

## Where Is the Beast? (Part 1)

**The Divergence of the U.S. and E.U.**

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We're going to begin this sermon by turning to Matthew 24: 32-44. This is probably one of the better-known places in all of the Bible, right in the midst of the Olivet Prophecy.

Matthew 24:32-44 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, [meaning the things that He had previously stated], know that it [His return] is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day [of His return] and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for you know not what hour your Lord does come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.

There are quite a number of interesting things to consider in Jesus' instructions here. First is that this is not instruction given generally to the public, but rather it was directly to His disciples. Second, He specifically says that we should know from the signs given that His return is near; not specifically accurate, but at least in the ballpark—*near*. Third is the emphasis that He puts on the element of surprise. I might even say *terrifying* surprise. The impression is that the world *will* be taken completely by surprise. Fourth, the overall point of this instruction is that by being alert to the signs and taking advantage of them, we should be ready; but fifth—a final warning in verse 44, because I think that He feared that even the attention, the alertness of His disciples, would be threatened—*“therefore be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.”*

Now are you getting anxious about Christ's return? I don't mean anxious in a sense of being fearful, but anxious in terms of seeing it come to pass? First, because things are getting so bad

one wonders at times whether it can get much worse, and yet we know that it can. Second, is simply because of the pressures of enduring life. I think that there is also some measure of concerned anxiety, because it seems to be taking so *long* for it to come to pass. I have no doubt that we are in "the time of the end," but at the same time I feel, sometimes anyway, that I have been on the gun lap since 1959.

Part of our anticipation exists because we have had it drilled in our minds to watch for certain events to happen. Sometimes it looks as though those events indeed are coming to pass, and right now some of the more important events we had drilled into our minds just aren't happening in a clearly visible way. If they are, they are being worked out in a way that we aren't prepared for, and therefore probably don't see.

Jesus meant this admonition in the sense of a soldier on guard duty, alert to what is going on around him, and so watch we do! But what if our point of view—the perspective we are looking from is not correct? We might be alert, diligently and sincerely looking in that direction, but at best we're only getting a part of the picture. It might be likened to a soldier on guard duty who is alert, but looking in the wrong direction, and so the enemy sneaks up from a blind spot and surprises him, despite him being tense, looking in the direction that he was looking.

In this sermon I'm going to suggest possibilities of a different point of view regarding Revelation 17 and Revelation 18 as *a woman riding the beast*. My entire 43 years in the church I have been taught, and I have taught, that we should look for the Beast to arise in Europe; but where is it? Perhaps the most deceiving of all is that Europe isn't acting much like the Beast described in the book of Revelation. Doesn't the scripture say, "Who can make war against the Beast?" Doesn't that exclamation give you a fairly specific picture? Do you know of anybody that fears Europe? Internationally, Europe as a whole is a joke in terms of terrifying power. Europe is not coming together in the way that we anticipated. Europe is not becoming the colossus that we expected to see arise. Europe is, in reality, disunited, flat on its back politically, economically, militarily, and religiously.

I've been clipping articles pertaining to this subject for quite some time, and from time to time in this sermon I'm going to be reading excerpts from some of them that will clearly and specifically illustrate the context I am in at this present time. I want to apologize to you in advance because I'm going to do quite a bit of reading in this sermon. I don't do this very often, so I'm asking you to bear with me because I feel that it is needful as I lay a foundation for you to understand what is happening in Europe—(in *fact* ~~been~~ happening in Europe for more than a decade)—from professional journalists' points of view.

Here is an article dated February 2, 2003, written by Anne Applebaum, a writer for *The Washington Post*. I took this from *The Charlotte Observer* where it was excerpted and appeared with another article on the Op/Ed page.

Quoting Anne Applebaum:

Old Europe. If [Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld had been deliberately searching for a way to simultaneously irritate the leadership of Europe's two largest countries, expose their deepest

national insecurities and undermine the entire European Union political project, which has long revolved around a "Franco-German axis," he couldn't have found a better way to put it. He was also, as it happens, correct, possibly more correct than he knows. Although all concerned vociferously deny it, Europe indeed is beginning to divide - slowly, unevenly but perceptibly - into two very distinct camps.

