

Where Is The Beast? (Part 2)

Rome and Babylon

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 22-Mar-03; Sermon #602

A very interesting news article appeared on the Web on February 28, 2003 that strongly accentuates how divided, and therefore how weak Europe is. Europe is not showing the kind of strength that one would expect the Beast to have. This article, giving some insight into the division in the European Union, was written by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, a Brit. This article appeared first in the News Telegraph published in the United Kingdom following a meeting on the 27th of February of *The Convention on the Future of Europe*, in Brussels, Belgium.

Quoting the article by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard:

The Convention on the Future of Europe was in a ferment of revolt yesterday as delegates of all stripes assailed the leadership for refusing to listen to the people as they draft the European Union's first constitution.

More than 1,000 amendments poured in demanding changes to the first 16 articles, which were released by the forum's elite praesidium two weeks ago.

Can you imagine that! One thousand changes requested, and that in only two week's existence of the first 16 articles of the proposed constitution. It remained for the British to put their finger on the central theme of almost every disagreement.

[Continuing the quote:]

The British had other concerns. Still fuming over federalist undertones at the convention, Tory and Labour members alike demanded the removal of a clause giving the EU "primacy over the law of member states."

They are most alarmed by the concept of "shared competence" put forward in the text, an innocuous sounding term that would prohibit member states from legislating in everything from public health to social policy, transport, justice and economic management unless Brussels waived its powers first.

The British are upset over the same issue which erupted in the American Civil War. The

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

issue which brought on that war was which was supreme, the Federal Government in Washington, or individual State governments. Slavery was the emotional issue, but the real issue was the struggle over who had control of what, who had the right to determine what was right or wrong, or which way the thing was to be done, and who was to do what, and when. This is the very thing the British are concerned about regarding the new constitution in Europe.

[Continuing the quote:]

David Heathcoat-Amory, a Tory MP on the convention, said the insiders had seized control and were pushing through a constitutional revolution that would leave the British Parliament an empty shell.

"This has now reached a dangerous stage," he said. "What we are looking is a completely different Union, with its own legal personality, endowed with rights by the constitution, not by member states," he said.

Lord Stockton, a pro-European Tory MEP, said the convention had degenerated into a "power grab" by the political class, who had forgotten that the purpose of the forum was to bring Europe back closer to the people after anti-EU referendums in Denmark and Ireland.

Things are not going well in Europe, and they have not been going well for quite a period of time. It seems as though that the time the Berlin Wall came down in the late eighties, it marked a high point, and ever since then they have declined in areas that men hold as important to national greatness.

Here is another report, this time on the depressed state of the German economy. It is from The United Kingdom Telegraph, from their Opinion Section, March 10, 2003. The article was written by George Trefgarne.

Quoting George Trefgarne:

Here is a surprising fact: 100 Germans are losing their jobs every hour. Imagine being Chancellor Gerhard Schroder. Like a starlet in a Hollywood disaster movie, he is trapped in a car heading over the cliff.

The speedometer just keeps whizzing round as he tries the door and screams for help. He pumps the brake and turns the steering wheel, but to

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

no avail. Last week, the counter hit 4.4 million [unemployed].

Apart from his own bad driving, who or what can Mr. Schroder blame? His predecessors, the world downturn and the Americans have all come in for criticism. But he may soon find the perfect culprit: the French. For although France and Germany are having a wonderful flirtation over the Iraqi question, they are actually star-crossed lovers.

I'm going to quote now from an article written by Elise Kissling that appeared in the German newspaper, *The Frankfurter Allgemeine*, March 12, 2003. The article is titled: *Record jobless rolls shock*.

Quoting from Elise Kissling's article "Record Jobless Rolls Shock":

Unexpectedly high unemployment figures for February have prompted calls for immediate action to propel the economy and stimulate job creation.

The jobless rolls jumped to 4.7 million in January from just under 4.3 million last February and up 83,000 from last month, the Federal Statistics Office reported on Thursday. The February figures, the third-highest level since World War II and the highest since unification, caught bank economists off guard.

Now I'm going to quote from an article that appeared on the web site "The Age," March 12, 2003. The article titled "Deutsche Telekom posts Europe's biggest loss," was written by Hugh Eakin. Deutsche Telekom is a company that is similar to Phillips Electric and ATT. It is a huge electronics empire.

