

Shalatan – Government

The Rule of Man...

The seventh and eighth chapters of Dany'el / Daniel contain a profoundly revealing presentation of history, much of it now past but most of it poised to play out in our immediate future. The prophetic proclamation was written twenty-five-hundred years ago, around 555 BCE. Evidence that it was inspired by Yahowah abounds. Its proof statements are irrefutable as a result of the Qumran library, because we possess sixteen separate manuscripts of Dany'el, which predate the book's most profound predictions.

While a captive in Babylon, in the most corrupt place on earth, in the birthplace of religion and politics and of military and economic schemes, in the place Yahowah asked Abraham to leave before engaging in the Covenant, Yahowah revealed a vision which unlocks the mystery of time, ultimately pinpointing the very date the Ma'aseyah Yahowsha' would arrive in Yaruwshalaim: March 28, 33 CE, four days before Passover, to honor His Towrah promises. He even predicted when and by whom the Temple would be destroyed, remarkable in that the Temple didn't even exist at the time of the vision. Dany'el revealed that Yisra'el would be deforested, something the Romans achieved in 135 CE when they salted the earth, sixty-five years after razing the Temple. But more than this, the prophetic visions witnessed by Dany'el chronicle the rise and fall of mighty empires, including Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. And it is from this book that Yahowsha' recited much of what is now found in Revelation.

But these are merely examples of what is foretold, among countless others. This is an amazing book, presenting 2,500 years of world history from Yisra'el's perspective. It is the human story, one delivered by a godly man who withstood religious and political persecution, a man who refused to compromise, a man who ultimately triumphed over the corrupting influence of human institutions to encourage the rest of us. It is the story of the fall of man.

The oldest extant scroll of Dany'el / Daniel was copied around 125 BCE, four-hundred thirty years after the book of prophecy was initially penned. It remains the only bilingual text demonstrating Divine inspiration found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. It opens in Hebrew, switches to Aramaic in the second half of the fourth verse of the second chapter, and then it reverts back to Hebrew at the beginning of the eighth chapter. Since our investigation will commence with the seventh chapter, we will be relying on Aramaic initially rather than Hebrew – our constant friend and companion throughout this study. And while this will limit our direct investigation of each word's meaning, and that is because ancient Hebrew is more thoroughly researched than Aramaic, the languages are so similar we will not be shortchanged, especially since Yahowah sent Gabry'el / Gabriel to explain the symbols used in the text and to elaborate on them.

But beyond this, there is an unexpected advantage to the juxtaposition of the two languages. Yahowsha' is known to have spoken both Hebrew and Aramaic, leaving us to wonder if there were some in His audience that would have understood one language but not the other. The question has also been posed as to whether Yahowsha' cited the Torah and Prophets in Hebrew or Aramaic. But with this review of Dany'el 7, those questions will become moot. The languages are so similar that if you understand one, you will relate to the other.

Before we begin, realize that much of what you are going to experience initially speaks of civilizations long past. Looking back at the rise and fall of ancient empires may initially seem incongruous with a chapter devoted to the fall of man during the tribulation, but yet every word paints a picture, exposing the contrast between God and his creation, between the Covenant and human institutions, between the Towrah and the Adversary.

The Beast who emerges out of the Greek and Roman Empires isn't simply a product of Macedonia and Rome, of Alexander and his generals or the Caesars, but of the entire edifice, beginning with Babylon. There are characteristics of every country from Babylonia to Persia, from Greece to Rome, in the Transgressor known to Christians as the "Antichrist." His government will be an expression of his religion, as was the case throughout each empire, a tactic born and first honed in Babylon. It was in Babylonia that the military was deployed as an economic resource. Nations were conquered for tribute, not integration. Compelling vassal peoples to pay for Babylonian indulgences became more expedient than working. Further, as it relates to the first of these fallen nations, never lose sight of the fact that while the Transgressor of the Tribulation will emerge out of Rome, he will ultimately represent Babylon, the very thing Yahowah has asked His children to walk away from if they want to engage in the Covenant.

Turning to Persia, it was the antithesis of Babylon in substantive ways. It grew through integration. For the Persians, the known world was one world – their world. They developed and deployed the means to effectively communicate, and thus influence people over large distances by way of a common language, a postal system, taxation, a state religion, and roadways – all designed to integrate the different cultures into a common empire. Their control mechanism was a centralized, bureaucratic administration under the dictatorial control of an emperor. His designs were conveyed by civil servants and imposed by a large professional military. But with so many cultures and ethnicities covering such a vast area, the king's authority was often challenged, causing the constant deployment of troops to quell rebellions, a burden that became economically unsustainable.

Greece by contrast was a loose collection of independent city-states – wholly decentralized. They were as likely to war against one another as they were to band together to ward off a common foe. While there were kings, Greece was the birthplace of democracy, and with it philosophy. Rhetoric was revered, as were knowledge and the pretense of understanding. The Greeks were the merchants of the ancient world. Having sapped their own resources, they purchased wood and wheat by trading wine and olives – commodities that would grow in dry, impoverished soils. This seafaring nation was no less religious or militaristic than its predecessors, but it was the Greeks who discovered the benefit of turning warriors into heroes. All means of propaganda were deployed to fan the flames of patriotism and militarism, from theater to oratory, from novel to actual worship as if their warriors were gods. This collection of independent communities with a common spirit became a unified empire briefly as a result of Alexander's conquests. But then as quickly as his weapons and strategy had built it, without any organizational control, it disintegrated, first into four kingdoms and then into many more.

Rome is unlike the others because it is still with us. The Imperial Empire is long gone, but not its legacy: the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church. As for the Empire, no civilization prior or since has been as perverted or cruel. The Romans and their Legions were vicious and duplicitous. They made carnality and killing an art form. The Caesars were vile, ruthless men, who acted like their pagan gods. Having flirted with representative government, the most covetous men and the most effective warriors became supreme dictators, with a litany of their spoiled children inheriting the throne thereafter. Their names are now infamous and include in chronological order the likes of: Tiberius (14-37), Caligula (37-41), Nero (54-68), Domitian (81-96), Commodus (177-192), Caracalla (198-217), Elagabalus (218-222), Carinus (283-285), and Constantine, whose life we will examine in some detail.

They were known for their massive civil projects, from roadways to aqueducts, from amphitheaters to public forums, from lavish temples to decadent palaces. But it was their flawed character that brought them down. Dependent upon slaves to perform every task, from cleaning the streets to protecting the empire, wonton abuse of everyone who wasn't Roman ultimately caused the world to rebel against them, and they collapsed from within before they were routed by those they had abused.

If Moseh's request of us in *Dabarym* 6:4-5 epitomizes the most desirable attitude, the Romans were exemplars of the worst extreme. The Towrah says: **“Listen Yisra’el, Yahowah is our God, Yahowah is one, certain and unique. So you should genuinely choose to love Yahowah, your God, with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your capacity.”** To which Yahowsha' added, also citing the Torah: **“You should choose to actually love your neighbor as yourself, for I am Yahowah.”** (*Qara'* 19:18)

The epitome of Roman animosity to these instructions was manifest when in 70 CE Rome razed Yahowah's Temple in Yisra'el, hauling its precious metals and people off to Rome to finance and build their Coliseum. Ponder the contrast between what was said and done in these places if you want to understand why God loves one and hates the other.

But it would only get worse. Prior to the Imperial Empire's decline, one of the worst of a bad lot of Generals turned Emperor claimed to have seen a vision before the sun, and out of it promoted a religion as perverted and cruel as the Empire and its Legions. It became known as Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. It could be argued that no institution in all of human history has been as menacing and debilitating.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches which grew out of Constantine's Roman legacy in Constantinople include: the Greek, Macedonian, Russian, Ukrainian, Cypriot, Georgian, Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Moldovan, Albanian, Montenegrin, Croatian, Czech, Slovak, Armenian, Syriac (Syrian), Ethiopian, and Copt (Egyptian) Orthodox Churches – all places Romans fought, killed, and died. They are as much a part of the Roman legacy as is the Roman Catholic Church. And as we shall soon learn, since the Beast that will terrorize the world throughout the Tribulation emerges out of both Rome and Greece, the Eastern Orthodox Church will be as culpable as is the Roman Catholic Church.

Bringing this all together, the Beast who will oppose all things Yah, His Word, His Name, His Torah, His Covenant, His Invitations, His Conditions, and His Way, will embody the religious, political, military, and economic influences manifest in Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome, Roman Catholicism, and Orthodox Christianity. So as we progress through history past, stay focused, because

everything we witness will become manifest again in our immediate future. We will learn precisely and irrefutably from which county the Transgressor will emerge. His entre to power will be disclosed as will his retort to those who sponsored him. But especially shocking to many, we will discover that the man thought to be the “Antichrist” by Christians will be indistinguishable from the Roman who wrote half of their New Testament.

And speaking of interesting connections, the historical presentation we are about to witness begins in Babylon and never manages to leave. The first nation to die is Babylonia, but the victor, Cyrus of Persia, uses Babylon as his seat of power. Then when Alexander defeats Darius, Babylon retains its deadly reputation, claiming the life of the Macedonian general within days of him entering Satan’s most nefarious lair. Even Rome was infected, having battled the Persians and their derivatives, the Parthian and Sassanid Empires, for seven centuries, its Church became the reincarnation of Babylon, its every rite, doctrine, and celebration. This plague of death was infused into every aspect of the Church and Beast it spawned, both of which will become the most adroit exemplars of the worldwide influence of Whore of Babylon.

And while Yahowah has taken both Judaism and Islam to task in other prophetic books, let’s not lose sight of the fact that Rabbinic Judaism was codified in the Babylonian Talmud. And it is this collection of religious arguments against Yahowah’s Towrah that were twisted by Muhammad to create the only credible portions of his Qur’an, giving birth to today’s most vicious religion. Simply stated, every soul Babylon infects becomes diseased, is destroyed, and dies.

In *Bare’syth* / Genesis, Babylon is the first place Yahowah asks us to walk away from if we want to engage in a relationship with Him. In the Revelation to Yahowchanan / John, Babylon is the last place Yahowsha’ calls His people out of prior to His return. And throughout God’s testimony there is a trinity of evil – Satan, the Beast, and Babylon – all shown to be united in their opposition to everything God desires. Therefore, we should not be surprised that throughout this prophecy, these associations is firmly established.

⚔⚔⚔

Aware of these factors, let’s commence our review...

“In the first year of (*ba chad shanah la*) Belsha’tsar (*Belsha’tsar* – May Bel (the Lord) Protect the King, commonly transliterated Belshazzar, along with his father, the last of the Chaldean kings), the king of (*melek* – highest royal ruler of the government of) **Babel - Confusion (*Babel* – Confusion, commonly**

transliterated Babylon), **Dany'el** (*Dany'el* – God Judges and Vindicates) **saw** (*chazah* – was able to look at and watch the totality of, facilitating comprehensive observation, perception, and understanding of (peal perfect)) **a revealing vision** (*chelem* – a prophetic revelation) **and** (*wa*) **supernatural revelations** (*chazuw* – sensory perceptions deployed to convey the truth visually) **in his mind** (*re'sh* – in his head) **while upon his bed** (*'al mishkab* – on the place where he lies down to relax).

Thereupon (*'adayn* – making a transition, therefore), **in** (*ba*) **the prophetic revelation** (*chelem* – revealing vision), **he was prompted to write a complete copy of** (*katab* – he was facilitated in the writing of the totality of (peal perfect)) **the things** (*milah* – the matters, events, and dialogue) **being communicated** (*'amar* – being told and spoken).” (Dany'el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:1)

The awkward phrase “he related the sum of the words” found in most English bible translations does not exist in Qumran's 4QDan, the only scroll that preserves this verse. Should you be reading along in a translation influenced by the Masoretic Text, you'll understand why it was omitted.

Belshazzar was the son of Nabonydus (Nabu is Praised). As father and son they ruled over Babylon from 556 to 539 BCE – but not in accord with normal succession. Much of what is known about them historically is gleaned from a terracotta cylinder housed in the British Museum. Upon it, Nabonydus claims to have orchestrated repairs to the Temple of Sin in Haran – the same shrine and deity that would influence Islam and explain its fixation with the moon. In a bit of irony, it was in Harran where the Assyrian Empire would ultimately succumb to superior forces.

As a devotee of Sin, King Nabonydus would have been at odds with the Babylonian priesthood. They favored Lord Bel and Marduk. In fact, this religious conflict is what caused Nabonydus to flee to the desert oasis of Tayma in Arabia early in his reign, an event which brought his son, Belshazzar, to the thrown in Babylon during his father's long absence.

Dany'el 4 contains the prophet's forecast regarding Nabonydus, Belshazzar's father, predicting his seven years of self imposed exile in the desert surrounding Tayma. Dany'el even surmised that the king's hubris would cost him his sanity. He foretold that the man who had countless slaves at his beacon call to have his every whim assuaged would live like an animal, fending for himself for seven years. The prophecy even states that He was smitten, which is why Belsha'tsar ruled in his absence.

“I, Dany'el (*Dany'el* – God Judges and Vindicates), **responded** (*'anah* – answered, reacted, and replied) **and then said** (*wa 'amar* – responded), **‘I am**

able to see (*hawah chazah* – I can envision and observe (peal perfect)), **with my sensory perceptions, the vision** (*ba chazuw* – in my supernatural revelation) **during night** (*‘im lyly ‘a* – in the darkness).’ **And then** (*wa*), **behold, right there** (*‘aruw*), **four** (*‘arba’*) **spirits** (*ruwach* – winds) **out of the heavens** (*shamaym ‘a* – of the sky, atmosphere, universe, or spiritual realm) **churning up** (*guwah* – stirring up) **the approach to the Great Sea** (*la yam ‘a rab ‘a*).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:2)

Aramaic and Hebrew share many words in common. Among them is *ruwach*, which can mean “spirit” or “wind.” And either translation is acceptable because different spirits were conceived in heaven. While most continue to serve Yahowah, others are now in league with the Adversary. In this regard, while Satan is a spiritual being, wind is often associated with him, particularly when it agitates or is depicted as a storm. Wind is also an indication of war. But in this case, especially knowing what follows, it’s reasonable to assume that the four beasts were influenced by four demonic spirits, which is why spirits was selected over winds in the translation.

Shamaym is also plural in the text, and can depict everything from the heavens to the atmosphere, from the universe and its stars to the spiritual realm. But since demons were conceived in heaven and cast out of the abode of God, “out of the heavens” was emboldened.

The Great Sea is often a reference to the Mediterranean, which forms the western border of Yisra’el. But it also symbolizes multitudes of Gentiles, especially when they combatively crash into the Promised Land. In this regard, the sea generally designates “*gowym* – people from different races and places” while “*‘erets* – land” consistently speaks of Yisra’elites throughout the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms. This distinction is important as we journey through Yahowah’s prophetic testimony.

As we continue, “*chyuwah* – beast” is deployed to describe to an undesirable and destructive empire, but it can also depict a hostile institution or a rebellious individual. It is typically used of a state, organization, or person engaged in advancing Satan’s agenda.

“Then four (*wa ‘arba’*) **great beasts** (*rab chyuwah* – large, terrifying, wild, animalistic, and powerful monsters) **were coming up out of the Sea** (*calaq min yam ‘a* – growing and ascending out of the ocean or nether regions of the underworld), **being transformed and different** (*shanah* – being changed, becoming dissimilar) **one from the other** (*da’ min da’* – this one from that one).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:3)

In this context, the “great beasts” depict empires, civilizations which were influenced religiously by the ultimate predator, *ha Satan* – the Adversary. Since

they have emerged from the “sea,” they are all Gentile nations with a history of being in opposition to the Chosen People and the Promised Land.

Shanah can speak of transformation or differentiation, which is why both options were provided. These were different beasts, and therefore represent different civilizations, but also some of them appeared to change before Dany’el’s eyes. That was especially true with Rome. The Empire became a Church.

“The first (*qadmay* ‘a) was similar to (*ka* – like and corresponding to) a lion (*‘aryeh* – fierce and powerful) but with (*wa*) wings (*gaph*) of (*dy*) an eagle (*nashar*) upon her (*la*). I kept watching (*hawah chazah* – I was totally focused and observant) while (*‘ad*) her wings were plucked off (*marat gap* – her wings were torn off). But then (*wa*) she was lifted up (*natal* – she was raised up (peil perfect)) from the earth (*min ‘ara* ‘a – out of the world of humankind) and (*wa*) upon (*‘al*) feet (*ragal* – a pair of paws) like a human (*k ‘anash* – similar to a person), she was established and made to stand upright (*quwm* – she was set upright (hophal perfect)). Then (*wa*) a human (*‘anash*) heart and thought processes (*labab* – mindset, attitude, capacity for reasoning, and persona) were given to her (*yahab la* – were placed in her (peil perfect)).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:4)

The winged lion was the predominant symbol for the nation of Babylonia. This characterization represented their most important deity: Bel, which translates as “the Lord.” The depiction was hard to miss because it was carved unto the gates of the capital, and it was engraved on the kingdom’s coinage. Beyond the obvious, Yahowah refers to *Babel* as a lion in part because the king of the beasts is among the most able and vicious predators. Lions hunt in prides, are especially swift, and look regal as the kill with jaws and claws.

The eagle’s soaring flight became symbolic of solar deities in pagan mythology, and particularly the father of the gods within the Babylonian, Greek, and Roman Trinity. As a powerful carnivore, an eagle is able to kill live prey, but like a vulture, typically prefers to consume dead and rotting flesh. Eagles are revered because of their enormous wingspan and because they appear almost majestic in flight. As a result of its ability to soar above other animals, many nations, from Babylonia to Rome, even America and the Russian Federation, identify themselves with this vaulted pagan symbol.

Babylonia was the world’s leading super power, albeit for a short period of time, from 605 to 539 BCE. “*Babel* – Babylonia” means “Confusion.” The Empire menaced Yisra’el, and in particular, Yahuwdah, enslaving countless Yahuwdym. Dany’el, himself, was a captive in Babylon when he witnessed this revelation.

You may have noticed that Babylonia existed a mere 66 years, an important figure because it represents the number of man and the beast. It is this relationship, the amalgamation of the beastly nature of a national institution and the worst of human behavior, that is so destructive and deadly. This deplorable state is brought about through the integration of religion and politics, thereby magnifying the influence of arrogant, covetous, and misguided men. The only thing worse than Babylon's twin sixes would be three sixes, 666, which adds Satan, himself, to this poisonous brew.

Speaking of the Adversary, an entire chapter of the prophet Yasha'yah / Isaiah, the 14th, is devoted to explaining the connection between Satan, whose name is Heylel ben Shachar, and "Babel – Babylon – Confusion." In its pages, we learn that conceit, an unrealistic and undeserved impression of himself, is what brought Satan down. He wanted to be worshipped as if he was God. His goal was to be seen above the Most High.

Few things this clearly stated are as universally misunderstood. Satan does not want to be known as the Adversary, as ugly and menacing beast. And that means that he does not want to be seen as *ha satan*. Instead, the Adversary seeks to fool the unsuspecting so that they bow down to him as if he were God. Therefore, you will never find Satan in an occult ritual, but instead in popular religious worship. His mission is to be called "the Lord," which is why Yahowah has given him the name, "Ba'al – Lord." As the Lord, he solicits obedience and worship. He becomes the fearsome beast behind the most imposing and intimidating institutions. He is all too often the hidden inspiration for nations and churches that seek to control and possess human souls.

Satan's primary tool is "*babel* – confusion," which is one of several reasons he is associated with Babylonia and referred to as "the Whore of Babylon." Through religion, he confuses the masses by corrupting God's testimony – just as he did in the Garden of Eden where he confused Chawah to the point that she misquoted, misinterpreted, and misapplied Yahowah's testimony. She added to and took away from God's Guidance, a strategy that would be deployed again to conceive Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The replacement of Yahowah's name for the title "the Lord" 7000 times in the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms by religious publishers was paramount in positioning Satan as God. Changing the Shabat to Sunday accomplished the same thing, as did substituting Sukah for Christmas and Pesach for Easter. Replacing the Towrah with a New Testament also served Satan, as did discarding Yahowsha' for Jesus. The blame for much of this can be placed upon Sha'uwl, a Roman Jew whom Christians know as "Paul." He admitted to being demon-possessed in his second letter to the Corinthians, and yet billions of souls believe this man's audacious claim that God authorized a man to contradict Him. By pretending to be inspired

by God when it had actually been Satan, by being a “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” Paul has “*babel* – confused” more souls on behalf of the Adversary than anyone who has ever lived.

He was not alone, however. Muhammad, another man who claimed to speak for God while also admitting to being demon-possessed, named his wannabe god, “Allah,” creating a persona that was equal parts satanic and self-portrait. And while the Islamic god’s Qur’an is the antithesis of Yahowah’s Towrah, Allah claims to author both. He covets the title Lord, demands prostrations, terrorizes believers into fearing him, requires obedience, and spends all of his time in hell torturing those who do not submit. It should not be surprising, therefore, that Allah orders Muslims to kill Yahowah’s chosen people.

Most of Yirmayah / Jeremiah, the prophetic book committed to enlightening Gentiles regarding the consequence of aligning themselves with human institutions, is focused upon explaining the connection between Babylon and religion, between Babylon and political power, between Babylon and military conquests, between Babylon and economic malfeasance, and thus between Babylon and the things which are opposed by God. Babylon is the place where the things God despises were syncretized, institutionalized, nationalized, and systemized. And sadly, most everything Babylon represents endures in Christianity, borne out through the *babel* of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.

We know that Babylonia’s wings were plucked over 2,550 years ago, and yet the text of this prophecy revealed: “**she was lifted up from the earth upon feet like a human and was established upright, given a human heart and thought processes.**” There are but two viable literal and two credible symbolic explanations for the reincarnation of Babylon. There has been only one man, one beating heart, one stream of human consciousness that was lifted up and established who represented Babylon in opposition to Yahowah to such an extent that he and his letters would warrant this kind of notoriety, especially in the context of a global summation of human history – Paul. He authored half of the Christian New Testament in opposition to God. He is the founder of the Christian religion. And in exactly 600 years, he would be preaching his Towrahless mantra to Rome.

We will meet other unsavory characters along the way, in particular Hadrian who outlawed the Torah and Constantine who established the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church. But their influence was much less pervasive than Paul’s.

The only other literal candidate for the human manifestation of Babylon is the Beast, the Transgressor of the Tribulation. This man whose personality, ambition,

and message will be indistinguishable from Paul's, will rule the world during the last three and a half years before Yahowah's return.

While there would be no reason for God to use phrases such as "feet like a human" or "given a human heart and thought process" if His intent were purely symbolic. But since He often conveys more than one relevant insight at a time, the only human institutions "lifted up from the earth" that are overwhelmingly Babylonian are Christianity generally, and particularly the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, both of which claim to be heavenly institutions. The religion embodies a resurrection of Babylonian ideals. Its character was shaped and established by men. But more to the point, Christianity was conceived by claiming that a man was the totality of god, by imbuing this man with Babylonian religious lore, and then by claiming that after their god was killed by men, he was resurrected. Therefore, with these words, Yahowah is adroitly connecting Christianity with its source.

There is another connection we should not forget. While Egypt under Pharaoh Sheshonk in 930 BCE and Assyria under King Sennacherib in 700 BCE looted Yahowah's temple, stripping it of some of its implements, the Babylonians destroyed the Temple in 586 BCE. In the process, they pummeled Yaruwshalaim and much of Yahuwdah, forcing Yahuwdym into slavery. In this way, Babylonia foreshadows Christianity's assault upon the Towrah and its Temple, upon everything Yahowah cherishes and has sought to achieve.

The most important king of Babylon from Yisra'el's perspective is Nebuchadnezzar II, known in Akkadian as "Nabu-kudurri-usur – God Nabu Defend My Firstborn Son." Nabu, the son of Marduk, was the god of wisdom in the Babylonian pantheon. By choosing this name, Nebuchadnezzar was claiming to be the preferred firstborn son of god as well as wise. He ruled from 605 through 562 BCE.

His father, Nabopolassar, is credited with achieving Babylon's independence from Assyria. In alliance with the Medes and Scythians, he razed Nineveh in 612 BCE. And while this battle didn't destroy Assyria, it ended Babylon's servitude as a vassal state. Thereafter, with visions of grandeur dancing in his head, Nabopolassar sent his son west at the head of a large army. In the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE near Haran, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Assyrians again, this time because their allies, the Egyptians, were waylaid in Yahuwdah. This brought western Assyria and Phoenicia under Babylonian control. But during his son's absence, Nabopolassar died, making Nebuchadnezzar king upon his return to Babylon.

Enchanted by war and unimpressed by alliances, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Scythians. He would bypass the Medes temporarily, however, because his

arranged marriage to Amytis, the daughter of the Median king, was perceived to be a vow of peace. Turning west again, he fought against Syria en route to Egypt, where his army was rebuffed. Frustrated by alliances forged against him between Yahuwdah and Egypt, after concluding a peace accord with Damascus, Nebuchadnezzar turned his attention toward Yaruwshalaim in 597 BCE. Initially, Yahuwdah capitulated. So as was the Babylonian custom, Nebuchadnezzar took prominent hostages with him to encourage the vassal state to honor their agreement. But by the time his departing troops had reached the Sea of Galilee, he got word that those who had lost family and friends revolted against King Yo'shyah / Josiah of Yahuwdah for having surrendered their loved ones. It was not a good idea. Nebuchadnezzar immediately decapitated every hostage and turned his army toward Yaruwshalaim. The city was sacked and the people were ravaged. Those who were not killed were enslaved by the Babylonian monarch.

Throughout the book of Yirmayah / Jeremiah, Yahowah speaks vociferously of Babylon, calling the empire a “destroyer of nations.” This is often considered to be a reference to Nebuchadnezzar, because within the kingdom’s sixty-six year existence, he conquered Assyria, Egypt, and Yisra’el. His siege of Yaruwshalaim and obliteration of the Temple is then depicted in the fifty-second chapter. Even though Yah clearly despises Babylon, he nonetheless exposes His rebellious children to the wayward nation in hopes of awakening them from their religious stupor.

While not the focus of the book, Yahowah has a great deal more to say about Babylon through Yasha’yah / Isaiah, this time focusing on its religious significance and spiritual leader. We are introduced to Satan in association with Babylon in the fourteenth chapter. There we discover that the Devil has no interest in being known as the Adversary, but instead wants to be worshipped as if he were above the Most High. He wants to lord over both God and man.

In this regard, we should not be surprised that the first thing Yahowah asks Abram prior to engaging in the Covenant is to walk away from Babylon. Then affirming that very few people take this step, at the end of Revelation Yahowsha’ cites Yahowah’s request in Yasha’yah, were in the last days, speaking of Babylon God says: “Come out of her My people.” There is, therefore, so much to learn and understand about mankind’s four-thousand year association with this demonic plague, an entire chapter will be devoted to exposing Babylon’s beastly appeal.

☞☞☞

The second of four beasts is now in view...

“And then behold (*wa ‘aruw* – so next look right there) **another** (*‘achoran*) **beast** (*chyuwah* – terrifying monster), **a second one** (*tinyan*), **actually resembling** (*damah la* – appearing like) **a bear** (*dob*). **And on one side** (*wa la satar chad* – then approaching from the side at first), **she was established** (*quwm* – she was raised up (hophal perfect)).

And (*wa*) **three** (*telat*) **ribs** (*‘ala’*) **were in her mouth** (*ba pum*) **between her teeth** (*ben shen shen* – in the grip of her upper and lower jaws). **And** (*wa*) **thusly** (*ken* – therefore) **they said to her** (*‘amar la* – they spoke approaching her), **‘Rise up** (*quwm* – take a stand (peal imperative)) **and devour** (*‘akal* – consume (peal imperative)) **an abundance** (*sagyi’* – a large or massive amount) **of human flesh** (*basar* – of meat).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:5)

The symbolism of the bear was deployed to depict the fierceness, and yet lumbering nature of the Medo-Persian Empire. After conquering Babylon, Persia overthrew Lydia and Egypt, which is why three ribs were found in its mouth. And while the Medes didn’t survive long, the Persians reigned from 539 to 331 BCE – and much longer than that through their various derivatives.

As for being murderous, Islam would emerge from this Beast, and nothing man has ever conceived has been as deadly. Its assassins bear religious names, jihadist and mujahedeen, and the kill screaming that their wannabe god is greater than Yah: “Allahu Akbar – Allah is Greater!” Over two-hundred million men, women, and children would die in the first one hundred years of the Islamic era.

But imagine being Dany’el at this moment. He and his people were enslaved by the most powerful nation on earth, and yet he was witnessing the demise of his captors. There would, therefore, be a beast more dominant than the one which had destroyed Yahuwdah.

Since Persia’s participation in this drama chronicling the fall of man will be reprised in the next chapter, and since Persia’s role is considerably less significant than Babylon’s, let’s develop Persia’s character later as the vision progresses. For now, the focus remains on the Middle East, from Mesopotamia to Egypt, with Yisra’el in between.

The third beast would strike quickly and appear regal in the process...

“At this same site (*ba danah ‘atar* – in this same place), **I kept focused and observant** (*hawah chazah* – I kept watching (peal perfect)) **and then, behold** (*wa ‘aruw* – right there), **another** (*‘achoran*), **this one resembling** (*ka* – similar and corresponding to) **a leopard** (*namar* – panther, based upon *nimrod* – rebel, the name of founder of Babylon). **And upon her** (*wa la*) **were four wings** (*‘arba’ gaph*) **such as** (*dy*) **a bird** (*owp*). **They were on her back side** (*‘al gab gab*). **There were also four heads** (*wa ‘arba’ re’sh* – with four top leaders), **all**

associated with this awesome beast (*la chywah 'a* – the terrifying animal). **And governmental dominion** (*wa shalatan* – the power and mastery to rule, sovereignty) **was imparted** (*yahab* – was allowed, given, and entrusted) **to her** (*la*).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:6)

The leopard with eagle’s wings with the power and mastery to rule describes the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great. He conquered the Persians, and most everyone else his troops encountered, rapidly, with the agility of a leopard and the speed of an eagle. He never lost a battle, so by age thirty-three, he had conquered much of the known world.

