

Are There Troubles Ahead For the European Union?

NATO's former secretary general Henri Spaak, upon signing the Treaty of Rome in 1957—thus establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), currently known as the European Union (EU)—said, “We felt like Romans on that day... We were consciously recreating the Roman Empire once more.” How can this be? Is history repeating itself? Will the EU finally culminate in the rise of a modern-day “Holy Roman Empire”? Is it now ascending to its ultimate destiny with perdition? What does BIBLE PROPHECY say about this emerging European “beast”?

The former *European Economic Community* is growing up into a formidable “United States of Europe” (European Union). Over the last four to five decades, the initial “Treaty of Rome” has been progressively redefined to accommodate this development. A constitution has been framed with hopes of ratification for establishing a common rule of law, standardizing the hegemony to manage the future growth of this emerging monolithic federation. But failure to ratify such a constitution does not mean the end of all hope for European unity. As an article in *The Economist* stated, “The collapse of the constitutional talks may allow the French to insist that an enlarged EU will be unworkable, so that a core Europe is needed” (“Who killed the constitution? And what happens to the beast now?” December 18, 2003).

As recently as May 1, 2004, ten additional countries have been added, making the European Union the *world's largest* consumer trading block. It now consists of twenty-five nation states, consolidating 450–500 million people, while generating a GDP of approximately 11 trillion dollars, with a common currency valued in excess of about 25–30 percent above the US dollar. All this has happened at an accelerated pace since the fall of the Berlin wall in November of 1989.

Europe is beginning to “open its eyes.” It is realizing that the original goals of the European Economic Community established after World War II are now radically inadequate and shortsighted in a “post-Cold War era.” Historically, men like Jean Monnet, Charles DeGaulle, and, currently, Valery Giscard D’Estang all had visions after World War II for Europe to “reawaken” the sleeping *beast* inside. They all shared this idea of a revived, affirmed, and reestablished European empire. And now this “ideological dream” is becoming a reality. Europe is unrelenting in forging for itself a stronger, more influential position in the global community of nations.

However, Europe is facing some major challenges in its progression for future acquisitions. Presently, Turkey is knocking on the door desiring entrance to this European fraternity. This presents some major concerns especially since Turkey is considered an Islamic country.

Remember, it was just recently, in March of 2004, that former Pope John Paul II was awarded the “Charlemagne Prize” for his extraordinary contribution toward European unification. Furthermore, outgoing German President Johannes Rau thanked former Pope John Paul II for his contribution toward German reunification and European unity. This illustrates the obvious: that the Christian heritage of European culture runs deep and wide. Its rich “Christian” ancestry is an important ingredient of European tradition. This is why Valery Giscard D’Estaing recently expressed concerns over the discussions and negotiations taking place, allowing the acceptance of the Islamic nation state of Turkey. Some inside Europe share the opinion that Turkey *will not* be compatible. It doesn’t have the historical, theological, or traditional connection to Europe’s “Christian” heritage, the renaissance, or any significant social linkage to Greece and Rome. All of the “European” philosophy and religious and Greco cultural enlightenment, historically, are missing with Turkey.

Instead, Turkey has been considered by some Europeans to be largely Asiatic, thereby running the risk of jeopardizing the original European objective of reawakening this “Roman Empire of old.” However, despite these concerns, the majority of EU leaders have voted to target 2007 for an *approximate date* of accepting the Islamic nation of Turkey into this European fraternity.

But Turkey is just one issue. The Ukraine is another. The establishment of a military and ability to formulate “national policy” on issues of economics, the environment, anti-trust, and human rights are but a few of the issues up for discussion challenging the leadership of this growing conglomerate of European nation states.

Historical Patterns

Since the prophecies given to Daniel, in chapters 2 and 7, Europe has been an integral part of the “pattern” of prophetic events. Both of these chapters describe human empires commencing with Babylon and continuing right up to the re-establishment of God’s government on earth. The Bible defines these empires as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Greco-Roman kingdoms.

History has shown that after the death of Alexander the Great, four of his generals split his Greco-Macedonian Empire. Ultimately, these four were reduced to two: the King of the North and the King of the South. The Ptolemys represented Egypt as the King of the South, while the Seleucids represented Syria as the King of the North. However, both Syria and Egypt were ultimately absorbed into the Greco-Roman Empire.

These are facts of the world’s historical record. But more importantly, it is an indication of our assurance God is steering world events. Otherwise, how could the prophet Daniel, hundreds of years before these kingdoms existed, know they would follow Babylon? God knows the future because He controls the events in the present that cause the future to occur *as He intended*.

Additionally, through the prophet Isaiah, God says that the patterns of history will provide evidence for future events. Notice Isaiah 41:21–23: “Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them *shew the former things* [history], what they be, that we may consider them, and know the *latter end of them* [future]; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.”

We are reminded that God knows the future. He can make it happen because He makes the decisions necessary and then steers events to insure the future will be accomplished according to His will and purpose. He points us to the past, revealing that if we will understand history, it will provide us the *prototypes* for the future.

