

WILL THERE BE A REVIVED “ROMAN EMPIRE” OR WILL IT BE “THE BEAST FROM THE EAST”?

Introduction

The Bible is made up of 66 books, one third of which is estimated to be prophetic in nature. Many modern preachers totally ignore the prophetic content of the Bible and seldom venture into the controversial area of interpreting prophecy in the light of past history and pending events. This is largely because many prophecies are couched in terms unfamiliar to the modern reader and are therefore difficult to understand.

Some prophecies are expressed in apocalyptic terminology and pictorial symbolism to express underlying truths and events which, for security reasons have been shrouded in strange imagery, making such prophecies obscure and confusing until the time when their fulfilment is imminent and earthly events give clarity.

It is not until such events of history and the guidance of the Holy Spirit give understanding and direction, that the reader is able to apply such revelation to the times in which he lives.

The Old Testament writings of Daniel and the New Testament writings of John in Revelation, use imagery of various strange beasts, some with multiple heads, horns, feet and toes, to portray the rise and fall of various empires, nations, kings and individuals of importance in World affairs as they affect and influence the people of God and the land of Israel.

Generally in this apocalyptic literature the imagery using “beasts” is expressive of empires or kingdoms, and it is the unfolding order, or historical sequence and fulfilment of events, which enables the reader to interpret which kingdoms, are being referred to.

The scriptures also give confidence that God will not allow events to overcome His people without warning them through revelation of His prophetic word.

As an aside however, we should note that Daniel recorded only four major empires which appear to relate to the period of history commonly called the Jewish Diaspora. The Diaspora started with the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 597 B.C. and continued with the subsequent dispersion of the Jews throughout the World until they were re-established in their ancient homeland in 1948.

In contrast, John in Revelation 13:1 and 17:10 explains that there would be a total of 7 earthly empires. Additionally, one of the empires had received a deadly wound, and would be revived as an 8th empire in the last days.

The premise of this article is that the Beast with seven heads that rises out of the sea in Revelation 13, symbolises the seven satanically inspired pagan and idolatrous empires that have appeared in the course of our recorded history.

This article will examine the scriptural prophetic record and endeavour to reveal which of the seven biblical empires will be revived in the end-times and given power to make war with the saints for 42 months during the Great tribulation. (Rev. 13:5-7, 17:13-14.)

Apocalyptic Imagery -

In the book of Revelation chapters 11 - 20 the Greek word used for "beast" is Strongs No. 2342 "*thērion*" which means "wild animal or fiendish beast". The imagery of various "beasts" is thus believed to represent Satan's opposition to God through blasphemous man-made historical empires. Over time these empires have thwarted

and opposed the worship of the true God of Israel and subjugated and persecuted His servants.

In Revelation 13 the image of the beast with 7 heads represents Satan's total opposition to the kingdom of God through the manifestation of 7 idolatrous empires.

The symbolic use of "horns" in relation to these individual "beast" empires usually indicates divisions of power which fragment from the singular empire, while in Daniel 2 the use of "feet and toes" in the lower portion of the vision of the metallic man statue indicates the disintegration of empire into related "nation states".

Although the modern prophetic biblical teaching which portrays the two end-time Beasts of Revelation 13 coming out of a revived "Roman" Empire has supposedly been based on the visions in the book of Daniel, (Daniel 2:40-44, Daniel 7:7 ff. and Daniel's vision of the 70 weeks - Daniel 9:24-27); Daniel specifically states in his writings that the Fourth Gentile Kingdom on Earth (identified as ROME) will be divided into many "toe" nations, "horns" or power bases. Furthermore he states that these future inferior nations will NOT CLEAVE TO ONE ANOTHER. "Cleave" in Daniel 2:43 is Strong's Hebrew word No. 1693 which means "to be united or have a very close association". This verse, therefore, refutes the teaching that the Roman Empire will assume supremacy once more or be revived in the last days.

To examine Daniel's statements which disagree with modern prophetic teaching, we will trace the Roman Empire throughout history and see if the prophecies are proven true. If they are, then we must conclude that the word of God does not contradict itself, and the empire with the mortal wound that is revived in Revelation 13 is not the Roman Empire, but some other empire of history.

The 7 Empires of post-flood history.

Revelation 17:10-11 indicates that according to John there are seven kings and kingdoms or empires which would rise and fall in the course of history which would be of biblical interest. From John's perspective 5 have existed in the past, one existed in his day, and one was yet to come. In the end-times an additional 8th empire would arise out of the previous 7.

- The first empire to arise in post-flood history was founded by the Great-grandson of Noah through Ham and Cush, who established the kingdom of Babel, and practised idolatry. (Genesis 10). His name was Nimrod and he is believed to be the first King to wear a crown. He established the cities of Babel, Erech and Accad in the plain of Shinar and from there he went to Asshur and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah and Resen.¹

For this reason Babel is considered to be the first of the empire "heads" portrayed on the singular anti-God beast as seen by John in Revelation, and Nimrod was the first King. Many scholars state that Egypt was the first empire head on the beast, but Egypt is on the periphery of the territory under review in this article, which concentrates instead on the successive empires which ruled the Fertile Crescent from the North.