The reason this empire is depicted with four heads is because when Alexander died suddenly and unexpectedly in Babylon, his four generals – Cassander (who claimed Macedonia, Greece, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia), Lysimachus (who reigned over Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, and Northern Turkey), Seleucus (establishing himself over Southern Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan) and Ptolemy (who became Emperor over Lebanon, Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and part of Libya) – divided the territory they had conquered among themselves. As a result, the Greeks were the world’s most influential civilization from 331 to 168 BCE, when their dominion was sequestered by the Romans.

As we did with Persia, we will do with Alexander and Greece. Since these characters will make a second appearance in this historic play, it’s best to retain continuity and deal with them after Gabry’el identifies and personifies them on our behalf in the next chapter.

But thus far, the three ribs ascribed to the bear and the four heads depicted upon the leopard are intriguing in that they provide a perfect match for what actually occurred. We should keep this in mind as we progress through the prophecy. In that God has provided a precisely accurate picture thus far, we should logically expect that every nuance of what He says will occur in our future will take place exactly as predicted.

—

The next empire, which is also the last, was arguably the most evil in human history. We are now witnessing the rise of Rome.

“In this same place (*ba danah 'atar* – at this same site) **I remained observant** (*hawah chazah* – I kept watching (peal perfect)) **during the night**

vision (*ba lyly chazuw 'a* – in the supernatural revelation of the darkness), **and right there, behold** (*wa 'aruw* – then behold): **the fourth and final** (*raby'ay raby'ay*) **awesome and monstrous beast** (*chywah* – terrifying and animalistic creature), **the most fearsome and frightening, yet also revered and respected by some** (*dachal* – dazzlingly beautiful yet terrible and terrorizing, often longing for revenge), **horrifying and appalling, awful and evil** (*wa 'eymatan* – dreadful and horrific, sickening and gruesome), **yet** (*wa*) **exceedingly and preeminently** (*yatyr* – exceptionally and extraordinarily) **powerful with the capacity to destroy** (*taqyph* – physically strong, mighty, and prodigious).

With (*wa*) **her teeth comprised of iron** (*shen dy parzel la* – rows of teeth which appear and are perceived invincible in association with her), **multitudes, including the largest, most numerous and powerful** (*rab* – a great number), **she devoured and devastated** (*'akal* – she destroyed and consumed), **crushing the remainder** (*daqaq sha'ar 'a* – smashing and pulverizing piece by piece the rest, including whatever is left) **with her feet** (*ba ragal*) **by trampling them down violently** (*raphats* – completely destroying and ruining them) **under foot** (*ba ragal*).

But (*wa*) **this one was different** (*hyi' shanah*) **from all the other** (*min kol*) **beasts** (*chywah 'a* – terrifying monsters) **which preceded her** (*dy qodam* – that came before). **And** (*wa*) **ten** (*'asar*) **horns** (*qeren* – indicative of leaders and nations) **were upon her** (*la*).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:7)

Rome was born as she died, fighting – trampling foes near and far underfoot. At least three hundred major battles were fought over twelve centuries. No nation has been as appalling, awful, or evil. Rome devoured people far and wide, including consuming her own.

Since historians are typically amoral, and present the grandeur that was Rome, I think that it’s important that we look behind the shimmering shields to the slashing swords and examine the blood that stained the Empire’s soul. So in light of Yahowah’s revelation besmirching the pervasiveness and viciousness of Roman conquests, I have prepared an accounting of Roman characters and wars for your consideration.

Rome’s first battle pitted Italians against Italians, with rival Romans vying for power. This would become a trend, occurring so often, civil wars were as common as fights with external foes. Called the Battle of Silva Arsia, in 509 BCE, the emerging Republic’s Senate fought the Etruscan forces of deposed Roman King Superbus in a wooded area just outside Rome. When the Etruscans, whose territory was forty miles north of Rome, determined that the battle was not worth the cost, they gave up the fight and the Senate declared victory. Rome’s priests tell us that the Spirit of Silvanus (“the Forest” god) was heard the night

after the battle saying “one more Etruscan had fallen than Romans so Rome was triumphant.”

As legend would have it, seven years later in 502 BCE, Latins would defeat the Romans, but then Rome avenged the loss when Postumius captured the Latin League’s encampment near Lake Regillus around 499 BCE. This was noteworthy only because the victorious Roman general, Postumius, returned to Rome as a dictator and arranged to have a temple built in his honor in the Forum. Since all of this occurred many centuries before Julius Caesar would become renown for changing Rome from a Republic to an Empire, it appears that this beast had a checkered past.

In skirmishes like this over territory and bragging rights, by the close of the 6th century BCE, Roman military lore would claim a dozen wars against neighboring cities, with five victories, four losses, and three draws. The foes were never far afield and were usually Etruscans never living more than fifty miles from Rome.

In one of these battles, Cincinnatus, a Roman aristocrat who became a recluse, a general, a dictator, and then farmer, in 458 BCE fought the city of Aequi and their allies from the communities of Sabine and Volscians, all of which were within short riding distance of Rome. Upon his victory, and after “cutting his foes to pieces,” the Aequi begged Cincinnatus not to slaughter them all, so he told them that he would allow them to live so long as they brought their leader and all of his officers to him in chains so that they could be humiliated.

His story is interesting because he was considered one of the heroes of early Rome, a model of Roman virtue, largely because he opposed and oppressed the Plebeians – the citizens at the lowest rung of Rome’s rigid caste system. He was also a horrible father, influencing his son to harass Plebeians. He was so aggressive tormenting those beneath him socially and economically, he was convicted and condemned to death.

The first Roman conflict against a formidable foe occurred in 387 BCE. It was against the Gauls, who were residing in Northern Italy, Germany, and France. Prior to the battle, the Senones, one of several Gallic tribes, traversed the Apennines searching for fertile land. Having reached a lightly-populated area not far from modern-day Tuscany in northwestern Italy, they asked the local Clusians if they could pay them to graze and farm their land. But rather than barter directly, the Clusians solicited Roman ambassadors for help. They proved fickle, briefly engaging on behalf of both parties, but then quickly terminating negotiations. According to the Roman historian, Livy, the Roman ambassadors “broke the law of nations,” which is to say they failed to honor their oath of neutrality as negotiators, and “took up arms against the Senones, killing one of the Gallic chieftains. This breach of diplomatic ethics compelled the Gauls to dispatch one

of their own ambassadors to Rome, demanding that the assassin be handed over to them for justice. The Roman priesthood was sympathetic, acknowledging the breach of ethics, but the populous mocked the clerics in mass demonstrations, prompting Rome to appease them by promoting the killer, an act which further enraged the Senones. As a result, the Gaul declared war and marched on Rome.

Livy paints the scene: “Contrary to all expectation the Gauls (or Celts as the Romans called them) did the people of the countryside no harm, nor took anything from their fields, but even as they passed close by their cities, shouted out that they were marching on Rome and had declared war only on the Romans, but the rest of the people they regarded as friends.”

Once they were eleven miles outside Rome, along the Allia River at tributary of the Tiber, they found that twenty-four thousand Romans had taken up positions akin to the Greek Phalanx. The force, which outnumbered the Gauls two to one, was comprised of six Roman Legions. At the time they were a militia of Roman citizens, each individual supplying his own equipment, with the poor and poorly armed on the flanks and the rich and powerful protected in the middle. The Gauls, therefore, attacked the Roman flanks, routing them, leaving the center surrounded. In so doing, they were able to slaughter Rome’s elite.

The few who survived the initial engagement, fled to Rome in panic, so frightened, the last soldier forgot to close the gates. But then retreating all the way to Capitoline Hill, they deployed barricades to slow the Gallic advance. Holding the high ground, and hiding behind overturned carts and furniture, Roman women and children were initially successful in rebuffing the Gauls, killing some. But since a woman wielding a kitchen utensil is no match for a soldier with a sword and shield, Rome fell and was plundered. The city was destroyed. But not yet satisfied, the Gauls refused to end their siege until the Romans paid them one thousand pounds of gold, leaving their chief to say, “Woe to the vanquished.”

And yet as is the case in war, it was also “victor beware.” Since the Gauls expected to bring the bodies of their dead comrades home as fallen heroes, they left their soldier’s caucuses unburied and in their midst, causing an epidemic that claimed many additional lives. And while that was probably the end of the fighting, to quell the sting of defeat, Roman propaganda promoted the myth that Roman reinforcements arrived just at that moment, with the valiant leader Marcus Camillus professing: “not gold, but steel redeems the native land,” a reference to the sword he was allegedly wielding. Then to glorify war, Roman folklore would say that after fighting door to door, street to street, the Gallic army was routed, with the Romans haling Camillus, dubbing their victorious general, the “Second Romulus” – a nod to the mythical founding wolf of Rome.

I shared the details of this battle because it would ultimately define and reshape the Empire. Romans were seldom trustworthy, and routinely reneged on their promises. And they remained immoral and arrogant, the traits which led to their defeat on this day and again eight centuries later. But in the intervening time, war became theater, a place where heroes were born.

As a result of this embarrassing defeat, Rome rebuilt its defenses and restructured its military. It developed new industries to manufacture weapons and started deploying more advanced tactics. Aristocrats would no longer bleed for the nation, but they would provide the lower classes with superior arms. The Legions would be comprised of professional soldiers, men paid for their service. And they would brutalize and plunder everyone within their reach, ultimately building an army of slaves. But this would mark the last time Rome would be captured until the Visigoths came calling in 410 CE.

Since it would take a volume of books rather than a portion of a chapter to chronicle every Roman battle, suffice it to say for now that the fourth century BCE would see Romans involved in ten major conflicts. They would fight and defeat the Etruscans in 396 and 310 BCE. The Samnites, living southeast of Rome, constantly found themselves at the business end of a Legionnaire's sword. They would battle their neighbors in 342, 341, 321, 316, and 305 BCE, losing the first two encounters, prevailing in the next two battles, but failing in the last. The Latins lost to the Romans in 339 and 338 BCE.



As we approach the third century BCE, Rome fought their neighbors to the south four times in quick succession. The Samnites defeated Rome in 298 but lost in 297, 295, and 293 BCE. Turning north, Rome's Legions began fighting the Gauls again beginning in 285 BCE, losing the Battle of Arretium. But they would get revenge during rematches at Lake Vadimo in 283 and Populonia in 282 BCE, crushing them.

The first Roman battle against Greek forces occurred in 280 BCE in the Battle of Heraclea – a seaside Hellenistic colony on Italy's boot. The Greeks were celebrating their annual Easter-time festival of Dionysus, the Greek analog for the Christian "Jesus," in their theater when they saw ten Roman ships filled with soldiers and supplies enter the Gulf of Taranto – a violation of existing treaties. And even though Rome had provoked the Greeks, after toying with diplomacy, it was Rome that declared war and plundered several local cities. But the Greeks, Romans, and their associated allies, would spar on land and sea for some time,

with the tide of war ebbing and flowing for both sides. But the battle was ultimately joined when thirty-thousand Romans faced off against the same number of Greeks, making it the first time the Roman Legion would encounter the Macedonian Phalanx. But it was the Greek deployment of elephants that carried the day, panicking the Romans and making them vulnerable. And so while the Greeks prevailed, twenty-six thousand men on both sides lost their lives in a matter of hours, suggesting that there were no winners. Then inexplicably, these same belligerents would face off in 279 BCE, again with the same result, but this time with even greater casualties.

Few conflicts are as well known as Rome v. Carthage. These heavyweights of the ancient world would meet for the first time in the Battle of Agrigentum in Sicily in 261 BCE inaugurating the Punic Wars. The Romans were the aggressors, attacking the Carthaginian city to gain control of shipping routes in the Mediterranean. The prelude to the conflict began twenty-seven years earlier, when in 288 BCE, the Italian mercenaries known as the Mamertines (Sons of Mars), were hired by the Tyrant of Syracuse, the self-proclaimed King of Sicily, to do his bidding. But after Syracuse lost the Third Sicilian War to Carthage, he was forced to cede Messina to the victors, which left the mercenaries without an employer. So they went into business for themselves, plundering the town they once protected. The Mamertines killed the men and divided the women as spoils. These Sons of Mars held the town for twenty years, turning it into a base for pirates, looting nearby ships and settlements. They also engaged in kidnap for ransom and conquest for tribute. Their exploits made them so rich and famous, they minted their own currency featuring their favorite collection of gods and goddesses.

Their run of good luck ran out when the Tyrant of Syracuse compiled a militia of willing to help him take his city back. But the Sons of Mars after winning the first battle and losing the second, convinced the Carthaginian fleet at Sardinia to come to their rescue. They had no affinity for the mercenaries, but they had long sought to control Sicily due to its proximity to Sardinia, Spain, and their homeland in North Africa.

We are told that the mere presence of Carthaginian fleet in the harbor caused Syracuse to flee. And because they were opposed to piracy, the Mamertines quickly grew weary of the Carthaginians. So they solicited Rome for protection. Not wanting Carthage to claim the strategic maritime island from the Greek colonies surrounding it, the Romans came to the aid of the Sons of Mars, initiating the first Punic War by signing a mutual defense pact with them.

At the time, the Romans had yet to fight a foe outside of the Italian Peninsula. But nonetheless, feeling sure of themselves, in 264 BCE, the Senate voted to declare war and sent an expedition to Sicily. Meanwhile, the Carthaginians

increased their troop presence and also hired Gothic and Spanish mercenaries to induce and equip the indigenous population to attack invading Romans.

Consuls Megellus and Vitulus, as the highest-ranking elected Roman Patricians, brought forty-thousand men to lay siege upon Agrigentum, a strategic town along Sicily's southwest coast. The population of Agrigentum swelled to fifty-thousand as the Romans approached because the local population sought refuge behind its walls. The garrison assigned to protect the town was small, but its leader bore a name Romans would come to hate – Hannibal – although this was Hannibal Gisco – and thus not the famous general who crossed the Alps to invade Rome during the Second Punic War.

Upon arrival, the Romans set up camp a mile from the town that had grown to a city and began gleaning the land for food. It was then, while soldiers were foraging, that Hannibal Gisco attacked, routing the unarmed troops and driving them back into their camp. Outnumbered ten to one, Hannibal skirmished with the garrison for a while, killing a substantial number of soldiers, before retreating back into the safety of the city.

The Romans then began digging siege works in an attempt to corral and then starve Agrigentum into submission, creating a stalemate for some five months. Concerned, Hannibal set word to his son Hanno, who arrived with elephants, Numidian cavalry, and an assortment of mercenaries. The numbers associated with each range from thirty to fifty elephants, fifteen hundred to six thousand cavalry, and thirty-thousand to fifty-thousand unaffiliated infantry. Hanno established his base twenty-five miles from Agrigentum and quickly set about the task of capturing Roman supply and communication lines. Then after frustrating and weakening the Legions for a while, Hanno ordered his Numidian cavalry to attack and then feign retreat. The pursuing Romans were thereby lured directly into the teeth of the Carthaginian line, where thousands died. Toying with his new-found foe, Hanno who thought turnabout would be fair play, took the high ground above the Roman camp on Torus Hill, where he deprived his adversary of food for six months. All the while, and inexplicitly, his father, Hannibal, was still trapped and starving inside Agrigentum. So they began communicating through smoke signals.

And speaking of smoke, what happened next is hazy. The various accounts vary markedly and the inconsistencies are difficult to resolve. But it appears that the Romans prevailed, killing most of the Carthaginians, their Numidian allies, and mercenaries. The Greek historian, Polybius, claims that the Romans slaughtered and starved thirty-five thousand men and took some four thousand captive during the siege and battles. While Hannibal would escape with some of his mercenaries, the Romans would also plunder the city, selling all twenty-five thousand civilians who survived their siege into slavery.

Such obsessive cruelty and wonton disregard for life and freedom backfired on the Romans, however. Their reputation for brutality became legend, and the world quickly grew adverse to them. So for those who believe that Rome was a beacon of light during the Republic era, the birthplace of political freedom and a bastion of moral debate, think again. Rome was born and remained as Yahowah had described them: **“an awesome and monstrous beast, the most fearsome and frightening, yet also revered, horrifying and appalling, awful and evil, yet exceedingly and preeminently powerful with the capacity to destroy. With her teeth comprised of iron, multitudes, including the largest, most numerous and powerful, she devoured and devastated, crushing the remainder with her feet by trampling them down violently under foot.”** (Dany’el 7:7)

Four years later, in 260 BCE, Carthage and the Roman Republic would meet again, this time fighting for control of the islands north of Sicily in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Romans, now possessing Sicily, built a fleet to control the Mediterranean Sea. The first seventeen warships sailed to Messina to herald the new era of Roman domination. While training his new navy in the strait, Consul Scipio received information that the garrison on the island of Lipara was willing to defect to Rome. Not able to resist the temptation of conquest without conflict, he said into a trap. As the Roman navy entered the harbor with their recently commissioned fleet, they found Hannibal waiting to ambush them. For his blunder, Rome would change Consul Scipio’s title, giving him the cognomen *Asina*, a pejorative meaning “female donkey.”

Later that same year, Rome would win the first major naval battle against Carthage which was fought off the coast of Northern Sicily. Back to the drawing board, or shipwrecks in this case, the Romans built a fleet of one hundred Quinqueremes (Fives) and twenty Triremes (Threes) by reverse engineering the Carthaginian designs which were themselves copies of warships invented by Dionysius of Syracuse a century earlier. The smaller ships were called “Threes” because there were three levels of oarsmen, typically slaves, confined and shackled inside the ship. And while it was long assumed that a Quinqueremes would have five levels of oarsmen, three stories was the practical limit, suggesting that the Fives were wider, allowing for more men on each level and oar. But the Romans added an interesting wrinkle. Recognizing that their infantry was better trained than their navy, they added a ramp to their vessels which enabled their troops to board enemy ships. This *corvi* was designed to pivot so that Romans could board from the bow, port, or starboard. This enabled them to throw a grappling hook to reel in a passing ship. And once it was close and the ramp was lowered, it locked into position with an iron stake, preventing escape.

The Senate asked Rome's Consuls, Scipio Asina and Gaius Duilius, to divide responsibility, giving the "Ass" control of the fleet. But before the battle began, Duilius switched positions with him, and he wielded the new navy wisely. He deployed the *corvi* drawbridge to board the first twenty Carthaginian ships as they attempted to ram the Romans. Before the battle was over, Rome had captured thirty-one vessels, sinking another thirteen, including the Carthaginian flagship. The remaining eighty enemy ships sailed off in retreat without the Romans giving chase. In addition, Rome took booty in gold and silver worth over two-million sesterces (a 2½ inch silver coin). Duilius received Rome's first naval Triumph.

Success at Mylae enabled the Romans to pursue Hannibal on Sardinia two years later. Their emerging navy prevailed again, destroying a third of the Carthaginian fleet. After another defeat, Hannibal was arrested by his own troops and taken back to Carthage where he was crucified for his failures.

These foes would meet again in the Battle of Tyndaris off the coast of Sicily in 257 BCE. This spontaneous engagement was scored eighteen to nine in favor of the Romans. But that led to a much bigger fight with a great deal at stake. The Battle of Cape Ecnomus was one of the largest naval engagements of the ancient world, and is considered by some to be the largest naval battle ever fought.

The Romans now had delusions of grandeur. They were intoxicated with the idea of being able to project a force, transporting their Legions upon the seas. And their first target would be Northern Africa, the Carthaginian homeland. So realizing that Triremes and Quinqueremes had little space for cargo, Rome built a large fleet of two hundred massive transport vessels. The only equivalent in world history would be America with its six-hundred warships.

But for Rome to accomplish its goal of capturing Northern Africa, the enemy's fleet patrolling the waters off Sicily would have to be neutralized. So as they had with their Legions, Rome divided its navy into numbered Squadrons, each commanded by a Consul. Their battle formation became a wedge with transports tucked behind attack vessels, all of which were protected by a line of Threes and Fives in the rear.

The opposing forces met off of southwestern Sicily, with the Carthaginian fleet arrayed in a long line. Rome advanced on its center and Carthage feigned a retreat, hoping to swing their flanks around quickly to attack the Roman transports. They were initially successful, pushing the larger ships into the Sicilian coast. But the Romans quickly regrouped, avoiding disaster. At the end of the day they had sunk or captured half of the Carthaginian fleet, opening the door to seize Africa.

A year later, in 256 BCE, Rome would invade Carthage with Consul Marcus Regulus leading the charge. Because the Carthaginians were not yet ready to

engage in a land battle, the Roman Legions quickly forced Clupea, a town forty miles east of Carthage, to surrender. After capturing twenty-thousand slaves and vast herds of cattle from the countryside, they then set their sights on Aspis. Messages were dashed off to Rome to notify the Senate of their success, seeking orders on the next move, which was punitive, plundering and destroying the countryside. Loaded with booty, both human and animal, the transports set sail for Rome, leaving Regulus with fifteen thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry.

By this time, Carthage had recalled five thousand infantry and cavalry from Sicily. The remaining army was comprised mostly mercenaries, light infantry, militia, cavalry, and riders upon elephants. But their military was unlike Rome's Legions, where its caste system and strict command and control structure turned Plebes and slaves into unthinking killing machines.

Rather than defend the city of Aspis, the Carthaginian army was deployed on a hill overlooking a nearby plain. It was an unwise decision because it reduced the effectiveness of their superior cavalry and elephants. Worse, unknown to them, and under the cover of darkness, the Romans deployed their Legions around the hill, attacking the Carthaginians from every side at dawn. Fighting bravely, Carthage opened a hole in the Roman line sufficient to allow their cavalry and elephants to escape. But eventually they were beaten back and crushed, with the survivors fleeing the hill in a rout. After looting the camp, the Romans marched to Carthage, stopping at Tunis en route.

That created a stalemate. Consul Regulus knew that despite enslaving fifty-thousand people, and slaughtering almost that many more, there would be no Triumph for him unless he took Carthage. But two Legions of fifteen-thousand troops were woefully inadequate for the mission. On the other side, the weakened Carthaginians found the Numidians who they had oppressed and subjugated rising up against them. And since the Romans had stolen everything edible, they were starving. Confined to the city, they were also ravaged by disease.

So Regulus sought to earn the accolades he could not achieve militarily by humiliating his foe. His terms for ending the unimaginable human suffering he was imposing on the city were unconscionable. In a massive land grab, he demanded that Carthage cede Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica to Rome. In addition, to end the siege, Carthage would have to give their entire navy to the Romans and would have to pay an onerous annual tribute tax to maintain it. What's more, they would have to surrender their freedom, giving Rome absolute control over the Carthage and its people. It was a death sentence which the Carthaginians refused. Rome was anything but merciful.

And sometimes, when people are pushed into a corner they fight back in unexpected way as if they have nothing to lose. Within a year, during the Battle of

Tunis, Carthage would defeat Rome. Rather than surrender everything to Rome, Carthage hired a mercenary general named Xanthippus. He didn't make the same mistake, deploying the Carthaginian cavalry and elephants on open ground to maximize their effectiveness. Xanthippus also created a phalanx of civilians.

General Xanthippus sent his elephants into the heart of the Roman infantry, tying them down, while sending his cavalry against the Regulus's horsemen. Outnumbered eight to one, the Roman cavalry was quickly defeated. While the Romans defeated many of the mercenaries, they fared poorly against the people's phalanx. The Carthaginian cavalry, having wiped out their Roman counterpart, split their forces and assaulted the already disarrayed infantry from both sides. Only two thousand Roman troops were able to escape, fleeing back to their ships. We do not know if Consul Regulus was captured or killed, but he was never heard from again. And during the ensuing period of global warming, vicious seaborne storms kept Rome from pursuing the war.

Carthage would successfully prosecute a Libyan revolt in 252. Following it, they dispatched troops to secure Sicily. When they sought to take Panormus from Rome, the Romans deployed a strategy to torment and kill the elephants that had been so effective against them. With javelins thrust into them, the elephants panicked and trampled the Carthaginian infantry. Then when the battle was over, the Roman capture the surviving elephants which they transported to Rome so that they could be slaughtered in the Circus to the cheers of ghoulish fans.

Rome would, however, lose its next engagement. An attempt to siege Lilybaeum on the western tip of Sicily failed in 250 BCE. The Carthaginians would defeat the Romans again, this time offshore in a fight between the fleets. In the prelude to the battle, and during the Roman siege of Lilybaeum, another Carthaginian commander named Hannibal broke through the Roman blockade in broad daylight, supplying food while removing useless and hungry horses without the napping Romans even noticing. Successful the first time, Hannibal did it again and again, frustrating the Romans and defeating the purpose of the siege – which was to starve the inhabitants to death. Embarrassed, the Roman Consul decided to launch a surprise raid on Drepana, the homeport of the blockade runners. But during a moonless night, the Romans squandered the element of surprise by arriving in disorderly fashion.

Meanwhile, on the Roman flagship, the Consul consulted religious chickens, as was Roman custom, before the battle. If the sacred chickens which were on board for this purpose ate the grain that was scattered before them, the Romans believed that their gods would support them during the battle. However, on this morning in 249 BCE, the righteous chickens chickened out – which was a foreboding omen. With his superstitious crews fearing foul play, the Consul threw

the sacred chickens overboard, saying, “Let them drink, since they don’t wish to eat.”

Out positioned, having lost the element of surprise, and with the gods against them, the blockade runners validated the faith the Romans had placed in their religious omen. And while Consul Publius Pulcher escaped, the highest elected official in Rome was convicted of treason and he was banished, not for losing the battle, not for the loss of his fleet, not even for squandering his men’s lives, but instead for the sacrilege of sacrificing the chickens. You just can’t make this kind of stuff up.

Even enriched by countless slaves and shiploads of stolen property, a constant state of war was bankrupting Rome. The Republic had spent way too much money on its navy and legions. And funny thing about ships: some sink and other rust and rot over time. Soldiers age and their weapons grow dull. The military had become a monster that was devouring the Republic. And yet since the Senate’s Consul was Commander in Chief of the Roman war machine, and since victories over foes real or imagined tuned consuls into gods, the sensible thing never occurred to the Romans.

So with the economy in a calamitous state and the treasury bankrupt, the Patricians were called to be patriotic. Aristocratic Romans weren’t asked to pay off the Republic’s national debt, they weren’t asked to start new businesses that would create jobs and invigorate the stalled economy. The privileged elite would show the way by building their own warship and donating it to the Senate. And so with two-hundred bristling new Quinqueremes duly equipped and crewed, Rome scanned the horizon for a worthy foe. The Fives, with Consul Gaius Catulus at the helm, sailed off in quest of booty and slaves on a brisk spring morning in 241 BCE.

They immediately laid siege to Lilybaeum again, adding Drepana to their blockade, which was the place they had lost their fleet during the fiasco of the faithful foul. And there they bobbed without incident or battle for the rest of the year. Then finally, a year to the day that they had set sail, the Carthaginian fleet arrived, providing the first opportunity for the Patrician Fives to prove their worth. The winds, however, were favoring Carthage, so Consul Catulus removed his ship’s masts and sails and sent his second in command, Fualto, off to play war in the stormy seas. And the Romans prevailed, but only because the Carthaginian ships were overloaded with food and supplies. Theirs had been a mission of mercy to feed the starving townsfolk. In the rough seas, they were out maneuvered by the Roman warships. Half were sunk. The others sailed away.

Consul Catulus, of course, renewed the siege and eventually starved the Sicilians into submission. And to celebrate his achievement, he built a marvelous

temple to Juturna – a Roman goddess turned water nymph who is said to have had a secret adulterous affair with Jupiter. I suspect that she was chosen because early in her life of make believe, she supported her brother Turnus in battle, giving him a new sword after he had dropped his own. The replacement warships were Rome's new sword.

And yet sadly for Rome, the Carthaginians wouldn't play with them again for a quarter of a century, so the Aristocratic navy would rust and rot once more. But that did not mean that the Romans were out of neighbors to antagonize. There would always be plenty of Gauls.

To set the stage, the Gauls had lived in peace with Rome in northern Italy until Rome partitioned their territory in 234 BCE. This intrusion into their lives and the subsequent loss of freedom caused the Gauls to create a federation of tribes and employ a mercenary force to protect them. This was so unacceptable to Rome, they signed a treaty giving Carthage unimpeded control over Hispania so that they could concentrate their animosity against the Gallic quest for independence.

So in 225 BCE, the Republic issued a call to arms against the Gauls living in northern Italy. Fifty-four thousand Samnite and Etruscan boys were forcibly dragged from their homes, joining forty-thousand Umbrian, Sarsinate, Veneti, and Cenomai and twenty-two thousand Roman Plebeians – all to create a massive army orchestrated by the Patrician elite. A quarter of the one-hundred sixteen thousand marched off to war with the Roman eagle and flags leading the charge. The remainder were given garrison duty to suppress local rebellions and make sure that everyone behaved back home.

The Gauls, however, wishing to avoid conflict, scampered away through Apennine Mountains. But the Romans, itching for a fight, pursued them as the Gauls continued to retreat. Unable to escape, the Gauls left their cavalry behind, hidden in the woods, and they lured the Romans into a narrow pass where they ambushed them, inflicting a near fatal blow on the hastily comprised legions.

Regulus, who had been busy fighting for control of Sardinia, arrived just as the Romans were assessing the damage. He moved his troops ahead, overlooking a pass that he thought the Gauls might use. The result was devastating. No match for Roman weaponry or tactics, forty-thousand Gauls were killed in a matter of hours and another ten thousand were taken prisoner. The few who escaped committed suicide rather than endure the torment that would have been inflicted upon them.

With the Gallic population defenseless, the Romans began a punitive expedition, plundering everyone and everything. A great celebration was held in

Rome as the generals were celebrated as gods and the spoils were distributed among the Patricians.

☞☞☞

Even though the Romans had signed peace treaties with Carthage in 509, 348, 306, 279, and 225 BCE, establishing each empire's sphere of influence, the Senate wasn't trustworthy and preferred war to peace. As an example of that, even when their favorite sparring partner was attacked by its Libyan mercenaries for failing to pay them what they were due for having successfully defending Carthage against Rome, the Senate aided and abetted Carthage. And while Carthaginian conflicts apart from those against Rome lay beyond the scope of this investigation, it should be noted that the Carthaginian war against its own mercenaries was among the most savage ever recorded. During the Battle of the Saw, Carthage cunningly lured the protesting mercenaries into a steep box canyon, then blockaded the open end so that they could starve their former allies to death. The mercenary leader was tortured and crucified for trying to negotiate a truce. And then because starvation wasn't sufficiently painful, Carthage began breaking the arms and legs of their captives, and then cutting off their hands and castrating them, before throwing them into large pits to die a much more miserable death.

