

**FOCUS #4—THE RISE OF A NEW EMPIRE &
THE PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL**

We must build a kind of United States of Europe.

Winston Churchill

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, a geopolitical revolution of historic dimensions is under way across the Atlantic: the unification of Europe. Twenty-five nations have joined together—with another dozen or so on the waiting list—to build a common economy, government, and culture. Europe is a more integrated place today than at any time since the Roman Empire.

T. R. Reid, *The United States of Europe*

There has been a growing unification in Europe over the last few years. This unification has been taking place due to the dangerous times in which we live. The world has a consistently growing dependence on oil, which means the world has a consistently growing dependence upon the countries of the Middle East. Unfortunately that region is extremely unstable. We find wars being waged in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. We see a growing nuclear threat coming out of Iran and with the resurgence of the Taliban this threat could possibly exist in Pakistan as well. The religious hatred between the Jews and Islam, the threat of terrorism, nuclear attack, disrupted oil supplies, war etc... leads to an extremely explosive situation.

“The only real solution is a peace treaty that settles disputes, disarms antagonists, and provides absolute guarantees. In short a peace treaty backed by force. A powerful leader will seize the world attention by such an offer when the world is on the brink of chaos. He will give the world what it wants. He will bring terror under control, guarantee the flow of oil, and temporarily diffuse the time bomb in the Middle East.”
[John F. Walvoord, *Armageddon, Oil, and Terror*, p. 76]

Of course leaders for years have sought to bring peace to the Middle East. I remember as a child, then President Jimmy Carter seeking to bring peace between Israel and Egypt. At other times in recent years, the United States has sought to stabilize situations in Kuwait, Iraq and now in Pakistan. Over the years we have seen Israel seek to defend itself from Syria, Iraq, and more recently terrorist groups in Lebanon and the Palestinian areas in Israel ,and ultimately will need to protect itself from Iran.

In short, peace seems unlikely, peace has been attempted, and these attempts at peace have always failed. But, the Scripture predicts an event in the end times when a world leader will be able to secure peace between Israel and its neighbors (Daniel 9:27).

What nation and what leader could possibly orchestrate such a phenomenal accomplishment as to secure peace between Israel and the surrounding Islamic nations?

About 2,500 years ago the Jewish prophet, Daniel was given a panoramic revelation by God that revealed the sweep of world history from Daniel's day all the way up to the second coming of Christ.

Daniel wrote most of his prophecy in the middle of the sixth century BC near the end of the 70-year captivity of Israel in Babylon. Daniel writes of such a peace treaty prior to the second coming of Christ (Daniel 9:27). This morning we will examine the prophecy of this peace treaty and the prophecies that predict the rise of the nation that backs it up.

The Prediction of a Peace Treaty in the Last Days (Daniel 9:24-27)

Daniel's prophecy provides the key to the entire drama of the end times. A new world leader will rise to power and cause a series of earth shaking events, which are highlighted by Daniel and described in detail in the book of Revelation. Let's look at this instrumental passage, **Daniel 9:24-27**:

(24) "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (25) "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. (26) "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (27) "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The context of this prophecy was probably the first year of the reign of Darius (538-537 BC) when Daniel observed that the 70-year Captivity was nearing completion (Daniel 9:1-2).

Upon realizing that the 70 years of prophecy was nearing its completion, Daniel comes before the Lord in prayer. He confesses the sin of Israel and prays for restoration.

While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel appeared before him as a man. Gabriel had come to provide insight and understanding to Daniel regarding a vision and

prophecy. It is at this point that Daniel describes what the angel Gabriel revealed to him.

In this prophecy, Daniel tells us that 70 weeks will be set apart for Israel. The term *weeks* is best understood as a unit of 7. It likely refers to 70 weeks of years or (70 x 7 years = 490 years).

- ***What is the purpose of this period of time?***

This period of time was set apart for the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem to:

- 1-finish the transgression,
- 2-make an end of sin,
- 3-make atonement for iniquity,
- 4-bring in everlasting righteousness,
- 5-seal up vision and prophecy,
- 6-anoint the most holy place.

This period of time (70 weeks of years or 490 years) was set a part for the accomplishment of these purposes. Some of these purposes for Israel were accomplished surrounding the first coming of Christ, while the others will apparently be accomplished during the time period leading up to and including the second coming of Christ.

- ***When does this time period begin and how long will it last?***

It is clear that the time period begins *from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem* (Daniel 9:25). 69 of the 70 weeks of years will pass by until Messiah the Prince is cut off.

The terminology *cut off* implies death and is often used to speak of the death of an individual. In other words 69 weeks of years (69 X 7 = 483 years) will transpire from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince is put to death. The 70th week of years will occur at some point in the future.