- The second empire is commonly believed to be Assyria.
- The third empire is generally accepted as neo-Babylon.
- The fourth is the dual empire of Media/Persia.
- The fifth was the Macedon kingdom of Alexander the Great.
- The sixth was the Roman Empire
- The seventh would come after Rome

¹ New Bible Dictionary, London Inter-varsity Fellowship, 1962. Page 867

In modern prophetic literature it is generally accepted that John's 3rd empire - Neo-Babylon = Daniel's 1st Kingdom - Lion.

4th empire - Media/Persia = Daniel's 2nd Kingdom - Bear.

5th empire - Macedon/Grecian = Daniel's 3rd Beast - Leopard.

6th empire - Roman = Daniel's 4th "dreadful and terrible" beast.

It is the intention of this article to concentrate on the 4th kingdom (Rome) and the one to come afterwards, and also to examine the relationships between Daniel's 4 beast empires - Babylon - Media/Persia - Macedon/Greece and Rome.

Historical fulfilment of Daniel's 4 Gentile Kingdoms

- The period of Jewish Diaspora began with the rise to power of the "gold kingdom" **Babylon** (described as a **LION** in Daniel 7:4) and the captivity, deportation and subjugation of the people of Judah, (the Jewish Nation) then living in Palestine.
- Babylon itself was later conquered by the dual "silver kingdom" of **Media/Persia** (described as a **BEAR** in Daniel 7:5), during which time some of the Jews returned to their land.
- In turn, Media/Persia was conquered by the "brass kingdom" - **Macedonia/Greece** of Alexander the Great (described as a **LEOPARD** in Daniel 7:6). His Kingdom eventually broke into four parts, ruled by his Generals.
- The Grecian kingdoms were eventually overtaken by the rise of **Rome**, the "iron legs" of the 4th kingdom (described as **DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE** in Daniel 7:7) but with no particular beast domicile.

The Visions of the 4th Gentile Kingdom -

The Fourth Kingdom (Rome) is first seen in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the metallic man statue, (Daniel 2:31-35) being composed of the legs, feet and toes at the lower end of the great statue which represented the four gentile kingdoms which were to arise and rule in the Fertile Crescent. These kingdoms would rise in an arc from Palestine, Lebanon and Syria to Babylon and Persia, and also in Europe. They would exert an influence, both good and bad on the people of Judah (Jews) - i.e. the Southern two tribes of Judah and Benjamin during the Diaspora when they suffered conquest and dispersion. Nebuchadnezzar's vision portrays these successive kingdoms as decreasing in value from Gold, Silver, Brass, Iron, and Iron/ clay together, until all are destroyed when the Kingdom of God is established in their stead.

God repeated the vision of the metallic man statue for Daniel who interpreted it for Nebuchadnezzar -

Daniel 2:40-44 *"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 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. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

The fourth and last Kingdom as seen by Daniel and King Nebuchadnezzar was to assume supremacy, but then it would be divided as legs, feet and toes are divided. The implication is that the Roman Empire would be divided into East and West, and furthermore that two different elements (i.e. iron and clay - strength and weakness) would co-exist, or be concurrently present, in the final era of the 4th Kingdom.

There appears to be four stages in the history of this empire as detailed in Daniel chapters 2 and 7 -

1. An ascendant, conquering stage attaining dominion.
2. A divided empire showing strength and weakness.
3. An empire disintegrating into many interacting nations.
4. The destruction of the last manifestation of the empire.

It is recorded in history that Rome did indeed conquer most of the old known "Biblical World" of that time in its ascendancy stage until 293 A.D. when Diocletian reorganised it into the Eastern Roman Empire and the West. Although it was briefly reunited under Constantine the Great, civil war, economic decline, and barbarian invasions followed until the last Roman emperor of the West was deposed by the German King Odoacer in 476 A.D. That was the end of the Roman Empire of antiquity which had existed since 27 B.C.

The fate of the divided Eastern and Western Roman Empire will be dealt with later in this article.

Whether or not this vision was given to Nebuchadnezzar for his own information is debateable, but the information contained therein was of interest to Daniel; as he saw and recorded the details of the successive future empires which would interact with the people of Judah. On a secondary level, God's intervention and

revelation enabled Daniel to interpret the vision, which became the catalyst for Daniel and the wise men of Babylon to be rescued from certain death. As a consequence Daniel was raised to the position of CEO in Babylon. (Daniel 2:13, 30, 48)

The Divided 4th Kingdom - East and West

Daniel states that the Fourth Kingdom is a divided Kingdom, which will suffer devolution into many pieces, some weak, and some strong. The reason for this is illustrated by the two elements from which the feet and toes are composed in the statue vision; i.e., iron and clay which cannot be mixed together and made to bond.