So it was against this backdrop that in 218 BCE, Rome initiated the Second Punic War, declaring war on Carthage after Hannibal besieged the city of Saguntum on the eastern shore of Iberia. This was remarkable in a way because just sixteen years earlier the Senate had ceded Spain to Carthage so that Rome could focus on fighting Gauls. Somehow Rome justified their duplicity by claiming that they had subsequently entered into a defense pact with the Iberian city. But that was obviously a ruse because Rome never lifted a finger to help their new ally during the eight-month siege, and only responded after the city had been taken.

Anticipating what was to come, Hannibal gave his army the winter off to rest, only to reassemble them in the summer of 218 after learning of the declaration of war against him. Having been elected to his position, and not the least bit timid, Hannibal led ninety-thousand infantry, twelve-thousand cavalry, and thirty-seven elephants from the southeastern Spanish coast toward Italy. Along the way his troops got to practice plundering by subduing the Iberian tribes of Ilergetes, Bergusii, and Austani, conquering much of Catalonia in extreme northeastern Spain. Along the way, they left the Greek colonies in place and unmolested. And

just offshore, Carthage shadowed Hannibal with thirty Fives and mobilized another fifty Quinqueremes in preparation for the battle that was sure to come.

While it had been Rome that had negated its own treaty to declare war, the Carthaginians struck first. Twenty of their Fives loaded with one-thousand soldiers raided the Lipari Islands in the waters off northeastern Sicily. But then on the island of Vulcano, the Syracuse captured three of their ships along with their crews when they were blown off course. And after learning that the Carthaginian navy was being mobilized for a strike on Lilybaeum, Sicily, they informed Rome of the impending raid.

We have to assume that the religious chickens were no longer running afoul of the fleet because Rome prevailed, capturing seventeen hundred Carthaginian sailors. Another two-thousand Carthaginians were captured in Malta.

Within two months, but on a different battlefield, this one in northeastern Iberia, Gnaeus Calvus substantially outmanned and thereby defeated the small garrison force Hannibal had left behind to protect the Iberian villages he had recently conquered. The Romans killed six thousand and captured two thousand Carthaginian soldiers, also stealing the supplies Hannibal had left behind.

The following month, in November of 218 BCE, the stage was set for a pair of epic battles. The first was waged in Gallic territory in northwestern Italy on the Pavia plains near the confluence of the Ticino and Po Rivers. It would be a fight between titans with massive forces assembled on both sides. Hannibal, who was just twenty-six years old, was in a foul mood, knowing that the Romans had wiped out his garrison forces and stolen his supplies.

The Senate knew that they were in serious trouble. Livy writes: "They knew they had never had to face a fiercer or more warlike foe. War was coming, and it would have to be fought in Italy in defense of Rome." They issued a decree to fill out the ranks of six new Legions with twenty-four thousand infantry and eighteen hundred cavalry, enlisting another forty-two thousand allied soldiers from client territories. And while the Senate had already declared war, and had already built its army and navy to prosecute that war, after doing so, in democratic fashion they asked free Romans to vote on whether or not to go to war. I can only imagine the propaganda and military posturing that accompanied this vote, one that was carried by the patriots.

Consul Tiberius in command one-hundred sixty Fives and two Legions, comprised mostly of men who had been forced into service, set sail for Sicily to stage an assault on Carthage. Their plan, one Hannibal interrupted, was to invade Africa. Concurrently, Consul Publius was sent north with two Legions to spar with Hannibal in the north. Manlius, an elderly aristocrat, was named Praetor, and

then assigned two Legions which were to be deployed against the Gauls to keep them from using the occasion to rebel.

With their armies marching off to war with orders to invade Carthage, to subdue Gauls, and confront Hannibal, for the purpose of theater, Rome sent a delegation of old Patricians to the Carthage Senate with plenipotentiary powers to re-re-declare war should their dishonest presentation of revisionist history fail to impress the audience. Having brought copies of past treaties, they asked the Carthaginian Senate to determine if Hannibal had acted as an individual or with the approval of the Senate. But the Carthaginians denied that Rome had a treaty with Carthage, pointing out that they had repudiated the Ebro Treaty, claiming that it was not ratified in order to promote a conflicting defense agreement with Saguntum. Having lost the argument on its merits, the Roman Fabius postured, saying, "We bring you peace and war. Take which you will." Unimpressed, and knowing that the Romans had already chosen war, the Carthaginians replied, "Whichever you want, we do not care." Fabius then proclaimed "We give you war," knowing full well that he wouldn't be fighting in it. (Livy, *History of Rome*, Book XXI) Then with similar result, Fabius who returned through Spain, failed when pleading with the Iberian tribes to join the Romans. The fact that Rome hadn't come to Saguntum's aid after promising to do so, spoke louder than Fabius. The Gauls received Fabius even more critically.

None the less delusional, Hannibal dreamt that a god-like man claiming to be the messenger of the gods told him to invade Italy and not look back. During the vision, he saw a serpent helping him destroy the Romans. So he left Spain with ninety-thousand infantry and twelve-thousand cavalry. But at the end of his five-month one-thousand mile ordeal, he had devastated his own army. Hannibal arrived in Italy having lost two-thirds of his men en route. His progress was slowed because he was forced to negotiate with or fight a never-ending array of tribes along the way, so his army averaged just six miles a day.

Meanwhile, Atilius was sent to relieve the elderly Manlius. The Senate also transferred five thousand allied troops from Publius and gave them to Atilius. Publius was instructed to raise another legion from tribes en route, promising them mutual defense. The Boii took the bait and offered guides and appropriate clothing for crossing the Alps.

Upon learning that Hannibal was still in the Pyrenees, the Romans dispatched Consul Scipio via naval transport to Liguria at the mouth of the Rhone, a narrow strip of land bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, the Alps, and the Apennines. There they would wait for the Carthaginians among friendly Greeks and Gauls.

At the same time, Hannibal reached the Rhone further upstream, where he was confronted by the Volcae, Gauls in alliance with Rome. The Carthaginians made a

successful crossing by sending a third of their force to deflect the Gauls. Hannibal's elephants floated across the Rhone on rafts. But shortly thereafter, a small number of Scipio's cavalry encountered a Carthaginian scouting party and routed them.

Having lost track of Hannibal's army, however, as they vanished to the north, Scipio dispatched most of his troops to New Carthage, the very place Hannibal had left five months earlier. He, himself, returned by ship to Pisa and then marched through Etruria to join Manlius and Atilius and wait for Hannibal along the Po River.

Hannibal, however, was fighting for his life. Hostile mountain tribes, avalanches, collapsed roadways, and deep snow made crossing the Alps miserable. At one point, the Carthaginians had to cut a path across a thousand-foot cliff by heating and cooling the rock face to crack it sufficiently that they could pick and pry their way forward. The two-week crossing took a heavy toll and Hannibal arrived with only twenty-thousand African and Iberian infantry and six-thousand cavalry. Surprisingly, most of his elephants survived. But the men were emaciated, having exhausted their food supplies.

Hannibal's next battle was against the Taurini, with whom he tried to negotiate a peace treaty and alliance. They refused, so Hannibal surrounded their village and leveled it, killing everyone as a message to other local tribes. Rather than fight him, many Gallic tribes allied with the Carthaginians in opposition to the Romans. The historian, Livy, states that they bolstered Hannibal's force by sixty-thousand foot soldiers and four-thousand riders.

Publius and Scipio were bewildered, finding it incredulous that Hannibal could have crossed the Alps, arrived in Italy, massacred a tribe, and forged new alliances in a matter of weeks. Hannibal was also surprised by the presence of the Roman army, because he thought that they were in Spain.

Unaware of the size of his opponent's army, Scipio, who as Consul outranked Publius, decided to hold his infantry in arrears and test his foe's metal with his cavalry and light javelin infantry. Hannibal responded similarly, but only deployed his cavalry, although they were highly motivated. The twenty-six year old general promised his men that if they were victorious that they would all slaves would be freed, that all allies would be afforded Carthaginian citizenship, and that every man would win tax-free land in Italy, Spain, or Africa. Incentives duly offered, Hannibal placed his heavily armored riders in the center and his light and swift Numidian cavalry on his wings so that they could break off and attack the Romans from behind. Scipio arranged his cavalry in a straight line as if they were infantry. He then tucked his javelin throwers behind his Gallic cavalry in the center of his line. Hannibal seeing the Roman tactic, charged, hitting his foe

so quickly that not a single javelin was launched. The Roman light infantry fled, running for their lives. Then Hannibal deployed his pincer maneuver, wounding Scipio and scattering his men.

Hannibal, however, did not pursue them, knowing that his cavalry was substantially outnumbered by the Roman infantry held in reserve. During the night, Scipio left his camp, crossed the Po River on the bridge they had built, and then demolished it. They were in Piacenza before Hannibal even knew that they had left camp.

But all was not well on the Roman side. As Hannibal arrived at Piacenza at dawn two days later, he was greeted by twenty-two hundred Gauls, men who just the night before had been Roman allies. But the previous night, each of them had cut off the head of the Roman sleeping nearest them in their tents. Festooned with their ghoulish artifacts, they crossed over to the Carthaginian side where they were well received. And knowing he was in trouble once again, Scipio retreated, positioning his troops on the far side of the Trebia River, a tributary of the Po. Moving slowly, Hannibal allowed the Romans to position themselves in the hills, fortify the slopes, and wait.

Enthusiastically resupplied by the Gallic population, the Carthaginians were itching for a fight. And they would get their opportunity in the Battle of the Trebia. It was a cold and snowy day, the 18th day of December, 228 BCE, a few days before the winter solstice. Scipio was recovering from his wounds, but Consul Sempronius was eager to exchange blows with Hannibal.

At the same time, Hannibal was laying a trap, sending eleven-hundred of his best men under the cover of darkness into the underbrush to lie in wait on the near side of the river he knew that the Romans would have to cross. Then at first light, he dispatched his Numidian cavalry beyond the Trebbia to harass the Roman camp and retreat, luring them into an ambush. In response, and not even giving them time to eat their morning meal or properly prepare, in impetuous Sempronius deployed his cavalry, six thousand javelin throwers, and twelve thousand heavy infantry along with twenty-thousand allied troops, ordering them to forge the ice-cold Trebbia in pursuit. On the other side, they were so chilled, they could scarcely hold their weapons. Hannibal, however, with his trap perfectly set, didn't obliterate his foe at this time. He thought that he could achieve a greater spectacle, and thereby further impress his Gallic allies, by engaging the whole Roman army. So he ordered his light infantry forward, which was comprised of javelin throwers and slingers. Behind these eight-thousand men, he positioned twenty-thousand African, Iberian, and Gallic infantry with ten-thousand cavalry and his elephants split between his flanks.

The Numidian cavalry feasted on their Roman counterparts who were strung out in pursuit. They then harassed the opposition's light infantry, causing the hypothermic hurlers to fling all of their missiles in vain. With his men frozen and providing no resistance, Sempronius ordered them to fall back. This left the heavily-armed infantry on both sides to close ranks. Simultaneously, Hannibal assaulted the Roman wings, forcing them back into the river. With many Roman troops exposed and unable to retreat, the moment they passed the position of the Carthaginians who had been lying in wait to ambush them, the trap was sprung. Panicked, the Roman infantry broke ranks and headed back into the river, where Hannibal slaughtered them.

The Romans who had not fled then formed a hollow square, with everyone facing out to oppose the enemy on all sides. Tiberius, who had joined the battle, commanded them from within. With the Carthaginians focused on massacring the defenseless soldiers in the river, Rome antagonized the elephants, causing them to go on the rampage. Meanwhile, the Roman square, ignoring their allies dying in the river, marched toward Piacenza, killing an untold number of Carthaginians in the process. Tiberius has a laundry list of excuses for not attempting to rescue his defenseless allies, but in the end, all that matters is that Rome abandoned them. Scipio also retreated, keeping the river between himself and his foe. Hannibal did not pursue them, because the weather turned frigid, killing his horses, elephants, and many of his men.

The Romans were defeated, but most of their army escaped. Seven Legions were still intact. They would quickly regroup, elect new Consuls, recruit an additional four Legions, build more ships, and replenish their supplies.

In the days which followed, Hannibal attempted a small-scale assault on Placentia which failed. He then marched on a supply depot filled with anti-Carthaginian refugees from the Gallic tribes. A mob of thirty-five thousand tried without success to impede Hannibal and were driving back into the fort. After surrendering, the garrison relinquished their weapons and Hannibal's men committed "every kind of outrage that lust, cruelty, and brutal insolence could suggest." (Livy, *History of Rome*, Book XXI)

Having lost all but twelve-thousand infantry and five-thousand cavalry to winter storms, it was either courageous or arrogant, but Hannibal marched his faltering army towards Tiberius's camp. His aggressiveness was rebuffed, but he later regrouped and struck again, this time succeeding. But darkness prevented Hannibal from eliminating his enemy. Casualties were significant on both sides.

In the Spring of 217 BCE the Carthaginian navy lost a battle near the Ebro River, sacrificing thirty ships and control of the Spanish coast. It was then that newly elected Consul, Gaius Flaminius, bearing a name that has to be spoken

cautiously in politically correct circles, turned his army south to prepare for the defense of Rome. Hannibal followed, but now having mastered the craft, marched faster and passed him. The young general then did his level best to Flaminius into battle, devastating the region the Roman Consul had been nominated to protect. Next, he taunted him, marching his army around the Roman camp, cutting off Flaminius's supply and communication lines with Rome. But it was only after Hannibal marched on Apulia, the southeastern Italian peninsula situated between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, that Gaius Flaminius finally reacted, foolishly sending his entire force into a battlefield of his enemy's choosing.

And it was well chosen. As Hannibal came upon Lake Trasimene, he noticed a valley along the lakeshore that was perfectly suited for an ambush. He had his scouts light campfires miles many miles away to create the impression that his army was a long distance from his chosen battlefield. Then during the night Hannibal positioned his heavy infantry behind a rise that would give them unimpeded access to charge down upon the enemy's left flank as they marched forward, strung out in a long line. He concealed his cavalry and Gallic infantry at the opposite end, in the wooded hills near the valley's opening overlooking the lake, which would allow them to close the only escape route and menace the Roman rear. His light troops were stationed in groups, hidden in the foothills opposite of the lakeshore.

The next morning, June 21, 217 BCE, eager for battle, the Romans broke camp early and marched at an exhausting pace along the northern shore of the lake, just as Hannibal had planned. So then to split the Roman force, Carthage initiated a small skirmish to draw the troops leading the march away from those following in the rear. Once the Romans were perfectly situated, trumpets were blown, signaling the attack. The cavalry swept down, blocked the road, and engaged the unsuspecting Romans, sending them into disarray. The heavy infantry rumbled down from the heights to slaughtering the trapped men. Simultaneously, the Gallic light infantry pounced from the side and from the rear, splitting the Legions into three uncoordinated groups. The Roman vanguard was pushed into the lake. The center, including Gaius Flaminius, was shredded by the Gauls in a matter of hours. By lunchtime, the entire Roman army was annihilated. Only six-thousand of Flaminius's army managed to escape in the low fog, meaning that twenty-four thousand were killed that morning. Hannibal's losses were less than two-thousand. And of the escapees, most were captured by the Maharbal the following day. They were all sold into slavery. Moreover, two days hence, four-thousand Romans sent to reinforce Flaminius were intercepted and slaughtered.

Hannibal, in the Battle of Lake Trasimene, planned and executed the largest and most successful ambush in military history. In response, the Fabii Patrician

Quintus Fabius Maximus was appointed dictator of Rome to coordinate the war effort. He would deploy what has become known as the Fabian Strategy of avoiding direct conflict and engaging only in the most favorable circumstances. Rome would try to harass the invader and wear him down.

As for Hannibal, even though he was within a few day's march to Rome, he elected to pillage Apulia over the next year to replenish his army. It is a matter of speculation as to why he didn't sack Rome. He was given unimpeded access. There were no Legions in his way or even within the central Italian Peninsula. But we know that his men were worn out. They had contracted scurvy. They were now equipped with confiscated Roman weapons, and they would have to be trained to wield them effectively. Also, his horses were in bad shape, so he would use a low-grade local wine as an ointment to bring his cavalry mounts back to health.

To restore Roman confidence and instill a renewed sense of patriotism, Fabius, the political dictator and supreme military commander, positioned himself above the national hierarchy of pagan priests. He meticulously led all religious functions, fully integrating temple and state. He would go so far as to blame the defeat at Trasimene on a national deficiency regarding proper religious observations. The Roman Senate would consult the Sibylline Books at the direction of Dictator Fabius, assigning a Praetor to appease the Roman gods through generous and regular sacrifices. In so doing, Rome became the reincarnation of Babylon. There was no longer any distinction between the Roman military, government, or religion.

All the while, Rome's allies were abandoned and sacrificed. Hannibal plundered them at will. But after a while, Hannibal grew complacent, and letting his guard down, nearly got ambushed. He entered a rich valley with limited ways out, all of which the Romans controlled, including the valley Hannibal had used to enter the vast plain. But the young Carthaginian general had another novel trick up his sleeve. Rather than confront the entrenched Romans, Hannibal paralyzed them. He tied torches to the horns to two-thousand oxen, stampeding them in front of Fabius in the middle of the night. The Romans, thinking that they were being lured into another trap, let the Carthaginians scamper out of the valley right before their noses in the middle of the night. Worse, more than one-thousand Romans fled before the stampede and they were systematically picked off. Hannibal had turned the tables on his tormentor by evading a battle he did not want to fight. It was pure Sun Tzu. Hannibal "Knew his enemy and knew himself, and thus knew that victory would be his" because "a battle avoided cannot be lost."

Now free, Hannibal ransacked Roman estates as Fabius shadowed him. And what the Carthaginians didn't take, Fabius ordered burned, scorching his own

land. And by doing so, his approach was beginning to wear thin. He had nurtured false hope in the Roman religion, in the Roman military, and in the Roman government, but when he timidly failed to deliver, knowing that it had all been propaganda, the people turned against him. The Senate replaced their dictator with Consuls Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus. And they were given command of a newly-conscripted army of unprecedented size – eight Legions, each consisting of five-thousand Plebeians besides five-thousand allied troops. Eighty-thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry would be brought to bear against the African that had out maneuvered them on every occasion.

Hannibal had now traversed and ransacked every inch of Rome, from north to south and from east to west. There was nothing left for him to do other than confront Rome's new army. Knowing that with two Consuls commanding one army, that they would switch off, alternating on a daily basis, Hannibal planned his strategy accordingly. Varro would be in charge on the day the armies met, making him a scapegoat, especially since he as a career soldier who had risen up the ranks, unlike Paullus, was not a member of the aristocracy.

Continuing to toy with his enemy, Hannibal seized a large military supply depot outside of Rome. Incensed by this, Consul Varro, is depicted as an exemplar of Rome, conceited and callous, so to capitalize upon their hubris, Hannibal sent a small raiding party against the whole of Rome's massive army. When they were repulsed, Roman overconfidence became their Achilles' heel.

On the morning of the battle, Varro aligned his ninety-five thousand troops in typical fashion, with three straight lines, one behind the other. His plan was to have his infantry march into and through the center of the Carthaginian line. Only one problem: there was no opposing line.

Hannibal was outnumbered two to one, but he knew that his cavalry was substantially better than his opponent's hastily assembled horsemen. So he positioned his forty-seven thousand troops in a wedge formation, with their backs to the wind and sun. Deploying an international force of Libyans, Iberians, Gauls, Numidians, Phoenicians, and Balearans, with slingers and hurlers, swordsmen and riders among them, each was stationed according to their ethnicity and competency. Then, to the surprise of the Romans, he positioned two-thirds of his cavalry along his left flank which was already protected by the Aufidus River. The remaining third he used to offset the Roman cavalry on his right flank, their left, away from the river.

With the low morning sun glaring into his enemy's eyes, Hannibal radically changed his formation, with the point of his wedge falling back and the wings pulling forward. This created a crescent, with the appearance of an open mouth filled with menacing teeth ready to devour the Romans. Unaware that they were

being lured to their death, the center of the Roman line rushed forward to fill the void. All that was needed then was to deflect the Roman cavalry so that the Carthaginian riders could push the Roman flanks back on both flanks, creating another crescent, this one convex, with the Romans now engulfed inside Hannibal's mouth. Once the inferior Roman cavalry was neutered, the remainder of the Carthaginian riders menaced the Legions from the rear.

During the *mêlée*, with a easterly wind, all of the dust and sand thrown up into the air by nearly one-hundred and fifty thousand soldiers and horses blew directly into the eyes of Hannibal's foe. Then, knowing that the Romans put their best men in the center of their lines, Hannibal, who was serving in the center of his line with his least capable infantrymen, pulled the center of his line back in what the Romans would have seen as a retreat. When the Legions rushed forward, Hannibal's most capable troops encircled them in a pincer movement. Six-thousand Roman legionaries were slaughtered a minute until darkness finally brought an end to the carnage. Less than fifteen percent of the largest army ever assembled by Rome lived to see the next morning, and two-thirds of them were captured. Hannibal, who had been outmanned two to one, lost just six-thousand soldiers.

Livy, in the *History of Rome*, wrote: "Two consular armies were lost. There was no longer any Roman camp, and general, any single soldier in existence." The Romans became so desperate, they resorted to human sacrifice to appease their gods, burying men, women, and children alive at the Forum.

Over the course of twenty months, Hannibal had defeated the equivalent of eight consular armies, sixteen Legions, and an equal number of allies. Rome had lost one-hundred and fifty thousand Plebeians – one fifth of the entire population of citizens over the age of seventeen. Most Roman allies abandoned them, and revolts sprung up throughout the empire.

Hannibal, however, wasn't interested in sacking Rome. He recognized that it would be a fight to the death, and it wasn't worth sacrificing the lives of those who had fought so valiantly with him. So he offered the Roman Senate a peace treaty on very favorable terms. But Rome refused. The Senate forced the entire male population of Rome into the military, every citizen, every peasant, every slave. They actually outlawed saying the word "peace." Public displays of emotion over the loss of loved ones, including the tears of mothers and widows, was strictly forbidden.

The military historian, Theodore Ayrault Dodge, assessed *Hannibal* as follows: "Few battles of ancient times are more marked by ability...than the battle of Cannae. The position was such as to place every advantage on Hannibal's side. The manner in which the far from perfect Hispanic and Gallic foot was advanced

in a wedge in échelon...was first held there and then withdrawn step by step, until it had reached the converse position...is a simple masterpiece of battle tactics. The advance at the proper moment of the African infantry, and its wheel right and left upon the flanks of the disordered and crowded Roman legionaries, is far beyond praise. The whole battle, from the Carthaginian standpoint, is a consummate piece of art, having no superior, few equal, examples in the history of war.” (T.A. Dodge, *Hannibal*, Perseus Publishing, 2004, pages 378-9)

Will Durant, in *The Story of Civilization*, wrote, “It was a supreme example of generalship, never bettered in history...and it set the lines of military tactics for 2,000 years.” (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Volume III, Simon and Schuster, 1944, page 51)

Rome and Carthage would fight again. A year later, in 216 BCE, Marcus Marcellus deflected an attack by Hannibal at Nola, doing so a second time in 215. A year later, in the same place, these men fought to a draw. But with a change of scenery, Hannibal defeated Consuls Fulvius Flaccus and Appius Claudius at Capua in 212 BCE. The same year at Silarus and then at Herdonia, Hannibal devastated the Roman army. The Carthaginians would prevail in the Battle of Baetis in 211 BCE. But later that year, Hannibal had a brief setback, failing to break the Roman siege of Capua. And yet within months, the Carthaginians would ravage the Roman army during the Second Battle of Herdonia. Also in 210 BCE, Hannibal defeated Marcellus a second time during the Battle of Numistro.

Against this savage backdrop, Philip V of Macedon defeated Rome’s Greek allies in 209 BCE in two battles fought at Asculum. Then in 208, Romans in Hispania, led by Scipio’s son, defeated Hannibal’s brother, Hasdrubal Barca. In retribution, Hasdrubal invaded Italy, a bad move, since he was defeated and killed in the Battle of the Metaurus by General Gaius Nero in 207 BCE. Hannibal’s favorite general, Hasdrubal Gisco, lost the city of Carmona to Rome later that year.

By 206 BCE, Publius Scipio decisively defeated the remaining Carthaginian forces in Hispania. The Roman fleet then won a naval engagement against the Carthaginian fleet in the waters off Carteia. All the while in southern Italy, in the Battle of Crotona, Hannibal is fought to a draw. But then as the Romans under Scipio defeated the Carthaginian army of Hasdrubal Gisco in the Battle of Bagbrades, annihilating them, the stage was set to bring the battlefield to Africa, recognizing that the only way to get Hannibal out of Italy was for Rome to invade Carthage.

And so it would be. In 203 BCE, Consul Scipio Africanus invaded Africa and fought successfully, thereby luring Hannibal home. Then on October 19, 202 BCE, the general who had fought so effectively on foreign soil would lose a battle

on his home turf, ending the Second Punic War. Scipio, who was now Consul Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maximus, engaged Hannibal at Zama Regia, eighty miles southwest of Tunis.

Hannibal's hastily assembled mostly mercenary force was comprised of thirty-six thousand infantry, four-thousand cavalry, and some eighty elephants. Scipio marched into battle with twenty-nine thousand infantry and sixty-one hundred cavalry. And while those numbers may look comparable, Hannibal's cavalry was comprised of novices, and his infantry was equal parts inexperienced civilians and the fickle mercenaries. Hannibal's only experienced troops were put at the rear of his formation, thinking perhaps that if his less able and less reliable forces were able to wear down the Roman attack, his strongest soldiers would finish the job.

But knowing that his prospects were poor, Hannibal summoned Scipio to a meeting before the battle began. He offered to cede all overseas territories to Rome, keeping only Carthage sovereign. Scipio refused, giving Hannibal two equally horrible options: unconditional surrender or a battle he could not win.

As usual, the elephants proved useless. They were stampeded into the Carthaginian cavalry, disorienting those new to battle. They were initially dispersed which is the best Hannibal could have hoped for because his goal was to keep the Roman cavalry from controlling the engagement. They would go on fighting in the distance. Then as the lines engaged, the Roman first line prevailed over time, with losses being relatively even. The same was true of the second lines. When the third lines met, the fighting became especially bloody, with neither side making any headway. But it was then after defeating the inexperienced cavalry that the Roman cavalry returned and struck the Carthaginian rear. Hannibal would lose twenty-thousand men in the battle and have another twenty-thousand taken prisoner.

The Carthaginian Senate tried once again to negotiate a peace treaty with Rome, but the terms, as they had been before, were devastating. Carthage was bankrupted by Rome, a condition that proved to be short-lived, because without the cost of supporting an army and navy, the Carthaginian economy flourished. Rome, however, within fifty years would renege on the terms of their own treaty and invade Carthage a third and final time. And the next time, they would leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake.

In all, fifty-seven wars were fought in the third century BCE, with the expanding and contracting Roman Republic battling the Samnites, Gauls, Etruscans, Greeks, Carthaginians, and Iberians multiple times.

At the dawn of the third century, in 198 BCE, the Romans engaged and defeated the Macedonians under Philip V, pummeling him again in Thessaly the following year. Turning north, they defeated the Gauls, and then turning south they attacked the Spartans, defeating them with the help of the Achaean League. In 191 BCE, the Romans under Manius Glabrio devastated Antiochus III the Great at Thermopylae, forcing him to evacuate Greece. The following year, Roman forces sank most of the Seleucid fleet commanded by their old nemesis, Hannibal. At year's end, near Smyrna, Lucius Scipio decisively defeated the Greeks.

Then in the Battle of Mount Olympus, Roman general Gnaeus Manlius Vulso crushed an army of Galatian Gauls in 189 BCE. But the Romans would meet their match, losing to Perseus of Macedon during the Battle of Callicinus in 171 BCE – interesting in that Perseus incited Rome into war. And yet his miscalculation would be the last hurrah for the Macedonians and Greece, with the Romans under Lucius Paullus defeating and capturing the Macedonian King in the Battle of Pydna on June 22, 168 BCE even though the Romans were outnumbered forty-four thousand to twenty-nine thousand. The victory earned Lucius Paullus the title Macedonicus – Master of the Macedonians. But evidently he didn't win the battle on his own. The previous evening there had been a lunar eclipse, which was perceived by the Macedonians as a terrorizing omen, as their goddess Selene (also known as Artemis), the sister of Helios (also called Apollo), went dark. In reality, the Macedonian phalanx had just become obsolete, and it crumbled on uneven ground when facing a better trained, better equipped, foe. The Romans would fight and win thirteen additional battles during the second century BCE, but none would be as transforming as their triumph over the last vestiges of Alexander's Hellenic Empire.

But there was a foreboding fight. Rome had imposed a humiliating restriction on Carthage, requiring their Senate to ask permission of the Roman Senate prior to engaging in any battle. And since Carthage was also prohibited from fielding an army or navy, they didn't give the policing action in 149 BCE against rebellious Numidians in their midst a second thought. But itching for a fight, Rome decided that by suppressing a riot, Carthage had violated the terms of their onerous accord. They immediately launched their fleet, blockading Carthage.

Rome would then invade Africa, whereby Carthage immediately surrendered, handing the Romans the weapons they had used to suppress the internal riot along with the protestors who had been captured. The Romans, however, demanded the complete capitulation and submission of the capital. Then somehow,

Carthaginians manned the walls of their city and kept the Romans outside. All the while, the half million civilians inside Carthage transformed everyday items into three hundred swords, five hundred spears, two hundred shields, and one-thousand projectiles for catapults each day during the height of their production.

Outside of the city, the smallish Roman army somehow lost a skirmish against Carthaginian civilians at Nepheris. But given another go at it, Scipio defeated them, killing most everyone. With the entire country now theirs to plunder, the Romans stepped up their siege of Carthage, breaking through the walls in 146 CE. But even inside, without a single soldier to oppose them, the women, children, and elderly wielding improvised weapons, held the Romans off for a while. But eventually the Roman killing machine was too efficient. Seventeen thousand Romans died murdering four-hundred fifty-thousand civilians. Fifty-thousand Carthaginians were sold into slavery. The city was leveled.

