

Reuben Sandwiched?

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***Forerunner*, "Prophecy Watch," October 1992**

All over Europe, leaders of government, industry and commerce breathed a massive sigh of relief after France narrowly approved the Maastricht Treaty on September 20. Before the vote, which pollsters correctly predicted would be too close to call, analysts forecast greater currency instability and worsening tensions among EC members if the French failed to ratify the December 1991 treaty. Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato even said that if the French had voted no, "then four decades of work probably would have fallen to pieces with irreparable damage."

Though the margin was close, the French passed the treaty 51% to 49%. Seven of the twelve EC member nations are still at various stages in the ratification process. Even if all these nations approve, the treaty's legitimacy will still be in doubt because of Denmark's rejection of it June 2.

An interesting and unremarked factor in this process is the role of Israelitish nations in the founding of this prophesied superstate. Denmark, recognized by Herbert W. Armstrong as the tribe of Dan, rejected the idea. Britain (Ephraim) may well do likewise because of the fear of losing its sovereignty. Luxembourg and Belgium (Asher) are expected to approve, as is The Netherlands (Zebulun). France (Reuben), long thought to be staunchly pro-EC, was a great surprise.

To those who understand, though, France's uncertainty should not have come as a shock. The tribal /national characteristics of Reuben are marked by ambivalence. Generally, the French do best when they have only one choice. Charles de Gaulle, President of France (1958-1969), once said, "How can you be expected to govern a country that has two hundred and forty-six kinds of cheese?"

The Bible echoes these sentiments. Jacob prophesied Reuben to be "unstable as water" (Genesis 49:4), mainly in moral matters, but the wider principle applies to other things. Deborah chastised the tribe for having "great searchings of heart," but never making a decision (Judges 5:15-16). And though a leading and honorable people (Genesis 49:3; Numbers 2:16; 32:17-18), Reuben will not excel because of its character traits (Genesis 49:4; I Chronicles 5:1-2).

The French may be torn between their natural affinity to other Israelitish nations and their national self-interest, represented by the EC. By a sliver they have chosen self-interest over their brethren, and Joseph may well find himself in captivity and sold into Egypt a second time.