He says these terminal nations will mingle, intermarry and interact with one another, but nowhere does he say that they will be closely united under a future solitary ruler. Nor does he suggest or state that these terminal nations will succeed in manifesting as a united empire or kingdom any time in the future. Instead he says that a group of these nations will war with one another and the last manifestation of the 4th Empire as such, (horn and beast) will be burned and destroyed. (Dan. 7:11)

Furthermore, he states that the residue of these two elements from the territory of the devolved Roman Empire (i.e., the strong and weak nations which are contemporary with one another) will continue to exist and interact until God's great everlasting Kingdom crushes and consumes them all.

Our World is governed today mostly in the style and culture of the Grecian/Roman influence. Our democratic institutions were birthed in Greece, and it could therefore be construed that the 3rd "brass" Kingdom did indeed extend, or "bear rule over all the earth" although in a non-military manner. **Daniel 2:39.**

The Eastern Roman Empire and its successor

As mentioned above, the Eastern Roman Empire (or Byzantine Empire as it became known) was established in 293 A.D. when Diocletian separated the Roman territories east of the Balkans from those to the West. For a time Eastern Emperors coexisted with their Western counterparts at Rome. Under Constantine the Great the Empire became Christian and in 330 A.D. he established Constantinople as the capital of "New Rome". After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. the Imperial Insignia was moved eastwards to Constantinople where Rome continued to rule for another thousand years.

The Ottoman (Turkish/Muslim) Empire rose to power through its founder Osman I (1258-1326) who began to acquire territory in Anatolia (Turkey) and in the Balkans and eventually became the successor to the Eastern Roman Empire. The city of Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 under the leadership of Sultan Mehmet, helped by a Hungarian "cannon founder" called Orban. The Ottomans renamed the city Istanbul and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1457, finally bringing to an end a millennium and a half of Roman rule in the East.

The Ottoman Empire which subsequently ruled for 600 years, (14th - 20th Centuries) straddled three continents, (Asia, Europe and Africa). Its power culminated in the conquest of Egypt and Syria in 1517, and under Suleiman the Magnificent further territories were added in North Africa, the Middle East and Hungary in 1529.

From the 17th Century the Ottoman Empire began a slow decline and was brought to an end as a consequence of the 1st World War. The subsequent nationalist revolution under Kemal Ataturk brought the state of Turkey into existence in 1923 in its place and in 1924 the Islamic Caliphate was written out of existence with the stroke of a pen.

Because of the Ottomans support of Germany during the war their defeat brought them the loss of all their territory outside of Asia Minor. The winning triple entente Empires ² (Britain, France and Russia) divided the Ottoman territories among themselves and ruled them by mandates from England, (i.e., Palestine, Jordan and Iraq) and France, (Syria and Lebanon).

France's mandate over Syria extended from 1920-1946

France's mandate over Lebanon extended from 1920-1941

Britain's (U.K.) mandate over Palestine extended from 1918-1948

Britain's (U.K.) mandate over Jordan extended from 1916-1946

Britain's (U.K.) protectorate over Egypt extended from 1914-1922

The ensuing period up to and including the 2nd World War and aftermath, saw the rise of Nationalism throughout the World and the neighbouring and mandated areas eventually achieved independent Nationhood - Syria 1941 - Iraq 1932 - Jordan 1946 - Lebanon 1941 - Egypt 1936 - Libya 1951 - and Israel in 1948.

The reorganisation after the 2nd World War by Allies - U.K., U.S.A. and Russia (Yalta and Potsdam Conferences 1945 ³) and the rise of nationalism in the Middle East spurred an additional rise in the number of independent Nations. In fact, the two World Wars have been described as "the graveyard of Empires".

Indeed, the move towards nationalism continues, as various people groups break into even smaller factions and independent nations. As prophesied in the vision of the Metallic Man Statue; the iron legs of Imperial Rome gave way to the feet and toes stage of the divided

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_I

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yalta_Conference
<http://www.historyguide.org/europe/potsdam.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potsdam_Conference

kingdom empires which through war and treaties, produced the iron and clay (strong and weak) fragmented independent nations that exist in the Middle East today - nations that "shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" Daniel 2:43.

The Western Roman Empire and its progeny

After 476 A.D. the old Western Roman Empire, led by the German Kings and Latin Popes, went through a series of manifestations; first as the Holy Roman Empire (800 - 1806 the 1st Reich), the German Empire (1871 - 1918 the 2nd Reich), and the Nazi Regime's 3rd Reich (1933 - 1945) which ended with the 2nd World War. At this time Germany's empirical aspirations and any semblance of a 3rd Reich (1,000 year) Empire were destroyed.

However, during this one and a half millennium period of time, and particularly from the 16th Century onwards, the descendent Nations from the territories of the old Western Roman Empire rose to power while establishing their own colonial Empires. These nations (listed below) eventually conquered the whole World and broke it in pieces as they established subservient Colonies throughout the New World. (See Daniel 7:7 and 23)

Spain 1492

England 1536 (Union of England and Wales 1543) - (England and Scotland 1707) - (Great Britain and Ireland 1800 = U.K. 1801

France 987

Germany 1871

Holland (Netherlands) 1648

Belgium 1830

Portugal 1139

Austro-Hungarian Empire 1804

Italy 1861

It is only in the 20th Century after the 2nd World War that these great West European Empires have granted independence in their colonies as “nationalism” took root throughout their Empires and the “core” nations withdrew to their homelands. Today the great Western empires of the 16th - 20th Centuries no longer exist.

