

THE SEVEN HEADS : FIVE ARE FALLEN, AND ONE IS...

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Linking The Daniel Prophecies With The Book Of Revelation, Identifying The Five Fallen Empires, Rome: The Sixth Empire With The Iron Teeth!

Any student of the Bible who has studied Endtime prophecy in depth is familiar with the mysterious woman in the Book of Revelation known as Babylon The Great Whore. We are first introduced to her in the following prophetic verses:

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (Revelation 14:8)

"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." (Revelation 16:19)

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Revelation 17:5)

It is in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen that we are given a full description of the whorish Babylon, her evil influence upon the world, and her final destruction by the Beast and the Ten Horns. Being as I have already shared my thoughts on the possible identity of this woman in my companion article 'Revelation's Babylon The Great Whore', the purpose of this current series of articles is not to concentrate on Babylon herself, but rather on the strange Beast upon which she is mounted committing spiritual fornication with the world as is described in the following verse:

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." (Revelation 17:3)

It is in the seventh verse of this same chapter that the angel tells John that he is going to give him the interpretation regarding the identity of the woman, as well as that of the Beast upon which the whore is straddled:

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." (Revelation 17:7)

In the next four verses, the angel reveals some startling information in the form of a riddle which has had many Bible

students perplexed ever since the words were first recorded by the Prophet John:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." (Revelation 17:8-11)

As I have revealed in other Endtime articles such as 'The Kings Of The North And The South', there is a close link between the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation given to John the Divine. Both of these men included some of the very same key elements in their prophecies. By comparing what they each said, plus applying the interpretations I have provided in my other articles, perhaps we can gain a much clearer understanding of exactly who these five fallen kings are, as well as identify the one who existed at the time of John's writing. To begin with, it is significant that the angel refers to seven heads, seven mountains, and seven kings which will be followed by a final eighth king. It is my belief that these seven heads, mountains and kings are synonymous terms, and are referring to the seven empires, and their primary leaders, which will have come and gone before the arrival of the final empire of the Beast.

To confirm that this may indeed be what the angel is referring to, notice his usage of the phrase 'five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come'. At the time John received this prophecy, five kings and their kingdoms, or empires, had indeed already come and gone. As I clearly demonstrate in my study of the Daniel prophecies found in 'The Kings Of The North And The South' and 'The Seven Heads' series, these previous five empires were Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Daniel describes these previous empires in two different ways: first in Daniel chapter two as various parts of a great image in the shape of a man, and again in later chapters as wild beasts. While the Daniel prophecies begin with King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire, we know from previous Biblical history, as well as from secular history, that Egypt and Assyria were indeed the first two empires to control vast territories, peoples and resources in the Middle East before Babylonia rose to prevalence.

One unifying factor between the prophecies of Daniel and the Book of Revelation can be found by looking at an earlier description of this very same Endtime Beast found at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter of John's Revelation:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." (Revelation 13:1)

As can be seen, this verse is almost identical to the one I shared previously from the seventeenth chapter where we see the very same phrases 'seven heads', 'ten horns' and 'names of blasphemy' used. However, it is in the next verse that we find even more striking similarities to the prophecies of Daniel:

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." (Revelation 13:2)

Notice first of all that this final eighth king, the empire of the Beast, is similar to a leopard. As I show in the aforementioned articles, the Grecian, or Macedonian, Empire was also symbolized by a leopard. Here is some of the information I provided in those articles:

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."
(Daniel 7:6)

In the above verse, the fact that Greece is represented by a leopard with four wings is very significant as it most likely symbolizes the great speed with which Alexander the Great, its greatest king, conquered the known world of his day. According to the historical record, this young conqueror's rise to power and rule over the Grecian Empire only lasted about thirteen years, from approximately 336 B.C. to 323 B.C. At the height of his power, Alexander suddenly seems to have lost the vision for any further conquests, even though much of the world still lay before him unconquered. It is said that he basically took off his war boots and died a drunk at about the age of thirty-three. His demise resulted in his empire being divided into four smaller weaker kingdoms ruled by his key generals. This may be represented by the four heads of the leopard in the above verse.

Returning to the Book of Revelation, notice too that we are told that the final Endtime Beast has 'the feet of a bear'. Again we see a direct connection to the Daniel prophecies:

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." (Daniel 7:5)

The above verse is commonly interpreted as prophesying the arrival of the Medo-Persian Empire on the stage of world events. According to the historical record, the year 550 B.C. is established as the first year of the reign of Cyrus, (Koresh in Hebrew, and Korrush in Persian), the son of Cambyses, as king of the Persian Empire. Cyrus' mother, Roxane, was daughter of Kiaksar, (also know as Astiak), the king of the Medes. Some historians place the beginning of Cyrus' reign as early as 558 B.C. The reason for this is because it is believed that initially, in 558 B.C., Cyrus was serving under his father as King of Anshan, a satellite

of Persia in what is today southwestern Iran. At the same time, Cyrus' father, Cambyses, may have also been sharing the throne with his father, Astyages. In 550 B.C., Cyrus decided to invade the kingdom of his grandfather, Astyages. The Medes helped him in this invasion hoping that he would free them from Kiaksar's harsh rule. Cyrus killed his grandfather and then continued ruling until about 529 B.C. Thus, depending upon which date we accept, the duration of Cyrus' reign was somewhere between twenty and thirty years.

While the Persian Empire had a whole line of kings, from both a Biblical and a historical perspective, Cyrus is probably the most well-known, and the most-loved. He is mentioned extensively in the Old Testament due to the important role he played in not only ending the Jews' 'Seventy Years of Captivity', but also in giving the order to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. This is covered in more detail in part four of this series entitled 'The Seven Heads: His Deadly Wound Was Healed'.

On the Median side, Darius the Mede, (Dar`yavesh in Hebrew, and Dariush or Dayara-Vahusha in Persian), was the son of Aspadas, who ruled the Median Empire from about 585 B.C. to 550 B.C. In the Bible, the Hebrews called Aspadas, King Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus holds Biblical fame as the husband king of the young Jewess Queen Esther. Ahasuerus may have also been known as Astyages, the very same family name as that of Cyrus the Great. Some say that Astyages was actually the name given to his son, Darius. King Ahasuerus was in turn the son of Cyaxerxes. Thus, Darius the Mede, who took the kingdom from Belshazzar in about the year 538 B.C., in the Book of Daniel, was also known to the Greeks as Cyaxerxes II, being named after his grandfather. At the time Darius took over Babylon, the Median Empire had already become subservient to the Persians under Cyrus the Great, also known as Cyrus II, who had defeated Ahasuerus, the father of Darius in 550 B.C. Thus, it appears that Darius was temporarily appointed over Babylon for just a few years by Cyrus.

What makes the history of the Medo-Persian Empire so confusing is the fact that some of these kings were known by different names by different cultures. To further add to the confusion, as we have also seen, some of these Median and Persian kings shared the same surname because of marriages between their families. This is why it is said that Darius was a distant cousin to Cyrus. It should also be pointed out that there was more than one Darius. For example, Darius I, also known as Darius the Great, the son of Hystaspes, became the founder of the Perso-Arian dynasty in 521 B.C. According to the Bible, we are told that Darius the Mede was sixty-two years old when he took Babylon in 538 B.C.:

"And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Daniel 5:31)

The historical record states that Darius the Great was born around the year 558 B.C., the very year that Cyrus the Great began sharing the throne with his father. This means that Darius the Great would have been twenty years old when Darius the Mede overthrew Belshazzar at the age of

sixty-two. Clearly then, these are two separate persons. According to my sources, there was also a Darius II, known as Nothus, or Ochus, who is believed to have ruled Persia during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and some of the minor Prophets such as Zechariah and Haggai. He reigned for about nineteen years from 424 B.C. to 405 B.C. Finally, the Darius who was defeated by Alexander the Great in about 330 B.C., was known as Darius III, or Codomannus.

Returning to our imagery of Daniel chapter seven, notice in the above verse that the bear is raised up on one side. This may be due to the fact that Persia was the stronger half of this dual empire. The three ribs in the bear's mouth may represent the first three kings of this empire; or they could represent the three empires which had come and gone before the arrival of the Medo-Persian Empire; that is, Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia.

Another important link between Daniel's prophecies and the Beast of the Book of Revelation can be found in the phrase 'and his mouth as the mouth of a lion'. Again we return to my article 'The Kings Of The North And The South' to find this confirmation:

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." (Daniel 7:4)

In Daniel chapter four, we discover that the wings of the lion being plucked represent King Nebuchadnezzar being temporarily abased by God due to his failure to recognize Him as the Supreme Sovereign who gives power to the kings of the Earth. While it isn't recorded in secular history, the Bible states that God ousted Nebuchadnezzar from his kingdom for a period of seven years until a spirit of humility had been restored to him. I discuss this topic in much more detail in later articles included in this series. In the book of Daniel we read:

"At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Daniel 4:36-37)

Nebuchadnezzar's reign lasted approximately forty-three years from about 605 B.C. to 562 B.C. It was during his reign that Jerusalem was invaded and the Temple of Solomon destroyed. This is described in much more detail in some of my other articles such as 'The Seventy Years Of Captivity: Was It Fulfilled?'. As you will see, Daniel's prophecies were in part a result of his own interest in the 'Seventy Years' prophecy of Jeremiah, being as he himself was taken captive during that same time, possibly in the days of King Jehoiakim:

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the

seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." (Daniel 9:1-2)

It is right after this that Daniel confesses his own sins, as well as the sins of his people, and pleads with the Lord to show mercy to Jerusalem which has already been destroyed by the forces of the winged lion, King Nebuchadnezzar. It is towards the end of the same chapter that Daniel is given his famous 'Seventy Weeks' prophecy which prophesied the coming of the Messiah, and His subsequent Crucifixion by the Romans along with other important events.

With this last comparison between the books of Daniel and Revelation, we have now covered all five kings, or empires, which had fallen by the time of Christ. For the sake of brevity, I have not gone into great detail regarding each of these empires. To do so would require many pages. However, you will find additional information on this subject in the fourth part of this series entitled 'The Seven Heads: His Deadly Wound Was Healed'. After telling John that five kings had already fallen, the angel then says '...and one is...'. In other words, of the eight kings which are to rule over the Middle East and have a direct influence on the nation of Israel, the sixth one was currently in power at the time of John's Revelation. Obviously, this was the Roman Empire. As I reveal in 'The Kings Of The North And The South', Rome was the fourth kingdom, or beast, predicted in the writings of Daniel. This powerful empire was first symbolized by two legs of iron in the great image seen by King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter two. As you will also see in later articles included in this series, this statue may have ties to the Beast, and events yet to occur in these Last Days:

"His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." (Daniel 2:33)

While the Imperial Roman Empire initially found its seat of authority in Rome, due in part to heavy influence from the First Century Christian Church, it was later divided into two powerbases; one in the East, and one in the West. The eastern half became known as the Byzantine Empire, and was founded by Emperor Constantine around 330 A.D. He ruled from the ancient Greek city of Byzantium which he renamed Constantinople. Today this ancient capital bears the name of Istanbul, Turkey.

The western half of the empire continued to be ruled from Rome which still retains the same name to this day. However, as the Apostle Paul pointed out in his Epistle to the Romans, Rome was full of pagan idol worship, hedonism and general decadence, including widespread homosexuality and lesbianism. Of course, we also know that until its conversion, Rome was full of the blood and the bodies of the Christian martyrs, thousands of which were buried in the catacombs below the city streets. It is also interesting to note that once Constantine 'Christianized' the empire with the 'Edict of Milan', over the period of the next several

hundred years, the seat of power eventually returned to Rome. Thus we see the birth of the Holy Roman Empire, of which the Roman Catholic Church with its pope is the last remaining vestige.

In the seventh chapter of his book, Daniel describes the brutality and iron-fisted rule of the Roman Empire, again confirming that it will be the fourth kingdom upon Earth. Here we see it pictured as a merciless beast with great iron teeth which devours everything in its path:

"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." (Daniel 7:7)

"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 7:23)

While the Roman Empire was indeed the fourth kingdom described in the prophecies given to Daniel, as I have already pointed out, counting from Egypt, we know that it was in fact the sixth empire to rule the Middle East. It is also interesting to note that it was because of Roman persecution, which began with the Death of our Saviour, that John found himself exiled to the isle of Patmos around the approximate year of 90 A.D.:

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 1:9)

Patmos is located in the Aegean Sea just off the coast of what was then called Asia Minor. It was in and around Asia Minor that Paul established most of the First Century Churches before his execution in Rome some twenty-three years before John received his Revelation. Today Asia Minor is known as Turkey, while Patmos remains a part of the Greek Archipelago. It was from Patmos that John wrote the letters 'to the seven churches which are in Asia' which begin the Book of Revelation:

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;" (Revelation 1:4)

Thus, with these verses, we have now discussed the first six kings, or heads, found on the Endtime Beast of Revelation chapters thirteen and seventeen. To summarize, based on my current understanding of world history and the Scriptures, these six kings are Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. There are several more important links between the books of Daniel and Revelation; however, because they deal more with the Endtime, and not with ancient

history, they will be discussed in later parts of this same series.

Before closing this article, allow me to state that, while a few Bible students have tried to convince us that there is no relationship between the writings of Daniel and John, in order to support their own erroneous interpretations, in light of the evidence I have presented here, I personally feel that there is absolutely no way to overlook this unity between the prophecies of Daniel and John. They fit together like a glove on a hand. As a serious student of the Bible I am convinced that the Word of God flows from one end to the other in its predictions, and in the fulfillment of those predictions. As the Lord said through the mouth of His Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel:

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" (Isaiah 46:9-10)

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."
(Ezekiel 33:33)

In the second part of this series, I will be discussing the phrase '...and the other is not yet come'. That article will revolve around my speculations concerning the identity of the seventh head. I'll see you there! I trust this article has been instructive, and a blessing to many.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

THE SEVEN HEADS : AND THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Rome And Palestine, The Byzantine Empire, Muslim Rule Over Palestine, The Balfour Declaration, The State Of Israel Is Born, Identifying The Seventh King Of The Book Of Revelation

In part one of this series, I began a study to help us to try to identify the eight mysterious kings which form part of the seven-headed ten-horned scarlet Beast of the Endtime. This concept is based upon the following Scriptures found in the Book of Revelation:

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."
(Revelation 17:8-11)

After presenting a considerable amount of Scriptural evidence, I concluded part one by stating that I believe that the first six kings, or heads, of the Beast are represented by the ancient empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. To begin this article, I am going to share some additional information regarding the sixth empire, Rome, which I think you will find quite interesting being as it relates ancient history with names and places found in the New Testament.

The Imperial Roman Government was founded by Gaius Octavius, (63 B.C. - 14 A.D.), who was also known as Octavian, or as Caesar Augustus. The term 'Caesar' was actually the surname of Roman general, statesman and historian Gaius Julius Caesar, (100 - 44 B.C.) whose fame is well known to historians, playwrights, readers of literary works, and students alike. When Gaius Octavius founded the empire, he converted Julius' last name into an actual title. In the New Testament, the word 'Caesar' is of Latin origin. It means 'severed', and whenever it is used by itself, it refers to the Roman emperor who happened to be in power at the time. In our English language, 'Kaiser' is derived from the transliteration of the Greek variation 'Kaisar'. You may recall that in times past, the leaders of Germany and Austria were both referred to as 'Kaiser' being as they considered themselves vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, it is said by some that all of the evil atrocities committed by Adolf Hitler were a result of his endeavors to restore Germany as the leader of the Holy Roman Empire.

It was on Yom Kippur of the year 63 B.C. that Roman general Pompey, (who had marched in from his conquests in Syria), conquered Jerusalem for Caesar Augustus. For the next four hundred years, Israel would remain under the domination of

Rome, until about the year 330 A.D., at which time the Byzantine Empire, (which ruled from Constantinople), would assume control over the Holy Land. It was during the reign of Caesar Augustus, the first emperor, that our Saviour was born in a small Judean town called Bethlehem, located about six miles south of the religious center of Jerusalem:

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)" (Luke 2:1-2)

As I have described in other articles, while the rule of the Caesars was indeed harsh, it was all a part of God's plan as it helped to create a period of relative peace over much of the known world, including in the land of Palestine. There were resistors to Roman authority such as the Zealots; however, they were a minor issue which were easily dealt with. While Roman taxes were heavy, the conquerors did make some attempt to enhance the living conditions of the subjugated peoples by improving their road systems, building aqueducts, etc. Of course, one could always argue that this was really just to further consolidate their own power, plus to make life more bearable for those who had to uphold Roman justice in the foreign lands. Regardless of their true motivations, with an improved system of transportation, general peace, the freedom to travel throughout the empire, plus several universal languages, that is, Latin, Greek and Aramaic, the job of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ was made all that much easier for the First Century Disciples.

By the time that Jesus was crucified, the stepson of Caesar Augustus, Tiberius Claudius Nero, (14 - 37 A.D.), had ascended to the Roman throne. This is not the same Nero who would later burn Rome, behead the Apostle Paul, and persecute and kill many other First Century Christians. This emperor's first name is transliterated from the Greek 'tiberios' and means 'from the Tiber (as god-river)'. The Tiber is a river of central Italy which finds its origin in the Apennines. It flows southward for about two hundred and fifty miles past Rome, and empties into the Tyrrhenian Sea. Tiberius was noted for his vicious and infamous lifestyle. It was in the fifteenth year of his reign that John the Baptist began his ministry of Baptism at the Jordan River:

"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." (Luke 3:1-2)

We also find Claudius I, (41 - 54 A.D.), mentioned by name twice in the Book of Acts. His name is transliterated from the Greek 'Klaudios' and means 'lame'. He was in power at

the time that a dearth, or famine, hit Palestine. When the Jews became too numerous in Rome, he was the one who kicked them out; although they returned not too long after that. He was poisoned by his 'loving' wife, Agrippina, thus ending his reign:

"And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." (Acts 11:28)

"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them." (Acts 18:1-2)

When Paul was beheaded, it was Nero, (54 - 68 A.D.), who was responsible for his martyrdom. This emperor's name is a transliteration of the Greek 'neron' which means 'brave':

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. <<The second [epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.]>>" (2 Timothy 4:22)

It was only a few years later, after Nero had committed suicide, that Emperor Vespasian, (69 - 79 A.D.), sent his son General Titus to complete the invasion of Israel which he himself had begun before having to return to Rome to fill the vacancy left by Nero. It was during Titus' invasion in 70 A.D. that the Second Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. It is commonly believed that around one million Jews lost their lives during the next three brutal years. The final battle for Jewish independence was lost when the famed Jewish fortress of Massada succumbed to a Roman siege. As I have shared in other articles, the destruction of the Second Temple was prophesied by Jesus during one of his Endtime sermons:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1-2)

About nine years after the Jerusalem massacre, Titus succeeded his father as the next emperor of Rome and ruled for only two years, from 79 - 81 A.D. The only emperor who ruled during this time period which I cannot directly connect to any events in the Bible is Gaius Caesar, (37 - 41 A.D.), who was also known as Caligula. One common habit of the Roman invaders was to change the names of some of the places they conquered in order to give honour either to themselves, or else to the reigning emperor. Thus, during the time of Jesus' ministry, we find such named places in Palestine as Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast, the Sea of Tiberias, (also known as Galilee or Kinnereth), Caesarea Philippi, etc.:

"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." (John 6:1)

"And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27)

"And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus." (Acts 25:13)

As I stated in part one of this series, initially, the seat of authority of the Imperial Roman Empire was located in the city of Rome itself. However, due in part to heavy influence from the First Century Christian Church, as well as to internal power struggles, treachery, and other nefarious reasons, the empire was ultimately divided into two powerbases; one in the East, and one in the West. Exactly how this came about is a bit nebulous in the eyes of historians. While there are a number of scenarios used to explain these events, the one fact with which there seems to be agreement, is that this split in Roman power occurred during the reign of Constantine the Great, (306 - 337 A.D.).

In about the year 313 A.D., Constantine passed the 'Edict of Milan' which made Christianity a 'religio licita', or legal religion, of the Roman Empire. Some say that this act resulted from a miraculous military victory he experienced a year before on the banks of the Tiber River; while others suggest he experienced a direct revelation from God. One thing is for certain; by this time, despite years of persecution, Christianity had taken a strong hold in Rome, even amongst the nobility class. Approximately eleven years later, Constantine vanquished his political rival Licinius. It was at this time that he set up his new powerbase in the ancient Greek city of Byzantium. Exactly when this occurred is a source of debate. It is agreed that it was somewhere between the years 324 - 330 A.D. With Constantine now established in Byzantium, and the eastern half of the Roman Empire under his control, the Byzantine Empire officially began. Eventually the city of Byzantium acquired the name of Constantinople. Today this ancient Byzantine capital bears the name of Istanbul, Turkey. This division of the Roman Empire was exactly as Nebuchadnezzar and the Prophet Daniel had seen almost eight hundred years before in the vision of the two legs of iron:

"His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." (Daniel 2:33)

One historic event which occurred at this time was the Council of Nicaea of 325 A.D. It was at this meeting that a formal doctrine was adopted by over three hundred bishops from throughout the Roman Empire. Thus we see the birth of 'organized' Christianity, what would eventually become Roman Catholicism, within the Holy Roman Empire. The supreme Christian bishop received the honorific, and in those days, powerful title of 'Pope' from the Greek word 'pappas'. While all of these events were going on in the East, the western half of the Roman Empire continued to be ruled from Rome. However, as the Apostle Paul pointed out in his Epistle to

the Romans, Rome was full of pagan idol worship, hedonism and general decadence, including widespread homosexuality and lesbianism. Of course, up until the time that Constantine legalized Christianity, we also know that Rome was full of the blood, and the bodies, of the Christian martyrs! It is also interesting to note that once Constantine did 'Christianize' the empire, over the period of the next several hundred years, the seat of Roman authority eventually migrated from Constantinople in the East, and returned to Rome in the West.

Historically speaking, what is most important to us in our quest to try to identify the seventh head on the Endtime Beast, is the fact that once the Byzantine Empire was established, the nation of Palestine came under its domination. However, Byzantine influence and control over Israel was rather shortlived. If we accept the date of 324 A.D. as the founding year of the Byzantine Empire, and the year in which Jerusalem came under its domination, then that dominion only lasted for two hundred and ninety years. In May of 614 A.D., Byzantine jurisdiction over Jerusalem was abruptly broken by a powerful invasion led by Persian King Chosroes II. Chosroes, or Khosro, was the grandson of Khosro I who some claim was one of the greatest kings Persia, (Iran), has ever known after Cyrus the Great. His reign was described as the 'Golden Rule' before the Islamic invasion. As a result of Chosroes II's invasion of Jerusalem, all of the churches and monasteries which had been built during the past several hundred years were destroyed.

About fifteen years later, in 629 A.D., there was another power shift when Chosroes II was assassinated by his son. Thus, Jerusalem reverted back to Byzantine rule under Emperor Heraclius, who had in fact helped Chosroes II to regain his throne when one of his commanders rebelled against him. However, the Byzantine victory was shortlived. Within a few short years, a major event would occur in Israel which would drastically change the lives of many for over one thousand years to come. The catalyst for that event occurred in the approximate year of 570 A.D. with the birth of Muhammad, or Mohammed, the 'prophet' and founder of Islam. By the time Muhammad died in 632 A.D., a powerful military and religious force had already begun to rip through the world of the Middle East.

Jerusalem felt the brunt of that force in 638 A.D. After a long period of siege, the Holy City was conquered by Muslim Caliph Omar ibn Khattib, thus beginning the first four hundred and seventy years of Muslim rule over Jerusalem. One of Caliph Omar's first acts was to build the original Al-Aqsa Mosque on the southern end of the Temple Mount. One belief suggests that he chose this location so that when worshippers faced Mecca, they would be turned away from the 'Foundation Stone' of the former Jewish Temple, thus showing disrespect for Judaism. By the end of the 600's, Damascus, Syria had become the powerbase for the Islamic Empire. The leader at that time was the Omayyad Caliph Abdel Malik.

When Abdel Malik's political rival, Ibn Zubayr, gained control of Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula, Malik decided to erect an alternate pilgrimage site closer to his

Syrian capital in Damascus. This resulted in the construction of the Dome of the Rock over the 'Foundation Stone' on the Temple Mount. It was after this construction had been completed that the Muslim leader gave the Temple Mount the new name of 'Haram Esh Sharif', which means 'The Noble Sanctuary'. When El Walid succeeded his father as the next caliph, he continued in his footsteps by replacing the original wooden Al-Aqsa Mosque with a larger and more glorious Mosque made out of stone during the years 705 - 715 A.D. To this day, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque remain the most noticeable features on the skyline of East Jerusalem.

In 750 A.D., three years after a major earthquake destroyed Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Omayyad Dynasty ended with the arrival of the invading Abbasid armies. Besides repairing the damaged Al-Aqsa Mosque, this new Islamic dynasty basically ignored Jerusalem choosing rather to rule their empire from Baghdad. For one hundred and seventeen years Jerusalem was ruled by the Abbasid caliphs. It was during this time that Emperor Charles I, also known as Charles the Great or Charlemagne, took an interest in Jerusalem and undertook some building projects. Despite his steps to renovate Jerusalem, the next two hundred years found her again basically ignored by the Muslim warlords who fought for control of Palestine on the plains to the west of the ancient city. During this period, Jerusalem was primarily controlled by various Egyptian dynasties including the Tulnids and the Fatimids. Towards the end of this period, the Fatimids were driven out of Jerusalem by the Seljuk Turks.

During this time, Christianity continued to expand in Europe. It was in the closing years of the eleventh century that, led by the inspiration of Catholic Pope Urban II, the 'Christian' Crusaders made their move towards Jerusalem. One year prior to their arrival at the Holy City, the Egyptian Fatimids had been successful in driving out the Turcoman rulers. Their taste of victory only lasted about a year, for in 1099, the so-called 'Christian' Crusaders arrived. During the bloody battle which ensued, thousands of Muslims and Jews alike were massacred. Many of the Jews were corralled into their own synagogue and burned alive. Those that did survive the ordeal were sold into slavery. Some of the Egyptian forces were permitted to escape to Ashkelon, but most were butchered. Thus began one hundred and forty years of the so-called 'Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem'.

Because of the massacre committed by the Crusaders, the population of Jerusalem was decimated. Following the conquest, those Jews and Muslims which had survived, were not even permitted to live within the city, being as the Crusaders viewed them as being unclean. Thus, the majority of Jerusalem's inhabitants were of European descent. In order to attract more European settlers to Jerusalem, several financial incentives were issued. Over time, Jerusalem slowly began to be repopulated by a variety of Christian ethnic groups from both eastern and western Europe. During this time, French became the official language of the 'Kingdom', and Jerusalem acquired its various ethnic enclaves which exist to this day.

After 'Europeanizing' Jerusalem for almost a century and a half, the Crusaders were finally ousted in 1244 by the armies of the Muslim Ayyubids. Their rule was short-lived, for in 1250, the Mamlukes came to power in Egypt. This social class was an odd assortment of freed slaves comprised of Turks, Armenians, Kurds, Tartars, plus a few West Europeans as well. The majority of the Mamlukes embraced Islam, and thus, Muslim control was re-instituted over Jerusalem, and the Middle East in general, for almost two hundred and seventy years, from about 1250 to 1517. Being as Cairo was the seat of the Sultan, it was also the capital of the empire.

During this time, as had happened under previous Islamic dynasties, Jerusalem was basically ignored politically and economically by her new rulers, and lost much of the 'grandeur' she had acquired during the Crusader occupation. In fact, while she had been the capital of the 'Crusader Kingdom Of Jerusalem', with the new power shift occurring, she was relegated the humble position of being a minor subdistrict of the region of Damascus which formed a part of 'Greater Syria'. To emphasize this point, consider that when Sultan Baybars constructed a system of roads to connect Cairo with Syria, even though this system extended as far north as the Euphrates River, it completely by-passed Jerusalem. Another interesting point is that during the Marluke's occupation, there were no walls around Jerusalem, being as they had been destroyed years before by El Malik El Muathim Isa, the Ayyubid ruler of Damascus.