Even though Europe is planning uniting far beyond the prophesied ten nations, to twenty-five nations by 2007, the attempt to unite, combined with the laws being enacted by those people in Brussels—enacted to make standards uniform—are producing the opposite effect, because each of these nations involved has personal interests to protect. The more laws that are enacted by this group in Brussels, the more it is irritating these other nations. Europe is, in fact, declining in many areas important to being a super power that reflects what the Bible shows the world-dominating Beast to be.

Here is another series of comments taken from "Prudentfair.com," a British website, from an article by Marshall Auerback titled "*International Perspective*," and it appeared on January 28, 2003. Mr. Auerback is a Brit.

Quoting Marshall Auerback:

Disagreements over farm policy, Zimbabwe, and, now Iraq: the aspiration for a common European defence and foreign policy today looks as futile as Don Quixote charging at windmills. Does this division have implications for a common European economic policy as well, notably in regard to Britain's future membership in Europe's economic and monetary union (EMU)?

Aside from the obvious question of what this growing divide means in regards to future policy in Iraq, this split between the UK on the one hand, and France and Germany on the other, reflect broader political, economic and philosophic divergences between the two blocs - between Anglo-American neo-liberalism and continental Europe's "social market" model.

Donald Rumsfeld's comments about Germany and France representing "Old Europe" might have struck a nerve in Berlin and Paris, but his observation that Europe's political (and, indeed, economic) centre of gravity has moved eastward is unassailable. Even France's *Le Monde* conceded as much: "It is perhaps unpleasant to hear it, but for the moment it is unavoidable; the countries of East Europe are massively inclined to follow automatically American leadership in defence and foreign policy." The violent reaction of the French political class in particular might say more about that nation's delicate national psyche than anything else. But whether by accident or design both France and Germany have now been put on notice that their opinions matter less

and less in the real world, and that their ability to control the leadership of Europe is also in decline.

Things pertaining to fulfilling prophecies are happening in Europe, but they are not going in the direction or at anywhere near the speed that I personally expected because of what I was taught earlier. But what if portions of "the Beast" that will affect this end-time configuration are arising elsewhere, or what if nations important to the fulfilling of certain prophecies connected to the "*end-time-Beast*" prophecies have already arisen and are exercising their power? Then I'm not looking in the right direction.

I'm going to begin a series of quotes extracted from yet another article much longer and far more detailed than the articles clipped from a newspaper or a news magazine. This article deals with areas specifically important to any nation deemed to be important as a world power influencing other nations. The article reveals *major* weaknesses in Europe's economic, military, and demographic makeup as compared to the United States. It leads one to understand that Europe at this time is not anything anybody needs to fear to the extent that one doesn't want to risk offending them as one might want to risk offending "the Beast" of Revelation 13.

This article is taken from *The American Enterprise Online*, December 2002 issue, and is titled "Old And In The Way." Can you get the picture here? This man is going to say, "Europe, get out of the way!" It is authored by Karl Zinsmeister. The title is especially interesting because he wrote this *long* before Donald Rumsfeld made his now-famous "Old Europe" statement.

Zinsmeister is an American and is employed by the State Department. He wrote this article in March/April 2002. He wrote it following his attendance at a conference in Warsaw, Poland in February, 2002. He was the lone American representative to present an overview to those assembled—an overview of the American culture. His report is a summary and a response to the continuous and vile America bashing that occurred throughout that conference.

The America bashing that took place during that meeting is merely a reflection of what is going on in Europe all the time now, publicly; but only now are we becoming aware, because it is intensifying and has hit the public. It is good for us to understand that the America bashing has been going on for quite a period of time in the hushed and hallowed halls of political diplomacy. Those in power in Europe have brought it into the open by taking advantage of the Iraq situation in an attempt to stop the American Juggernaut.

I'm going to begin reading from Mr. Zinsmeister's article which is actually like an essay of pretty long proportion.

"Old And In The Way" by Karl Zinsmeister, as appeared in *The American Enterprise Online*, December 2002 issue.

