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Ten Horns Coming into View?

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cap-9-10-Horns-MP3-3.mp3

(This is a shorter version of a Post by the same name; Scriptures quoted from ESV Bible unless noted otherwise)

Several theories have tried to explain which nations represent the *"ten horns"* featured on the head of history's final Beast-empire (portrayed in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17). And there is some confusion about the matter, much of which is due to a mis-translation in older Bible versions: *"And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire."* (Revelation 17:16, NKJV)

This makes it sound as if the *Ten Horns* are the ones doing the monumental job of destroying the *Great Harlot empire*. But where the above translation says "*ON* the beast", it should have said "*AND* the beast".

A more accurate translation: *"The BEAST AND THE TEN HORNS you saw will hate etc."* (NIV, ESV, NLT and others) This more clearly shows that it is the Beast who destroys the *Great Harlot*… with the help of his 10 horns, of course.

According to the symbolism, these ten nations do not have any significant power of their own. Horns just do what their "head" wants them to do. The *"head"* in this case is the Antichrist. In Daniel 7 he is also portrayed as *"another horn, a little one"* – but a horn that had *"eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things".* (7:8) The *Ten Horns*, however, do not possess these characteristics, meaning they have nothing close to the same kind of power and influence. They are

appendages and do not act independently of their *Beast* (the *Little Horn*) who directs them and uses them to fight against other predators and enemies.

And yet, paradoxically, they do *"receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast."* (Revelation 17:12) So what could all this mean?

At this stage, it would help to pinpoint who is the *Beast*. That is easy. Ezekiel 38-39 predicts that at the End of the Age the northern power of Russia will invade the Middle East, especially the nation of Israel. As far as God is concerned, all the empires of human history are beast-like. But Russia, like the other *Beasts* mentioned in Daniel 7-8 and Revelation 13, will have that unique qualification of a Biblical *Beast* – namely, control over and occupation of the nation of Israel. (See Posts on Ezekiel 38-39.)

Since the ten-horned beast likely originates in the Russian nation (according to Ezekiel 38-39), then it would seem natural that those *Ten Horns* should have a close connection with Russia. Horns are supposed to be attached to the beast they are part of. This close relationship is also suggested in Daniel 7:8 and 20 – *"There came up among them another horn* (Antichrist from Russia)… *that seemed greater than its companions."*

So who then might these horns be? The satellite nations on Russia's border would appear to be the most likely candidates as the fulfillment of the *Ten Horns* symbolism. At this point we might wonder about the portrayal in Daniel 7, which seems to indicate that those *Ten Horns* should come out of nations that once belonged to the Roman empire. To understand why the horns do not have to be connected to ancient Rome would involve a lengthy explanation, which can found in "Appendix 1″ in the original Post.

These satellite nations are already partnered with Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.) organization. In the 1990's there were 11 nations in this group – Russia plus the 10 states of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan. (Turkmenistan, because of its economic independence, was able to maintain "associate" status rather than become a full member.) Since the 1990's, Ukraine and Georgia have

dropped out due to the prospects of joining the European Union and/or NATO.



Interestingly, there is a prophetic passage about the Ten Horns with the peculiar detail (mentioned three times) that "[the *Beast*] *shall put down three kings".* They would be *"plucked up by the roots"*. (Daniel 7:8,20,24) It is easy to foresee this could become the eventual fate of Ukraine and Georgia, and any other state (Moldova?) drifting too far into the American anti-Russia camp.

But then, we may wonder, what about some other nations with whom Russia is allied – such as some Middle Eastern ones or China? Perhaps, but those nations are more distant and independent from Russia; it would be

difficult to see how they might get *"plucked up by the roots"*.

However, the C.I.S. nations are right there in Russia's backyard and somewhat dependent on her economically and in other ways. So they are obliged, in spite of having their independence, to follow in Russia's footsteps. And if they don't, then, like some Latin American nations who've tried to deviate from American interests, they are likely to get *"plucked up by the roots"*.

And the fact that they have formed the C.I.S. shows that these nations have made one step, at least, towards handing *"their power and authority to the beast"*, as mentioned in Revelation 17:13,17 (ESV). *"Power and authority"* means their resources and quite a bit of their decision-making power. Those nations will allow themselves to come under the Russian sphere of influence, in other words. Again, it would be difficult to see how this might happen with any nations outside of Russia's backyard.

Although they will join the Beast (the Russian Federation), it seems they will be allowed to retain the outward symbols of sovereignty. This we might assume from Revelation 13:1. *"I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having… ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns."* (NKJV) Other than that, however, they will be assimilated into the Russian Federation… largely for the purpose of joining it in the wars against the *Harlot* empire.

Then there is this unusual statement that *"the ten horns… have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast."* (17:12) This fits nicely with the situation of the C.I.S. nations. Having been swallowed up in the old Soviet Union during the 20th century, they have emerged out of subjugated status only now in very recent history.

During Perestroika in the early 1990's, Russia, through the influence of its leader Mikhail Gorbachev, allowed them to choose independence; yet they remained in mutual association with Russia through the C.I.S., just as the Scripture states, *"they are to receive authority as kings… together with the beast."* (Revelation 17:12)

The re-structuring (Perestroika) of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's and the sudden appearance of its former republics as independent nations

was a unique event in recent world history. And it is one that seems to fulfill precisely the situation that Revelation 17 describes.

As for the other former communist nations in eastern Europe (along with former Soviet republics of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia), they have broken away completely now and have joined the European Union and NATO. They are no longer *"together with the beast"*, in the way that the C.I.S. nations are who also gained their independence during the Perestroika era.

So, could it be that this peculiar and outstanding event in history – this bestowing of independence on the Soviet republics – was predicted long ago in this ancient passage of Scripture?

And another peculiar aspect about this event: The *Ten Horns "receive authority as kings… together with the beast."* (17:12) In other words, without the Beast, these nations would not have gained independence. Normally, nations fight for independence and gain it in spite of their over-ruler; the powerful nation doesn't just hand it to them so easily.

Perhaps because of this more friendly relationship, as the Word suggests, when conflict with the *Great Harlot* gets to the boiling point, and because of their mutual hatred for her, they willingly re-attach themselves to the Beast – unlike the forced co-operation in the days of the Soviet Union.

> ***And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot… For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.* (17:16-17, NASB 1995)**

To summarize: These satellite nations around Russia were totally subjugated in the Soviet Union (*"have not yet received royal power"*). Then at last in the 1990's, they *"receive authority as kings"*, their independence. But it is *"together with the beast."* This independence was given to them by Russia, and they maintain close ties with her through their membership in the C.I.S.

It all fits rather well the description given in Revelation 17. In essence,

the symbolism of *Beast* and *Ten Horns* appears to be the Lord's way of identifying who the final *Beast* is – the resurrected version of the old Soviet Union, now known as the Russian Federation.

Of course, part of the prophecy hasn't been fulfilled yet: *"these are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast."* But it is not hard to foresee that these unstable, formerly Communist nations might re-join Russia – *"hand over their power and authority to the beast"*. (17:13)

Another aspect not fulfilled: Their independence will be short-lived – *"receive authority as kings for one hour"*. (17:12) So if this passage of Scripture in Revelation 17 is talking about these former Soviet states, then the time for their re-integration with Russia (when they *"hand over their authority*") can't be very far away, it would appear.

Here are some helpful, practical details to consider: In a quote from Vladimir Putin about the breakup of the Soviet Union, he stated that the nation "lost 23.8 percent of its national territory, 48.5 percent of its population, 41 percent of its gross domestic product and 44.6 percent of its military capacity." (from "Time to Get Over the Russophobia" by Patrick J. Buchanan – March 8, 2018)

If the smaller C.I.S. nations were to re-join Russia, the nation would jump in size by almost 50% – in population, resources, and power. The 23.8% increase in land territory may not seem like a lot; but considering that much of Russia is barren wasteland, that also is quite a bit of territory.

It is being assumed here – for now – that the original 10 "permanent members" of the C.I.S. – Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgizstan – will be recognized as the *"ten horns"* of the ancient Biblical prophecies. This includes Ukraine and Georgia who have dropped out for now but may be forced to re-join in the future. Turkmenistan is not included since, at present, she is not a permanent member of the C.I.S.

This is only an assumption, of course. As history moves forward, then we will learn more precisely how this upcoming power arrangement will

manifest.

Some other points to consider: Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova on Russia's western border serve as an important buffer zone against NATO-allied Europe. Georgia, Armenia, Azherbaijan have valuable reserves of oil and natural gas. Also, they occupy strategic locations along the borders of Russia, leading into the Mideast. Other C.I.S. nations have nuclear energy resources, navies and armies, sea ports, oil and other resources that Russia vitally needs.

And it should be added that the central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekhistan, Kyrghysztan, and Tajikhistan) are providing the rail transportation links between China and Russia, the Middle East, even Europe (if she's willing). This gigantic infrastructure project (known as Belt and Road Initiative) is destined to turn Eurasia into a great economic powerhouse (that will rule the world of the near future).

Russia has climbed out of the second-class nation category and returned to her former superpower status. But she has not yet re-claimed those satellite nations that serve as a protective buffer zone (the way horns do) around her extensive and vulnerable borderland territory (as they used to do in the days of the old Soviet Union). Re-unification with the C.I.S. nations, as they *"give their kingdom to the beast"*, will empower Russia to again challenge the *Great Harlot* (as in the days of the Cold War)… and even defeat her militarily. (17:17, NKJV) (Learn more on this subject in *Fall of the Great Harlot* series.)

We see then how these small C.I.S. nations could play a pivotal role in turning the tide in favor of Russia's (and the Antichrist's) ascendance to supreme power in the world. They could also help the *Beast* in the task God has permitted him to carry out – that of bringing about the fiery downfall of the *Great Harlot* empire, as pictured in Revelation 17-18.

Even now, the C.I.S. nations are serving as a sort of testing ground where a big showdown is taking place between U.S. and Russian interests. These small C.I.S. republics are quite vulnerable, but if they perceive Russia as a more reliable friend and support, then that may embolden them to resist the *Great Harlot* by returning to the Russian fold.

This peculiar feature about the final *Beast* – its *Ten Horns* – is mentioned no less than seven times in the *Books of Daniel* and *Revelation.* Could the recent startling appearance on the world stage of the 10 Commonwealth of Independent States nations be one more "sign of the times", pointing us to the reality that human history is heading into that climactic era known as the End of the Age?

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Gabriel's Prophetic Proclamations: Ancient Past or Near Future?

(May, 2021; these points were drawn from the *Daniel 9* series and *Daniel 11, Part 3* series; Scriptures quoted from NKJV, unless noted otherwise; this Post also published in the *Issues* section)

One of the main goals in the Daniel 9 and Daniel 11 series of posts, was to show that the angel (Gabriel) who delivered those messages was speaking primarily about events to come in the distant future – events which should not be relegated to the ancient past. Over the centuries, well-meaning scholars and teachers have tried – a little too hard perhaps – to view these Scriptures in the light of past events, rather than seeing them as prophetic insights into future events.

Today, with the benefit of more historical hindsight than was available in the past, it is easier to pinpoint more accurately the full meaning of Gabriel's prophetic messages. But because of the heavy weight of scholarly opinion from the past, the task of adjusting our understanding of these intriguing passages developed into a major overhaul.

The accumulation of translations, commentaries, and various interpretations over the years has stifled the mystery and magic implicit in the words of God's archangel, Gabriel – a being whose mind possessed tremendous foresight, insight, and multi-leveled comprehension. There is a need then to re-capture the beauty and wonder of these words from the past… for we stand on the threshold of the End of the Age, and the matter of resolving these particular doctrinal issues is becoming ever more needful.

If God's Truth lies buried under the rubble of mistranslation, misinterpretation, or the cultural understanding of yesteryear, why should it remain so? And why should God's message through His angel Gabriel remain sidelined at a time when it is needful to grasp the full extent of what he was trying to say long ago about our present world situation?