While Jerusalem did suffer political decline, it did flourish as an Islamic religious center during the reign of the Mamlukes. A collection of Muslim writings known as the 'Fadail El Quds', (Praises of Jerusalem), was used to encourage influential Muslims to 're-Islamize' the city following the occupation by the 'infidel' Christians. Jerusalem was described as the 'first of two qiblas'. Qibla is the direction of prayer in the Islamic religion. What few people may realize is that in the early days of Islam, Muslims faced Jerusalem and NOT Mecca during the hour of prayer. This fact was used by Jerusalem's new rulers to advertise the city's religious virtues as the 'third Haram', or religious territory, after Mecca and Medina. The area of the city which received the most attention was the Temple Mount. During the thirteenth century, quite a bit of renovation and new construction was accomplished on and around 'The Noble Sanctuary'. This included resurfacing the domes of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock with gold.

By the beginning of the year 1517, Jerusalem again switched hands. This came about as a result of the defeat of the Marmluke army by the Ottoman Turks in Aleppo, an ancient city in northern Syria between the Mediterranean coast and the Euphrates River. Thus, beginning with Sultan Selim the Grim, Jerusalem became a part of the Ottoman Turk Empire for the next four hundred years. The Islamic Turks maintained their capital in Istanbul, once known as Constantinople, the capital of the former Byzantine Empire. Since then, the seat of government has moved to Ankara. It was during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the son of Selim the Grim, that the walls were finally rebuilt around Jerusalem, the current

tile surface was placed on the Dome of the Rock, and a number of other major improvement projects were carried out.

While things started out fine under the new foreign master, the situation in Palestine soon deteriorated due to a poor management style by the local Turkish governors, greed, extremely poor security throughout the land, and other factors. Few foreign travellers visited Palestine due to the threat of robbery, and city life declined to such a degree that the population of Jerusalem was reduced to below ten thousand souls. While the Jewish population had been slowly growing since the departure of the Crusaders centuries before, they were still small in number, and were very low on the social scale. So deteriorated was the situation in Palestine, that when Napoleon Bonaparte crossed the coastal plain twice in the year 1799, he didn't even bother to visit Jerusalem some forty miles away. Truly, this signified how unimportant Jerusalem had become in the eyes of the world.

Three hundred and fifteen years after the Ottoman Turks had gained control of Palestine, an event occurred which would serve as a catalyst for bringing positive changes to the Turkish administration of the Holy Land. In 1831, the nation was conquered by an Egyptian army led by Mohammed Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha. This band of renegades cast off the yoke of their former Turkish superiors and seized control of Egypt, Palestine and most of Syria. During their nine-year rule, they introduced some positive reforms which included in part, giving Jews and other non-Muslims more rights, strengthening the security of the land which encouraged more foreign visitation, better organization of the regional government, and more direct control from the central government in Egypt.

Even though the Ottoman Turks returned to power in 1840, the changes implemented by Mohammed Ali had a lasting effect, and the Turks built upon the foundation established by the Egyptians. Aside from continuing to improve living conditions for the local populace, and strengthening their direct control over Palestine, another very important thing they did was to permit foreign countries to establish consular offices in the Holy Land. These consulates were granted what would today be called diplomatic immunity, and at times, some of them exercised more political power than the temporary visiting Turkish governor. Another major event occurred in 1863 when Jerusalem became the second city to acquire the status of municipality in the Ottoman Turk Empire. The only other city with that status was Istanbul. Thus, Jerusalem acquired a Muslim mayor, and a local council which intervened for the interests of the local ethnic and religious groups, primary of which were the Jews and the Christians.

Thus we see that during the nineteenth century, the land of Israel truly began to open up to the world, and became of particular interest to Europe in a variety of ways, including religiously, scientifically, intellectually, and strategically. Because of this fact, many foreign-run institutions were established such as hospitals, libraries, hospices, churches and the like. While the entire Jewish population of Jerusalem was only about five thousand people

in 1840, this began to change as more Jews began to arrive from around Palestine, as well as from abroad. This resulted in the establishment of five new neighborhoods outside of the walls of Jerusalem. Some of these were financed by rich Americans, while others were organized by families or individuals living within the walled city of Jerusalem.

December 9, 1917 was the next major turning point in Israeli history; for on that day, three years after World War I had begun, British troops known as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, led by General Allenby, entered Jerusalem, thus ending four hundred years of rule by the Islamic Ottoman Turk Empire. The idea of liberating Jerusalem from the Muslims was not something which had occurred overnight. For some time the British had been discussing the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. After holding discussions in the British Cabinet, and consulting with leaders of the Zionist Congress, the British government finally made known its position through the following letter written by Arthur James Lord Balfour addressed to Lord Rothschild:

----- Begin Quote -----

Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely, Arthur James Balfour

----- End Of Quote -----

Several weeks after the invasion, on December 28, 1917, Sir Ronald Storrs was appointed military governor of Jerusalem. At that time, the city faced serious food and water shortages, insufficient medical and sanitary supplies, a greatly reduced male population, and a transportation system in great need of repair. What made matters even worse was the fact that the Bolshevik Revolution had occurred only two months before in Russia. Many Jews and Orthodox Christians had depended upon various incomes from Czarist Russia. When those funds stopping flowing into Israel, the rich areas of Jerusalem suffered immediately. Some land was sold, while

other once-rich areas became slum neighborhoods. While the next thirty years would bring great development to Jerusalem, and to Palestine in general, it was also during this period that a dark conflict would begin to rear its ugly head; a conflict which has continued to this very day. At the center of this human drama would be the beloved city of Jerusalem; and the protagonists of this dark play would be the Arabs and the Jews.

In July of 1922, the League of Nations entrusted Great Britain with what became known as the 'Mandate For Palestine' which established the guidelines for creating a Jewish national homeland. Two months later, in September of 1922, the Council of the League of Nations and Great Britain decided that the provisions for setting up the Jewish national homeland would not apply to the area east of the Jordan River, which constituted three fourths of the territory included in the Mandate. Eventually, this area would become known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Under the Mandate, the British authorities granted the Jewish and Arab communities the right to handle their own internal affairs. However, despite many improvements, the British government did not fulfill all of its obligations under the Mandate. This resulted in escalating conflicts between the Arabs and the Jews. Between 1920 and 1939, there were four periods of ethnic violence which resulted in many lives being lost.

It was in 1937, at the recommendation of the Peel Commission, that the British government first considered dividing Palestine into two distinct nations. However, strong objection from both parties resulted in that plan being scrapped; at least for the time being. Seven years later, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 which called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. It was approved with thirty-three votes in favor, thirteen votes against, ten abstentions and one member absent. While the Jews living in Palestine accepted the Resolution, it is interesting to note that eight of those who voted against it are still anti-Israel today, although a few have signed superficial peace accords with their Jewish neighbor. Those opposed included Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen. With the passing of Resolution 181, the British government announced that the termination of its Mandate over Palestine would take effect less than six months later on May 15, 1948.

These monumental announcements by the U.N. and the British government served as the catalysts for two major events. The first event took place within hours of these announcements being made public. The second one would occur some six months later. Aside from establishing the actual boundaries of the separate Jewish and Arab states, Resolution 181 also established the international status of the city of Jerusalem:

----- Begin Quote -----

A. SPECIAL REGIME

The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority on behalf of the United Nations.

----- End Of Quote -----

Within hours of this announcement being made, fullscale war erupted between the Arabs and the Jews. This war has come to be known as the 'War Of Independence, and lasted from November of 1947 to July of 1949. It was fought along the entire border of Israel; against Lebanon and Syria in the north; against Iraq and Transjordan, (renamed Jordan during the war), in the east; against Egypt and the Sudan in the south; and also against Palestinians and volunteers from Arab countries already inside the country. When peace finally did arrive a year and a half later, Iraq was the only nation which chose not to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Aside from ousting all of her Arab enemies, Israel also captured and held some five thousand square kilometers of land over and above the areas she had been allocated by the United Nations.

The second event which occurred as a result of these two announcements by the U.N. and the British government, was that only six months into the war, just hours before the British Mandate was to expire, the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum and approved a proclamation which became known as 'The Declaration Of The Establishment Of The State Of Israel'. The United States of America recognized the birth of the new nation of Israel that very same day, and was followed three days later by the former Union of Soviet Socialists Republic. This declaration was published in the Official Gazette, No. 1 on May 14, 1948 and says in part:

----- Begin Quote -----

"On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable."

"This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State."

"ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

----- End Of Quote -----

With this historic document, I have now covered just over two thousand years of foreign domination in Palestine, from the conquest by the Romans in 63 B.C., to the birth of Israel as a world-recognized nation in 1948. It is interesting to note that there is a prophecy in the book of Isaiah which some have applied to this historic event. While Christians may view it as referring to the birth of God's spiritual nation with the birth of Jesus Christ, others insist it is actually a prophecy regarding the birth of Israel in one day as per the above document:

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." (Isaiah 66:7-8)

If there is one point I wish to emphasize here, it is that in order to properly understand these ancient Endtime prophecies, we must keep in mind that they were written from the Jewish perspective. The Lord was showing the Prophets of old what would befall the land of Israel in the Last Days. In my view, if our interpretation does not maintain Israel as the central focal point of the prophecy, then it may mean that our understanding is not on the mark. In order to keep things in proper focus, let's take another look at exactly what the angel told John regarding the mysterious seventh empire which was yet to come:

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." (Revelation 17:10)

In the above verse, we are told that this seventh empire will only continue for 'a short space'. The problem is, exactly what is meant by 'a short space'? What God considers 'a short space', and what we humans consider 'a short space' is probably very different. However, in my mind, it seems to me that if the Lord is having John see these things and write them down for the benefit of His Endtime children, then He would want to convey them in terms which we could easily understand. In other words, perhaps this time reference to 'a short space' should be looked at in a historical sense. Perhaps the Lord is saying that compared to the length of time that each of the previous six empires have existed, this seventh empire will be easily recognized by the simple fact that it will exist for a shorter period of time. At the same time, we don't want to be overly legalistic in our approach either. The word 'continue' might not necessarily be referring to the full length of time that this seventh empire will exist, but only to the amount of time that it will continue to have influence and control over Israel.

With the above thoughts in mind, I am now going to present a short table consolidating the information I have presented thus far in this article. By doing so, I believe some things will become very obvious. Please note that I am using the

modern name of Istanbul rather than Constantinople to conserve shape in the following table. Please also note that the dates and length of years are close approximations:

OCCUPIER:	APPROX. DATES:	CAPITAL:	RELIGION:	YEARS:
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Romans	63 BC - 330 AD	Rome	Pagan	393
Byzantine	330 - 614	Istanbul	Christian	284
Persians	614 - 629	Tispoon	Zoroastrianism	15
Byzantine	629 - 638	Istanbul	Christian	9
Omayyads	638 - 750	Damascus	Muslim	112
Abbasid	750 - 867	Baghdad	Muslim	117
Tulnids	867	Cairo	Muslim	
Fatimids	till	Cairo	Muslim	232
Seljuk Turks	1098	Istanbul	Muslim	
Fatimids	1098 - 1099	Cairo	Muslim	1
The Crusaders	1099 - 1244	Jerusalem	Christian	145
Ayyubids	1244 - 1250	Damascus	Muslim	6
Mamlukes	1250 - 1517	Cairo	Muslim	267
Ottoman Turks	1517 - 1831	Istanbul	Muslim	314
Egyptian Force	1831 - 1840	Cairo	Muslim	9
Ottoman Turks	1840 - 1917	Istanbul	Muslim	77
British	1917 - 1948	London	Christian	30

As can be seen, this table really helps to put things in perspective in regards to who had control over Jerusalem. At the same time, it presents us with some very interesting questions regarding the identity of the seventh empire. Before interpreting this data, there is another important fact which I feel we need to consider, and that is this: In the prophecies of Daniel, we are given a very clear un interrupted view of the flow of history as it relates to Israel. In other words, there is no major gap in the historical timeline. Assyria followed Egypt, just as Babylonia followed Assyria, Medo-Persia followed Babylonia, Greece followed Medo-Persia, and Rome followed Greece. While there are some short periods where control over Israel passed back and forth between the waxing power and the waning power, ultimately, the next empire in line came to the fore.

One example of the above would be the various battles between the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Ultimately, the Egyptians lost their beachhead in Syria, and Israel came under Assyrian domination. Later, when the Assyrians began to weaken, Egypt again tried to grab Syria and lands beyond, and she was again beaten down and utterly defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. Another example might be the wars which occurred after the demise of Alexander the Great. Israel did not immediately come under Roman occupation once the Grecian Empire was divided. As I pointed out in 'The Kings Of The North And The South, Part One', for several hundred years there were a series of wars between the leftovers of the Grecian Empire, that is, between the Ptolemy's of Egypt, and the Seleucid kings of Syria. Therefore, Israel kept being passed back and forth between them, being loyal to one, and then being loyal to the other. It was right towards the end of that period that we have Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Maccabean revolt, etc. It was when the last Seleucid king was defeated by the Roman General Pompey, that Israel

finally came under the mighty fist of Roman authority.

The main point I am trying to show from this is that if we follow the Biblical prophetic pattern, then it does not seem to me that a great deal of time should pass between the passing of the sixth empire, Rome, and the arrival of the seventh empire. To suggest that since the height of Roman power, almost seventeen hundred years have passed, and the seventh empire has not yet appeared, just seems totally contradictory to the prophecies of Daniel. So the question then arises, exactly how are we supposed to interpret the above data? Naturally, I cannot provide a solid definitive answer. The problem I see is that phrase 'a short space'. How can we make it fit?

When I first began compiling this information, my initial thought was that the Byzantine Empire might be the seventh empire; however, I don't think it fits the picture. As can be seen, the Byzantine Empire ruled over Jerusalem for two hundred and eighty-four years, followed by a fifteen-year period of control by the Persians, and then an additional nine years by Constantinople, for a total of two hundred and ninety-three years. If you choose to accept 324 A.D. as the beginning date for the Byzantine Empire, instead of the year 330 A.D., then that gives us three hundred years minus one for the total period of Byzantine rule over Jerusalem. That is longer than the Medo-Persian rule, so I really don't think that the term 'a short space' can be applied to it. Being as Byzantium, or Constantinople, was the eastern leg of the 'Christianized' Roman Empire, I feel it should be treated as a continuation of the same. In other words, we could say that Rome ruled from 63 B.C. until about 638 A.D. for a total of some seven hundred years, except for the fifteen-year control of Jerusalem by the Persians.

Could it be that this short span of Persian rule constitutes the seventh empire? Possibly. Notice what happened next after the Byzantine Empire lost control again after nine years. From 638 to 1917, we have a total of one thousand two hundred and seventy-nine years! Except for the one hundred and forty-five years that the 'Christian' Crusaders controlled Jerusalem, the rest of that time, one thousand one hundred and thirty-four years, Jerusalem found herself under Muslim rule! Initially, the powerbase for that control alternated between the Islamic triangle of Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo; however, once the Ottoman Turks came into power, that was extended to include Istanbul. To help you to visualize this more easily, here is how our new table might look:

OCCUPIER:	APPROX. DATES:	CAPITAL:	RELIGION:	YEARS:
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Romans	63 BC - 638 AD	Rome	Pagan	686
Byzantines		Istanbul	Christian	
Persians	614 - 629	Tispoon	Zoroastrianism	15
The Crusaders	1099 - 1244	Jerusalem	Christian	145
Muslims	638 - 1917	Damascus	Muslim	1134

Cairo
Baghdad
Istanbul

British 1917 - 1948 London Christian 30

As can be seen, wedged in the middle of the long period of Islamic rule, we have one hundred and forty-five years of rule by the 'Christian' Crusaders. I pointed out earlier that during this time, Jerusalem was actually declared the capital of the 'Crusader Kingdom Of Jerusalem'. Could this possibly constitute the seventh empire which would 'continue a short space'? Again, all I can say is possibly. In like manner, the thirty years of British intervention might also be a third possibility for the seventh empire. One thing is for certain, the British Commonwealth was indeed an empire covering vast territories like the empires before it. The fact that it did control Jerusalem for a short time does make it a definite candidate.

As I have already pointed out, under U.N. Resolution 181 of 1947, Palestine, including Jerusalem, was divided between Israel and Transjordan. This resulted in the 'War Of Independence' and the problems which have plagued Israel ever since. Thus, from that time until now, (January of 1998), we have an additional fifty years of Muslim rule over part of Jerusalem. Although Israel regained the Sinai in the Campaign of 1956, and East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War, the truth of the matter is, for all the talking that is done, she still does not control the Temple Mount; and that is the key issue in all of these Endtime prophecies.

Israel cannot rebuild the Temple of Solomon because the Palestinian security forces known as the Wakf, or Waqf, have control of the Temple Mount. While the Islamic Wakf was traditionally selected by Jordan, in 1994 it was replaced by one installed by PLO chief Yasser Arafat; and they are extremely sensitive about allowing any Jewish religious activities to occur within 'The Noble Sanctuary'. Thus, if we add these extra fifty years to our tally, we have a total of one thousand one hundred and eighty-four years of Islamic control over all, or part of Jerusalem since the year 638. Percentage-wise, Jerusalem has been under full, or partial control by the Muslims, eighty-seven per cent of the time! How could this long period not be included in the Bible prophecies as one of these eight empires, or kings? It seems to defy logic to me. Let me emphasize again that the Biblical empires were consecutive. There was no large lapse of time between them. If we are as close to The End as many of us believe, then there must be evidence for either the past or current existence of this mysterious seventh king.

One thing I am relatively certain of is this: if we compare the length of time which previous empires endured, I don't see how we can consider this period of Islamic rule to be the 'short space' required for the seventh king, or head, to exist. Thus, in my view, we have four possibilities for the seventh king, or empire, which was to follow Rome. Based on the actual historical record I have provided, they are the following:

1. Byzantine Empire 293 years
2. Persians 15
3. Christian Crusaders 145
4. British 30

If one of the above powers is indeed the seventh head, this definitely points to some interesting possibilities for the last thousand years plus of Islamic rule over Jerusalem. I will be presenting some interesting ideas regarding this in parts three and six of this series. I trust that this article has been informative, and a blessing to many. I'll see you in part three!

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

THE SEVEN HEADS : EVEN HE IS THE EIGHTH!

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Defining Syria, Assyria And Babylonia, More On The Possible Home Of The Beast, Jesus' Syrian Connection, History Of The Aramaic Language, More On Moshiach, Saddam Hussein And Nebuchadnezzar, American-Jewish-Turkish Military Triangle

Many Christians today are firmly convinced that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is imminent. Depending upon the doctrinal position, some say that it could happen at any time. Others like myself believe that there may be a final seven-year period first, the beginning of which may be marked by a soon-coming Middle East peace accord which will, among other things, internationalize Jerusalem and bring it under the jurisdiction of the United Nations, (as per the 1947 U.N. Resolution 181), permit the rebuilding of the ancient Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah, and establish a homeland for the Palestinians. All of these topics are discussed in more detail in some of my other Endtime articles. Finally, there are other Christians who feel that the Second Coming of Christ might not be as immediate as some believe, but that it will definitely occur in their lifetime. So, no matter how you look it, whether it happens today, or within the next twenty or thirty years, it is still very close, even at the doors as Jesus said:

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." (Matthew 24:33)

As I pointed out in my article 'The Kings Of The North And The South, Part One', after doing a thorough study of the Scriptures, I came to the conclusion that the kings of the north and south prophesied by Daniel represent the countries of Syria and Egypt. I then suggested that there is a high probability that the Beast may arise out of Syria. The reason I prefer to say 'may' is based upon several factors. First of all, I am a fallible human being. While I desire with all of my heart to understand these Endtime prophecies, and while I do my best to study and compare the Scriptures which describe these events, as well as refer to secular history, I must humbly admit that I can make no claim to having interpreted these prophecies with one hundred per cent accuracy. Thus, I prefer to remain flexible in my views, and am willing to change them when additional study of the Scriptures, ancient history and current events reveals that I have been mistaken or a little off-center in my interpretation.

The second reason I state that the eighth king 'may' arise out of Syria is due to the fact that in the Bible we have what is referred to as Syria proper, and we have Assyria. These are not exactly one and the same. One clear example of this can be found in the following Scriptures where King Ahaz of Israel bribes King Tiglathpileser of Assyria to

fight against Rezin, the king of Syria residing in Damascus:

"In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah."
(2 Kings 15:37)

"Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." (2 Kings 16:5-9)

Here we see a clear picture of Damascus, the capital of Syria, being assimilated into the Assyrian Empire by King Tiglathpileser. All of this came about as part of the Lord's chastisements against Pekah, the king of Samaria, (the capital of northern Israel, also known as Ephraim), and against Rezin, the king of Syria, who formed a confederacy to attack Jerusalem in the south. Some of the major Prophets predicted the fall of Samaria and Damascus and Syrian King Rezin in verses such as the following from Isaiah:

"Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." (Isaiah 7:7-9)

"For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria. The LORD spake also unto me again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:" (Isaiah 8:4-7)

"The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts."
(Isaiah 17:1-3)

To fully grasp this difference between Syria and Assyria,

one must understand the ancient geographical and political relationships between these different countries and empires. To assist us in this matter, I am going to refer to several different sources. To begin with, in the Catholic Encyclopedia, we find the following useful information regarding the Assyrian Empire:

----- Begin Quote -----

"In treating of Assyria it is extremely difficult not to speak at the same time of its sister, or rather mother country, Babylonia, as the peoples of these two countries, the Semitic Babylonians and Assyrians, are both ethnographically and linguistically the same race, with identical religion, language, literature, and civilization..."

"Geographically, Assyria occupies the northern and middle part of Mesopotamia, situated between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; while the southern half, extending as far south as the Persian Gulf, constitutes the countries of Babylonia and Chaldea. Assyria originally occupied but a scant geographical area, comprising the small triangular shaped land lying between the Tigris and Zab Rivers, but in later times, owing to its wonderful conquests its boundaries extended as far north as Armenia to Media on the east; to northern Syria, and to the country of the Hittites, on the west and to Babylonia and Elam on the south and southeast, occupying almost the entire Mesopotamian valley. By the Hebrews it was known under the name of Aram-Naharaim, i.e. "Aram [or Syria] of the two rivers" to distinguish it from Syria proper, although it is doubtful whether the Hebrew name should be read as dual, or rather as a plural, i.e. Aram-Naharim (Aram of the many rivers or "Of the great river" -- Euphrates. In later Old Testament times, it was known under the name of Asshur. By the Greeks and Romans it was called Mesopotamia, and Assyria; by the Aramaeans, Beth-naharim, "the country of the rivers"; by the Egyptians Nahrina; by the Arabs, Athur, or Al-Gezirah, "the island", or Bain-al-nahrain, "the country between the two rivers" -- Mesopotamia. Whether the name Assyria is derived from that of the god Asshur, or vice versa, or whether Asshur was originally the name of a particular city and afterwards applied to the whole country cannot be determined."

From the Catholic Encyclopedia, copyright © 1913 by the Encyclopedia Press, Inc. Electronic version copyright © 1997 by New Advent, Inc.

----- End Of Quote -----

In order to really understand the extent of the Assyrian Empire, we first need to define some of the terms and locations mentioned in the above description. Regarding 'Media', here is some information taken from the Hebrew lexicon:

'Media' is derived from the English transliteration of the Hebrew 'Maday', pronounced 'maw-dah'-ee'. In the Authorized King James Bible, it is translated as 'Medes' eight times, as 'Media' six times, and as 'Madai' two times. It means

'middle land' and refers to the descendants of the son of Japheth who inhabited the territory of Media. This land was located northwest of Persia (Iran) proper, south and southwest of the Caspian Sea, east of Armenia and Assyria, and west and northwest of the great salt desert of Iram. In short, it was basically the northwestern corner of current-day Iran.

Easton's Bible Dictionary provides this additional information concerning Media, the land of the Medes:

----- Begin Quote -----

"We first hear of this people in the Assyrian cuneiform records, under the name of Amada, about B.C. 840. They appear to have been a branch of the Aryans, who came from the east bank of the Indus, and were probably the predominant race for a while in the Mesopotamian Valley. They consisted for three or four centuries of a number of tribes, each ruled by its own chief, who at length were brought under the Assyrian yoke, (2Ki 17:6). From this subjection they achieved deliverance, and formed themselves into an empire under Cyaxares, (B.C. 633). This monarch entered into an alliance with the king of Babylon, and invaded Assyria, capturing and destroying the city of Nineveh, (B.C. 625), thus putting an end to the Assyrian monarchy, (Nah 1:8, 2:5-6, 3:13-14). Media now rose to a place of great power, vastly extending its boundaries. But it did not long exist as an independent kingdom. It rose with Cyaxares, its first king, and it passed away with him; for during the reign of his son and successor Astyages, the Persians waged war against the Medes and conquered them, the two nations being united under one monarch, Cyrus the Persian, (B.C. 558). The "cities of the Medes" are first mentioned in connection with the deportation of the Israelites on the destruction of Samaria, (2Ki 17:6, 18:11). Soon afterwards, Isaiah, (Isa 13:17, 21:2), speaks of the part taken by the Medes in the destruction of Babylon, (Jer 51:11, 28). Daniel gives an account of the reign of Darius the Mede, who was made viceroy by Cyrus (Dan 6:1-28). The decree of Cyrus, Ezra informs us, (Ezr 6:2-5), was found in "the palace that is in the province of the Medes," Achmetha or Ecbatana of the Greeks, which is the only Median city mentioned in Scripture."

----- End Of Quote -----

As stated in the previous definition, Achmetha, or Ecbatana is the only Median city mentioned in the Scriptures:

"Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written:" (Ezra 6:1-2)

Again, using Easton's Bible Dictionary, I discovered this additional information regarding Ecbatana, or Achmetha, as it is referred to in the Scriptures:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Achmetha, called Ecbatana by classical writers, the capital of northern Media. Here was the palace which was the residence of the old Median monarchs, and of Cyrus and Cambyses. In the time of Ezra, the Persian kings resided usually at Susa of Babylon. But Cyrus held his court at Achmetha; and Ezra, writing a century after, correctly mentions the place where the decree of Cyrus was found."

----- End of Quote -----

Another location we need to define in our explanation of the extent of the Assyrian Empire, is the land of 'Elam'. The Hebrew lexicon states that 'Elam' is transliterated from the Hebrew 'Eylam', pronounced 'ay-lawm', or 'Owlam', pronounced 'o-lawm'. In a genealogical sense, Elam means 'eternity', and was the name given to one of the sons of Shem. However, geographically speaking, it means 'highland', and was a province located east of Babylon, and northeast of the lower Tigris River. Easton's Bible Dictionary again provides us with a wealth of additional information:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Highland, the son of Shem, (Gen 10:22), and the name of the country inhabited by his descendants, (Gen 14:1, 9, Isa 11:11, 21:2) etc., lying to the east of Babylonia, and extending to the shore of the Mediterranean, a distance in a direct line of about 1,000 miles. The name Elam is an Assyrian word meaning 'high'. The inhabitants of Elam, or 'the Highlands', to the east of Babylon, were called Elamites. They were divided into several branches, speaking different dialects of the same agglutinative language. The race to which they belonged was brachycephalic, or short-headed, like the pre-Semitic Sumerians of Babylonia. The earliest Elamite kingdom seems to have been that of Anzan, the exact site of which is uncertain; but in the time of Abraham, Shushan or Susa appears to have already become the capital of the country. Babylonia was frequently invaded by the Elamite kings, who at times asserted their supremacy over it (as in the case of Chedorlaomer, the Kudur-Lagamar, or 'servant of the goddess Lagamar,' of the cuneiform texts). The later Assyrian monarchs made several campaigns against Elam, and finally Assur-bani-pal, (about B.C. 650), succeeded in conquering the country, which was ravaged with fire and sword. On the fall of the Assyrian Empire, Elam passed into the hands of the Persians, (A.H. Sayce). This country was called by the Greeks Cissia or Susiana."