The second (extended) vision of the fourth Kingdom

This vision is seen by Daniel himself and recorded in **Daniel 7:7-8, 19-25**.

In this vision, the 4th Kingdom is described as a “*dreadful and terrible beast...and it had 10 horns.*” Daniel was told in verse 23 “*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. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*”

Historical fulfilment

In this extended vision Daniel is seeing the terminal nations in the Western part of the 4th Kingdom which would have a profound influence on the people of Judah (the Jews). As mentioned above, this 4th Kingdom was prophesied to “devour” or conquer the whole earth. The 10 horn Nations and Kings that would arise in the later stages of the devolution of this Kingdom are - Britain, Holland (Netherlands), Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia. These Nations, many of which colonized the whole World, were all geographically part of the old Roman Empire.

They were also the grouped 10 “horn” Nations or “founding Nations” out of the old Roman Empire that were contemporary with, and found within the larger League of Nations which was established in 1920. Another European nation joined the League of Nations in 1926, six years after the others. It was Germany, the “little horn” of **Daniel 7:24** – *“and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.”* Germany later withdrew from the League of Nations and eventually made war against them in Europe. The three “horns” or “kings” that were subdued at the beginning of the 2nd World War were Austria, Czechoslovakia (Sudentenland) and Poland. Germany’s aspirations were to restore a greater Roman Empire with a 1,000 year rule – i.e. the 3rd Reich. ⁴

Just as prophesied in Daniel’s vision, this particular 4th Beast Kingdom (in its last manifestation as an attempt to revive the Roman Empire for a thousand years – via Germany’s 3rd Reich) was destroyed – *“I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame...”* (Daniel 7:11)

This in fact was the end of both Hitler’s and Germany’s imperial ambitions.

Many prophecy scholars have anticipated a revived Roman Empire in an amalgamation of 10 European countries since the formation of the E.E.C. by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. However, the current membership of the European Union stands at 27, and recent efforts to unite themselves under one constitution have failed with individual nations choosing to retain their own sovereignty.

⁴ For a fuller treatment of this subject, see my booklet “The little horn of Daniel’s 4th Empire and the Kingdom of the Jews.”
<http://www.fivedoves.com/letters/apr2008/ear421.htm>

The Bible says there will be no revived Roman Empire under one authority - the "TOE" nations "WILL NOT CLEAVE TO ONE ANOTHER." (Dan. 2:43).

Furthermore, after the period of prominence of these "10 horn" Kingdoms in the "age of discovery" during the (16th - 19th Centuries) and after the wars between them, God promised to set up a Kingdom on earth which will eventually supersede and destroy all that remains of the four Gentile Kingdoms. Once established this Kingdom will remain forever. (Daniel 7:17-18, 26-27)

Although many people failed to make the connection between the historical events of the 20th Century and Biblical prophecy, this is precisely what happened at the end of the 2nd World War.

After the German "little horn" was destroyed in 1945, the United Nations decree of 1947 enabled the Jews to establish a territorial base in part of the old Kingdom of Israel. Israel as a Nation was reborn when they declared their Nationhood on 15th May 1948 just as the British mandate over the Palestinian territory ended.

The Jewish Diaspora was finally over after the Jews fought the neighbouring Arab countries for the right to inhabit their ancient land. Jerusalem, their spiritual capital, was added in 1967 after the 6 day war and, according to Daniel, the Kingdom land will remain in their possession "in trust" until the Messiah rules from Jerusalem. (Daniel 7:22, 27)

Summary

As we have seen, recent history has brought us to the end of Empires. In Nebuchadnezzar's vision Daniel saw only four major Empires which would interact with the people of Judah during the

period of their Diaspora - Babylon - Media/Persia - Macedon/Greece and "divided and fragmented" Rome.

In many ways it is an unfinished story because the visions of Daniel chapters 2 and 7 did not focus on Rome's eventual successor. To understand more about what came after Rome, we have to turn to other prophetic books to piece together the details regarding the next empire. Daniel does, however, give us one tantalising insight into what came next.

HOWEVER – "... as concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." (Daniel 7:12)

The "*rest of the beasts*" had their dominion taken away, "empire by empire" when they were toppled by the next conquering and succeeding Empire. Rome had finally ended their dominion when it ruled parts of their territory in their stead; and yet the promise was given that the lives of the three old empires would be prolonged for a season and period of time.

The "*beasts*" referred to in the scripture above were from Daniel's perspective, the past Kingdoms of Babylon (**LION**), Media/Persia (**BEAR**) and Greece (**LEOPARD**). All of these Kingdoms ruled in the Middle East and Asia, had their base in Babylon, and had no part to play in Western Europe.