So, because of its relevance to our understanding of the End Time scenario and doctrine, and because of the need to supply an antidote or remedy against the well-meaning preconceptions of scholars from earlier times, following is a summary of the reasons why the primary fulfillment of Gabriel's prophetic messages (especially verses 9:27 and 11:21-35 in the Book of Daniel) can be understood as coming in the near future… that brief tumultuous era prior to Christ's Return:

1) First of all, given the impressive introduction in chapter 10 – the appearance of Christ in His heavenly glory – it would seem quite a letdown and mismatch if the following revelation dealt mostly with the exploits of an obscure ancient king. Gabriel told Daniel, *"I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."* (10:14)

Not all translations are the same as this (NKJV), but anyway, the main idea seems to be that the vision was to stretch a long time into the future. It would seem more consistent with Gabriel's statement if his following message dealt with a *"many days yet to come"* scenario – namely, the historical events just prior to Christ's Second Coming in the *"latter days"*. (More information in Post "Encounter with Christ-like Supernatural Being")

2) In Daniel 11 the nominal sentence in verse 22 – *"yea,* [he is] *also the prince of the covenant"* – takes us back to Daniel 9:27 about the same *"prince"* who *"shall confirm a covenant."*

After checking the original Hebrew wording, it seems best to understand this *"prince of the covenant"* phrase as a sort of link to Gabriel's message 3 or 4 years earlier, and also as a signpost to direct us forward from the ancient time into the modern era of End Time events. (To understand the linguistic technicalities here, refer to the relevant section in the Daniel 11 series.)

This "connection" of Daniel 11:22 with the previous *70-weeks* revelation serves also to maintain the continuity between the two

messages (in chapter 9 and chapter 11). And we would expect a certain amount of continuity since, judging by the introductions and context of them, both messages were delivered by the same angel Gabriel.

What this tells us: The *"vile person"* of the previous verse 21 (in chapter 11) would have been the ruthless king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but now Gabriel's discourse has in sight another king, similar in many ways to the ancient king, but also very different; for this one *"shall confirm a covenant with many for one week"* (Daniel 9:27) – meaning his rule happens during the final 7 years of history.

Gabriel's statement was meant as a proclamation: "this vile person, he's also the prince of the covenant!" So, "Fasten your seat belts! We're heading now into the End of the Age!"… or something to that effect. Similar to how a railway track is shifted so an oncoming train can veer off into a new direction, so this verse 22 signals a change of direction in the prophetic train of thought.

3) Related to the above point is the word *"league"* in Daniel 11:23. In keeping with the literary devices common in ancient Hebrew, *"league"* is simply another word for *"covenant"* from the previous verse. This is known as "parallel structure". (See relevant section in the Daniel 11 series.)

What this tells us:

Firstly, the passage in verse 22 (of chapter 11) was mistranslated in most Bible versions, making it sound as if the *"prince of the covenant"* gets destroyed. This does not make sense, for in the very next verse we read that he is very much alive: *"after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully,"* etc. The reason for this mistranslation? Apparently, to make it easier to fit certain details of ancient history into this part of Gabriel's message. (For details, see here.)

Secondly, the word *"League"* was used for agreements between human beings. *"Covenant"* could be used the same way, or for agreements between God and human beings. So to clarify which type of agreement is being referred to here, the word *"league"* establishes the fact that this is a down-to-earth, worldly agreement between warring groups of human beings. It has nothing to do with the ancient, sacred covenant made between God and the Hebrew nation.

It seems what's happened here, Bible scholars of the past, not having witnessed the modern day return of Israel as a nation, tried to make Gabriel's words fit in with the events of ancient history, not realizing that this portion of the prophecy is supposed to be about the future (a restored Israel) rather than about the past (a vanished Israel). It was not an already-fulfilled prophecy, as many of them thought.

And, of course, such thinking affected the way verse 22 in chapter 11 was translated – in such a way that the link to the *"prince of the covenant"* of Daniel 9:27 was obscured.

4) The existence of the *"holy covenant"*: Back in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes' reign, there was no record of a covenant made, much less one that dealt with religious issues – in verses 28 and 30 of Daniel 11 it is termed a *"holy covenant"* – nor one that marked the starting point of a crucial period of 7 years. Nor was there any such covenant made in the years after Christ's execution.

The passage in chapter 11 goes on to relate that the *"king of the North"* would communicate with *"those who forsake the holy covenant"*, after which he would *"defile the sanctuary"* by allowing an *"abomination of desolation"* to enter it. (11:30-31) This passage expounds on that message of 3 or 4 years earlier (9:27) when Gabriel told Daniel about a *"covenant"* which had much to do with religious issues (*"sacrifice and offering"*) and desolating *"abominations"* that would lead to the break-up of the covenant. And it would mark the middle point in that final *"week"* (seven years) of a 70-week (490 years) timeline. (Learn more about this 70-weeks timeline in Posts 3, 4, 5 of the Daniel 9 series.)

While teaching His followers about His Second Coming and the End of the Age, Jesus singled out the *"abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet"* as an important sign that would come just before those final days. Since the *abomination of desolation* was linked to the covenant (in both passages of Daniel 9 and 11), and since Christ (in Matthew 24:15, 21) linked the abomination's arrival to the *Great Tribulation* that would precede His Return, there should be little doubt then that Gabriel, in Daniel 9 and 11, is speaking of an End Time (not ancient) *"covenant".*

5) Consequently, the 7-year time span of this covenant (the final *"week"*) belongs in the End of the Age era – our modern day. This final week has not yet arrived. There are several other points to consider here, which are outlined in post 6 in the *Daniel 9* series. But here is a brief summary:

Firstly, the conditions for the completion of the entire *70-week* (490 years) time span have not arrived. How can our world see *"an end of sins"* or *"everlasting righteousness"*, as outlined in Daniel 9:24, until Christ returns to establish His government in the Earth?

Secondly, there is an implied "gap" in the 70-weeks time schedule between the 69th week (the end of Christ's ministry) and the 70th week (before His Return to bring in *"everlasting righteousness*"). (See "Grammatical Dividers Appendix" for more information.)

This is not as unusual as we might think. Each revelation in the Book of Daniel starts with an ancient historical scenario, which then acts as a catapult to shoot the revelation across the wide gap of centuries into our modern day and the End of the Age.

It helps also to understand here that Gabriel's message about the *70 weeks* was linked to the fate of the nation of Israel. This was Daniel's concern – the fate of his own people and nation. So although the angel is outlining the timing for the redemption of the entire world, nevertheless, that timing is still linked to the history of the particular nation Daniel was concerned about – Israel.

Remarkably, Israel's history has also seen a "gap" – similar to the division between the 69 weeks and 70th week of the prophetic message in Daniel 9. After the Roman armies dismantled it, Israel ceased to exist as a nation for almost 2,000 years. But only now in modern times has it been restored. Such a return to nationhood is unprecedented in world history; and it stands out as a clear sign of God's hand at work behind the scenes of human history.

Israel has no more right than any other nation to be called "God's people"; that honor has gone now to the followers of the Light of Christ in every nation of the world. Nevertheless, Israel's existence and restoration as a nation, with the same race of people in it, serves now as a "sign". Amazingly, the historical setting from ancient times has re-emerged. The time is ripe now for the resumption of the final 70th *"week"* – that 7-years countdown before the end of our present

Age.

With these major points in mind about where Gabriel's prophetic message is heading after verse 21 in chapter 11 of the Book of Daniel, we can more easily view other facets of Daniel 11:21-35 in a different light.

6) *"Not give the honor of royalty"* (Daniel 11:21). In 198 B.C. the Seleucid king conquered Israel (*"glorious land"* in 11:16). This man was followed by another ruler (Antiochus Epiphanes) who stole the throne from the legitimate heir and later raised persecution against the Jewish people. But since Gabriel's prophetic message at this point is about to veer into the modern age, the phrase could apply also to that oppressive ruler who in the End of the Age will overrun the land of Israel.

Throughout history, rulers have usurped power by intrigue. And since the passage seems to lay particular emphasis on the absence of the pomp and ceremony of royal coronation, this could be a veiled reference to modern times – when old-style monarchies have been replaced by republican government. Nowadays, any would-be ruler, sneaking into the halls of government in order to grab the reins of power, is more likely than ever to have to forego *"the honor of royalty".*

7) The use of *"flatteries"* (meaning smooth, slippery persuasiveness) in verse 21 is another commonly used tactic of modern political leaders who, using the media, can fool the people with false promises just long enough to get themselves voted into power. This, by the way, resembles the methods by which Hitler rose to power – through crafty manipulation of the media and the voting system. As noted already, would-be rulers nowadays do not inherit power with *"the honor of royalty"* as did the kings and queens of old. Instead, they must seize power by getting themselves voted in, and to do this, they must *"obtain the kingdom by flatteries"* (slippery smoothness of false promises; see definition).

8) The phrases *"come in peaceably"* (11:21) and *"enter peaceably"* (11:24) are more characteristic of modern means of gaining power – through voting or through media and financial manipulation – which do not require the use of military force. In the section dealing with

the wars of ancient history (11:2-20), no mention is made of this peculiar "peaceable entry" strategy. (Points 6-8 are covered in Posts "Vile Person Arrives" and "Rise to Power".)

9) Nor does the expression *"fathers… forefathers"* (11:24) appear in that part of the message that dealt exclusively with ancient history (11:2-20). In the ancient language, it was a way of projecting into the distant future to explain that the activities of this distant-future *"king"* (the Antichrist) would be strangely different to how things were done in ages past – especially in the realms of war technology and religion.

10) The use of special, complex, computerized *"devices"* in warfare (11:24-25, KJV) is a feature peculiar to modern times. (Points 9-10 are covered here in this Post).

11) In the phrase *"he shall honor the god of forces"* in Daniel 11:38, we note the use of the word *"honor"* here rather than the word *"worship". "Honor"* is more characteristic of the distant relationship that the scientifically-oriented people of modern times have towards the supernatural realm. Had the setting been in ancient times, the word "worship" would have been more appropriate. But instead, the word *"honor"* is used because it better reflects the prophecy's setting in modern times.

12) *"For ships from Cyprus shall come against him."* This statement in Daniel 11:30 applies nicely to the modern situation. Britain occupies two huge military bases in Cyprus. (See map.) As a result Cyprus has become a military stronghold for the powers of the West, mainly the U.S. and Britain. The bases were used in the Iraq and Afghan wars and will probably be used again to oppose the rise of the Antichrist. He and his forces will be confronted in war by these battleships (and "air ships" too most likely). In ancient times Antiochus Epiphanes was confronted by the Roman envoy, whose ships may have passed through Cyprus; however, it was a diplomatic confrontation, not a real war engagement. The ultimate fulfillment is yet to come.

13) The *"abomination that makes desolate"* does not refer to some

ancient form of idol worship, but a thorough study of this phrase brings to light its hidden meaning as a cryptic reference, in the ancient language, to a modern vehicle of war that enters the *"temple"*. (Daniel 11:31, ESV) (Refer to the posts in *Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination* for more information.)

14) The phrases *"at the appointed time"* and *"time of the end"* (11:27, 29, 35, 40) are referring to that momentous event of Christ's return. It is the fixed destination of human history, over which the other events taking place around that time in history are *"appointed"* and will have no power either to hasten or delay. These phrases should indicate clearly enough that the passages where they are found are not dealing with past events, but with events that will happen just prior to Christ's return.

Nevertheless, the passages in verses 27 and 35 about peace treaties and persecution convey the idea that these things have been going on throughout history, which is certainly true. (See "History Repeats Itself" Appendix.) Yet the passages zero in on that version of those events that will happen in the very End. But it is easy to mistake some similar event in the past as the fulfillment of these words. There have been intermediate fulfillments, true enough, but there is only one ultimate, final fulfillment.

15) Finally, Gabriel concludes his message, saying, *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."* (12:4) Here again is another indication that the major thrust of Gabriel's message was intended, not for Daniel nor for ancient times, but rather, for *"the time of the end"* – a phrase which is used again in verse 9.

And validating this point is Gabriel's mention of two peculiar features of our modern era: *"many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."* (12:4) Travel (many running *"to and fro"*) and scientific *"knowledge"* have mushroomed in the past one or two centuries. When compared with the slow pace of travel and the rudimentary knowledge of yesteryear, humanity's recent progress in these areas is unique and outstanding. Gabriel foresaw these unusual features 2,500+ years in advance; and his mention of them here in the conclusion of his message drives home the point that the closing

era of history was indeed the main subject of his discourse with Daniel.

As a result there was no point in Daniel trying figure out how the prophetic message might apply to the people of his time. All he can do is *"shut up the words, and seal the book"* since it would never make proper sense *"until the time of the end".* (12:4)

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Because history tends to repeat itself, past events can resemble future ones. This explains why scholars became convinced that the events predicted in Daniel 9 and 11 had already happened. Prophetic messages often have a shadowy, intermediate fulfillment before the ultimate fulfillment of them comes to pass. In the business of prophetic interpretation, therefore, it is important not to confuse an intermediate fulfillment with a prophecy's distant-future, final and ultimate fulfillment.

