” and linked in prophecy to God’s intervention in human affairs with Christ’s return, lies ahead.

In 1957 six Western European nations—West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium—came together to create the European Economic Community through the Treaty of Rome.

These groundbreaking steps toward European unification were taken in the ancient capital city of the Roman Empire and home to one of the world’s oldest and major religions.

Paul Henri Spaak, former secretary-general of NATO, later remarked on that signing in a BBC documentary: “We felt like Romans on that day...we were consciously recreating the Roman Empire once more.”

Europe’s long dream of unity retains its hold on European leaders. Although slow to come together, and certainly not yet in its final form, that union will emerge as a global superpower that will stun and shock the world.

The European Union is now the world’s greatest economic power, accounting for more than a third of the globe’s total gross domestic product. It’s the largest exporter in the world. The euro, the EU’s common currency, has increased in value almost 50 percent against the U.S. dollar since its introduction in 2002.

Why Europe and Not the United States?

One lesson of world history is that great powers come and go.

Since World War II the United States has been the undisputed world-leading superpower. This will not always be the case. Bible prophecy shows that a *different* superpower will exist immediately before Jesus Christ’s return. It will be a great religious and commercial system whose trade, culture and strong military dominates the world.

British historian Paul Kennedy, who now lectures at Yale, wrote his monumental book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* in 1987. In it, looking back to the year 1500, he showed that the qualities that lead to nations’ rising to power and the reasons for their decline and fall have certain commonalities: debt and imperial overreach.

Just as the British Empire collapsed due to debt and an overstretched military, so the United States faces the same problems today. It stretches to field enough troops for all its military commitments. Astronomical debt is a crucial and growing problem.

Only a generation ago the United States was in such sound financial condition that it was the world’s greatest lender. That’s no longer the case. Due to its overspending, it’s now one of the most indebted nations in history.

There’s another reason we can know the United States won’t be that dominant superpower leading the world before Christ’s return: There are too many details given

in Bible prophecy about the beast power that just don’t fit with the description of the United States.

Primarily, the description of the beast in Daniel 7:7 says that the beast was “dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet.” This beast was represented by iron legs in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and as a beast with iron teeth in Daniel 7. The historic Roman Empire fits this description in that it ruthlessly crushed its enemies and ruled with an iron fist.

In contrast, the United States as a superpower on the world stage has never wielded power in the same way other superpowers before it have. Consider the aftermath of World War II. Instead of annihilating its former enemies Germany and Japan in a declaration of victory, the United States enacted policies and spent considerable money to help those nations rebuild after defeating them. Not that the U.S. has always had pure motives or done the right thing in every case (its dealings with the native American people, or the U.S. government’s complicity in the legalization and commercialization of abortion and pornography, for example). But as a self-proclaimed beacon of freedom in a world where communism and dictatorship threatened billions around the globe, the U.S. has acted in many cases out of a motivation to do good for the people of any given country.

Some EU leaders believe that the union isn't developing fast enough or flexing enough muscle on the world scene. There has even been discussion of forming a coalition within the European Union, led by France and Germany, that would speed up political unity.

Not all Europeans are greeting the concept of an EU military force with open arms. The joint U.S.-European incursion into Kosovo in the late 1990s revealed the general reluctance of many European states to play a part in using military force. The combined EU members sent only 50,000 troops to the Balkans, when they have almost 2 million men under arms.

Meanwhile the United States, with its major military commitment in Afghanistan and other forces scattered worldwide in the war on terror, is showing considerable weariness in acting as the world's policeman. Instead of pursuing force with Syria after that country's president Bashir al-Assad used chemical weapons on its own people, the administration of Barack Obama has pursued diplomacy instead. Likewise a recent diplomatic deal with Iran has taken shape instead of the typical threat of armed conflict and sanctions that have been used in the past.

Europe's Prophesied Future

The events in Europe are following a historical pattern—an attempt to unite the Spanish and Italians, Germans and Slavs, French and Scandinavians into one empire.

