



Wilfred J. Hahn is senior partner with *Hahn Investment Stewards & Company Inc.*, a global portfolio management firm. For more perspectives and resources on world economic and financial trends of interest to Christians, visit his website [www.eternalvalue.com](http://www.eternalvalue.com) for additional resources and subscribe to the free newsletter, *Eternal Value Review: World Review and Market Monitor*.

# Finding the Traces of the Beast Behind Modernity



Just how much of a product are we of our times and the past history of humanity? It is tempting to think we are safely above the influences of an unbelieving world and the legacies of past societies ... even the negative influences of our own families. We might be persuaded to think we are different, better, and more modern, untouched by the legacies and mistakes of past societies and environments. But is that so?

**T**he Pharisees and scribes of Christ's time certainly had this perspective. They too tried to disassociate themselves from the past — the sins of their forefathers and the blindness of their nation — thinking themselves more enlightened and informed. Christ turned this attitude against them, saying: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers

with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matthew 23:29–32 ASV).

The scribes incriminated themselves the very moment they identified themselves as descendants of their fathers, as members of the same tribe and human race. Why? Because we all are sinners and come short of the glory of God. Who is to say that any of us, possessing the "human condition," and living in other times would have done any

differently than past generations? Who, given a pinstriped suit, a high position and \$100 million, wouldn't be corrupted? In fact, you may be interested to learn how much of our supposedly Christian society and way of life in these last days originated in earlier pagan nations from Babylon to Rome. Our pagan ancestors remain with us under many guises.

The Bible indicates that the ruling world regime of the last days bears the characteristics of at least four prior world empires. Revelation 13 presents a beast that is a composite of the four



The significance of the Middle East is one of the fascinating aspects of human history. The history of humanity starts in this region — the Garden of Eden, Sumer, Mesopotamia, Shinar, Ur, Chaldees, etc. Antiquity branches out from there to the ends of the earth. From this area of the world came Abraham, a man of faith whom God selected to become the patriarch of a people who were to bring His light to the world.

previous world kingdoms — Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The same depictions of the four world kingdoms that Daniel foresaw in animal form — the lion, bear and leopard and the terrible creature — are shown here as one beast (See Daniel 7). Why are all four shown as one animal in Revelation 13? Just what are the characteristics that mark that last-day regime? Is it similar to our society today?

#### Right from the Cradle

The significance of the Middle East is one of the fascinating aspects of human history. The history of humanity starts in this region — the Garden of Eden, Sumer, Mesopotamia, Shinar, Ur, Chaldees, etc. Antiquity branches out from there to the ends of the earth. From this area of the world came Abraham, a man of faith whom God selected to become the patriarch of a people who were to bring His light to the world. From this point forward, human history depicted by the Bible — inspired by the very God of creation and the universe — revolves around the descendents of the Hebrews. Why? For salvation comes from the Jews (John

4:22) and Christ's final kingdom on earth will be the completion of King David's throne, the royal line and scepter of Judah. This final kingdom will rule the whole earth — the entire earth, not just Israel, but also the entire world from Chile to China. The Kingdom of God will be on earth for 1,000 years. Seen backwards from that future vantage point, much other history apart from what is recorded in the Bible appears rather insignificant. The Aztec empire, the Moguls, the Chinese dynasties, the Great British Empire, or even America — none earns any direct or literal mention in the timeline of the oppression of the Jew.

Only seven world kingdoms are mentioned in the Bible (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome ... both old and revived). All of them intersect with the Hebrews. All of them will find at least part of their kingdoms geographically extending into the Middle East. The last of these kingdoms, the revived Roman Empire (whether represented by the European Union alone or not) is now just one country-breadth away from again spanning into the Middle East. If the present accession

plans of Turkey proceed to form an association of some kind with the EU, the revived Roman Empire will again extend into the ancient Middle East.