----- End Of Quote -----

In the Hebrew lexicon, we discover that 'Shushan', or 'Susa', is transliterated from the Hebrew 'shuwshan', pronounced 'shoo-shan', and means 'lily'. As the Scriptures bear out, Shushan was the winter residence of the Persian kings, such as Ahasuerus, and was located on the river Ulai, also known as Choaspes:

"Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) That in those

days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace," (Esther 1:1-2)

We also know from the Scriptures that Daniel served in the royal courts during the reigns of Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, during the reign of Darius the Mede, and also during the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Likewise, we know that during one of his prophetic visions, he was either actually at the palace in Shushan on the River Ulai, or else he was translated there in the Spirit where he beheld the expansion of the Medo-Persian empire, and then its subsequent demise at the hands of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. The way the verses are worded, it is a bit difficult to tell if Daniel was actually there in Shushan, or if he simply saw himself there in the vision:

"In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai." (Daniel 8:1-2)

Regarding the River Ulai, Easton's Bible Dictionary provides us with this additional information:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Eulaus of the Greeks; a river of Susiana. It was probably the eastern branch of the Choasper (Kerkhan), which divided into two branches some 20 miles above the city of Susa. Hence Daniel, (Dan 8:2, 16), speaks of standing "between the banks of Ulai", i.e., between the two streams of the divided river."

----- End Of Quote -----

Finally, let's take a look at who the Hittites were, and where their primary area of residence was located. The Hittites were the descendants of Heth who was the second son of Canaan. It was from Ephron the Hittite that Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah for four hundred shekels of silver. Machpelah was located in the plain of Mamre which we are told in Genesis chapter twenty-three pertains to Hebron. It was in this cave that both Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, as well as Isaac and Rebekah, Leah and Jacob:

"And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah." (Genesis 49:29-31)

Regarding the geographical location of the Hittites, it appears that their land of origin was what is today known as Turkey, a topic I will greatly expand upon in part six of this series. However, the Hittites did a lot of travelling,

and at different times, their influence and power extended as far as Syria, Lebanon, Canaan and Egypt. Their capital was Carchemish which was located on the Euphrates River in northern Syria, in the plains or tableland region known as Padan-aram. This area forms the northern region of Mesopotamia and was named after Aram, one of the sons of Shem. Carchemish was first captured by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, and then taken from him by King Nebuchadnezzar as will be explained further along in this series.

What is also very interesting about all of this is that when Abram and his family first left Ur of the Chaldees in lower Mesopotamia along with Abram's father, Terah, and other relatives, they migrated northwestward to Haran which is also in Padan-aram. Not only that, but as I also explained in my article 'The Children Of God And Politics', it was in Padan-aram that Isaac obtained his wife Rebekah, and where Jacob also worked for his Syrian uncle Laban for fourteen years in order to obtain his two wives Rachel and Leah. Easton's Bible Dictionary provides us with this related information regarding Mesopotamia:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The country between the two rivers (Heb. Aram-naharaim; i.e., "Syria of the two rivers"), the name given by the Greeks and Romans to the region between the Euphrates and the Tigris, (Gen 24:10, Deu 23:4, Jud 3:8, 10). In the Old Testament, it is mentioned also under the name 'Padan-aram'; i.e., the plain of Aram, or Syria, (Gen 25:20). The northern portion of this fertile plateau was the original home of the ancestors of the Hebrews, (Gen 11:1, Act 7:2). From this region, Isaac obtained his wife Rebecca, (Gen 24:10, 15), and here also Jacob sojourned, (Gen 28:2-7), and obtained his wives, and here most of his sons were born, (Gen 35:26, 46:15). The petty, independent tribes of this region, each under its own prince, were warlike, and used chariots in battle. They maintained their independence till after the time of David, when they fell under the dominion of Assyria, and were absorbed into the empire, (2Ki 19:13)."

----- End Of Quote -----

To conclude these definitions of terms used to describe the Assyrian Empire, here is some additional information concerning the Hittites taken from Easton's Bible Dictionary:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Palestine and Syria appear to have been originally inhabited by three different tribes.

1. The Semites, living on the east of the Isthmus of Suez. They were nomadic and pastoral tribes.
2. The Phoenicians, who were merchants and traders; and
3. the Hittites, who were the warlike element of this confederation of tribes. They inhabited the whole region between the Euphrates and Damascus, their chief cities being

Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Kadesh, now Tell Neby Mendeh, in the Orontes Valley, about six miles south of the Lake of Homs. These Hittites seem to have risen to great power as a nation, as for a long time they were formidable rivals of the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. In the book of Joshua they always appear as the dominant race to the north of Galilee. Somewhere about the twenty-third century B.C. the Syrian confederation, led probably by the Hittites, arched against Lower Egypt, which they took possession of, making Zoan their capital. Their rulers were the Hyksos, or shepherd kings. They were at length finally driven out of Egypt. Rameses II sought vengeance against the "vile Kheta," as he called them, and encountered and defeated them in the great battle of Kadesh, four centuries after Abraham.

They are first referred to in Scripture in the history of Abraham, who bought from Ephron the Hittite the field and the cave of Machpelah, (Gen 15:20, 23:3-18). They were then settled at Kirjath-arba. From this tribe Esau took his first two wives, (Gen 26:34, 36:2). They are afterwards mentioned in the usual way among the inhabitants of the Promised Land, (Exo 23:28). They were closely allied to the Amorites, and are frequently mentioned along with them as inhabiting the mountains of Palestine. When the spies entered the land, they seem to have occupied with the Amorites the mountain region of Judah, (Num 13:29). They took part with the other Canaanites against the Israelites, (Jos 9:1, 11:3). After this, there are few references to them in Scripture. Mention is made of "Ahimelech the Hittite", (1Sa 26:6), and of "Uriah the Hittite," one of David's chief officers, (2Sa 23:39, 1Ch 11:41). In the days of Solomon they were a powerful confederation in the north of Syria, and were ruled by "kings". They are met with after the Exile still a distinct people, (Ezr 9:1, Neh 13:23-28). The Hebrew merchants exported horses from Egypt not only for the kings of Israel, but also for the Hittites, (1Ki 10:28-29). From the Egyptian monuments we learn that "the Hittites were a people with yellow skins and 'Mongoloid' features, whose receding foreheads, oblique eyes, and protruding upper jaws are represented as faithfully on their own monuments as they are on those of Egypt, so that we cannot accuse the Egyptian artists of caricaturing their enemies. The Amorites, on the contrary, were a tall and handsome people. They are depicted with white skins, blue eyes, and reddish hair, all the characteristics, in fact, of the white race", (Sayce's 'The Hittites'). The original seat of the Hittite tribes was the mountain ranges of Taurus. They belonged to Asia Minor, and not to Syria."

----- End Of Quote -----

With all of this additional information I have provided, we can now easily translate the description of the Assyrian Empire into modern-day terms. If you apply all of these definitions to a current map of the Middle East, you will discover that this ancient empire included the northern half of Iraq, most if not all of Syria, a section of Turkey, and part of the northwestern corner of Iran. Additionally, we know from the Scriptures, as well as from secular history, that the Assyrians also controlled ancient Israel, particularly the northern half and its capital Samaria. As I

stated in my article 'The Fruits of Disobedience', not only did the Lord allow Israel and Judah to be carried away captive into Assyria and the cities of the Medes because of their pagan idol worship, but Esar-haddon, the king of Assyria at the time, also brought idol-worshipping people from Babylon, Assyria and Syria to replace those he had carried away captive out of Samaria:

"And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof...Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;" (2 Kings 17:24, 29-34)

Having now established this description of the Assyrian Empire, it is a simple matter to define the original land area covered by its parent empire, Babylonia. Following is a description I extracted from the Catholic Encyclopedia:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The country lies diagonally from northwest to southeast, between 30° and 33° N. lat., and 44° and 48° E. long., or from the present city of Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, from the slopes of Khuzistan on the east to the Arabian Desert on the west, and is substantially contained between the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris, though, to the west a narrow strip of cultivation on the right bank of the Euphrates must be added. Its total length is some 300 miles, its greatest width about 125 miles; about 23,000 square miles in all, or the size of Holland and Belgium together. Like those two countries, its soil is largely formed by the alluvial deposits of two great rivers. A most remarkable feature of Babylonian geography is that the land to the south encroaches on the sea and that the Persian Gulf recedes at present at the rate of a mile in seventy years, while in the past, though still in historic times, it receded as much as a mile in thirty years. In the early period of Babylonian history the gulf must have extended some one hundred and twenty miles further inland. According to historical records both the towns Ur and Eridu were once close to the Gulf, from which they are now about a hundred miles distant; and from the reports of Sennacherib's campaign against Bit Yakin we gather that as late as 695 B.C., the four rivers Kerkha, Karun, Euphrates, and Tigris entered the gulf by separate

mouths, which proves that the sea even then extended a considerable distance north of where the Euphrates and Tigris now join to form the Shatt-al-Arab."

J.P. ARENDZEN Transcribed by Rev. Richard Giroux

From the Catholic Encyclopedia, copyright © 1913 by the Encyclopedia Press, Inc. Electronic version copyright © 1997 by New Advent, Inc.

----- End Of Quote -----

Thus we see that ancient Babylonia, and the land of the Chaldeans, was contained within what is currently the southern half of Iraq. With this enhanced understanding of Syria, Assyria and Babylonia, perhaps you can now understand why I hesitate to say that the modern country of Syria is the ONLY possible place of origin of the Beast. Currently, as I stated in 'The Kings Of The North And The South', I am of the opinion that President Hafez Al-Assad, the current leader of Syria, (or possibly one of his successors depending upon how much time is left), holds the highest possibility for being the Endtime 'king of the north' mentioned in the Daniel prophecies.

However, based on the historical facts I have presented here, I also feel it is wise to remain flexible and thus suggest that this mysterious Endtime 'king of the north', that is, the Beast or eighth king of the Book of Revelation, could also possibly arise out of Iraq. This of course immediately brings President Saddam Hussein into the picture, or possibly one of his successors. Again, I base this expanded understanding on the following facts: The Assyrian Empire was primarily comprised of the northern half of Iraq. Assyria later assimilated Syria Proper as explained towards the beginning of this article. The Assyrian Empire was later assimilated by the Babylonian Empire which primarily constituted the southern half of modern-day Iraq.

At the same time, by this inclusion of Iraq in the Endtime scenario as the possible home of the Beast, I do not wish to minimize the importance I place upon Syria either. That Syria will play a pivotal role in Endtime events, and possibly give rise to the political/military leader known as the Beast, there is no doubt in my mind. Unbeknownst to most people, Syria also played an important role in the life and ministry of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago. While most people are familiar with the fact that Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem due to the Roman census, few realize that Nazareth may actually have been under the jurisdiction of Cyrenius, the Roman Governor of Syria. In other words, due to its location in northern Israel, it may be that Galilee was NOT under the jurisdiction of the governor of Israel, but rather under Syrian jurisdiction as Luke appears to point out:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of

the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)" (Luke 2:1-4)

The implication here seems to be that the mandate to Nazareth went forth from Cyrenius in Syria who in turn received his orders from Caesar Augustus in Rome. While this may seem like a small point to some, I believe that every detail which was recorded by the writers of the Holy Scriptures was inspired by the Lord. While some might argue that Luke simply included this point because he was a meticulous physician given to details, I prefer to believe that God's Spirit impressed upon Luke the importance of including this small detail in his account. As we are told in Paul's second Epistle to Timothy:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16)

While Paul was probably referring to the Old Testament Scriptures when he wrote the above verse, being as that is all they had at the time besides other manuscripts which have since been lost, why should we not apply this verse to the New Testament as well? Thus, I believe that it was under inspiration of the Holy Ghost that Luke included this one small detail regarding the move from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Aside from the fact that Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was partially a result of the mandate issued by the governor in Syria at the behest of Caesar Augustus, once Jesus had begun His public ministry, we are also told that, due to Galilee's nearness to Syria, His fame was also well known throughout that country. It seems to me that, in His Divine Wisdom and Foresight, God wanted to make sure that the Syrians heard the Good News of Salvation directly from the Source:

"And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." (Matthew 4:24)

Depending upon how you wish to interpret this verse, it seems to me that the 'they' mentioned here is referring to Syrian believers who had heard of the fame of Jesus. In his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul made the following statement:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Being as Jesus was and is the Son of God, we know that He had the foreknowledge that He, and His ministry, would be rejected by the majority of the flesh Jews in Israel, those who claimed to be the true Jews and the seed of Abraham. It is for this reason that John wrote at the beginning of his Gospel:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."
(John 1:11)

The Prophet Isaiah also wrote in the well-known fifty-third chapter of his book:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."
(Isaiah 53:3)

Jesus also spoke a number of times of His rejection by the Jews in such statements as the following:

"But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." (Mark 6:4)

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
(Matthew 16:21)

"And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought." (Mark 9:12)

"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." (Luke 17:25)

Being as God the Father, and Jesus Himself, were well aware of how events would transpire in Israel, it is easy to understand why They would plan for the future and prepare a city completely outside of Israel, away from Jewish persecution, where Christianity would not only be preserved, but would also eventually blossom to fill the entire world. It was because of Jesus' faithfulness during His Earthly ministry to plant the seed of faith in the fertile ground of Syria, that Antioch, located in northwestern Syria, would later become the first major outpost for the Christian faith outside of Israel.

While the new religion had a strong start in Jerusalem, with thousands being won to the Faith under the inspiration of Peter and others, by the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts, we see that the fire is beginning to die, and the young Church is becoming stifled as fewer and fewer are daring to join the ranks of the Disciples due to the increasing persecution. However, as I have explained in other articles, it was through this very same persecution that the Lord drove out the Disciples into all the world in obedience to the commandment He had first given them in the Gospel of Mark and in the first chapter of the Book of Acts:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

As in Jerusalem, initially, the Word was only preached to the Jews of Antioch, and then to the Grecians, who may have been Hellenist Jews. However, once Barnabas arrived and saw the good fruit that was being born there, he went to get Paul who had returned to Tarsus. From that point on, things began to explode, and as we know, the Disciples were first called Christians at Antioch:

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:19-26)

Another interesting tidbit which points to the Syrian connection is the fact that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Considering that He spent much of His early life and the early part of His ministry in northern Israel, this should really come as no surprise to us. In fact, when He died on the Cross, Jesus' final agonizing words were not spoken in Hebrew as most people suppose, but rather in Aramaic:

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Eli, or Eloï, is derived from the Aramaic 'elahn', pronounced 'el-aw', and means 'God'. Lama, pronounced 'lam-ah' is also transliterated from Aramaic and means 'why'. Sabachthani means 'thou hast forsaken me' and is transliterated from the Aramaic 'shebaq', pronounced 'sheb-ak', which means 'to leave or let alone'.

Aramaic was the language of the descendants of Aram, a son of Shem, who settled in northeastern Syria, known in times past as Padan-aram. As I explained earlier, Padan-aram was the place of origin of the first Hebrews, beginning with Abram who left Ur of the Chaldees with his father Terah, his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot. Isaac also obtained his wife Rebekah from Padan-aram, as did Jacob his two wives Leah and Rachel. The word 'Hebrew' was actually used as a descriptive word to describe the fact that Abram, a Shemite or Semite, had come from beyond, or outside of Canaan. 'Hebrew', or 'ibriy', (pronounced ib-ree' in Hebrew), actually means 'one from beyond'. Whether or not Terah and Abram were actually Babylonian or Chaldean is difficult to say as the Bible

simply does not make it clear. All we know is that for some unknown reason, Terah decided to move his family out of Ur and over to Canaan. According to the writings of Moses, Terah died before completing the journey, in a place which would later bear the name of his dead son Haran, which was a place in Padan-aram.

The Aramaic language was heavily influenced by the Assyrian, Babylonian and Chaldean cultures, and is thus referred to as a Syro-Chaldaic language. Like Greek and Latin, Aramaic was a universal language. When Assyrian King Sennacherib came against Jerusalem, we are informed that the Hebrews understood Syriac, (or Aramaic), and asked Sennacherib's representative to speak in that language so as not to demoralize the Hebrew soldiers:

"Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall." (2 Kings 18:26)

The universality of Aramaic was probably even more widespread following Nebuchadnezzar's victory against Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in northern Syria. As I have stated in other articles, Syriac, (also written as 'Syriack'), was also spoken in the courts of this powerful Babylonian king:

"Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation." (Daniel 2:4)

Following the fall of the Babylonian Empire to the Medo-Persian Empire, Aramaic, or Syriac, continued to enjoy popularity in the courts of the conquerors as is evidenced by the following verse from the Book of Ezra:

"And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue." (Ezra 4:7)

Thus we see that for thousands of years, right up to the time of Christ, the Syrian language known as Aramaic or Syriac, remained an important language in the Middle East.

Before moving on, allow me to offer some additional food for thought. As Christians, we all know that Satan is a usurper. He is a liar. He is an imposter. He is an imitator. Jesus made this very clear when He said in part:

"...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44b)

Considering all of the facts I have presented regarding Jesus' connection to northern Israel and to Syria, doesn't it seem possible that Satan the imposter might raise up his

Endtime false 'messiah', whom Orthodox Jews refer to as 'Moshiach' or 'Moshaich ben David', from the very same geographical area? After all, in order to deceive as many people as possible, it seems to me that he would have to follow a path very similar to that of the True Messiah, Jesus Christ. As I explained in 'The Kings Of The North And The South, Part Two', the Orthodox Jews are convinced that their 'saviour' will be a descendant of the bloodline of King David who was of the tribe of Judah. In other words, 'Moshiach ben David' will be a flesh Jew of the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

If this false 'messiah', or 'Moshiach', is the very same 'Son of Perdition' which I discuss in 'Who Is Hindering The Antichrist From Appearing?', it makes it all the easier to understand why he will be permitted by the Jews to sit in the long-awaited Third Temple, demonstrating to all, (at least to those who want to be deceived), that he is in fact the 'messiah', 'God' in the flesh, who has come to deliver the Jews out of the hands of their Muslim enemies. As Paul clearly points out, God will allow this strong delusion to occur because for two thousand years now, the majority of Jews have fully rejected Jesus Christ as their one and only True Messiah:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who 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. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-11)

Returning to the topic of Syria, another important fact which supports the importance of Syria in Biblical and secular history is that it was in Riblah in the land of Hamath, or northern Syria, that Nebuchadnezzar set up his war headquarters where he judged King Zedekiah. It was also in Riblah that Pharaoh Necho placed Jehoahaz in bonds to carry him off to Egypt:

"And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold." (2 Kings 23:33)

"But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah." (Jeremiah 39:5-6)

Clearly then, from ancient times, up until the present, Syria has played an important part in Biblical prophecy, as well as in secular history. The question which remains then is this: Exactly what role will Syria play in the completion of Endtime prophecies? Will she produce the final eighth king of Revelation as I speculated in 'The Kings Of The North And The South', or will that be delegated to Iraq with Syria being one of the ten Endtime horns which gives her power for one hour to the Beast?:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast...For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." (Revelation 17:12-13, 17)

As I partially explained in part two of the aforementioned article, whether Israel is invaded by Syria or by Iraq, this invasion will still probably occur via the Golan Heights, an elevated plateau in northeastern Israel along the Syrian border. As you may know, Israel grabbed this important piece of property from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War; and it is partially because of this that there are still strong contentions between Israel and Syria today. Unlike Egypt and Jordan, to date, (January 1998), Syria has followed in the footsteps of Iraq and has refused to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Unless I am mistaken, this is a position which both countries have held since 1947 when the United Nations first proposed the failed Resolution 181.

The key point of the matter is this: Both Syria and Iraq could qualify as the 'king of the north', (who I personally believe is synonymous with the Beast, or the eighth king of the Book of Revelation), if either one of them attacks Israel through the Golan Heights. It was from this same direction that the Syrian and Assyrian kings attacked Israel in ancient times, and this is also exactly what King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did, and why he too was referred to as a power coming from the north in the Book of Jeremiah, even though in a geographical sense, Babylonia, or Iraq, is more to the east of Israel, than it is to the north. Consider the following example verses:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north. Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land." (Jeremiah 1:13-14)

"Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction." (Jeremiah 4:6)

"Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great

commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons." (Jeremiah 10:22)

"Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations." (Jeremiah 25:9)

To further emphasize the possibility that a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar might perform the very same military feat, consider the following astounding quote I came across. While the commentary deals with Saddam Hussein's refusal to allow United Nations, (UNSCOM), weapons inspectors to visit certain areas within Iraq, notice how the remarks of General Norman Schwarzkopf seem to confirm the fact that we may see a repeat of history sometime in the near future when Saddam Hussein, or perhaps one of his successors, may attack Israel via Syria, which might then be one of the Ten Horns giving her military power to the Beast:

----- Begin Quote -----

"...In the end, though, the United States does not think that Saddam sees this confrontation as a "make-or-break" crisis. He is, officials think, looking long term for a place in history as the man who saved the Arab world from the West, just as Salhidin did during the Crusades."

"You have to remember that this is a man who had his name imprinted on every brick that was used in the reconstruction of Babylon," the official said, a practice followed by the ancient Babylonian kings."

"I think in his own mind he has aggrandized himself," says Schwarzkopf. "He has said in the past that he wants to be the second coming of (the legendary Babylonian ruler) Nebuchadnezzar - the person who unites all of the Arab world. To once again bring the Arab world to its glory all under the leadership of Saddam Hussein."

----- End Of Quote -----

What amazing information! While this may come as news to some of you reading this, this military possibility is not something which has been overlooked by the governments of Israel and the United States of America. It is for this very reason that in recent months, both nations have been forging treaties and creating stronger ties with Turkey. As I have said before, by creating a military alliance with the government of Ankara, Israel hopes to neutralize two of her most feared enemies, Syria and Iraq, which both share borders with Turkey, and which in recent years have begun mending their dipolmatic relations which were strained for seventeen years. It seems that by creating this American-led and supported American-Jewish-Turkish military triangle, the Americans and the Israelis hope that this muscle-flexing will persuade Syria and Iraq that they should not even consider any move to attack Israel.

The final question then is this: Will it work? Or will two-thousand-year-old prophecies soon be fulfilled? Will Syria rise up to the task, or will it be left to Iraq to fulfill the prophecy of the Beast? Or might it even be someone else? If my understanding of Endtime prophecy is anywhere near accurate, we may not have long to find out who it will be. In the fourth part of this series on 'The Seven Heads', I will delve into history and provide some information regarding the military exploits of the first six kings or empires, and then show how it is connected to the eighth king, or the Beast. Part four will also include some interesting details regarding the leaders of both Syria and Iraq. I'll see you there. I pray this article has been informative, and a blessing to many.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

THE SEVEN HEADS : HIS DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED!

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Pharoah Necho Falls To Babylon, Nineveh Falls To Babylon, Jerusalem Falls To Babylon, Tyre Falls To Babylon, Babylon Falls To The Medes And Persians, Cyrus And Darius, The Return To Jerusalem, Alexander The Great, A Modern King Nebuchadnezzar?, Hafez al-Assad And Saddam Hussein

In the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, there is one particular verse regarding the Endtime leader known as the Beast, which has been the subject of debate by many Bible students. That verse is the following:

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." (Revelation 13:3)

The most common interpretation I have heard of the above verse is that the Beast, the actual human leader of the final empire which will rule over Israel, will be mortally wounded, possibly in battle, or perhaps from a successful assassination plot. However, according to those who support this view, the world will be shocked when this leader is raised back to life! They suggest that his 'resurrection' will be explained to the public as simply being another wonder of modern science and technology, possibly even being referred to as a medical 'miracle'. While for many years I too considered this possibility, I currently feel that such an event would be too obvious. Personally, I don't believe that Satan wants to go out of his way to make his plans known to the world. Those who accept the above scenario may be the same ones who will be looking for a literal '666' tattooed in some way on everyone's right hand or forehead. For more information on this topic, please refer to my article 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast'.

Concerning the 'deadly wound' which was healed, I would like to propose another possibility which I feel may have equal, if not more merit than an assassination attempt and a successful 'medical resurrection'. Many years ago I came across one very interesting verse which might possibly be the clue to understanding what is really meant by the 'deadly wound'. It is the only verse in the entire Bible which uses the phrase 'deadly wounded'; and it was written by Ezekiel during the time of the Babylonian captivity. In this verse, Ezekiel is prophesying the defeat of Pharoah Necho, king of Egypt, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Some years earlier, Pharoah Necho had grabbed some provinces in northern Syria from the Assyrians during a battle at Carchemish:

"In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen

him." (2 Kings 23:29)

In case you are confused or wondering exactly what is being said here, this verse is stating that when Pharaoh Necho went up to fight against the Assyrian king at Carchemish on the Euphrates River, Jewish king Josiah went out to challenge him, (Pharaoh Necho), at Megiddo. Pharaoh Necho told Josiah clearly that he had come up to fight against the king of Assyria, and NOT against him. Despite this fact, foolish Josiah challenged him anyway; and it was during this battle that King Josiah needlessly lost his life because of his own pride. You can find a more complete story in 2 Chronicles chapter thirty-five.

Once the Assyrian Empire began to wane under the onslaught of her parent nation, Babylonia, Pharaoh Necho decided to use the now-captured Carchemish in Syria as a beachhead to further expand his empire into Assyrian territory. To his dismay, he was met with strong resistance by Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar king of Babylon, who soundly defeated him. Pharaoh Necho's defeat represented a judgment from the Lord against Egypt, not only because of Josiah's death, but also because Pharaoh Necho then made the mistake of imprisoning Josiah's first son, Jehoahaz, in Egypt where he died; and he made Josiah's other son, Eliakim, whom he renamed Jehoiakim, puppet ruler in Jerusalem; and forced him to pay a heavy tribute to Egypt.

If there is one clear lesson the Bible teaches, it is that no one should ever touch the Lord's anointed. After King David had smitten the Philistines and had recovered the Ark of the Covenant, and had returned it to Jerusalem, he wrote a victory psalm in which he sang in part:

"...Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."
(1 Chronicles 16:22)

In another incident, when the Lord had delivered King Saul into David's hand, David cut off a piece of Saul's skirt and then repented of his act by saying:

"...The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."
(1 Samuel 24:6)

As a result of Pharaoh Necho's major defeat at the battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar grabbed much of the Egyptian empire, including Israel, thus greatly extending his power and influence. In the second book of the Kings, we read the following description concerning the demise of the Egyptian Empire:

"And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt." (2 Kings 24:7)

In other words, as I will explain more fully in a moment, all of the land from southern Egypt up to northern Syria was annexed to the Babylonian Empire. In prophesying of Pharaoh

Necho's coming defeat, the Prophet Ezekiel also wrote the following revealing verse:

"And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man." (Ezekiel 30:24)

In comparing the above phrase 'deadly wounded man' with what the Apostle John wrote in Revelation chapters thirteen and seventeen, I have come to realize that John may have used the phrase 'his deadly wound was healed' to inform us that one of the seven heads, or ancient empires, will be resurrected in the Endtime to become the eighth and final ruling power in the Middle East. In fact, if we do a straight interpretation here, it could be that the head which has the deadly wound which is healed is a shaded reference to the revival in the Last Days of the ancient Egyptian Empire!

This interpretation would fit in perfectly with the explanation I provided in part one of this series regarding the leopard's body possibly representing Greece, the bear paws representing Medo-Persia, and the mouth of a lion symbolizing Babylon. In this sense, all of the five empires previous to Rome would be covered in Revelation seventeen since Assyria was the daughter nation of Babylon, and was eventually conquered and assimilated by her parent nation. In fact, if you read Ezekiel chapters twenty-nine through thirty-one in their entirety, you will see that the Lord is using Assyria in the thirty-first chapter as an example to show Egypt how she will be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, just as the Babylonian king also conquered Assyria with the sword.