This simple reality needs to be faced squarely by Americans: In a great variety of areas--foreign policy, demography, religion, economics--Americans and Europeans are growing apart.

I want you to understand that the word "growing" is important to the thrust of this article. The

man is saying that while the United States is still growing in areas men feel important to national greatness, Europe is declining and divided, despite what it might look like on a map.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

While the September 11 attacks deepened American sobriety, patriotic feeling, and national resolution, in Europe they merely created one more flashpoint for division. European elites, already worried they won't be able to keep up with America over the next generation, are now approaching panic as the U.S. coalesces, during its September 11 recovery, into an even steelier and more determined colossus.

Mark that word "colossus." It doesn't come up again in this article, but it will later, maybe in the next sermon.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

Some Europeans complain that the U.S. is more and more heading off on its own without them. They are right. America's psychic link with Europe, I suggest, is fading extremely rapidly.

Since the end of the Cold War Americans have felt much less intertwined with Europeans, and at least as interested in China, Mexico, India, and the Middle East as we are in Europe.

If enough of these divergences accumulate, however, Americans may eventually be forced to conclude that, as economist Irwin Stelzer has put it, many European nations "are ceasing, or may have already ceased, to be our friends."

The U.S. will never be hostile to Europe; there are too many links of kinship and shared purpose for that. But neither do I expect the U.S. will have especially warm relations with the E.U. 15 or 20 years hence.

It isn't just differing policies that are splitting the E.U. from the U.S. It is also sheer competition. The very idea of forming a united states of Europe comes in large measure from a desire to keep up with America. Today, "much of the psychological drive for Euro-nationalism is provided by anti-Americanism," notes John O'Sullivan, one of the contributors to our symposium on page 30. During his term as president of the European Union, the prime minister of Sweden, Goran Persson insisted that functioning "as a balance to U.S. domination" was Europe's most important role. [JWR comment: That puts us in a position of being enemies.] The view of many European leaders is that "whatever diminishes the stature of the United States is of benefit to Europe," states Jeffrey Gedmin (another of our symposiasts). Many of the economic choices, cultural initiatives, and foreign policy decisions

being in Europe today are animated by simple competitive envy.

"It would be a misreading of Europe's political elites to see anti-American complaints as isolated gripes which can be overcome, one by one, through patient dialogue," warned Michael Gove, a perceptive editorialist for London's Times, when I visited his office. "Europe is not begging to differ in particulars, but beginning to diverge in fundamentals." [JWR comment: We're going in very different directions.]

The philosophical differences between Europe and the U.S. are reflected and magnified in three critical structural breaks: 1) Europe has surrendered much of its economic dynamism. 2) Europe has lost its stomach for military action, substituting an exaggerated confidence in diplomacy. And, 3) Europe is on a path to population collapse.

First we're going to look at economics. What you might do in your notes is to compare this part of Zinsmeister's report with Revelation 18 and what it says about "the Beast." Actually, it's about the woman that is riding the Beast.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

First economics. We have conventionally thought of Europe as having about the same standard of living as Americans. This is less and less true. For the European Union as a whole, GDP [Gross Domestic Produce] per capita is presently less than two thirds of U.S. levels. America's poorest sub-groups, like African Americans, now have higher average income levels than the typical European.

What's behind this? For one thing, Americans work harder: 72 percent of the U.S. population is at work, compared to only 58 percent in the E.U. American workers also put in more hours. And U.S. workers are more productive--an E.U. worker currently produces 73 cents worth of output in the same period of time a U.S. worker creates a dollar's worth.

Now here is a brief aside. I'm going to quote from an article written by Ted Halstead which was excerpted into *The Charlotte Observer* from *The Atlantic Monthly*. It's interesting, because this article, as it appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, had nothing at all to do with economics.

A quote from Ted Halstead's article from *The Atlantic Monthly* as it appeared in *The Charlotte Observer*, February 16, 2003:

American parents have the least amount of free time to spend with their children; indeed, the average American works nine weeks more each year than the average European.