Again we can ask: Why is the Middle East the cradle of mankind and its culture? It is one thing to say that world history navigates around the timeline of the Jew because God has planned it that way. But why does the history of civilized mankind find its roots in this arid region as we see it today in the first place? It did not happen by happenstance. Of course, God created the world and therefore ordered the conditions that would allow mankind to radiate worldwide influence into the future from this region. But, it is interesting to reflect on the means God used to pre-determine this outcome.

In his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies*, Jared Diamond, an anthropologist and Pulitzer-prize-winning author, provides some insightful perspectives on the question of how God shaped such a destiny. Mr. Diamond shows how natural geography concentrated human development in the Middle East in early times and then spread

Why could horses from Asia be tamed and not zebras in Africa? Simply because God designed it that way. It is for these causes that farming and commerce first thrived in the Middle East. Therefore, its early societies stood to have the most influence upon successive human culture and societies around the world.

outward from there. He documents that the availability of the types of plants and animals that could be easily domesticated were also clustered in the Middle Eastern region. For example, of all the large mammals living upon earth that were candidates for domestication — either for food or burden — almost half are found in this Eurasian region. Furthermore, 13 of the 14 animals that were successfully domesticated worldwide found their start in this area. The only large animal productively tamed outside of this region was the llama (and the related alpaca) of South America.

Why was domestication not possible in other parts of the world? Why could horses from Asia be tamed and not zebras in Africa? Simply because God designed it that way. It is for these causes that farming and commerce first thrived in the Middle East. Therefore, its early societies stood to have the most influence upon successive human culture and societies around the world.

We may be a few steps closer to learning why Abraham was born in the Middle East and why human history and its dominating kingdoms would later be anchored to the timeline of the Jew. Let's now return to our original quest: Just what are the legacies

of these past kingdoms upon our society today and are we aware of them?

### The Modern-Day Legacies of Past Kingdoms

The Bible repeatedly portrays the progression of human kingdoms relative to Israel's timeline. Daniel sees four great successive human kingdoms proceeding from his time — Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman. Joel, who wrote even earlier than Daniel, also saw four serial kingdoms that oppress and fully rule over the Hebrews. Only here, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome are depicted as four different types of locusts (Joel 1:4; 2:25). The Revelation writer also sees these four as the third to sixth kingdoms represented in the seven-headed beast of Revelation 17: "The seven heads are seven hills upon which the woman is sitting; And they are also seven kings" (Revelation 17:9–10 AMP). Here a historic timeline is presented that goes back to two earlier kingdoms that intersected with the Hebrews — Egypt and then Assyria.

Many scholars have produced reliably documented works that connect the pagan religions that underlay all seven kingdoms (including that of our day!) providing evidence that the same

"whore" (signifying spiritual harlotry and paganism) was common to all kingdoms. Therefore, the latest and ongoing manifestation of revived Rome, or the seventh "king" or "head," also has the whore riding upon it. She has a common heritage, a common progenitor — the "prince of the air."

There are at least seven common characteristics (two of them already mentioned) of all seven ruling kingdoms mentioned in Scripture:

1. All the nations are only of primary significance as they all have a role in relation to the history of Israel. All of them suppressed Israel and/or Judah.
2. All seven kingdom societies are essentially pagan (Revelation 17).
3. All kingdoms are noted in the Bible for their pride and confidence... rising up to heaven, so to speak. They are all symbolized as mountains and tall, lofty trees.
4. Each successive kingdom captured and/or dominated the prior kingdoms, each time expanding the realm of a worldwide kingdom (except the first, Egypt).
5. All seven of the world kingdoms had a monolithic rulership. The ruler of the sovereign nation and the head of the religious establishment were one and the same person (religion and state were merged).



Just as the great harlot sitting upon a seven-headed beast would be the marker of the spirit behind all of the seven kingdoms — the same source of false religion and paganism — we can draw a similar construction from the composite beast shown in Revelation 13.

6. All of these kingdoms merged materialism with religion. Mammon was enjoined by religion as it is today. God and mammon are served as one whole, though Christ clearly said this was not possible. They represent two opposite masters.

7. All seven kingdoms have left legacies, advancements, patterns, and influences upon successive worlds.

It is this last aspect that we yet want to continue exploring briefly.