This idea of the revival of an ancient Middle Eastern empire is exactly what I proposed in part three of this series. If we put the descriptive verses from Revelation chapters thirteen and seventeen side by side, this possibility becomes even more obvious:

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast...And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed...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." (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14)

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition...And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." (Revelation 17:8a, 11)

I think it is very significant that John mentions the 'deadly wound' three times in chapter thirteen. It seems that he might be emphasizing the point to make sure that we

take note of it. It might even be that he was personally awed by the fact that this former empire would once again rise to power in the Last Days. We tend to do the same thing when we are excited or amazed by something. We keep repeating ourselves. The primary difference between these two descriptions is that in chapter seventeen, the angel, via John, specifically tells us that the eighth and final empire will be one of the first five; therefore, the one with the deadly wound must also be one of those first five empires.

Notice that the angel tells John it 'was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit'. In other words, at the time John received his revelation, this beast, or empire, had already passed away; therefore at John's time it 'was, and is not'; but then he goes on to say it 'SHALL ascend out of the bottomless pit' in order to fulfill the final phrase 'even he is the eighth, and is of the seven'.

As I began to study this issue more closely by comparing Scripture with Scripture, instead of relying upon what I had heard, read or learned from others, it became clear to me that the phrase 'wound by a sword' is symbolic of military defeat. In the previous verse I shared from the prophecies of Ezekiel, we are clearly told that the Lord Himself is placing His Sword in the hand of the king of Babylon in order to defeat Egypt and her allies which support her. Consider these additional verses from that same prophecy:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee."
(Ezekiel 29:8)

"And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD."
(Ezekiel 30:4-6)

Notice how specific the Lord is in this prophecy. The tower of Syene was located on the east bank of the Nile River on what was then the Egyptian-Ethiopian border. In other words, Syene, today called Assouan or Aswan, was Egypt's southern gateway, just as Migdol was its northeastern gateway. Since those ancient times, that land area has now been divided into the Sudan and Ethiopia. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt, he didn't stop with that country alone, but also defeated all of her allies which surrounded here including Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, (possibly the one in Asia Minor), and the people of Chub, an undefined people, possibly of northern Africa. In earlier chapters when the Lord is prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem, the same type of sword symbolism is used to show that, while Nebuchadnezzar will be the instrument of chastisement, it is actually the Lord who is punishing them through the king of Babylon:

"And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more." (Ezekiel 21:3-5)

Thus, while the idea of a mortally-wounded human leader being brought back to life is a fascinating thought, I am becoming more convinced that the phrase 'the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live' is really referring to the Endtime resurrection of one of the first five empires which suffered military defeat as a result of the Lord's chastisement against that king and empire. While the pharaoh of Egypt is described as being mortally wounded by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, thus making Egypt a possible candidate for the final eighth Beast, we need to remember that Nebuchadnezzar also defeated Assyria militarily, as was prophesied by such prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Nahum and Zephaniah in the following verses:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness." (Ezekiel 31:10-11)

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:...Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled." (Isaiah 10:12-13, 33)

"Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?...Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (Nahum 3:5-7, 18-19)

"And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness." (Zephaniah 2:13)

According to one historical source, the turning point in Assyrian dominance occurred around 626 B.C. with the death of King Assurbanipal, whom the Babylonians called Kandalanu. This was at the beginning of the reign of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, who was a Chaldean who had risen from the position of general in the Assyrian army to become the first king of Babylon. According to this source, Nabopolassar invaded and annexed the Mesopotamian provinces of Assyria, and when Sinsharishkun, the last King of Assyria, tried to cut off his return and threatened Babylon, Nabopolassar received help from the Manda, the nomadic tribes of Kurdistan. Another source states that these Manda were actually the Medes who, after breaking away from their Assyrian oppressors, united under Cyaxares, (their one and only king while Media remained a solitary empire), and formed an alliance with Babylon. The exact date of Nineveh's destruction is a small source of debate. Some place it at the beginning of Nabopolassar's reign in 625 B.C., while others place it towards the very end of his reign in 606 B.C. The year 612 B.C. seems to be a commonly agreed upon date. What is certain, is that by the time Nebuchadnezzar ascended to the throne of his father, Assyria had fallen.

One interesting side note is that within archeological circles, the ruins of Nineveh are believed to have been found in northern Iraq near the bank of the Tigris River, opposite the modern-day city of Mosul.

As I explained previously, once Assyria had fallen, King Nebuchadnezzar then turned his attention to Egypt which had already established its beachhead in Carchemish, Syria. When Pharaoh Necho attempted to cross the Euphrates River to try to grab more of the former Assyrian Empire, he met with stiff resistance from Nebuchadnezzar who chased him all the way back to the borders of Egypt. This was around the year 604 B.C. Upon hearing of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar stopped his Egyptian campaign and returned to Babylon to begin his forty-three year reign. However, it wasn't long before he was forced to return to Judah to put down the rebellion begun by King Jehoiakim who refused to pay Babylonian tribute. When King Hophra, (who had succeeded Pharaoh Necho II to the Egyptian throne in about the year 589 B.C.), secretly tried to unite all of the Syrian States in a conspiracy against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar once again found the need to go to Judah. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon had already entered into the confederacy; and going against Jeremiah's warnings, King Zedekiah broke his oath of allegiance to Babylon and joined the league as well. This eventually resulted in the fall of Jerusalem in about 587 B.C. after several years of siege.

Having defeated and destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jews captive to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar next waged war against Tyre, the Phoenician island nation. As stated in the article 'Satan: King Of Tyrus, King Of Empires, Part One', this was also a judgment from the Lord because Tyre had ridiculed Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonian king:

"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is

turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock...For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people." (Ezekiel 26:2-4, 7)

Being as Nebuchadnezzar could not reach the island nation due to his lack of a marine fleet, his thirteen year campaign ended in about 572 B.C. with only a partial victory. Therefore, a few years later, in approximately 567 B.C., he invaded Egypt and let his wrath be felt there as he plundered her of her riches in fulfillment of the words of the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

"The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 46:24-26)

"Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army." (Ezekiel 29:18-19)

Just as the Lord had used Nebuchadnezzar, 'the mighty one of the heathen' as the Prophet Ezekiel referred to him, as His Sword to punish Israel and other nations, He then used the Medes and the Persians to likewise punish Babylon for her many sins. Again the Prophets spoke very clearly regarding this as in the following example Scriptures:

"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."
(Isaiah 13:17-19)

"A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease...And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men,

with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." (Isaiah 21:2, 9)

Notice Isaiah's use of the phrase '...Babylon is fallen, is fallen...', the very same words we find being uttered by the great angel in the Book of Revelation:

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Revelation 18:2)

But this is not where the similarities end. Twenty-six chapters later, we find the following verses from the Prophet Isaiah which are also amazingly similar to the words John wrote in the Book of Revelation:

"Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know." (Isaiah 47:8-11)

Notice how Babylon boasts that she does not sit as a widow, just like the Babylon in the Book of Revelation states that she sits a queen and shall see no sorrow. As in the above verses, Revelation also tells us that her destruction shall come in one day. The Prophet Jeremiah also warned of the coming destruction of Babylon once the Lord had removed His Sword from the hand of the Babylonian king, and placed it in the hands of the Medes and the Persians:

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." (Jeremiah 25:12)

"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast." (Jeremiah 50:1-3)

"Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 50:8-10)

"Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon." (Jeremiah 50:41-42)

"Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple...Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant." (Jeremiah 51:11, 27-29)

Finally, the Prophet Daniel also specifically prophesied of the great expansion of the Medo-Persian Empire in the eighth chapter of his book:

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great....The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." (Daniel 8:3-4, 20)

Thus from these verses, and from many more which I haven't even listed here, we see that the Medes and the Persians indeed served as the Sword of the Lord in the destruction of the once mighty Babylonian Empire.

Following Nebuchadnezzar's reign, the Babylonian Empire had four more kings before being taken over by the Medes and the Persians. The first was Evil-Merodach who became king in approximately 561 B.C. He was responsible for releasing Jewish King Jehoiachin from prison after thirty-seven years of captivity. Even though Zedekiah, (the final rebellious king of Israel before the Babylonian invasion), and his royal family were destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, in His

foresight, the Lord saved the royal blood of the tribe of Judah through the captivity of Jehoiachin and his family in Babylon, as I point out in other articles as well:

"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life."
(2 Kings 25:27-30)

After less than three years, Evil-Merodach was assassinated by Neriglissar, or Nergal-sar-usur, his brother-in-law, in about the year 558 B.C. Neriglissar was succeeded four years later in about 554 B.C. by his young son, Labasi-Marduk, who reigned nine months before being assassinated. Those involved in the conspiracy then elected Nabonidus, or Nabu-na'id, to the throne. One source states that he was the last king of Babylon and ruled from about 555 B.C. to 539 B.C. However, another source states that Belshazzar succeeded Nabonidus to the throne around 537 B.C. making him the final king. While other historical sources say that he was the son of Nabonidus, the Bible states that Belshazzar was the son of Nebuchadnezzar. However, it should be noted that the Hebrew word 'ab' doesn't always mean one's physical father, but is also applied to one's forefathers or predecessors; so the interpretation of the follow verse is open to discussion:

"There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;" (Daniel 5:11)

Regardless of whose son he was, the Bible clearly states that Belshazzar was indeed in power when Darius the Mede took over the kingdom following the famous 'Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin' writing on the wall. In fact, Belshazzar told Daniel that if he could interpret the strange writing, he would make him the third most powerful ruler in all of the Babylonian empire:

"And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." (Daniel 5:16)

Considering that Daniel was a young boy when he was taken to Babylon, and some sixty-six years had passed since that time, he must have been at least in his seventies by the time Babylon fell to the Medes. The fact that Belshazzar was

king and offered to make Daniel third in his kingdom, and not second, may add veracity to some information I came across. This source states that at the time Belshazzar made this promise to Daniel, now known as Belteshazzar, his father (?) Nabonidus was still king of Babylon, and he, Belshazzar, was actually the Crown Prince who handled most governmental affairs while his father was away. At the time, Nabonidus had gone to a place called Opis to fight against Cyrus the Persian who had already subdued the Medes, and who had now begun to stir up trouble against Babylon. Upon losing the battle, it is said that Nabonidus fled back to Babylon where he was captured a short time later by the Persians. It is at this time that the Bible states that Belshazzar was slain by Darius the Mede, and not by the Persians as per the historical record:

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Daniel 5:30-31)

While this may at first appear to be a contradiction between the Scriptures and secular history, as the following information will show, this is not necessarily the case. This confusion regarding the fall of Babylon and the various kings of the Medes and Persians seems to be due in part to that fact that some of these kings had the same family names. The following information from an unpublished work called 'Compendium of World History' by Dr. Herman Hoeh may help to clarify this issue:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Here are the Median kings according to Ctesias' record from the Persian archives.

"House of Arbaces, Median Kings After Overthrow of Assyrians at Rehoboth.

Arbaces	816-788 B.C.
His son Mandauces	788-768
Sosarmus	768-738
Artycas	738-708
Arbianes	708-686
Artaeus	686-646
Artynes	646-624
Astibaras	624-584
Aspades (called Astyigas or Astyages)	584-549 (584-546)

"The successor of Aspadas was Darius the Mede, mentioned in Dan. 5:31 and 9:1. The Hebrews called Aspadas 'Ahasuerus'. The Greeks called Darius the Mede Cyaxeres II.

"Historians have completely misunderstood the events surrounding the end of Median independence. The reason is this. There were two Median kings reigning at the same time with the same name --- Astyages, or similar spelling. One was the grandfather of Cyrus the Persian; the other, Aspadas called Astyigas, was father of Darius the Mede. Before explaining any more details, it is necessary to introduce the second Median royal house and the second Astyages.

"In the year 700-699, following the death of Shalmaneser III, the Medes successfully completed a second revolt against the Assyrians. Not until this year were all the Medes completely free from Assyrian dominion. Herodotus preserves the names of these Median kings who ascended the throne in 699.

"House of Deioeces: Median Kings Following Revolt in 700-699.

Deioeces	699-646
Phraortes	646-624
Cyaxeres I	624-584
Astyages, Grandfather of Cyrus	584-549

"Certain late Greek and Roman writers used figures other than those given by Herodotus and Ctesias. The preceding are the original and true figures. The variants may have arisen from otherwise unknown events occurring in the Median realm, or from joint reigns.

"In 549 Astyages was overthrown by his grandson, Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus had come to the Persian throne, which he shared with his father in the year 558. He reigned altogether 29 years (558-529).

"The chronological evidence from Ctesias and Herodotus indicates the last three kings of each Median line shared the throne jointly. Each was succeeded by a son in 646, 624 and 584. An exception occurred in the case of Astyages, son of Cyaxeres I. This man, declared Herodotus, had no son, only a daughter. He ruled with a harsh hand. His daughter he gave in marriage to the king of Persia, Cambyses, who became the father of Cyrus. By contrast, Josephus stated that Astyages had a son -- Darius the Mede. Historians have -- for no justifiable reason -- assumed the testimony of Josephus and Herodotus were irreconcilable. A little thought would have made it plain that each writer was discussing a different Astyages. Josephus, and Daniel too, wrote of the Astyages or Aspadas who was of the house of Arbaces. Herodotus' account was of Astyages of the house of Deioeces.

"The confederation of Persians and Medes, often stressed in the Bible, resulted from a political union of the house of Arbaces, which began in 816, with the young Persian monarch Cyrus. Cyrus could never have come to power had there not been strife between the two Median royal families."

----- End Of Quote -----

Here is some additional information regarding Cyrus from Easton's Bible Dictionary which will help to further explain some of the confusion which has existed concerning the names and dates for these various kings:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Cyrus, (Heb. Ko'resh), ...was the son of Cambyses, the prince of Persia, and was born about B.C. 599 In the year B.C. 559 he became king of Persia, the kingdom of Media being added to it partly by conquest. Cyrus was a great

military leader, bent on universal conquest. Babylon fell before his army, (B.C. 538), on the night of Belshazzar's feast, and then the ancient dominion of Assyria was also added to his empire. Hitherto the great kings of the earth had only oppressed the Jews. Cyrus was to them as a "shepherd". God employed him in doing service to his ancient people. He may possibly have gained, through contact with the Jews, some knowledge of their religion. The 'first year of Cyrus' is not the year of his elevation to power over the Medes, nor over the Persians, nor the year of the fall of Babylon, but the year succeeding the two years during which 'Darius the Mede' was viceroy in Babylon after its fall. At this time only, (B.C. 536), Cyrus became actual king over Palestine, which became a part of his Babylonian empire."

"The edict of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem marked a great epoch in the history of the Jewish people. This decree was discovered "at Achmetha, ("Ecbatana"), in the palace that is in the province of the Medes". A chronicle drawn up just after the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus, gives the history of the reign of Nabonidus (Nabunahid), the last king of Babylon, and of the fall of the Babylonian empire. In B.C. 538 there was a revolt in Southern Babylonia, while the army of Cyrus entered the country from the north. In June the Babylonian army was completely defeated at Opis, and immediately afterwards Sippara opened its gates to the conqueror. Gobryas (Ugbaru), the governor of Kurdistan, was then sent to Babylon, which surrendered "without fighting," and the daily services in the temples continued without a break."

"In October, Cyrus himself arrived, and proclaimed a general amnesty, which was communicated by Gobryas to "all the province of Babylon," of which he had been made governor. Meanwhile, Nabonidus, who had concealed himself, was captured, but treated honourably; and when his wife died, Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, conducted the funeral. Cyrus now assumed the title of 'king of Babylon,' claimed to be the descendant of the ancient kings, and made rich offerings to the temples. At the same time he allowed the foreign populations who had been deported to Babylonia to return to their old homes, carrying with them the images of their gods. Among these populations were the Jews, who, as they had no images, took with them the sacred vessels of the temple."

----- End Of Quote -----

Putting all of this information together then, what we see is that, while it was indeed Darius who 'took the kingdom' from Belshazzar, this does not mean that he was the overall king of the Medo-Persian empire at the time. The above information suggests that Cyrus and Darius ruled their separate kingdoms for a while; but ultimately, it was Cyrus who gained the upper hand. At the time Darius took Babylon, he was already serving under Cyrus the Persian of the now-united Medo-Persian Empire, as viceroy of Babylon, and NOT as king. As I pointed out in part one of this series, there were actually three or four rulers by the name of Darius. The Darius who came to power in 521 B.C., about eight years after the end of the reign of Cyrus the Great,

was probably Darius the Great.

Another important point worth mentioning is that while Cyrus was of Persian descent, in the Bible he is referred to once as the king of Babylon. Artaxerxes is also referred to as the king of Babylon. This may simply be due to the fact that, because of its grandeur, and possibly because of other geographical and political considerations, some of the Medo-Persian kings chose to rule the empire from captured Babylon, while others chose to rule it from Achmetha. In like manner, while Darius the Mede took over Babylon in the Book of Daniel, in the Book of Ezra we have a ruler referred to as Darius king of Persia. This may be simply because he ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire, or because of the mixed marriages between the families of Cyrus and Darius. However, the most plausible explanation is that they are referring to two different kings of the same name as I mentioned previously. Thus, we find what appear at first to be conflicting verses like the following:

"Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia." (Ezra 4:24)

"But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God." (Ezra 5:13)

"But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king:" (Nehemiah 13:6)

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (Daniel 6:28)

"The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian." (Nehemiah 12:22)

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;" (Daniel 9:1)

Despite these rough and confusing spots in the historical record, we should not lose sight of the overall picture in Bible prophecy. From a Biblical perspective, one of the major events which occurred during the time of the Medo-Persian Empire, was that in accordance with the prophecies of Jeremiah, the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem after serving their 'Seventy Years of Captivity' under the various kings of Babylon. This was so that they could rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, as well as the destroyed Temple of Solomon. This edict was first put forth by Cyrus, king of Persia, in the first year of his reign as king over Babylon:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king

of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up." (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

These same verses are repeated in the opening of the Book of the Ezra, which, along with the Book of Nehemiah, go into the details of the return to Jerusalem, the reparation of the walls around the city, and the construction of the Second Temple. At the time Ezra returned to Jerusalem, over forty-two thousand Jews took part in this massive exodus from Babylon:

"Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;...The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore," (Ezra 2:1, 64)

It was in the second year after returning to Jerusalem that the Temple foundation was laid, which caused great rejoicing amongst the Jews:

"Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel." (Ezra 3:8-10)

After this, the enemies of the Jews stirred up trouble so that the work was halted for the remainder of the reign of Cyrus the Persian until the reign of Darius the Great:

"Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue." (Ezra 4:4-7)

After doing a search of the records, Artaxerxes sent a return letter to the enemies of the Jews commanding that the building of the Temple at Jerusalem should be stopped:

"Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me. Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."
(Ezra 4:21-24)

For the sake of clarification, the name 'Artaxerxes' was actually applied to several Persian kings. It is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew 'Artachshashta', pronounced 'ar-takh-shash-taw', and means 'I will make the spoiled to boil: I will stir myself (in) winter'. It is believed that this particular Artaxerxes who frustrated the plans of the Jews may have been Artaxerxes Smerdis. Eventually the Jews again began to rebuild the Temple led by the inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah the Prophets. Again the enemies of the Jews tried to deter the work by sending a letter to Darius who had now ascended to the throne of Babylon. Darius made a search for the decree first issued by Cyrus:

"Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;" (Ezra 6:1-3)

Having found the original record, Darius then ordered the troublemakers to desist in their persecution, and to let the Jews continue rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem:

"Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place." (Ezra 6:6-7)

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (Ezra 6:14-15)

At this point we see that we now have a definite starting

date, and a definite finishing date for the Second Temple. If Temple construction began in the second year after the Jews returned from Babylon, which coincides with the second year of the reign of Cyrus, that would have been in the approximate year of 558/557 B.C. depending on which historical records you choose to believe. At the same time, if this is referring to Darius I, then the sixth year of his reign would have been about the year 515/514 B.C. This gives us a total of 43/44 years for the construction time of the Temple. Comparing these historical dates with the actual Scriptures, I discovered that these dates are very close to being accurate, but not quite. I base this on the following verse from the Gospel of John:

"Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"
(John 2:20)

In thinking about this discrepancy, it seems to me that we should give the Scriptures pre-eminence over accepted historical records. Considering how important the Temple was to the Jews, and how well they kept records, I am sure they knew exactly how long it had taken for the Temple to be completed. While this is a small matter, I think it serves as a reminder to us that we should always accept ancient historical dates with a grain of salt realizing that they may be off by a few years. If the Scriptures and history cannot be reconciled, then as Christians, it is safer for us to accept the Inspired Word of God as our standard of measurement.

It was some time after this first return to Jerusalem that Ezra, scribe and priest, led a second group of Jews out of Babylon and back to the Holy City, all with the blessing and encouragement of King Artaxerxes. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, Ezra was very instrumental in inspiring the Jews to repent of their idolatry and inter-racial marriages, and to return to the Lord their God:

"Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,...This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king." (Ezra 7:1, 6-7)

According to historical records, this particular Artaxerxes was probably Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes I. This would make him the grandson of Darius. He ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire from about 465 B.C. to 424 B.C. What is also very important about Longimanus is that it is believed that it was during his reign that the 'Seventy Weeks' prophecy of Daniel began to be fulfilled; for it was during his reign that Longimanus gave Nehemiah the commandment to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy

holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and 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." (Daniel 9:24-26)

It was precisely in the twentieth year of his reign that Artaxerses Longimanus issued the above commandment to Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem as Governor of Judah to rebuild the street and the retaining wall:

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven," (Nehemiah 1:1-4)

"And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time." (Nehemiah 2:1-6)

Not only did the king comply with Nehemiah's wishes, but he also granted him all of the materials he would need in order to complete the job:

"Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give

me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me."

(Nehemiah 2:7-8)

After secretly surveying the walls of Jerusalem by night, Nehemiah finally made his plans known to the elders of Jerusalem:

"Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

As had occurred years before, the enemies of the Jews became privy to their plans and immediately began to mock them, and to oppose them, and to stir up trouble:

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." (Nehemiah 4:1-3)

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." (Nehemiah 4:7-8)

After that, everyone began working in shifts with their weapons next to them; and they didn't even take off their clothes except for washing them:

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which

followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing." (Nehemiah 4:17-23)

From his own record, we know that Nehemiah served as governor of Judah for at least twelve years. Considering that Artaxerxes reigned for some forty years in Babylon, it is possible that Nehemiah remained governor for at least another eight years above what is recorded here:

"Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God." (Nehemiah 5:14-15)

One favorite verse which has been used by many Christians who have heard the Lord's call, and who won't allow themselves to be dissuaded by the lies or tricks of the enemies of the Gospel, is the following spoken by Nehemiah when Sanballat, Geshem and others tried to slow them down:

"And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner." (Nehemiah 6:3-4)

Despite the mischievous tricks and deceit practiced by their enemies, under Nehemiah's direction, the Jews finally finished repairing the wall after fifty-two days:

"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." (Nehemiah 6:15)

After securing the genealogical records and taking a survey of the people who now dwelt within the secured city, it fell upon Ezra the priest to read the Laws of Moses. It was then that they discovered that they were supposed to be observing the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month; so for the next seven days they dwelt in their booths. It was several weeks later that they performed a public prayer of repentance and made a renewed covenant with the Lord to keep the Laws of Moses. The rest of the book deals primarily with the reforms that Nehemiah made while he served as governor of Judah under King Artaxerxes.

From the historical record, as well as from the Biblical record, we know that the Medo-Persian Empire eventually went the way of all of the kingdoms which had come before it. Like them, it was also wounded by the Sword of the Lord on the battlefields of the Middle East. This time the Sword was in the hand of the Macedonian, Alexander the Great, exactly as had been prophesied by Daniel. As I explained in 'The Kings Of The North And The South' articles, in the image of Daniel chapter two, Greece was represented by the belly and thighs of brass:

"This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,...And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." (Daniel 2:32, 39)

As I discussed in part one of this series, in Daniel chapter seven, we also find Greece represented by a strange leopard with four heads and four wings. I explained that the four wings, and the fact that the beast is a leopard, are symbolic of the speed with which Alexander conquered the Medo-Persian Empire. Finally, in the following verses from Daniel chapter eight, we see a vivid picture of the two-horned Medo-Persian ram pushing against the Grecian he-goat, and then being crushed by the overpowering Grecian king:

"And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven...And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." (Daniel 8:5-8, 21-22)

Notice that the he-goat does not touch the ground. This again signifies the speed with which Alexander conquered the known world of his day at the young age of about twenty. Alexander is probably symbolized by the 'notable' or 'great horn'. What is not very common knowledge is that Moses made mention of the beginnings of the nation of Greece in the tenth chapter of Genesis with the following:

"The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations." (Genesis 10:2-5)

As can be seen from the above verses, the fourth son of Japheth was named Javan. This is transliterated from the Hebrew word 'yavan', pronounced 'yaw-vawn'. What may surprise you is that in the previous verses where we see the word 'Greece', or 'Grecia', it is this Hebrew word 'yavan' that is used. In fact, this word 'javan' was universally used by the nations of the East as the generic name for the Greek race, and Alexander the Great was known as the 'King of Javan'! Another transliteration used is 'Ionia'. Thus we

see that the Greeks, or Ionians, are actually the descendants of Javan who settled there thousands of years ago. Greece originally consisted of four provinces. These were Macedonia, Epirus, Achaia, and Peleponnesus. It is believed by some that the descendants of Javan's first son, Elishah, populated Peleponnesus since it was known by the name of Elis. The Prophet Ezekiel may have also made a reference to the same in his prophecy against Tyre:

"Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee."
(Ezekiel 27:7)

However, there is even more to it than that. This word 'yavan' is itself believed to be derived from the Hebrew word 'yayin', pronounced 'yah-yin', which means 'wine'. How appropriate then that a wine-loving people like the Greeks should be descended from Javan. Unfortunately, there is a negative side to this as well. While studying this topic, I discovered that the Greeks purchased Hebrew children through the slave market at Tyre in exchange for their fine wines, and then sold those children to the Gentile nations to be used as prostitutes. This is all verified in the Bible:

"And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border."
(Joel 3:3-6)

The Prophet Zechariah also spoke of the Lord's judgments against Syria, Phoenicia and Greece. In this verse, Greece is specifically mentioned:

"When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man."
(Zechariah 9:13)

Javan's second son, Tarshish, receives his English name from the Hebrew 'tarshiysh', pronounced 'tar-sheesh'. It is also written as 'tharshish' and means 'yellow jasper'. There is a degree of debate regarding the exact location of ancient Tarshish. Some suggest that it was a city of the Phoenicians in a distant part of the Mediterranean Sea to which the Prophet Jonah was trying to flee, possibly in Cyprus or Spain. Others suggest it was a city somewhere near and accessible to the Red Sea to which ships constructed at Ezion-geber on the Elanitic Gulf on the Red Sea were to sail. Easton's Bible Dictionary seems to agree with both of these possibilities lending more weight to a city in Spain. It begins by suggesting that 'Tarshish' may actually be a Sanscrit or Aryan word meaning 'the sea coast'. It then adds:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The name of a place which first comes into notice in the days of Solomon. The question as to the locality of Tarshish has given rise to not a little discussion. Some think there was a Tarshish in the East, on the Indian coast, seeing that 'ships of Tarshish' sailed from Eziongeber, on the Red Sea, (1Ki. 9:26, 22:48, 2Ch. 9:21). Some, again, argue that Carthage was the place so named. There can be little doubt, however, that this is the name of a Phoenician port in Spain, between the two mouths of the Guadalquivir (the name given to the river by the Arabs, and meaning 'the great wady' or water-course). It was founded by a Carthaginian colony, and was the farthest western harbour of Tyrian sailors. It was to this port Jonah's ship was about to sail from Joppa. It has well been styled 'the Peru of Tyrian adventure;' it abounded in gold and silver mines. It appears that this name also is used without reference to any locality. 'Ships of Tarshish' is an expression sometimes denoting simply ships intended for a long voyage, (Isa. 23:1, 14), ships of a large size (sea-going ships), whatever might be the port to which they sailed. Solomon's ships were so styled, (1Ki. 10:22, 22:49)."