Would these three old Kingdoms reappear in scripture and in history? Yes, they do, but Daniel was not shown the form in which they would appear. We must turn to the prophetic book of Revelation to understand the full historical sequence of the earthly, pagan/gentile Kingdoms which opposed God and his Kingdom of Israel.

What came next after Rome?

Although Daniel only saw four gentile Kingdoms in his visions, John explains in **Revelation 17:7b-12** that the Satanic, anti-God, “beast” forces at work in the World actually have 7 manifestations as “heads” or Empires on the singular anti-God pagan beast.

These can be named as Babel (1st rebellion by Nimrod), Assyria, Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece, Rome and Ottoman Empires. These 7 major Empires all succeeded or “sat on top of” one another during the course of History, mainly in the Middle Eastern “fertile crescent” area. Only the Roman and Ottoman Empires extended into Western Europe and Western North Africa.

John who was writing in the 1st Century A.D. said that one more empire/head was to follow the “Roman” era of his day, and this can be identified as the Ottoman Empire when the Muslim Turks finally captured Constantinople and destroyed the remains of the Eastern Roman (New Rome - Byzantine) Empire in 1453 A.D.

The Ottoman Empire is the “7th head” that was to come on the multi-headed anti-God beast that John saw in his vision in Revelation 13:1-2. The Islamic tribes that originally burst onto the scene out of Saudi Arabia in the 7th Century, Turkish Muslim Sultanates and the Ottoman Empire’s consolidation eventually conquered most of the territory previously ruled by Rome in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

“A century after the death of Muhammad an Islamic empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Central Asia in the east. The subsequent empires of the Umayyads, Abbasids, the Fatimids, the Mughals, the Safavids, and Ottomans were among the largest and most powerful in the world.”⁵ It was only during the

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_history

Battle of Tours near France in 732 A.D. that Charles Martel halted their march further into Europe from the Iberian Peninsula.

“The Islamic Golden Age, also sometimes known as the Islamic Renaissance, was traditionally dated from 700 A.D. to 1200 A.D.”⁶ John says that the 7-headed Anti-God Beast Empire had a “mortal wound” to one of its heads and that it is this “revived head” appearing as an 8th Empire which will finally be destroyed. He gives several clues about the 8th head on the Beast that help to identify the “empire” he is referring to.

Clues to the Revived Beast’s Identity -

1. **Rev. 13:1b - 2a - 3** *“... and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns... 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 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.”*

Surprisingly we see that this beast that arises with seven heads and ten horns in Revelation is not a singular animal, but a composite beast. It consists of parts of three previous empires. From John’s perspective, he lists them in order from the most recent to the past, i.e., Greece (**Leopard**), Media/Persia (**Bear**), and Babylon (**Lion**). These are the same three “*rest of the beasts*” mentioned in Daniel 7:12 who “*had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*”

The picture that John gives of this composite beast appears to focus on its appearance and structure in its second manifestation rather

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Age_of_Islam

than its first. John sees it in its healed state as it is about to embark on its revived mission.

2. **Rev. 17:10** *“And there are seven kings (or heads) five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.”*

John is here giving a description of the 7 Anti-God empires led by kings in the Middle East that will have existed prior to the establishment of God’s enduring, everlasting Kingdom on earth.

At the time when John wrote, these “fertile crescent” empires were Babel, Assyria, Babylon, Media/Persia and Macedonia/Greece – which are the five that “are fallen”. The one that “is” in John’s day was Rome. The one that was “not yet come” is given no description in this passage.

Since this composite leopard/bear/lion beast empire of Revelation 13 bears no exact individual historical similarity to any of the five previously described fallen empires, nor to Rome, we conclude it is probably to be associated with the one that came after Rome which occupied the territory of the named beasts. This was the Ottoman Empire, based in the areas covered by the Grecian (Leopard), Media/Persian (Bear) and Babylonian (Lion) Empires, centred on the modern countries of Turkey, Syria and Iraq in the Eastern Mediterranean from whence they ruled.

A further clue to the revival of this eastern beast empire, is contained in the words “...when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” This phrase has puzzled many commentators, because the Turkish Ottoman Empire endured for 6 Centuries, which can hardly be called a “short space” of time. However, the word “continue” is the clue to understanding the life cycle of this beast, because it actually has a 2nd coming.

The passage could be read thus in terms of history “... *and when he cometh...*” (i.e., his first appearance for 6 Centuries), at the end of which period he receives his deadly wound to the head and ceases to exist, then “... *he must continue a short space...*” (i.e., his revival is only for a short space in time) when he continues⁷ what he was doing before, which is to reclaim and subjugate all the territory he originally conquered in the name of Allah. This agrees with the further clue below.

3. **Rev. 13:3** “*I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed...*”

This deadly wound occurred when the Ottoman Empire which supported Germany was defeated at the end of World War I and subsequently lost all its territories outside of Asia Minor. The only remnant of the once great empire is the state of Turkey, the decapitated head of the Ottoman Empire. However, the deadly wound is prophesied to be healed. We are further told **Rev. 13:2b**. that “*the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*” This revived empire will be satanic in origin, and status, and the whole World will wonder as its reappearance.