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Fall of the Great Harlot

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cap-Rev-17-18.mp3

(This summary is taken from the posts about Revelation 17 and 18; Scriptures quoted from the ESV Bible, unless noted otherwise)

The chapters of Revelation 17-18 start with John the apostle's spectacular vision of two great empires: one symbolized as a *Harlot* and the other as a *Beast*. (17:1-6) Guiding angels then take over to explain the monumental struggle between these two great rivals. (17:7-18:24) They focus mainly on the catastrophic downfall of the *Harlot* (also known as *Babylon the Great*).

Although he didn't understand it so well, the apostle was blessed with a most unusual glimpse into the future – at the world's geopolitical situation in the End of the Age era of history. In fact, certain details given in the revelation point directly to what is unfolding before our eyes right now. It behooves us then to understand clearly how this astounding

prophetic message in the *Book of Revelation* is manifesting in our present historical age.

Much as we might prefer it, this is not just an allegory depicting vague spiritual realities. It is a symbolic picture, yes, but one that points to specific historical realities, forming on the modern world stage. And how can we know this to be the case? Specific details in chapter 17 (and in the Book of Daniel, chapter 7) – about the *Beast* especially – point directly to the rising superpowers of Russia and China as the ones destined to overthrow the *Harlot* empire in this End of the Age era.

To explain how exactly these superpowers can be identified in these chapters would go beyond the limitations of this capsule summary, but for the interested reader, those points are explained in the posts "Ten Horns Coming into View?" and "Eighth Head/Beast".

Regarding the *Harlot* symbolism, this term is similar to how God sometimes depicted ancient Israel when she departed from the worship and ways of her God. It means simply that this empire was founded on godly principles; but in time slid back into a downward spiral of worship of Materialism, into economic injustice and social depravity; and over much of the rest of the world, has imposed great financial tyranny and military devastation. And so, in the eyes of the Almighty, she has become a great offense. She has transformed into a *Harlot*.

> ***"For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities…."* (Revelation 18:5)**

Although the *"the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth"* (17:18) has existed throughout all history in one form or another, the Revelation 17-18 chapters clearly point to a specific version that is to come in the End of the Age. All signs point to the American empire as the final and ultimate version of the *Harlot* city system. And it is quite logical. For if the *Beast(s)* are easily identified as the Russia-China combine, then who else is there to oppose their rise to prosperity and influence in the world other than the American superpower?

She is the arch-enemy, the incumbent rival, trying desperately nowadays to hang on to her wealth and to stop these superpower giants

from claiming their rightful share of the Earth's bounty. These Eurasian powers are rapidly gaining ground. And they are willing to bolster the economies of weaker nations – something the American empire, in spite of loud claims to be the beacon of democracy and freedom and so on, is not doing. Instead, she is rapaciously profiteering from and exploiting the weaker nations of the world.

The peculiar feature about the *Harlot* empire is the fact that she is ruled by wealthy power-brokers: *"Your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery."* (Revelation18:23) This passage points directly to and identifies America-centered capitalism as the *"great harlot"* of modern times. (For more information about how America has transformed over the years into her present *Harlot* state, see Appendix 4 and 5 in *Fall of the Harlot series.)*

For decades since World War 2, America-centered capitalism has held the world hostage to its financial control. *"Merchants"* rather than military-political leaders are controlling this modern empire. Through most of history, empires were ruled by powerful military-political leaders. But the unusual feature about this modern empire is that the moneyed power-brokers are the ones actually in charge from behind the scenes. (For more detail on this point, see here in post "A Mighty Angel's Millstone".)

During the 20th and 21st centuries, numerous wars have been fought and nations destroyed – especially those that have tried to break free of America's financial tyranny. In this way she also resembles the ancient warlike empire of *Babylon.* And so, in addition to the *Great Harlot* designation, this modern empire is also named *Babylon the Great.*

And to make matters worse, the world regards America as the bastion of Christianity. But her bad example, sadly, is disillusioning the world, turning it away from faith in the Creator and in His plans to restore the Kingdom of God on Earth. All through history this has been the main business of the *Harlot.* For the city system of trade and commerce has no interest in unselfish endeavors or any such idealistic constraints. No surprise then that *Harlot* societies have, all through history, channelled their religious devotion into all sorts of distorted beliefs and harmful activities.

In this modern day, the *Harlot's* spiritual condition resembles all too closely what the Lord had to tell the ancient Laodicean church, *"I will spit you out of My mouth."* (Revelation 3:16) Her riches had so corrupted this church that she did not even realize how far off track she had wandered… and how bad an example she had become to those whom God wanted to draw to Himself through the Light of Christ. Hypocrisy always results in bad fruit, as the apostle Paul noted long ago: *"The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."* (Romans 2:24)

Sad to say, the following Scripture applies all too well to present day America: *"How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who… has outraged the Spirit of grace?"* (Hebrews 10:29) As a nation she has departed far from the ways of God, *"outraged the spirit of grace"*. And as a result these chapters in the *Book of Revelation* describe this future *Harlot* society receiving catastrophic correction under the heavy hand of chastisement, executed by those nations who've managed to get out from under the *Harlot's* control. By no means are those nations just or ideal societies. Far from it. But for now they are the lesser of two evils.

It should be noted, by the way, that there are many sincere, godly folks in the U.S. whom God wants to spare. And for them the warning plea is given: *"come out of her, My people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues."* (18:4)

Thankfully, right after chapters 17-18 about the *Harlot's* destruction, we glimpse contrasting scenes in Heaven of the *"marriage supper of the Lamb"*, whose *"wife"*, the true *Bride* of Christ, is rewarded for her faithfulness and dedication to her Husband and to all that is true, right, and loving. (19:7-9)

To understand from a different viewpoint what *"great harlot"* means, it will help to look at what she isn't, or what she's trying to imitate or counterfeit: the real thing, the Kingdom of Heaven.

In contrast to the *Harlot*, the Revelation Book portrays another *"woman"*, who is engaged in a life and death struggle with *"the great dragon… that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."* (12:1-17) She is portrayed elsewhere as the *"wife… of the*

Lamb… arrayed in fine linen… **[symbolic of]** ***the righteous acts of the saints.”*** **(19:7-8)**

This *Woman*, the *Wife of the Lamb*, who is battling the forces of Darkness, stands in sharp contrast to the *“harlot” woman* and her *“inhabitants”*, swallowed up in Darkness (*“drunk with the wine of her fornication”*), along with *“the kings of the earth”* (who have *“committed fornication”* with her). (17:1-2, NKJV) (By the way, *“fornication”* is a metaphorical expression for the worship of Materialism, as explained in the post “Whoremonger and Warmonger“.)

All through history, this *Harlot* has acted like a magnet, drawing her captives away from God’s presence, enticing them into her web of Materialism. Her inhabitants, wrapped up in the spirit of Materialism, are no match for the true *Bride* – those who love God and do what they can to follow Him. And the world’s city system is but a poor substitute, a feeble attempt by the forces of Darkness to mimic the glorious reality which will exist one day on planet Earth.

That reality is beyond description or understanding. But we have glimpses of it, such as in the description of the Heavenly City in the final two chapters of the *Book of Revelation*. Its beauty and splendor stretch far beyond human imagination or experience: the presence of God gives it light; the trees of healing are there, and all manner of blessing, ecstasies, peace, and things we can barely imagine right now.

The world’s cities, on the other hand, are cesspools of corruption and greed. By imitating Heavenly realities, they have their appeal, of course, and have become a sort of worldly utopia, a counterfeit “heaven”, for the people of the world. But what is an old whore in comparison to the resplendant *Bride of Christ*? And what is any worldly city in comparison to the Heavenly City of the Almighty?

What we have then in the Book of Revelation is a symbolic portrayal of two women: 1) The *Bride:* God’s people and their (future) dwelling place – the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth 2) The *Harlot:* the world’s people and their current dwelling place – a counterfeit utopia, manufactured and presided over by the forces of spiritual Darkness.

Well, it's bad enough that this world's whorish system is such a mockery and cheap imitation, dragging the world into worship of Materialism. But it goes further; this Harlot has been responsible for the deaths of untold numbers of people, including those who are the *Bride* of Christ. Throughout history, as the various *Beast* empires degenerated into decadence, they became harlot-like in spirit, intent on extinguishing those voices of truth they didn't want to hear. *"In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."* (18:24) (Again, see Appendix 4 and 5 in *Fall of the Harlot* series which track the *Harlot's* destructive influence through history.)

It is apparent then that, besides her commercial power, the *Harlot* possesses a great deal of military strength, which she uses to destroy those who try to resist her control. This combination of military-political and economic-commercial power has characterized all the empires of history and is true of this *Great Harlot* empire as well. In that respect this modern worldly system, in spite of her veneer of Christianity, is no better than the *"beasts"* (the tyrannical, political-military empires) that have come and gone throughout history.

These passages in Revelation 17-18 issue a strong indictment against the *Harlot* society, followed by a horrific judgment: *"the ten horns… and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her with fire… And the kings of the earth* [and the *"merchants"*]*… will stand afar off, in fear of her torment."* (17:16, 18:9,15) Much as we might wish otherwise, this sounds like the kind of devastation that results from nuclear warfare.

Ominous as this may sound, we should remember God is in control. And He won't allow the situation to get too far out of hand. *"And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."* (Matthew 24:22) And in Revelation 20 we learn that the Earth and human society will continue on for another 1,000 years during a glorious Age of peace and harmony.

This war between the *Beast* and the *Harlot* is one of those occasions in history when God allows the forces of Darkness (in the form of the *Beast* empire) *"to rise from the bottomless pit"* (17:8) and to act as His *"hired razor"* against the *Harlot* of western capitalism. (Isaiah 7:20) *"For God has*

put it in their hearts **[of the *Beast* and his *Ten Horns*] *to carry out His purpose.”* (17:17)**

But we may still wonder, is the modern city system all that bad, and specifically, has the American empire descended to such depths? Does she really deserve such catastrophic correction? These are legitimate questions, which have been answered to some extent here, but are addressed more fully in the various posts in the *Revelation 17-18* series.

A big problem here is the amount of media deception (propaganda) coming out of Western news outlets, which have done a superb job (if one wants to call it that) of hiding the truth, covering up the *Harlot* empire’s crimes and atrocities. (The section “Shattering Delusions” in Appendix 3 explores this subject more fully.)

A final note: The judgment, referred to in chapters 17-18, against the *Great Harlot/ Great Babylon* is only the initial stage. For not only the city system of Western capitalism, but all the cities of the world are guilty of harboring the spirit of Materialism. And they too are in line to be removed in order to make way for the coming reorganization of human society in the Kingdom of God. So in the very End, before the start of the Millennial Kingdom, comes stage two: God Himself carries out the judgment against *Great Babylon* by means of

> ***“a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great… 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 16:18-19, KJV)**

At this great transition point in history, Earth will be cleansed from the forces of spiritual Darkness. In addition, their evil works will be removed: cities levelled, weapons destroyed (or they will be during the Millennium according to Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3). So although the End of our present Age will witness a time of great upheaval, there is so much to look forward to afterwards – a new and glorious Age of peace, harmony, and righteous government in the Earth.

To conclude: These passages in Revelation 17-18 do offer us a

remarkable taste of God's amazing foresight; 2,000 years in advance He knew what was going to happen. What amazing insight the Lord gave to His apostle of the future events that would play out shortly before His Second Coming!

Add to this the fact that the revelation came so long ago, well before the Modern Era and way beyond anyone's imagination then of what the nowadays-future would look like. This makes for solid proof of the authenticity of this extraordinary glimpse into the future. And it is a glimpse that strengthens our faith that God is in control during those coming dark days of upheaval.

And we are reassured that a glorious future awaits those who leave behind the ways of the *Harlot* that they might remain true to the heart of their Creator.

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HELL IN HEAVEN? HEAVEN IN HELL?

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cap-Heaven-Hell.mp3

(Scripture quotations are from the ESV Bible, unless noted otherwise)

This series of posts covers a big subject, and a controversial one, about how we humans transition from our earthly existence into our existence in the Hereafter. It is controversial because opinions on this matter differ widely and are tied closely to one's religious beliefs. In addition, problems arise because of narrow definitions as to what goes on in the Afterlife and who is worthy of acceptance into the Heavenly Realm.