----- End Of Quote -----

Concerning Javan's third son, Kittim, also spelled Chittim, as I pointed out in my 'The Kings Of The North And The South' articles, it is probably a reference to the island of Cyprus. It is transliterated from the Hebrew 'Kittiy', pronounced 'kit-tee', and means 'bruisers'. Here is a more amplified definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary:

----- Begin Quote -----

"...the name of a branch of the descendants of Javan, the 'son' of Japheth. Balaam foretold, (Num 24:24), 'that ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and afflict Eber.' Daniel prophesied, (Dan 11:30), that the ships of Chittim would come against the king of the north. It probably denotes Cyprus, whose ancient capital was called Kition by the Greeks. The references elsewhere made to Chittim, (Isa 23:1, 12, Jer 2:10, Eze 27:6), are to be explained on the ground that while the name originally designated the Phoenicians only, it came latterly to be used of all the islands and various settlements on the sea-coasts which they had occupied, and then of the people who succeeded them when the Phoenician power decayed. Hence it designates generally the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean and the races that inhabit them."

----- End Of Quote -----

Finally, Javan's fourth son, Dodanim, may possibly be the father of the inhabitants of the island of Rhodes, the largest of the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean Sea off the southwest coast of Turkey. Rhodes was ceded by Italy to Greece in 1947. The name 'Dodanim' is transliterated from the Hebrew 'Dodaniym', pronounced 'do-daw-neem', which means 'leaders'. It is also translated as 'Rodanim'. Here is

additional information from Easton's Bible Dictionary:

----- Begin Quote -----

"A race descended from Javan. They are known in profane history as the Dardani, originally inhabiting Illyricum. They were a semi-Pelasgic race, and in the ethnographical table they are grouped with the Chittim (q.v.). In 1 Chronicles 1:7 they are called Rodanim. The LXX. and the Samaritan Version also read Rhodii, whence some have concluded that the Rhodians, the inhabitants of the island of Rhodes, are meant."

----- End Of Quote -----

Aside from all of this interesting history regarding Greece, we also know, as I pointed out in 'Biblical Cafeteria Or The Whole Course? Part One', that some of the First Century churches established by Paul and his successors, were found within Greece, particularly within Macedonia. For example, these included Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi and Berea. Berea is particularly well spoken of in the Book of Acts:

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." (Acts 17:10-12)

As has already been seen, if there is one thing we know from history, it is that no power lasts forever. Alexander the Great was only in his early thirties when he died. Some say that he died a drunk lamenting that there were no more worlds to conquer. At the time of his death in about 323 B.C., his empire was divided up by his four main generals who themselves are symbolized by the four heads of the leopard described previously. This fact is again emphasized in Daniel chapter eleven where we read:

"And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those." (Daniel 11:3-4)

Following Alexander's demise, the four key heirs of his empire are believed to have been Ptolemy I of the southern kingdom of Egypt, Seleucus of the eastern area of Babylonia, Antigonus of the northern kingdom comprised of Syria and Asia Minor, and finally, Antipater of the western area of Macedonia and Greece. I discuss some of this in more detail in the first 'Kings Of The North And The South' article. Likewise, I will be offering some additional surprises in part six of this same series. While these areas survived for some time in their divided state, Greece was eventually conquered by the 'teeth of iron' of Rome in 146 B.C., just

as Daniel had prophesied. Philippi, the capital of Macedonia, particularly became an important Roman colony according to the Book of Acts. It is also confirmed by Easton's Bible Dictionary:

"And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days." (Acts 16:12)

----- Begin Quote -----

"Formerly Crenides, "the fountain," the capital of the province of Macedonia. It stood near the head of the Sea, about 8 miles north-west of Kavalla. It is now a ruined village, called Philibedjik. Philip of Macedonia fortified the old Thracian town of Crenides, and called it after his own name Philippi (B.C. 359) In the time of the Emperor Augustus this city became a Roman colony, i.e., a military settlement of Roman soldiers, there planted for the purpose of controlling the district recently conquered. It was a "miniature Rome," under the municipal law of Rome, and governed by military officers, called duumviri, who were appointed directly from Rome. Having been providentially guided thither, here Paul and his companion Silas preached the gospel and formed the first church in Europe."

"The city of Philippi was a Roman colony, i.e., a military settlement of Roman soldiers and citizens, planted there to keep in subjection a newly-conquered district. A colony was Rome in miniature, under Roman municipal law, but governed by military officers (praetors and lictors), not by proconsuls. It had an independent internal government, the jus Italicum; i.e., the privileges of Italian citizens."

----- End Of Quote -----

While some of this historical data may seem a bit boring to some of my readers, it definitely has its place in the study of eschatology. If there is one thing I have learned during the course of my study of the Scriptures, it is that in order to properly understand the Biblical prophecies, or at least to be able to come close to understanding them, one must have a working knowledge of secular history. After all, while the Bible is an inspirational Book, it is also a historical Book as well. In order to understand what may happen in the future to fulfill the ancient prophecies, we must also understand what has already happened in the past. For me personally, to delve into these areas is truly a fascinating adventure.

Having said that, the primary purpose of providing the bulk of the material I have presented thus far in part four of this series, is to show how, beginning with Egypt, each of the first five empires, or kings, were wounded, (or defeated in battle), by the Sword of the Lord placed in the hand of the conquering empire. Thus, in that regard, they each are eligible candidates for the final eighth Beast 'which had the wound by a sword, and did live'. Based on the descriptive verse from Ezekiel describing the king of Egypt as a 'deadly wounded man', we could jump to conclusions and say that Egypt will be the eighth and final Beast. However,

in my view, this would be an error in judgment. If there is one thing I have emphasized throughout my writings, it is that we must compare Scripture with Scripture in order to come to the right conclusions; and even then we still might not be right on the mark.

Following my own advice, I can easily point out why I feel that Egypt should be dropped from the list of candidates. If you the reader accept my view that the 'king of the north' mentioned in the prophecies of Daniel, and the Beast prophesied in the Book of Revelation are one and the same person, then there is no way that Egypt can produce the Beast, because according to my understanding of the Daniel prophecies, the 'king of the north', (the Beast), defeats the 'king of the south', which I have interpreted as being Egypt. In fact, as I pointed out in my articles 'The Kings Of The North And The South', Daniel practically tells us that Egypt is the 'king of the south':

"He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." (Daniel 11:42-43)

There is a truly amazing secret hidden in these verses. To date, in every commentary I have ever read regarding the Daniel prophecies, the authors seems to agree with my view that beginning with verse twenty-one of this chapter, the Prophet Daniel is speaking of the ENDTIME, the rise of the demonic Beast, and his wars against the 'king of the south'. Consider these two verses. The first one introduces the Beast in Daniel, and the second one tells us when these wars will transpire:

"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." (Daniel 11:21)

"And at the TIME OF THE END shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." (Daniel 11:40)

This seems like another confirmation of what I have been saying all along in this series, in 'The Kings Of The North And The South', and in other of my Endtime articles; and that is that the Beast's place of origin may be somewhere between Syria and Iraq. If there is one thing which current world events have confirmed, it is that Saddam Hussein is definitely 'a vile person', just as Daniel states. Anyone who would have his own sons-in-law and other officers assassinated in order to remain in power is clearly influenced by satanic forces. From what I have read, Hussein is currently preparing his younger son Qusay to be his successor, in case something should happen to him. Hussein's security organization consists of a four-tier system. The outermost level is the Republican Guard, followed by the Special Republican Guard, then the Special Security

Organization and finally at the center is the Presidential Security Service of which Qusay is in charge. Hussein's eldest son Uday is believed to have been marked as his father's successor, but much has happened in the past several years which makes it appear highly unlikely now.

In case you still don't understand the amazing Scriptural connection I have just made here, let me quote for you again the verses I shared earlier in this article describing the ancient fall of Egypt, (the 'king of the south'), by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, (the 'king of the north'). I will place the Daniel verses right below them so that you can't possibly miss the similarities:

"And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD."
(Ezekiel 30:4-6)

"He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." (Daniel 11:42-43)

The first set of verses is clearly describing the ancient fall of Egypt by King Nebuchadnezzar, who many times in the Scriptures is said to be a great power coming from the north. The second set of verses is also describing the fall of Egypt. However, if you accept what I and others have said regarding these verses, they are prophesying the fall of Egypt IN THE ENDTIME by an ENDTIME 'king of the north'! Both sets of verses are describing two different falls of Egypt separated by thousands of years of history! Not only that, but both sets of verses describe the fall of the Egyptians, the Libyans, and the Ethiopians! Is this a mere coincidence, or are we indeed going to soon witness a prophetic repetition of history? As I pointed out in part three of this series, Saddam Hussein views himself as a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar who will unite the Arab world against Israel and the powers of the West. Following is another interesting quote taken from a 1996 edition of the Wall Street Journal:

----- Begin Quote -----

"At the height of his recent military confrontation with the U.S. over the Iraqi army's push into the northern Kurdish enclave, Saddam Hussein made sure his top brass showed up at this month's Babylon Festival. The annual celebration is part of the Iraqi leader's effort to portray himself as the modern-day successor of King Nebuchadnezzar, whose biblical empire stretched from Kuwait to Israel. Saddam Hussein has used bricks stamped with his name and the seal of Iraq in the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar's ancient palace in Babylon, 60 miles south of Baghdad. He cited the claim that

Nebuchadnezzar's father was an ancient tribal leader in what is now Kuwait as further justification for Iraq's 1991 invasion of that country."

----- End Of Quote -----

According to the information I have researched, there may indeed be an element of truth in Hussein's claim. As I stated earlier in this article, Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, is believed to have been a Chaldean who rose through the ranks of the Assyrian army to become a general, and ultimately the first king of Babylon. Ur of the Chaldees was indeed located in what is now known as Kuwait. Whether or not this is justification for Saddam's military maneuvers is a matter of politics and personal opinion. To further convince you the reader of how serious Saddam Hussein views his role as a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar who will lead the Muslim world to victory over Israel and the West, following is part of an article which appeared last year in the New York Times:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Across southern Iraq, but especially in the rubble remains of this city with its magical name, some mud bricks unearthed from the distant past still carry the mark of Nebuchadnezzar, the fabled Babylonian king... More than 2,500 years later, new bricks placed in Babylon's walls carry the same cuneiform script, but a very different inscription."

"In the era of President Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq," the modern bricks read, "who rebuilt Babylon."

"It is no coincidence, Iraqi officials say, that Saddam has decided to embrace both Babylon and its most famous leader. It is in Babylon -- 60 miles south of Baghdad, and praised long ago by the Greek historian Herodotus as a city that surpasses in its splendor everything in the known world -- that the government has found a favorite emblem."

----- End Of Quote -----

Following the above quote, this article then goes on to state that after the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein spent a great sum of money to construct a magnificent palace made of white marble on a hilltop overlooking the ruins of ancient Babylon. With this quote I have now provided three major American news sources which have publicized the Hussein-Nebuchadnezzar connection. For God to forewarn us of these things in His Word is one thing, but to have even the world news organizations proclaim it is quite a confirmation!

What is interesting to me is that no matter from what angle I choose to try to interpret these ancient prophecies, I still come up with the same results; and that is that the Beast, or eighth king, may indeed arise from either Syria or Iraq. Up until a few years ago, any cooperation between Syria and Iraq would have seemed highly unlikely. This is because in 1977, the governments of Syria and Iraq each went

their separate ways in a political and ideological sense. The gulf between Assad and Hussein had become so great that during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, Syria sided with Iran which is not even an Arab nation. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Assad sided with the Western allies by sending troops to Saudi Arabia. However, since a few years ago, when Bill Clinton became the President of the United States and paid a diplomatic visit to Syria, Assad has drifted away from the West, and has been working to improve Syria's relations with Iraq. This has included the re-opening of their common borders. Additionally, Assad has sought to improve Syrian relations with Russia.

You see, when the U.S.S.R. began to fall apart in 1989, Syria made a political shift towards the West. Personally, I find it interesting that Assad would make such a move. Did he just see it as an opportunity to secure more American dollars, or could it be that like many world leaders, he chose to side with the government that could help keep him in power? Regardless of his motivations, as I have already said, it appears that the American honeymoon is over. While President Assad has distanced himself from Washington in recent years, he has maintained a close relationship with the pro-Western Gulf Cooperation Council which is comprised of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. This relationship is based on his strong belief in Arab unity.

While Assad distanced himself from the Russians following the world-shaking events of 1989, Iraq continued and continues to maintain close ties with the Russian Federation. In fact, as news reports will verify, the Russians have been instrumental in trying to ease the sanctions imposed upon Iraq since the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. Despite the fact that the current leaders of Syria and Iraq have been at odds with each other in the past because of their political ideologies, what some people may not realize is that President Hafez al-Assad and Saddam Hussein come from very similar backgrounds. They both ascended to the ultimate position of power in their respective countries in roughly the same time period; Assad in 1971, and Hussein in 1979. Another similarity is that both are members of the Ba'ath Party which is what helped catapult them into power.

Hussein was born on April 28, 1937 to a poor peasant family which lived in al-Auja, a small village on the banks of the Tigris River located on the outskirts of Tikrit, north of Baghdad. It is because of the fact that Hussein and his inner core of leaders are all from this same area that they are sometimes referred to as the 'Tikrit Clan'. In fact, Hussein's full name happens to be Saddam al-Tikriti Hussein. After the death of his father, Hussein was raised by his uncle who was a devout Sunni Muslim and a nationalist. Hussein joined the nationalist and anti-Western Ba'ath Party at the age of eighteen in 1956. In a 1959 assassination attempt against Iraqi Prime Minister Abudul Karim Kassim, Hussein was shot in the leg and ended up fleeing to Syria, and then later to Egypt until 1963.

After attending Cairo Law School with the help of his friend and hero, Egyptian president Gamel Nasser, Hussein returned

to Iraq. Following a period of imprisonment, he eventually helped lead the bloodless coup that brought the Ba'ath party to power in 1968 under his cousin General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr who became president and head of the Revolutionary Command Council. As the new Vice President and Deputy Chairman of the RCC, Hussein built an elaborate network of secret police, the primary purpose of which was to root out dissidents. Because of his ruthlessness and the brutal steps he is known to take to eliminate all opposition, he has been referred to by some as the 'Butcher of Baghdad'. Eleven years after the Ba'athist victory, in 1979, at the age of forty-two, Hussein deposed Bakr and became the new leader of Iraq. Today he is President, Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Like Saddam Hussein, Syrian president Hafez al-Assad is equally ruthless and brutal in his tactics; and he is quick to eliminate any opposition to his authoritarian government by whatever means is necessary. This is accomplished through the use of his secret police force. Assad was born in 1928 in Qardahah, Syria amongst an ethnic minority known as the Alawi. In 1946 he joined the Ba'ath Party at the age of eighteen, the very same age at which Saddam Hussein joined the party ten years later. At the time, the Ba'ath Party was still a small, secular, yet very aggressive and very nationalistic organization. Assad attended the Military Academy at Homs and graduated in 1955 as a pilot officer. As would occur in Iraq five years later, a Ba'athist coup in 1963 resulted in Assad becoming the head of the Air Force. Three years later, in 1966, he was appointed Minister of Defence. In 1970 he ascended to the powerful position of Prime Minister, followed a year later as the elected President of Syria.

While Syria has good relations with Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan, like Saddam Hussein, President Assad views the peace deals between Egypt and Israel, and Jordan and Israel with a great deal of contempt. In his mind, those agreements represent a sign of weakness on the part of his Arab allies. Despite some of their differences in viewpoint, Assad and Hussein, like many of the other leaders of the Muslim world, do agree upon some basic points: They hate Israel's policy of expansionism. They hate the Western alliance. They want Israel to return to pre-1967 borders which means giving up the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Mount Hermon, and southern Lebanon. They want a homeland established for the Palestinians. Most importantly, all of these leaders claim to be striving for Arab solidarity, and some of these leaders, such as Assad and Hussein, believe that they are the man to do the job.

Part of the problem is that while they claim to want unity in the Muslim world, what is most important to each one of these leaders is that they maintain their own powerbase in their home country. As we have seen, they will go to any length to ensure this, whether it be through extreme authoritarian governments, political assassinations and other acts of brutality, changing loyalties, or even siding with the Western powers if it will help them to achieve their goals. This is one reason why the Gulf Cooperation Council nations are pro-Western in their political stance.

While Iraq and Iran are both Muslim nations, their Muslim brothers around the Persian Gulf realize that these larger nations could turn against them at any time, just as Iraq tried to swallow up Kuwait. From all of the research I have done, if there is one thing that has been made clear to me, it is that some of these leaders of the Arab/Muslim world are paranoid egomaniacs. They trust absolutely no one outside of their inner circles. Anyone could stab them in the back. I am again reminded of a verse from the prophecies of Daniel regarding the kings of the north and the south:

"And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed."
(Daniel 11:27)

Another set of very interesting verses found in the Book of Psalms which sound just like the slick promises of the Beast is the following. Remember, the previous verses in Daniel tell us that the Beast will come to power through peaceable means and through FLATTERIES:

"He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."
(Psalms 55:20-21)

However, mistrust amongst the Arab leaders isn't the only problem confronting Muslim solidarity. If there is one thing that Israel and the West fear the most, it is a deep and lasting military cooperation between Syria and Iraq. As I stated in part three of this series, it is for this very reason that the U.S.A., Israel and Turkey are forging closer military and economic ties. They are hoping to neutralize Syria while it is still possible to do so. To augment this potential danger from anti-Western Muslim nations, after a bloody and deadly eight-year war, Iran renewed diplomatic relations with Iraq in 1990. In fact, in late 1997, Iran was the host for the prestigious Organisation of Islamic Conference, (OIC), attended by many prominent Arab leaders. Given enough time and the right developments, an improvement in diplomatic relations between Syria, Iraq, Iran and other Islamic nations could indeed result in a deadly political and military machine. So why hasn't this happened yet?

It may be due in part to successful efforts by Israel and her Western allies to keep the Arab world fragmented and destabilized. From a Biblical perspective, could it be that the final Endtime prophecies have not yet been fulfilled because God, in His mercy, patience and longsuffering has been holding back the Islamic tide until a pre-determined amount of people have heard about and accepted the Lord? Once the Lord is satisfied that the Gospel has been preached in all the world to all nations, the Scriptures tell us that He will indeed allow the Beast to be released in order that he might utterly burn Babylon the Great Whore with fire, and lead the Islamic nations in the 'mother of all battles' known as Armageddon, exactly as the Scriptures tell us:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these

shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." (Revelation 17:16-17)

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." (Revelation 16:13-16)

The name 'Armageddon' is transliterated from the Hebrew 'Har-Magedon' which means 'hill or mount of Megiddo'. If you use the Hebrew 'Ar' instead of 'Har', it could also be interpreted as 'city of Megiddo'. This ancient Canaanite city, which was given to Manasseh for an inheritance, was located on the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon six miles, (or about ten kilometers), from Mount Carmel, and eleven miles, (or eighteen kilometers), from Nazareth in northern Israel. The plain of Esdraelon holds great significance in ancient Jewish history. It was there that Barak defeated the Canaanites, and where Gideon was also victorious over the Midianites with his band of three hundred. Additionally, it was on this same plain that Saul was slain in a battle against the Philistines, and where Josiah was slain by Pharaoh Necho as I explained earlier. I also find it interesting that 'Megiddo' actually means 'place of crowds'. When the final battle between Good and Evil begins, it truly will be a 'place of crowds', in fact, international crowds!

Returning to the main theme of this article, if there is one thing which is indeed true about Iraq and Saddam Hussein, it is that the phrase 'wounded by a sword and did live' certainly applies to them. We have already seen that Iraq is the home of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian empires. We have also seen that Saddam Hussein firmly believes that he has an appointment with destiny as Nebuchadnezzar III who will restore the glory of the Islamic Empire. In these points alone, he would fulfill the ancient prophecies. Additionally, during the almost twenty years he has been in power, he has engaged in an eight-year war with Iran, he has suffered tremendously at the hands of Western governments due to his invasion of Kuwait and his persecution against the Kurds, plus according to a Fox News report, a 1983 book published by his former intelligence chief states that he survived seven assassination attempts in fifteen years! The Western allies are so intent on destroying this man that they now utilize satellites and other modern technology in order to try to detect his every move by tracking his voice every time he speaks! It is for this reason that Saddam Hussein currently has some eighty 'Presidential Palaces' where he lives, works and sleeps; and he never spends more than one night in any one of them!

Despite all of the above, Saddam Hussein just keeps bouncing back! There is an old saying which states that you can't keep a good man down. In the secular world, they would say that Saddam Hussein has got good karma. As a Christian, all I can say is, either he is being protected by satanic forces, or else God is indeed miraculously sparing him until his hour of worldly 'greatness' as the Beast of the Book of Revelation! What do you think? In part five of this series, I will be discussing the meaning of the 'Bottomless Pit', sharing more on death and the Resurrection, providing a possible interpretation of the 'Image of the Beast' and 'The Abomination of Desolation', as well further discussing President Saddam Hussein. I hope you are finding this series of articles exciting. I'll see you in part five. May God bless you with the Truth.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

THE SEVEN HEADS: THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND IMAGE OF THE BEAST

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

The Bottomless Pit, Death And The Resurrection, King Nebuchadnezzar And The Image Of The Beast, The Abomination Of Desolation, And The Egocentricity Of Saddam Hussein

Thus far in this series I have presented a preponderance of evidence which, in my view, strongly suggests that the final eighth king of the Book of Revelation, known as the Beast, or as the 'little horn' and the 'king of the north' in the prophecies of Daniel, may arise out of either Syria, or else out of Iraq. As additional indicators that Assad of Syria, or Hussein of Iraq, or possibly one of their successors, may be the Beast, I would now like you to consider the following evidence I came across while studying the Scriptures. In some of the earlier verses I shared from the Book of Revelation, we read the following:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (Revelation 17:8)

Exactly what is meant by '...and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit...'? While quite a variety of interpretations have been used to try to explain this phrase, I believe the proper meaning is really quite simple and can be found by comparing Scripture with Scripture. This phrase 'bottomless pit' is derived from the Greek word 'abussos' which means 'bottomless, unbounded, pit, the immeasurable depth'. As you will notice, it is from this Greek word that we get our English word 'abyss'. The Greek lexicon also states the following regarding 'abussos':

----- Begin Quote -----

"A very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the Earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons."

----- End Of Quote -----

In my article entitled 'Hell And The Lake Of Fire, Part One', I go into a lengthy discourse concerning the meanings and applications of the word 'hell' as found in both the Old and New Testaments. As I explained in that article, in the Old Testament, the word 'hell' is transliterated thirty-one times from the Hebrew word 'sheol'. Another thirty-one times, 'sheol' is translated as 'grave'. Additionally, 'sheol' is translated three times as 'pit'. In short, 'hell', or 'sheol' refers to the insides of the Earth, the bowels of the Earth, the common grave where all mortal flesh

will end up unless it is cremated. It also denotes the spiritual underworld of the dead where the wicked are kept, a multi-tiered prison or dungeon or sorts. In the New Testament, the Greek word 'hades' is used to denote the very same thing. I encourage you to read the aforementioned article to obtain a deeper and fuller understanding of the word 'hell' as it is used in the Scriptures.

So then, based on these explanations, it is my view that the 'bottomless pit' refers to the very same thing as 'sheol', or the 'hell' of the Old Testament, and 'hades', or the 'hell' of the New Testament. In fact, there is another very interesting verse in the Old Testament which adds even further weight to this understanding. In a physical sense, a 'bottomless pit' would be one which has no end as you would never reach the bottom of it. If such a pit could really be dug or created, then it could NEVER be filled up because it has no bottom to it. This is exactly what we are told in the Book of Proverbs concerning hell. Hell, or the 'bottomless pit', the common grave, is NEVER full!:

"Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." (Proverbs 27:20)

The insides of the Earth are so huge, that even if you were to take everyone who has ever died since the world began, they would still not fill up hell; thus it truly is a 'bottomless pit'! In the previous verse, the word 'hell' is derived from 'sheol', and the word 'destruction' is derived from the Hebrew 'abaddown' or 'Abaddon' which is a place of destruction or ruin. What this verse is referring to is the destruction, corruption, or decay of the human flesh in the grave. In the New Testament, the Greek words used are 'phthora' and 'diaphthora' which also mean 'corruption, destruction or perishing'. This destruction or decay of the human flesh is clearly evident in such verses as the following where Peter is discussing the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose mortal body did not undergo decay, or corruption:

"Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts 2:26-31)

The Apostle Paul wrote extensively concerning the fact that those who place their hope in Jesus Christ will inherit the Divine Nature, that is, a new Resurrected Body which will not experience decay:

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from

the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21)

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:...Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:50-55)

The Apostle Peter likewise touched on this topic in the following verse from his second Epistle:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

In the Old Testament, we find some of the most famous words regarding the coming Resurrection of the dead spoken by Job as he praises the Lord despite the fact that he is sitting in the midst of his suffering covered with boils:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27)

Returning to the Book of Proverbs for a moment, we find another very interesting verse which shows this connection between the grave, hell, and the 'bottomless pit':

"Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:" (Proverbs 1:12)

In the above verse, the word 'grave' is derived from the Hebrew 'sheol', and the word 'pit' is derived from the Hebrew word 'bowr' which means 'pit or dungeon'. Remember that I also said that 'hell' refers to the spiritual abode or dungeon of the wicked within the bowels of the Earth. Now this is where we find some very interesting connections between Satan and some of these ancient empires and their leaders. If you have read my article 'Satan: King Of Tyrus, King Of Empires Part One', then you may already understand what I am about to explain. In Isaiah chapter fourteen we have a very interesting prophecy against Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. In part, this prophecy states:

"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden

city ceased!...Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." (Isaiah 14:4, 9-11)

Here we see the physical destruction of King Nebuchadnezzar as he is brought down to the grave by the overwhelming forces of the Medes and the Persians. All of the kings Nebuchadnezzar has defeated during his lifetime ridicule him as he meets the same fate as they. As I explained in the 'Satan: King Of Tyrus' article, it is right after this that the words of the Prophet take a strange twist, and we see that the Lord is not only prophesying against the Babylonian king, but also against the evil force which controls him, Satan himself!:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Thus we see Satan's human vehicle, King Nebuchadnezzar, cast down to hell, to the 'bottomless pit'. But guess what? That is NOT where he remains! While I was doing this research, as He so often does, the Lord shocked me with some amazing verses which I had never paid much attention to before. Following the previous set of Scriptures, the dead kings of the Earth continue to ridicule Nebuchadnezzar; but then, beginning in the nineteenth verse, we read something very interesting:

"But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned." (Isaiah 14:19-20)

Please read those verses closely. Do you see what they are saying? Allow me to emphasize a few key phrases for you:

1. BUT THOU ARE CAST OUT OF THY GRAVE...
2. THRUST THROUGH WITH A SWORD...
3. THOU SHALT NOT BE JOINED WITH THEM IN BURIAL...