### Common Legacies Prevailing Today

Just as the great harlot sitting upon a seven-headed beast would be the marker of the spirit behind all of the seven kingdoms — the same source of false religion and paganism — we can draw a similar construction from the composite beast shown in Revelation 13. If a spiritual heritage of seven world kingdoms is documented through

one “whore” riding on the back of a seven-headed beast in Revelation 17, then we may legitimately inquire whether the depiction of the composite beast in Revelation 13 also provides a key to the historic links of the four prior world regimes with the last form of the Roman-based kingdom today. To be sure, the beast of Revelation 13:1–2 is the same as shown in Revelation 17. Both have seven heads, ten crowns, and ten horns and have written upon them words of blasphemy. However, different aspects are now highlighted:

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2). This beast has characteristics from the Grecian empire (the leopard), the bear (Medo-Persia), the lion (Babylon) and the terrible beast (Rome) all mentioned in Daniel 7. They represent the legacies of these four societies reflected in our world today. What could they be?

Starting with the earliest kingdom, here are some possible connections. We’ll begin with the earliest kingdom. Accomplished

historians, no doubt, will see many more connections than I can present. However, in our speculations, I’ll refer to at least one aligning Scripture verse as support.

### BABYLON (LION)

Secular research shows that Babylon was the mother of modern-day commercialism and its preoccupation with wealth. Babylon represented the first “gilded age” — after all, it was shown as the head of gold in Daniel’s vision of the tall statue (Daniel 2). The “gilded age” of the late 19th century certainly didn’t compare. Nearly all of the documents recovered from that early Babylonian era refer to commerce. The concepts of banking, compound interest, promissory notes and even mutual funds derive from that time. Even its numerical system based on the number 60 (the hexagesimal system, which extends back to earlier Sumerian cultures) is still deeply imbedded in our society. We still count 360 degrees in a circle and in trigonometry. Until not too long ago, a 360-day cycle was still considered the financial year for purposes of calculating interest. The word “dozen” is the Baby-



Democracy, assuredly a human system with many good facilities, still harbors the fatal flaw that will enable a spiritually blind world to willingly allow the Antichrist to come to power. And, of course, we cannot forget the Olympics, the highest celebration of human physical achievement.

Ionian word for “a fifth,” meaning one-fifth of sixty. Twelve is a prominent number probably because it was based upon the 12 moon cycles per year. We still count 60 minutes to the hour and 60 seconds to the minute. From these and other connections we see that the lion remains the head of gold today. The same “commercial culture” will be (and is) the hallmark of the last-day society of the beast (Zechariah 5:5–11; Revelation 18).

#### MEDO-PERSIA (BEAR)

The most significant contribution of the Medes was the principle of tolerance. The figure of Cyrus has survived throughout history as the role model of an ideal ruler. Though a conqueror, he was tolerant and magnanimous. In like fashion, Darius I and Xerxes I and later Persian rulers were considered to be liberal.

The attitude of tolerance is evident in the Bible’s account of Cyrus. He was moved to fund the rebuilding of the Jewish temple (Ezra 1:2). He provided a grant for this humanitarian project involving a different people with another religion (Ezra 3:7). Cyrus even returned some of the

temple treasures that had been carted out of Jerusalem decades earlier. What reigning powers in history ever considered offering recompense to those they had conquered? If that is the key characteristic symbolized by the Medo-Persian “bear,” then it certainly does apply to our time. If it were not so, how could it have ever been possible for the Jews to be restored to their own land in 1948, after almost 2,000 years of dispersion? This is one of the greatest confirmations that the beast depicted in Revelation 13 is indeed verging upon the scene today.

#### GREECE (LEOPARD)

Greece is the source of much humanism. Its ancient society placed a high value upon human reasoning and philosophy. That was still the case during New Testament times. Paul often debated Greek thinkers, notably at Mars Hill (Acts 17). He later writes that “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:22–23). Here we see the Apostle Paul confirming that the god of the Greeks

was human logic. Paul also held “discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9) for over two years. Tyrannus was a Greek teacher and sophist whose school was in Ephesus. To the Greeks, the very fact that something might be incomprehensible could only be referred to the “Unknown God.” Paul showed them that all ways higher than man’s were attributable to God (Isaiah 55:9). Human wisdom precludes the move of the Spirit and rejects the “impossibilities” of God’s ways. This Hellenistic emphasis upon science and naturalism rules our society today.