Quoting from Hugh Eakin's article Deutsche Telekom posts Europe's biggest loss:

Deutsche Telekom [a company—a huge electronics empire—similar to Phillips Electric and ATT] has posted a loss of \$44 billion American for 2002, the biggest annual loss in European corporate history.

Where is all this heading? Journalists all over the world are beginning to publish their conclusions. Their conclusions indicate, at least to this point in time, a political world in

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

the greatest turmoil in a very long time. Now listen to some brief statements of their conclusions. What we're going to point toward here is what Swiss historian Carl Jaspers called "an *axial* period"—a time of great overturning of the great powers of the past to something that is new.

I'm going to read a quote from NEWS.scotsman.com article by Geoff Meade, European Editor, PA News, in Brussels. The article is *titled Germany Plans Two-Tier EU over Iraq Policy Splits*.

Quote from Germany Plans Two-Tier EU over Iraq Policy Splits:

Germany is reviving plans for a two-tier European Union—leaving Britain and Spain out in the cold in anger over the Iraqi crisis, it was confirmed today.

It doesn't say Britain and Spain are angry over the crisis. It's saying that Germany is angry over the crisis.

[Continuing the quote:]

The "two-speed" Europe idea is not new; it has been mulled over in Paris and Berlin every time a policy difference casts Britain against the continental mainstream.

But Britain has repeatedly resisted being left in the European slow lane, and will not welcome any suggestion of a European "hard core" group driven by France and Germany—particularly one seeking to drive a wedge into the EU on the basis of policy towards Iraq.

"It looks as if Schroeder is out to reinvent the original founding group of countries—the old six against all those which have joined since," said the leader of Labour's Euro-MPs, Gary Tittley.

This next quote is from *THE AUSTRALIAN*. This paper is the equivalent to the American newspaper *USA TODAY*, only it is Australian. The date is 03/14/03. The article, titled "Strategic alliance system 'in decay' was written by Patrick Walters, National security editor.

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Quote from Strategic alliance system 'in decay' by Patrick Walters:

The world is witnessing a rapid breakdown of the US-led multilateral alliance system built up since World War II and with it the demise of the UN, according to a leading strategic analyst.

"It's a defining moment," argues Francois Heisbourg, chairman of the London-based international Institute of Strategic Studies, and one of Europe's most respected strategic analysts.

"We are witnessing a sea change vis-?-vis everything which has been built up since the Second World War."

Finally a quote from DEBKAFfile, February 11, 2003, in their concluding statements of a fairly long article. They see four things arising out of this present crisis.

1. The steady disintegration of the United Nations for all practical purposes.

The breakdown of NATO—the strategic pact binding the United States and Europe since World War II.

3. The serious erosion of the European Union as a West European-oriented community, followed by the redistribution of the continent's power centers to the nations supporting the US offensive against Iraq: the UK, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the new NATO members of Eastern Europe.

The race for domination of the Asian-Pacific region among the United States, Russia, and China.

Revelation 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

I think that the major point to remember from my previous sermon is that things that make for national greatness and importance as men rate them are missing in Europe at this time. In short, Europe is declining—not growing as a great power other nations fear (as one would expect the *Beast* should be feared).

As pictured in verse 1, three fearsome animals, including the so-called "king of the beasts," are used by God to *portray* the Beast. Instead, we find that Europe is moribund. It has been steadily waning in world influence for the past 10 to 15 years. Their economies are shrinking and their populations declining. Even though each nation has its own military, Europe, in actual practical fact, is dependent upon the United States to defend it should all-out war erupt.

In that first sermon I suggested two conclusions: (1) that if the Beast is indeed to arise in Europe, then we either have much longer to go until Christ returns, or (2) in order for the Beast to arise in Europe, fast—absolutely miraculous events are going to have to happen to completely turn the tables by bringing down the United States while simultaneously raising the European Union to the super-power status that other nations fear. Note that I never said in that sermon that the Beast will **not** arise in Europe.

I also gave a brief overview of the image that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of in Daniel the second chapter, with its head of gold, its upper body of silver, its hips and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. I also mentioned Daniel's dream in Daniel 7 of the four beasts, each beast corresponding with one of the four parts of the image of Daniel 2.

Those four parts and four beasts historically are the Chaldean Empire, followed by the Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman empires. The Beast of Revelation 13 corresponds to the feet of iron and clay of Daniel 2 and the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Those two there reveal some aspects of the Roman Empire. Just different imagery is used.