This series of posts ended up being fairly long and drawn out. However, the brief summary below will outline the main concepts that this study has tried to articulate:

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1) A more flexible and inclusive view on who are God's people:

The Scriptures can seem paradoxical on this subject. Some passages give general, inclusive guidelines:

- ***"Those who do what is right come to the light"*, whereas those *"who do evil hate the Light and refuse to go near it"*. (John 3:20-21, NLT)**
  ***"Believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."* (John 12:36)**
- ***"All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."* (Romans 8:14)**
- ***"You may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him."* (1John 2:29)**
- ***"Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."* (1John 4:7, NKJV)**
- ***"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* (Romans 10:13)**
- **In Luke 12:10 (also Matthew 12:32, Mark 3:28-29), Jesus states that a person could *"speak a word against the Son of Man"* and it could be forgiven, but *"the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."* This is a remarkable statement for it is saying that, even if a person is not a Christian, they could still be dwelling in God's favor if they are yielding to the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of Truth bears witness, pointing in a certain direction and speaking directly to people's hearts and minds, then to disobey and ignore that truth would be rejection of (or blasphemy against) the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not bound by earthly limitations of religious belief, location, culture and customs, prejudices, and so on. The Spirit is able to punch through these barriers against understanding God's Truth and lets that Truth become manifest to a particular person or society.**
- **Finally, in Matthew 25:31-46 we read that the people who didn't think of themselves as followers of Christ were rewarded at the Judgment because they had shown compassion to those in need (which equals ministering to Christ Himself); while others, who thought they were doing okay, were sent off for re-training in God's "reformatory" because they had failed to show compassion to those in need.**

And yet, other Scriptures are quite specific, even exclusive, making it clear that God's people are those who have accepted Christ:

- ***"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is none other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)**

- ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* (John 14:6)**
- ***"For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."* (Matthew 7:14)**
- ***"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* 1Timothy 2:5)**
- **And in Matthew 7:21-23 we learn that some who pretend to be followers of Christ will be rejected because, in God's eyes, they are actually *"evildoers"* (7:23, NIV).**

We see then that some Scriptures depict open acceptance into the family of God; while others imply a restricted entry. So how do we resolve this apparent contradiction between inclusivity and exclusivity?

To start, it will help to understand that a soul's journey to Heaven or Hell is not just a matter of being sent there by God. It is also a person's own choice. One chooses to respond to the voice of God or to reject the voice of God. And from there he or she simply follows the path that they have chosen. God gives them what they desire.

Furthermore, their acceptance or rejection of that voice (or grace) of God is tied in some way to their deeds and the kind of life they have been living. This is very plain in Christ's own words:

> ***All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.* (John 3:20-21, NLT)**

Let us consider the case of Mahatma Gandhi who some say has gone to Hell for not being a Christian. But the obvious question is, why should Gandhi be sent to Hell when he lived a more virtuous life than many Christians? Can it not be, as Jesus said, that he was doing *"what is right"* and *"doing what God wants"?* (John 3:21, NLT). If people, even non-Christians, *"are doing what God wants"*, then it must be that God's Spirit is available to them and working on their consciences. And so we can understand what is written in 1John 2:29 – *"you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him."*

Certainly, it is an advantage to know Christ personally and to be knowledgeable about what the Word teaches. But for many people those advantages have not been available to them. And for such cases, Paul the apostle made this statement:

> ***"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law* [not educated in the Word]*, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness."* (Romans 2:14-15)**

The Reverend Billy Graham ushered thousands of souls into the Kingdom through his inspired preaching. But even he acknowledged the reality that many non-Christians would enter the Kingdom. In an interview with Robert Schuller ("Hour of Power", 1997), Mr. Graham made some astounding observations:

> ***GRAHAM: "I think there's the Body of Christ. This comes from all the Christian groups around the world, or outside the Christian groups. I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ …***
> ***"The Apostle James in the first council in Jerusalem… said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for His name. And that's what God is doing today, He's calling people out of the world for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ, because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven…***
> ***"I've met people in various parts of the world, in tribal situations that they had never seen a Bible or heard about a Bible, never heard about Jesus. But they believed in their heart that there was a God, and they tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived."***
> ***SCHULLER: "That's fantastic! I'm thrilled to hear you say that! There is a wideness in God's mercy."***
> ***GRAHAM: "There is, there definitely is."***

After these remarks there followed a storm of criticism from the usual herd of conservative evangelicals who, like the Jews in Paul's day, felt threatened by and/or jealous of such a possibility – that they might not have cornered the market, that some of God's people might exist beyond the bounds of their denominations and scope of influence.

Expanding our boundaries is an ongoing process. And like the Jewish people of old, we in modern times may also need to expand our boundaries. We need to recognize – in spite of whatever we may think constitutes salvation – that many people outside of Christian congregations will wind up in the family of God. So, instead of calling these folks non-Christians, perhaps it would be better to call them "pre-Christians".

Christ is *"the true light, which gives light to <u>everyone</u>."* (John 1:9) And regardless of where or in whatever culture a person lives, whoever responds to the understanding that they do have and sincerely seeks God will in some way be given an opportunity to respond to Him.

But the question lingers, if a person has never accepted Christ during his or her earthly life, is it not then too late? Once they are dead, have they not lost that opportunity? Can they still be granted the right to enter the Heavenly Realm? If we can resolve that, then the paradox between inclusivity and exclusivity will dissolve. Well, the solution for that comes in the next main concept explored in this study, namely…

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2) A better understanding about what happens after death, in particular, the possibility of Salvation in the Afterlife:

The idea that this life provides the only or last opportunity for Salvation over-simplifies a reality that is more broad-based and multi-faceted than we could ever imagine. On this subject of Salvation in the spirit realm, the Scriptures are very clear:

> ***Christ suffered … physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. So He went and preached to the spirits in prison—those who disobeyed God long ago… That is why the Good News was preached to***

> ***those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.*** **(1Peter 3:18-20, 4:6 – NLT)**

The above passage describes Christ's remarkable sojourn in the Nether World during the interval between His Crucifixion and Resurrection. At this time He was engaged in ministering to the souls who had been incarcerated there from long ago.

> ***And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear My voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live… Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.*** **(John 5:25, 28-29, NLT)**

We who are Christians might prefer to ignore the truths expressed in these Scriptures. If souls can come to Christ in the spirit realm after death, then that levels the playing field somewhat. Being a member of a church, or having a born-again experience, isn't the be-all and end-all. A Christian person is not necessarily more righteous than those who haven't had those advantages. For so much depends on how one acts out his or her faith. That Scripture (Matthew 7:14) about the *"narrow gate"* and the *"hard way"* that *"few"* are able to find describes what happens, not only when a person comes to the Lord, but also what can or should happen continually throughout a person's life.

Jesus warned the hypocritical Pharisees, who were much advanced in their understanding of religious matters, *"Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you."* (Matthew 21:31, ESV) And more than once, He made this puzzling statement: *"But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."* (Matthew 19:30, NIV; also Luke 13:30; Mark 9:35, 10:31)

The statement is puzzling, probably because it's a difficult truth to swallow. Many of the *"last"*, who are ignorant of Gospel truths, will be more highly honoured in the Kingdom than many who knew, but were too complacent about living those truths.

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3) The understanding that to be *"justified by faith"* does not exclude being *"justified by works"*:

That is, you can't believe if you don't have works, and you can't have works if you don't believe. Salvation has to be a blend of faith and works. Those "works" need only be a humble and repentant heart. The apostle James wrote, *"The devils also believe, and tremble."* (James 2:19, KJV) They *"believe"*, but it is not real faith because it is not accompanied by the "works" of a repentant heart. And so the demons are barred from entrance into the Heavenly Realm. Or rather, they choose not to enter. For *"all who do evil hate the Light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed."* (John 3:20, NLT)

Whether it is the "works" of a repentant heart or a lifetime of *"works… carried out in God",* of doing *"what is true",* this is what enables an individual to have the faith to *"come to the Light".* (John 3:21) These works, of course, cannot be works of the flesh, such as, in the days of the Early Church, keeping the laws of Moses. Or in any other day and age, any going-through-the-motion type of ritual is not likely to open the door to Salvation, unless it happens to be *"carried out in God".*

From our human viewpoint, it is difficult to judge who stands justified before God. But nothing is hidden from the infinite understanding of the Almighty who knows our hearts better than we do. So thankfully, He can figure it out – that is, judge who is worthy to have their names written in the Book of Life and so be counted as citizens of His Heavenly Kingdom.

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4) The urgency and responsibility of believers to bring the Good News message and way of life into the world of humankind:

Why is it important to know Christ in this life? For one thing, God needs those who can labor to advance the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Those who know Christ intimately have resolved the burdensome issue of life-after-death anxieties; and with the help of the Holy Spirit, they are better equipped to wage war against the powers of Darkness that rule the Earth.

And furthermore, just because salvation can happen in the Afterlife, does not mean we can neglect the business of guiding people towards salvation in this life now. There is so much misery and emptiness that people are suffering from now that God would like to undo… but He needs us to reach out to them.

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5) The realization that salvation does not automatically rule out any form of correction or chastening in the Afterlife:

At the End of the Age there will be a great resurrection of believers, *"some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace."* (Daniel 12:2, NLT) The apostle John exhorts believers to *"abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink in shame at His coming."* (1John 2:28) And the apostle Paul issues a stark warning that at the Judgment for believers, *"the Day will disclose it… and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done… If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."* (1Corinthians 3:13,15)

If one is a believer, his or her salvation is guaranteed, and they are granted entrance into the Kingdom. But their degree of honour and reward has everything to do with how they have lived out their faith during their earthly sojourn.

For some, their entrance into the Kingdom could be a painful process at first, as they start to realize how much they missed the mark because of poor decisions made during their earthly lives and come to grips with how their life was a poor testimony. They are still *"saved"* of course, *"but only as through fire."*

Just as on Earth we have reformatories and rehabilitation centres, why should not something similar exist in the Kingdom of God? For not everyone who is saved is ready for life in the Heavenly Realm. For many, a time of re-shaping and re-orientation will be required. In fact, all of us probably have some "blind spots" that will need correction as we enter those heavenly portals. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) But the Lord is gracious and full of compassion and

promises to wipe away our tears. (Revelation 7:17, 21:4; Isaiah 35:10, 51:11, 65:19)

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6) The understanding that *Hell* and the *Lake of Fire* are there for the purposes of refining and correction and are not necessarily permanent abodes:

Most Bible translations express the fate of those who enter the *Lake of Fire* in rather forbidding terms: *"shall be tormented with fire and brimstone… and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever… they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."* (Revelation 14:10-11, 20:10, NKJV) Admittedly, these are not easy words to digest. There is a certain amount of symbolism in these passages, however, so it will help to examine them and try to understand better what they are saying.

First of all, this nasty word *"torment". It* comes from the Greek *basanos*: a touchstone (also called basanite or Lydian stone); it was used to test the purity of gold and silver metals by the kind of streak the metal would leave when it scratched the stone. Because the stone was used for testing purposes, the word for it came to be applied to the practice of torture or the experience of torment. But the fact that the original word had to do with testing for purity suggests that the *"torment"* in the *Lake of Fire* has a certain useful, even benign, purpose.

In addition to the touchstone method, if a goldsmith was unsure of a metal's purity, then he would resort to using fire to burn out the dross from the metal. Elsewhere in the Scriptures, the word *"fire"* is associated with the idea of purification. *"The fire will test what sort of work each one has done."* (1Corinthians 3:13; see also Proverbs 17:3; Isaiah 4:4, 48:10; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:2-3; Revelation 3:18)

Finally, it may be helpful to note that the Greek word for "fire" is *pur*. It forms the base for the English word "pure" and "purify" and for things to do with fire ("pyre, pyro-").

Knowing then how the Bible treats fire as a symbol for purification

should help us to understand this phrase *"lake of fire"* in a different light. We can see it from a less dreadful point of view, not as punishment only, but as God's furnace where He refines the souls of those who have caused great destruction in the Earth – with the end in view of turning around even those incorrigibly rebellious ones to the Light.

So, the purpose of the fire is not punishment only. It might seem like that to the person being purged, but in God's mind it is actually chastisement or correction, which goes beyond punishment. For it cleanses and gets rid of the trash from a person's life, and in this way prepares him or her for life in the Kingdom.

So again, what is the *"fire"* for? In standard Christian thinking, it's just a dead end. But is it really just punishment and nothing else – to make people miserable for infinity? If that were the case, then it would be like saying God has come to His wits' end and doesn't know what to do anymore. The skeptic would be right in thinking God isn't all that He's cracked up to be.

But if God is who He is supposed to be – all-powerful, infinite, and perfect in His love – then we can rest assured that He does not give up so easily on His creations; He is tireless in His endeavors to reconcile the souls of humankind to Himself. Surely then, the fires of Hell are there for a purpose, that of purification and reconciliation: to use the misery of Hell and the uncomfortable feelings of guilt over sin and destructive behavior that will guide and prod souls towards repentance and restoration.