In the final throes of death, as Carthage was burning to the ground, nine hundred survivors had found refuge in the Temple of Eshmun, the Phoenician god of healing, even as the shrine was burning around them. They pleaded with Scipio for mercy, but none was shown. They would burn alive. It all served as a foreshadow of what Rome would do not once, but twice to Jerusalem.

The waning years of the second century, migratory Germanic tribes of the Cimbri and Teutoni were forced into fighting a pair of Roman armies. From the Roman perspective, they had disturbed the balance of power – which is to say they spoke critically of Roman oppression. So the Romans assembled their Legions and went on the warpath. But the adventure quickly soured. An advance party of Romans encountered a small contingent of Cimbri, who routed them, capturing the Legate Scaurus. Arrogant even in the custody of those he had been sent out to eradicate, Scaurus belittled the Cimbri king and got himself killed.

All the while, the Roman Consuls were vying for control. Each wanted credit for the victory they were sure would come. Caepio, the “*novus homo* – new guy,” launched a unilateral attack on the Cimbri camp on October 6, 105 BCE to circumvent Maximus, the senior statesman, from claiming all the credit for the successful outcome. But instead of victory, Caepio’s army was annihilated, with the Cimbri moving into the Roman camp. The next day, the Cimbri attacked Maximus’s army, pushing the poorly positioned troops into a river behind their camp. At the end of the day, conflicting Roman egos had sacrificed the lives of eighty-thousand soldiers and forty-thousand support personnel.

After a string of Roman failures, Gaius Marius succeeded in killing ninety-thousand Germanic Teutones and Scandinavian Ambrones, enslaving another twenty-thousand – mostly women and children. It would have been even more, but most of the captured women committed mass suicide rather than endure life

among the savages that comprised Rome. The Romans even refused a last minute offer to have married women serve as ministers in the temples of Ceres and Venus. “By the conditions of the surrender three hundred of their married women were to be handed over to the Romans. When the Teuton matrons heard of this stipulation they first begged the consul that they might be set apart to minister in the temples of Ceres and Venus; and then when they failed to obtain their request and were removed by the victors, they slew their little children and next morning were all found dead in each other's arms having strangled themselves in the night.” (Strauss, Bary, The Spartacus War, Simon And Schuster, pages 21-2)

Adding to this ocean of blood, and thereby becoming the living embodiment of Yahowah’s depiction of the savage brutality of Rome, in 101 BCE Gaius Marius struck again. On this day in northern Italy Romans slaughtered one-hundred forty-thousand Cimbri, harvesting sixty-thousand women and children as slaves. Neither life nor liberty mattered. The world’s greatest superpower, the ultimate integration of religion, politics, and the military, became to Yahowah as darkness is to light.

The carnage of the past fifty years had become almost unfathomable. A million souls had been devoured by the Beast.

The larger they become, the longer they exist, the more they blend religion and politics, patriotism and militarism, human institutions typically embody everything God despises. Lives are truncated and freedom is negated. Deceit is celebrated to such an extent, God becomes unknowable. It is the triumph of tragedy.

—

Rome’s first battle of the first century BCE was waged against Italians, and thus bears the name the “Social War.” Cities that had been allies of the Roman Republic, became foes. The reason was clear cut: once Rome demonstrated its dominance militarily, the Senate began to impose its will upon the nation’s neighbors and demanded tribute. But more concerning, Rome demanded soldiers – impoverishing the surrounding communities of their sons. So onerous were the Roman demands, that two thirds of the soldiers in the Roman armies were now forced into service, having come from other Italian territories. This served to strengthen Rome militarily and weaken the client states, giving the Romans absolute control over the peninsula. The Republic’s subsequent policies of inequitable land and wealth distribution, enriched Romans further, while turning

their neighbors into serfs. The masses were rendered paupers without sons or hope.

In 91 BCE, in order to quell the simmering rebellion, Marcus Livius Drusus proposed reforms to the Roman Senate that would grant sub-citizenship to the Italians. But his plan to allow them to vote on local matters, without having any say in alliances, wars, or the distribution of plunder, was soundly defeated by the aristocracy. The client cities declared their independence as a result, sparking the civil war.

The Italia Federation created their own coinage to pay for troops, most of whom were older men who had served in and now had been released from the Roman armies. But nonetheless, a battle-tested force of one-hundred-thousand men was fielded and then divided among fourteen consuls, most of whom would be killed or commit suicide within the coming year. Rome successfully pitted Italian cities against one another, persuading some to ally with Rome under the promise of full citizenship should they prevail. Rome became proficient at offering bribes, but was never very good at honoring them. In typical Roman fashion, Lex Lucius Julius Caesar came with conditions that people in the allied cities could not meet. And in a matter of years, it would not matter anyway, because Rome would soon cease to be a republic.

There would be more than fifty additional battles fought during the first century BCE as Rome made the transition from the rule of law to the dictates of the Caesars. This transformation began in 83 BCE, when following the first Mithridatic War against rebellious Greeks, the initial battle of what's been called "the First Roman Civil War" was fought upon Mount Tifata. Aristocratic forces, or Optimates as they were known, were led by Lucius Cornelius Sulla. They opposed the Populares, shepherded by Gaius Norbnaus. And while the Populares were neither popular with the people, nor comprised of ordinary people, they would initially go down in defeat for their political ideals. Also in 82 BCE, the Popular army was defeated at Asio River and again at Sacriporto.

Later that same year, the Popular Political Party would regroup and defeat the Aristocratic Optimate Political Party forces at Clusium. But they lost at Faventia, Clusium, and Colline Gate, which was the decisive battle in the First Roman Civil War. The Samnites, comprising the preponderance of the Popular army at the time, surrendered and were summarily executed by the Romans within earshot of the Senate. Having slaughtered the rank and file of the opposing political party in the Villa Publica where the census was conducted, the Imperialists tossed their mutilated caucuses into the Tiber River. The Aristocratic Optimates, after making Populares generals watch the mass murder of their people, were decapitated. Their heads sent off to intimidate those who would dare consider rebellion against the aristocracy. It was Imperial, but it was not civilized.

Perusing those who valued their freedom to the ends of the earth, Roman Legions under Lucius Fulfidias chased rebel forces under the command of Quintus Sertorius all the way to Hispania, only to lose to them in 80 BCE. But half way around the world, Fulfidias would avenge his loss seven years later, decisively defeating Mithridates (Gift of Mithra) the Great in northern Anatolia, today's Turkey, during the Siege of Cyzicus. In reality, Mithridates's army was starving to death and they became easy prey as they scavenged for food.

Rome's next battle is legendary. Roman slaves led by Spartacus were attacked by Gaius Claudius Glaber at the base of Mount Vesuvius. The Romans, to satiate their bloodlust, promoted gladiatorial games, whereby slaves and prisoners were taught to kill for sport. But in 73 BCE, some two-hundred gladiators in Capua plotted an escape, with seventy succeeding. Three Gallic slaves, Crixus and Oenomaus, and Spartacus, a Thracian, were elected to lead the band of freed men. Initially, they defeated a small force from Capua that had been sent to arrest them, capturing their weapons in the process. Now well armed, they freed other slaves in the area by menacing the wealthiest Roman estates, recognizing that this region was home to many elaborate vacation villas.

Glaber's forces, a militia of some three-thousand men, besieged the former slaves on the slopes of the ancient volcano, blocking their only means down the mountain. With them contained, the Roman aristocrat was content to let them starve. But Spartacus and his men were ingenious. They made ropes and constructed ladders out of indigenous flora to rappel down the cliffs, enabling them to surprise and take Glaber's militia.

In retaliation, the Romans dispatched four-thousand men under Praetor Publius Varinius to deal with the slave rebellion. But he too was defeated in a battle that only served to better equip the former slaves. Then with each successive victory, more and more slaves were willing to risk their lives for a chance at freedom, ultimately swelling their ranks to some seventy-thousand.

After investing a year training his new recruits, Spartacus defeated the Roman army at Picenum, again at Mutina, and then at Capania, only to lose to Marcus Crassus at the Battle of Siler River. So intent were the Romans at suppressing any hope of freedom, Crassus trapped Spartacus in Bruttium by building a forty-mile long system of ditches and walls.

Following a failed truce, Spartacus and fifty-thousand of his men were able to break through the Roman siege and escape, gathering in the open fields along the banks of the Siler River. Crassus pursued them, and although Spartacus and his men fought valiantly, one by one they were killed by the superior force, Spartacus himself, dying as he tried to reach Crassus. The total casualties were too numerous to count, but an estimated thirty-six thousand gladiators and slaves

were murdered for the crime of wanting to be free. Another six thousand survivors were captured and then inhumanly crucified on Crassus' orders. Romans had little respect for those who actually built Rome, and for those who entertained them. The fact is, they had no respect for liberty or life.

Following this savage display of sadism, the Romans defeated the Armenians in 69 BCE and the Tigranes in 68 BCE. Then in the Battle of Lycus, Pompey the Great annihilated the army of Mithridates VI, ending the Third Mithridatic War. At the same time, while basking in the ghoulis glory, he claimed credit for defeating Spartacus, irritating Crassus. And while books have been written about Catiline and his role trying to preserve the Republic against the likes of Caesar and Crassus, he was labeled a traitor and conspirator. So in 62 BCE, he and those loyal to him were killed in the Battle of Pistoria.

This brings us face to face with Gaius Julius Caesar, who was at the time known as a clever politician rather than a crafty general. As Governor of Gaul, he fought and won his first battle against the migrating tribes of the Helvetii, who had come from today's Switzerland, initiating the most brutal part of the Gallic Wars. Near present-day Geneva, the Romans destroyed a bridge across the Rhone, impeding the people's migration, and constructed nineteen miles of fortifications to stop the Helvetii passage. Rome was always opposed to the homeless who roamed the land. And I suspect that was because their continual movement made them difficult to suppress and tax.

Having no interest in fighting, the Helvetii tried a different route, crossing the Arar River using improvised rafts. But Caesar, coveting easy prey, attacked the migrant community with three Roman Legions, killing and enslaving all of those who had yet to cross the river. Julius's motivation was simple if not grotesque. The Roman Legions were funded by stolen booty, and they were manned by captured slaves. Those unfit to fight were sold into slavery with the generals retaining the proceeds. The conquered lands were not only taxed, massive land grants were awarded to the most valiant soldiers.

A month later, and now with six Legions under his command, Julius Caesar moved his army ahead of the Helvetii migration route, confiscating the available food supplies. Then Caesar deployed his cavalry to delay the Helvetii while he positioned his Seventh (Bull), Eighth (Augusta), Ninth (Hispania), and Tenth (Equestris / Mounted) Legions in battle order at the foot of nearby hill along the Helvetii migration route. Caesar took the Eleventh (Claudia) and Twelfth (Fulminata / Thunderbolt) to the top of the hill. The battle began at noon according to Caesar, with his men piercing the Helvetii with their javelins.

Trying to flee the onslaught, the Helvetii retreat was supported by two nearby tribes who arrived just at the right time to assist them, the Boii and the Tulingi,

both of whom engaged to flank the Romans. But with an overwhelming advantage, Julius was able to rebuff the Celtic tribes, while simultaneously perusing his primary prey, the Helvetii and their baggage train. By the time the blood had stopped running, Julius Caesar had killed or captured two-hundred thirty-eight thousand people, slaughtering nearly a quarter of a million civilians.

Two months later, Caesar attacked and defeated the Germanic chieftain Ariovistus, although he never disclosed the reason for actions. The following year, in 57 BCE, Julius fought the Belgae, apparently for sport and booty. A month later, he took on the Nervians on rumors that they were forming a federation of allied tribes to thwart the Roman onslaught.

But it wasn't all a parade of victorious mass annihilations and enriching enslavements of vulnerable communities. In 53 BCE, in the last days of the Roman Republic, the Parthian Empire stopped a Roman invasion force under the command of the great crucifier, Marcus Licinius Crassus. At the time, Crassus, the wealthiest man in Rome and member of the First Triumvirate (a fragile yet powerful political, economic, and military alliance between three egomaniacs: Caesar (the politician), Pompey (the military muscle), and Crassus (the banker)), was enticed by the prospect of military glory, because of the added riches and power it would provide. So he invaded Parthia, marching his armies directly through the deserts of southern Turkey in search of territory and treasure. But once he arrived in Harran, the Persian Spahbod Surena outmaneuvered Crassus' superior force. Most of the Roman soldiers under the financier's command were either killed or captured. Crassus suffered the same fate during truce negotiations.

This battle was the first fought between the Romans and the Persians, starting a prolonged war that would last five-hundred years. It also provides a window into the mindset of the Roman elite, revealing that they fought not to defend Rome, but to promote their personal ambitions. These motivations, in fact, precipitated the Great Civil War which doomed the Republic and brought Julius Caesar to power.

On the other side of the known world, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony busied themselves pummeling Gauls into submission, this time in France. The Siege of Alesia is considered one of Caesar's greatest military achievements. It brought the Celtic influence in France, Belgium, and Switzerland to an end, making France another Roman Province to pillage.

It is odd to note, however, that the primary account we have of the battle was written by Caesar, and his depiction does not correspond to the location where he claimed it occurred. But as they say, history is often little more than the bragging of victors. Moreover, Caesar's revisionist claims and self-serving testimony

reveal a tendency that would play a major role in the birth of Christianity with the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.

In this regard, the Senate's refusal to allow Caesar the honor of a Triumph, a civil ceremony and religious rite designed to celebrate and sanctify a military achievement and army commander, is what caused him to rebel. In such a celebration, the general is given a laurel crown and wears a purple toga, regalia that identifies him as divine. And as a god, he would ride through the streets in a four-horse chariot, his army marching behind him, parading along with their captives and spoils of war. The procession would typically conclude at the Temple of Jupiter on Capitoline Hill.

Returning to France, circa 52 BCE, Julius Caesar, who had appointed himself Pro-Consular Imperium for a decade, became the absolute dictator over the territories north of Rome, from the Adriatic to the Apennines. Having defeated and robbed the Gallic (Celtic) tribes one by one, including the Helvetii, Boii, Tuling, Belgae, and Nervii, he brought enormous wealth to the Republic. He also provided new lands to tax. In the process, Caesar, himself, became fabulously rich. As a Roman general, he personally pocketed the proceeds from the sale of those enslaved by his Legions.

But all was not well in Caesar's world. He had given his daughter Julia in marriage to Pompey to garner political favor, but she had just died in childbirth. And having lost the support of his allies in Rome, men dedicated to preserving the Republic like Cato, started political campaigns against Caesar, accusing him of wanting to overthrow the Senate so that he could become King of Rome. Cato and his ilk were, of course, correct.

That is not to say that Julius Caesar wasn't also vulnerable in his own right. Around this time his Fourteenth Legion was wiped out in a cleverly planned ambush by the Eburones, causing him to lose a quarter of his soldiers. The Celtic victory inspired a revolution throughout the region as those who had been ravaged and oppressed by Rome sought their freedom. To quell the uprising, Caesar hastily rallied his army and crossed the Alps, which were still covered in snow. Catching the Gauls by surprise, he split his forces, sending four Legions with Titus Labienus to fight the Senones and Parisii in the north of France while he set out with six Legions and enslaved Germanic cavalry in pursuit of the Arverni and their commander, Vercingetorix. The two armies met in Gergovia, where Vercingetorix, holding the high ground, forced Caesar to retreat after suffering heavy losses.

But these same foes would meet again, which brings us to the Alesia, and their hilltop fortification. Recognizing that a frontal assault would be suicidal, Julius Caesar, who outnumbered the Gauls four to one, decided upon a siege, hoping to

starve the eighty-thousand Alesia troops garrisoned there into surrender along with the local population they were protecting. Caesar, therefore, had his men construct twelve-foot high encircling fortifications with corresponding ditches, each fifteen feet wide and twelve feet deep, the inner one of which he filled with water. Then he built series of traps to bury the men and woman who tried to escape, along with towers his artillery would use to shoot those who avoided the pits.

Starving to death, the Alesians decided to let tens of thousands of local women and children go, thinking that Caesar would let them pass through his lines since they were noncombatants. But Julius was too cruel for such niceties. He trapped them between his earthworks and trenches, seeing to it that over thirty thousand mothers and their babies wasted away in full view of the men trapped inside of the fort. It's hard to fathom such cruelty.

Then after a series of desperate probing attacks by the Gauls, some of which found weaknesses in the Roman earthworks, both sides were near physical exhaustion. With nothing to lose, the Alesians launched a major offensive with sixty-thousand men, which proved successful until Caesar deployed his favorite tactic, which was to menace his enemy's rear with his cavalry, effectively pushing armies trying to escape the mounted foe behind them into the teeth of his infantry. On this day it surprised the Gauls, who were slaughtered no matter which way they ran. And as usual, the few not killed were taken prisoner and sold into slavery.

Thereafter, Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BCE, the border between Rome and the Province of Gaul, which was considered an act of insurrection. This provocation precipitated the Second Civil War which was fought over four years, with Romans killing Romans through 45 BCE for no other reason than to advance the clash of personal egos.

It began in June of 49 BCE. The Populares (Popular Political Party), of which Caesar was head, encountered the Optimates (Best Men or Aristocratic Political Party) of Pompey the Great. Julius, who was commanding six Legions, opposed the Spanish army of his rival, comprised of seven Legions and twice as many men. They met at Ilerda in modern-day Spain. Caesar, writing in third person, as was his custom, described his pursuit of the army of the Roman Republic – a force loyal to his former political ally and his late daughter's husband, Pompey. As you consider the sacrifices these men made, most of whom were slaves, on Julius Caesar's behalf, keep in mind that the only reason this battle was being waged was because the man who had made a career of murdering and enslaving noncombatants wanted to be god and king. The "enemy," therefore, is the Roman Republic.

“Caesar, contrary to his expectation, finding the consternation likely to spread through the whole army, encouraged his men, and led the ninth legion to their assistance. He soon put a stop to the vigorous and insulting pursuit of the enemy, obliged them to turn their backs, and pushed them to the very walls of Lerida. But the soldiers of the ninth legion, elated with success, and eager to repair the loss we had sustained, followed the runaways with so much heat that they were drawn into a place of disadvantage. They found themselves directly under the hill where the town stood. The enemy, again facing about, charged vigorously from the higher ground... Here they bravely maintained the fight, although with great disadvantage to themselves, on account of the narrowness of the place and because of being posted at the foot of the hill. None of the enemy’s darts fell in vain. Still however they supported themselves by their courage and patience, and were not disheartened by the many wounds they received.”

Having led his men into this unfavorable position, Julius Caesar went on to profess: “The enemy’s forces increased every moment, fresh cohorts being sent from the camp through the town. They succeeded in the place of those that were fatigued. Caesar was likewise obliged to detach small parties to maintain the battle, and bring off such as were wounded. The fight had now lasted five hours without intermission, when our men, oppressed by the multitude of the enemy, and having spent all their darts, attacked the mountain sword in hand. Overthrowing such as opposed them, obliged the rest to betake themselves to flight. The pursuit was continued to the very walls of Lerida. Some out of fear took shelter in the town, which gave our men an opportunity of making good their retreat. At the same time the cavalry, though posted disadvantageously in a bottom, found means by their valor to gain the summit of the mountain. Riding between both armies, they hindered the enemy from harassing our rear. Thus the engagement was attended with various turns of fortune.”

The battle wasn’t actually heroic, as Caesar was painting it, but instead miserable. Spring storms had flooded the Roman and rebel camps, bringing with it famine and disease. Nonetheless, Julius Caesar ordered half of his army to overtake the retreating army of the Optimates while the other half blocked their route of escape. In this way Caesar completely surrounded Pompey, forcing the Consul general and his five Legions to surrender. Immediately thereafter, two additional Legions defected to the Populares, allowing Caesar to retain control of Spain while he pursued his ultimate ambition.

Julius’s next move proved disastrous. He dispatched a force to North Africa under the command of Curio to counter the Optimates forces garrisoned there. But every strategy his rebels deployed backfired, prompting the panicked retreat of the Populares into troop transports anchored offshore. Swamping their only means of escape, and with their backs against the sea, Curio surrendered based

upon assurances from the Optimates that the Julian troops would not be harmed. But they were summarily executed by the Republic, depriving Caesar of ten thousand soldiers.

The next move of the man who sought to be god was hardly divine. After crossing the Rubicon, Caesar confronted the Senate. He did so because he realized that his prior behavior had left him susceptible to lawsuits, many of which were being filed. But in Rome he knew that he could not be served while he was proconsul, because public officials were immune from litigation. Therefore, with his term nearing its end, he went to the Senate to request an extension. They, however, were not only unwilling to renew it, with him having crossed the Rubicon with his Legions, the Senate demanded that he surrender his army.

As a result of Caesar's own Triumvirate agreement, Rome was Pompey's territory, not Julius's. But he, ever the politician, proposed an interesting option, saying that he would resign his military command if Rome's authorized commander, Consul Pompey, followed suit. Finding that unacceptable, the Roman Senate declared Julius ineligible for public office. They demanded that he disband his Populares army immediately or be declared an enemy of the people. Realizing that he would be prosecuted, losing his fortune, and be politically marginalized, losing his power, Caesar positioned his Legions against the Republic of the Optimates, forcing Pompey and most of the Senate to flee to Greece.

While he was eager to do so, Caesar couldn't readily chase after Pompey because the Optimates had left him no ships with which to cross the Adriatic and enter Greece. Moreover, the Optimates' Legions in Spain had begun to reconstitute and mobilize against the Populares forces he had left in place to protect the territory in the Iberian Peninsula he had just won. So Julius turned his army toward Spain to protect his rear while others built a navy for his army. But upon his return, he found that only a portion of the necessary ships had been built. Growing impatient, Julius divided his force, sending half to Greece under the proviso that the ships would then return to transport the remainder of his troops.

The winter crossing was treacherous, and unbeknownst to Caesar, the Republic's massive six-hundred-ship fleet laid waiting just off the coast of Greece. And while Caesar's initial wave of men was able to reach their destination unhindered, most all of the Populares ships were destroyed as they attempted the return voyage. This blunder left Caesar vulnerable, with too small a force to attack and no way to retreat. Further, there was no means to supply his army due to the lack of vessels and the naval blockade. He couldn't even use local resources because the Greeks preferred the Optimates to the Populares.

Julius's situation was so grim; he tried to negotiate a peace with his rival. But even that failed, because as a former ally, as the husband of Caesar's deceased daughter, Pompey knew that Julius could not be trusted. And yet, rather than attack and finish off the army of the Popular Political Party, Pompey adopted Caesar's preferred tactic, hoping he could starve the opposing force so that he wouldn't have to fight them.

But then yet just when it appeared that the final curtain would be drawn down over Julius Caesar, his Master of the Horse, Marc Antony, hastily built the requisite ships and successfully broke through the naval blockade, arriving north of his position. That meant the race was on. Would Caesar or Pompey reach Marc Antony first, with nothing less than the fate of the Roman Republic hanging in the balance? And while Pompey prevailed, Caesar was rapidly closing the gap, putting the army of the Optimates between the two belligerent forces, prompting Pompey to retreat to Dyrrachium.

There, the Optimates' rear was guarded by the sea, and in front, they held the high ground, making an assault suicidal. So Caesar dusted off the strategy that he had used against the Gauls, building earthworks to pin Pompey against the sea. But not to be outdone, the aristocratic party had their minions carve their own ditches and mounds. This created a no-man's land between the spoiled brats, a foreboding landscape hauntingly similar to the inhuman trench tactics deployed by bankers, politicians, and generals during the First World War.

This time, however, while Caesar was in control of the neighboring farmland, every eatable plant and animal had already been harvested by Pompey's men, who in addition, were also resupplied by the Optimates navy. But after a while, fodder for their horses and water became problematic, so Pompey attacked the weakest point in Caesar's defenses, overwhelming the Ninth Legion, which retreated during the onslaught. In response, Julius Caesar dispatched Antony with reinforcements to counterattack. But Pompey's vastly superior army of the Optimates Republic was up to the challenge, quickly flanking the Populares, causing a panicked retreat which neither Caesar nor Antony could arrest.

This should have been the last gasp for Julius. But always timid, rather than pursuing his fleeing foe, Pompey the Great withdrew from the battle. He may have thought that his rival had been defeated. He may have even believed that the retreat had been feigned to lure his troops into a trap. Either way, Caesar would write: "Today the victory had been the enemy's, had there been any one among them to take it."

After a month of maneuvering and posturing, on August 9th, 48 BCE, the players' fortunes changed during the Battle of Pharsalus in central Greece. Caesar, who was short of men and supplies in a hostile country, should have been

easy prey, but Pompey hesitated once again, believing that his rival would surrender rather than let his men starve. Impatient, however, the accompanying Optimates Senators finally goaded Pompey into advancing, something they and he would soon regret. Pompey was soundly defeated by a foe half his size, forcing the Optimates to flee toward Egypt to survive.

Julius Caesar would follow him. And the two would meet again on a field near Pharsalus. Caesar was equipped with veterans of the Gallic Wars, his favorite Legions: the Tenth Equestris, the Eighth Augusta, the Ninth Hispana, and the Twelfth Fulminata in addition to three new Legions which had been levied expressly for the Great Civil War. These included: One Germanica, Three Gallica, and Four Macedonica. Pompey the Great had reconstituted his army as well. He now had mastery over one hundred Pompeian cohorts and eleven Roman Legions. Even having lost their previous encounter, living at a time when peasants had very little control over their lives, the Optimates could rely upon Rome's oppressive grip on its provinces to effectively swell any fighting force. So on this day, the Senate's chosen consul possessed every tactical advantage. He held the high ground, commanded a larger army, and he was far better equipped and supplied fighting in an allied province.

Always predicable, the conservative traditionalist aristocrat deployed the Optimates army in the standard Roman fashion. Pompey would field three lines, each ten deep. He placed his most formidable defenders on his flanks. His new and untested recruits would be in the center, along with his Syrian and Cilician Legions. Since his right was protected by a river, he positioned all of his cavalry on his left flank, where Pompey took command of the First and Third Legions. His auxiliary troops were stationed behind him, protecting his rear.

Pompey's plan was to wait for Caesar to advance his infantry. He would then deploy his cavalry to push the numerically inferior Julian horses and foot soldiers back. If all worked according to plan, by day's end his Optimates would be attacking retreating Populares forces from all sides.

At his whit's end, Caesar had run out of supplies. He had no means of retreat. So there would be no tomorrow if he did not prevail this day. Since defeat meant certain death, Julius rallied his troops, encouraging them to fight for their lives – if not for his. Following the pep rally, he too would arrange his men in three lines, but only six soldiers deep, due to his lack of manpower. The Populares left flank was protected by the same river that was guarding the Optimates' right, so Julius positioned his entire cavalry on his exposed side. Then as was typical of Caesar, he took a risk most generals of his day would have considered foolhardy, thinning his already sparse and vulnerable line to create a fourth regimen of infantry behind his cavalry. Knowing that Pompey's riders vastly outnumbered his own,

Caesar took command of his cavalry, bolstering them his Tenth and Eighth Legions, both under the command of Marc Antony.

Since the distance between the belligerents was considerable, Pompey, who remained stationary, expected the Julian forces to wear themselves out crossing the abnormally wide gap. But when Caesar's troops saw that Pompey was not charging, without orders to do so, they stopped halfway to rest before continuing their charge. Then as Julius had expected, once the battle lines were joined, Pompey deployed his cavalry, galloping directly into Caesar's hidden fourth line. The *Populares* in the rear immediately deployed seven-foot long *pilum* javelins, causing the *Optimates* horses to swerve away and retreat. This enabled Caesar to attack Pompey's right flank, effectively deciding the outcome of the battle. The Popular Political Party would lose over a thousand men, but Caesar would win the day.

The Patrician Party of the Best Men retreated, as did Pompey. In the ensuing *mêlée*, every *Optimates* was left to his own devices. Pompey, himself, threw off his general's cloak, gathered his family and as much gold as they could carry in a horse-drawn cart, and fled, masquerading as civilians. He was, however, captured by Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII, who ordered that he be assassinated. He even sent his head to Caesar in an effort to garner his favor. The plan backfired, however, because it deprived Caesar of his ultimate public relations moment – pardoning the glorified general to win the hearts of patriotic Romans.

Angered by the gift of his rival's head, Julius invaded Egypt in 47 BCE under the guise of trying to resolve the Alexandrine Civil War between Ptolemy and Cleopatra. Emotions still raw from his lack of support in Greece, Caesar favored Cleopatra and captured Ptolemy, only to release him. Gathering his army, the Greek potentate besieged Julius in Alexandria. But Mithridates of Pergamum marched overland from Asia Minor to rescue Caesar and defeated the Egyptian force dispatched to stop him. The allies joined forces and routed Ptolemy in the Battle of the Nile. With Egypt in Caesar's hand, he appointed Cleopatra queen. But more than that, Julius lingered in Egypt, enjoying a liaison with the young and beautiful woman.

Julius Caesar left the embrace of Cleopatra in May 47 BCE to fight Pharnaces II for the Kingdom of Pontus. Pharnaces had acted like a Roman, committing atrocities against prisoners and civilians alike. In pursuit, and during his long march through Israel, Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia, Julius was accompanied by the Sixth and Twelfth Legions in addition to the *Balatians* and *Vexillations* from the Thirty-Sixth Legion. But Pharnaces, tearing a page out of his opponent's playbook, gave up the high ground to launch a surprise attack upon the Julian forces while they were still digging earthworks. The tactic backfired, however, with the more experienced Romans quickly regrouping, driving their

overly aggressive foe away. The quick victory prompted Caesar's oft'-referenced citation: "*Veni, vidi, vici* – I came, I saw, I conquered."

During January of 46 BCE, a different fate lay before him. Julius Caesar returned to Africa to battle the Republican forces of the Optimates under the command of Titus Labienus, his former ally. Recognizing that Labienus significantly outmanned him, Caesar fell back, which served only to give Labienus the land of his choosing. And while Caesar claimed victory, the resulting battle was a bloody affair, costing Julius one third of his men.

A month later, the Optimates and Populares fought again, this time in Thapsus in modern Tunisia. The Popular Political Party, of which Caesar was head, encountered the Best Men or Aristocratic Political Party – the traditional elitists who supported the caste system of the old Roman Republic. The Optimates had amassed forty-thousand men in eight Legions along with sixty war elephants to confront the wannabe king and god. But Caesar's archers menaced the elephants, causing them to panic and trample their riders. The Julian cavalry outmaneuvered the Aristocrats and destroyed their camp, forcing the Best Men to retreat. Some ten thousand Optimates troops tried to surrender to Caesar, but were slaughtered instead.