Now we're going to consider the Babylon-Rome relationship, first in regard to what Babylon is biblically, and then in regard to Rome's geographic location. I am finding that some do not understand what Babylon is. Biblically, Babylon can be a city. It can identify a nation. It is not a church. It is sometimes figuratively portrayed as a woman. In prophecy—especially in the New Testament—it symbolizes the worldly system opposed to God. One must discern from the context in which Babylon appears which interpretation is intended. It has been my experience that Babylon overwhelmingly signifies the nation. God often uses a city though to represent the entire nation.

Regarding the Roman Empire, what the church has done at this point is to assume that the Roman Empire in its biblical usage is confined to the same basic geography that it occupied anciently. But is that the approach we are to take when interpreting the end-time prophecies? I think that there is some possibility that we are **not** to do so, and I will show you why as we proceed.

I want you to go back in thought and consider again the image of Daniel the second chapter. Every time that the metal changed—from gold to silver to brass, and then to iron, and then to iron and clay—the geographical location of the world power that the metal represented also changed. It changed from Chaldea in the extreme south of the Tigris-Euphrates valley to Medo-Persian in the extreme **north** of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. From there it moved to Greece in southeastern Europe, and from there to Rome, Italy in south-central Europe.

If you are at all familiar with the history of the *resurrected* Roman Empire, beginning in 554 AD, you will know that through the ages its boundaries were expanding and contracting as its various eras came and went. Its geography and its administrative centers were not the same under Justinian as they were under Charlemagne. Charlemagne's administrative center was in what is today Auckland, Germany.

Then there was Otto the Great's empire. He moved the administrative center much farther east in Germany. Then there was the Hapsburgs, who moved it into Austria. Napoleon came along, and he moved it back to Paris, France. Then Garibaldi came along, and he established it once again in Rome, Italy. Now concerning prophecy, geographical location is a generality. When we apply that into interpreting a location, we find that the location is not consistent.

I want us to go back in thought to what Babylon is, and we will get back to the Roman Empire and its geography a little bit later.

Genesis 10:8-10 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LOORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LOORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

I think that it's important to lay a foundation here, because empires or systems have beginnings, and what is laid in the foundation rarely changes through the years, especially for the better. Doing this helps us to understand God's perspective when we approach the end. God is a God of patterns, and He does things in patterns so that we will be able to follow them.

In verse 8, referring to Nimrod, it says, "he began to be a mighty one," and in verse 9 it says "he was a mighty hunter." The term "mighty" here is directly related to what God

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

says in Genesis 6:4. The time setting in Genesis 6:4 is just before the flood.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that [meaning after the flood], when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

We'll see the similarity of the words—the statement about Nimrod and the statement here about those giants who were in the earth before the flood. There is a direct tie here between these two.

We're going to look first at the word "giants." This is the word *Nephilim*, and this has nothing to do with being tall and muscular. It has everything to do with cultural leadership. You can see what God is describing here. He's describing the way the cultures were just before the flood. Nephilim has to be seen in that context there. The word is used in terms of that. These Nephilim were establishing evil, deceitful, violent and enslaving leadership. We're going to connect this with "men of renown," because that is right in the same verse: "The same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

That word "renown" literally means "name." They were men of name. In other words, they had a reputation. They were people of reputation. That term is used in a derogatory sense. These were not good characters. When it talks about Nimrod in chapter 10, in verses 8 and 9, it is used in the same sense. It is a derogatory sense in which it is seen.

Now going back to Genesis 10 again, verse 9 says Nimrod was "a mighty hunter before the LORD." Nimrod means "let us revolt." In the context of Genesis 10 there is absolutely no mention of animals. Again, the context has to do with the description of character, moral spirituality, and culture. Nimrod was a mighty man, a mighty hunter in terms of *men*. He was like the Nephilim. He was a giant of a moral and spiritual nature.

Do you know what Nimrod was doing when he was hunting? Nimrod hunted other Nephilim, and eliminated them. He got rid of the competition and established a despotic and autocratic system of government. He did that before the Lord. In other words, he did what he did right in front of God. God was aware of what he was doing. The revolt wasn't hidden.