*

7) Then there is the phrase *"forever and ever"*, which is usually taken to mean an infinity of time:

The Greek word used here, *aion,* simply means "age". The literal translation of *"forever and ever"* is "to the ages of ages". Like the expression, *"Lord of lords"* or *"King of kings"* or *"holy of holies"*, it denotes the supreme, ultimate Ages to come: the Millennial Kingdom, followed by the Heaven on Earth that the Revelation Book describes in its final chapters 20-22.

Of course, it will be a great tragedy for those who must spend these Ages in the *Lake of Fire*, or whatever purgatorial realms they may be assigned to. Those lost souls may not see it that way and may even be glad to be there in Hell, but if they do come to their senses and are repentant, would not God, in His mercy, allow them to move on into celestial regions of greater blessing?

Furthermore, we learn in Revelation 14:10 that *"they will be tormented* [tested] *in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."* Surely, one of the reasons Jesus and the angels are present at the *Lake of Fire* is to watch over what is going on. Jesus said, *"I have the keys of Hell and of Death."* So, could it not be that He and the angels are there to offer protection and salvation to any souls who might wish to turn to the Light? (Revelation 1:18, KJV)

When referring to the earthly realm, the Greek word *aion* is normally used. When referring to the Celestial Realm, however, the Greek word *aionios* is used and is translated in the New Testament as *"eternal"* or *"everlasting"*. In the strictest sense *aionios* means "age-lasting". But in most Scriptures where it appears, *aionias* transcends this literal meaning – not in the sense of adding infinitely more time (as suggested in the translations of *"everlasting/eternal"*). Rather than it being a question of length of time, *aionias* is used to express the idea of beyond time. Rather than describing passing earthly reality, *aionias* is used to refer to the enduring realm of reality in the Celestial Domain.

It is a realm that exists beyond the boundaries of time and space, having no beginning or end. That is something inexplicable to us created beings, of course, totally impossible for our finite, time-bound minds to fathom or comprehend! Thankfully, we need only to understand that our loving, all-powerful Creator is in charge of that Realm. And so we have the great comfort of knowing that He is taking care of things, and us; we are in His hands and greatly beloved of Him.

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And now we come to the end of this brief summary of what is contained in the rather lengthy *Hell in Heaven? Heaven in Hell?* series. Hopefully, it will save the reader some time that he or she might not have and still give

a satisfactory representation of the concepts introduced in that series.

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THE FINAL SEVEN YEARS

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cap-Final-7-Years-1.mp3

(Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless noted otherwise)

One of the more remarkable prophetic messages in the Sacred Book came in the year 539 B.C. when the angel Gabriel visited the prophet Daniel. In his message the angel Gabriel revealed that a timeline of 490 years would pass during the history of the nation of Israel and the city Jerusalem – a timeline that would pinpoint both the First and Second coming of Christ. And the angel promised that the completion of this period of time would usher in a new Age under the reign of the *"Most Holy"* – an Age free of the evils that presently bedevil the world of humankind. The timeline is expressed as *"70 weeks"*, which in the ancient Hebrew meant 70 sevens of years – that is, a time span of 490 years. For more information on that point, see at the start of the Post "Overview".)

***Book of Daniel 9:24-27* (NKJV)**

> **24 "Seventy weeks are determined**
> **For your people and for your holy city,**
> **To finish the transgression,**
> **To make an end of sins,**
> **To make reconciliation for iniquity,**
> **To bring in everlasting righteousness,**
> **To seal up vision and prophecy,**
> **And to anoint the Most Holy.**
>
> **25 "Know therefore and understand,**
> **That from the going forth of the command**
> **To restore and build Jerusalem**
> **Until Messiah the Prince,**
> **There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;**

The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."

For generations, scholars have wondered how to understand this intriguing *"70 weeks"* prophecy about the future of Daniel's *"people"* and *"city"* of Jerusalem. In particular, the final 70th *"week"* has given rise to many conflicting interpretations – regarding especially the question of whether or not that *"week"* (7 years) has already passed, or is it meant for the future?

That is to say, does this one *"week"* time span really represent the last 7 years of our present Age, which will end with the Return of Christ? Does human society really stand on the threshold of a new Age in its history, or will we just muddle along as always and continue with no big change on the horizon? Those are serious questions, and it's helpful for followers of Christ if they can gain a good understanding of this subject.

Some controversy swirls around this matter, much of which arises from what scholars and teachers from a past era have taught. Before the re-appearance of Israel in the modern world, it was often thought that the final *"week"* of the *"70 weeks"* timeline had already passed around the time of Christ's First Coming.

The *"70 weeks"* is supposed to revolve around what happens to

Daniel's people and the city of Jerusalem. It's not that "Daniel's people" are any more righteous than anyone else; it's just that the prophecy is centered on them. And just because they were Daniel's people then doesn't make them "God's people" now. That honor goes only to the followers of Christ.

So it was easy in the past to think that the *"70 weeks"* had already passed because of the short time span of 490 years and because of the fact that Israel was no more. Since the *"70 weeks"* prophecy is centered around Israel, it was difficult to foresee that the final *"week"* was reserved for a different historical era.

To bolster the 70-weeks-is-finished interpretation, scholars have put forth a number of reasons. Although seemingly good, those reasons, upon investigation, seem to fall short of giving a solid understanding of what Gabriel's prophetic message about the *"70 weeks"* and its final *"week"* was trying to get across.

This has had the unfortunate result of leaving us with a confusing legacy of conflicting ideas. In times past it didn't matter much what one believed on this subject. But if human history is approaching its End of the Age era, then it is becoming more urgent to get these finer points of eschatology straightened out.

So that will be the focus here: to answer the question, does this passage in the *Book of Daniel* about the final *"week"* of the *"70 weeks"* timeline focus on the very end of our present Age (which makes it needful for us to pay attention to what it tells us)? Or is it not at all relevant to us in this present day, since the events it refers to finished long ago?

The following summary, hopefully, will bring some clarity to this issue and a more accurate understanding of what these prophetic words from ancient times were meant to convey to us in the Modern Age. It will draw on material from two of this website's series of posts about *Daniel 9* and *Daniel 10-12* and the single post "Holy Covenant – 70th Week: Past or Future?"

To start, it should be understood that the *"70 weeks"* timeline (490 years) is divided into two main parts: 69 *"weeks"* (483 years) leading up

to Christ's First Coming; then one *"week"* (7 years) leading up to Christ's Second Coming. This organization of the *"70 weeks"* is illustrated in the following charts:

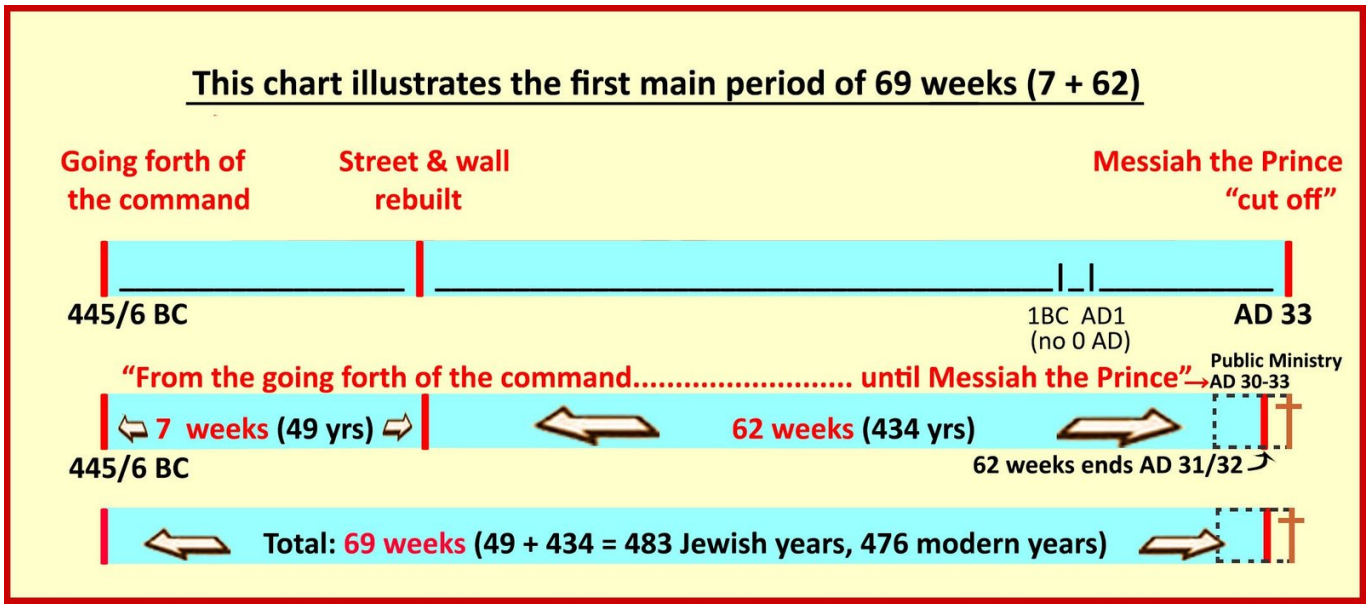

Illustration that charts the first 69 *"weeks"* of the *"70 weeks"* timeline
(from online post "Date of Christ's First Coming Predicted")

If we use the Jewish year of 360 days, and the date of 446-445 BC for the start of the 70 weeks, then, 69 weeks later (483 years, 173,880 days), we land somewhere in the time of Jesus' public ministry. (There are several other details to consider, along with the charts below, which are featured in the online post "Date of Christ's First Coming predicted".)

Jewish (Lunar) Years (360 days each)	Modern (Solar) Years (365 ¼ days each) - based on known historical dates -
69 "weeks"	445 years (445 - 0 BC in solar years)
x 7 years in a "week"	+ 32 years (0-32 AD in solar years)
483 Jewish years	- 1 (non-existent year of 0 A.D.)
x 360 days in one year	476 solar years
173,880 days (= 483 years)	x 365¼ days in one year
	173,859 days (divided by 360 = 483 Jewish years)

And if this foretelling of the time of Christ's first appearance isn't remarkable enough, then Gabriel goes on to foretell, *"after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off."* (9:26a) – meaning after 69 weeks (which includes the initial 7 weeks time span prior to the 62 weeks), Christ would be executed. Then Gabriel goes on to foretell the fall of Jerusalem under the Roman armies and their ruler. *"And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."* (9:26b) Israel as a nation was dismantled.

At this point there is an obvious break in the passage and the timeline. (To understand the grammatical technicalities, this excerpt from *The Daniel 9:24-27 Project* is helpful.) This verse 26 about the invasion of the Romans to *"destroy the city and the sanctuary"*, this section is not actually part of the 70-week time span, coming as it does *"after the sixty-two weeks"* and before the *"one week"* which starts with an event known as the confirming of the *"covenant"*. (9:27) This break spans a historical interlude of almost 2,000 years, during which time Israel as a nation did not exist. But remarkably in very recent times, Israel has re-appeared on the world stage. And this sets the stage for the start of the final *"week"* (7 years) of history before the Second Coming.

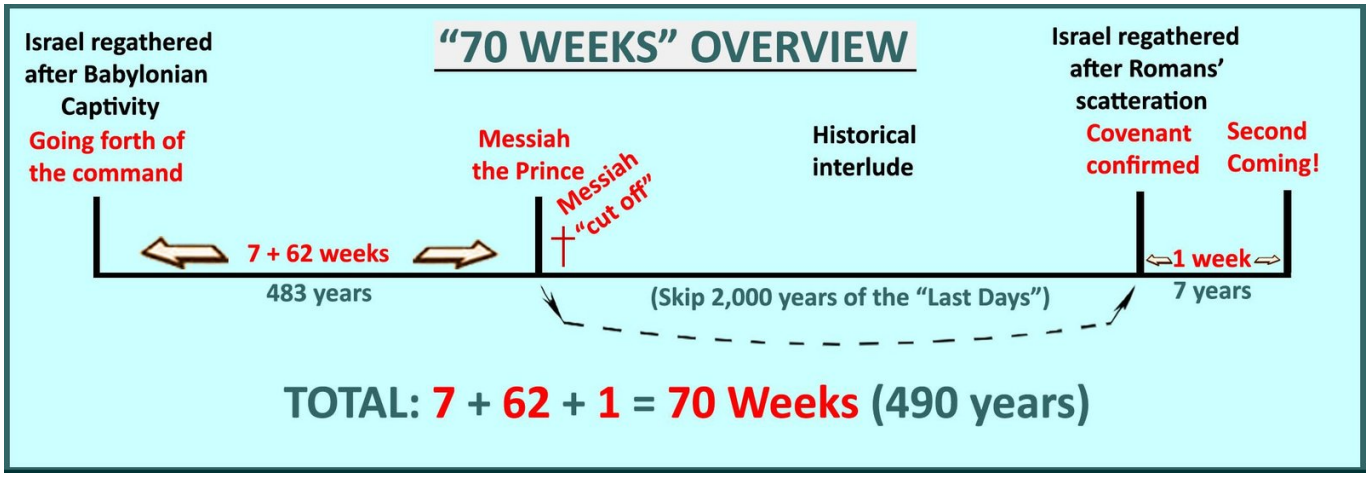

Chart illustrating the entire *"70 weeks"* (490 years)
(from online post "Messiah's Crucifixion and Jerusalem's Destruction")

And what event signals the start of this final seven years? Again, Gabriel's message is clear: *"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week* [7 years]*."* (9:27) The *"he"* refers to an ungodly ruler who, similar to the one in the previous verse, would in a future day invade Jerusalem and the temple.