The final battle of Caesar's Civil War was fought at Munda in southern Spain on March 17, 45 BCE. After a short siege, Julius Caesar with the backing of eight Legions took the fortified city of Ategua, causing the Optimates allies to desert, leaving the aristocratic old guard vulnerable. Caesar ordered a frontal attack while shouting the name "Venus" as a rallying cry. The Roman goddess of love, beauty, seduction, enticement, magic, and prosperity was chosen to punctuate the moment because it was from Venus that Julius Caesar claimed to be descended. He was announcing to the world that he was more than a man – he was a god.

Preoccupied with the savage fighting inspired by Caesar's bold announcement on his left flank, Pompey's son, Pompeius, removed a Legion from his right to combat the Populares, a move that left the Optimates vulnerable to the Julian cavalry which turned the course of the battle. The infantry broke their lines and retreated in a disorderly fashion. By sundown some thirty-thousand men were dead. Then, demonstrating his wanton cruelty and unbridled greed, in the aftermath of the battle, and within the city of Munda, the civilian male population was summarily executed and the surviving women were forced to pay a heavy tribute to Caesar.

After routing the Republican armies of the Optimates Aristocratic Party and killing Pompeius (Pompey's eldest son), Julius Caesar returned to Rome as a dictator. But it was not the homecoming he had envisioned. According to Plutarch, "the triumph which he celebrated for this victory displeased the Romans

beyond anything. For he had not defeated foreign generals, or barbarian kings, but had destroyed the children and family of one of the greatest men of Rome.” Nonetheless, Julius Caesar was declared “Dictator for Life” by the Popular Political Party. But he would not live to have the curly hair beneath his crown grow grey, because the following year one of his most trusted lieutenants, Trebonius, orchestrated his assassination along with Brutus on the Ides of March, 44 BCE. The transition from the Roman Republic to the Imperial Roman Empire occurred shortly thereafter with the reign of his great-nephew and adopted heir, Octavius, who became known as Augustus – the first Roman Emperor.

The killing did not stop with Julius Caesar’s celebrated death. Marc Antony was unhappy with the Senate’s decision to send him to the Province of Macedonia as Governor, principally because it was too far away from Rome. So he exchanged the post for a five-year term in Gaul in northern Italy, even though its governor had already been appointed. So in April 43 BCE, Marc Antony, after transferring his Legions in Macedonia to Italy, lost a battle north of Rome he had all but won.

Facing off again a month later, Antony had Brutus trapped near Mutina, today’s Modena. But before he could capitalize, Octavian came to the aid of the Brutus, not out of respect for his adoptive father’s assassin, but to prove to the Senate that he could be trusted as a leader of men. And while the combined forces routed Antony, the Senate’s interim leader, Hirtius, was killed during the battle, leaving the army and Rome leaderless. Seizing his opportunity, Octavian took control of the combined forces. But when the Senate asked him to relinquish control to Brutus, Octavian refused, noting that the eight Legions would refuse to fight under the man who murdered his adoptive father. As proof, the Legions under Brutus at Mutina, deserted him and joined Octavian. The assassin fled toward Macedonia, but Brutus was killed in route by a Gallic chief. And as a result, young Octavian was now the most powerful man in the known world. But he wasn’t the only power in Rome.

Marc Antony crossed the Alps with the remains of this army and assembled seventeen Legions plus ten-thousand cavalry. But before they could be positioned for the next battle, a truce was formed between Antony and Octavian at Bologna. A “Commission of Three” for the “Ordering of the State” was established, known as the “Second Triumvirate,” with Marcus Lepidus, Octavian, and Marc Antony as the Triumvirs. This trinity of dictators, however, turned on the Senate. As was common among Romans, their egos were too large to work well together.

In the years that followed, Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, near Greece. This naval battle was waged in 31 BCE, bringing about the Roman Empire, or Principate, with Octavian becoming Caesar Augustus and

reigning as Emperor. During the Principate, the Roman dictators tried to preserve the illusion that Rome was still a Republic, but that ended with the Dominate.

Octavian and Antony would fight two battles as allies and cohorts in October 42 BCE. But by 41, they were at each other's throats vying for supremacy. Thereafter, on his own initiative, Octavian, now Augustus, would attack the Cantabri people in 25 BCE. His Legions, however, were defeated by West Germanic warriors in Gaul in 16 BCE, a loss Augustus' stepson, Drusus, would avenge five years later.

✂✂✂

As we open the calendar to the First Century CE, nothing much changes with Rome. But since the next battle would shape the Empire's future, let's consider what happened to precipitate the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 BCE when an alliance of Germanic tribes led by Arminius ambushed and destroyed three Roman Legions led by Publius Varus – one of Rome's most vicious generals.

To gain a perspective, a decade or so earlier, the Marcomanni tribe of Suebi warriors who survived the battle with Drusus, fled into the territory of the Boii, and formed an alliance with the Hermunduri, Quadi, Semnones, Lugians, Zumi, Butones, Mugilonas, Sibini, and Langobards. So then in 4 CE, when Tiberius (whom we will study in a moment) entered Germania to continue subjugating the native population, and expressly the Cananefates, Chatti, and Bructeri tribes, he met with fierce opposition. Worse, in the process of his assault upon Germania, a massive rebellion arose in the Illyricum Province, prompted in part by broken promises made to the Marcomanni. As a result, Tiberius was forced to stop his campaign against the local Germanic tribes so that he could send eight Legions (VIII Augustan, XV Apollonian, XII Balerian, XXI Predator, VIII Twin, XIV Twin, and XVI Gallic) to the Balkans to crush the more disruptive and threatening of the two rebellions.

The events in Germania and the Balkans are related, however, and they ultimately foretell Rome's fate, because the Illyricum revolt, like the one about to occur in Germania, arose because the Romans were merciless, callous, and cruel. Each province was required to send their sons to serve long stints in the Roman army. In addition, the Romans grossly overtaxed those they conquered, taking so much of the food produced in the provinces away the locals often starved. Aggravating matters further, the abuse doled out by the Roman officials and tax collectors became legendary. Further motivating some while tranquilizing others, those who rebelled against Roman oppression were persecuted, usually tortured to

death in a public spectacle. But through all of this, desperate people with nothing to lose became increasingly difficult to subjugate. The entire edifice of Rome hung in the balance, which is why half of the Empire's legions were deployed to the Balkans to punish those who had every right to hate the Romans.

As a result of this massive projection of military might, in the autumn of 6 BCE, there were just three Legions left to control the Germanic tribes. Varus, a nobleman related to the imperial family, was assigned the mission of consolidating the new province. He was chosen because he was especially ruthless, routinely crucifying anyone in opposition to Roman authority.

But he did not march into a vacuum. Earlier that same year, Gaius Saturninus and Marcus Lepidus had led a massive army of sixty-five thousand Legionaires, ten-thousand cavalymen, and five-thousand archers, with a supporting staff of twenty-thousand, organized in thirteen Legions in an offensive operation against King Maroboduus of the Marcomanni, a tribe of the Suebi, whom Drusus had defeated in 11 BCE. So there was lingering animosity. And especially problematic, unknown to Varus at the time, his eventual opponent, Arminius, had previously been sent to Rome as tribute by his father, Seimerus, chief of the Cherusci. In the heart of the Beast, Arminius had spent his youth as a slave in a military training facility, which made him a formidable and angry foe. Also noteworthy, during his absence, his father had been labeled a coward by other Germanic chiefs because he had surrendered to Rome and submitted to their demands – acts punishable by death under Germanic law.

To achieve his revenge, Arminius earned an appointment as one of Varus' advisors, all while secretly forging alliances with Germanic tribes, some of which had previously been enemies. His stealth federation was comprised of Cherusci, Marsi, Chatti, Bructeri, Chauqi, Sicambri, and the remaining Suebi. He succeeded largely because of their collective outrage over Varus' tyrannical and grotesque cruelty towards those he subjected to his authority. The universal hatred of Roman dominion forged and maintained enduring alliances.

So while Varus was meandering from his summer camp west of the Weser River to his winter headquarters near the Rhine, Arminius fed him false reports of a local rebellion. Considering Arminius his submissive vassal, Varus never suspected that he was being played by the Roman slave.

Varus, true to his nature, decided to suppress the uprising immediately. In a hurry to strike down the insurgents, the general was even willing to follow Arminius along an unfamiliar path that the Germanic slave had claimed was a shortcut. En route to the chosen location for the ambush, Arminius left under the pretext of rousing Germanic forces hostile to the rebellious tribe to assist the

Romans in quelling the rebellion. And once free of Varus, Arminius led the federation of Germanic tribes he had secretly forged against their merciless foe.

In a hurry, the Roman forces became strung out over ten miles, making them particularly vulnerable. Their susceptibility to attack worsened because Varus failed to dispatch advance scouting parties. And as they entered the forest, the undulating roadway became muddy and narrowed, which is when the allied Germanic tribes attacked, raining down javelins on the Romans followed by menacing attacks with lances and swords. Arminius, aware of Roman tactics, countered every move Varus made, inflicting heavy casualties on the Roman army. They even fought throughout the night as the Romans attempted to gather into a common camp. The next morning, as Varus tried to break out into open ground, the constant rain proved a menace because the sinew strings of Roman bows became slack when wet. Even the Roman shields became waterlogged and too heavy to carry.

During the second night of the ambush, the Romans undertook a moonlit march in an attempt to escape. But they found themselves engulfed in another of Arminius' traps – a sandpit between a steep embankment and a wall of trees. The Romans were easy prey, no matter if they attempted to scale the rock wall, move slowly through the sand, or run toward the trees. In the ensuing mayhem, the Varus' cavalry fled, only to be wiped out in yet another ambush. Varus then took his own life rather than endure the kind of treatment he typically imposed on his victims. In all, the Romans lost up to twenty-thousand soldiers, with many of the officers taking their own lives by falling on their swords. The few who survived were used as human sacrifices during Germanic religious ceremonies. Others were cooked in pots so that their bones could be displayed around the forest to ward off future Roman Legions. The surviving enlisted men were sold off as slaves.

Following their victory, the Germanic federation destroyed every Roman fort, garrison, and outpost in the region. The XVII, XVIII, and XIX Legions were never reconstituted, something that only occurred one other time in Roman history – when the XXII was disbanded after heavy losses during the Bar Kokhba Revolt over a century later in the Province of Judea. The ambush abruptly ended Roman expansion. But having prevailed in the Balkans, Augustus' stepson, Tiberius, was given control of the army – an act which will soon loom large.

Victorious for the moment, Arminius sent Varus' severed head to King Maroboduus of the Marcomanni, encouraging him to join the anti-Roman federation, but he declined. And without the benefit of such cohesion, the Romans who were masters at sowing dissention and disuniting their foes, would get their revenge. Once Tiberius became Emperor (as the adopted son of Octavian), he led a succession of monstrous raids into Germania between 14 and 16 CE, killing and

enslaving hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children. Upon the conclusion of each raid, the Roman Aquila, or Eagles (the symbol of Rome and the standard of the army), lost in Western Germania by the XVII, XVIII, and XIX Legions during the Teutoburg Forest ambush, were returned to Rome and placed in the Temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger).

The initial return to Germania was led by Germanicus in 15 CE. He fought the Chatti and then the Cherusci. After inflicting considerable injury on both tribes, the Roman Legions returned to the Teutoburg Forest, where the bleached and unburied bones of their fallen soldiers littered the ground and trees.

The following year, in 16 CE, the most telling of the punitive retaliatory assaults perpetrated by the Beast against those they considered barbarians, occurred at the time Yahowsha' was equidistant from His arrival and departure. It was waged against an alliance of Germanic tribes led by Arminius – the slave who had outsmarted his captors. Tiberius, the adopted son of Germanicus, engaged in the family business, seeking revenge for the loss of the Legions, wanting to restore the Roman psyche, hoping to quell a formidable foe, and to make a name for himself. And so he did, inflicting heavy losses on the allied tribes. But his prize eluded him – Arminius's head. Also, infuriating, Rome lost ten-thousand soldiers in the process of killing ten-thousand Germans. But nonetheless, needing a victory to inspire patriotism, and thus submission, Tiberius arranged for a Triumph to be held for his returning army on May 26, 17 CE. As for Arminius, he was later assassinated by rival Germanic chiefs.

Before we depart this horrible time in Roman history when mass murder was proclaimed divine, let's consider the character of the man at the helm of the Beast. Tiberius Julius Caesar Divi Augusti filius Augustus was born in November 42 BCE, he became Emperor in 14 CE, and he died twenty-three miserable years later in 37 CE. He was therefore the man in charge of the Empire when Rome savagely crucified Yahowsha'. His father was Tiberius Claudius Nero, a prominent Roman politician. His mother, Livia Drusilla, divorced his father within three years of his birth and married Emperor Augustus, making Tiberius the stepson of Octavian.

And while we are getting ahead of our story, since we are speaking of matrimony, keeping it all in the family, after Octavian told Tiberius to marry his best friend's daughter, he was ordered to divorce her and then marry his best friend's wife, who was also Augustus's daughter, Julia. After which, Tiberius was adopted by Octavian making him a Julian in addition to a Claudian, gaining a weighty pedigree in aristocratic Rome. As the forefather of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Tiberius was the grand uncle of Caligula, the paternal uncle of Claudius, and the great-grand uncle of Emperor Nero.

Tiberius's first public appearance was his biological father's eulogy at age nine. Four years later, in 29 BCE, he and his brother were seen riding alongside Octavian during his Triumph celebrating the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra. A handful of years later, Octavian became gravely ill, and while he did not die, he focused upon succession, thereby directing Tiberius to enter politics. His stepfather even waived the age limit so that he could "run" for Praetor and Consul five years earlier than stated in Roman Law. Run was in quotes because these were now appointed positions, not elected as they had been in the Republic.

With an affinity for Greek philosophy and rhetoric, Tiberius was sent to east under Marcus Agrippa to bargain with the Parthians after the Roman defeat. With his words failing to achieve the desired result, Tiberius led an army into Armenia, using the threat of force to negotiate the return of the highly-prized Aquila Eagles lost by Crassus. He was also able to reestablish neutrality for Armenia – returning the region to its previous role as a buffer between the superpowers.

Upon his return to Rome in 19 BCE, Tiberius married the aforementioned, Vipsania Agrippina, the daughter of Marcus Agrippa, Octavian's closest friend and greatest general. Thereafter, the newlywed was appointed Praetor and sent off to subjugate the Gauls in Northern Italy. Seemingly successful, he was relocated to the Danube to harass Germans. By 13 BCE, he was appointed Consul (previously and elected position) around the same time his son, Drusus, was born.

Weaving a wicked web, upon General Agrippa's death in 12 BCE, Tiberius became the chosen one. Augustus told him to divorce Vipsania, his best friend's and dearly departed general's daughter, and to marry Julia, Augustus's daughter but also Agrippa's widow – making her Vipsania's stepmother and his stepsister. To no one's surprise, the contrived nuptials didn't produce harmony. So miserable was Tiberius at the annulment of his first arranged marriage and the imposition of the second, he ran to Vipsania's home crying, begging her to join he and his promiscuous wife in a twisted arrangement. Seeing to it that this wouldn't happen, Augustus dispatched Tiberius to Pannonia and then to Germania – both highly volatile regions – to play war.

As a result of these tours, Tiberius was considered a great general. He and Rome's Legions played their part suppressing Pannonia (located in today's Hungary, Austria, Herzegovina, and Slovenia), Dalmatia (located along the Adriatic Sea in today's Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia), and Raetia (in modern Switzerland), while subduing Germania (with ill-defined borders encompassing today's Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Denmark, and Lithuania).

But somewhere along the way the world turned dark for Tiberius. In 6 BCE, on the cusp of being put in command of the entire Eastern Empire, becoming the

second most powerful man in Rome, Tiberius announced his withdrawal from politics and the military. He retired on the Island of Rhodes. But he would not find rest for his inner demons. His wife, Julia, became publicly licentious, thereby embarrassing and taunting her husband. He would not only grow to loathe her, Octavian had ordered the Praetorian Guards to assure that he would never again see Vipsania – the only woman he ever loved.

The retreat from power put a crimp in Octavian's plans, especially when his grandsons died, first Lucius passing in 2 CE and then Gaius death in Armenia in 4 CE. By default, Tiberius, the adopted son, became the exclusive heir, inheriting Augustus's *Imperium Maius* – Greatest Power to Command. Eight years later, in 12 CE, Octavian would announce that Tiberius was "co-princep," and thus Emperor-in-Waiting.

All the while, from 10 to 12 CE, Tiberius was earning his Triumph by hunting Germans. When he returned to great fanfare, he governed jointly with his promoter and tormentor, Augustus. Affirming this, as part of the subsequent census, those subjugated by Rome were required to pledge their allegiance to both men, declaring that they were gods among men. Then upon the conclusion of the "*lustral* – purification" ceremonies in 12 CE, Tiberius was dispatched to Illyricum, from which he returned two years later to preside over Augustus's death and deification.

At which time Tiberius was offered, but did not accept the title "*Pater Patriae* – Father of Fathers," also known as "Pope." The term now synonymous with Roman Catholicism was first offered to Furius Camillus in 386 BCE, when myth tells us that he arrived in Rome just after the city had been sacked, making him a Father of Fathers, not unlike the mythical wolf Romulus. Cicero would receive it next for his role in suppressing the Catilinarian conspiracy. The third Roman "*Pater* – Pope" was the man who as dictator would be god, Julius Caesar. Augustus received the title in 2 BCE, the year of Yahowsha's birth. Caligula (37) would claim it next, as would Claudius (42), Nero (55), Vespasian (70), Titus (79), Domitian (81), Trajan (98), Hadrian (128), Commodus (177), and Diocletian (284) – the ultimate bad boys of Rome. The last to receive it was Constantine (307) as the founder of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church. There is an undeniable connection between the rhetoric of the Empire and that of the Church.

Tiberius was also afforded, but then refused to bear, the Civic Crown of interwoven laurel and oak crown that announced that the Emperor was the Savior of Roman lives. In addition to declining the aforementioned titles, the fact that Tiberius wouldn't allow anyone to call him Emperor or Augustus, the very titles Octavian is famous for bequeathing upon himself, it becomes obvious that he hated the *Pater Patriae* Emperor Augustus who had controlled his life, making

him so miserable. At his best Tiberius was a derisive obstructionist, and at his worst, he became the Devil incarnate. And while we will never know just how abusive Octavian had been, his victim would make Rome pay for what was done to him.

As the reluctant prince of confusion, he told the Senate that he couldn't be bothered with the trivial matters of state, but then issued vague orders the inspired wildly variant interpretations. He derided the aristocratic Senate as "men fit to be slaves" while in the same breath ordering them to act independently.

Thereafter, the heart of the military state skipped a beat. The Legions oppressing the Germanic tribes were cheated out of the compensation Augustus had promised and mutinied when it became clear that Tiberius had been the instigator. Worse, rather than providing the bonuses, Tiberius dispatched his son, Drusus Julius Caesar, and Germanicus, with an army to quell the mutiny. And their solution was pure Roman: Germanicus led the mutineers in terrorist raids across the Rhine and into Germania, telling the Legionnaires that whatever plundered treasure they could steal from the people they encountered along the way would count as their bonus. This grotesquely unethical and savage recipe for quelling the Beast's insatiable war lust and greed was duly celebrated with a Triumph in 17 CE, rekindling Roman pride and patriotism.

Germanicus was given the Eastern Empire as a prize, but died shortly thereafter. He accused Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the governor of Syria, of poisoning him. And while there was no merit to the charge, since the Pisones had allied themselves with Octavian, with Piso even marrying Livia (Augustus's widow and Tiberius's mother), he was indicted. But when brought to Rome and questioned before the Senate, Piso threatened to implicate Tiberius. Immediately thereafter, his death was officially called a suicide.

It was at this time, in 19 CE, when Yahowsha' would have been twenty-one, that Emperor Tiberius demonstrated overt anti-Semitism. He ordered all Jewish men between the ages of sixteen and forty-six be conscripted into sacrificing a minimum of twenty-five, and as many as forty years of their lives to fight in the army of the Beast that was oppressing them. Beyond this, Satan's associate banished every Jew who was not in the military from Rome, threatening to enslave them for life if they did not leave his city. (Jossa, Giorgio, 2006, *Jews or Christians*, pages 123-6)

Perhaps all the killing took its toll. Tiberius became the "gloomiest of men" – a paranoid, demented, and sadistic recluse – especially after the death of his son Drusus in 23 CE. Three to four years later, around 27 CE, he exiled himself from Rome, and moved to the Villa Jovis (Home of Jupiter) on the island of Capri,

leaving control of the Empire to his unscrupulous Praetorian Prefects – and most notably, the equestrian Lucius Sejanus.

Before we examine Lucius's role in Tiberius's drama, consider the fact that Lucius was derived from the Latin "*lux* – shining light." It was thereby a cognate of Lucifer – the name of Satan in the Roman Catholic Church's Latin Vulgate. And so it would be at this very moment when Lucius was empowered over the Beast of Rome, this being the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, another Lucius (Luke 3:1) announced that Yahowchanan the Immerser (John the Baptist) had commenced his mission, telling the world to prepare themselves for the One who comes in the name of Yahowah. Coincidence?

But on this day in Rome, Lucius transformed the Praetorian Guards, a paramilitary police force whose principle mission had been the defense of the city and Emperor, into his own personal army of 9,000 troops. Shortly thereafter, Sejanus initiated a series of purge trials, thereby removing and robbing the elitists with the power and wealth to oppose him. The confiscated funds were split between Lucius and the Empire's treasury. It was the ancient world's version of the one percent paying their fair share. Next, Lucius went after the most popular citizens, especially Germanicus's wife and sons. They were arrested in 30 CE only to die under suspicious circumstances. Caligula was one of the few survivors.

Immediately thereafter, Lucius tried to marry his way into the Julian line, beginning with a licentious affair with Claudia Livilla Julia (the daughter of Nero Claudius Drusus and the sister of both Emperor Claudius and General Germanicus, also Caligula's aunt and Emperor Nero's great aunt). Livilla was later implicated in this plot and killed, one which contemplated murdering Tiberius with the consent of the Julians. So with all of the blood feuds and bloodletting, Tiberius ordered the Senate to rid Rome of Lucius Sejanus, who was executed after being accused of treason, along with all those implicated in the *coup d'état*. At the same time, Tiberius invited the nineteen-year-old Caligula to play at his Villa Jupiter.

Lucius's death in 31 CE marks the year that Yahowsha' met with Satan and then commenced His public mission to rid humankind of the corruption being manifest in Rome. Coincidence?

Tacitus, the famed Roman historian, claims that more treason trials followed and that without compunction the lives of anyone with political ties to the Julians were truncated. Even the imperial magistracy was hit, as any and all who had associated with Lucius Sejanus were eliminated, their properties seized by the state.

Tacitus vividly describes what Tiberius had done to Rome circa 33 CE, at the very moment Yahowsha' was being crucified by Rome: "Executions were now a stimulus to his fury, and he ordered the death of all who were lying in prison under accusation of complicity with Sejanus. There lay, singly or in heaps, the unnumbered dead, of every age and sex, the illustrious with the obscure. Kinsfolk and friends were not allowed to be near them, to weep over them, or even to gaze on them too long. Spies were set round them, who noted the sorrow of each mourner and followed the rotting corpses, till they were dragged to the Tiber, where, floating or driven on the bank, no one dared to burn or to touch them." (Tacitus, Annals, VI, page 19)

Tacitus would ascribe Tiberius's apparent virtues as hypocrisy – as the crafty assumption of virtue. He would display the pretence of good while being the embodiment of evil. He was infamous for his cruelty and veiled debaucheries. He lived in the shadows and hid from the light. He noted that corruption, and the growing tyranny among the governing classes of Rome, was the overriding theme of his reign. And by 33 CE, Tiberius plunged headfirst into every wickedness and disgrace, without concern or shame. He indulged his own inclinations while devaluing the life and liberty of others. (Tacitus, Annals, VI, pages 50-51) Coincidence?

This comparison between earthly contemporaries, Yahowsha' and Tiberius is one of absolute contrasts: of good and evil, of freedom and enslavement, of mercy and vindictiveness, of life and death, of relationship and estrangement, of a loving family and child abuse, of light and darkness, of Yahowah versus the Beast.

But even more lurid behavior was occurring off the coast in Capri. Rumors abounded as to what the paranoid Tiberius was actually doing there. Suetonius records the tales of sexual perversity, including graphic depictions of child molestation and cruelty. (Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars, Life of Tiberius*, pages 43-45) While I cannot prove either claim, I suspect Caligula was abused as a child by Tiberius, just as Tiberius had been abused by the man who placed him upon the throne.

The news that Tiberius had died in Misenum on March 16, 37 CE was celebrated in Rome. The city rejoiced when it heard that Caligula had smothered him. (Tacitus, Annals, VI, page 50) In his will, which was obviously prior to his murder, Tiberius appointed his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, and his killer, Caligula, the sole surviving son of Germanicus, joint control over the Empire. But then in his first act of business as co-Emperor, Caligula voided Tiberius's will. In his second, and now as an accomplished killer, he had Tiberius Gemellus executed. Thereafter, Caligula spent Tiberius's fortune, which was indistinguishable from the Roman treasury, of nearly three billion sesterces, on himself.

Caligula, was twenty-five when he became Emperor and Pope. But he may have been more twisted than his benefactor was at seventy-eight. Initially hailed by patriotic Romans as “Our Baby” and as “Our Star” by the adoring crowds, most every historical source portrays Caligula’s four-year reign as cruel, extravagant, and sadistic. He was sexually perverted in addition to being a megalomaniac and tyrant.

As was the case with most Germans in the late 1920s who worshipped Adolf Hitler, Caligula was admired by every Roman in “all the world, from the rising to the setting sun.” (Philo of Alexandria, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, Volume II) Suetonius wrote that over one-hundred sixty-thousand animals were sacrificed during demonstrations of public rejoicing as part of the religious ceremonies ushering in the reign of Rome’s new god. (Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Caligula, page 14) And as will be the case with the Towrahless One during the onset of the Tribulation, Philo described the first seven months of Caligula’s reign as “completely blissful.” (Philo of Alexandria, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, Volume II)

Again forecasting the tactics that will be deployed by the Beast of the later days, Caligula’s first acts were said to be generous in spirit, though many were political in nature and bankrupted the country. To garner support for his reign, he granted bonuses to those in the military including the Praetorian Guard. To appease the wealthy, he declared that treason trials were a thing of the past, recalling the aristocrats Tiberius had sent into exile. To endear himself to the poor, he offered tax relief to those on the bottom rung of the Imperial revenue system. Then in an act of hypocrisy, to appear moral, he even banished certain sexual deviants. Lastly, recognizing the hypnotic effect of patriotism, Caligula promoted lavish spectacles for the public’s entertainment, sponsoring ever more ghoulish gladiator battles.

But within seven months at the head of this deadly Beast, Caligula became gravely ill – with many thinking that he had been poisoned. While he would recover from his illness, the young Emperor became diabolical monster. Then, as will be the case with those who abet the Towrahless One’s rise to power, Caligula had all of those who were closest to him killed, especially those he saw as a potential threat. Of his family, only his uncle Claudius was spared, and that was because Caligula enjoyed mocking him.

In 38 CE, Caligula promoted political reform. He published an accounting of public funds he was squandering. He reimbursed those who lost property in fires and abolished taxes for everyone except the wealthy. He even enabled upward mobility for the middle class, allowed new members into the Equestrian and Patrician orders. Toying with Roman citizens, he restored democratic elections, knowing full well that their votes didn't matter. Of them, the noted Christian historian, Cassius Dio, wrote: "though delighting the rabble, it grieved the sensible who stopped to reflect. If offices should once again fall into the hands of the many...many disasters would result." (Cassius Dio, Roman History, Volume LIX, 9.7) It was spoken like a true Roman Catholic.

Then appearing like Barak Obama's proclivity to kill civilians with American drones without so much as an indictment much less a trial, we find Caligula executing people throughout the realm without even the pretence of judicial process.

According to Cassius Dio, a financial crisis arose early in Caligula's short reign, perhaps as soon as the spring of 38 CE. The Emperor's liberal policies which were designed to garner political support, his increased military spending was contrived for greater control, and his overall extravagance was to keep the people entertained and therefore oblivious. Collectively, they exhausted the Empire's treasury. In three years, Rome went from a surplus of three billion sesterces to a deficit almost that large.

Ancient historians state that Caligula began falsely accusing the rich, fining the most productive Romans, and even killing the wealthy to seize their estates, to resolve the national debt. But confiscating all of the wealth of the richest citizens wasn't nearly enough, so before the invention of fiat money and the smoke and mirrors of quantitative easing, in order to resolve the debt and keep from declaring bankruptcy, Caligula asked the public to lend the state money. Next, he levied taxes on lawsuits, marriage, and of course, prostitution. Then Caligula began auctioning the lives of the gladiators at his shows. Wills that left anything of value to anyone other than the Emperor, were reinterpreted, granting all assets to Caligula instead. Even the Legion's Centurions who had stolen property during plundering raids were compelled to turn over their spoils to the state. (Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Caligula, pages 38-42)

Current and past civil servants, who were accused of incompetence and embezzlement, were forced to reimburse the treasury. According to Suetonius, in the first year of Caligula's reign he squandered 2,700,000,000 sesterces that Tiberius had amassed. And as a result, Rome was besieged by a famine that was induced by Caligula's response to this financial crisis. Once production was penalized and economic success essentially criminalized, there was no longer an incentive to grow or transport food. . (Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*,

Life of Caligula, pages 38-42) In a nation now devoid of businessmen, Caligula seized the means to transport grain imports, distributing food to whom he pleased using his boats, carts, roads, and bridges. (Seneca the Younger, *On the Shortness of Life*, Volume XVIII, page 5)

Even though the Beast was bankrupt, Caligula completed the Temple of Augustus, promoting patriotic devotion not unlike what the United States did with its Temples, Shrines, and Monuments to Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. And in keeping with American presidents and the enormity of the White House, to convey the proper prestige, he had his Imperial Palace expanded. He also funded the construction of a large racetrack known as the Circus. It's important because it connects the Roman Empire with the Roman Church. Pope and Emperor Caligula had an Egyptian obelisk transported by sea and erected in the middle of his Circus amphitheater. Today, that same Obelisk now sits in the middle of the Vatican. (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Volume XVI, page 76) It isn't, however, the largest pagan monument in Rome. Constantine's son, Constantius II, removed an two-hundred-thirty ton obelisk from the Temple of Amun in Karnak to decorate the Circus Maximus in 357 CE, shortly after Christianity became the official religion of Rome. Today, that same tribute to the sun-god Amun Ra stands proudly outside of the Apostolic Palace of the Lateran, the ancient Roman palace which now serves as the papal residence. It is, of course, covered in hieroglyphics, all paying homage to the Egyptian gods.

