

Spiritual Bubblegum 2  
The Strength and Weight of the iron  
A commentary on the “*iron*” feature of Daniel 2

By  
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When Imperial Rome passed away the nations of modern Europe became the descendants of that vast and great Empire that once ruled supreme in the territory of the same name. Though divided at the least by language and culture they nevertheless shared this very common bond that united them all. For at least three centuries the European nations were dominated by the overwhelming influence of everything the Roman Empire offered. The legacy of the Roman yoke may be still realized in the infrastructure and architecture of European politics, education, social, economic and legal systems, at the very least. It is fair to say that Greco-Romanism lies in the very DNA of European history and life.

But in the latter half of Europe’s history there existed a much stronger bond of commonality of even greater significance. This bond would transcend any and all limitations traditionally imposed by nationalism, race, language or culture and would encompass all major aspects of European life. It would surpass the legacy realized from a common subjection to the powerful Roman Empire to a much greater and significant degree.

European history experienced one powerfully enduring feature of their existence by way of a *common subjection to the rule of Papal Rome for more than twelve centuries!* And the legacy of such a long period of domination must also find itself to be much stronger than the former inheritance from Imperial Rome. This is so in spite of the convulsive effects of the Protestant Reformation that eventually severed the power of the Papal See in many of its former strongholds-an admission that is painful and regrettably true.

As explosive as the Reformation was in European history its effect has apparently proven to be less enduring than that of Papal Rome. If the declining rate of Church attendance and membership

in several European nations is any indication of the level of European spirituality then the Reformation is all but a blur in an otherwise thoroughly Catholic landscape. How much can this be attributed to the success of the Counter-Reformation is anyone's guess. The facts today however speak plainly of a Europe more favorable to the growth and extension of the Catholic faith than the children of the Reformation.

This development ought not to surprise students of prophecy as the evidence of this condition is clearly revealed in Daniel 2. There the "*iron*" Empire of pagan Rome when it ceased to exist as "*one*" would continue to exist as "*toes*" numbering ten, by virtue of the iron reaching down beyond the feet itself. The presence of the iron has prolonged representative of the enduring power of Papal Rome throughout Europe as a dominant part of its life until its eventual and entire destruction by the *Divine Stone*. That end in itself is a testament to the injurious nature of this common connection and subjugation to Papal Rome.

Yet another notably unique feature of the these European kingdoms is this: though Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Imperial Rome each sought and obtained universal dominion, tolerating no rivals in the process, according to prophecy *another state of things would arise*. Eventually, instead of being subjected to Pagan Rome as provinces of that empire *by force of arms*, these ten nations would divide the heritage of Pagan Rome, and, *as independent kingdoms, voluntarily give their allegiance* to Papal Rome for the greater part of their existence.

Thus this powerful legacy of Papal Rome than challenges and perhaps dwarfs that of pagan Empire is sufficient reason for her to claim Europe as her own, even in the former strongholds of the Protestant Reformation. Though recent studies have revealed what is already known- that European Christianity is experiencing a troubling decline in Church attendance and membership, Rome still sees in Europe:

*"...an impetuous return of religion to the public square. Here, religion means: the Catholic Church, reinvigorated by the*

*political charisma of Karol Wojtyla and by the theological guidance of Benedict XVI; the Protestant churches of American evangelical strain; the Orthodox churches, with their Byzantine model...*” (Sandro Magister, *Christians, Islam and the future of Europe*, undated online article at [www.chiesa.com](http://www.chiesa.com))

Though the “separated brethren” were named as part of the European spiritual *reinvigoration* the forceful presence of the *iron* feature continues to be dominant in the nations of Europe- for, according to the prophecy, the iron is still present there, though lacking in cohesiveness. Scripture refers to this fact as being “divided...partly strong and partly broken...” unable to cleave one to another (Dan.2:41-43).