4. **Rev. 17:7b -8** “... *the beast ... which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend... when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”*

⁷ Websters Dictionary defines “continue” [meaning No. 5] as “to go on again after an interruption”.

There are two aspects to consider in interpreting these difficult verses about the beast that had existed, did not exist, but will yet ascend.

(a) The end of all Empires - concentrating on the "beast"

John is being told that this "singular 7-headed anti-God beast" that he saw had existed in history and would rise again in the future after a period of absence. The Beast would have a complete career spanning the 7 head/empires in succession. At a particular point in time it would cease to function because its 7th/last head as empire would suffer a deadly wound (Rev. 13:3), which would bring to an end the succession of all 7 empires and the life of the beast.

History has brought this to fulfilment. After the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1543 and conquered the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, they continued to dominate in the geographical locations of the previous 6 empires in one form or another on the three Continents until the 17th Century when the empire began to decline. Finally in 1922 at the end of the 1st World War, the Ottoman Empire was signed out of existence with the "stroke of a pen". This was when the 7th and last Kingdom/head received the deadly wound (Rev. 13:3) that ultimately brought the beast to an end.

At the same time as the Ottoman Empire was defeated at the end of the 1st World War the great European empires of the 16th to 20th Centuries began to wane. By the end of the 2nd World War there was a "new world in which empires had given way to their nation state successors".⁸ Today we live in an age of nationalism; the age of colonialism had ended.

⁸ Gelvin, James L. "The Israel-Palestine Conflict – One Hundred Years of War. Second Edition – Cambridge University Press – 2007 – page 34.

John's vision indicates that it had to be the 7th head on the singular beast which actually brought it and the age of empires to an end, because, as he saw the beast in the future end-time, that wounded head would be healed and a particular Beast empire would rise again in a fresh 8th manifestation as a **Leopard/Bear/Lion** Beast, (Rev. 17:11) having characteristics from its 7 predecessor empires.

(b) The end of the Babylonian, Media/Persian and Grecian "head" Empires which were relegated to history for a time - concentrating on the "heads".

Looking at these difficult verses from another point of view, this end-time composite Lion/Bear/Leopard beast had already lived three previous lives in the three separate old Empires of Babylon, Media/Persia and Greece; therefore it had existed in the past. It did not exist, ("is not") in John's day because Rome the 6th empire was in dominion.

Rev. 17:10 *"And there are seven king's five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come..."*

Therefore, this beast empire which "*shall ascend*" must already have had a history and been defeated by the empire that existed in John's day which was Rome.

This agrees with what Daniel said about these three other beast empires in chapter 7:12 *"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."* Their dominion was taken away by each of the succeeding empires in turn, the last of which in John's day was the Roman Empire.

For it to be able to "*ascend*" again it had to be based on a kingdom or kingdoms prior to Rome and consequently was only able to manifest itself after the Roman Empire (6th head) was defeated. The

successor/conqueror of the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire became the 7th head on the beast as it arose out of the territories of the old Babylonian, Media/Persian, and Grecian empires in the East as opposed to the Roman Empire which arose out of the West.

This was the pictorial view as seen from John's vision (far in the future), when he saw the singular anti-God Beast - complete with 7 empire heads one of which had received a deadly wound that had healed - rise up out of the sea ready to continue its opposition to God and his servants.

Taken together, these two viewpoints on the singular beast's career through all 7 anti-God empires would indicate that the Islamic Ottoman Empire which came after Rome manifested itself as the 7th head on the beast which brought the beast's career in the Fertile Crescent to an end.

It is only in the absence of such empires today, when the beast itself *"is not"* and the 7 empire heads have also ceased to exist that we can appreciate that the time is ripe for the healing of the 7th head as it rises again from the past.

Contemporary existence of iron and clay nations

An important thing to remember in considering Daniel's prophetic material is that the biblical description of the descendant nations from the 4th empire's eastern and western legs as being "iron" and "clay" or "strong and weak", shows that they would contemporaneously exist and interact with one another, as they do at this present time in history. This period began about the 16th Century in the "age of colonial empires" when the great trading routes were opened up by the "strong" nations during the age of exploration and continues until the present day. During the intervening four centuries the successor empire of the Eastern

Roman Empire and the successor European empires from the Western Roman Empire all interacted with each other through trade, exploration and numerous wars in Europe and the Middle East.

It was only after the Muslim Ottoman Empire was dismembered in 1923 and after the final manifestation of Rome as an empire was destroyed with the 3rd Reich Nazi defeat in 1945 when all empires collectively ceased to exist, that the leopard/bear/lion beast empire was even **able** to "*ascend*" once more. It had to receive its deadly wound before it could ascend again.