Do you understand why? It's because they take so many vacations. I think I'm correct when I say the German government promises each worker at least six weeks vacation a year. No wonder their productivity per person is abysmally low.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

The locomotive of Europe is the German economy, which has been in a serious mess for more than a decade. Germany's annual growth rate over the past ten years has been a limp 1.4 percent. Among the major industrial nations, only Japan (a true basket case) has done worse. The German labor market has become one of the most inflexible and uncompetitive in the world, which is why unemployment has been stuck at 9-10 percent for years, even amid a global economic boom. [JWR comment: In 2002 it was 11%.]

Now I'm going to quote something that appeared in *USA Today* newspaper, Monday, February 10, 2003. The article is titled: "Germans' Coziness puts nation at risk," by Steven Komarow. The following statistics are regarding Gross Domestic Products, and Gross Domestic Products for 2002 for the following countries was as is listed here:

Japan was -0.3% (They went backwards.)

United Kingdom increased 1.6% .

Sweden increased 1.6% .

Spain increased 1.9%

Portugal increased by 0.3%

Netherlands increased by 0.2%

Italy increased by 0.3%

Ireland increased by 3.9%

Greece increased by 3.2%

France increased by 0.9%

Belgium increased by 0.7%

Austria increased by 0.9%

Germany increased 0.3%

United States increased by 2.4%

As bad as you might think it to be in the United States during this year, the American

percentage of increase of Gross Domestic Product in 2002 was eight times greater than Germany's and Italy's, and almost three times greater than France's.

Quoting again now from Zinsmeister's article:

Over the long haul, these sorts of disparities add up to crunching economic divergences. Since 1970, America has produced 57 million new jobs. The E.U. nations, with an even bigger population, have produced 5 million (most of them with the government). [JWR comment: Governments don't produce anything. They just regulate things and get in the way.] A startling 40 percent of the unemployed in Europe have been out of work for more than a year, compared to only 6 percent in the U.S.

If no visible alternative loomed, citizens might not realize that better ways of achieving prosperity exist. But any European with eyes can observe that the United States makes very different economic choices, with very different results. Here is one root of the resentment felt by European elites, who would otherwise have a free hand to mold their societies according to their own visions. "The anti-American alliance," noted Michael Gove in the London Times earlier this year, "resents American economic success because it reminds them that their preferred cocktails of protectionism, state regulation, subsidy, and intervention constrict growth. America's practical success is a standing rebuke to their abstract beliefs."

That's all on economics. He had much more, but we're going to move on to his second.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

A second divergence splitting Europe from America is defense strategy. When it comes to guarding the peace, current European leaders put all their faith in the endless talk, commissioneering, and resolution-writing of collective diplomacy--what they call "multilateralism" (a term nearly as feeble as the concept). Given Europe's history with the Treaty of Versailles, Neville Chamberlain's Munich Agreement, a biological weapons "ban" secretly violated with impunity by the Soviets and scads of other signatories, plus many more recent failures of "let's pretend" diplomacy in places ranging from Iraq to Rwanda to Bosnia, it's inexplicable that Europeans would bet all future peace on the security of parchment walls. But that's exactly what they're doing.

Charles Krauthammer diagnoses the problem this way: "After half a century under the American umbrella, West Europeans have come to believe that their freedom is self-generated. It is by now, they feel, a simple birthright, as natural as the air they breathe. When they see the

United States slaying dragons abroad--yesterday Afghanistan, today Iraq, tomorrow who knows who--they see a cowboy whose enthusiasms threaten to disturb the perfect order of things, best symbolized by the hushed paper-shuffling at the International Criminal Court."

At the same time they've bet the farm on Swiss-cheese treaties, the Europeans have pared their military spending to the point where the entire continent now has approximately the same force-projecting power as the Swiss navy. [JWR comment: Switzerland doesn't have a navy, brethren!]

Without admitting it, the Europeans have essentially decided to rely on the U.S. to keep them safe.

Until Europe demonstrates an equivalent willingness to commit its sons and its treasure to national defense, all talk of building a formidable independent military force in Europe is merely hot air. Wishful thinking will not man and equip a carrier battle group, build a missile shield, or otherwise instill the necessary awe in the world's tyrants.

Is Saddam Hussein afraid of *them*? He's afraid of *us*, not them, and he is playing them like a violin, because all they want to do is talk.