Let's look at the term "against." It's not in there, is it? No, it's not, but the *sense* is there. It is the sense of the word "before." There are some Bibles that actually translate that

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

word "against." However, the word "before" is a proper literal translation of that Hebrew word.

Now if a person is standing before another, he can stand before the person as a friend, he can be neutral, or he can be an enemy. We're already getting all kinds of clues about Nimrod and how he stood before the Lord, because he is named "*He who revolts*." He is standing before the Lord as an enemy. He is **against** God, and the evidence for that is presented in chapter 11 which we will go to in just a moment.

Nimrod founded a city, and he named it *Babilu*. Not Babel. He called it Babilu, and Babilu means "Gate of God." Babel is what the Hebrews called it, and thus when Moses, who was a Hebrew, wrote the Bible, he called it "Babel." Babel is the Hebrew name. It sounds somewhat similar to Babilu, but Babel means "confusion."

Genesis 11:1-5 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name [a name of renown, a name of reputation], lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

God is the Judge of all. He saw what was going on. All this was done in front of Him although He was up at His location in Heaven. But as the Judge of all things, He came down to give it His eyeball right on the spot.

Genesis 11:6-9 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: [In other words, worse was to come.] and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

There is the evidence of what Nimrod (which means "Let us revolt") built, in what he called "Babilu," which was called by the Hebrews "Babel." It was a place of revolution. That was his administrative center of the revolution which was against God, and therefore we can see very clearly why some interpreters translate that word "before" in Genesis 10 as "against." Even though "before" is correct literally, Nimrod was standing before the Lord as an enemy. So God's scattering the builders shows Nimrod's, and therefore Babylon's attitude toward God. The pattern is being established.

From this point Babylon became a worldwide political, military, economic, and religious **system** bearing the same basic attitudes as its founder. It can be a nation or a system that is **against** the Lord. Babylon became the Bible's code word for what the Bible's writers in the New Testament call "**the world**." As the New Testament writers used the Greek term **cosmos**, it is an organized worldwide system **opposed** to God. Just as surely as Nimrod was opposed to God, it is an organized worldwide *system* opposed to God. That's what Babylon is. It is a system. It is a culture that is anti-Christ, anti-God. It is **EVERYWHERE!**

Again, that's what the context shows in Genesis 11. The people scattered from the Tigris-Euphrates valley, taking much of the antagonistic-to-God culture with them, and each group speaking the same language adapted it to some degree to their ethnic group. Undoubtedly each group altered it somewhat, but secular evidence reveals a common strain connecting *all* civilizations worldwide to the Tigris-Euphrates valley. It is the womb of man's civilization.

It took centuries of time for the people to migrate and to settle in their new lands, but occur it did. And so the pattern of worldly government **following** the flood was established right here in Genesis 10 and Genesis 11. God even gives us a hint in Genesis 6 that it's coming, when He says, "there were Nephilim in those days, and **after**." Nimrod was the greatest of those Nephilim.

We must understand that even though this spread worldwide, we must also understand that not everybody migrated. Some people remained in Babylon, and through the centuries became the Babylonian nation. The Chaldeans dominated them. Babylon was the name of their capital city. Hammurabi was one of their great early kings, but Nebuchadnezzar became Babylon's greatest king. He was given the dream of the great image, and was told by Daniel that he, Nebuchadnezzar, represented the head of gold. That's in Daniel 2:38.

Each of the other portions of that image represented powerful kingdoms that, in terms of time, would follow Babylon in dominating the western world through the centuries. Of

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

course these would be Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. They did not dominate the entire world. Perhaps they could have, but there is no doubt they dominated the part of the world that the Bible is concerned with, and that portion of the world is the one that the Israelitish descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in. This is very important.

But because the head represented Babylon—and the head directs the entire body—I think that we can safely assume that we are to understand that this image in Daniel 2 was also showing the continuation of the same general Babylonish system right on down to the end of the system represented by the feet and the toes. In other words, that image was showing that the pattern established under Nimrod continues right on down till today.

Geographically, the interpretation of this image in this manner places the Babylonish system firmly in what is today called widely by the media personalities, political figures, and geographers, and anthropologists as "**the WEST.**" Now what all is included when these people refer to *the West*? We shall see.

Besides the migrations from the Tigris-Euphrates valley, there were other vast migrations important to the fulfillment of end-time prophecies. Even as the dominating power system eventually geographically migrated from Babylon to Rome, so did other massive ethnic migrations occur.