The current moves to expand and solidify the European Union appear to be setting the stage for the emergence of the end-time power Daniel prophesied as being made of partly of iron and partly of clay. In light of what Bible

prophecy reveals, it's fascinating to note the roots of the movement to unify Europe.

The idea of founding a renewed Roman Empire was certainly on the minds of those whose efforts have led to the current organization of European nations. That union has continued to strengthen with greater cooperation and integration in economic and political affairs.

The 10 kings who will give their power and authority to the beast will not understand how monstrously evil their creation will become, ultimately plunging the world into catastrophe.

Revelation 17:14 clearly states the time setting for this prophecy: "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them..." The Lamb, of course, is Jesus Christ. He will not return until this prophecy of 10 rulers who form an end-time superpower is fulfilled. Yet all indications are

Why Not Asia?

Many warn that China or another Asian state or confederation will replace the United States as the world's dominant power. And indeed the Bible does prophesy a great power rising in the Far East. But it's a power that comes with its own military against the beast (Revelation 9:14-16; 16:12). This could very well include China, perhaps in alliance with other regional powers.

China is a great power and is set to become even more powerful. However, it's clear that whatever strength it wields will be separate from the beast power that's to come.

that His return must be soon (a forthcoming study aid *Seven Prophetic Signs Before Jesus' Return* will cover this topic in greater detail)—and the appearance of this empire will of course be even sooner.

As history shows, the Roman Empire has fallen, risen and fallen several times in the past. Be assured that it will rise once more, yet soon afterward will be destroyed and replaced by the final superpower—the Kingdom of God, ruled by Jesus Christ, which will *never* be destroyed!

The last superpower of men described in Bible prophecy will be replaced by the final superpower—the Kingdom of God.

The Final Fall

The dreams of Julius Caesar, Justinian, Charlemagne, Napoleon and Mussolini have never died. They will resurge once more—yet will end in utter disaster. In Revelation 19 we find out who destroys this final empire. Here the apostle John writes about a vision he received concerning the future: "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'" (verses 11-13). This is the One we know as Jesus Christ.

Continuing: "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" (verses 14-16; see also verses 17-21).

The last superpower of men described in Bible prophecy will be replaced by the final superpower—the Kingdom of God, led by Jesus Christ, which will rule the entire world. Prophecy was given by God to guide us through changing world conditions,

strengthen our faith and give us hope for the future. Our faith must be in Him and our lives must be dedicated to doing His will

so we might ultimately be a part of that Kingdom.

This is what Bible prophecy reveals regarding the end time. The foundation is laid, the structure is being built, and the time for the seventh revival of the Roman Empire—the beast—draws ever closer.

Will you be ready to face these events that are destined to transform the world?

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The Final Superpower: The Kingdom of God

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ... You saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold ... The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” —Daniel 2:44-45



In God's love, He revealed what will happen in the coming years so that we may not be discouraged, but instead have hope. The beast power of Rome will persecute God's people and rule the world with iron cruelty.

Revelation pictures the end-time superpower as a woman dressed in purple and scarlet, riding a on a scarlet beast. John vividly writes that she appeared "drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:3-6). So this great superpower will be responsible for the killing of some of Jesus' own disciples in the end time, as well as bringing great cataclysm on the world at large.

It is a dire and bleak image, but Jesus Christ will intervene before mankind can fully destroy himself. He will come in power to break the oppressive reign of the end-time superpower. It is at this time that the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 2:34-35 comes to pass: "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the earth."

A Kingdom of Peace to Replace an Empire of War

As mentioned earlier a mountain can symbolize a nation or kingdom. The stone cut without hands pictures God's Kingdom that is established when Jesus

returns. That it strikes and destroys the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's vision is indicative that God's Kingdom supplants and replaces the series of world superpowers that have ruled the earth for the last several thousand years.