[Continuing the Zinsmeister quote:]

Of course, most European elites deny such measures are necessary. To quote my British friend Mr. Gove again: "Europe's leaders seek to manage conflict through the international therapy of peace processes, the buying off of aggression with the Dane geld of aid or the erection of a paper palisade of global law, which the unscrupulous always punch through. Europeans may convince themselves that these developments are the innovations of a continent in the van of progress, but they are really the withered autumn fruits of a civilization in decline."

A final, crushing, structural divergence separating America and Europe is demography [which is the study of population]. Birth rates in Europe have been catastrophically low for two decades. Europe is thus getting old and starting to shrink. The U.S. remains a youthful and fast-growing nation.

It takes 2.1 lifetime births per woman just to keep a population stable over the long run. Today, German women are having less than 1.4 children each--only two thirds the level needed to maintain zero population growth. Italians and Spaniards are at a shockingly low rate of 1.2 lifetime births per woman. The E.U. as a whole is far below the level needed simply to replace its current population.

The social, economic, and geopolitical ramifications are stark. At current

fertility rates, Germany's total population will shrink from 82 million to 67 million over the next 50 years. Italy will tumble from 58 to 39 million people. Over that very same period, the population of the U.S. (where the birth rate is more than half-again as high) will go from 283 to 410 million.

And it isn't only the raw numbers that will change; the composition of the population will also shift dramatically. As births remain below the replacement level year after year, and old people live longer and longer, a geometric spiral forms, and a society becomes elderly. By the end of my [Mr. Zinsmeister's] expected lifespan in the 2030s, fully half of all Germans will be over 50. Italians will be even older--half over 54. (The U.S., by comparison, will have a median age in the upper 30s.) The European Union will be a very gray place, and within its boundaries every single employed individual will have his own elderly person 65 or older to provide for through the public pension system. This is not a recipe for an energetic society.

Europe's disinterest in childbearing is a crisis of confidence and optimism. It is a spiritual indicator, reflecting millions of individual decisions to pursue self interest and material well-being instead of participating in the human future. These individual decisions will have profound collective effects.

Among other effects, "a weakened Europe is likely to grow more resentful toward America," warned British journalist Charles Moore in a lecture to the New Atlantic Initiative last year, "rather than blaming themselves."

Though a nasty flame-out is conceivable, I will close with a less alarmist yet blunt prediction about Europe's likely future. Fifty years hence, when my oldest children approach retirement, I expect that today's European dream of achieving economic and military superpower status will be a dim memory, and that some more realistic alternative will have replaced it.

At that point, under current trends, the largest Western European country--Germany--will rank about 23rd on the list of the world's biggest nations. Europe as a whole will contain in the neighborhood of 360 million people and falling. Americans will be at 550 million and rising. The U.S. economy will have grown to more than twice the size of Europe's.

I expect that Americans and Europeans will be reasonably amiable. But it will be China, India, Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, Vietnam, the Arab world, and Turkey that the U.S. will have to huddle with most earnestly at important international conclaves--not Europe.

That is, frankly, not the circumstance most Americans would prefer. By rights, Europe and America ought to remain close cousins. But Europe's current choices in politics, economics, social and family life, and moral reasoning unmistakably suggest that a less familial relationship is emerging.

[The end of quoting the Zinsmeister article.]

As you can probably tell, things are not going well in Europe, and they have not been going well for about the last ten to twelve years. Even though they are gradually uniting, they are also in reality declining in power and influence, and that is not what the visionaries anticipated regarding a united Europe.

With that foundation, I want to emphasize to you that what I'm going to speak on from here on is not church doctrine. I am thinking out of the box. I'm speculating, based on what I see going on right now, and I'm actually looking to you for help, for ideas, for criticisms and suggestions. Now events may happen that will change my point of view in the future, but right now it looks like either a major portion of "the Beast" may be arising in the nations of Israel, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, or the woman riding the Beast in Revelation 17 consists of the nations of Israel, led by the United States and the United Kingdom. That is the one that I presently consider most likely at this point.