II Kings 17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

II Kings 17:18-20 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

We all know that Israel was defeated by Assyria even before Babylon the nation arose to full strength, and was taken captive to Assyria. But then they, along with the Assyrians, migrated to eventually settle in central and northwest Europe. They began arriving and settling there **long before** Rome continued the Babylonish system. Another migration began whenever the Jews were defeated by Babylon and taken *into* Babylon in

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

captivity.

II Chronicles 36:17-21 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years.

As mentioned in that last verse, a small remnant of Jews returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah 70 years later, but the great bulk of them remained in Babylon and eventually migrated over the century. Many of them also ended in Russia and eastern Europe.

Ernest Martin established in a paper published in the seventies that the Chaldeans, after being overthrown by Medo-Persia, migrated first from Babylon to Tyre. When Alexander the Great conquered that area of the world, destroying Tyre and Sidon, the Babylonians then migrated into Italy and Rome, eventually making up a fairly large portion of Italy's population. Undoubtedly a number of Jews also migrated with the Babylonians.

I want you to notice how Babylon's influence is being spread into the Western world in a much more concentrated dose than the original migration begun with the confusion of languages in Genesis 11. It is directly impacting upon, and also at the same time being carried by Israelitish people. Again, a reminder that the biblical concept of Babylon is of a worldwide anti-God system that began in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, but it didn't remain there.

Here is a brief conclusion to this point: The Roman Empire is one dominant power *within* that anti-God system, and because of the migrations of the ethnic groups it ruled over the entire Mediterranean area and into Europe as far north and west to and including the British Isles. The direct supervision (if I can put it that way) and influence ended at Hadrian's Wall that separated Scotland from England.

Perhaps even more interesting is that almost all of the people who eventually make up the northern and western parts of the Roman Empire are Semitic. Israel, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans are all descended from Shem: Israel through Shem's son Arphaxad, Eber, and Abraham; Assyria through Shem's son Asshur; and Chaldea, also through Shem's son Arphaxad, but by way of Chesed.

We're going to take this one step further. From where did the peoples who colonized Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and the United States begin their colonization? Semitic Israelitish people from Northwest Europe colonized every one of them, and the colonists all came from *within* the vast area of the Roman Empire in the same manner that the people from Nimrod's kingdom took the Babylonish anti-God system with them. The colonists from Northwest Europe carried much of Rome's Babylonish culture with them, but with their own Israelitish semi-biblical twist to it.

For the past two thousand years the history of the Israelitish people has been culturally dominated by Rome's Babylonish system because they were geographically within its borders. And more importantly, they were under its religious, economic, military, and political influence. English, Dutch, French, Scots, Welsh, Irish, Belgians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Fins, and Germans colonized first. It wasn't until later, after the colonies were well-established with Semitic people, that large numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe came into the Israelitish colonies.

The Bible clearly reveals Babylon to be a worldwide entity. I submit to you, that even though the Bible doesn't directly present Rome as being geographically as massive as Babylon, it is nonetheless dominant culturally on a worldwide basis because of the migrations and influence of the Israelitish people.

The dominant religions in *all* Israelite areas are **Roman Catholicism** and its **Protestant daughters**. All of us have a basically Roman republican form of government and educational system through the government's schools.

Now why should we think that the Beast must be confined to Europe if the Israelitish people have carried its influence everywhere they have gone, except that they put a biblical twist to it, and because the Bible shows the geographical location of the dominant powers consistently changing? Remember the head of gold? The shoulders and torso of silver? **The WEST** (as termed by the media) consists of all those countries that are predominantly Semitic Roman Catholic and Protestant religiously, and are republic in form of government, and so that could include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

At the present, Europe is weak. It has no united army. Its economy is pathetically weak, and so is its political and cultural influence. They are suspicious of each other and therefore very divided, even though leadership is trying to unite them into one common market. They very much do not like it, but they are very dependent upon the United States economically and militarily.

If we are in the end-time, and the Beast arises in and is confined to Europe—and again I submit to you that unless something truly unusual, even miraculous, happens so that America and Europe do a complete flip-flop of their present conditions—we have a long time to go before Christ's return. I know that is not something any of us wants to hear, and I am not saying that it is going to stay this way. I am only saying this is the way I see it right now.