In part four of this series, I clearly showed how the phrase 'wound by a sword' is referring to military defeat as a result of the Lord placing His Sword of chastisement in the hand of a particular ruler, nation or empire. King Nebuchadnezzar is so evil, that even the grave doesn't want him! He is cast out! Now, I honestly don't know exactly what

happened to the original Nebuchadnezzar of Biblical fame. Maybe they really did dig up his body and let it rot on the ground. However, I think this prophecy is a lot deeper than that. The above three phrases sound identical to me to what we find in the Book of Revelation! I may be entirely wrong on this, but it appears to me that here we have an Old Testament picture of the Beast 'which had the wound by a sword and did live', ascending out of the Bottomless Pit! Here we see the resurrection of the ancient Babylonian Empire! Let me remind you of the very first verse I shared in this article:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (Revelation 17:8)

As I write this in January of 1998, if there is one thing the whole world is currently wondering about, it is how long Saddam Hussein, who proudly claims to be the modern-day King Nebuchadnezzar, is going to last. What keeps him alive? What keeps him going? Some people attribute it to luck; others to his extremely tight security system; and still others claim that he is actually Nebuchadnezzar of old either raised from the dead, or else reincarnated in Saddam Hussein! What is also amazing is that while the Western powers who have fought against him readily admit that Hussein doesn't have much in the way of formal education or formal military training, he is nevertheless very cunning and very astute, just like that old serpent in the Garden of Eden! Some have also said that Hussein has excellent organizational abilities. If this man continues to 'miraculously' surmount all of the difficulties and obstacles thrown against him by the powers of the West, perhaps he truly is the one we have all been waiting for. But, there are other possibilities which I will cover by the time we reach the end of this series.

As I pointed out in part three, the Assyrian Empire was primarily comprised of the northern half of Iraq. Assyria later assimilated Syria Proper. The Assyrian Empire was later assimilated by the Babylonian Empire which primarily constituted the southern half of modern-day Iraq. I also mentioned previously that Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, was a Chaldean general who served in the Assyrian army prior to becoming the first king of the Babylonian Empire. Additionally, I stated that the Assyrians and the Babylonians were of the same ethnic stock, and that they share a common religion, language and culture. It may be for these very reasons that in the prophecy against King Nebuchadnezzar found in Isaiah chapter fourteen, he is also referred to as 'the Assyrian':

"The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed

upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"
(Isaiah 14:24-27)

Sixteen chapters later, we find another brief mention of the fall of this Assyrian/Babylonian king:

"For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod." (Isaiah 30:31)

As I have already shown, King Nebuchadnezzar is not the only one who is in the Bottomless Pit, the unsatiated bowels of Hell. The other leaders of the seven-headed dragon are there as well, in addition to other past kings and their armies who raised the sword against Israel. Perhaps you may recall the following verses I shared in 'Satan: King Of Tyrus, King Of Empires, Part One' regarding the fall of Tyrus:

"When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;"
(Ezekiel 26:20)

"They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas."
(Ezekiel 28:8)

In the second verse above, instead of using the word 'bowr' for 'pit', the Hebrew word 'shachath' is used which means basically the same thing: 'pit of hell, destruction, grave'. Just as the Lord simultaneously prophesied against Satan and his human vehicle Nebuchadnezzar in Isaiah chapter fourteen, we see the very same thing happening in the prophecies of Ezekiel. In the thirty-first chapter, we find the Lord prophesying against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt by using the Assyrian, (probably Assurbanipal or Sinsharishkun), as an example to show Pharaoh what is going to happen to him. Again we find mention of the Bottomless Pit where all of these beasts are cast once they have fulfilled the Lord's purposes:

"Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs...Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen."
(Ezekiel 31:3, 15-17)

The Lord, through the Prophet Ezekiel, then concludes by telling Pharaoh Necho of Egypt that he will meet the same fate as the Assyrian king by being cast into the Bottomless Pit after Nebuchadnezzar has devoured his country:

"To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 31:18)

"For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee...Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit."
(Ezekiel 32:11, 18)

If you read the rest of the chapter, you will see a list of some of the other nations and empires which have also been wounded by the Sword of the Lord and then cast into the Bottomless Pit. The prophecy against Pharaoh Necho concludes with the following:

"Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD."
(Ezekiel 32:31-32)

It is interesting to note that in Daniel chapter four, the Lord also uses a great tree to symbolize the pride of Nebuchadnezzar and his seven-year debasement. However, in the above verses from Ezekiel, it doesn't make sense that the tree represents Nebuchadnezzar being as the Lord is speaking of an Assyrian king who fell BEFORE Pharaoh Necho. That could only be Assurbanipal or Sinsharishkun who were defeated by the Babylonians before King Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho some years later.

So once again, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we have not only come to understand what is probably meant by the Bottomless Pit, but we have also seen exactly who is in there; and it includes the first five kings of the Book of Revelation, of which one of them is the final resurrected Beast of the Endtime! From all of the evidence I have presented thus far, I am becoming more and more convinced that Syria and Iraq may be the two top contenders for giving the world the Beast. Really stop and think about this: Syria was part of the Egyptian Empire, Syria was part of the Assyrian Empire, Syria was part of the Babylonian Empire, Syria was part of the Medo-Persian Empire, and Syria was part of the Grecian/Macedonian Empire. This is the only land mass all five of these empires had in common because Pharaoh's reign did not extend any further north than that, or any further East than Israel. Is this a coincidence? I don't think so.

With each additional piece of information, we keep coming up over and over again with the same results: Syria or Iraq; both kings of the north, and both parts of the greater empires of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. If all of this weren't enough, while continuing my research, I discovered another interesting connection between the ancient king of Babylon, and our modern King Nebuchadnezzar, Saddam Hussein. In part one of my article 'The Kings Of The North And The South', I discussed the great image that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his visions of the night. For this discussion, what is important is not what each part of the image, or statue, represented, but rather the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed by this vision in which he was depicted as the head of gold, that in the very next chapter, we are told that he ordered his subjects to construct a golden replica of this great statue; and that is exactly what they did:

"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." (Daniel 3:1)

This must have been one great and expensive construction project. Imagine in those days building a statue of gold which stood sixty cubits, (at least ninety feet), tall, and six cubits, (at least nine feet), wide. This magnificent monolith was as big as was Nebuchadnezzar's own pride and vanity. Does it remind you of another Middle Eastern leader today who has been willfully defying the Western powers even to his own hurt and the hurt of his people? While this is a bit of speculation, being as the idol had to be a three dimensional object, could it be that the breadth of it was also six cubits so that it was properly balanced and stood upright? In other words, is it possible that this idol had dimensions of sixty by six by six, that is '666'? Remember again what John tells us in the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation:

"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 is Six hundred threescore and six."
(Revelation 13:18)

In part six of this series, I will be presenting another very interesting insight regarding the possible significance of the infamous '666'. Once this golden monument was completed, the vain king then ordered that all of the leadership throughout Babylonia come to the dedication at Dura and bow down and worship it! While the Scriptures don't outright reveal this, considering the events of Daniel chapter two, in my mind there is little doubt that this great statue must have been made in the likeness of the king himself. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to be worshipped like a god!:

"Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had

set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." (Daniel 3:3-6)

Without going into all of the details of the story, this is where we see Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, cast into the fiery furnace due to their refusal to bow down to the great image. Just prior to throwing them into the blazing furnace, a very enraged and haughty Nebuchadnezzar gave them an ultimatum:

"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15)

Of course, we know that these faithful Jews refused to give in to Nebuchadnezzar's demands, so into the fiery furnace they went trusting God for the outcome. According to the words of the king, it appears that the Lord Himself may have arrived to protect them so that they came out without even the smell of smoke on their garments:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." (Daniel 3:24-27)

While Nebuchadnezzar rewarded Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego by elevating their positions in Babylon, and while he passed a law by which no one would be permitted to curse or speak against the God of the Jews, there is Scriptural evidence which seems to indicate that he never fully repented of his wickedness, nor came to accept the one true God as his own. Even though he glorified the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, the Lord was still just one of many gods to the Babylonian king. Despite this wonderful witness and manifestation of God's power, it is in the very next chapter that we read of the king's seven-year abasement while the Lord dealt with his pride. However, even after this, there is still no real sign of repentance on the part

of the king. He doesn't free the Jews; and he doesn't return all of the gold, silver, bronze and other precious and sacred things he stole from them. This will be discussed more in full in part six.

What adds credibility to this ancient account of the great golden image is the fact that ancient Dura in Iraq still retains the same name today. In fact, on one of the mounds of Dura, a large pedestal has been found which is believed to have been the base for the very statue mentioned in Daniel chapter three! So how does this account relate to the Endtime and our attempt to identify the Beast? In the Book of Revelation, we discover that this Endtime king of a 'fierce countenance', as the Prophet Daniel referred to him, will likewise have an image, or idol, built to honour himself. This work will be under the direction of the False Prophet:

"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 as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (Revelation 13:14-15)

In the above verses, the word 'image' is derived from the Greek word 'eikon', from which we obtain our English transliteration 'icon'. In other words, it is an idol. Currently, I am not certain who this False Prophet is who will construct this monument of the Beast. As I have stated in other articles, if my present speculations regarding the possible identity of the Beast are correct, then it stands to reason that the False Prophet will also be an Arab, and if not an Arab, then at least a Muslim spiritual leader who is either currently held, or at some time in the near future will be held in high esteem by the Muslim world. The Scriptures clearly state that the Beast and the False Prophet will be working very closely with each other. In a sense, the False Prophet will be the Beast's propaganda agent or public relations man. It will be the perfect marriage of false religion and politics.

No one can doubt that in our modern times, images play a very important role in our lives, not only the personal image we each have of ourselves, or the image that others have of us, but also electronic images such as the myriad of commercials to which we are exposed every time we turn on the television set. Images not only influence how much money we spend, but also where we will spend it. Commercials and billboard advertisements influence what we eat, how we dress, what kind of a car we drive, etc. More importantly, images also affect public opinion and world politics. We are all familiar with how our communities become plastered with political billboards and posters full of all kinds of faces, slick political slogans, and quite often what will turn out to be nothing but broken promises. The whole purpose of this strategy is to win our confidence as well as to win our votes, as if they really mean anything. As I have said before, I believe 'The Controllers' have already decided who

is going to win and who isn't. It's all one big farse.

So exactly how does all of this relate to Saddam Hussein? According to one Fox News report I read some time ago, after Hussein became president of Iraq in 1979, one of the first things he did was to plaster the country from one end to the other with twenty-foot-tall posters of himself. From that time until today, he has been a master at manipulating the mass media in his favor. Within Iraq, there are those who indeed view him as an indestructible 'god'. There have been many monuments dedicated to his honor. In fact, one monument which boasts of victory during the Iran-Iraq War consists of two hands brandishing a pair of swords. These hands are mounted on piles of Iranian helmets obtained during that War. According to the information I read, these large hands were actually moulded after Hussein's own hands!

If we take this a step further, is it possible that just as King Nebuchadnezzar of old constructed the ninety-foot-tall idol of himself, that someday in the near future, after successfully invading and conquering Israel with Arab and Russian help, that Saddam Hussein will place a great image of himself on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem to brag of his great victory over the Jews and the West? In previous Endtime articles, I have suggested the possibility that the 'Image of the Beast' might actually be a large computerized image such as a television monitor. Considering that the Apostle John would have absolutely no idea what a television screen is, describing an image which was brought to life and which could speak would certainly be an appropriate description for a televised image. To John it would indeed seem like magic or sorcery. From all I have read regarding how cold-blooded Saddam Hussein is, I can just imagine a huge televised image of him being broadcast from the Temple Mount in which he is condemning people to death.

On the other hand, perhaps the 'Image of the Beast' will be something a little more mundane such as a huge bust of Saddam Hussein, or whoever the Beast ends up being. Perhaps the False Prophet will actually bring this large bust to life exactly as the Bible states. While this possibility may seem ludicrous and totally unrealistic to some, we must not forget that we are speaking of a time of great spiritual darkness and strong delusion. The magicians of Egypt also had spiritual powers. They were able to transform their rods into serpents, as well as duplicate the plagues of blood and frogs performed by Moses and Aaron. In short, it was a direct confrontation between the gods of the Egyptians, and the true God of the Hebrew children. By the third plague of the lice, the Lord finally outmatched the magicians so that even they were begging Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel go:

"And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."
(Exodus 8:18-19)

"And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of

the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians." (Exodus 9:11)

"And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" (Exodus 10:7)

While I don't know exactly what the 'Image of the Beast' will be, I suspect that it may possibly be the same thing as the 'Abomination of Desolation' of which I have made mention in such articles as 'The Kings Of The North And The South, Part One'. As I pointed out there, some have theorized that Daniel's prophecy may have found its fulfillment when the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV profaned the Jewish Temple by sacrificing pigs to Jupiter on the Temple altar. However, in Matthew chapter twenty-four, Jesus clearly tells us that Daniel's words had not yet been fulfilled in His time. Notice that He is speaking in the future tense:

"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:). Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:" (Matthew 24:15-16)

Other Bible scholars suggest that Daniel's prophecy may have been fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Roman flags were flown over Jerusalem symbolizing her fall to pagan forces. These flags bore an image of an eagle. According to the Mosaic Law, the eagle is an unclean bird. In other words, it is an abomination:

"And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray," (Leviticus 11:13)

Those who support this view strengthen their interpretation by adding the following verses to the previous verses from Matthew:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." (Luke 21:20-21)

In other words, these scholars are suggesting that what Jesus is really saying is, 'When you see the Roman flag bearing the emblem of an eagle flying over the Temple Mount, it is time to flee because the desolation of Jerusalem is about to begin.' To add a bit of modern intrigue to this Roman connection, consider the fact that I recently discovered that the Roman Catholic Church has some rather clandestine ties to Saddam Hussein. While they may seem like odd bedfellows, the truth of the matter is, that they both have interests in seeing Jerusalem come under their control. While the Jewish state puts up with all of the monasteries and with other Christian tourist traps within Jerusalem and other areas of Israel, it is only because of the tourist dollars they generate. As recent headlines will reveal,

there is no love affair between Judaism and Christianity in Israel. The Jews wish to practice Judaism, and that is all. A recent bill in the Knesset to ban passing out Christian literature in Israel is a clear indication of what really goes on inside the hearts and minds of Orthodox Jews.

While the Roman interpretation may indeed be true, as with other Biblical prophecies, what happened in 70 A.D. may have only been a partial fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. If there is one thing I have clearly shown in this series of articles, it is that the Books of Daniel and Revelation are clearly linked. As such, the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar of old built a great statue of himself, plus the fact that the False Prophet will do the same for the Beast who may be a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar, plus the fact that we are told that the 'Abomination of Desolation' will STAND in the Holy Place, still lends credence to my interpretation. Not only that, if my speculation regarding the 'Abomination of Desolation' and the 'Image of the Beast' being the same thing is correct, you certainly can't give life to a flag and make it speak.

There is one verse I shared earlier which may indeed point to Saddam Hussein, or Nebuchadnezzar III if you will, as possibly fulfilling the ancient prophecies regarding the 'Image of the Beast' and the 'Abomination of Desolation'. In the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, we are clearly told that Nebuchadnezzar was an abomination in the sight of the Lord:

"But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet." (Isaiah 14:19)

If the Lord deemed Nebuchadnezzar an abomination, or a filthy defiled thing in His sight, would He not view with equal disgust a huge golden statue of the king which everyone was forced to worship? Thus, if Saddam Hussein or his heir were to place some kind of idol or image on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem, we might very well be witnessing the fulfillment of the 'Abomination of Desolation'. As a final thought, consider the fact that in both accounts, in Daniel and in the Book of Revelation, those who refuse to worship the image are destroyed!

Not only does Hussein use images, monuments, and the mass media to let his own people know who is in charge in Iraq, but he also uses the same media to ridicule his enemies and to program his countrymen according to his particular political ideology. Of course, politicians and governments all around the world do this, even in the United States of America. Like them, Saddam Hussein is definitely a pro! Recently I came across one photograph from Iraq which showed a poster of American President Bill Clinton being crushed by an Iraqi tank. Thus again we see what powerful messages can be transmitted via images to mold the opinion of the masses.

With these thoughts I am going to end part five of this series. In the final installment, I will be providing some additional fascinating information and possibilities

regarding Khatami And Khamenei, the Kurds, the Mark of the Beast, the Euphrates River, the Shatt al-Arab waterway and Abadan, Ataturk and Turkey, the 'kings of the East' and the Ten Horns of the Endtime. I pray this article has been a help and a blessing to many. I'll see you in part six.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net

<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

THE SEVEN HEADS: THE EUPHRATES AND THE KINGS OF THE EAST

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Home Of The Beast, Khatami And Khamenei, Mystery Of The Medes And The Kurds, The 666, Faith Of Gold, The Euphrates River, The Kings Of The East, Shatt al-Arab And Abadan, Ataturk and Turkey, The Ten Horns

As I've made clear in the previous parts of this series, as well as in other of my Endtime articles, it is my current belief that the coming Kingdom of Darkness of the Beast may be an Islamic Empire comprised of Muslim states currently in existence in the Middle East. Based on my understanding of the prophecies of such books as Daniel and Revelation, I have proposed that the political/military figurehead of this Empire may quite possibly arise out of Syria; and if not there, then possibly out of Iraq. In fact, due to new information I have discovered, I will take this a step further and suggest that Turkey also offers some possibilities. While Turkey is currently warming up to Israel, we must remember that the Middle East is a very volatile area of the world. Conditions are always changing; loyalties are always changing. While we are presently witnessing a military alliance between the U.S.A., Turkey and Israel, things could change dramatically overnight. For example, if the Muslims were somehow able to gain control of the secular government, it is obvious that Israel would lose her ally and gain a very powerful enemy. Therefore, Turkey is a key player in the Endtime scenario.

As I stated previously, in a geographical sense, Syria and Iraq are both potential 'kings of the north' because they are situated north and northeast of Israel. This also applies to Turkey. Additionally, all three of these countries occupy territory which was formerly the northern and eastern regions of the divided Grecian Empire as I partially explained in the article 'The Kings Of The North And The South'. This makes them the perfect candidates for the home of the Beast. In describing the expansion of this leader's powerbase, the Prophet Daniel wrote:

"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." (Daniel 8:9)

All three of these countries could expand in these three directions to varying degrees, some more than others. For example, from Baghdad, Sadaam Hussein could easily expand eastward into Iran, southward into Saudia Arabia and the Gulf States, and westward towards Israel, (the pleasant land), through Jordan and/or Syria. In the case of President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey, he could also move eastward through Armenia into some of the former Soviet republics, southward towards Syria, Jordan, Saudia Arbia, etc., and southwestward into Israel and Lebanon. Finally, if King

Assad were to expand from Damascus, he could also move eastward towards Iraq, directly southward towards Jordan, and southwestward into Israel. In all three cases, if they were to invade Israel, it would most likely be from the north through the Golan Heights, an elevated area in northeastern Israel which as of January 1998 is still a point of dispute between Israel and Syria. The Golan Heights represents Israel's most vulnerable point on her northeastern border, and that is why she adamantly refuses to return it to Syria.

In part five of this series, I discussed the unique relationship between the Beast and the False Prophet. In my view, if the Muslims in the Arab countries and Iran are able to continue resolving their differences, this could very well open the way for someone like the Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran to become the False Prophet. Such a powerful Islamic leader could easily encourage the Islamic masses to follow behind someone like Saddam Hussein. While Mohammad Khatami is the actual president of Iran, it is an established fact that Khamenei is the real supreme leader of the country. Like his predecessor Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei is a very charismatic leader. Additionally, he has made no effort whatsoever to hide his displeasure when he has disagreed with President Khatami who is a moderate by Iranian standards. As an example, according to one Reuters report I read recently, Khatami's supporters have often accused the state radio and television, (which are headed by a director appointed by the Ayatollah), of being politically biased against him, that is, against Khatami.

During the final Gulf Cooperation Council conference of 1997, the Persian Gulf states expressed more trust, albeit guarded trust, in the leadership of Iran, which is not even an Arab nation, than in Saddam Hussein of Iraq. As the events of 1979 revealed, there are powerful spiritual forces at work in Iran. It was in that year that the pro-Western Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was deposed and Iran became the first Islamic republic based on shari law under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. As such, it would not be wise to rule out that ancient nation, formerly known as Persia, as a possible location for the origin of the political, military and spiritual team known as the Beast and the False Prophet. After all, just like King Assad of Syria and Saddam Hussein of Iraq, the leadership of Iran also has the vision for becoming the leader of the Muslim world. Additionally, in recent years she has made great strides in a military and technological sense; so much so that the Israeli leadership fears Iran as much as it fears Syria and Iraq!

There are other reasons why we should keep a close eye on Iran. As I have stated before, history and prophecy seem to repeat themselves until their final fulfillment. In part five of this series I mentioned how God drove King Nebuchadnezzar from his kingdom for seven years after he forced his subjects to worship a ninety-foot-tall golden idol, which I theorized was made after his own likeness. While the Nebuchadnezzar of our modern-day has not been driven from his kingdom, (although internal forces supported by the West have tried to bring that about), Saddam Hussein has indeed been humbled the past seven years since his

'defeat' during the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. The reason I place the word 'defeat' in quotes is because there are those who are of the opinion that the entire Persian Gulf War was a staged event meant to purposely build up the vanity and false-confidence of the Western powers, particularly that of the United States of America, in preparation for a major and unexpected Muslim and Soviet offensive against Israel and Eastern Europe. As we are told in the Scriptures:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

However, it is also interesting to note that in the case of Babylon of the past, just as Nebuchadnezzar devoured many nations, the Lord eventually punished the Babylonian Empire by laying a snare of His own:

"I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD." (Jeremiah 50:24)

Concerning Saddam Hussein, not only was his military might crushed, but he has also had two no-fly zones enforced upon him; one to protect the Kurds in the north, and the other to protect the Shi'ite Muslims in the south. Remember, the 'Tikrit Clan', of which Hussein is a part, are Sunni Muslims. Additionally, Hussein's people have suffered greatly due to seven years of sanctions being imposed upon them by the United Nations. This has been due primarily to pressure from the United States of America which is intent on seeing this man removed from power one way or the other. The question then is this: Is 1998 going to herald some world-shaking events before it is over? Let us not forget the passing of Comet Hale-Bopp last year. The Bible clearly tells us that the Lord placed these things in the heavens as signs and warnings for those who have the wisdom to understand them. They are meant to serve as celestial markers, and omens of impending doom and world change:

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:" (Genesis 1:14)

While I do not really involve myself in Biblical numerology, or gematria, to add to the potential importance of this current year, let me again remind you of the fact that the year 1998 is a triplicate of the number '666'. In other words, if you add up '666' three times, you arrive at the sum of 1998. Perhaps this is merely a coincidence; but then again, maybe it isn't.

Regardless of whether Saddam Hussein is removed from power, or if he attains to even greater heights like the great cedar tree which symbolized his ancient counterpart, it is

still going to be a world-shaking event. If he rises to even greater power and influence in the Middle East after his dismal 'defeat' of the past seven years, the whole world will truly wonder after him, exactly as we read earlier in the Book of Revelation. However, what if he is removed from power? Then what? If we follow the scriptural example, it could still lead to some very interesting developments. While secular historical records list four additional Babylonian kings following the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the Book of Daniel goes directly to his son Belshazzar who was either the final king, or viceroy under Nabonidus. As I shared in part four of this series, Saddam Hussein, our new Nebuchadnezzar, is currently preparing his younger son Qusay to be his successor being as the eldest son, Uday, has fallen from grace and suffered a serious injury in 1997.

Here again we see another possible parallel to the Old Testament Scriptures. In part five I discussed several interpretations of the 'Image of the Beast' and the 'Abomination of Desolation'. I also shared one possible way to interpret the infamous '666'. Another idea which I heard once before, (and which is now beginning to make more sense to me), is that the amount of gold used by Nebuchadnezzar to make his immense idol may possibly have been six hundred and sixty-six talents. If this was part of the gold which was stolen from the Temple at Jerusalem, this would add even further weight, (no pun intended), to the idea that Nebuchadnezzar was assigned the number '666' by the Lord because this is what he owed the Lord. As I explained in my article 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast', since Old Testament times, the value of Jewish currency was determined by its weight. When Jeremiah bought a field just prior to the Babylonian invasion, we see him weighing out the money:

"And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances." (Jeremiah 32:9-10)

The whole reason the Lord had Jeremiah do this was to serve as a sign to the Jews that after they had completed their 'Seventy Years of Captivity' in Babylon, the Lord would allow them to return to Israel and purchase lands again:

"Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 32:44)

This very same system of weight was also used to determine the value of the vessels, furniture and ornaments used in Solomon's Temple: Consider the following verses:

"And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out. And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table

of gold, whereupon the shewbread was, And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple. So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD." (1 Kings 7:47-51)

When King Nebuchadnezzar's forces invaded and destroyed Jerusalem, they took all of these items to Babylon as part of their spoils of war. Part of this happened in the days of King Jehoiachin, and the remainder was taken during the final assault against Jerusalem eleven years later during the reign of King Zedekiah:

"And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said." (2 Kings 24:13)

"And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away." (2 Kings 25:13-15)

As I said previously, King Nebuchadnezzar never fully repented of his sins because, even though he was impressed by the way the Lord saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego from the fiery furnace, and even though the Lord kicked Nebuchadnezzar out of his kingdom so that he went insane and became as a wild beast for seven years until he had learned his lessons in humility, he still didn't take any steps to free the Jews or to return their wealth to them. In Daniel chapter five, we discover that Belshazzar continues in the sins of his father. In that chapter he celebrates a great feast in which he blasphemes against the God of Israel by drinking out of the gold and silver cups which his father had stolen from the Temple of Solomon. Because of this, the Lord boldly tells him through the handwriting on the wall, that his days as king are numbered:

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines,

drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." (Daniel 5:1-6)

"This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." (Daniel 5:26-28)

Belshazzar was so frightened that his knees were knocking together! Notice the means by which the Lord determines the fate of Belshazzar. Is it a coincidence that just as the Jews weighed their money and metallic objects to determine their value, the Lord is likewise weighing Belshazzar and finding him wanting? In other words, Nebuchadnezzar incurred a debt with the Lord when he profaned the Temple and robbed it of all of its vessels, furniture and ornaments of gold, silver and brass. Not only did he not return the items, but now his son Belshazzar is doing worse by actually drinking out of them! The Lord was so upset with him that it sounds like He wrote on the wall with His very Hand to let Belshazzar know that he had blasphemed against the Lord. Sure enough, according to the historical records, the Medes, led by Darius, snuck in under the massive walls of Babylon and took over the empire:

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Daniel 5:30-31)

Just as the Lord had severely punished the Philistines when they stole the gold-laden Ark of the Covenant, here again His judgments are swift. However, this isn't the end of the story. As I explained in part four of this series, once the Jews had fulfilled their 'Seventy Years Of Captivity' according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, beginning in the first year of the reign of Cyrus the Persian, the Lord began to open the way for the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Over forty-two thousand Jews took part in that first massive exodus out of Babylon:

"Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;...The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore," (Ezra 2:1, 64)

Unlike Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants, we are told that Cyrus returned some of the holy items to the Jews. However, as I will explain shortly, I am not certain that it was all of it:

"And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem." (Ezra 1:6-11)

"Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered: I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents; Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold. And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers. Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD. So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God." (Ezra 8:24-30)

As I explained in 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast', a gold talent weighs roughly two hundred and fifty pounds; and a dram is approximately 8.32 grams. Therefore, in the second set of verses above, after doing all of the necessary conversions for one hundred talents of gold, and twenty basons containing one thousand drams of gold each, we are told that Cyrus returned approximately one hundred and three talents of gold in various forms, which is equal to about 25,750 pounds of gold or about 12.875 tons of gold! At \$350 dollars an ounce, that is about U.S. \$144,200,000 worth of gold in our modern times! Now, I am sure that seems like a lot of gold to you, and by most people's standards it is; however, if we consider how much gold Solomon is said to have earned in a single year, the amount the Children of Israel took back to Jerusalem was but a drop in the bucket. Exactly how much did Solomon earn in a year? Here again comes that infamous number '666':

"Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,"
(1 Kings 10:14)

King Solomon earned '666' talents of gold, or 166,500 pounds, or 83.25 tons of gold every single year! The book of

1 Kings tells us that Solomon reigned forty years in Judah; therefore, if the figures recorded by the Jews is not an exaggeration, we come up with another very interesting figure. During his lifetime, King Solomon alone earned 6,660,000 pounds of gold! If we again multiply that by \$350 an ounce, that means Solomon earned U.S. \$37,296,000,000! Folks, that is a staggering figure! When the Queen of Sheba came up to visit Solomon with all of her royal pomp and ceremony, and a long train of servants carrying great wealth for Solomon, she was completely amazed by how much Solomon already possessed:

"And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

(1 Kings 10:1-7)

If you want to see exactly how rich King Solomon was, just read the entire chapter. The main point I am trying to make from all of this is that Solomon was filthy rich! I also want to point out that I think it is very significant that he earned '666' talents of gold a year, or 6,660,000 pounds of gold during his entire lifetime. The reason I am stressing all of this is because I feel it may tie in directly with a number of things we have already discussed. Let's consider the facts:

1. Nebuchadnezzar robbed Jerusalem of an undetermined amount of gold, silver and brass in various forms.
2. Nebuchadnezzar constructed an image of gold which measured 60 cubits high and 6 cubits in width, and I have theorized it was also 6 cubits in depth as well so that it was perfectly balanced and would stand upright.
3. Solomon earned '666' talents of gold a year, or 6,660,000 pounds of gold in his lifetime.
4. The number of the Beast is '666'.
5. When the Children of Israel returned to Jerusalem, they only took with them about 103 talents of gold.
6. When Belshazzar was weighed in the balances, he was found wanting.