But before doing that, he confirms a *"covenant".* We cannot be too definite about what this *"covenant"* entails. However, judging by the rest of the verse about the breaking of this covenant – *"he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering"* and by what we are told in chapter 11 that *"forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation"* – the covenant should have something to do with religious freedom. (9:27, 11:31)

Jesus Himself referred to this breaking of the covenant when He told His followers that *"when you see the 'abomination of desolation', spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place… then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."* (Matthew 24:15,21) At this crucial point in history, all hell will break loose; it will be a time of trouble for the entire world, not just for the Israeli nation. And for Christ's followers, it will be a time of organized persecution.

But with this message of woe, there is strong reassurance, for we learn that there is a cut-off point. After the breaking of the *"covenant… in the middle of the week"*, there remain only 3½ years until an end is brought to the rule of the forces of Darkness. Christ returns to usher in His Kingdom of righteous rule and peace on Earth. Christ's own words (in Matthew 24:29-31 and Mark 13:24-27) are a clear statement about the end of these last 3½ years of *"great tribulation"*, at which time the world would see His glorious and dramatic Return:

> ***"Immediately after the tribulation of those days… the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth…. will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* (Matthew 24:29-30)**

This final, tumultuous span of time before the Second Coming – the Great Tribulation – is noted several times in both *Books of Daniel* and *Revelation* in different ways – as 42 months, 1260 days, time-times-half a time (as noted in the chart below).

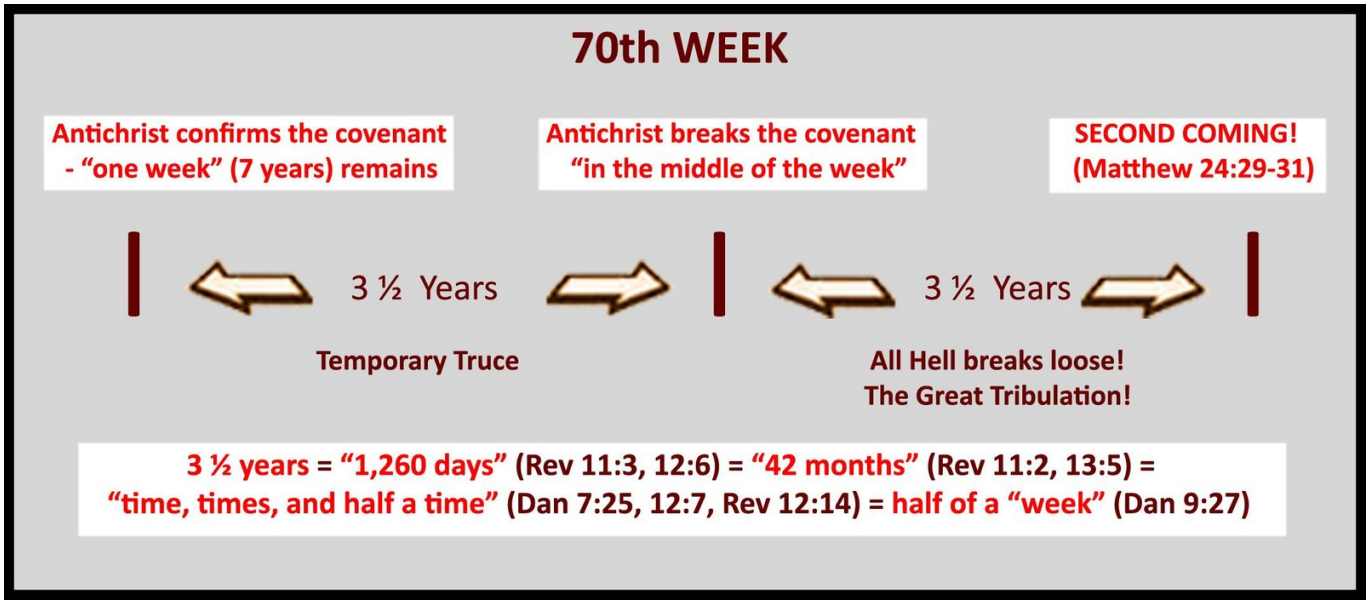

Chart illustrating the final 7 years, which includes 3½ years of the Great Tribulation
(from online post "End of the Age Predicted (Christ's Second Coming)")

As mentioned already, it just so happens that many scholars and

teachers from the past have taught that the *"70 weeks"* has already passed. This is not surprising when we consider that Israel had disappeared from the geopolitical landscape, so it appeared as if the First Coming of Christ had fulfilled, or could be made to fulfill, the 70 weeks timeline. Although we respect greatly the work and teachings of many of these former teachers and reformers, nevertheless, there are several reasons why some of their teachings can be set aside, especially those having to do with the 7-years-is-past concept:

1) Nowadays we have much more information and more historical hindsight than former teachers and scholars. Sometimes much of what they taught reflected their own historical situation and hadn't caught up with what we can see going on in the present era with all its advanced technology, re-appearance of Israel, and other geo-political changes that have arisen.

Without the knowledge that we have today, it would be easy to interpret the conditions for the fulfillment of the *"70 weeks"* (in Daniel 9:24) – *"to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy"* – as having been fulfilled by Christ's First Coming. And partially, some of those conditions were fulfilled through His sacrificial death which made *"reconciliation for iniquity".*

But there are other aspects that have not yet been fulfilled, such as *"finish the transgression"* and *"make an end of sins"* or *"seal up the vision and prophecy"*. The *"transgression"* of the Jewish people (and all humanity) hasn't finished by any means. And presumably, the condition about *"vision and prophecy"* refers to previous revelations in the *Book of Daniel* about the coming of Christ, the destruction of the final Beast, and establishment of the Kingdom of God – which, of course, have not happened yet. (For more information, see here in post "Overview".)

2) It is sometimes taught that the seven years finished shortly after the Crucifixion. There would be 3½ years of Christ's ministry, followed by 3½ years, which would end with the cessation of God's *"covenant"* to the Jewish people. This idea, however, doesn't fit very well with the fact that Gabriel's message makes it clear that the final 7 years is a span of time that starts after the Crucifixion, not before. *"And after the sixty-two*

weeks Messiah shall be cut off… Then he **[referring to a different *"he"*, the anti-messiah]** ***shall confirm a covenant with many for one week."*** **(9:26-27)**

Furthermore, there is no verifiable date of any significant event happening 3½ years after the death of Christ. One teaching has it that the martyrdom of Stephen marks the end of the *"70 weeks"*, but it is difficult to see how this fits as a suitable end to the *"70 weeks"*, not to mention the fact that no one really knows when this tragic event happened. However, if the *"70 weeks"* ends with the Second Coming, that fits much better as a suitable end of the timeline.

3) Another hindrance to understanding this *"week"* as the final 7 years of our present Age has to do with the idea that the *"covenant"*, mentioned in chapters 9 and 11, is the same as the covenants that God made with the Jewish people in the Old Testament, or with all of humanity in the New Testament. However, there is plenty of evidence pointing to the *"covenant"* as an earthly agreement between warring groups of people, and not between God and human beings:

There are, for instance, some technical, grammatical considerations based on whether or not the person who confirms the *"covenant"* is the Messiah Himself confirming His own covenant with humankind. Or is it just an agreement between groups of human beings? For several reasons, it seems more accurate to see it as referring to the latter type of agreement (as pointed out in the Keil-Delitszch commentary).

For example, Daniel 11:23 mentions a *"league"*, which fine-tunes what is meant by the *"covenant"* mentioned in the previous verse 22. The purpose of this parallel structure is to show more precisely what kind of covenant Gabriel is talking about. *"League"* refers exclusively to covenants between human beings. *"Covenant"* can refer to covenants between God and humans or between humans only. So this parallel structure, this Hebrew literary device, clarifies for us what kind of covenant this is – one between humans. (See here for more information.)

Another relevant point: In all the passages where the word "covenant" appears (Daniel 9:27 and 11:22,28,30,32), there is no definite article in the ancient Hebrew – which is why the majority of translations render the opening of Daniel 9:27 thus: *"he shall confirm A covenant".* The indefiniteness here doesn't point well to the kind of covenant that would exist between God and humankind. Not until verse 11:23, which uses a different Hebrew word for *"covenant"* does the definite article

appear. This word, translated as *"THE league"* (NKJV), refers exclusively to covenants on the earthly level between individuals or groups of human beings.

Granted, it is called a "holy covenant" in Daniel 11:28, 30. After having been established amongst groups of human beings with the intent of allowing Israelis to conduct their worship (and perhaps to protect Israel from invasion), the Antichrist starts to rise up against the covenant, at which point it takes on a new dimension. Although probably it will be the Israelis' bad behavior that will provoke and provide the Antichrist with the excuses he needs to break it, nevertheless, the *"covenant"* becomes *"holy"* at this point because it was the one guard-rail left protecting believers of all faiths in all corners of the world.

With the entry of the *"abomination of desolation"* into the *"holy place"*, war is declared and breaks out against any who believe in and follow a Higher Power other than the Antichrist and his system. Jesus mentioned this about the abomination being the trigger for the start of the Great Tribulation. As Daniel 11 makes clear, the abomination enters the *"sanctuary of strength"* in opposition to whatever conditions were laid out in the *"holy covenant"*.

4) A question that may come up: does the *"he"* in verse 27 – *"he shall confirm a covenant"* – refer to the Messiah or to an ungodly ruler like the Antichrist? In ancient Hebrew (and in most languages), a pronoun normally refers to the last person mentioned. So the *"he"* should refer back to the *"prince"* in the previous verse 26 – the Roman "antichrist" who came to *"destroy the city and the sanctuary"* back in A.D. 70.

It doesn't seem possible that this *"he"* should be identified with the Messiah, as some interpreters teach. Jesus did predict the invasion of Jerusalem (in Luke 19:41-44), it is true, but it was the Roman *"prince"*, or the *"people of the prince"* (his armies and followers presumably), who actually did it. So, are we to believe that Jesus, or His followers, are doing this? He had to allow it, of course, but He's not the earthly ruler who invades and destroys Jerusalem. And this earthly ruler's spiritual descendant in modern times is not the Messiah; it is the anti-Messiah, the Antichrist, who barges into the *"holy place"* to disrupt the covenant.

Interestingly, this *"he"* from verse 27 was called the *"prince who is to come"* in the previous verse 26, which means that the Roman *"prince who is to come"* (in the near future, A.D. 70) should be differentiated from

"Messiah the Prince" **who had already come; He had exited the world stage at His Crucifixion a few years earlier in A.D. 33. This *"who is to come"* phrase also suggests that the reach of this worldly *"prince"* extends beyond the ancient Roman Caesar to include the modern Antichrist. (See here for a scholarly investigation into this matter.)**

At this point in the prophetic passage, Gabriel's view is telescoping into the distant future through the lens of what happened in A.D. 70.