Please understand that this is a large subject and that we can only cover a small portion of the scriptures that pertain to it, and that there is very much that is going to go unanswered today. But because of the way things are going in the world, if neither of these two possibilities is correct, then I will make two suggestions to you: (1) We either have a great deal more time before Christ returns, or (2) traumatic and miraculous events are going to have to happen both in Israel, and the United States in particular, and in Europe for it to arise, ...solely in Europe in my lifetime, and exercise the power the Bible shows it to have. If those traumatic and miraculous events do not occur soon, but world events continue at the pace they normally move, then we have a very long time to go before Christ's return, and I and many of you will be long dead before that occurs.

This sermon today is going to be focused primarily on providing information showing that the Roman Empire portion of the various visions given in Daniel and Revelation need not necessarily be confined to the boundaries of the *ancient* Roman Empire if the past historical patterns continue. Right now I can't see why they shouldn't. God does things in patterns.

Luke 12:49-57 I am come to send fire on the earth: and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose you that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, No: but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her

daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And he said also to the people, When you see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway you say, There comes a shower: and so it is. And when you see the south wind blow, you say: There will be heat: and it comes to pass. You hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time? Yes, and why even of yourselves judge you not what is right?

This is a very interesting section because it shows that in a major way Jesus thought a lot like we do regarding the time of the end. The word "fire" in verse 49 indicates "judgment." "I am come to send judgment upon the earth." And then He says, "What will I?" Do you know what He means by that? He means, "How I wish that it was already kindled!" He wanted to get on with it, even as we do today. However, in verse 50 He shows that certain things have to come and be done first. In this particular case He is referring to His death, and then His resurrection.

There is always more depth and clarity that can be made from the things that we see in the scripture, because God is faithful to reveal more as we grow and come closer to its fulfillment. I think it's pretty evident that the church's history shows that we don't always hit the right understanding of prophecy right off. We might get a piece of it. We might see a vague outline of it, but most of the time we don't hit it right off.

Let's go to Ezekiel 6:14. This scripture appears in a variety of different ways over thirty times in the book of Ezekiel alone.

Ezekiel 6:14 So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yes, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and *they shall know that I am the LORD.*

We don't always interpret prophecy correctly. Sometimes we get one thing right, and other things wrong; maybe very frequently wrong, or a frequent number of them wrong. But in any case, God shows here in Ezekiel 6:14 that this sort of thing is very common, because God says "He will do nothing except He reveal His secret to His servants the prophets," but He doesn't reveal it all at once. He reveals it in little steps, and we may see little steps of it as we go along. We don't get the whole thing, but there is going to come a time when we will see it.

So God's pattern is to reveal things a little bit at a time as we go along. In that way He keeps us intrigued and interested. He knows how to keep our anticipation up without spilling the whole beans all at once, because the chances are if He does that, we would probably lose interest a lot more quickly than the way that He does it.

Now what does He tell us in that verse 14? He is telling us that most of the time we are not going to understand the fullness of prophecy until we are either involved directly in it, and then the scriptures begin to flood our mind and we see the pieces all falling together, *or*, we won't get it until it's completely fulfilled. But even then sometimes He's going to have to describe it to us, and explain it to us. I'll give you a real good example of that. When Jesus was crucified and

resurrected, He walked with two men it seems like most of the day, on the road to Emmaus, and they didn't understand the scriptures pertaining to Christ's death and resurrection until Christ explained it to them *after* the fact. That is what God means by this in Ezekiel 6: 14. It's not at all unusual that we don't get the whole picture all at once. The pieces will be revealed by Him little by little.

Let's go back again to Luke 12. In verse 54 He says, "When you see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway you say, There comes a shower; and so it is." People are able to foretell, to forecast the weather by the signs that they see, and they know that certain kinds of weather will follow. Jesus is using that as an illustration. In verse 54 it says that He spoke this *to the people*, which means to the people in general, and not to His disciples specifically. He called these people hypocrites because they were able to forecast the weather, but they couldn't forecast what they were going through prophetically at the very time that it was happening.