The ascending 8th head on the composite beast -

This "ascent" of the Muslims in a fresh configuration is happening in our own generation as we have seen the revival of radical Islam beginning with the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini which overthrew the Iranian Monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and replaced it with an Islamic Republic. "It has been called an event that made Islamic fundamentalism a political force... from Morocco to Malaysia." ⁹

Since that time we have seen a proliferation of terrorist organisations led by al Qaeda (The Base) which is a "well-known Islamist group founded sometime between August 1988 and late 1989/early 1990. It operates as a terrorist network, comprised of both a multinational arm and an extremist Sunni movement. Al-Qaeda's objectives include the end of foreign influence in Muslim countries and the creation of a new Islamic caliphate. Reported beliefs include that a Christian-Jewish alliance is conspiring to

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution

destroy Islam, and that the killing of bystanders and civilians is Islamically justified in jihad.”¹⁰

Together with al Qaeda, “the Taliban is a pro-Wahhabi Sunni Islamist, predominately Pashtun fundamentalist religious and political movement that governed Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, when its leaders were removed from power by Northern Alliance and NATO forces. Its pro-Wahhabi Sunni Islamist Mullah Mohammed Omar is intent on destabilising Middle Eastern governments and establishing Sharia law in Islamic countries.”¹¹

These two terrorist groups presently believed to be hiding on the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan are, among others, prime candidates for the “ascent” of a revived radical Islamist empire seeking to restore an Islamic Caliphate based on Sharia law.

5. Rev. 17:11 *“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven...”*

This final ascending 8th Beast “head” has its roots in the 7 previous empires which occupied the Middle East, Europe and North Africa, but it is largely composed of those areas specific to the LEOPARD, BEAR and LION empires. As modern atlases will attest, this is the area of the World where the greatest proportion of Muslims live, and together with the 50 million Muslims who live in Europe, it is believed that Muslims now exceed Catholics in number, and are rapidly gaining numerical ground on the collective protestant denominations.

¹⁰ Wikipedia – al Qaeda – accessed May 2009

¹¹ Wikipedia – Taleban – accessed May 2009

5. **Rev. 13:1b** *“...and 10 horns, and upon his horns 10 crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”*

Furthermore, when John first sees this beast arising in Revelation, it comes complete with 10 horns which are crowned. Crowns usually stand for sovereignty, kings or nationhood, and when the geographical areas originally covered by the LEOPARD, BEAR and LION Empires are plotted on a modern map, it is seen that the total area contains 10 modern nations that are all ISLAMIC in nature and which surround Israel on three sides. The terrorists and Islamists declared goal of driving Israel into the sea illustrates their territorial positions as close neighbours to the North, East and South. The nations within this territorial area are Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and northern parts of Egypt and Libya. When seen on a map it even looks like a crouching beast with the head of a lion (Turkey). These are the 10 “horn” nations on the reviving Rev. 13:2 composite Beast.

7. **Rev. 17:3** *“...and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast..”*

As seen previously, this same beast was composed of the body of a LEOPARD, the feet of a BEAR, and the mouth of a LION. In John’s time, the only other Empire sitting on top of these three previous empires was ROME, the “dreadful and terrible beast” mentioned in Daniel 7:7.

To convey his meaning about the woman “sitting” on the beast, John reverses the historical order of these Kingdoms, to show that the woman was sitting on top of this composite beast in most recent order - i.e. LEOPARD, BEAR and LION. It therefore follows that it was Rome sitting on these previous empires and shows the Middle Eastern origin of the (apparently) submissive composite beast. It

also confirms that the composite beast is definitely not a revived Roman Empire from the West.

In this later vision Rome has been “transformed” into a corrupt, profligate harlot, the nemesis of the people of God.

For his own security and that of the Christians to whom the book of Revelation was intended, John hid the identity of the Roman Empire in all its manifestations under the pseudonym of “*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*” It was Rome who was clothed in purple (Emperors) and scarlet (Popes), who was adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, with a golden cup of abominations. (This picture of the “so called” Christianization of the Roman Empire illustrates the descent of the Roman Church into barbarity and adulterous promiscuity which was future history from John’s perspective.) This is the reason John “*wondered*” in astonishment about this woman.

It was future Rome in all her manifestations and attempts at re-creating the Roman empire of antiquity who was drunk with the blood of the saints (Old Testament believers), and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Christians). Although this was true of the Roman Empire in John’s day with its cyclical persecution of Jews and Christians whilst trading goods and the souls of men in slavery; this was especially true of its manifestation as the Holy Roman Empire, through the Crusades, the French and Spanish inquisitions, and particularly in its last manifestation as the Nazi 3rd Reich, birthed out of Germany, through its satanic attempts to annihilate the Jewish race.

This illustration of “a woman riding a beast” uses a simile from an ancient Greek myth about Europa riding on a bull (Zeus); a symbol that abounds in modern Europe today, in statuary, coins, and imagery.

The European Union is now composed of 27 countries. However to date all attempts at political unification have failed, although some success has been achieved militaristically via NATO, and economically with the “common market” and monetarily with the “euro”.

As prophesied in Daniel chapter 2, the terminal nation states of the 4th empire will not cleave to one another.