Considering his short reign, remained devoted to restoring and erecting temples to the gods, including his masterpiece, the Temple of Apollo at Ephesus. But since there was another god closer to home that Caligula preferred, he constructed two massive landlocked ships for himself on Lake Nemi – the largest vessels in the ancient world. The smaller of the two was designed as a Temple to Diana, the virgin goddess of the moon, to lure young women to the larger ship, which was essentially an decadent and ostentatious floating palace designed to accommodate Caligula's orgies.

Caligula lived in the whirl of conspiracies, all of which he resolved through execution. So when visiting kings came to Rome to pay their respects to him, if they claimed noble descent, the insecure pontiff would wail: "Let there be only one Lord and one King." (*The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Caligula, page 22) He was speaking, of course, about himself. In fact, by 40 CE, Caligula began implementing policies whereby religion and politics became indistinguishable in Rome – with Caligula, himself, playing the leading role. The Emperor began appearing in public dressed as a variety of gods and demigods such as Hercules, Mercury, Venus and Apollo. (Philo of Alexandria, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, Volumes XI to XV) Caligula even began referring to himself as a god when

meeting with politicians. He adopted the name Jupiter when signing public documents. (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Volume LIX, page 26-28)

A sacred precinct was set apart for his worship four temples were erected to worship him in Asia and Rome. The massive Temple on the Forum was then devoted to Caligula and connected directly to his Imperial residence on Palatine Hill. He would make regular appearances in his temple, presenting himself as god to the public. Caligula had the heads removed from numerous statues of gods throughout Rome and replaced with his own. He favored being worshipped as “*Neos Helios* – the New Sun.” He even had coins minted presenting himself as the Egyptian sun god Amen Ra.

According to Cassius Dio, prior to Caligula, living emperors could be worshipped as divine in the East and dead Emperors could be worshipped as divine in Rome. The exception was Augustus, who had the public worship his spirit while alive and his body when deceased. Caligula went all the way to having everyone in Rome, including Senators, worship him as a physical living god.

It should not be surprising, then, that Caligula often came to the aid of his good friend, Herod Agrippa, who became governor of vast territories when Caligula became emperor. This then increased his superiority complex and deep-seated hatred of Jews. So he, too, took an active role in suppressing and antagonizing them, making sure that they received heavy doses of Greek culture and Roman Law.

In 38 CE, Caligula sent Agrippa to Alexandria unannounced to check on Flaccus whom he did not trust. According to Philo, the visit was met with jeers from the Greek population who saw Agrippa as the king of the Jews. Flaccus tried to placate both the Greek population and Caligula by having statues of the emperor placed in Jewish synagogues. As a result, riots broke out in the city with Jews blaming Greeks for the blasphemy. Caligula responded by removing Flaccus from his position and executing him.

Then in 39 CE, Agrippa accused Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee, of planning a rebellion against Roman rule. Herod Antipas confessed and Caligula exiled him. Agrippa was rewarded with his territories.

Riots again erupted in Alexandria in 40 CE because Jews were accused of not honoring the emperor by anti-Semitic Greeks. Jews were frustrated further by the erection of a new altar to Caligula, which they destroyed. So in response, Caligula ordered a massive statue of himself be placed in Yahowah’s Temple in Yaruwshalaim, which was nothing less than a declaration of war. And it was in this context that Philo wrote that “Caligula regarded the Jews with special

suspicion, as if they were the only race which cherished desired opposed to his own.”

Postponing the inevitable conflict nearly three decades, the Governor of Syria, Publius Petronius, fearing civil war if the order were carried out, delayed implementing it for nearly a year. Agrippa then convinced Caligula to reverse his decision.

Historians Philo of Alexandria and Seneca the Younger describe Caligula as an insane and self-absorbed, angry and murderous, as a man who indulged in too much spending and sex. He was accused of sleeping with other men’s wives and bragging about it, of killing for mere amusement, of deliberately squandering Rome’s treasury, of causing the population to starve, and of wanting a statue of himself erected in the Temple of Yahowah in Jerusalem so that he could be worshipped as the most important god in the universe.

When he was presiding at the Circus, he would order his guards to throw an entire section of the crowd into the arena during intermission to be eaten by wild animals because there weren’t enough criminals he grew bored. Suetonius and Cassius Dio provide additional tales of perverted insanity. They accuse Caligula of incest with his sisters, Agrippina the Younger, Drusilla, and Livilla, and say he prostituted them to other men. He turned his palace into a brothel, and infamously, he promised to make his horse, Incitatus, Consul, while actually appointing him a priest.

While none of this seemed to bother Romans, as most of their politicians, priests, generals, and aristocrats were similarly perverted, Caligula’s announcement to the Senate that he would be leaving Rome permanently so that he could move to Alexandria, Egypt to be worshiped as a living god was not well received. The prospect of Rome losing its Emperor, and thus its political influence, was unconscionable, as was the realization that people less perverted might find Caligula’s debauchery unbecoming. So the Senate did what it did best – plan the Emperor’s assassination.

The perpetrator would be Chaerea, an effeminate man with a weak voice that the Emperor had called derogatory names. Caligula mocked Chaerea’s compassionate approach to tax collection by referring to him as “Venus.”

On 22 January 41 CE we are told by Suetonius that Caligula’s death was similar to that of Julius Caesar, in that he was stabbed thirty times by multiple conspirators. What’s interesting is that Caligula’s Germanic guard was grief struck and enraged. They not only attacked the assassins and conspirators, they lashed out at innocent senators and bystanders alike.

The Senate tried to capitalize on Caligula's death by restoring the Republic. But the military remained loyal to the office of the Emperor and kept it from happening. Still in love with their young monster, grieving Romans demanded that Caligula's murderers be tried for treason. So the assassins decided to go out swinging, stabbing Caligula's wife, Caesonia, to death and then killing their young daughter, Julia, by smashing her head against a wall.

Claudius then became Emperor after procuring the support of the Praetorian Guard. He immediately ordered the execution of Chaerea and all other known conspirators. And thus ends another sordid affair.

Turning our attention from Roman perversion back to its killing machine, in 43 CE, the Romans initiated their attacks against the Celts living in England, invading Britain for the first time. The initial phase of this conflict raged for seven years, with the deciding battle occurring in Caer Caradoc (perhaps around Herefordshire) in 50 CE.

The Celtic leader, Caratacus, was among the last of his kind, someone with the courage, character, and conviction to openly resist Roman oppression. Therefore, for his moral stand, he and his family were captured and hauled off to Rome as slaves. They were paraded in shackles as part of Claudius's Triumph. So it would be almost a decade before an alliance of indigenous peoples in Roman-occupied Britain would rebel again. But as before, they were annihilated so mercilessly, their demise ended all resistance to Roman rule for centuries thereafter.

Halfway around the world, Rome turned its iron teeth on the Parthian Empire in an effort to control Armenia, which was serving on and off as a territorial buffer between the two superpowers. Augustus had made Armenia a client of Rome, but then when Nero ascended to the throne, the Parthians installed their own vassal. Nero reacted impulsively as was his style, dispatching Legions to reestablish it under the Roman sphere of influence. He picked Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo, who from a Roman perspective had distinguished himself subduing the Germanic tribes, to command the assault. Corbulo, who was serving as governor of Asia, was also given control over Cappadocia and Galatia in modern-day Turkey, with Pro-Consular authority *Imperium* to induce him to accept the associated risk. And although Galatia was considered an ideal recruiting ground for Legionnaires, in that the native population was often rash and impulsive, the bulk of Corbulo's forces came from Syria, where all four of the Legions garrisoned therein were transferred to his command.

Keenly aware that the Parthians were formidable foes, Corbulo tried the diplomatic approach initially. When it failed, he prepared his forces for war,

ruling over them with an iron hand. The young Tiberius had tried this same carrot and stick approach with considerable success.

But even with the uncompromising discipline which made Corbulo infamous, fighting began through an act of insubordination. One of Corbulo's advance cavalry units launched a failed raid against the Armenians, and during their retreat, panicked Rome's armies. Now faced with the old use them or lose them adage with regard to his soldiers, Corbulo readied three of the Legions at his disposal (Third Gallica, Fourth Scythica, and Sixth Ferrata) and hurriedly attacked Armenia.

The Romans prevailed, sacking Armenian cities and torching its capital – although partly because the Parthians were otherwise occupied, dealing with a revolt by the Hyrcanians near the Caspian Sea, and couldn't properly defend their client. Then in typical Roman fashion, the Armenians who stood up against Rome's unprovoked invasion, and who fought solely to preserve the lives and freedom of their family and neighbors, were captured, tortured, and killed.

But now Armenia, at least what was left of it, was under Roman control. So Corbulo, having murdered most of the Armenian royal family, installed one of the few survivors king, leaving some troops behind just to make sure he behaved.

But Nero's rash actions proved counterproductive. Armenia had never been the adversary, only a buffer; Parthia was the enemy. Therefore, in response to Nero's provocation, King Vologases of Parthia quickly negotiated a truce with the Hyrcania so that he could turn his undivided attention toward Rome. To which, Corbulo, on Nero's behalf, dispatched the Sixth Scythica and Twelfth Fulminata Legions to Armenia while he positioned the Third Gallica, Sixth Ferrata, and Fifteenth Apollinaris along the Euphrates, thinking that the Parthians might invade Syria.

Instead, the Parthians marched directly into Armenia. But when they failed in their initial siege attempts against the Romans garrisoned there, a fragile truce was devised because the leaders in the theater recognized that all out war might prove catastrophic. And yet Nero was never moved by reason. He divided Rome's army, giving Lucius Paetus control of three Legions, including the newly arrived Fifth Macedonica, to reinvade Armenia. Meanwhile, he told Corbulo to remain in Syria.

After a series of minor skirmishes in the Armenian countryside, Paetus withdrew, dispersing some of his forces and granting leave for his officers during the winter. The Parthians capitalized and laid siege to Paetus' remaining troops. And while he dispatched messengers to Corbulo requesting help, the rescue was too slow in coming. With a divided army, Paetus was forced to surrender to Vologases. Then as Corbulo had feared, the conditions of capitulation became

onerous, with the Romans agreeing to leave Armenia and surrender all forts to Parthia. Under the terms of this accord, the VI and XII Legions were to strip naked, giving the Armenians what the Romans had plundered, their weapons and clothes. It was a horrifying embarrassment for the ego of Nero and Rome.

Before we consider the next battle, let's ponder the conflict brewing within the Beast – of lives being discounted to facilitate an ever-expanding palette of elitist indulgencies. Throughout the Republic and continuing during the Empire, Rome imposed a strict cast system. At the bottom were slaves. They were property, often abused in horrible ways for the sadistic pleasure of the aristocrats. These individuals, most of whom were women and children, had no rights or legal standing. Greek slaves, however, who were better educated than their masters were valued possessions – but only in the sense that they were not worked to death doing menial tasks. Illiterate slaves and those lacking the technical skills of a trade were condemned to manual labor and were often worked as if they were tools or simply beasts of burden. Violent and disobedient slaves were subjected to inhuman conditions in Roman mines.

Freemen without citizenship were either called Peregrini or Liberti depending on whether they were foreign subjects or liberated slaves. A unique set of laws were written to govern their conduct. Foreigners doing business with Romans were known as Clients.

Climbing up the social ladder from the bottom rungs, we discover that Roman citizens fell into three casts, with common people on the bottom rung of society known as Plebeians. The only ways for them to rise in status and to assert any control over their lives was to be adopted by a Patrician or to win the highest award for valor fighting foreign foes.

Those in the intermediate class were Equestrians, also called Equites or Knights. There weren't very many of them, and most were deployed in the Praetorian Guard or as intermediate officers in the military.

The Roman aristocrats were known as Patricians. There were fabulously rich, self indulgent, typically carnal, and often cruel. The highest ranking Patricians were in the Senate. Above them were priests and above the priests was the Emperor, who was considered divine.

In the military hierarchy, Generals were almost always Patricians. The officers, called Equites, were Equestrians. The Hoptites were typically Plebeians. The infantry was comprised of Liberti, while the Support and Rabble were almost always forced conscriptions or slaves. The youngest were sixteen, but a man could be conscripted and forced to serve even into his mid forties. The minimum tour of duty was twenty years plus an additional five in the reserves. At Rome's option, this could be extended to forty years. And there was no opting out. If a

man got homesick, if he wanted to see his family, and he went AWOL, he would be hunted down and tortured to death.

Women were objects to be manipulated in Rome. Loving monogamous marriages were rare. Some women were considered citizens but they could not vote or hold political office. And Roman Law required that both the man and the woman be citizens for the title “marriage” to apply. For example, if one or the other was not a citizen, they weren’t considered married and their children wouldn’t be considered citizens.

Also in Rome, just as there was a hierarchy among the gods, there was a religious hierarchy among Romans. Those who worshipped the Roman or Greek pantheon were afforded more opportunities than the devotees of the Egyptian gods. And the subjects of Amun Ra, Osiris, and Isis held sway above those devoted to the Persian variations. Moreover, the civilized deities and devotees were more highly regarded than the gods and goddesses of the barbarians. But within this spectrum, some of the discriminatory effects were diminished through syncretism, whereby religions were amalgamated. A devotee of Dionysus for example, might join the cult of Bacchus.

Within the religious class system, there was a pariah, a people considered indistinguishable from their religion. As a result of having only one God, as a result of their unwillingness to be syncretistic, their God, Torah, Shabat, Feasts, Temple, and Land were despised – considered beneath contempt. Their refusal to pay homage to the Imperial Cult was considered an act of treason which was punishable by death.

To a lesser extent, and right around this time, since the first to accept Yahowsha’ were Torah observant Jews, the initial Followers of the Way were demeaned. And while they were not actually “Christians,” since that title was later projected upon them, they were persecuted. This is largely because once the harassment of God’s Chosen People began in Rome, it never ended, even when the Empire transitioned into a Church. From the time of Tiberius and continuing with Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, Jews were *persona non grata*.

As a result, in 64 CE when the Great Fire swept through Rome, Emperor Nero blamed Chrestuaneos (meaning “good and useful implements prepared for service,” later corrupted to Christians, meaning “drugged”). Writing about it, the historian Tacitus (one of the classical world’s most authoritative voices) in *Annals* XV, 44, 2-8, reported: “All human efforts and propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the fire was the result of an order [from Nero]. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Chrestuaneos by the populous. Chrestus, from whom the name had its origin,

suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate.”

Ever since Tiberius attempted to cleanse his city of Jews, with Caligula, Claudius, and Nero being equally anti-Semitic, the Emperor’s scapegoat was always more racial than religious, and focused upon Jews – the only people unwilling to worship the Roman gods and the Roman Emperors as god. It was an insult their fragile egos could not endure. This reality was borne out by the historian Suetonius (69 to 122 CE), who affirmed that that the Yahuwdym who followed Chrestus were held in low esteem. In his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, he reports: “Claudius expelled from Rome the *Iudaeos (Yahuwdym)* for constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.”

Most modern historians have come to realize that the Roman government did not distinguish between Jews and those would later become known as Chrestuaneos, then Christians, prior to Nerva’s modification of the *Fiscus Judaicus* in 96 CE. As a result of this edict, practicing Jews paid a punitive religious tax and Christians did not. But that is the first time they were actually distinguished one from the other.

✎

And while the Romans were always oppressive, in Judea circa 66-73 CE during the Great Revolt, the Beast revealed its most appalling nature. But this was just the first of three uprisings in the Roman-occupied Province of Yahuwdah (*Iudaea* in Latin) between 60 and 135 CE. All three insurrections grew out of religious oppression, criminal activity on behalf of the Romans, and excessive brutality and taxation. And with exception of religious persecution, since the other abuses were common throughout the Empire, this became a religious war. So when rabbinical Yisra’elites rebelled, the Empire responded by pummeling then plundering the object of their devotion, the most famous Temple in the world. Then to dissuade future displays of conscience and character, Rome crucified six-thousand Yahuwdym in Yaruwshalaim.

By way of background, so long as a vanquished race or region accepted the gods of the Roman pantheon, and also acknowledged that Rome’s Emperors were divine, so long as they were willing to sign an oath of allegiance to them, the Empire didn’t much care how many other gods or goddesses the people enshrined. But there was one place, a tiny sliver of land at the crossroads of continents, where one race acknowledged only one God. And that God was unique. He was not only real, He was had provided a very specific set of

instructions on how to engage in a relationship with Him. As a result, He had a Covenant, a Chosen People, and a Promised Land. Especially important, this God was loving, and therefore jealous, and would not share His children with a deity or institution of man's making. And that was not acceptable to the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, or the Roman Catholic Church. This God's prerequisite for engaging in a relationship with Him was walking away from all political and religious associations.

Immediately preceding the initial conflict, Roman citizenship reached six million souls. And during this time, King Herod ruled Yahuwdah as a Roman vassal. He was essentially Roman: an egomaniacal tyrant, killing anyone and everyone he perceived to be a threat – especially members of his own family. He ran Rome's client as if it were his own private plantation, similar to the lords of feudal Europe, treating laborers as if they were his slaves. And he used the priesthood to his advantage, appointing religious clerics who endorsed him, much like the marriage of church and state throughout the world under the corruptive influence of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.

Although Herod was a miserable man, when he died, in the vacuum of power that ensued, the Yahuwdah became susceptible to uprisings, political, religious, and economic. Initially the revolts were localized because the first Roman Procurators over Judea granted a partial exemption from pagan rights, from images of gods on coins, from statues of gods in sensitive places, and even from Sunday worship. That changed, however, with Gessius (note the similarity to the Christian misnomer "Jesus") Florus. He set the Great Revolt in motion by stealing from the Temple treasury in 66 CE, then murdering the Yisra'elites who exposed and condemned his crime.

But there is some history we should reconsider before this, because rather than lighten the yoke, in 6 CE, Yahuwdah transitioned from a client kingdom to a Roman Province – a change that brought greater governmental interference, especially the imposition of Roman Law. And because the Romans adored Greek culture, Greek philosophy, and the Greek religion, even their Gnosticism, these influences began spreading throughout the Land, effecting both the religious fundamentalists and political liberals in Judea, with both embracing some Hellenistic ideals while chafing against others. But all the while, Greeks continued to look down their noses as Jews. They were, and they remain, among the most anti-Semitic people on earth. Even today, nearly two-thousand years later, recent polls reveal that nearly seventy percent of Greeks are vehemently prejudiced against Jews – by far the highest level of racial hatred in Europe.

Therefore, the legacy of Alexander the Great's conquests continued to chafe Yisra'elites. And now as a Province, Roman Law became much more pervasive and therefore onerous in Iudaea. Yisra'elites as a whole were noncompliant,

causing them to be discriminated against. And leading up to this time, Caligula's persona became an issue. This repulsive man with hideous tendencies became paranoid, so to curry favor with him and avoid his deadly wrath, Roman vassals like Flaccus in Egypt started placing monstrous statues of Caligula inside of Jewish synagogues, beginning in 38 CE in Alexandria. This as we know, stirred riots, which Caligula dealt with by abusing Jews and assassinating Flaccus. Caligula's successor, Claudius, forbade Jews from emigrating into Alexandria henceforth. He would also expel Jews from Rome, primarily because as a zealous pagan fundamentalist, he found their public bickering regarding the identity of "Chrestus" irritating. Fascinating, however, as a passable writer and historian, Claudius added the letters W and Y to the Latin alphabet. But unfortunately, these contributions to being able to properly transliterate Yahowah's name, didn't survive his reign.

As we discovered a moment ago, thereafter, Agrippa accused Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee, of planning a rebellion against Roman rule. This appeared plausible because in 40 CE, riots broke out between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria after the Yisra'elites destroyed one of many pagan alters. In response, Caligula, arguably the most self-absorbed ruler in Roman history, arranged to have a massive statue of himself erected inside of Yahowah's Temple in Jerusalem. Knowing that doing so would bring war, Publius Petronius, the governor of Syria, delayed implementing it for nearly a year. Thereafter, Agrippa finally convinced Caligula to reverse the order. But at this time, Yahuwdah remained a powder keg ready to explode. Rebellions became commonplace, with protests occurring in 46 and continued through 48 CE. The brothers believed to have inspired it, were publicly and painfully executed.

According to Josephus, the noted Jewish traitor, the Great Rebellion was provoked by pagan Greek merchants who sold and sacrificed birds to honor the Greek gods in front of a synagogue in Caesarea in 66 CE, rendering the synagogue unclean. Rome didn't intervene, allowing Hellenistic animosity towards Jews to fester, in fact, they favored Greeks over Jews. In response, one of the Temple clerks, Eliezar ben Hanania, terminated prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the Roman Emperor. Protests over taxation followed, especially after Nero increased each province's tribute payments to fund his new palace.

It was then that Gessius Florus, who had been assigned by Nero, and who was noted for his greed, breached the Temple with Roman troops and stole seventeen talents from its treasury – an account used to aid widows and orphans. Mocking him, the population began passing baskets around to collect money for Gessius, as if he were impoverished. The Roman Procurator responded by raiding Jerusalem and arresting civil and religious leaders – all of whom were flogged and then crucified. Outraged, various religious and political factions throughout the Judean

Province crafted improvised arms and attacked the Roman military garrison in Yahuwdah / Judah, quickly overrunning them.

Rather than apologize, the pro-Roman King Agrippa II and his sister, together with Roman officials, fled the capital. Given the opportunity, Yisra'elites cleansed the country of all vestiges of the Roman Empire – removing all of its pagan symbols.

At this moment, Nero, who was noted for duplicity, debauchery, and extravagance, was nearing the end of his life and reign. He is often blamed for having lit Rome afire to expand his palace and for having turned people into torches to illuminate his gardens, but neither are likely true. And if the latter were so, his luminaries would have been Jews, not Christians. And while we are clearing away some myths, he did not “fiddle while Rome burned.” It’s an anachronism, not only because of the preference for the lyre at the time, but also because there were no fiddles in first-century Rome.

Nero inherited the throne at seventeen after his mother, Agrippina, poisoned Claudius, his lame and innocuous predecessor, with laced mushrooms. A mean spirited momma’s boy, Nero constantly insulted Claudius’s memory, joking that he “played the fool among mortals.” The murdering mother was omnipresent, by his side in statues, eye to eye on coins, and sitting in the accompanying throne during meetings and functions. All the while, Nero grew to hate, Octavia, his wife, and entered into an indiscrete affair with a slave. The undignified interloper put a wedge between mother and son, with Agrippina promoting Nero’s teenage stepbrother as his replacement. But the family feud was negated when Nero poisoned him. Then, once he tired of the captive coietus, he tried adultery, becoming romantically entwined with Sabina, the wife of his friend and future Emperor, Otho. And since Agrippina objected yet again, Nero killed his mother, calling it a suicide. Then, ever the hypocrite, Nero divorced Octavia for infidelity. When she complained, he had her executed. Evidently hard to please, he kicked Sabina to death. But then evidently developing post mortem feelings for her, he had her body stuffed with spices and embalmed. Looking for alternative means of satisfaction, Nero selected a young castrated by named Sporus from his household staff and married him.

Evidently concerned that he may have been tarnishing his reputation with so many unexplained deaths, Nero decided to have a Praetor who spoke critically of him at a party, put to death. According to the historian, Suetonius, Nero “showed neither discrimination nor moderation in putting to death whomsoever he pleased.” And yet, since Nero only robbed and killed the richest elitists, he remained popular with the people. In fact, like so many infamous individuals, Nero was obsessed with his personal popularity – especially among the drunkards in taverns and working ladies in brothels, frequenting both regularly. He reigned

in the cruelest tax collectors and impeached government officials most noted for extortion. He even reduced the federal tax rate from 4.5% to a paltry 2.5%. Then to lower food costs, he made merchant shipping tax exempt.

After the Great Fire in 64 CE, Nero provided financial relief for ordinary citizens while embarking on civic reconstruction. He, himself, engaged trying to find and save victims of the blaze, often shifting through the rubble with his own hands. Nero would also open the doors of his palaces to provide shelter for the homeless. He participated in planning the new Rome, with wide boulevards and homes built of brick, each with their own porticos. Yet it wasn't all altruistic. Nero built a grand new palace complex for himself in one of the areas cleared by the fire. It included several hundred acres of lush landscapes and a one-hundred foot tall bronze statue of himself that was covered in gold: the Colossus Neronis. It was designed to present Nero as Sol, the sun god.

So to finance its construction, Rome's colossus imposed heavy tributes upon every province within the Empire. This project, as well as the means to fund it, are telling. It is in this garden that Tacitus, who was nine at the time of the fire and therefore twelve at this moment, became the first immensely credible secular historian to chronicle the profound nature of the life of an individual from the Province of Judea the Greeks referred to as Chrestus – the Ma'aseyah. He would go on to say that some of the Jews who followed Him were blamed for the fire and therefore crucified as living torches to illuminate the golden statue within Nero's garden. Moreover, the dramatic increase in taxes demanded from the provinces to fund this celebration of human extravagance contributed substantially to the rebellion in Yahuwdah that would follow.

Even with higher tributes, the cost to rebuild Rome was greater than the dwindling treasury could bear. Especially costly was the Golden House Nero had constructed to overlook his Golden Colossus. His new palace was the first Roman building constructed with concrete, and featured walls covered in gold leaf while many ceilings were veneered in ivory and bejeweled in dazzling gemstones to represent the stars that were perceived to be fellow gods and goddesses. These ceilings were ingeniously designed so that when cranks were manipulated by slaves, the dome would revolve like the heavens. The floors, many vaulted ceilings, and some walls were covered in mosaics, a technique which was extensively copied in Christian cathedrals throughout Rome and Constantinople, inspiring a fundamental feature of Church art.

With so much money devoted to one god, emperor, and pope, Nero devalued the Roman currency, doing so for the first time in the Empire's history. He reduced the weight of the Denarius from 3.85 grams of silver to 3.35 grams. He also reduced the purity of the silver from 99.5% to 93.5. And all the while, with the Roman economy contracting, Nero continued promoting public works and

charitable entitlements because they seemed to flavor the public's perception of his economic malfeasance.

And so it would be, as the riots broke out throughout the Province of Yahuwdah in 66 CE, Nero dispatched his army. Immediately thereafter, Cestius Gallus, the Legate of Syria, arrived with the Twelfth Thunderbolt Legion, a total of thirty-thousand troops, to restore Roman authority and collect Nero's tribute. He began in Caesarea and then Jaffa, murdering 8,400 civilians. Nabata and Sipporis surrendered without a fight as a consequence. Lydda was taken next. But in Gaba, the Judean rebels led by Shim'own Giora, engaged and managed to kill five hundred Roman troops. The defeat caused Gallus to retreat toward the coast, where the XII Legion was ambushed and routed during the Battle of Beth Horon, leaving six-thousand Romans dead, thousands more wounded, and their Aqila / Eagle lost – shocking and humiliating the Empire. Second only in carnage to what the Germanic tribes inflicted in the forest ambush, it was the worst defeat the Roman Empire had ever suffered in one of its provinces at the hands of a civilian militia. Gallus abandoned his troops as the survivors fled in disarray to Syria.

Emperor Nero replaced Gallus with Titus Flavius Vespasian, assigning him the task of snuffing out the righteous indignation of the Yisra'elites. His son, Titus, was appointed second in command. They were given four Legions to crush the life out of the Iudaeen Province, with the X Fretensis and V Macedonica arriving in April 67 CE. Titus then brought the XV Apollinaris from Alexandria. It was combined with the troops on King Agrippa's control, collectively bringing sixty-thousand soldiers to crush Yahuwdah.

Beginning where his predecessor had left off, he terrorized Galilee, eliminating resistance in the north by 68 CE, perpetrating a campaign of terror designed to punish the population. His next objective was the Judean coastline, thereby delaying direct confrontation with the rebels in Jerusalem. But even with the force of four Legions against a civilian uprising, it took the Romans several months to suppress Galilee. The last holdout was Jodapatha, which survived a forty-seven day siege.

In both Rome and Jerusalem political turmoil arose, with corrupt politicians vying for power. Nero's megalomania was becoming a serious issue, prompting increasingly erratic behavior. And he had manufactured rivals. In March 68 CE, Gaius Vindex, the Governor of Gallia (the Gallic Province covered most of northern France), also rebelled against Nero's tax and tribute policies. So Nero ordered Lucius Rufus, the Governor of Germania (due east of Gallia), to suppress Vindex's rebellion. But rather than capitulate, Vindex solicited the support of Sulpicius Galba, the Governor of Hispania (covering most of modern-day Spain), encouraging him to join the rebellion and claim the throne for himself. And while that plan had merit, it didn't work out for Vindex. When the Governor of

Germania defeated Gallia, Vindex committed suicide. Nero's strategy, however, backfired, because the Germanic Legions declared Lucius Rufus Emperor.

At the same time, some Senators, most all of the Praetorian Guard, and a number of aristocratic Romans, came to favor Sulpicius Galba, and they conspired to assassinate Nero, labeling him "an Enemy of the People." Already unstable, Nero fled Rome, hoping to sail off to a supportive province in the East and reestablish himself. But when the military officers he met along the way to the harbor refuse to obey his orders, Nero chirped, "Is it so dreadful a thing then to die?" Evidently, Nero didn't like the prospect, so he wrote a speech, hoping to beg Romans to pardon him for his past offenses, while at the same time requesting control of a minor province, suggesting Egypt. And while a copy of the speech has been found, Nero, who found the courage to return to Rome, couldn't muster the nerve to deliver it. He would spend the night in his palace overlooking the Colossal Nero. But come morning, he found himself without servants or guards, allegedly muttering a line similar to Paul's last pathetic lamentation, "Have I neither friend nor foe?"