> **Suppose we take the anointed one being cut off [in Daniel 9:26] to refer to the death of Jesus the Messiah, and we were then asked what the next statement seemed to suggest: *And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.* We might well reply that this could very naturally be taken as a description of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by Titus in AD 70.**
>
> **The question then arises: what does the rest of the passage refer to? … Could it be that Daniel 9 is … looking at the time of the end through the lens of AD 70? That is, *the prince who is to come* is Titus, who shall destroy Jerusalem, and there will follow an indefinite period of war *to the end*. Then the "he" who is referred to next in the phrase *he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week* is not Titus but someone who, like Titus, desecrates the sanctuary in Jerusalem; the final embodiment of Gentile power: the man of lawlessness referred to in 2 Thessalonians.**
>
> **It is arguable that there is internal evidence in Daniel 9 that the final week does not run immediately after the first sixty-nine. There is an implied gap, involving the kind of prophetic telescoping we have seen in other parts of Daniel…**
>
> **(from *Against the Flow* by John Lennox, pgs 303-304; published 2015)**

5) So the "break" in the passage is fairly obvious. (Again, see this excerpt from *The Daniel 9:24-27 Project*.) During this time, not only is Messiah cut off, but also, Jerusalem gets destroyed by the Roman forces. Building on what was mentioned in point 4 above, prophetic messages sometimes have to be viewed through the lens of past events, or we could also say, through the lens of a celestial observer. In our world time operates a certain way. It has been said that time is God's way of keeping

things (historical events) from happening all at once.

But in the Spirit Realm historical events from our Earthly Realm, because they tend to repeat themselves, can appear to be happening all at once. As history unfolds in our world, what was compressed spreads out over many centuries; the same event gets repeated in different forms at different moments of our historical "time".

All that to say, there is no need to get alarmed by the 2,000 year gap between the 69th and 70th week, as if that were some kind of terrible miscalculation.

The same can be said for the dream of the *"image"* in Daniel 2: Between the ancient *"legs"* of ancient Rome and the modern *"feet"* of the final empire, there is a gap of several centuries. Even though they are actually separate empires, yet they were envisioned as one – a single *"fourth kingdom"* – having in common a military *"strength"* symbolized by the metal of iron. Also in Daniel 7: the *"fourth beast"* is a two-in-one portrayal of both ancient Roman and modern empires. The *"little horn"* of Daniel 8 jumps from the Seleucid empire of ancient Greece to the final modern empire (as the angel Gabriel explicitly states in 8:17, 19). In Daniel 11 the prophetic message jumps from the Seleucid empire of ancient Greece to the Time of the End.

So it shouldn't be difficult to understand how the prophetic message in Daniel 9:26-27 can jump from ancient to modern times. The invasion of Jerusalem that came after the 69th week was the start of Jerusalem's troubles and is destined to happen one last time during the 70th week, just before the End of the Age.

6) Co-existence of the *"abomination"* and the *"covenant"*:

Although Jesus didn't happen to mention the word *"covenant"*, He did mention the *"abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet."* All we have to do then is refer to what Daniel wrote to get the full picture. Jesus didn't have to explain every last detail since many of the details were already written. Just because he doesn't happen to mention "covenant" doesn't mean that it's not part of the picture.

And Daniel the prophet, or rather the angel (Gabriel probably), clearly specified that the abomination's arrival would bring about the breaking of the *"covenant"*. In chapter 11 several verses mention the *"covenant"*: *"His [Antichrist's] heart shall be against the holy covenant… he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy*

***covenant… and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant… And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries."* (11:28,30,32) And sandwiched between these verses, we read, *"they shall place the abomination that makes desolate."* (11:31)**

It's as plain as can be that there can be no *"abomination"* without the existence of the *"covenant",* the confirming of which is the event that kicks off the last 7 years. If one believes there is no *"covenant"*, then one also has to believe there is no *"abomination".* And if one believes that, then one will have to say that Jesus didn't quite know what He was talking about in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 about the entrance of the *"abomination of desolation"* into the *"holy place"*, the one *"spoken of by Daniel the prophet"*.

7) Further evidence that those 7 years come at the End of the Age: The *Book of Revelation* makes specific reference to a period of time, the final Great Tribulation, and it just happens to be exactly half of seven years: 42 months, 1260 days, time-times-half a time. Is it only coincidence that this final time span happens to be half of the seven-year time span spoken of in Daniel 9:27? Is not this a good indicator that the final *"week"* (7 years) happens in the End of the Age?

Jesus didn't say anything about the last 7 years or the *"covenant"*, but He did mention in the Gospels that the Great Tribulation would happen just before His Return. And the *Book of Revelation* elaborates on this, revealing a few times that it would be a 3½ year span of time. This makes an obvious connection with the Daniel 9:27 *"covenant"* which starts the countdown of 7 years. And what is said in 9:27 about the second half of that *"week"* is confirmed by other verses in *Daniel* (7:25 and 12:7 and 11), which make specific reference to a 3½ year time span of persecution and great tribulation, at the end of which comes the deliverance of God's people. And those verses are clear that the events described in them are taking place in the very End.

The *Books of Daniel* and *Revelation* were meant to complement each other, and so, the *Book of Revelation* does not have to repeat what the *Book of Daniel* reveals, at least not too much. It simply builds on what was revealed in *Daniel*. So it is no surprise that *Revelation* does not repeat the subject of the *"covenant".* It was only needful to have references to it by the several mentions in the *Book* of the time span of 3½ years for Great Tribulation to happen in the very end of the Age. That should be enough

to indicate that the *"week"* of seven years, which starts with the confirming of the *"covenant"*, also happens in the End of the Age.

***

Conclusion: There are numerous passages in the prophetic Books pointing to the historical fact that we stand on the threshold of a new Age in God's plan for humankind. Such evidence from the Word offers great reassurance to the followers of God's Light given through His Christ. It also offers us the kind of mental preparation that will serve us well in the tumultuous years to come, along with the spiritual strength needed to resist the forces of evil that will be unleashed in the days to come.

And so, we should not be surprised that the forces of spiritual Darkness are fighting to extinguish the godly understanding, which is available to us in God's Word, of present and future events. And this issue about the final 7 years is, no doubt, one area of understanding where those Dark forces are working hard to sow confusion, doubt, and disbelief.

Hopefully, the above discourse on this subject has brought some degree of clarity and made it easier to grasp what the Sacred Book has to say about some of the specifics of God's plan for our soon-coming End of the Age future.

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Final Empire: Revival of Rome?

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cap-Final-Empire-Revival-of-Rome-MP3.mp3

(Published December, 2024; this Capsule is based mainly on the post "Physical Geography: Which Two Territories?" from the *Shape of the Future* series; Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless noted otherwise)

Many a commentary has explained the world's final empire before the Return of Christ in terms of a revival of the ancient Roman empire. This

idea is based, logically enough, on the prophetic passage in the *Book of Daniel,* chapter 7.

> ***After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.* (7:7)**

Chapter 7 goes on to explain that this *"fourth beast"* (empire), gets destroyed by the *Son of Man* (Jesus Christ) at the End of the Age, at which time He takes over the rulership of the world. (7:9-14) Now, in the progression of *"beasts"* that Daniel saw in vision, it is clear that this *"fourth beast"* should be identified with ancient Rome.

But the picture in chapter 7 also portrays the *"fourth beast"* as being around in the End Time when Christ returns in power and glory (and destroys the *Beast*). So, it is quite reasonable to assume that in some way the ancient Roman empire is to re-emerge as the final empire to rule over Israel, the Mideast, and most of the rest of the world in these last days before the Return of Christ.

But the question of how exactly to make that connection between the ancient and modern empires has puzzled Bible teachers and scholars for generations.

Many commentaries fixate on trying to project how the ten-horns feature of this "*fourth beast*" might show up as the continuation of the Roman empire. In the early days, commentaries tried to envision the various barbarian tribes who invaded Rome as the 10 horns. In recent times it was thought that the nations of Europe could fit this role. There was even a time in the 1980's when there were 10 nations in the European Union. But now that number has climbed to 27 nations.

So, is there another better angle from which to view this mystery about the *"fourth beast"*? Well, if we look closely at chapter 2, that might help. In that chapter (the companion to chapter 7), Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar both had the vision of a great "*image*" that represented all the same empires that appear in chapter 7.