With this in mind, when reading the *exact same* description of the “beast” in Revelation 13:1–3 that was mentioned thousands of years *before* in Daniel 7, it becomes obvious this “*end time*” beast is *historically connected and patterned after* the Babylonian, Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman empires of the past. Consequently, the emergence of a European Union, the magnitude of what we are currently witnessing, is quite an exciting confirmation of prophecy, but at the same time distressing, knowing what mayhem this particular “sign of the time” will eventually bring to Planet Earth.

Notice what Daniel says about this fourth and final beast, which appears *at the time of the end*: “Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and *shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces*” (Daniel 7:19–23).

This will be a frightful time. It will be especially horrifying for Christians. Your Bible is explicit that a future martyrdom, similar to that conducted throughout the Middle Ages, will be repeated. Notice, continuing in Daniel 7:24–25: “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall *wear out the saints* of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [three and a half years].”

We are told this world power, this government system, will think to change times and laws, thereby granting it legal power to *enforce punishment and/or penalties* on those who will not conform. Notice also Revelation 13:16–18: “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. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number of a man and his number is Six hundred threescore and six [666].”

We now begin to see that this government will have the *power to enforce* and cause the people of this system to be affected based on their degree of cooperation with it. If you do not cooperate, you will be *prevented from doing business*. If you are not able to work, you won't be able to buy. If you cannot buy, you may not be able to eat or socially integrate with the culture. This will present non-conforming individuals with many difficulties, even *resulting in death* for some! This future “mark” appears to be significant to the “beast's” government because it is contingent for approved citizenship. Those who will not compromise their Christian values and accept this mark will be considered an insurgent, resulting in personal persecution.

Daniel mentions this in Daniel 7:21,25. We are told that this “same horn made war with the saints, and *prevailed against them*.... And he shall speak great words *against* the most High, and shall *wear out the saints* of the most High, and think to change times and laws....” This “beast” power will *wear out* the saints of the most High. The Hebrew word used here means to consume or afflict. The implication is that the saints will become victims of violent attacks that will directly transgress their human rights as citizens. This same kind of government activity was initiated against early New Testament Christians by Roman rule. Scripture reveals a time, yet in the future, that will have the same tragic and horrible results for modern-day Christians.

In Revelation 6:9–11, the fifth seal describes a horrific event warning all Christians that a shockingly dreadful martyrdom is reserved for the future, at the “time of the end,” because of man's hatred toward God and His people, “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

Jesus mentioned the same warning in Luke 21:13–19. Many will claim that this particular persecution was intended to describe the terrifying events of Titus who invaded Jerusalem in about A.D. 70, which concluded with the massacre of Masada, in about A.D. 72. And though this is historically correct, and quite assuredly many at that time remembered this prophetic statement, we shouldn't dismiss the *latter-day application* of the events Jesus outlined. Remember, prophecy can be dual in specific cases. Luke 21 is obviously one of those cases.

Horns of Future Trouble

As terrifying as these end-time events will be, they will not occur without additional preceding evidence and opportunities to repent. God assures us He “will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

Therefore, it would do us well to reconsider what Daniel indicates as a curiously intriguing item regarding this “fourth kingdom.” As we read before, in the course of describing the frightening events and ascent of the fourth beast’s world dominance and consequent global decimation resulting in resumed Christian martyrdom, Daniel mentions that *three horns* fall prior to the final ascent of this latter-day, resurrected “Holy Roman Empire.”

Notice Daniel 7:7–8: “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, *before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots*: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Note also Daniel 7:24: “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, *and he shall subdue three kings*.”

In both of these incidences, we see an additional horn, separate from the ten, which rises up and *subdues three kings*. We are not told if these three kings are inclusive or exclusive of the ten horns, but it is clear these three kings succumb to this little horn, “whose look was more stout than his fellows,” and who “shall speak great words against the most High and shall wear out the saints....”

This additional horn is the same one described in Daniel 8:23–25: “And in the *latter time* of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully [or by wonderful works], and shall prosper, and practise, *and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people*. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and *by peace shall destroy many*: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes [Jesus Christ]; but he shall be broken without hand.” He is also described as the eighth head, connected to the seven-headed beast of Revelation 17:10–14, who goes into perdition.

The point is, Daniel warns us that this European King of the North, along with those sharing in this global power, determine it’s necessary to conquer *three additional* independent nation states or, perhaps, human leaders biblically recognized as significant. We know in Daniel 11:40–43, the King of the North (*remember anciently the “pattern” is linked to the Greco-Roman Empire*) will invade and occupy the land of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and along with that conquers Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. Is it possible that these three kings (kingdoms) are the three “horns” mentioned in Daniel? Or are there three others? Should we consider the invasion of the Jews as one, along with two others?

Time will tell. The point is, it appears that additional conflicts are coming and will provide evidence further confirming the identity of the “beast” of Revelation 13 and the final configuration of this European King of the North. The “signs of the times” and “beginning of sorrows” are upon us. For those of us who “have eyes to see and ears to hear,” may God help us to become more motivated in our commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and dedicated to His work, both personally and collectively.

Paul says, in Romans 13:11–12, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to *awake out of sleep*: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” It would do us all well to seriously consider the instructions of verses 13–14. (Please read it in your own Bible.) It may just make the difference in our salvation.

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