The simile of Europa (the woman) sitting on the beast is applicable in today’s scenario in the militaristic nature of the European Western coalition forces (NATO) which today are “sitting on” and attempting to “suppress” the Islamo-fascist rising 8th head on the composite beast from the east.

8. **Rev. 17:16** *“And the 10 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.”*

This verse adds a further dimension to the picture, because it shows that at a later stage of development, the 10 horns on the beast who hate the whore, rise up to conquer and invade her (i.e. “eat her flesh”) and ultimately attempt to destroy her. Through Jihad (holy war) and terrorism, the Islamic insurgencies rising in the Middle Eastern and Islamic nations of the World are intent on reinstating the Caliphate and Sharia law. At the same time they see the current conflict together with the “occupancy of Islamic land” by Western troops as a continuation of the Crusades of the 11th and 13th Centuries. Additionally, it is their stated goal to destroy Israel, (little Satan) and U.S.A. (big Satan) who stand in the way of them achieving their goals.

This same scenario has already had a prior fulfilment when the Eastern leg of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire was brought to an end in 1453 with the capture and sacking of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire. At that time, Constantinople in her role as NEW ROME, had been for 1,000 years *“sitting upon many waters”* (Rev. 17:1) as she straddled the Bosphorus Strait between two Continents and exercised her power as *“the “great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth”*. Rev. 17:18.

Constantinople, like her Western counterpart, ROME, was also built on 7 hills, a further endorsement that the woman portrayed in Revelation 17:9 encompasses the whole Roman Empire. A complete description of the sins of the Roman Empire in all its manifestations is contained in Rev. 18:2-24.

However, there appears to be a yet future fulfilment of this prophecy in the end-times because it is only after the revival of the *“wounded head”* empire in Rev. 13, that the events of Revelation 17 and 18 take place. It is also after these prophetic events that the evil entities of the Beast and the False Prophet who are empowered by Satan are finally destroyed – Rev. 19:19-21.

Conclusion

Most of the teaching about a revived Roman Empire, published prior to the year 2,000 has been based on speculation and teaching from hundreds of years ago; prior to the events of the 19th and 20th Centuries and two World Wars. The fulfilments mentioned in this article were unknown to the early prophetic writers. They could not know that the Ottoman Empire which succeeded the Byzantine Empire (New Rome) would itself be defeated; that the Ottoman Empire would be dismembered and beheaded, with Turkey as its sole survivor; whilst the remains of the empire would be carved up

into individual nations at the beginning of the 20th Century by Britain and France.

Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later president Kemal Atatürk), Turkey became a republic and the Ottoman sultan was deposed in 1922. As a result, the Islamic Caliphate was written out of existence in 1924 where it has remained for over 80 years.

It is not a revived Roman Empire that arises in the last days according to the evidence of Daniel and John, but it is a second manifestation of the 7th head on the composite Beast Empire which rises out of the old Eastern Empires of Babylon, Persia and Greece, which will “*make war with the saints, and overcome them*”. **Rev. 13:7.** These areas are clearly situated in the Middle East, Asia and Greece and have no reference to Europe or Rome in the West.

In its first appearance, the 7th (Ottoman) Empire, lasted for Centuries, but in its second manifestation it “*must continue a short space.*” **Rev. 17:10.** That “*short space*” refers to its second ISLAMIST manifestation after its mortal wound is healed. The “*short space*” is limited to 42 months - “*and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*” **Rev. 13:5**

This second manifestation which is currently rising out of the old Empires of Babylon, Media/Persia and Greece, is composed of 10 modern Islamic Nations - Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Libya.

Since September 11, 2001, the World has woken up to see the form in which this radical composite ISLAMIC Beast is coming back to life. The 10 Nations mentioned above are the very same Nations where radical Islamo-Fascist insurgents are intent on toppling the current governments, and where the Western (ex Roman Empire) coalition forces are seeking by military means and political pressure

to subdue the insurgents and establish Democratic reforms, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

Furthermore, out of these radical Islamic extremist terrorist groups come the “amorphous stateless enemy”¹² leaders described in Rev. 17:12-13 “ . . .10 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.”

It is unfortunate that the scriptures offer little hope of a quick solution to the War against Terror which has engulfed the World. The scenario painted in chapters 13 – 18 of the book of Revelation portrays a continuing battle between the European/western descendant Nations of the 4th empire and the leaders of the various Eastern Islamic insurgencies who eventually become united and of one mind in their purpose to destroy the West and install another Islamic Beast Empire in its place.

John’s revelation confirms the scenario that we see through the media today, when he says in Rev. 17:3b “I saw a woman (ex Roman Empire nations) sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

Rev. 17:14-18 “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 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. And the woman

¹² Joe Klein, Time Magazine – June 1, 2009 – page 11

which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

Additionally, in this further description of the whore/city who ruled over the kings of the earth, we see that her influence is spread over many peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. However, Rev. 18:5-7 condemns her for "*...her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."*

Rev. 17:16-17 "*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."*

Daniel's prophecies were SEALED until the TIME OF THE END;
that time is now -