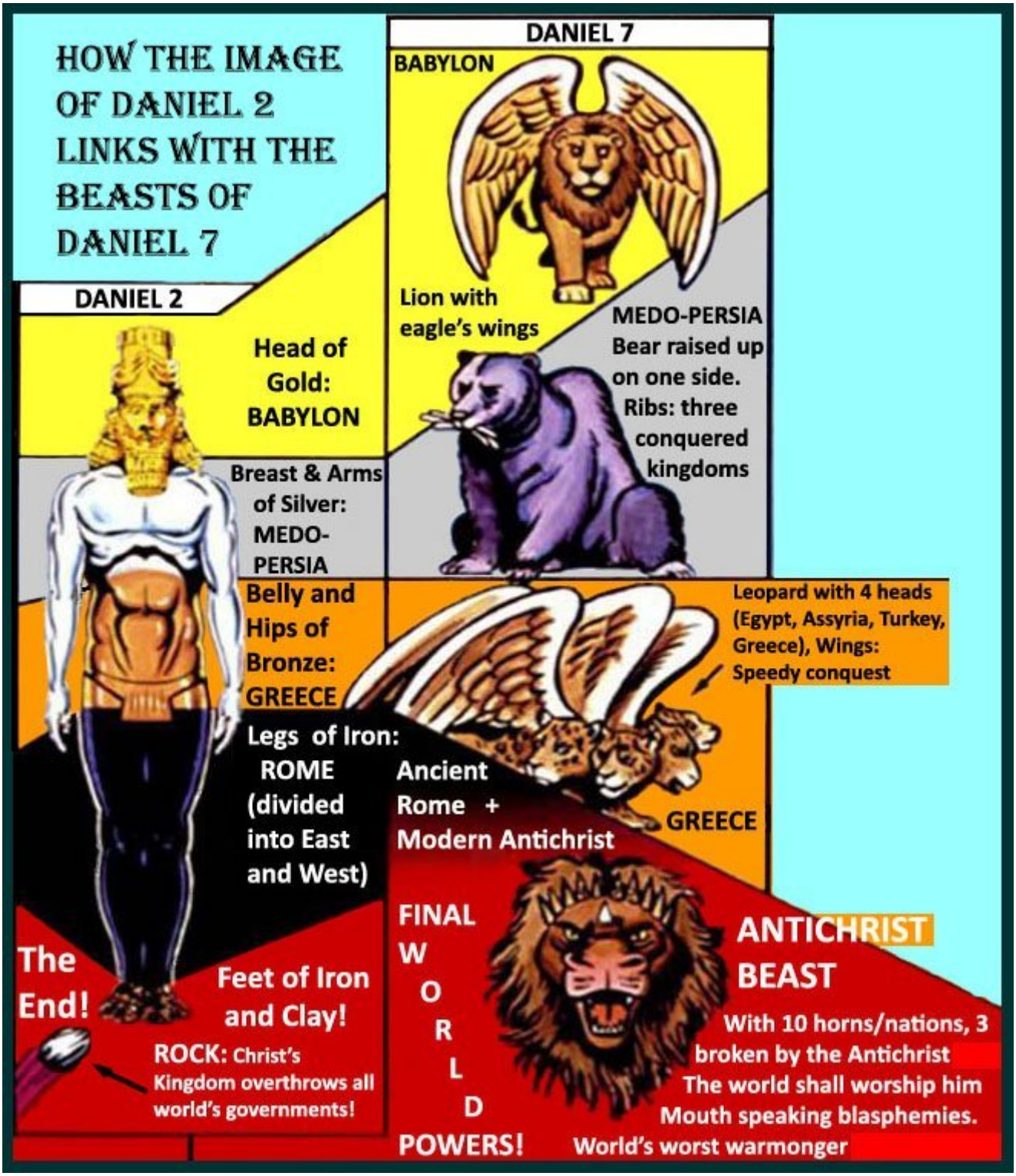


Illustration Comparing *Image* of Daniel 2 with *Beasts* of Daniel 7

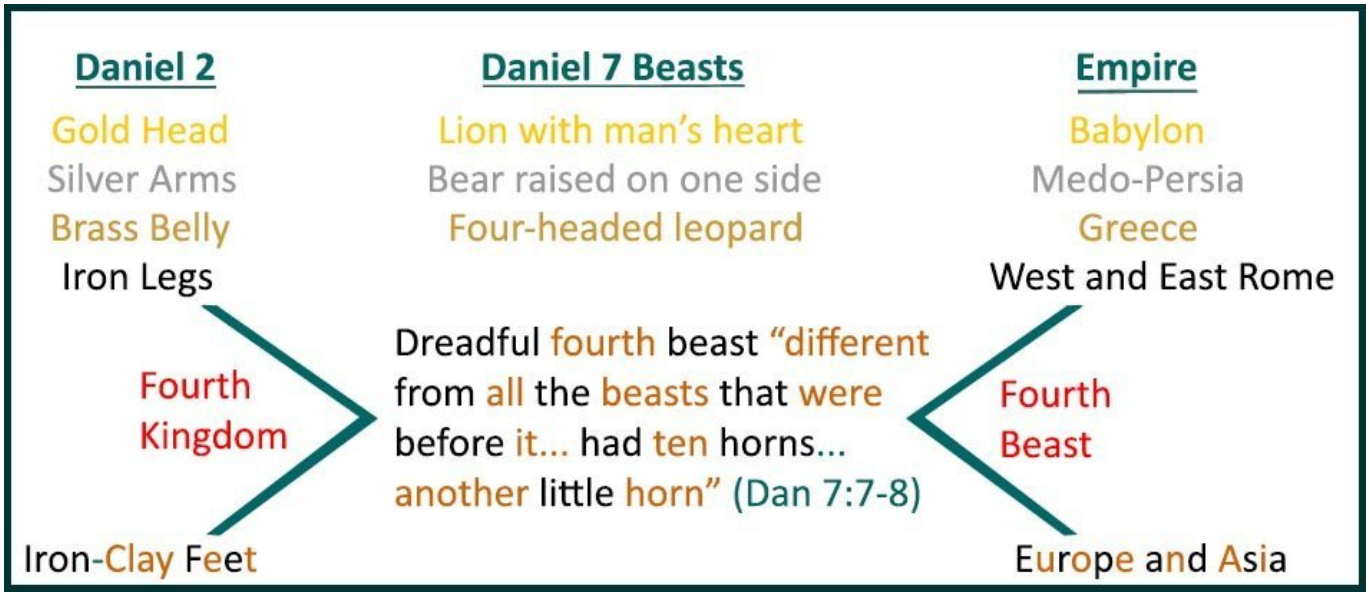
What was known as the *"<u>fourth</u> beast"* in chapter 7, is called the *"<u>fourth</u> kingdom"* in chapter 2. This *"fourth kingdom"* straddles both legs and feet of the image, which corresponds to how the *"fourth beast"* from chapter 7 symbolizes both ancient and modern empires. (2:40; 7:7,23)



The legs of iron represent the dual empire of West and East Rome, and the feet represent the final empire to come before the Return of Christ. We know the feet come at the End of the Age because the Stone (who represents Christ) strikes the feet of the image, destroying the whole thing and resulting in establishment of God's Kingdom. *"The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."* (2:35)



Note that chapter 7 envisions both ancient and final empires as represented in *one* single *Beast,* whereas the parallel revelation in chapter 2 represents the same as *two* body parts (legs and feet).



Why one *Beast* for two eras and two empires? Perhaps because the Coming of the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) happens in both time periods. His First Coming happened during the time of the ancient Roman empire, and His Second Coming will happen during the time of Earth's final empire under the Antichrist. For this reason, the ancient and modern eras and empires are seen in the eyes of God as one *"fourth beast"*. The Coming of the *Son of Man* into our Earthly Realm is like one continual event, taking place in two stages we might say.

> **There is a saying about the nature of time – that time is God's way of keeping things from happening all at once.**

Here in chapter 2, there is another common feature that appears in both the "ancient" legs of Rome and the "modern" feet of the final empire: the *"iron"* metal that runs through both legs and feet. The other metals in the *"image"* point to the authoritarian nature of those empires, all of whom conquered Israel and the Mideast world with their powerful armies. And the same is true of the Roman empire of the legs, of whom it is said,

> ***And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.* (2:40)**

That *"iron"* strength was certainly true of ancient Rome, and that aspect of the ancient empire continues into the final *"feet"* version of the *"fourth kingdom"*. For the passage goes on to say about the *"feet",* that even though *"the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it."* (2:41)

Now this *"iron"* component points to intangible features – the *"strength"* of military rule, efficient republican government and legal system – that characterized ancient Rome. And that will also characterize the rule of the final empire. In fact, this kind of republican government exists to some degree or other in most countries of the modern world.

But this *"iron"* feature does not represent the actual physical, geographical nature of the *"fourth beast".* So, is there any other connection between ancient and modern empires – something that would clearly pinpoint the actual territories involved?

To find that connection, we can look at the parallel revelation in Daniel chapter 2 of the *"image"*. The peculiar feature that relates to our question lies in how the body parts of the *"image"* reflect the geographical and chronological nature of the empires that ruled over Israel:

- **The single head of gold – empire of Babylon**
- **Next, the *two* silver arms and breast – *dual* empire of Media and Persia**
- **Next, the belly of brass – the empire of Alexander the Great (note that the Medo-Persian and Greek empires had almost the same boundaries, which seems to reflect the similar boundaries between the chest and belly of the *"image"*)**
- **Next, the *two* legs of iron – *dual* empire of West and East Rome.**
- **Next, the *two* feet – representing… ?**



Empires of Medo-Persia and Greece have almost the same boundaries

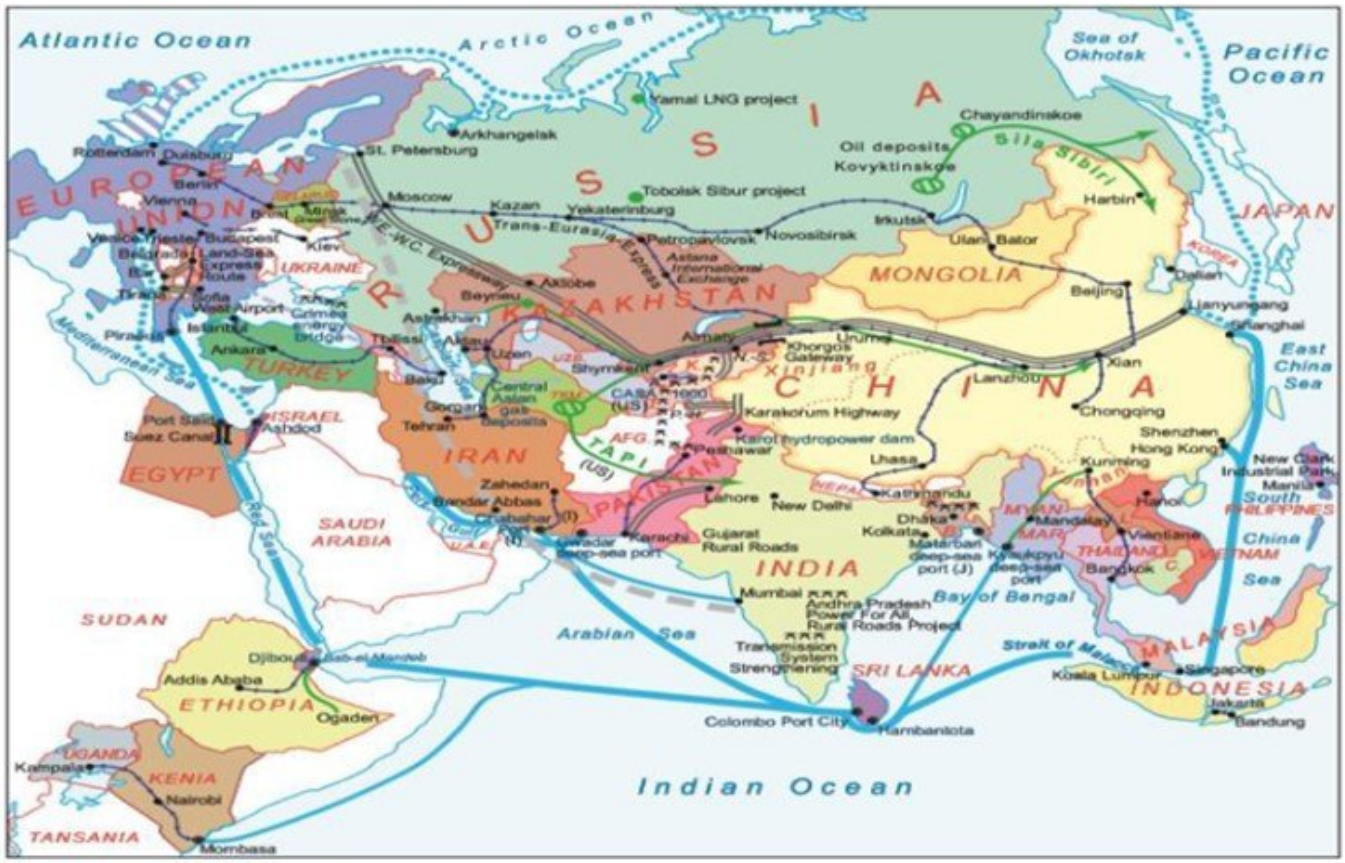
So then we are left with the feet of the image. One obvious conclusion: the final empire would have to be a dual territory. A less obvious conclusion: the geography would differ from that of ancient Rome (a foot is not the same as a leg); yet the final empire should connect to the ancient empire in some way (feet connect to legs).

The big question now is, can we see something like this taking shape in the modern world? The ancient Roman empire was divided into West and East, roughly between European and Asian territories, and between two different cultures. (Tribal territories of the West were assimilated and adopted the Latin language and Roman Catholicism; eastern territories, once major civilizations, kept their traditional customs and language but adopted Orthodox Christianity.)

In our modern day we have the benefit of some historical hindsight that was not available in times past. In very recent history, we are witnessing the rise of a new and very powerful empire. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure projects are uniting the Eurasian landmass. The powerful nations of Russia and China have become strong allies. In fact, Russia, according to the prophetic passages in the *Book of Ezekiel,* chapters 38-39, will invade the Middle East in the *"latter days"* to become the final power to rule over the Israeli nation. (For more information, see the series of posts, *Ezekiel 38-39*.) So Eurasia looks destined to become the next ruling empire, the final one headed by the Antichrist. This we can foresee will happen once the collapse of the American empire has come to

pass. (Learn about this in the *Book of Revelation* from the series of posts, *Fall of the Great Harlot*.)





And how has this huge landmass of Eurasia been divided? The Ural Mountain range divides European Russia (and Europe) from Asian Siberia and many other nations to the east (including China). The Caucasus Mountains divide European Russia from Asian nations to the south, the Middle Eastern nations. Remarkably, it is similar to the East-West, Europe-Asia division of ancient Rome. There is even a cultural division – mostly between the Christianized cultures of the West and the non-Christian cultures of the East (Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Confucian, Communist).



[By the way, whether a nation has a "Christian" or "non-Christian" culture is not meant to be a value judgment. In the eyes of the Almighty, and on the geo-political level, what matters is how much a nation seeks for peace and stability in the world. Sad to say, in today's world those nations who have Christian culture are misbehaving on this level. They should be the peacemakers, but instead, seem to have become the warmongers of modern times.]

So this seems to answer the puzzling question of how the *"fourth beast"* in Daniel chapter 7 emerges as a revival of ancient Rome. The key in all this is to link the information about the *"fourth beast"* in chapter 7 and factor it in with the information given about the *"fourth kingdom"* in chapter 2.

So what about the *"ten horns"*? Since our conception of the *"fourth beast"* has undergone some expansion and includes a lot more than just ancient Rome, that throws a whole new light onto that question. Since the modern empire links to ancient Rome, simply by virtue of it being the expanded version of the ancient West-East, Europe-Asia divide, there is no

need anymore to find some way to link those *Ten Horns* to the ancient Roman empire. And in the huge landmass of Eurasia, there are many countries other than those in Europe or the Mideast to choose from.

And we could add this small detail: the toes of the Daniel 2 *"image",* which are usually considered equivalent to the *Ten Horns* of the *"fourth beast",* do not come out of the legs of the image, but out of its feet; that is, they belong to the expanded End Time portion of the ancient Roman empire, the power bloc that is growing now by leaps and bounds in the great landmass of Eurasia.

A good possibility for the identity of the *Ten Horns* is the *Commonwealth of Independent States.* This association consists of Russia plus ten smaller territories that border Russia to the west and to the south. They form a sort of buffer zone – like horns that can protect Russia along its very long borderland territory. There are many details to cover on this subject, and a thorough study of it can be found in the post, "Ten Horns Coming into View?"

So, isn't it remarkable how the End Time scenario is unfolding before our eyes? And how historical events are lining up so accurately with what the prophetic passages in the *Books of Daniel* and *Revelation* foretold so long ago? It is reassuring to know that God has planned it out well ahead of time. Despite all the confusion and chaos, there is a predetermined end to it, followed by the glorious Age of Peace, the Millennium (also foretold, in the *Book of Revelation*, chapter 20).

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Continue to *CAPSULE SUMMARIES, Part 3!*