Later that day, wrongly believing that the Senate planned to torture him to death, Nero, who couldn't bring himself to take his own life, forced his secretary to do the deed. And in his dying breath, the insane and delusional beast uttered, "What an artist dies in me!" It was June 9th, 68 CE. He was the last of the short-lived Julio-Claudian dynasty. Aristocrats celebrated his death while the lower classes who were beneficiaries and recipients of the fabulous excesses, bemoaned the news. The army, as it turns out, was bribed to turn against him.

Sulpicius Galba, the Governor of Hispania, became Nero's replacement. His short reign was spent executing most every potential rival, including allies of Nero. But then Galba was murdered a few months later by one of his intended victims, Marcus Salvius Otho, at the time the Governor of Portugal, triggering a third Civil War. This chaotic period was called the "Year of the Four Emperors," even though there were actually five. Otho was encouraged to this action on the counsel of astrologers, making it a religious response.

Otho, who had squandered his inheritance, somehow found the money to bribe some twenty members of the Praetorian Guard. They took him to their barracks and heralded him as Emperor. Now with an imposing force, the would-be Emperor Otho made his way to the Forum at the base of Capitoline Hill, where the actual Emperor, Galba, was wading through the crowds to reach the barracks Otho had departed. He had become alarmed by the rumors that treachery was afoot. But along the way, Galba's cohort deserted him, and the Praetorian Guard turned on him, brutally murdering Galba and his immediate family. Celebrating the slaughter, Otho claimed the throne.

Subsequently, we learn that the reason Galba became vulnerable was that he had promised to lavish large amounts of gold on the Legions Praetorian Guards who supported his ascension, but then reneged. Further demonstrating the deterioration of Roman character, Otho, the man whose wife had been taken by Nero, the man who had been banished to Portugal by Nero, adopted Nero's name. He even became intimate with Sporus, Nero's castrated lover. He moved into Nero's Golden House and reestablished all of the statues of Nero that Galba had taken down, in recognition of how popular the perverted Emperor remained with the populous. It was a lesson learned and a strategy often repeated: rob the rich to indulge the poor and most people will love you, even if the welfare state bankrupts the country, devalues its currency, and precipitates war.

After arranging his predecessor's death, the man whose reckless temperament, grandiose extravagance, and effeminate and yet murderous demeanor, was said to be identical to Nero's, was confronted by another rival, this one Vitellius, the commander of the Rhine Legions. He and they were advancing on Rome with Otho in their sites. So after vainly trying to conciliate Vitellius, offering him a share of the Empire, Otho prepared to combat him. For reasons now lost to history, the Legions of Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia rallied to Otho's cause, as did the Praetorian Guards. As Emperor, Otho also had access to Rome's formidable fleet which was dispatched to Liguria along the coast of northwestern Italy to prevent Vitellius's advance. Undeterred by foreboding omens and prophecies, Otho barricaded himself in Brixellum, while ordering his men to attack the Vitellian Legions. They did, they failed, and they retreated right back to Brixellum. Vitellius pursued them, expecting another battle, but upon his arrival, the disheartened army of Otho welcomed Vitellius's army into their camp as friends. It was then that Otho would allegedly declare: "It is far more just to perish one for all, than many for one," before stabbing himself to death. Some soldiers were so impressed, Rome's propagandists claim that they threw themselves on Otho's funeral pyre to die with their Emperor.

This then allowed Vitellius to become the fourth Emperor of Rome in less than a year. But that was not the end of it. The Danube armies (III Gallica, IV Macedonica, VIII Augusta, and VII Claudia) were brought against Vitellius after swearing an oath initially to him and then later to Vespasian. To counter their duplicity, Vitellius composed an army of XXI Rapax, V Alaudae, I Italica, and XXII Primigenia. But as Vespasian's Legions saluted the Sun, acknowledging their god at sunrise as was their custom, Vitellius misinterpreted the gesture. He was led to believe that they were welcoming reinforcements. So the General turned Emperor lost heart and retreated. Vitellius was taken prisoner and after a matter of months on the throne, was summarily executed. He was prepared to abdicate, but that wasn't the Roman way.

In the midst of this chaos, Vespasian, who was now hailed as Emperor by his Legions, returned to Rome and claimed the throne, affirming beyond any doubt that the Empire had become a military state. Also confirming this realization, in dating his rule, Vespasian chose the date of the decree of his Legions over the Senate's affirmation, a decision that transformed the Roman military into an electoral college for would-be dictators.

☞☞☞

Meanwhile, the Yahuwdym were not of one accord either. Menahem ben Yahuda's attempt to lead the Sicarii (men wielding daggers) into Yaruwshalaim / Jerusalem was repulsed by the Sadducees. Ben Yahuda was executed and his Sicarii were driven back. All the while, Ananus, the Sadducean leader, was reinforcing the city in preparation for the beastly siege that was sure to come.

But surprisingly, the first siege wasn't from the Romans. Driven from Galilee, the Zealot rebels and thousands of homeless civilians sought refuge in Yahuwdah / Judah, creating political and social turmoil in Yaruwshalaim. Infighting between the Zealots (conservative religious fundamentalists) and Sadducees (liberal secular politicians) became violent and bloody. With Edomites fighting on behalf of the Zealots, Ananus was killed and his faction of the fractured rebellion suffered substantial casualties. And as a result, Bar Giora, commanding a militia of fifteen-thousand men, was invited into Jerusalem by the Sadducees in an effort to ward off the Zealots. They prevailed, but at a tremendous cost of lives and treasure that would have been better invested fighting Rome.

Back during the time Vespasian had been in Judah, he opposed an open siege against Jerusalem. The city, situated on a hill and protected with three walls, was a formidable target, and Vespasian was concerned that he would lose too many troops in a direct assault. Mind you, his concern wasn't for his soldier's lives, but for his own career. Generals who squandered Legions were summarily dismissed. But when Vespasian withdrew to Rome, he left his son, Titus, in command.

Younger, brash, and impervious to the human cost of his strategy, Titus, trying to build a name for himself, immediately struck the heart of the opposition, besieging Yaruwshalaim in early 70 CE. He breached the outer two walls within a few weeks, but the inner wall was thicker and resistance was aggressive, keeping the Romans at bay for seven months. Inside the city, the brutal Civil War raged on, with the religious Zealots ultimately prevailing over the political Sadducees. Then without internal opposition, they mounted a passionate defense, turning the siege of Jerusalem into a stalemate.

The Romans, predictable as ever, in support of their siege, built walls and dug trenches around the city, creating a fearsome barrier in hopes of starving the population to death. Anyone who dared run the gauntlet between the two walls in an attempt to flee the city was captured, crucified, and displayed in long lines on top of the dirt walls the Romans had made, always facing Jerusalem. The message was clear: every Jew would die an excruciating death at the hands of the Romans. The Beast crucified an average of five hundred Jews a day, day after day, week after week, month after month, for seven months. That equates to over one-hundred thousand excruciatingly slow and agonizingly painful deaths. The only reprieve was that the dying couldn't suck enough air into their lungs for their pitiful screams to be heard over any distance.

It wasn't all unbearable torture, however, because at the same time the Romans began constructing ramparts to facilitate their ultimate invasion of the city. Contemplating the inevitable, the Zealots, in a deliberate and desperate act, inflicted a wound that accomplished what the siege implements and crucifixions could not achieve. To motivate Yaruwshalaim's population to fight the Romans as if their lives were dependent upon it, the religious fundamentalists intentionally burned the city's stockpile of food. As a result, the entrapped Yisra'elites would either die hopelessly fighting a vastly superior force without appropriate weapons, starve to death, or be crucified.

Most of the remaining six-hundred thousand to one million besieged men, women, and children engaged in the resistance, fighting Romans in hand to hand combat after the walls finally gave way. But it was futile. The Romans ransacked the entire city, burning Yahowah's favorite place on Earth to the ground. The last bastion of Yisra'elite resistance, the Temple itself, was destroyed and plundered by the most depraved nation in human history on July 30, 70 CE.

The Arch of Titus outside the Coliseum in Rome chronicles the moment, showing the Legions hauling away the Temple's implements, including the Menorah, during the frenzied celebration. The Arch was built to commemorate Titus's Triumphal procession in Rome, demonstrating all that is wrong with humanity. Roman coins were distributed throughout the Empire with the inscription "IVDEA CAPTA – Judea Captured." They were minted to demonstrate the futility of rebelling against the Empire. On the coins, Yahuwdah was represented by a woman whose head was bowed, bent over in shame and sorrow, crying. As for Titus, he allegedly refused the wreath of victory, claiming that he had "lent his arms to god." I strongly suspect that God disagrees.

The last Jewish holdout was Masada, which the Romans, led by Lucius Silva, destroyed in the Autumn of 72. To do so, they deployed the X Fretensis (Sea Strait) and an army of Jewish slaves. Once they finally achieved their immoral

aim, they found all but seven of the nine-hundred sixty-seven men, women, and children inside, having already committed suicide.

Above Masada, everything surrounding Jerusalem was destroyed, either torn to the ground or burned. The war the Romans had started with thievery and stupidity, ended ruthlessly and vengefully, even sadistically. The survivors were either crucified or enslaved. In all, one million one-hundred thousand Yisra'elites were killed during the Roman siege. At least one-hundred thousand Jewish slaves were carted off to Rome, initiating the Diaspora. They were initially tasked with building the Flavian Amphitheater, more commonly known as the Roman Coliseum. The project was funded out of the treasure stolen from the Temple.

Nothing in all of human history speaks louder or more clearly regarding the Beast of Rome than the fact that they funded their Coliseum with the metals they looted when they destroyed Yahowah's Temple, constructing the most carnal amphitheater on earth using Jewish slaves. In the Temple, Yahowah celebrated life and relationships. In the Coliseum, the Romans celebrated conquest and death.

With the Temple's destruction, a feat Yahowah deliberately allowed, the debate between those who had claimed that the Torah was a compilation of Laws that had to be meticulously obeyed and those like Dowd / David who realized that the Towrah was comprised of teaching to be understood and parental guidance to be embraced, should have been over. All of the Towrah's instructions pertaining to the Temple were now impossible to perform, making the religious interpretation invalid. And yet every nuance of every word remained relevant for those seeking to know God, for those wanting to participate in His Covenant Family. The failure on behalf of Jewish theologians and scholars to adjust their thinking accordingly and to embrace the simple truth of Yahowah's message, further alienated the Chosen People from their Land and their God. As a matter of fact, it was at this time that Rabbis began weaving the Towrah and the Temple, along with its Author and Host, out of their religion, crafting their Talmud to focus Judaism and Jews on them, instead.

While I'm not sure anyone should care, and I know God doesn't, there were more battles in more places. And while my heart tells me to leap ahead sixty years, my head realizes that we should complete what we have started. Since Yahowah detailed His utter disgust for Rome, the Empire and what it represents today in Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, and since He had to witness its most gruesome crimes against the people He had created, the least we can do is delineate why Rome has earned Yahowah's enduring wrath.

In 84 CE, Romans scored another military victory, this one in Scotland. Although in the aim of full disclosure, the only account we have of this battle was

described by Tacitus who was not there, and nothing he said can be confirmed by modern excavations, leaving many historians to doubt whether it even took place. The vanquished were illiterate.

A great deal more is known about Domitian's Dacian War. It was waged against the Dacian Kingdom in 86 CE to confront King Duras who had invaded the Roman Province of Moesia. This tiny strip of land in the Balkans sat along the south bank of the Danube River in modern-day Serbia, and included northernmost Macedonia and parts of Bulgaria. He caught the Romans by surprise, annihilating the V Alaudae / Gallica Legion. Following the attack, Domitian replaced the lost Legion, brought in the IV Flavia, and the I and II Adiutrix. And while historians disagree on whether Domitian personally led the operation or returned to Rome, the result was a Roman victory, clearing the Dacians out of Moesia, with Domitian claiming credit, throwing a Triumph in his honor. It was perhaps a bit premature, because in 87 CE, Fuscus crossed the Danube, was ambushed, and Rome's V Alaudae Legion was destroyed.

As we move into the Second Century, the battleground remains unchanged. In 101 CE, Emperor Trajan defeated the Dacian King Decebalus. This is telling because in 88 CE, the Dacians and the Romans signed a long-term and comprehensive peace accord. But unwilling to honor its terms, afforded the opportunity, Trajan annihilated the remainder of the Dacian armed forces the following year near Adamclisi (in modern Romania). After the battle, a new peace accord was negotiated, this time favoring the Romans.

This Pax Romana didn't last either. The Romans laid siege to the Dacian capital in 106 CE, sacking it. Upon their return to Rome, they carried 165,000 kilograms of Dacian gold and 331,000 kilograms of their silver along with them, even Decebalus's head and right arm. Even this battle and its covetous and ghoulish conclusion would be memorable. This assault marked the final conquest of the Roman Empire. From this point on, every battle would be defensive, fought to retain control of their crumbling country. From the moment they executed the Ma'aseyah Rome began to die.

The Beast was dying, not dead, unfortunately. The second of three wars between Rome and Yisra'el, called "Kitos War," was waged between 115-117 CE. While many hundreds of thousands of Yisra'elites had been murdered and enslaved forty-five years earlier, there were still many Jews living around the Mediterranean. But they were not happy. Following the brutal and sadistic Roman assault against Yahuwah between 66 and 70 CE, the Jews in Diaspora were righteously indignant. As a result, they are said to have initiated revolts in Cyrene, Cyprus, and Egypt, allegedly killing many Romans to avenge the deaths of their countrymen and destruction of their homeland. And while the fourth century Christian theologian Orosius exaggerated the scope of the Jewish protests to

demonize Jews, as was the Roman custom, there is indisputable evidence that Greeks throughout the late first and early second century became increasingly prejudiced against Jews, largely as a result of the growing popularity of Paul's letters among Gentiles.

At the time, Emperor Trajan was victoriously advancing through northwestern Mesopotamia in his pursuit of the Parthian Empire. And with a remnant of Jews still living where they had been enslaved long ago by the Babylonians, there is every reason to believe that, given the opportunity, Jews menaced Trajan's rear, attacking some of the smaller garrisons stretched out along his supply line. During the same period, unrest in Cyrenaica, along the coast in northeastern Libya, spread into Egypt and then Cyprus, inciting supportive demonstrations in Judaea.

The most notable protest occurred in Lydda, known as Lowd in Hebrew, which was located some ten miles southeast of today's metropolis of Tel Aviv. The Romans were concerned over the dissent because it might potentially threaten grain supplies grown in Egypt that were being transported to Trajan's troops. Lusius Quietus, the bane of Jews in Mesopotamia, was put in command of the Roman army in Judaea. He immediately laid siege to Lydda, crucifying thousands of Jews in the process.

Simultaneously, back in Cyrenaica, Yisra'elites began desecrating Roman and Greek temples to Jupiter, Apollo, Artemis, and Isis. To which, interpreting these events in the fifth-century CE, the Gallaecian (Spanish) priest, Christian theologian, and budding historian, Paulus Orosius, wrote: "The Jews...waged war on the inhabitants throughout Libya in the most savage fashion, and to such an extent was the country wasted that, its cultivators having been slain, its land would have remained utterly depopulated, had not the Emperor Hadrian gathered settlers from other places and sent them thither, for the inhabitants had been wiped out." (Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, 7.12.6) In reality, as a Christian, Paulus had been indoctrinated by his namesake to hate those Yahowah had chosen and was simply doing his part to justify his religious hatred of them.

Since early Christian clerics so substantially reshaped Roman and Church history to serve their agenda, it should be noted that Orosius, who took the Christian name, Paulus, became one of Augustine's students and is said to have had significant contact with Jerome – the author of the Latin Vulgate. He was also a Roman apologist at times, influenced by the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire in Braga (in the Iberian Peninsula) during his youth. This event caused him to migrate to Algeria where he met Augustine. There as his student and secretary, it is thought that Orosius may have contributed to the writing of Augustine's most acclaimed work, *The City of God*.

In 413 CE, and for the next 13 years, beginning three years after the fall of Rome, Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, long after the influence of Constantine, set out to prove that Christianity wasn't responsible for the destruction of the Roman Empire. Half of the book is devoted to this purpose. And while he was correct in not blaming the religion for Rome's meltdown, he missed the point that Yahowah makes in Dany'el: Rome is still very much alive and is now menacing the whole world through the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church. In fact, according to Augustine, the *City of God* is the Roman Catholic Church, while according to Yahowah, the Church of Rome is the Beast.

Correct in condemning the greed and decadence of Rome, he was wrong in associating the Roman Church with Christ and Roman Catholicism with the New Jerusalem. God does not have a Church, He hates Rome, and there won't be a single Roman Catholic in heaven.

While most all of Augustine's arguments relative to Christianity were derived from the poisoned Roman pen of Paul, the fulcrum of his world view pivots on *removing* the millennial presentation found in Revelation 20 and 21 from Yahowsha's prophetic letters condemning the "Church Age" in Revelation 2 and 3 and also from Yahowsha's explanation of Dany'el 7 through 9 found in Revelation 12 through 19. As a result, the second half of his book is a romp through the make-believe world of religion.

It is telling that Augustine, like Paul, was a Gnostic. Just as Paul's letters present the Gnostic view of the spirit and the flesh, with one being good and the other evil, the actual city of Rome is contrasted with a spiritual construct in *The City of God*. Augustine was heavily influenced by Manichaeism, the original version of Gnosticism that was founded by the prophet Mani in Sasanian Babylonia. This elitist philosophical belief system thrived during Augustine's lifetime, especially between the third and seventh centuries where it was not only as widespread and as influential as Christianity, the religions became so similar, Gnosticism was amalgamated into Christianity. This explains Augustine's fascination with Plato, the Greek scholar who popularized Gnosticism among intellectuals.

Since Augustine's *The City of God*, second only to Paul's letters, is the most influential text in developing Christianity, it should be noted Augustine was wrong in developing the Doctrine of being enslaved to Original Sin along with the Doctrine that Grace was the only means to freedom. His Doctrine of the Trinity was purely Babylonian. And his Doctrine of Amillennialism was completely Gnostic. And while all of Augustine's errors continue to haunt Christianity, the least known, Amillennialism, may be the most troubling. His projected prophetic timeline of the last days on earth, which is still the prevalent Christian view today, is that the millennial celebration of *Sukah* and the *Shabat* is a wholly invalid

concept, wrong in nature, wrong in time, wrong in place, and wrong in purpose. This perspective, which is the antithesis of Yahowah's promise, was advanced because Augustine was opposed to the Shabat, to the Miqra'ey, to the Towrah, to the Covenant, to Yahowah's six plus one formula, and to what Yaruwshalaim and Eden represent. With Augustine, all of these things were replaced by the Roman Catholic Church, making them superfluous. In Augustine's mind, the millennium had already begun and it was synonymous with the advent of Roman Catholicism.

Much of *The City of God* paints paganism and Christianity as black and white, as good versus evil. And yet in reality, most every material aspect of the Christian religion has pagan roots. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church grew through syncretism, by combining complementary and contradictory mythologies that were practiced and accepted by the different cultures the Church wanted to influence and control.

And while Augustine was a Catholic apologist, his affinity for predestination made him a favorite of Calvinists and therefore many Protestants. He's even become a saint, with his Feast Day celebrated on June 15th. And since for much of his life he was a hedonist and bisexual libertine, he and his *City of God* have become popular again in academia. It should also be noted that his conversion experience occurred while reading Paul's attack on the flesh in the midst of his letter to the Romans.

As an interesting insight into this unique slice of history during Christianity's formative years, it was Augustine who sent Orosius to "Palestine" to meet with Jerome in Bethlehem, the author and translator of the Roman Catholic Church's Latin Vulgate. The intent of the trip was to undermine Augustine's most effective foe, Pelagius, who recognized that Augustine's promotion of original sin and predestination were absurd. Augustine wanted Pelagius to be declared a heretic, thereby demeaning the man, since Augustine could not refute Pelagius's arguments. And that is because Pelagius consistently cited the Torah to prove that his assessment was consistent with God's testimony. Noting the fact that Pelagius relied expressly on the testimony of God in the Torah and Prophets, I love his retort to his critic: "Who is Augustine to me?"

Returning to Orosius, he was also extraordinarily influential, especially as a result of his book *History Against the Pagans* – an ironic title considering Christianity is a syncretistic blend of many pagan beliefs. And yet Orosius believed that Christianity's three persona Trinity was monotheistic while the Towrah's proclamation that Yahowah, Yisra'el's God was one, was somehow pagan, and needed to be corrected. As a result, he found utter futility trying to convert Jews to Christianity. The purpose of the book was to claim that the world had improved because the introduction of Christianity had replaced the villainous nature of Jews and Judaism. He contrasted Rome's initial decadence with what it

had become, Christian, odd since it was never worse than at the time of Orosius's writing. Rome was sacked by the Visigoths led by Alaric in 410 CE. But neither truth nor reason have ever been popular among those advancing Christian myths.

The ground we are currently tilling is the soil in which Christianity was planted and took root. It explains, in part, the mindset of the Romans and Greeks, as well as the Church which emerged from them. Everything associated with Yahowah, His Towrah, His Covenant, His People, and His Land was rejected and despised. Christianity was born out of animosity and it grew adverse. If this review of Roman history accomplishes nothing more than explaining why Christianity is so overtly hostile to everything God cherishes, then for that reason alone, this long march through human depravity has been worth our time.

Turning to another Roman and Christian apologist to assess the situation circa 115 CE, we find Dio Cassius, who also was prone to revisionism and exaggeration, claiming: “Meanwhile the Jews in the region of Cyrene had put one Andreas at their head and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would cook their flesh, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood, and wear their skins for clothing. Many they sawed in two, from the head downwards. Others they would give to wild beasts and force still others to fight as gladiators. In all, consequently, two hundred and twenty thousand perished. In Egypt, also, they performed many similar deeds, and in Cyprus under the leadership of Artemio. There, likewise, two hundred and forty thousand perished. For this reason no Jew may set foot in that land, but even if one of them is driven upon the island by force of the wind, he is put to death. Various persons took part in subduing these Jews, one being Lusius, who was sent by Trajan.” (*Dio's Rome*, Volume V, Book 68, paragraph 32) Some small portion of this is accurate, but the preponderance of it is not, including all of the most demonizing accusations.

But we cannot simply dismiss this racist rant as irresponsible hyperbole from an isolated individual. Cassius Dio was an insider and elitist. He was the son of a Roman Senator. He became a Byzantine Consul – the highest elective and appointed office in the Empire. He was born as Lucius in Nicaea in 155 CE, not long after the obliteration of the Promised Land. He was directly related to Dio Chrysostom, the famed Greek philosopher. And as a Nicaean, he was heavily influenced by the Council of Nicaea where Christianity became pagan and grew out of the Gnosticism and the cult of Dionysus. Further, he was a contemporary and compatriot of Theodosius – a name that will soon loom large in the imposition of Christianity. His historical musings, while often mythological and fanciful, were hardly trivial. Over the course of twenty-two years he composed eighty books detailing the history of Rome, from its legendary founding in 756 BCE up until 229 CE. So while his voice is shrill, while he is prone to revisionist

history, while he is a Christian propagandist, and while he is a raging anti-Semite, his views reflect the prevailing view from Constantinople circa 200 CE.

There is evidence, however, that rebellious Jews molested the tomb of Pompey, a crime which elicited a strong and vicious response from Trajan. And in Cyprus, Jews actually took control of the island and may have killed several thousand of the Greeks and Romans who were oppressing them. But as a result, Trajan dispatched an army to crush the rebellion, and thereafter, laws were passed forbidding any Jews to live in Cyprus.

While Trajan was busy creating a name for himself by conquering Nisibis, the capital of Edessa in today's Turkey, and then Seleucia on the Tigris in today's Iraq, his very presence was sufficient to irritate the large Jewish populations still living there as exiles. And as it would transpire, in the summer of 117 CE Trajan suffered heatstroke and died after a long and grandiose speech delineating his accomplishments.

Trajan was replaced at the head of the Beast by Aelia Hadrian sometime in 118 CE. This action was not without effect. Hadrian demoted Lusius Quietus, later executing him, because he had been too soft of the Jews. And wanting to resolve that issue for all time, Hadrian began planning a final solution. But to accomplish his objective, he would need to gather resources and eliminate distractions. To that end, he withdrew his troops from Mesopotamia and garrisoned Legio VI Ferrata in Caesarea, a harbor town on the Mediterranean coast in northern Judea.

And while that was no doubt irritating and indeed fearsome and foreboding, it was insufficient. A grand deception would be required to entice wandering Jews back into the land from which they had been expelled. So just as a hunter lures his prey into his trap, Hadrian publicly appeared sympathetic to Jews. He encouraged them to return home to Jerusalem with the promise that they would be allowed to rebuild the Temple his predecessors so hastily destroyed. What's worse, Jews believed him.

But as the expectations of the returning Yisra'elites rose, and as they busied themselves with plans to rebuild the Temple, Publius Aelia Hadrianus Augustus sprung his trap. He arrived on the Temple Mount and announced his intentions, which was to rebuild Yaruwshalaim as a Roman city named in his honor: Aelia Capitolina – making it a Shrine to Hadrian. His vision for the holy city would make it a vacation home for Legionaries, a place where pagan deities could be celebrated. He had already laid out its broad avenues and urban grid in Roman style, replete with piazzas, forums, and baths. In addition to announcing that Aelia Hadrian was god, there would be lesser shrines built for regional deities and other grand Capitolina for the Trinity of the Roman pantheon, Jupiter, Juno, and

Minerva. Upon the Temple Mount a grand Temple would be constructed for the Best and Greatest Jupiter Capitolina. The goddess Venus would be similarly honored, with her temple situated so strategically, it would later become the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

With his plan revealed, and Jews now clustered in one place, Hadrian knew what would follow. They would riot and he would respond by crushing them. Aelia Hadrianus was playing with Jews like a conductor leads his orchestra – but this time the gestures, the notes, and the instruments would all be sour.

The intended consequence of Hadrian's final solution was the Third Roman War against Judea – a time when every city in Yisra'el would be laid waste, when over half a million Yisra'elites would be killed, and when virtually every survivor would be dispersed, sold in the Roman slave markets. The Promised Land would be completely depopulated. For eighteen long centuries, the Roman assault on Yahuwah remained the most horrific genocide ever perpetrated against a nation or race. And all the while the Jews were baited into being victims by a depraved man at the helm of a ruthless empire.

The battle was waged over religion and politics, over military power and economic oppression. The spark, as previously mentioned, that ignited the Great Jewish Revolt was Aelia Hadrian's visit to the Temple Mount in 130 CE when he disclosed that the city would become a shrine to himself with a temple to Jupiter erected where Yahowah's Home once stood. To mark the occasion, Rome minted a coin inscribed "Aelia Capitolina" in 132 CE, just as the people's indignation boiled over.

The Jewish reaction was predictable, immediate, and obviously adverse. But Aelia Hadrian was ready, having brought a second Legion, the VI Ferrata, into the Province of Ieuda.

Then in early 131 CE, as work commenced on the shrine to Roman ego, Senator Tineius Rufus presided over the foundation ceremony for Aelia Capitolina. He thereby officially announced the decision to rename, reshape, and repurpose Yaruwshalaim to serve the Roman Empire rather than Yahowah's Children. The perverse lie that was Rome would be placed directly on top of the place where Yahowah's testimony had been manifest to the world. In this way, it would be a dress rehearsal for Christianity. It would also serve as a model Muslims would follow.

But there was more to Tineius Rufus than just master of ceremonies. He was a sexual pervert who found great pleasure in raping Jewish women. And he, like so many other Romans, was sadistic and anti-Semitic. I suspect Hadrian knew this, which is why he was appointed.

Desecrating Jewish women, Yaruwshalaim, and the Temple in this way was offensive, especially to rabbinical Jews. But the Roman Emperor wasn't done yanking their chain. Demonstrating his animosity toward Yahowah and His Covenant, Hadrian, a Hellenist, abolished circumcision – effectively nullifying God's family and the means to salvation. Greeks and Romans, like the Babylonians and Persians before them, considered the rest of the world inferior. But because Yisra'elites knew that they were God's Chosen People, they were unwilling to bow before their pervasive prejudice. Therefore, their every peculiarity, and especially circumcision, was viewed as a barbaric. And since Romans and Greeks were typically bisexual lustful libertines fixated and enamored with the male genitalia, they considered circumcision a form of mutilation. This then explains in part why, Paul, a Roman speaking to Greeks, was so opposed to it. Most Romans and Greeks agreed with him.

At the time, and on the opposing side, a man most probably on God's top ten most despised list, Rabbi Akiba, promoted the myth that a local thug, Simon Bar Kosiba, whom he renamed Bar Kokhba ("Son of a Star" in Aramaic), was *ha Mashiach*. It made sense to some because the coming year, 133 CE, would be a Yowbel, this one within a century of Year 4000 Yah. And during the Yowbel, slaves are freed and land is returned.

Unfortunately, like most things in Rabbinic Judaism, Akiba's assertion regarding Bar Kokhba was as phony as his name. But truth seldom if ever matters to the proponents of religion, so Akiba saw to it that Jews either accepted his declaration or die – an unconscionable admission for the many Yahuwdaym who were now part of the Covenant as a result of Yahowsha's fulfillment of its *Towrah* and *Miqra'ey*. Those who had actually come to know the Ma'aseyah were persecuted mercilessly when they refused to accept the Akiba's religious lie. So once again Yisra'el was a house divided.

Rabbinic lore portrays Shimon Bar-Kokhba capturing scores of Roman forts and nearly one thousand undefended villages, including Jerusalem. Impressed with himself, especially after some initial success, Simon Bar Kokhba began referring to himself as "*Nasi Yisra'el* – the Prince of Israel." This declaration was hauntingly similar to Adolf Hitler's "*der Fuehrer* – the Leader" moniker. The newly coined Prince minted shekels showing his star above a façade of the Temple. His currency proudly proclaimed: "The Era of the Redemption of Israel."

But Hadrian wasn't impressed. He simply recalled General Sextus Julius Severus from Britain and gathered troops from as far away as the Danube, from Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Macedonia. Reinforcements would also come from Egypt, Syria, and Britain. It would become the largest army ever assembled in the history

of the Roman Empire – a total of twelve Legions. Hadrian's plan to exterminate the Jews was playing out with Roman precision.