There are other Greek cultural legacies that still mark our world. Democracy is the prevalent organizational form politically worldwide today (its origin found in ancient Greece). Democracy, assuredly a human system with many good facilities, still harbors the fatal flaw that will enable a spiritually blind world to willingly allow the Antichrist to come to power. And, of course, we cannot forget the Olympics, the highest celebration of human physical achievement.



### ROME (BEAST)

All Western society and culture can find much of its root in the early Roman Empire. From Roman law, civil organization, and military techniques to many other influences, Western society today remains essentially Roman. We need not spend much time documenting this phenomenon. Rome was a ferocious military beast 2,000 years ago. The new Rome both militarily and economically is even a more ferocious beast, one that certainly is stamping much of the world under its feet (Daniel 7:7; 7:19)

### Points to Ponder

We may not realize our society remains the offspring of our ancestor societies. We have reviewed four such societies mentioned by Daniel and Joel. A vast global commercialism is rapidly ensnaring the world into a controlled entity (Babylon). Tolerance and secular global humanitarian campaigns are spreading humanism and pluralism ever deeper into the mindset of mankind (Persia). Democracy is furthering its reaches across the world and human logic and technological advancements prompt many to deny the existence of God. The European Union, without much fanfare, is now spreading so-called

Mankind is eating and drinking without much concern just as did Belshazzar before the fall of Babylon. Israel is again returning to its land as it did during the reign of Persia once before. In the name of tolerance, the world has institutionalized its intolerance of truth and of the one and only Way.

democratic “freedom” faster than is America, which trumpets it as a hallmark of its foreign policy (Greece). All taken together, in the absence of a fear for God and in the rejection of Jesus Christ, mobilizes a fearsome, ferocious beast that is actually taking greater numbers of people into bondage, and is variously persecuting those who believe upon the Word of God.

Like no other period, our time today fits the picture of the composite beast in Revelation 13 that portrays the key characteristics of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The alignments seem compelling. An intense commercial and materialist culture has emerged upon the world. Mankind is eating and drinking without much concern just as did Belshazzar before the fall of Babylon. Israel is again returning to its land as it did during the reign of Persia once before. In the name of tolerance, the world has institutionalized its intolerance of truth and of the one and only Way. The Hellenizers are again at the forefront, promoting humanism in all its forms, denying the need for salvation and the real God. And, most significantly, Jesus Christ is again expected to appear as He did

during the first and ancient rule of Rome.

Are we not living near the time of the beast of Revelation 13? (MC)

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies*. 1999, New York. Pg. 162, Table 9.2. The definition used to categorize large animals as greater than 100 pounds.
- 2 J. C. Reichardt. (Source not determined) Each of the four species of locusts in Hebrew letters represents the exact number of years that each empire oppressed until they had deprived the Jews of all their glory. Gazare, the first, “the palmerworm,” represents the 50 years of Babylon’s oppression, from the temple’s destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (588 B.C.) to Babylon’s overthrow by Cyrus (538 B.C.). Arbeh, the second, “the locust,” represents Persia’s 208-year sway over the Jews, from 538 to 330 B.C., when Persia fell before Alexander the Great. Yelequ, the third, “the cankerworm,” represents 140 years of the Graeco-Macedonian oppression, from 330 to 190 B.C., when the Roman, Lucius Scipio, defeated Antiochus the Jews’ great enemy. Chasil, “the caterpillar,” the fourth, represents the 108 years of the Romans’ oppression, beginning with their minion Herod the Great, an Idumean stranger, 38 B.C., and ending A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
- 3 *Financial Times*, editor comment. “Decision on Turkey looms for Europe,” July 12, 2004.