Here then are several speculations for you to consider. When the Lord weighed Belshazzar in the balances and found him wanting, He was basically saying, 'Your father Nebuchadnezzar robbed Me of so much gold, and not only have you not returned any of it to My children, but now you have defiled the gold and silver vessels by drinking out of them. You owe me big time Mister!' There is no record in the Scriptures of anyone in Nebuchadnezzar's lineage having ever paid back the Lord for all of that gold they had stolen. Perhaps I am really stretching this bit of speculation, but could it be then that the Lord has held it against Nebuchadnezzar's descendants ever since then? If Saddam Hussein is indeed of the lineage of Nebuchadnezzar as he claims, could that mean that the Lord has marked him, and any of his descendants who may follow him, with the '666' because they have a big debt which has never been paid back?

Really think about this. If Solomon alone in his lifetime earned that much gold, not to mention what Saul and his father David may have earned, or any of the kings which came after Solomon, doesn't it seem rather unusual that Cyrus the Great would only return 103 talents of gold? Does that mean that Nebuchadnezzar only hauled 103 talents of gold from Jerusalem to Babylon, an extremely small amount, and left all of the rest? It certainly doesn't make any sense to me. He was a very greedy man. He wanted it all! Now, we can assume that the Jews probably did manage to hide some of it within the city. However, remember that Jerusalem was under siege for a number of years before it actually fell; so there is no way they could have hidden it anywhere except inside the city. Not only that, but Jerusalem wasn't nearly as big then as it is today. It seems to me that the Babylonians would have scoured every corner of the city until they recovered anything of worth. Even today rumours abound that the Ark of the Covenant may still be hidden in a hidden chamber within the Temple Mount.

So the question still remains: Why is it that Cyrus only returned about 103 talents of gold to them? Is it because that is all he had which belonged to them? Or is it because he was selfish? Or could it be that there was a good reason he was unable to return the rest of it, which must have amounted to many thousands of talents? I am going to suggest the only possibility which seems to make sense to me, and which I can support with the Scriptures. In part five of this series when I first discussed the image built by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter three, I was assuming that it was probably similar in construction to the idols of wood overlaid with thin plates of gold or some other metal as were made in Israel prior to Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. We find a description of this in the tenth chapter of the Book of Jeremiah:

"For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." (Jeremiah 10:3-5)

While the above verses are commonly used to expose the vanity of the tradition of decorating Christmas trees, a closer reading suggests that they were actually fashioned into either a human or an animal form because we are told they cannot speak or move on their own. No one in their right mind would describe a Christmas tree that way. My article 'The Sins Of Disobedience' discusses in detail the many false gods worshipped by the heathen and the backslidden Israelites. However, what I also discovered is that some of the ancient Jewish idols were actually made out of pure metal. Such appears to be the case of the golden calf fashioned by the rebellious Israelites in the desert of Sinai. There is absolutely no mention of it being made of wood. We are told that it was a **MOLTEN** calf which was melted and formed in the fire with a graving tool. Not only that, after the Israelites had sinned, Moses ground the calf into a fine powder and mixed it with water and made them drink it:

"And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt...And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf...And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." (Exodus 32:2-4, 24, 20)

So then, based on these examples, I am going to speculate that perhaps one of the reasons that Cyrus did not return more gold to the Jews is because a lot of it was used to build a ninety-foot-tall idol of solid gold. That is a ten store tall monument! Similar to Nebuchadnezzar's 'Hanging Gardens Of Babylon', this great monument was one of his crowning achievements which must have awed the world. Considering the height of this image, plus the fact that it was built on the plain of Dura, it must have seemed even more impressive at the time to those who stood and worshipped at its base. Despite the fact that Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes treated the Jews well, perhaps even they were so overcome by the magnificence of this towering figure that they dare not tear it down in order to give the Jews additional compensation.

Another indication that Babylon contained much more gold than what was returned to the Jews is found in a chapter I discussed earlier concerning the judgment against Babylon:

"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" (Isaiah 14:4)

Here we see a clear picture of the Devil's counterfeit in Babylon the Great. Just as the Heavenly City, New Jerusalem,

is described as a magnificent city made of gold and precious stones, so too was ancient Babylon, the pride of the Babylonian kings. Not only that, as I have already discussed, our modern-day Nebuchadnezzar has also built himself a magnificent palace overlooking the ancient ruins. What is also interesting about this golden image made by Nebuchadnezzar, is that it has never been found; at least it has not been reported in the public media. Of course, considering how valuable such a discovery would be, should we even expect a public announcement to be made? Another possibility is that the statue was eventually broken down by the enemies of Nebuchadnezzar. Who knows, perhaps much of the gold which currently circulates in the modern false system of man is actually part of the stolen spoils of war from Jerusalem of the Babylonian era.

In the previous section of this series, I suggested that Hussein, or his successor, or whoever the Beast ends up being, may actually march into Jerusalem where, together with the False Prophet, he will build the 'Image of the Beast' on top of Mount Moriah. Is it possible that this blasphemous idol will be built out of some of the recovered stolen gold thus bringing the prophecy of old to a full closure as the Nebuchadnezzar of old has his image restored by the Nebuchadnezzar of the Endtime?

As I thought on these many uncanny connections between Nebuchadnezzar of old and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, some other interesting verses came to my mind which may be yet another confirmation of Hussein's importance in the Endtime. Those verses are the following:

"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things." (Daniel 11:37-38)

These verses can be applied to Saddam Hussein in more ways than one. For example, he is not really a devout Muslim. After all, if he magnifies himself above all, thus making himself a god, how can he possibly claim to be submitting himself to the will of Allah? Concerning not regarding the desire of women, while one interpretation which has been applied to this is that it is referring to homosexuality, it might also simply be a reference to the fact that in Islamic society, women are really second-class citizens. As to honouring the god of forces, this can definitely be said of Saddam Hussein. He is an extremely brutal man. For the past seven years, the whole issue has been, how much nuclear capability does he possess, how many chemical weapons does he possess, and how many biological weapons does he possess? These gods of forces are definitely not gods which were known to his ancient forefathers.

In the previous section, I also explained why I feel the 'Image of the Beast' and the 'Abomination of Desolation' might be one and the same thing. I also showed how the Lord views Nebuchadnezzar as an abomination, a foul thing which even the grave would not want; possibly a shaded reference

to the resurrection of the Babylonian Empire in the Endtime. Another reason the Lord views Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and possibly their modern descendant as an abomination is because they have all been weighed in the balances and found wanting; they owe the Lord, and what does the Book of Proverbs say?:

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight." (Proverbs 11:1)

"Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good." (Proverbs 20:23)

This whole topic is very profound, much moreso than I think most people realize. You see, we are all weighed in the Balances of the Lord. We are all tried in the furnace of faith just like Shadrach, Meshack and Abed-nego so that the dross in our lives is removed and we come out as pure gold. This is precisely what the Great Tribulation is all about. The Heavenly City, New Jerusalem is made out of pure gold as clear as glass because we are that City, we are God's purified Living Temple. We will inherit the Eternal Glories if we are weighed in the Balances of the Lord and not found wanting; and we won't be if we allow Him to mold us and shape us in this current life through the fiery afflictions we endure now and in times to come. Remember, judgment must first begin at the House of God, and after that, the judgment of the world. Here are some verses to confirm all of this:

"Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19:36)

"Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." (Job 31:6)

"Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath." (Ezekiel 45:10)

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
(James 1:2-4)

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." (Daniel 11:33-35)

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17)

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable

fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:11)

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter 1:7)

"Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer." (Proverbs 25:4)

"And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:" (Isaiah 1:25)

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matthew 3:9)

"And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40)

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Revelation 3:18)

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2)

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." (Revelation 21:18)

What truly inspiring verses, and what a motivator to keep hanging on to the Lord! Returning to Saddam Hussein and the Book of Daniel, just as Babylon did not fall in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but rather some years later during the rule of his son Belshazzar, is it possible that this pattern will be repeated in our modern times? What if, after seven years of hardship and humiliation, Saddam Hussein is deposed this year and his son Qusay takes over? Or perhaps, there will be a few other leaders in Iraq, and then Qusay will eventually come to power. According to the Biblical pattern, Qusay would then have to be defeated by the Medes sometime in the future. The question then is: What nation or ethnic group is most qualified to represent the Medes in our modern day? From all of the information I have provided in previous sections of this series, perhaps you already know. Have you

ever wondered why Saddam Hussein hates the Kurds so much? I never really did. However, while doing the research for this series, I came across some very interesting information I'd like to share with you:

----- Begin Quote -----

"For nearly three thousand years the Kurds have lived along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This places them at the very source of the nations and at the crux of history's most momentous events - including the Creation of Man, the Fall, Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, the Calling of Abraham, the Assyrian Exile, the Babylonian Empire, and many more. The Kurdish belief that they are descendants of the biblical Medes reflects this rich background. They base this claim on geographical, linguistic and cultural factors. The Kurds have a strong case."

"To begin with, the Kurdish language, like modern Persian, is derived directly from the imperial tongue of the ancient Medo-Persian Empire. Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes each left inscriptions in this language that can be compared with other documents, allowing us to trace the evolution of Old Persian into its present form. Since Kurdish is significantly different from modern Persian, it is easy to draw a parallel between the situation of the Medes and the Persians in the Bible and the modern Kurds and Persians. (Persian is the designation of the largest ethnic group in Iran, and the name of their language.)"

"According to Herodotus, the Bible and other ancient sources, the Persians and Medes were closely related, but not identical peoples. They both settled in northwest Iran; the Medes remaining the more northern of the two. The only Medo-Persian nations of any size in this region today are the Kurds and the Iranian Persians. It is reasonable to assume then, that if the Kurds are not the Persians, they must be the Medes. After all, the Kurds still inhabit the homeland of the Medes, and like their presumed forbears, the modern Kurds are closely related, yet not identical, to the Persians. As one Kurdish scholar put it to me, 'If we are not the modern Medes, who are?' His point is well taken: there are no other contenders in the arena."

"We would caution that a one-for-one parity with the ancient Medes is impossible to prove. No nation is pure. Even an Israeli cannot justify his descent from Judah based on a pure blood line. That's the intriguing thing about nations. Their cohesiveness is based on faith and identification as much as on history. Therefore, we can admit that the Kurds have a mixed ancestry from nations that predate the Medes and from a host of later interlopers like the Arabs. This does not matter. The Medes still form a commanding share of the Kurdish heritage. From this point of view, many modern nation states are built on far flimsier evidence than what the Kurds have presented. They have in their favour a 2500 year consistency of language, geography and religion linking them directly to the Medes. This is a record that few can match."

----- End Of Quote -----

If this information is accurate, then for good reason Saddam Hussein, and the Turkish government as well, have been persecuting the Kurds. In fact, the fact that Turkey has sent troops into northern Iraq to quell the Kurdish resistance has caused friction between the two countries as this excerpt from an October 1997 Reuters report verifies:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Baghdad is also at loggerheads with Turkey over several cross-border operations by Turkish troops in northern Iraq. About 15,000 Turkish troops, supported by Kurdish militia forces, entered Iraq last week, (Oct. 1997), in a campaign against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas who operate from the region in their fight for self-rule in southeast Turkey."

----- End Of Quote -----

If Saddam Hussein were to be defeated by the Persian Kurds, that is, the Iranians, not only would it follow the ancient Biblical pattern, but it might also open the way for the fulfillment of another prophecy written almost two thousand years ago. Would it surprise you if sometime in the near future there is a severe drought in the Middle East? It shouldn't, because this is precisely what the Book of Revelation may possibly be predicting:

"Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."
(Revelation 9:14)

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."
(Revelation 16:12)

As most Bible students know, the Euphrates River is one of the most important rivers mentioned in the Bible besides the Jordan and Nile Rivers. The Greek lexicon states that the name 'Euphrates' means 'the good and abounding river'. In addition to major events of the Endtime, it is associated with the Garden of Eden, and with a number of historic battles involving Egypt, Israel, Syria, Assyria and Babylonia. According to the Encyclopedia of the Orient, in Turkey, this river is known as the 'Firat', while in Arabic it is referred to as the 'al-furaat'. This encyclopedia provides this additional information regarding this great river:

----- Begin Quote -----

"A river in the Middle East, rising in Turkey, passing through Syria, before it ends in Iraq where it, together with the Tigris, forms the Shatt al-Arab river way. The Euphrates is 2,735 km long, and has a discharge of 900,000 litres per second. The surface area of the river is 450,000 km². The Euphrates gets 90% of its water from Turkey, through a set of tributary rivers, like the Karasu, Murat, and Khabur."

----- End Of Quote -----

Besides possibly referring to an extended drought, another way to interpret the above verses from the Book of Revelation, is that the Euphrates River will be used as a weapon of war against Syria and/or Iraq. This is nothing new. In ancient times when a city was besieged, it was a common practice to dam up or divert its water supply in order to force the people to surrender. During the days of King Hezekiah, the Prophet Isaiah prophesied against King Sennacherib of Assyria saying in part:

"I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places." (2 Kings 19:24)

You see, the Jerusalemites were well familiar with the tactics used by Sennacherib; and that is why King Hezekiah constructed a secret conduit in order to bring water into the city from the Gihon spring. If memory serves me correctly, this is the very tunnel which caused quite an uproar in 1997 between the Arabs and Jews when the Jews decided to re-open it and use it as a tourist trap:

"And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" (2 Kings 20:20)

I found the following interesting information regarding this ancient conduit in Easton's Bible Dictionary:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The 'conduit of the upper pool', (Isa 7:3), was formed by Hezekiah for the purpose of conveying the waters from the upper pool in the valley of Gihon to the west side of the city of David, (2Ki 18:17, 20:20, 2Ch 32:30). In carrying out this work he stopped "the waters of the fountains which were without the city", i.e., "the upper water-course of Gihon", and conveyed it down from the west through a canal into the city, so that in case of a siege, the inhabitants of the city might have a supply of water, which would thus be withdrawn from the enemy."

"There are also the remains of a conduit which conducted water from the so-called 'Pools of Solomon', beyond Bethlehem, into the city. Water is still conveyed into the city from the fountains which supplied these pools by a channel which crosses the valley of Hinnom."

----- End Of Quote -----

People can go for a while without food, but no one can go without water for more than a few days at best. It is vitally essential for our physical well-being. The question then is: Failing a serious drought in the Middle East, is it possible that someday in the near future the Euphrates River will be totally stopped or diverted at some point along its long and winding way to the Persian Gulf? Before you dismiss

this possibility, consider the fact that there have already been such water disputes between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, over dams built by the former. The Encyclopedia of the Orient has this to say:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Euphrates is one of the most important sources for tension between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, as all three countries tries to exploit the water both for agriculture and for electricity, as best as they can. Turkey has constructed the Ataturk Dam, while Syria has the Assad Dam. Especially Syria and Iraq are vulnerable to decrease in the water output, as both countries' agriculture is already receiving a minimum of water of what is needed."

----- End Of Quote -----

That this river is indeed currently being used by the government of Turkey to chastise both Syria and Iraq, is verified by the following excerpts taken from an October 1997 Reuters report:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Iraq accused upstream neighbour Turkey on Wednesday of threatening the flow of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers by building dams and urged Ankara to reach a water-sharing accord."

"'Turkey monopolises the flow of waters of the Tigris and Euphrates as dictated by its own interest at the expense of Iraq and Syria's interest,' the ruling Baath party newspaper al-Thawra said."

"'The country where these rivers rise should not monopolise waters of such international rivers the way it likes,' the paper said in an article written by Mohammed al-Douri, an Iraqi university professor."

"Iraq protests have grown since last year when Turkey announced a plan worth \$1.62 billion for its fourth dam on the Euphrates to produce power and irrigation for a large chunk of southeastern Turkey. Syria and Iraq say the current flow of water from Turkey is not enough."

----- End Of Quote -----

Having now established the extreme importance of the Euphrates River to these countries, as well as to Endtime events, the next question which arises is: Who are the 'kings of the East' which are going to cross this river? Some eschatologists have suggested that the 'kings of the East' are a reference to Japan and the economic dragons of Southeast Asia. However, as I said in part one of this series, we must remember that most of the Endtime prophecies were written from a Jewish perspective to show the Jews what would happen to them in the years before the Second Return of Christ. For example, in the Book of Daniel we find the Heavenly Messenger saying to the Prophet:

"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days." (Daniel 10:14)

While Japan and the Southeast Asian countries have a vital interest in the Middle East due to their need for oil, as far as I can tell, none of them have any current military interests in that area of the world; and that is what these prophecies are all about, a military invasion. Additionally, as I have made clear throughout my articles, I believe that these Endtime kings are Muslims. Having clarified that, I am now going to propose three possibilities for who these 'kings of the East' might be. I think some of you might be surprised by some of the discoveries I have made concerning this issue. As I pointed out earlier, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers cut right through and actually join in southern Iraq where they form the Shatt-Al-Arab waterway which flows into the Persian Gulf. This waterway is extremely important because not only is it the border between Iraq and Iran, but it is also through the Shatt al-Arab that oil tankers reach the Persian Gulf on their way to foreign destinations.

You may recall that a number of years ago, the mouth of the Persian Gulf, known as the Strait of Hormuz, was under danger of being blocked off. This would have choked the world's oil supply. If there is one flashpoint for causing WW III, this would definitely be it! However, before returning to our main topic, that is, the 'kings of the East', there is one other reason why the Shatt al-Arab may be very important in the near future. Situated in this wide river is an island called Abadan on which is located the city of al-Abadan. Here is what the Encyclopedia of the Orient has to say about it:

----- Begin Quote -----

"City in Iran with 300,000 inhabitants. Situated in the south-western corner of Iran, on the island of Abadan, that lies in the river of Shatt El Arab. The economical base of the city is petroleum refining and shipping, as oil is transported from the Iranian oil fields up north, through pipelines, to Abadan.

HISTORY:

1847: With the agreement of Ezerum, Abadan is passed on from the Ottomans to Persia.

1908: Oil is discovered near Abadan.

1913: Abadan becomes the centre of oil refining for Persia.

1980-88: Much of the Iran-Iraq War, is staged near Abadan, principally because of the wealth that the city represents with its oil resources."

----- End Of Quote -----

If you have a sharp eye, and a good knowledge of Endtime events, perhaps you have already seen the possible

significance of this island in the Scriptures. In the Book of Revelation, we find the following verses:

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power...And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." (Revelation 9:1-3, 11)

As I explained in part five of this series, it is my belief that the Bottomless Pit is synonymous with the Old and New Testament term 'hell' where it is referring to the bowels of the Earth, the inside of our planet, the common grave, as well as to the spiritual abode of wicked spirits deep within the Earth. In the above verses, we see the fifth angel sounding his Trumpet. The Seven Trumpets pertain to the Seventh Seal of the Book of Revelation. After this angel sounds, a star, or angel, falls to the Earth and opens up the Bottomless Pit. In other words, he is opening up the bowels of the Earth. Upon doing this, a great smoke ascends out of the Earth. It is so black that the Sun and the air are darkened by it. We are then told that strange locusts come out of the smoke and sting men. You can read the whole chapter in order to get a fuller description of this event.

Towards the end of this unusual account, we are told that these locusts are led by their demon king 'Abaddon'. This word 'Abaddon' is the English transliteration of the Hebrew word 'abaddown'. The Greek and Hebrew lexicons provide the following information regarding this word:

----- Begin Quote -----

Abaddon {ab-ad-dohn'}

Of Hebrew origin

Abaddon = "destruction"

- 1) ruin
- 2) destruction
- 3) the place of destruction
- 4) the name of the angel-prince of the infernal regions, the minister of death and the author of havoc on the earth

----- End Of Quote -----

Notice that 'Abaddon' means 'destruction'. In part five I shared the following verse from the Book of Proverbs:

"Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." (Proverbs 27:20)

This verse uses the very same Hebrew words we have been discussing, that is, 'sheol' for 'hell', and 'abbaddon' for

destruction. In other words, this demon king of the realm of the dead, the insides of the Earth, is NEVER satisfied, just like men are never satisfied with what they have. Therefore, this demon king is always looking for more people to fill up his dark realm. What is his principal means of acquiring souls for his kingdom? If he were to do it one at a time, it would take a very long time. Thus, he has resorted to a more effective means of filling up hell; and that is through something which has plagued the Earth for about six millenia. Do you know what it is? It is wide-scale war; and today, with the help of this evil demon king, man has perfected his killing skills to a very fine degree. Just by dropping one nuclear bomb, as in the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he can not only kill, but he can totally evaporate the bodies of thousands upon thousands of human beings in literally seconds! Of those that have survived such blasts, many would have preferred to have died instantly rather than a slow agonizing death due to radiation sickness, skin burns, losing limbs, cancer, etc.

Aside from nuclear bombs, man has invented other weapons of mass destruction including chemical and biological weapons. As I pointed out earlier in this series, this has been clearly evidenced in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, as well as in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 where thousands upon thousands died due to exposure to these lethal germs and chemicals. How all of this might fit into our current discussion is quite interesting. Within eschatological circles, there are those who are convinced that the above description from the Book of Revelation may be a direct reference to either the Iran-Iraq War, or to the Persian Gulf War, or possibly to both. The oil refineries of Abadan Island, as well as the oil fields of Kuwait were indeed destroyed or damaged during these awful wars. While the whole world watched on their television screens, the skies over these areas became literally black with smoke from the thousands of gallons of oil burning which were spewed from within the bowels of the Earth, from the Bottomless Pit!

During the Persian Gulf War, the government of the United States of America and her allies partially relied upon their helicopter gunships to defeat Saddam Hussein and bring the situation under control. Might these 'winged' machines indeed be the locusts which came out of the black smoke as described by John the Revelator? I honestly do not know, but the similarities in description is a bit uncanny. I leave it up to you the reader to form your own opinion based on a close reading of Revelation chapter nine.

What is extremely interesting about all of this is that following these events announced by the fifth angel, we have the sixth angel sounding which results in the Euphrates River drying up to prepare the way for the 'kings of the East! If this interpretation of the fifth angel is correct, if it does symbolize the Iran-Iraq War followed by the Persian Gulf War, then we may indeed be much further along in prophetic history than many people realize. It means that we may soon see the armies of the 'kings of the East' flow over in a great land-based army to fight a Great Battle in Israel, just as I explained in part four of this series, as well as in other of my articles dedicated to the Endtime.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, this possibility has become even more of a reality as the peoples and ethnic groups which were formerly under her dominion have been striving for their political, economic and religious freedom. Many of these people are Muslim fundamentalists. Following the example in Iran, some of them want to convert their nations to Islamic republics. Take for example the continuing developments in such places as Chechnya where the people appear to be achieving their goals. If we accept this interpretation of the 'kings of the East', then some of the countries which I feel we need to keep a close eye on are those which are near the Iranian borders. These are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

What I find interesting about this particular interpretation is that if some of these nations were to join forces with a Beast/False Prophet team originating in Iran, in order to invade and conquer Israel, they would have to pass through three countries: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Do you remember the verse I shared earlier from the Book of Daniel?:

"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." (Daniel 7:8)

While the above scenario seems very plausible, there is one thing which puzzles me. A quick glance at any half-decent map of the Middle East will reveal the problem. In order for these kings to invade Israel, after coming in through Iran, they would also have to cross the Tigris River on their way through Iraq. Despite this fact, the previous verse from Revelation only mentions the Euphrates River being dried up. Why is this? One possibility is that the 'kings of the East' is not referring to Iran and other Muslim nations which surround her, but rather to someone else. You see, in our modern-day, when we hear the word 'king', we automatically think of a leader of an entire nation. However, in Biblical times, this was not necessarily the case. Oftimes, the word 'king' is referring to military leaders of smaller groups of people under the king; in other words, generals, commanders, captains and the like. As an example, when Benhadad the king of Syria went to war against Samaria, we are told that he had thirty-two kings with him. Now, Syria isn't that big, so this seems a bit odd:

"And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it." (1 Kings 20:1)

"And they went out at noon. But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him." (1 Kings 20:16)

In the above two verses, the word 'king' is derived from the Hebrew word 'melek' which is pronounced meh'-lek. Here we

are clearly told that Benhadad has thirty-two kings under him. However, only two chapters later, we have these same thirty-two kings described in a different way. Now they are no longer kings, as in the leader of a nation, but rather captains and commanders of war:

"But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel."
(1 Kings 22:31)

This word 'captains' is derived from the Hebrew word 'sar' which itself is derived from sarar which means 'to be or act as prince, rule, contend, have power, prevail over, reign, govern'. Notice the similarity to the title given in times past to the leaders of Russia, that is 'czar' or 'tsar'. Is this another hint of behind-the-scenes Jewish control in Russia? The Hebrew lexicon provides the following information regarding 'sar':

----- Begin Quote -----

sar {sar}

- 1) prince, ruler, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain
- 1a) chieftain, leader
- 1b) vassal, noble, official (under king)
- 1c) captain, general, commander (military)

----- End of Quote -----

Why would any king give control of his chariots to the kings of other nations? Most kings wouldn't. As a modern-day example, consider the fact that some of the American soldiers who were sent to Bosnia to join the United Nations 'peace-keeping' troops refused to wear the U.N flag on their uniforms; and would not take orders from anyone but other Americans. Anyone who has been in the military knows that this problem with obedience and morale is one reason why it is difficult for the New World Order folks and the United Nations to create a 'universal army'. Most folks of high moral values will refuse to turn against their own people. Thus, bringing in foreign troops to subdue the masses is the only way to create such a universal force. The only other way to look at the above verses is to say that Benhadad had thirty-two kings under him who in turn had thirty-two captains under them. Given the size of Syria, I honestly don't believe this is what it is saying. Thus, my conclusion is that these thirty-two men under Benhadad were not really kings of other nations, but rather commanders of his own army.

If we turn to the New Testament, we find another confirmation of this dual meaning of the word 'kings'. In almost every single verse, we discover that it is derived from the Greek word 'basileus', pronounced bas-il-yooce', which means 'leader of the people, prince, commander, lord of the land, or king'. Notice the many different meanings applied here. I am now going to show that the 'kings of the East' who cross the Euphrates River may not necessarily be kings of other nations, but merely military captains and

commanders under the king, or president, of one nation who join forces with armies from other countries who are also on their way to the Battle of Armageddon. Compare these two verses which are talking about the very same people:

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."
(Revelation 16:12)

"That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."
(Revelation 19:18)

What I am suggesting then as a second possible interpretation is the following: If Saddam Hussein, or his successor, were to launch an attack from Baghdad, (which we might view as Babylon since it is the modern-day capital which was indeed burned with fire during the Persian Gulf War), his army would only have to cross one river on its way to Israel. Baghdad is located on the banks of the Tigris River. That means they would only have to cross the Euphrates River to the west of them, EXACTLY as the verse from Revelation tells us. Thus, the 'kings of the East' might simply be a reference to Saddam Hussein and the military forces under him. This leads us to one final possibility concerning the 'kings of the East'; and it is indeed an interesting one.