There is only one decree issued to rebuild Jerusalem. We find that decree in Nehemiah 2:1-8. This decree from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah can be dated on Nisan 1, 444 BC.

Nisan 1 would have fallen on March 4, 444 BC. So the 69 weeks of years (483 years) would begin on March 4, 444 BC.

It is important to note that the prophetic year is in view here. Prophecy did not necessarily follow a lunar calendar and certainly did not follow a solar calendar. It usually followed a prophetic calendar of 360-day years (cf. Revelation 11-12).

If one assumes the 360-day prophetic year, then the 69 weeks of years ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) would equal 173,880 days.

If one begins with Nisan 1, 444 BC (March 4, 444 BC) and calculates out 173,880 days, then one comes to Nisan 9, AD 33 (April 29, AD 33), which is none other than the triumphal entry date of Christ into Jerusalem for the Passover (His Passion week, when He would be cut off/crucified).

- ***What about the last week of years?***

Notice that this period of 70 weeks of years is broken down into sections. The first period of 7 weeks of years (49 years) was needed to rebuild Jerusalem. The second segment of 62 weeks (434 years) marked the time that would pass until Messiah was cut off.

But one week of seven years is still left unfulfilled. Daniel 9:26 predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple after the death of Messiah. Of course we know from history that this took place at the hands of Rome in AD 70.

Daniel 9:27 actually deals with that final 7 years. It tells us that the prince who is to come will make a firm covenant with the many for one week. The many is referring to the people of Israel for which God had decreed these 70 weeks of years. Some future prince (ruler) will make a covenant (a peace treaty) with Israel for 7 years. This ruler is of the people who will destroy Jerusalem and its temple. That of course was the Roman Empire.

Therefore some form of the Roman Empire must be revived and at some time in the future a ruler will rise up from this empire and sign a covenant for the protection of Israel.

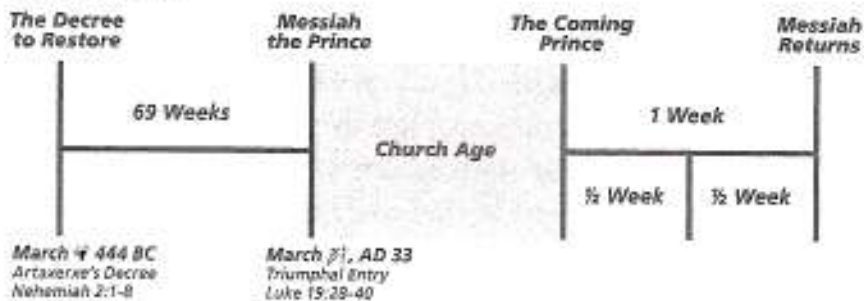
Evidently this covenant will result in the rebuilding of the temple and the reinstatement of the temple sacrifices. Unfortunately in the middle of that week of years (3 and $\frac{1}{2}$ years later) this ruler will break the covenant, put a stop to the sacrifices, defile the temple and vow to destroy Israel.

This ruler, we identified as none other than the antichrist, and this period of time is known as the Tribulation period of Revelation 6-18, also briefly described by Christ in Matthew 24-25.

After the rapture of the church, there will be widespread chaos and fear in the world. This ruler will seek to restore order, make peace and lead the world through this difficult time. Unfortunately the world will follow after this ruler, and he will achieve what no other human leader in the history of the world has achieved, world domination.

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

(Daniel 9:24-27)



The Prediction of a Period of Time up to the Last Days (Daniel 2: 7)

In Daniel 2 and 7, God encouraged His people and answered their questions by giving them an overview of the course of world history. Before the King and His Kingdom would come, there would be four great world empires ruling over Israel.

With the benefit of 20/20 hindsight we now know the identity of these four great world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

- **What does Daniel 2 reveal about these empires?**

Daniel 2 involves a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, which disturbed him greatly. Nebuchadnezzar asked his wise men to tell him both the content and interpretation of his dream. But the wise men told the king that he had an unreasonable request, so Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all of the wise men were to be slain (Daniel 2:1-13).

Daniel requested time so that he could declare the interpretation to the king. So Daniel along with his friends prayed to God for compassion concerning this mystery. God revealed both the content and interpretation of the dream to Daniel. Daniel's first response was praise and thanksgiving to God. At this point Daniel requested to be taken to the king (Daniel 2:14-24).

Daniel was taken before the king at which time he explained that what Nebuchadnezzar requested was humanly impossible, but that God in heaven had revealed the mystery to him (Daniel 2:25-30).