Now this is the point that I would like to make. If he called these people "hypocrites" who were *not* part of His group and expected *them* to understand the times that they were living in, what does He expect of *us*? Surely He expects more. In that illustration in the book of Luke with the two on the road to Emmaus, He called them "fools." These were His disciples, which shows that He expected more of them. He then opened their minds to the scriptures, and it says that He went all through the Old Testament, as we call it today, explaining that the Son of Man should have had to go through this. "Why didn't you understand it?" So how much does He expect of us? I don't know. It's a good prod though to think about that.

Daniel 2: 32-35 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay: You saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken into pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel 2: 37-40 You, O king [Nebuchadnezzar] are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven has he given into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all. You are this head of gold. And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Daniel 2: 44-45 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom

shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold: the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

When Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold, it shows us a biblical principle that a king in prophecy represents the entire kingdom. In verses 39 and 40, the "after you" indicates four successive world-ruling empires from the time of the Chaldean empire of Nebuchadnezzar until the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. So what we see in overview is an outline of world history from a Gentile perspective, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and coming all the way down through the various kingdoms until the image is struck on the foot by the Stone, representing the Kingdom of God, or Christ.

This prophecy brings us right into our present time that we are in—the time of the end—the time when can expect that the Stone, sometime off in the not-too-distant future, will strike this image on the feet. So we can look for that last empire, represented by the feet and toes, to exist today, or either coming together, or shortly will be together. History has shown that these four empires, beginning with the head of gold, to be the Chaldean (the head of gold), the Medo-Persian (the silver), the Greco-Macedonian (the brass) and the Roman (the iron). The Roman Empire existed from BC 31 to 476 AD. Secular history shows that a people historians call the Vandals defeated Rome. But Rome was revised and re-established as "the Holy Roman Empire" under Emperor Justinian in 554 AD.

Daniel 7:1-7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I behold, and to another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads: and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly: and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: and it had ten horns.

Daniel 7:17-20 These great beasts, which were four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. [Remember, a king represents the kingdom.] But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

Daniel 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.

Daniel 7:24-27 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

What we have here is a further explanation of, showing national characteristics, but this time designed into animals of the same four kingdoms that appear in Daniel 2. Instead of being metals—gold, silver, brass, iron—now we have animals, indicating national characteristics of those four kingdoms, symbolized by the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the beast that was diverse from all the others.

The important thing to note here is that this illustration in Daniel 7 is a parallel of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. This illustration in Daniel 7 confirms that the legs of iron of the Daniel 2 image and the fourth beast of Daniel 7 both exist at Christ's return, fight against Him, and are defeated. So even as the feet and toes of the Daniel 2 image will be at the time of the end, so will this diverse beast. They are one and the same.

Revelation 12:3-4 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her

child as soon as it was born.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The dragon of verse 3 is identified as Satan in verse 9. This identification provides the lead-in to the introduction of the end-time beast in Revelation 13:1. Let's look there.

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns; and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The similarity between Revelation 13:1 and Revelation 12, verses 3 and 9, show a direct relationship between the dragon, viewed in heaven in Revelation 12, and the beast rising on earth. This relationship between those two is further confirmed in Revelation 13:4, where it says, "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." Revelation 13:4 shows that the beast on earth receives its power from the dragon.

There is another commonality, and that is that both the dragon in heaven and the beast on earth have seven heads and ten horns. But there are two differences. One is in the number of crowns—seven on the dragon, ten on the beast. The second is that the crowns on the dragon are on the heads; the crowns on the beast are on the horns.

I'm not exactly sure what these differences mean, but they may show, lead us to a relationship, or show us a relationship between the beast of Revelation 13 and the beast of Daniel 7. The beast in Revelation 13 is a further illustration of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, with its ten horns—the ten horns representing ten kings who will all be part of the beast, and present at Christ's return.

I don't think that there is any doubt that the legs and feet of iron of Daniel 2, the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and the beast of Revelation 13, 17, and 18, all reveal the Roman Empire, its revival, and some of its end-time configuration.

The fourth beast of Daniel 2, the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and the beast of Revelation 13 are all showing aspects of the beast as it appears at the end-time just before Christ's return.

We will stop there, and the next time I speak we will pick it up right there after a little bit of a review.