As I have already pointed out, in order to cross the Euphrates River, there needs to be either an extended drought, or else Turkey is going to have to completely dam up or divert the river. Not only would it cause extreme hardships for the people of Syria and Iraq, but I am also wondering what effect it would have on the level of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway. Would it be sufficient to make shipping difficult if not impossible? In other words, could it stop or at least slow down the world's oil flow? What I find interesting is that following the Iran-Iraq War, the leadership of Iran must have realized the vulnerability of Abadan Island. Thus, since that time, they have been exploring other alternatives for importing and exporting oil and natural gas. For example, the following excerpts are taken from a 1996 Washington Post article:

----- Begin Quote -----

"NATO member Turkey today signed several accords with Iran designed to bolster trade between the neighboring countries, ignoring a U.S. call to isolate Tehran."

"The agreements, designed to double the trade volume between Turkey and Iran to \$2 billion, were signed near the end of a four-day visit to Turkey by Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani that has caused concern in Washington."

"The accords illustrated the warming of relations between Turkey and Iran that has been fostered by Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. Erbakan visited Iran

shortly after taking office in June and concluded a \$23 billion natural gas deal. Turkish officials said construction of a pipeline to carry the Iranian gas to Turkey will begin next year."

"Under the accords signed in Ankara, Turkey and Iran grant each other most favored nation trading status, call for the encouragement and promotion of mutual investment, outline new cooperation in maritime trade, including the use of shipping lanes, ports and territorial waters, and agree to establish a joint chamber of commerce."

----- End Of Quote -----

Today, in 1998, although some of the leadership which orchestrated this agreement has changed, and despite the fact that the United States continues to view these developments with concern, the pipeline project continues to be developed. This is one prime example of why it is sometimes difficult to know the true position of countries in the Middle East. One minute they are at war with each other, and the next they are allies and trade partners. What it all really comes down to is the worship of the god of this world; and I am not just talking about Satan, but what he offers people: money! What makes this particular union even more interesting is the fact that, while Iran was and continues to be the catalyst for Islamic change in the world, since October 1923, Turkey has had a secular-oriented government which is controlled by the military. This all came about because of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, after whom Turkey is named. Following are some interesting excerpts from the Encyclopedia of the Orient regarding this man who founded the modern pro-Western republic of Turkey:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Founder of the modern republic of Turkey. His original name was Mustafa Kemal, and the honorary title 'Ataturk' was bestowed upon him as late as 1934, by the Grand National Assembly, and means 'Father of the Turks'."

"Ataturk's achievements were many, but most were formed after clear Western ideals. Ataturk meant that the traditional way of running Muslim countries had outlived itself, and that Turkey's chances of surviving the future as well as gaining new strength would only be through adopting principles from the European countries, which at that time had outdistanced Turkey in all fields. Imposing regulations that hindered the use of central elements in the Oriental clothing style, introduction of Latin alphabet, reduction of the centrality of Islam in Turkish public life, equality of all citizens regardless of religion, emancipation of women, and regular education of the masses. Ataturk introduced a political system that had many elements from Western systems, but he never allowed political pluralism, allowing only his own Republican People's party."

"The price of Ataturk's modernisation was principally felt by his political rivals, which he had removed from power by 1926, when Kemal had them accused of assassination conspiracy. Ataturk's Turkey was never established as a

democracy, but it relied heavily on the allegiance from the bureaucracy, and the rich of the country."

"The other victim of Ataturk was the traditional way of governing Islam. Islam ceased to be the state religion, and the Caliphate was abolished, an institution of great symbolic importance for many Muslims inside and outside the former Ottoman empire."

----- End Of Quote -----

At this point, you may be wondering what all of this has to do with the 'kings of the East'. The answer is really quite simple, and may be shocking, or at least a bit disconcerting for some of you. When I first began looking into this topic, I was assuming that when John wrote about the Euphrates River and the 'kings of the East', he was probably looking eastward towards Jordan, Iraq and Iran. Thus, it was only natural to conclude that these would be the 'kings of the East'. I am not saying that they are not; however, I am saying that they may not be the only possibility; and they may not even be who John and the angel were referring to. Stop and think for a moment. Where was John when he received the Book of Revelation? As I have explained before, he was exiled on the small island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. In the beginning chapters of the Book of Revelation, we find him writing to the Seven Churches which were in Asia, that is, Asia Minor, which was located to the EAST of him! Today that very same land mass is known as Turkey.

At this point you are probably wondering to yourself, 'So what is the point? That doesn't prove anything!' Oh, but you see, it most certainly does! If you use a Greek lexicon and open up to a verse in the New Testament which contains the word 'east', as in the phrase 'kings of the East', you will discover that every single time, it is derived from the same Greek word 'anatole', pronounced an-at-ol-ay', which means 'a rising (of the sun and stars), the east (the direction of the sun's rising)'. When John wrote that verse about the 'kings of the East', if he was looking eastward at the time, he would not see Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, etc.; he would see Asia Minor, now known as Turkey! You see, unless you have a good knowledge of East European history, you may not know that before Mustafa Kemal Ataturk established the modern republic of Turkey, it was known as 'Anatolia' by the Greeks! The following information is taken from 'Discover Turkey'. I think you will find it quite interesting:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Anatolia is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the world, and it has repeatedly served as a battleground for foreign powers. The earliest major empire in the area was that of the Hittites, from the 18th through the 13th century BC. Subsequently, the Phrygians, an Indo-European people, achieved ascendancy until their kingdom was destroyed by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC. The most powerful of Phrygia's successor states was Lydia. Coastal Anatolia (Ionia) meanwhile was settled by Greeks. The entire area was overrun by the Persians during the 6th and 5th centuries and fell to Alexander the Great in 334 BC.

Anatolia was subsequently divided into a number of small Hellenistic kingdoms (including Bithynia, Cappadocia, Peramum, and Pontus), all of which had succumbed to Rome by the mid-1st century BC. In AD 324 the Roman emperor Constantine I chose Constantinople, now Istanbul, as the capital of the Roman Empire. It subsequently became the capital of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire."

"In 1055 a group of Central Asiatic Turks, the Seljuks, conquered Baghdad and established a Middle Eastern and Anatolian empire. When this empire was broken up by the Mongol invasion, one of the remaining local powers became known as the Ottoman dynasty, after its leader OSMAN I. The OTTOMAN EMPIRE spread from northwestern Anatolia and captured Constantinople in 1453. At the peak of their power the Ottomans controlled much of the eastern Mediterranean. The Ottomans had a sophisticated system of internal administration and also organized the first standing army in Europe."

"As the Ottoman Empire began to collapse under its own weight in the 18th and 19th centuries, it became a battleground for rival European powers, wedged as it was between the Russian and Austrian empires. By the outbreak of World War I the Ottoman Empire had essentially been divided into spheres of influence by the great European powers, but a reform movement was active within the Ottoman Empire itself. The Young Turks brought about a revolution in 1908 and were successful in introducing civil and social reforms of far-reaching consequence."

"In 1922, however, the Turks, led by Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Ataturk) and Ismet Inonu, defeated the armies occupying Anatolia. Inonu then won what has been called 'the greatest diplomatic victory in history' when the Treaty of Lausanne recognized the Republic of Turkey. The republic was declared on Oct. 29, 1923, and Ataturk was elected its first president. Turkey remained neutral in World War II until it joined the Allies in February 1945. Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952."

----- End Of Quote -----

Thus we see that Asia Minor is Anatolia, and Anatolia is Turkey. If you accept this evidence, then instead of translating the phrase as the 'kings of the East', might it not be correct to translate it as the 'kings of Anatolia' since 'anatole' means 'east'? Could it be that John was referring to a tremendous army, led by the Beast, and originating in Turkey, swooping down through Syria into Israel? If you recall everything I have said throughout this series, Turkey could easily fit the description of being the 'king of the north' just as much as Syria, Iraq, or Iran, because in the Bible, they ALL invaded from the north through Syria. Furthermore, If you recall our study of the Daniel prophecies, Turkey was indeed part of one of the four land masses into which the Grecian Empire was divided following the death of Alexander the Great; and it is from one of those four land masses that the Beast will arise!

In case you are still wondering about the Euphrates River

question, that is a very easy one to answer. Earlier in this article, I pointed out how Turkey is controlling the Euphrates water flow into both Syria and Iraq by building various dams. If you take another look at your map of the Middle East, you will see that this great river flows through a great portion of northeastern Syria, from west to east. If Turkey were to completely dam up or divert the river, a mighty army, the 'kings of the East', the 'kings of Anatolia', could indeed cross the Euphrates and work their way down through Syria and invade Israel through the Golan Heights! To add further support to this possibility, consider this updated information taken from my article 'The Kings Of The North And The South, Part Two':

----- Begin Quote -----

"At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." (Daniel 11:29-30)

"In the above verses, it is believed that Chittim is actually referring to the island of Cyprus. As maps of the ancient world will reveal, 'Chittim', or 'Kittim', is the former name of Cyprus. It appears then that sometime in the near future when all of these events begin to occur, a naval strike may be launched from Cyprus just as the Syrian forces are about to make another attack on the south, that is, against Israel and Egypt. Given the current range of missile delivery systems, as well as other factors like American naval carriers which are various acres in size and which can hold many warplanes, it will be an easy matter to deter the Beast; at least for the time being."

"The very fact that Cyprus is involved in these affairs, and is able to temporarily stop the Beast is another indication that Syria may be the country of origin of the Beast. If it was Russia, it doesn't seem likely to me that a small island like Cyprus would be able to stop her. Of course, if it involves a nuclear threat launched from Cyprus, or combined naval forces in the vicinity of Cyprus, that is indeed a possibility. The fact that the United States of America, Israel and Turkey are currently forging stronger military ties is indeed an interesting development. At this point, my feelings are that if Syria is not the home of the Beast, then it will at least be used as the gateway to invade Israel from the north through the Golan Heights."

----- End Of Quote -----

Now perhaps you are thinking to yourself, 'Wait a minute! You just said that Turkey is forging stronger ties with Israel! Are you changing your mind already?' Most certainly not. As I already said, when it comes to the news media and world developments, it is not wise to believe everything you see with your eyes or hear with your ears. The political climate of the Middle East is changing all the time. While it currently appears that Turkey is forming a stronger

military union with the United States of America and Israel, that does not mean it will last. Right now it is to Ankara's advantage to do so in more ways than one. For one thing, it helps to neutralize Syria, a common enemy of both Israel and Turkey. Additionally, it may give some Arab states second thoughts about attacking Israel. Finally, it means more money and technological assistance passing back and forth between Israel and Turkey.

One thing we need to remember is that Islam is on the rise throughout the world. While Turkey is currently under the control of a secular pro-Western government, its people are still for the most part Muslims; and there are strong forces at work within the country trying to bring about an Islamic revolution such as occurred in Iran in 1979. These same forces are at work in other countries as well where they are trying to topple the secular governments. Egypt is a prime example of this. The 1997 massacre committed by Islamic fundamentalists in Luxor is a clear sign of this. Personally, it seems a bit strange to me that an Islamic nation like Turkey would conduct such military maneuvers with Israel, an avowed enemy of the Muslim states. I have wondered if perhaps there might not be a bit of deceit going on here such as I mentioned in part four of this series. If Turkey is the home of the Beast, and not Syria, Iraq or Iran, then this quote from part four applies to her:

----- Begin Quote -----

"And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed."
(Daniel 11:27)

"Another set of very interesting verses found in the Book of Psalms which sound just like the slick promises of the Beast is the following. Remember, the previous verses in Daniel tell us that the Beast will come to power through peaceable means and through FLATTERIES:"

"He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."
(Psalms 55:20-21)

----- End Of Quote -----

So again, I advise you the reader to not believe everything you hear or see in the news media. It may be a case of subtle deceit. Have you considered the possibility that Turkey is simply seeking to discover some of the weaknesses of Israel's military machine through these current economic and military agreements? On the other hand, this 'cozy' situation with Israel and the West may indeed be genuine. Just as Israel is the outsider in a Muslim-controlled Middle East, Turkey is the outsider in the European Community. In fact, she was just recently rejected as a potential member of the European Union. Just remember, the current situation may not last. If Muslim fundamentalists are able to topple the secular military government, attitudes could change very

fast; and it won't be in Israel's favor! Turkey might still be the home of the Beast!

As paradoxical as it may seem then, Turkey could thus represent both the 'king of the north', (because Daniel was down in Babylon, which means he would look northwestward to see the Beast descend on Israel) as well as the 'kings of the East', (because John would be looking eastward from Patmos to see the Beast and his armies cross a dried up Euphrates River to enter into Syria, and then down into Israel). As I said before, no matter how we look at these prophecies, we still keep coming up with that same land area which was commonly controlled by all of the former empires, from the Egyptian Empire to the Roman Empire. That common hub is centered in Syria and Turkey, the northwestern edge of ancient Mesopotamia. Whether the Beast will originate in Syria, or Iraq, or Iran, or Turkey, is hopefully a question which will be answered soon.

This brings us to our final question for this series: How are the 'kings of the East' related to the Ten Horns of the Endtime? If we follow a strict interpretation of the Scriptures which state that the 'kings of the East' must cross the Euphrates River, and only the Euphrates River, then as I have shown, they would have to be the actual forces of the Beast rising out of either Iraq or Turkey. If this is not the case, then as I stated earlier, I believe that they are probably a part of the Ten Horns, that is, the other nations, which the Beast and the False Prophet will lead into Israel. In other words, the Ten Horns, (or Toes), and the 'kings of the East' are synonymous terms.

This brings us back to some of the information I provided in part two of this series. As you may recall, I gave a historical view of the foreign domination of the land of Israel from Rome to our current day. The purpose of that discourse was to help us to try to identify the seventh head, or empire, which would rule over Israel for 'a short space'. You will notice that I did not suggest that the almost twelve hundred years of Muslim rule was the seventh head. My reasons for declining to state that are the following:

1. I personally do not consider one thousand one hundred and eighty-four years to be 'a short space'.
2. If time is as short as some of us believe it is, then it is my belief that this period of Muslim rule must be related in some way to the eighth king, and NOT to the empire of the seventh.
3. I think it is significant that the triangle of Muslim power which existed then, that is, Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, is still in existence today.
4. I believe that the Ten Toes of Daniel and the Ten Horns of Revelation may be speaking of the same thing.
5. Daniel and John both tell us that the Ten Horns, or Ten Toes, exist concurrently with the 'little horn', or Beast or Revelation. Consider these verses:

"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." (Daniel 7:8)

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."
(Revelation 17:12-13)

Notice that Daniel does not say that the 'little horn' came up AFTER them; he says that it came up AMONG them. That clearly identifies it as existing concurrently with the other ten. Only in this way will it be able to subdue three of them. So what does all of this mean? Several times now, I have presented the argument that Biblical history and prophecy is one continuous developing story. There are no large time gaps between the first six empires which controlled the Middle East. As such, why should there be a gap between the coming of the seventh empire, and then the final eighth empire? This would be totally contradictory to everything we have seen in this series, which is solidly based on actual history, as well as on the Holy Scriptures. If the seventh empire which was only to continue for 'a short space' followed the Roman Empire, then surely it has already come and gone. As to the identity of that empire, as I said in part two, I honestly do not know with any degree of certainty. That is why I merely offered the evidence I had found along with a short list of potential candidates.

So exactly what does that mean? In my view, it can only mean one thing; and that is that the almost twelve hundred years of Muslim rule up until our modern day coincides with the time period of the eighth empire, which itself is a resurrection of one of the first five. This immediately excludes Rome and a European Union as some would like to believe. In my view, all indications point to a Muslim Empire based in either Syria, Iraq, or Iran. If Turkey makes a radical move towards Islamic fundamentalism, then it should also be included in this list. To emphasize what I am saying, the Scriptures clearly state that the Ten Horns and the Beast exist simultaneously. Since the mid 600's when Islam was born, we have seen the Ten Toes and the Beast develop into modern Islamic nations. They are here NOW! It is NOT some future event! The eighth empire of the Beast is here NOW and the Ten Horns of the Endtime are already a part of it!

Now, undoubtedly, some of you reading this will scoff and say 'So where is it?' The reason you have this attitude is because you don't recognize the Beast and the Ten Horns yet. Because you personally can't point out the eighth empire, you want to place it somewhere in the future as something which hasn't happened yet. I have done the very same thing for many years. Well, the future is here NOW! Just because we don't precisely know and recognize who they are doesn't mean they aren't here. That is ridiculous! We must account for those almost twelve hundred years of Muslim domination

of Jerusalem. The only way to do that is to accept that empire number seven has passed already, and that we have been living with empire number eight for quite a while. It's been under our noses all of this time. You might say that up until now, it has been an 'invisible' empire.

You need to remember that the Ten Horns only reign for one hour with the Beast. Exactly how long that is on the Biblical timescale is very difficult to determine. All I can say is that it must be a very short time. Is it a literal hour? I don't think so, but I could be wrong. Another point to consider is that this doesn't necessarily mean that these nations are not already in existence; it simply means that they have not turned over their political and military power to the Beast yet. In other words, all of the components of the eighth empire, the Ten Horns, and the Beast are in existence. They are already in place, and have been in place for a long time; we just don't know with absolute certainty who they are yet. That is why I referred to it as an 'invisible' empire, because it is still invisible to our understanding.

If my understanding of the Scriptures is correct, we may not know who the Ten Horns are until close to the end of the Great Tribulation when they assist the Beast in utterly burning Babylon with fire:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." (Revelation 17:16-17)

Many may not realize that we are already living during the time of the eighth empire until after the fact. If you are of the crowd which says 'No man knoweth the day nor the hour', then Jesus may indeed come as a 'thief in the night' for you, and you will be looking back at past events saying, 'So that is who the Beast was! So that is who the Ten Horns were! Wow! I never even saw it!' Concerning the Ten Toes, allow me to share a few ideas with you. The Prophet Daniel wrote the following:

"And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 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. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." (Daniel 2:41-43)

I believe the above description describes the many smaller kingdoms and states which resulted from the demise of the Roman Empire. The iron and the clay may be indicative of two different types of governments. At this point, we are confronted with a myriad of interpretations. It seems there are as many interpretations as there are preachers. So as

not to confuse you, I am only going to briefly explain one of the most popular interpretations, and then share my own thoughts on this subject.

As I pointed out in my article 'Revelation's Babylon The Great Whore', it has been proposed by some that Rome and the Roman Catholic Church represent Endtime false religion, and thus Babylon the Great Whore who has committed spiritual fornication with the kings and nations of the Earth. That word 'fornication' is very interesting. In the broadest sense of the word, it means having sex with someone you really aren't married to. In a spiritual context, as the Children of God, we are supposed to be married to Jesus Christ. By faith, we already are, for as the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4)

However, our actual marriage to the Lamb of God is not due to occur until some time in the future according to the Book of Revelation. Thus, you might say that right now we are simply betrothed to Him:

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." (Revelation 19:6-9)

Unfortunately, some, while claiming to believe in God, and while claiming to be the true religion of God, in fact, the very voice of God Himself on Earth, have forsaken their husband-to-be in order to fornicate with the world. This is precisely what the Roman Catholic Church has done. It is nothing more than a worldwide commercial enterprise which feigns religiosity. The Roman Catholic Church, which I personally believe is totally infiltrated by International Jews, owns and runs the world! Of course, most of this power is behind the scenes, so many people don't see and recognize it. It is a well-known fact that Rome is situated upon seven hills. Those who support this view of Roman Catholicism being Babylon believe that the pope is the Antichrist, the False Prophet or the Beast depending upon what your personal interpretation is of these terms.

These people also believe that the Ten Horns may be ten countries of the European Union. According to them, the iron and the clay represent democracies and dictatorships. Following this line of reasoning, democracies would be represented by the clay, since a democratic society is supposed to be one ruled by the people; and people are made from clay, or the dust of the ground. On the other hand,

iron would be a more tough-fisted form of government since, while it is likewise taken from the ground, it is a much harder and more durable substance. The fact that the iron and clay don't mingle could be a reference to the fact that democracies and dictatorships don't mix very well; although in this day and age, for economic and military reasons, some modern democratic societies like the United States of America, are known to secretly support such strongmen.

As I have stated before, the above interpretation does have a lot of merit. I have personally examined and written about some of the evidence which is used to support these views in my series 'Satan: King Of Tyrus, King Of Empires'. In some regards, the evidence is quite convincing, but it simply is not enough to fully persuade me to accept this particular interpretation of the Scriptures. As some of my other articles will reveal, I personally have found a lot of things within the Roman Catholic Church with which I do not agree. While there are many sincere Christians and God-fearing people within the Catholic religion, as a whole, I believe the system itself, the hierarchy which controls it, is corrupt to the bone. I have likened them in other articles to the church of Laodicea which was also fat, wealthy, lazy and self-satisfied.

One of my primary problems with the above interpretation, (besides the fact that Rome was not one of the first five empires), is that it fails to maintain Israel and the surrounding territory as its main focal point. If you the reader take the time to slowly, carefully and prayerfully read the Books of Daniel and Revelation, as well as the things that Jesus had to say about the Endtime, you will see that the primary focus is on Israel and the surrounding Muslim countries. If you take the time to read all of the other prophetic books, as well as ancient Jewish history, you will also see that they focus on this same area. Finally, if you read everything I have written regarding the Endtime, you will see that my writings follow this same pattern. Therefore, when we talk about the demise of the Roman Empire, I believe we are supposed to concentrate on the countries, or horns, which sprung up in the area immediately surrounding Israel, and NOT up in Europe.

If the above is correct, how can we accommodate the Ten Toes consisting of iron and clay in the arena of the Middle East? A quick glance at the area offers a simple answer in my view. On one hand we have pro-Western nations such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the other five countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Oddly enough, that is a total of ten nations which openly side with the United States of America. On the other hand, we have the Russian supported nations of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. Additionally, we also have Afghanistan, Pakistan and the republics of the former Soviet Union which need to be taken into consideration. Is it possible that we have ten nations here which are also staunch supporters of the Russian Federation?

Thus we can easily see that the description of iron not mixing with clay is indeed met, just as with the other

interpretation regarding democracies and dictatorships. The primary difference is that my interpretation brings us closer to Israel. The next question then is this: Who are the Ten Horns of the Endtime? As I said earlier, until Babylon is actually burned with fire, we may never know with any degree of certainty. I am not a political analyst or a Prophet. As such, just like other Bible students, I can only loosely speculate. One requirement I do feel is necessary for these nations to qualify as one of the Endtime Ten Horns which form a part of the eighth empire of the Beast, is that they are militarily strong. I also believe that they must be relatively large nations by Middle Eastern standards. In my view, this immediately rules out the five smaller Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

Having the same general political views also seems like an important factor. Some of the nations I have identified above certainly have a common hatred of Israel, an interest in Muslim unity, and they have demonstrated support for a Palestinian state. You may recall that in part two of this series, I mentioned that when U.N Resolution 181 was passed in 1947 to create two separate Jewish and Palestinian states with Jerusalem as an international city under United Nations jurisdiction, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen all opposed the idea, which quickly resulted in the 'War of Independence'. Religious unity might also be a deciding factor in this alliance with the Beast. Again, since 1979, we have seen a tremendous wave of Islamic fundamentalism invading the world from the United States of America to Russia; and it all started in Iran, the home of one fanatical religious leader known as the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

While some have envisioned Russia as the actual Beast who will lead the Ten Horns due to her atheistic nature, plus her geographical position above the Middle East, that is, to the north, I feel that if she is involved, she may just remain quietly behind the scenes pulling the strings of the real Beast and his ten Endtime puppet nations.

If we eliminate all of the pro-West pro-Israel states, that leaves us with Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. The rest is purely guesswork. I am tempted to add Libya for obvious reasons. While it is possible that the remaining six will be some of the former Russian republics I mentioned earlier, as I already said, I have some reservations regarding this due to the fact that they would have to cross both the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. Remember, we must have eleven in all because one of them will be the Beast who leads the other ten to utterly burn Babylon The Whore with fire. Don't forget too that we need three horns which are subdued by the Beast as per the prophecies of Daniel.

While discussing the possibility of Iran being the home of the Beast and the False Prophet, I suggested that these three nations might be Iraq, Saudia Arabia and Jordan. Being 'plucked up' might not necessarily mean that they are destroyed, but simply that they are either pressured or seduced in some way into going along with the Beast and the other seven horns. After all, if they were destroyed, then there would not be Ten Horns to utterly burn Babylon the

Great with fire. Allow me to suggest a slightly different possibility as to who these three 'horns' might be. That I am aware of, there are only three nations which have fought against Israel in the past, yet who are now pro-West and pro-Israel; at least on the surface. These are Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Might something happen in the near future to cause some of them to do an 'about face' and adopt the stance of their Muslim brothers? Might the Beast convince at least one of them that it is useless to keep waiting for Israel to give the Palestinians a homeland, a real state of their own? Daniel seems to indicate that such might be the case with Jordan, a current ally of Syria:

"He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." (Daniel 11:41)

Why would Jordan escape the wrath of the Beast unless sometime in the near future she is going to decide to go along with him? On the other hand, it appears that Egypt will remain adamant about maintaining peace with Israel. As I have stated before, Daniel clearly tells us that Egypt is going to feel the brunt of the force of the Beast coming in from the north:

"He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." (Daniel 11:42-43)

Notice though that it does not say that Libya and Ethiopia are invaded or destroyed; it simply says that they are at his steps. In the article 'The Kings Of The North And The South', I suggested that this might mean that he stops his invasion at their borders. Could this be because they are sympathetic to his cause? In the case of Libya, this is definitely the case. Moammar Ghadaffi hates Israel with a passion!

As I have now shown, trying to decide who the Ten Horns are is a difficult issue. In fact, it is next to impossible. There are simply too many variables to consider. However, as I have already stated, just because you personally cannot identify them or the Beast does not mean that this eighth empire is not already in existence. This would be similar to denying that a certain person is in a group of people simply because you don't know who he is. All of your friends have told you that this certain person is definitely there, but you continue to deny it because you haven't been able to pick him out in the crowd. You may have looked at this person right in the face without even realizing it. All I can tell you is that the Lord promised us through the words of the angel to the Prophet Daniel, that He would open up the Scriptures to us in the Endtime:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and

knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4)

However, that doesn't mean He will do it all at once. Perhaps the Lord works on a need-to-know basis. He reveals a little to us at a time. When it is time for us to know the whole story, He will reveal the final keys to the puzzle. If we are as far along as I believe we may be, then we may not have long to wait! But as Jesus said, we must watch and pray! Regardless of what happens or when it happens, the main thing we as Christians need to remember, is that God loves us, and He is in control of things. He will not allow anything to happen to us unless it is for our own good, even if we may not understand it at the time:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

In this series we have now travelled far down the prophetic road of the Endtime. As you can see, there are a lot of sidestreets we have explored which feed into the main artery. It is my hope and prayer that through this series, if nothing else, I have at least helped you to become a little more familiar with The Map of the Endtime. I don't claim to understand The Map fully either, and I don't wish to leave you with the impression that I do. I have offered quite a few different interpretations on a wide variety of topics related to the Endtime. Exactly which ones are on the mark and which ones are not, I am not sure. It is now up to you to carefully and prayerfully ponder these things in your own heart to see if they might be true.

All I can promise you is that as I personally learn more, and as I come to a greater understanding of the knowledge of The Truth, I will continue to update my current articles, as well as continue to write new ones, as long as the Lord permits me to have this wonderful ministry. If you have encountered any difficulty in understanding anything I have written in this series, then I apologize for not making my views clearer. At the same time, I encourage you to claim the following promise, and to explore the Scriptures for yourself to see if these things are so:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

May God richly bless you with nothing but The Truth as you continue to delve into the Wonders of His Word.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