It is at this point that both the content and the interpretation of the dream was revealed by Daniel to King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Content of the Dream: Daniel 2:31-35

(31) “You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. (32) “The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, (33) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. (34) “You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. (35) “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The content of the dream was that of an awesome statue in which the head was made of fine gold; the chest and arms were made of silver; the stomach and thighs were made of bronze; the legs were made of iron; and its feet were made of an iron and clay mixture. A stone was then cut out, struck the statue decimating it and then became a great mountain filling the Earth.



The Interpretation of the Dream: Daniel 2:36-45

(36) *“This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. (37) “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; (38) and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. (39) “After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. (40) “Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. (41) “In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. (42) “As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. (43) “And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. (44) “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. (45) “Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”*

Daniel began the interpretation of the dream by asserting the sovereignty of God. He declared that it was the God of heaven, not the Babylonian gods nor King Nebuchadnezzar himself who was sovereign.

In the interpretation, Daniel moved from the top to the bottom of the image indicating the passage of time. Thus the upper parts of the image portrayed earlier history, while the lower parts of the image indicated later history.

Daniel identified Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom as the head of gold. His kingdom would be followed by another kingdom represented by the silver chest and arms. We know from the passage of history that the chest and arms represent the Medo-Persian Empire, which followed Babylon. Then that kingdom would be followed by another kingdom represented by the bronze stomach and thighs. Of course from history we are able to understand that the stomach and thighs represent Greece, which began under Alexander the Great in 331 BC. Then a fourth kingdom would come, but it will be a divided kingdom. Rome is thought to be this fourth kingdom, especially since it will be emphasized again later on in Daniel. Evidently the legs of iron represented the first

phase of the Roman, and the feet of iron and clay would represent some future revival of the Roman Empire.

Most scholars believe that Rome will be revived, because it was not shattered as depicted in this dream, but it gradually deteriorated and declined until the western part of the empire fell in AD 476 and the eastern portion was cut off in AD 1453.

The final portion of this dream depicts a stone shattering the statue, becoming a great mountain and filling the Earth. This stone is speaking of Messiah, who will in the future establish His kingdom upon the Earth (The Millennial Kingdom of Christ).

What we learn from this passage is that at some future time prior to the second coming and millennial reign of Christ, there will be a revival of the Roman Empire (whether it will be called that or not is debatable). It is from this revived Roman Empire that a leader (the Antichrist) will rise to power and sign a covenant with Israel. This actual covenant will take place after the rapture of the church, however, it is possible that the future revival of Rome will unfold prior to the Rapture, but it certainly does not have to.

- ***What does Daniel 7 reveal about these empires?***

In Daniel chapters seven through twelve Daniel related dreams or visions that he received during the later years of his life. The Dream of Daniel 7 is described in Daniel 7:1-14 and interpreted in Daniel 7:15-27.

The dream of Daniel 7, while different from Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, portrayed the same thing, the course of Gentile world dominion from the time of Babylon to the second coming of Christ.

In Daniel 7 these same world empires are pictured as four great wild beasts rising up out of the Mediterranean Sea. The Babylonian Empire is pictured as a Lion; the Medo-Persian Empire is depicted as a Bear; Greece is pictured as a leopard, and Rome is pictured as a terrifying beast, the later form of which is described as having 10 horns.



Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

It is the matter of the fourth beast that concerns us in this class. It appears that the future, revived Roman Empire will go through three stages:

- First, a group of ten kings or some form of a 10-fold division of what was the ancient Roman Empire will appear, described here as a group of ten. This will mark the first phase of its revival.
- Second, a strong man will emerge who will consolidate these ten nations or regions into a united empire and probably extend the borders in various directions.
- Third, there will be a final stage when by declaration or edict its power extends throughout the Earth. The Antichrist will simply declare that he is the ruler of the world. This will be somewhat easy to do after the decimation of nations at the invasion of Israel (Ezekiel 38-39).

Some have speculated that the re-unification of Europe under way as we speak might be the beginning stages of this future empire. It is important to note that it is impossible to completely identify who these ten nations might be. Certainly it will consist of Europe, and the Mediterranean nations since that was the territorial possession of the Roman Empire. But anything beyond that is simply speculation.

What we do know is that at some point in the future, there will likely be a weakening of the United States, a strengthening of Europe, Russia, Middle East nations, and China. These are the nations that appear to play key roles in end time events.

Conclusion

Daniel, 2, 7 and 9 emphasize a revival of the Roman Empire at some time in the future. It is from this revived Roman Empire in which the future leader, the antichrist, will come. It is this future leader, the antichrist, who will sign a covenant with Israel to restore the temple and its sacrifices. It is this treaty/covenant that will mark the beginning of Daniel's 70h week otherwise known as the tribulation period.