Europe is in no condition to be the Beast, but at present America is very much acting as we thought the Beast should act. This does not mean that America is the Beast of Revelation, but presently we are acting in that manner. We are the world's only super-power militarily. We dominate the world economically, culturally, and politically. I am not addressing the quality of that domination, I am only saying that it is a reality.

The world has *never* seen one nation so dominant militarily, economically, and politically at one time. Not even Rome, at the height of its power, was as dominant. And even though other nations are very envious of what God has given us—and some literally seem to hate us—they nonetheless eventually give their grudging support to us. Why do they do it? Because they're afraid of us, and they're afraid that if they do not go along with us it's not going to go well for them, especially economically. An example is the issue of Iraq.

European nations are presently resisting us for a variety of reasons. Perhaps most of all, because they see that their way of life—their national interests and their influence upon other nations—is very seriously threatened by a colossus that they are fearful of. They see America as one that they cannot literally control, but they are making efforts, because they feel that so much of their perspective regarding especially politics and economics, is very seriously threatened by the influence of the United States.

I'm going to quote from an address given by Charles Krauthammer at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. Mr. Krauthammer is a journalist with *The Washington Post* Writers Group. His address is titled: ***American Unilateralism***. I will be reading only a very small portion of it.

*Quoting from **American Unilateralism** by Charles Krauthammer.*

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

At the end of the Cold War, the conventional wisdom was that with the demise of the Soviet Empire, the bipolarity of the second half of the 20th century would yield to a multi-polar world.

I want to interject here an interpretation of that. The bipolarity of which he spoke was Russia and the United States dominating the world. In other words, there were two super-powers. The one balanced off the other. Whenever the Berlin Wall came down, it was very apparent to these other nations that the United States had won the war between the two super-powers economically. We drowned the Russians in greenbacks. We outspent them, and so they collapsed internally because of the economic conditions.

It was hoped that the United States would be a benign single power cooperating fully with all the other nations of the world. That's what they mean by a "multi-polarity" world. It's what the Europeans call "multi-culturalism" or "multi-lateralism."

[Continuing the Charles Krauthammer quote:]

You might recall the school of thought led by historian Paul Kennedy, who said that America was already in decline, suffering from imperial overstretch. There was also the Asian enthusiasm, popularized by James Fallows and others, whose thinking was best captured by the late-1980s witticism: "The United States and Russia decided to hold a Cold War. Who won? Japan."

Well, they were wrong, and ironically no one has put it better than Paul Kennedy himself, in a classic recantation emphasizing America's power. "Nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power, nothing. Charlemagne's empire was merely Western European in its reach. The Roman Empire stretched farther afield, but there was another great empire in Persia and a larger one in China. There is, therefore, no comparison."

We tend not to see or understand the historical uniqueness of this situation. Even at its height, Britain could always be seriously challenged by the next greatest powers. It had a smaller army than the land powers of Europe, and its navy was equaled by the next two navies combined. Today, the American military exceeds in spending the next *twenty* countries combined. Its Navy, Air Force and space power are unrivaled. Its dominance extends as well to every other aspect of international life—not only military, but economic, technological, diplomatic, cultural, even linguistic, with a myriad of countries

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

trying to fend off the inexorable march of MTV English.

So we bestride [we sit astride] the world like a colossus.

Brethren, journalists are beginning to wake up to the fact that the stakes in what is going on regarding Iraq are exceedingly great. Iraq's threat is not military. Iraq's threat is geopolitical and economic to the **whole world**, not just to Europe and Israel and to America.

I think that we may be seeing the first visible steps taken to bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 9:13-20, the Sixth Trumpet, and the 200-million-man army, and Revelation 16:12, which is the Sixth Vial of God's wrath, when the Euphrates River is dried up so that the kings of the East may march to the Battle of Armageddon unimpeded. It seems as though great populous powers are being drawn into that area, and though it may yet be years away, steps have to be taken in order to prepare for that event.

We're going to step away from the great world powers for just awhile and consider that the church at the end-time is also a worldwide entity. Do you think that it might not have been a coincidence that the church we came out of was called *the Worldwide Church of God*?

In one sense the church was planted, and it took root in God's calling of Abraham. To him the promises were made. Abraham's descendents were pretty much confined to the area of Canaan until Joseph was sold into Egypt and slavery. Famine eventually drove Jacob and his party of 75 into Egypt. It was here that they prospered and grew into several million people, but eventually they became slaves of the Egyptians.