Yet in this regard, Cardinal Ruini, Vicar General of Rome and close confidant of the present Pope Benedict, in a speech delivered on Feb.11<sup>th</sup> 2005 in which he admits extensive use of an essay of then Cardinal Ratzinger, discusses Christianity’s place in Europe. In this speech he traces briefly the Christianization of Europe and the integration of the Christian faith into Greco-Roman culture that enveloped Europe. Then he states that “...*from this would be born a new Christian civilization in which the Greek and Roman heritage would continue to live, though certainly in a profoundly renovated form.*” (Cardinal Camillo Ruini, speech entitled *Christianity’s Place in the New Europe*, 2/11/2005), as reported in [www.chiesa.com](http://www.chiesa.com).

But that *renovated form* of which he speaks and by which Greco-Roman culture yet survives is seen in the *iron* diffusing down the legs, feet and toes of the image. And that iron that permeates the toes, at least is certainly no longer exclusively pagan but intrinsically papal- the renovated form of of Cardinal Ruini. Thus by reason of this observation we can understand how both Ruini and Ratzinger could describe Europe’s fundamental needs “*in order to have a future*” as “*a good awareness of its own values and a respect...for its own history.*”

Notwithstanding the ecumenical flavor included in the European revival that the Papacy itself admits to be taking place, she however hastens to explain that Italy, the crown jewel of European Catholicism, “*has a particular responsibility...is entrusted in a special way with the task of defending, on Europe’s behalf, the religion and cultural heritage bequeathed to Rome by the apostles Peter and Paul.*”

Rome has, by these very words entrusted the religious and cultural guardianship of Europe, claimed responsibility for the spiritual welfare of those nations simply because in her eyes and according to her interpretation of history, that responsibility was given her by the Peter and Paul. Of course, no evidence to support this *bequeathing* is ever offered.

Here again her attitude is clear evidence of the weight and strength of the *iron* feature of that image manifesting itself as it “breaks in pieces...subdues...and bruises”(Dan.2:40), while at the same time continuing to disseminate the tyranny, superstitions and falsehoods of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Pagan Rome collectively.

The influential Cardinal Manning, one of Rome’s own would utter an almost prophetic observation that “*A power had grown up in Rome, far more imperial over the reason and will of man than the iron despotism of the Roman Empire.*” (Cardinal Manning, *Temporal Power*, Preface, p.xlii as quoted in *Light for the Last Days* by H.Grattan Guinness, Chap.4, 1888).

The domination of the *iron* continues as Wordsworth observes: “*The European kingdoms, which arose at the dissolution of the Roman Empire, surrendered themselves to the dominion of the Church of Rome, and were, for centuries, subject to the Papacy...she still treats them as her own.*” (Christopher Wordsworth, DD, *Union with Rome*, Chap.2, London, 1924-online edition at EIPS.org).

In conclusion the following points may be considered as we engage the image of Daniel 2 and its particular feature of iron.

- 1) There is no Biblical distinction made concerning the “*iron*.” In the prophecy iron is iron, whether pagan or Papal but there is *a kind of consistency* suggested by the Author which we may be relevant to our times.
- 2) The iron spreads itself throughout the legs, feet and toes with no hint of transition from pagan to Papal phase-indicating that perhaps end-time Rome is as much pagan as she is Papal?
- 3) The fact that the iron did not stop at the heel or instep of the image but continued thru the toes indicates that Rome will persist in involving itself in the affairs of Europe who will eventually turn against her (Rev.17&18).
- 4) Though the Protestant Reformation severely reduced the sphere of Papal domination in Europe, Rome holds these nations dearly as her own, in trust, recently advancing a novel concept of an “*Enlarged Europe*” which “*extends to Russia, North America, South America and Australia.*” ([www.chiesa.com](http://www.chiesa.com) Article entitled The Religious Geopolitics of Cardinal Ruini” Feb.11, 2005).
- 5) Rome’s concept of an “Enlarged Europe” as articulated by Cardinal Ruini to include countries beyond the traditional geographic confines of that region is based on the shared European religious and cultural roots. It is this to which she continually appeals- the common bond that exists despite the “*different characteristics*” of these nations. She yet insists that “*...with globalization the common aspect will predominate, and will predominate even more.*” Ibid.
- 6) As Protestant Europe has all but collapsed as a force for Christianity leaving the way open for the resurgent and ambitious Catholic thrust, so too a fallen Protestant America will likewise allow for serious inroads into what was once considered a bastion of religious freedom and Christianity.