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

Compare this with Daniel's prophecy of the same event: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not

It is a dire and bleak image, but Jesus Christ will intervene before mankind can fully destroy himself. Jesus Christ will come in power to break the oppressive reign of the end-time superpower.

be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

This scripture indicates that the Kingdom of God will exist as a literal, world-ruling government, just as the beast power that will precede it will exist as a literal, world-ruling superpower. There will be a *tangible* Kingdom on earth which will rule over the "kingdoms of this world!" Zechariah 14:16 and Isaiah 2:2-4 clearly picture the people who live through the tribulation until Christ's return traveling to Jerusalem, which will be the capital of God's government, in order to learn God's ways and to worship Christ: "And it shall come to pass that every-

one who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

God Is Inviting You to Be in His Kingdom

The greatest aspect of God's Kingdom is that the world of peace it will rule over is open and available to all mankind. Jesus was speaking to all who would listen when He said we should "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). This message of God's Kingdom and your potential to enter it was the very heart and core of Jesus' gospel message.

When we hear and understand the gospel of the Kingdom of God, Jesus expects us to repent and believe the good news about this Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15).

Accepting Jesus' command to repent and believe this message, this good news, is the first step to being

a part of His Kingdom. We can turn to God for forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ and begin to live by the laws of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus Christ. Those who refuse to live God's holy way of life will be refused entrance into the Kingdom of God and eternal life (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5).

Jesus warned of obstacles that can prevent our entrance into the Kingdom (Matthew 5:20; 19:23-25; Mark 9:47; Luke 18:17; John 3:5). To enter the Kingdom, we must gain a proper outlook—a humble, teachable, childlike attitude—accompanied by real repentance, baptism and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit (Matthew 18:3; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38).

If you want to know more about baptism and how your life can change, please also read our free study aid *The Road to Eternal Life*. This knowledge is vital to your entering the Kingdom of God.

Seeking God's Kingdom must become our highest priority, no matter what the difficulties. Paul said, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Jesus encourages us to overcome these difficulties by keeping the Kingdom of God as our primary goal (Matthew 6:33). He urges us to pray for God's Kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10).

When our lives are devoted to seeking God's Kingdom, our outlook will be like the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Notice these inspiring words about their mindset: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ... Therefore

God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them” (verses 13, 16). The patriarchs considered themselves “strangers and pilgrims” because they looked forward to the Kingdom of God. Their lives were centered on that Kingdom, not on their physical, material life.

God reveals His wonderful truth to those He is calling now (John 6:44). Jesus Christ said His message would be preached at the end time before His second coming. “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

The United Church of God is committed to proclaiming this message and invites you to follow Jesus Christ’s calling to believe and respond to it.

The message Jesus brought is called, appropriately, the good news—the gospel—of the Kingdom of God. And it really is good news. It’s the most wonderful news imaginable to mankind. Jesus Christ is asking you to believe

that good news and seek first His Kingdom. If you do, Jesus said in Luke 12:32, it will be God’s pleasure to give you the Kingdom!

Conclusion

The Kingdom of God, not the beast of Revelation, will be the true “Last Superpower”—the final Empire that will ever rule over the people of the earth. As Daniel 2:44 said, it will “consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” Not only does this indicate that the Kingdom has not yet been established, but it also verifies that the Kingdom is a real government that will exist on the earth! It will be a time of unprecedented peace, prosperity and true justice. This Kingdom was the focal point of Christ’s gospel ministry, and the United Church of God is dedicated to carrying out His commission to spread that gospel. For additional resources that you can access right now to learn about the Kingdom of God, check out our free study aid *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.

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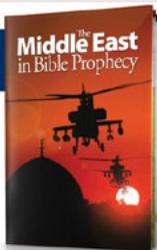


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“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’”—Revelation 11:15

What's Inside

2  Introduction: A Snapshot of World Affairs

4  The Dreaming King and the Slave

10  The “King of the North”
vs. the “King of the South”

15  Roman Revivals of a United Europe

21  The EU: A Seventh Roman
Revival in the Making?

26  The Final Superpower:
The Kingdom of God

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