They were relieved from their slavery under Moses, and in a 40-year trek returned to the Promised Land, to Canaan. Once there, it was still about 400 years until they were united into a single nation under David. It was also there, about a thousand years later, that Christ was born, and it was to those there in that tiny area that Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

After His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven, and the Church of God was born in Jerusalem. By that time, over 1800 years had passed since the birth of Abraham, and around 4,000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve, and God's spiritual purpose was still confined to a very tiny geographical area of earth—an area roughly the size of our State of New Jersey. However, that was going

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

to change dramatically.

Within a few years God gave Peter the vision of the full sheet of unclean animals. He sent Cornelius to Peter. God was opening a door to the conversion of the Gentiles and other nations of His creation besides Israel.

In a few years before the conclusion of the First Century and the death of the Apostle John, the church had expanded all the way around the Mediterranean Sea, throughout Northwest Europe, and all the way to the end of the Roman Empire, including the British Isles.

Now it, like Babylon and the Roman Empire before it, was becoming a worldwide entity. It didn't reach that status until God raised up Herbert Armstrong and sent him around the world to raise up the end-time church—the end-time generation of those who would be part of the church at Christ's return. That church never had influence like either Babylon or the Roman Empire, but a corrupted version of it, created by combining some of its tenets with outright paganism from within the Babylonian system, **did** become very influential worldwide.

The corrupted version exists primarily in the Semitic Israelitish countries. The **true** version is primarily located in the United States and the United Kingdom, although small numbers of its members are also scattered in other Israelitish nations, plus Germany, Latin America, and the Philippines.

Now a Summary to this point:

At the time of the end there are five entities that are the focus of prophecy: (1) the true church, (2) the false church, (3) the Israelitish people, (4) the Beast, and (5) Babylon. All possess some measure of worldwide influence. None of them is contained fully within the place of their origin.

I'm going to end this sermon with a brief summary of the five entities important to us at the end-time.

Entity number 1: ISRAEL

Israel began as a small nation confined to the area of Canaan, but because of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abraham, it has grown to become the most powerful group of nations the world has ever beheld. Though not completely united, there is a great deal of commonality. Its dominant nations are the families of Joseph,

Where Is the Beast? (Part 2) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Reuben, and Judah.

Regarding God's relationship with Israel, I'm going to read Amos 3:2 right here:

Amos 3:1-2 Hear this word that the LOORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth.

What a statement! This encompasses God's relationship to Israel. It is the only nation in the history of mankind that God had an intimate close personal relationship with; so close that He portrays it as a marriage—a marriage that was altered, broken by divorce, as says Jeremiah the 3rd chapter. But He has made it clear, that despite Israel's whoredoms, His faithfulness to His promises remains unbroken because of His grace, and He will **move** to rescue Israel from its stubborn blindness.

Entity number 2: THE TRUE CHURCH

When the true church was begun by God it became the spiritual *Israel of God* (Galatians 6:15-16), thus showing that **this** Israel—not the physical *nation* Israel—was His focus, and His spiritual purpose moved ahead. However, at the end, the church is influentially weak, scattered, and without an administrative headquarters.

Entity number 3: BABYLON

Babylon is no longer a secular nation but, in one sense like the church, IS a spiritual entity. Perceived in this manner, it exists in all nations. It is the worldwide anti-God system called "*the world*." It has no physical place specifically designated in the Bible as its headquarters, but as we shall see, in Revelation 17 this spiritual entity does have a geographic focus—a place where it reaches the height of its influence. Never has Babylon ever been so powerful as it is right now.

Entity number 4: THE BEAST

Rome was the administrative center of the Roman Empire when it was at the peak of its influence. It also headquartered the world's largest religious organization. It is never once directly mentioned in the Bible as anything more than a city where church brethren are located. However, its operation and its influence in secular history are significant, and geographically seems at this point in time to be most likely the administrative center of the coming Beast.

Entity number 5: THE FALSE CHURCH

The false church was begun a few short years following the birth of the true church. It has ***far*** exceeded the true church in its worldwide influence, but like Europe, it is presently in disarray, fractured by division, led by a man so physically weak that it looks as if even a weak wind would topple him, and it is rent by blatant immorality.

I could go further, but this is a good place to break, and so I will pick this theme up at the next best opportunity.