Predictable as ever, General Severus surrounded Jewish towns and withheld food. When the people were too weak to fight effectively, he attacked. This cruel strategy played out for three years before the rabbinical revolt was finally crushed in the summer of 135 CE. One by one, Rome antagonized, starved, assaulted, captured, and then eradicated every village, town, and city in Judea and then Israel.

In spite of Severus's strategy of weakening his foe before killing him, when people have nothing to lose, when their enemy becomes inhuman, even when wielding farm paraphernalia and kitchen utensils, they become deadly. So great was the resulting carnage, Rome was forced to disband the XXII Diotariana Legion due to its irrecoverable losses. The Legio IX Hispana was also dismissed immediately after the war – and never heard from again.

Bar Kokhba's last stand occurred at Bethar. It served as his headquarters, the home of the Sanhedrin, and a strategic fort, situated on a mountain ridge overlooking the Sorek Valley. The Fifth Macedonian Legion and the Eleventh Claudian coordinated the siege – killing everyone. According to the Talmud, "the Romans went on killing until their horses were submerged in blood to their nostrils." So enraged were the Romans, they wouldn't even allow the bodies of Jews to be buried for six days, and some say six months. This defeat fell on the 9th of Ab, a fast day for rabbinical Jews who were commemorating the day Rome had destroyed the Temple in 70 CE.

Cassius Dio, neither a friend of the Jews nor of the truth, wrote: "580,000 Jews were killed, fifty fortified towns were destroyed, and 985 villages were razed to the ground." A Rabbinic Midrash states that in addition to Bar Kokhba, the Romans executed the ten most senior members of the Sanhedrin, including the High Priest. The Rabbinic account details agonizing tortures, with Rabbi Akiba being flayed alive. Rabbi Ishmael had the skin on his face pulled off slowly over time. Rabbi Hanania was burned alive with a dampened Torah scroll wrapped around his body to prolong his agony.

Hadrian subsequently imposed policies that made Judaism illegal, prohibiting the practice of the Jewish faith anywhere in the Roman Empire. In addition, the Roman Emperor outlawed the Torah, making its Shabat, its calendar, and its seven appointed meetings illegal – as remained the case with circumcision. Every Torah scroll found in Yisra'el was burned upon the Temple Mount. All Hebrew scholars were executed. Hadrian had achieved what he had sought to accomplish.

At the site of the Temple, the Roman Emperor erected two massive statues, one of himself and the other of Jupiter. Jerusalem would become as he had

envisioned, the pagan polis of Aelia Capitolina. Jews were forbidden entry – except on Tisha B’Ab – the date which commemorates the destruction of the Temple at the hands of Romans. Then to erase any memory of Judea or Israel, Aelia Hadrian wiped both names off of every map, replacing them with the name of an ancient, albeit long extinct foe, Palestina, for the Philistines. To further add insult to injury, he salted the land.

As for the man who would be god, the man whose ambitions ignited the war that he then ruthlessly prosecuted, he died in 138 CE. As for the rabbis that foisted the debilitating religious deception upon their own people, they were executed. But even in opposition to one another, collectively they brought either death or enslavement to most every Jew. The few who were able to freely flee from the carnage moved to Babylon. There they came to accept Babylonian religious customs. They allied themselves with the Persians and then wrote the Babylonian Talmud in the heart of the Beast. As a result, Judaism would become as Babylonian as Christianity.

As an interesting and relevant aside, centuries removed from this day in 614 CE, after contributing to the Islam’s Qur’an, after being savaged by Muhammad and the first Muslims, amoral Jews joined the Devil’s brigade, and along with Persian Muslims attacked the Byzantine garrison in Jerusalem. Their return, however, would be short lived. They would surrender to Byzantine forces in 625 CE and were summarily massacred four years later. A dozen years thereafter, in 637 CE, Arab Muslims under the command of Umar ibn al-Khattab devastated the Byzantines, claiming Yisra’el for Islam.

It remained the Promised Land, but there were no Chosen People. It was a fight to the death over religion, with God opposed to both sides.

Inexplicably, rather than renouncing him for promoting a lie that cost the Yisra’elites everything, their freedom, their lives, and their land, Rabbi Akiba grew to become the father of Rabbinic Judaism – the most revered man in the only surviving form of the religion. Bar Kokhba, who embodied his lie, became a symbol of valiant national resistance when he should have become the poster child for false hope. His star, not David’s, remains the symbol of the state.

Before we move on, recognizing how disorienting carnage and duplicity of this magnitude can be, I’d like to reestablish our bearing. Two Yowbel and two years prior to this historic date, Yahowah through Yahowsha’ had affirmed the promises He had made in His Towrah to liberate His children and give them life. And yet now under the influence of Rome, His Torah was outlawed and His people were either dead or enslaved. Four score and four years prior to this infamous occasion, Paul, a Roman citizen and rabbi, the author of half of the Christian New Testament, would denounce Yahowah’s Towrah, claiming that it

enslaved and could not save. And three score and three years prior to the culmination of ancient history's most diabolical plot and subsequent crime, the Roman Empire had initiated it all by a brazen act of common thievery – by robbing the Temple treasury. Rome and the Beast that lives within her sought to claim that which belongs to Yahowah, fulfilling, albeit temporarily, Satan's ultimate objective. In reality, that is all this story has been about – right from the very beginning.

It should also be duly noted and specifically reinforced, Rome's final conquest occurred between the two wars the Empire fought against Yisra'el. From this point, the Beast would only fight to delay the inevitable. Rome was dying – although its death would play out over another nineteen centuries. Its wound was self-inflicted. It had become the implement of Satan and the plague of death – literally.

—*—

As we have done in the past, let's review the life of Aelia Hadrian. He sat upon the Beast's throne at age forty and remained for twenty years. He rebuilt the Pantheon – the universal home of Rome's pagan gods. He served as the architect and then arranged for the construction of the Temple of Venus and Eternal Rome, erecting Rome's second most imposing building between the Forum and Coliseum. This tribute to the Everlasting and Divine Fortune of Rome was set upon the porticoed vestibule of Emperor Nero's *Domus Aurea*, requiring him to move the Colossus of Nero which was modified to become the Colossus of Sol. Later repurposed by Pope Honorius, and with the consent of Emperor Heraclius, the gilt-bronze tiles from the roof of the Temple were used to adorn the roof of St. Peter's Cathedral. The building itself was transformed into the church of the New Saint Mary, with the columns of the pagan temple still visible and dominant in the rear. Since the papacy of Saint John Paul II, the Temple has been used as a platform for large public addresses, especially on Good Friday, when a cross is carried by the pope from the Temple to the Coliseum. And so it is with every stroke, the Beast of Empire and Church become one.

As will be the case with the Towrahless One, Hadrian is regarded as a humanist – as a man who celebrated the works of men. In this regard he was also a Philhellenist – a lover of Greek culture and philosophy. Hadrian actually established an extensive and enduring Greek religious cult in Rome and served as its leading evangelist. His first tour of Greece as a Roman Emperor was climaxed by his participation in 124 CE in the Eleusinian Mysteries where he, himself, was initiated. Less than a year later, during Easter week in March 125 CE, Hadrian

presided over the Festival of Dionysia to honor the god Dionysus, the deity upon which the Christian caricature of Jesus Christ was fashioned. This makes it all the more intriguing that Paul, a Roman himself, quoted Dionysus's most famous line during his conversion experience seventy-five years earlier.

The Festival of Dionysia was held over four days approaching the full moon in the midst of the lunar month nearest the spring equinox. It is thereby the inspiration of the Catholic Holy Week celebration associated with Easter this exact same time of year. The first day of the Festival, statues of Dionysus, who was believed to be the Son of the Sun, were brought into Athens. Once they arrived in the Theatre of Dionysus on the southern slope of the Acropolis, this god in the image of a man was rejected, with Dionysus being severely punished, mirroring the Christian Good Friday. This is said to have plagued the male genitalia, which was then cleansed and cured, saving the people when the preponderance of the population accepted Dionysus and joined his cult by splashing holy water. This was a symbolic counterfeit for circumcision, the sign of the Covenant, which Christian's replaced with baptism.

The faithful pagans acknowledged their devotion by marching in the streets carrying a phallus on poles, a rite also associated with Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods. Chorus leaders in the most expensive and ornate robes carried holy water and wine in the procession. Bulls, the symbol of the sun, were sacrificed.

In the Eleusinian Mysteries, Dionysus, who was known to Romans as Bacchus, was called the "Liberator" who "frees his faithful from fear and from the oppressive restraints of the laws imposed by the most powerful. This then became synonymous with "Jesus" freeing Christians from the Law through the Gospel of Grace.

Those who partook in his mysteries were believed to be possessed and empowered by the god, himself, which is why the faith was called the "Cult of Souls." His devotees were restored to life by feeding on bread representing his dead flesh and by drinking wine, symbolizing his blood during a divine communion – effectively establishing the tradition upon which the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Eucharist would be based.

Dionysus was the son of Zeus, the Father of the gods. But he had a mortal mother Semele, who thereby served as the model for the Roman Catholic devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. This illicit divine – mortal affair conceived a human being who was also considered to be the Son of God. His birth was celebrated by bringing trees into homes during the winter solstice, then December 25th, thereby establishing the timing and tradition of Christmas. In addition to his birth, his death and resurrection were worshipped in many mystery religions and held great mystical significance. In another parallel, Dionysus appears before

King Pentheus on charges of claiming divinity, which is comparable to “Jesus” being tried on the same claim before Pontius Pilate. And in Rome, Dionysus is celebrated bringing an end to the Law, freeing the faithful from its restraints.

Nietzsche claimed that the oldest forms of Greek Tragedy were entirely based upon the suffering of Dionysus. And the Roman form, Bacchus, appears in C.S. Lewis’s Prince Caspian, which as part of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, is supposedly a story celebrating the Christian Christ.

Speaking of scholars and theologians, the author of *The Prince*, Machiavelli, who was the patron of papal supremacy and strategy, placed Hadrian among Rome’s five greatest Emperors. British historian Edward Gibbon agreed, and wrote in 1776 that Hadrian’s “vast genius, equity, and moderation” created the “happiest era of human history.” Methinks, God disagrees.

But no one disagrees with the fact that Emperor Hadrian, like today’s Popes, wielded absolute power. He spoke for Rome and the Gods. His edicts could not be questioned. Additionally, Hadrian served as supreme commander of the military state. He most always dressed for appearances, creating the illusion of being a great General by wearing his elaborate military uniform. He, like today’s Pope, was never seen in civilian attire.

Hadrian’s father was of Patrician rank and a Senator. As a young man, he began public life as the Tribune (an officer considered sacrosanct, prohibiting any assault on their person) of Legio II Adiutrix – Second Rescuer Legion, which was levied by Vespasian from naval marines. He was transferred to Legio I Minervia when the First Army Devoted to the Goddess Minerva was stationed in Germania. Then upon Emperor Nerva’s death, Hadrian was appointed Legate of a Legion in Pannonia, eventually becoming Governor of the Province. And prior to becoming the Legatus of Syria and Emperor of Rome in 117 CE, as Archon / Lord and Ruler of Athens, he accepted Athenian citizenship.

It is interesting that at the time Trajan became gravely ill after his long speech embellishing his resume, Hadrian, who had served with him during the expedition against Parthia, had not been adopted as Trajan’s heir. And the fact that the document finally adopting him was signed by Plotina, Trajan’s widow, the evidence suggests that Trajan was dead before his contrived inheritance affirmed. But it didn’t matter because Hadrian quickly secured the support of the Legions, and the Senate’s endorsement quickly followed.

Hadrian, however, initially shied away from Rome, preferring to busy himself with admiring the Greek religion and eradicating Jews. And before returning to the capital, in typical Roman fashion, Hadrian charged anyone loyal to Trajan with conspiracy, hunting them down and killing them.

Apart from his obsession with obliterating Yahuwdah and Yisra'el, Hadrian wasn't much of a fighter. He surrendered his predecessor's conquests of Mesopotamia, claiming that the territory was indefensible. He used diplomacy rather than the military with Parthia. He built the massive wall in Britain and others near the Danube and the Rhine to separate the barbarians from the Romans. He maintained peace through these divisions and through the constant threat of war. The extinct Province of Iudaea served as Example A.

As will be the case with the Towrahless One, as is the case with the Roman priesthood, Emperor Hadrian's his closest and most enduring sexual relationship was with Antinous, a beautiful Greek boy. Upon his death from drowning, Hadrian "wept like a woman." At his request, "the Greeks deified Antinous, and henceforth spoke oracles through him that were composed by Hadrian, himself." The sullen Emperor even founded the Egyptian city of Antinopolis in his memory. The resulting Cult of Antinous at Hadrian's direction became extremely popular in Greece, Egypt, and Rome, serving as the means to unify the religions, cultures, and politics, synchronizing these things with Roman authority. It was an act that would foreshadow the development of Christianity.

Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli included a sacred Alexandrian garden which was then repurposed by Roman Catholic Cardinal d'Este to erect his Villa d'Este, replete with its Tivoli Fountains. And while Hadrian considered himself to be a great architect, the leading designer of the day, Apollodorus criticized his sense of proportions. In response, Hadrian had him exiled and then executed. And as was the case with Nimrod, Hadrian fancied himself a great hunter. He established cities in places that he or Antinous claimed bears and lions.

Prior to his death, Hadrian designed the largest mausoleum in Rome for himself – a building that was later transformed into a papal fortress: Castel Saint Angelo. Atop his grandiose tomb, Hadrian had a statue of himself erected driving a four-horse chariot that was so enormous, it not only dwarfed those offering tribute, each horse's eye was bigger than the largest man. So each time we investigate the character of the men who shaped the Beast, we come to see the personality of the Beast that will shape the Tribulation.

With the ongoing war against Parthia continuing apace, and commanding Rome's attention from 161 to 166 CE, something happened that changed the course of history. Marcus Aurelius's returning troops caught the plague. Soon thereafter, the army infected the heart of the Beast with a deadly pandemic. Five million Romans would die as a consequence, crippling the Empire.

At the same time, great migrations were occurring throughout occupied Europe, with the Goths moving westwards and into land foraged by the Germanic tribes. Against this backdrop, six-thousand Langobardi and Lacingi invaded

Pannonia, and while their advance was checked by the Legio I Adiutrix, the encounter marked the beginning of the end. The military governor of Pannonia, Marcus Iallius Bassus was forced to negotiate with eleven Germanic tribes in hopes of maintaining some semblance of control. But, the Marcomannic King Ballomar, a Roman client, acting as mediator, was unable to reach an accord. Then as Bassus had feared and anticipated, the Vandals and the Sarmatian invaded Dacia, killing the Roman governor. The Legio V Macedonica was moved to Dacia so that it would be closer to this rising menace to Roman supremacy.

Marcus Aurelius, being a good Roman, which made him a bad person, wanted to lead a punitive expedition against the Vandals, but the plague his army had contracted was ravaging his military, causing him to postpone his vengeance. Then, beginning in 166 CE and continuing through 180, the previously mentioned Marcomannic King, Ballomar, asserted his dominance against his former benefactor.

With all of these pieces in play, in the spring of 168, Marcus Aurelius established a headquarters at Aquileia and supervised the defense of Italian Peninsula. He raised two new legions, the II and III Italica, and crossed the Alps into Pannonia. By the autumn of the following year, Aurelius and his son were ready to subdue barbarians of all shapes and shades. But the tribes they were pursuing weren't staying put, and in fact were moving in their direction. The Costoboci crossed the Danube and plundered Thrace. They would reach Eleusis, near Athens, destroying the Temple of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Meanwhile, the Marcomanni, as part of a confederation of Germanic tribes, were maneuvering in the west. They crossed the Danube as well, winning a decisive victory over a force of twenty-thousand Roman soldiers near Opitergium. Next, they set siege to Marcus Aurelius's headquarters in Aquileia. It would be the first time that hostile forces had invaded Italy since 101 BCE.

It should be noted that these Germanic tribes were called barbarians by the Empire that embodied the concept. But there is no indication that they were any more savage than the Beast menacing them. Also relevant, the Marcomanni were liberated, and thus able to rebel as a direct result of Rome removing so many of its Legions from the Danube and the Balkans into Judea to annihilate Jews.

Faced with so many foes, Marcus Aurelius had to re-establish Rome's priorities, withdrawing forces from the frontier to protect Italy. And while by 171 CE, many of the most recent invaders had been evicted, Rome's attempts at diplomacy continued to flounder. They had earned a bad reputation for not honoring their agreements. The Quadi wouldn't comply, nor would the Varistae, nor Naristi. It got so bad, that in one battle when the Legio XII Fulminata was hemmed in by a superior Germanic force, and were dying of thirst, a thunderstorm was required to save them. The aforementioned Cassius Dio would

call it “divine intervention, saying: “the rain started as a result of an Egyptian magician praying to Mercury.” Tertullian attributed the rain to Christian prayer. Both were wrong.

And speaking of wrong, each time Rome defeated a foe, they forced their victim to surrender their sons to fight as slaves in the Roman military. After subduing the indigenous people living in the plain along the Tisza River, Marcus Aurelius required that their king forfeit one hundred thousand young men to serve in Rome’s infantry and another eight thousand to serve in the cavalry.

With his new recruits, Aurelius marched eastward to suppress the rebellion of Avidius Cassius. And while he was successful, Rome was running out of fingers to plug leaks in the dam. And the respite was brief. By 177 CE, the Quadi rose up against Roman oppression a third time, now motivating the Marcomanni to ally with them. Marcus Aurelius jumped upon his horse and galloped north once again. And once again, Rome prevailed, chasing the Quadi westwards and deeper into Germania, but Aurelius would not survive to celebrate.

Aurelius’s successor, Commodus, didn’t have much of a taste for war. He was a diplomat. So against the advice of his generals, he negotiated a lasting peace with the Marcomanni and the Quadi, and left for Rome. Even though he had decided not to fight, he arranged for a Triumph to be celebrated in his honor in the fall of 180 CE. He was the new “Germanicus Maximus.”

But Rome was now vulnerable and knew it. Sixteen of her thirty-three Legions were currently stationed along the Danube and Rhine Rivers – along the frontier. But the Legions were ineffective in stopping mass migration into northern Italy. Even when Rome banned settlers, who they referred to as “barbarians,” Germans kept coming.

The Battle of Cyzicus followed in 193 CE, but this fight wasn’t to hold barbarians at bay. It was between Roman rivals, the forces of Septimius Severus and his competitor for the throne, Pescennius Niger. It would be the Year of the Five Emperors, a tumultuous period in Roman history. It began when the Praetorian Guards assassinated Emperor Pertinax. While not very good at providing protection, these aspiring entrepreneurs held an auction for the throne of Rome. Didius Julianus was high bidder and became Emperor. But not everyone bought into the idea of an auction, and Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger, the military governors of Syria and Britain decided to settle the dispute the old-fashioned way – through civil war. Severus marched to Rome where Didius capitulated and was decapitated. Then he turned to cross swords with Niger in Asia Minor, defeating him, also.

But since once was never enough, in the Battle of Nicaea, Severus attacked his rival Niger once more, defeating him a second time at Issus in 194 CE. That

was interesting because the battlefield was where Alexander the Great defeated the Persian King Darius in 332 BCE. Severus's strategy was quite different than his predecessors. He kidnapped the wives and children of neutral parties, motivating them to play along with him to earn their release. Niger, of course, was captured and executed.

Then to close out the second century, in the Battle of Lyon, France in 197 CE, the newly minted Emperor Severus caught up with Clodius Albinus, a usurper for the throne, and former ally of Severus. The propagandists tell us that it was the "largest, most hard fought, and bloodiest of all clashes between Roman forces." Our resident anti-Semite and exaggerator extraordinaire, places the number of combatants at three-hundred thousand – farfetched because that would represent most all of Rome's soldiers at the time. What appears likely is that Albinus took three Legions from Britannia to Gaul, meeting another there, the Legio VII Gemina. Severus was in command of the Danubian and German Legions. Albinus struck first, defeating the Germanic slaves, but not decisively enough to trot into Rome for a Triumph. So these former allies engaged again, with Severus appearing to prevail. Albinus withdrew but was pursued and ultimately crushed. Albinus was stripped and beheaded by Severus, who to the delight of his troops, ran back and forth over his naked body with his horse. Albinus's head was then sent to Rome, where it was probably mounted in Severus's trophy room.

١٧٧

By 210 CE, the Romans and Parthians were back at each other's throats. The dispute occurred because Emperor Caracalla, who considered himself the living incarnation of Alexander the Great, decided to take advantage of an internal dispute between rival monarchs. He proposed an alliance to Artabanus, even offering to marry his daughter. So then when the alliance was agreed upon, Caracalla entered Mesopotamia unopposed, ostensibly to break bread with his new ally and to meet and marry his new wife. But when Caracalla entered the Parthian palace, he attacked and slew the king's court. While Artabanus escaped, the Romans freely plundered the lands east of the Tigris before returning to Edessa for the winter.

However, the treacherous Roman schemer fell victim to a plot by his Praetorian Prefect and was murdered in April 217 CE. Macrinus, who most likely orchestrated his murder, was immediately pronounced Emperor by his Legions, and would now have to deal with the irate foe his predecessor had created. So with Artabanus approaching with a massive army and looking for revenge, Macrinus was in a pickle. He then did something few if any Romans have ever

done. He told the truth: “You see the barbarian with his whole Eastern horde already upon us, and Artabanus seems to have good reason for his enmity. We provoked him by breaking the treaty, and in a time of complete peace we started a war.... This is no quarrel about boundaries or river beds; everything is at stake in this dispute in which we face a mighty king fighting for his children and kinsmen who, he believes, have been murdered in violation of solemn oaths.”

After the pep talk, Macrinus, having no military experience, and wanting to avoid conflict, tried to placate Artabanus. When that failed, he tried to reach an accommodation. But Artabanus wanted the Romans to pay to rebuild the towns they had destroyed and plundered, and he wanted them out of his hair – the cession of all Roman provinces in northern Mesopotamia. What seemed at the moment too expensive in money and prestige to surrender, soon appeared cheap.

The Battle of Nisibis then was waged between Emperor Macrinus and Artabanus IV. The Romans had a more disciplined infantry while the Parthians were better horsemen, and thus more mobile. Artabanus attacked at sunrise, launching a volley of arrows while the heavily armored cavalry, supported by lancers on camels, charged Macrinus’s line. When the Roman line buckled, the Parthians roared in, only to find Roman caltrops littering the battlefield. These four-pronged iron spikes were the landmines of antiquity, destroying the effectiveness of the Parthian cavalry and dromedaries. In the resulting hand-to-hand combat, the Romans held a slight advantage. And yet there were no winners, only death. The adversaries fought to a draw that day and the next. By the third day, the entire plain was covered in corpses piled up in huge mounds.

With his army now on the verge of collapse, Emperor Macrinus sent another envoy to Artabanus, informing him that Caracalla had been killed and that Rome was now ready to reimburse the Parthians for the cities they had razed. Artabanus agreed to peace after receiving two hundred million pieces of silver. The battle would also cost Rome any claims it would ever have against Parthian territory. This was the last major battle between Rome and Parthia, although Rome and Persia would soon rekindle old wounds.

Now broke, Macrinus cut the pay of his legionnaires. So the Legio III Gallica hailed Elagabalus Emperor in May 218, with other Legions following suit. In retaliation, Macrinus dispatched his cavalry with Julianus in command to stem the flow of desertions. But the cavalry killed the Julianus along the way and joined Elagabalus. Even when Macrinus offered to reinstate the original wage and to pay retention bonuses, his offer was considered a day late and a dollar short. Every Legion under his command defected to Elagabalus. Macrinus could not even flee effectively. He shaved his beard and changed his clothes to look like a commoner, but he was recognized by a centurion along the Bosphorus, taken back to Antioch and executed.

The infighting continued. In 238 CE in the Province of Africa, forces loyal to Emperor Maximinus Thrax engaged those commanded by Emperors Gordian I and II – a father and son duo endorsed by the Roman Senate. The conflict arose as a result of the increased taxation imposed on Roman landowners which was required to offset the Parthian concessions. The opposing Roman armies met near Carthage. Gordian II was killed, and his father, learning of his son's death, committed suicide.

But there would be another Gordian, this one the GIII. He arranged a campaign to retake the Roman cities of Hatra, Nisblis, and Carrhae in modern Turkey. His forces were initially successful, but their momentum was halted far short of their objective.

Then in 250 CE, during the Battle of Philippopolis, between the Romans and the Goths, King Cniva prevailed. His success during a previous siege emboldened other oppressed peoples to ally with him, and collectively they attacked and defeated the Roman Emperor Decius in the Thracian city in modern-day Bulgaria.

The following year, they would meet again, this time in Abritus, just west of the Black Sea. The Goth King Cniva, leading a federation of Scythians, shot and killed Emperor Decius's son and co-regent, Herennius Etruscus, during pre-battle maneuvers. And yet his father, addressing his troops, said that the loss of his son was irrelevant: "Let no one mourn. The death of one soldier is not a great loss to the Republic." Thereafter, Cniva outmaneuvered the Romans who marched directly into a swamp and were slaughtered. The defeat was one of the most catastrophic in the history of the Roman Empire. The Emperor and his army were lost in the mud. No one was spared.

In 259 CE, Emperor Valerian was out fighting the Sassanid Empire, which along with the Goths, had sacked the Province of Thrace and were plundering Asia Minor. Unable to protect Rome's borders, Valerian appointed his son, Gallienus, co-Emperor. As bad as the situation was becoming in the east, it was worse in the western half of the crumbling Empire. Apparently "barbarians" don't much like being abused, starved, or oppressed. Germanic tribes led by the Alamanni, living between the Rhine and Danube Rivers, had crossed the Alpine steps and claimed the harvest from the fertile farmland along the Po River. Since the Po flows eastward across northern Italy, through cities like Turin and Milan and into a delta near Venice, and since the federation of Germanic tribes were in a foul mood and had sacked the region, Rome, knowing that it was defenseless, was terrorized.

At the same time the Romans were discovering that armies comprised of disgruntled slaves, forced conscripts, and mercenaries can be a little twitchy. As the young Gallienus marched towards Dacia and Moesia to confront unrest in the

Balkans, the Legions of Moesia and neighboring Pannonia rebelled and decided to ally with Ingenuus, declaring him Emperor. So after battling his own army, and subduing Ingenuus, Gallienus turned to intercept the Alamanni and associated Germanic barbarians in northern Italy. He was in command of the I Adiutrix, the II Italica, and the II Parthica Legions.

Simultaneously, Romans were beginning to realize that dispersing their military to protect the borders of the Empire was a risky proposition. Especially since the oppressed inhabitants within the Empire were now a far more present and menacing danger. So to protect themselves against the righteous indignation of those they had subjugated, the Roman Senate hastily conscripted Plebeians, the lowest ranking Roman citizens, into the army. Patriotism and self-preservation aside, fighting might have had some appeal to them because the only way to climb up the Roman caste system was to be adopted into Noble Household or to achieve one of the three highest military awards. Recognizing the need for a pep talk, and thereby patting their pawns on their backs, the Senate proclaimed: "You are not a lowly peasant. You are a citizen of Rome, and you must never bend a knee in supplication to either lords or gods." That was funny in a way. Every Roman was required to bow to the Patrician Lords who as Emperors claimed to be Gods.

When Gallienus reached the Po Valley, the Alamanni were camped around Milan. Catching them off guard, the victory was resounding, with three-hundred thousand German barbarians dying in a single day. For anything even approaching this level of massacre to occur, particularly at the hands of three relatively novice Legions, the overwhelming preponderance of the people killed were non-combatants: women, children, and the elderly. And yet for his act of wonton depravity, Gallienus was declared Germanicus Maximus. It was nothing more than propaganda borne out of a desperate sense of patriotism, whereby the military, no matter how counterproductive, was presented as protecting the public.

Ending any pretence that Rome was a republic, upon his return, Emperor Gallienus disbanded the Senate's guardian plebs. Dictators are typically paranoid, making them uncomfortable with any potential threat to their authority, real or imagined. At the same time, he began building a wall around Rome.

Meanwhile, in 260 CE, Emperor Gallienus's father, Emperor Valerian, was fighting the Sassanids under Shahanshah ("Shah of Shahs or King of Kings") Shapur. It did not go well. His army was defeated and captured by the Persian forces. For the first time in Roman history, the Empire's Emperor was taken hostage.

Prior to the battle, Shapur had successfully penetrated Roman territory, conquering and plundering Antioch in Syria. Valerian was gradually able to

restore Roman order, but there were too many challenges. A Gothic naval invasion ravaged Pontus and was poised to plunder Cappadocia. And there was nothing Emperor Valerian could do to stop them. Plague was once again debilitating the Roman military. And against this backdrop, the Shah of Shahs invaded northern Mesopotamia.

Plague or no plague, and perhaps believing the patriotic propaganda, the sixty-year-old Emperor marched eastward toward King Shapur, meeting his army between Carrhae and Edessa, in modern-day Turkey. There are no Roman sources to tell us what happened because the entire Roman army was lost. It appears from Persian historians that Valerian tried to negotiate a truce, but was captured in the process, causing his army to surrender.

The Persian sources also reveal that Shapur sent Valerian along with part of his army to Bishapur, where the Romans may have lived out their lives as free men. The remaining soldiers according to this accounting, were deployed building a dam near Susa. But to be fair, some scholars claim that Shapur humiliated Valerian, using the former Emperor as a human stepping stool when mounting his horse. Then once that got wearisome, he had Valerian's body skinned and stuffed with manure to serve as a macabre trophy.

Following Valerian's capture, the Shah of Shahs raided Cilicia. He was finally rebuffed by Macrianus, Callistus, and Odenathus of Palmyra, commanding a Roman force. Thereafter, Macrianus proclaimed his sons Macrianus and Quietus, co-Emperors. Then while in the Balkans, as we have already discovered, Ingenuus and Regalianus revolted, only to be defeated by an army sent by Gallienus, the son of the captured Emperor Valerian.

In the mounting chaos, Rome occasionally won a battle. Such is the case in 268 CE when an invading Gothic coalition was defeated near Naissus in present-day Serbia. Emperor Aurelian's success on the battlefield suppressed the threat of the Germanic tribes in the Balkans for several decades. But we must be careful. Throughout the troubled third-century, Roman history is muddled and often more myth than reality.

Our primary source is now Zosimus, a Byzantine from the sixth century. He, himself, relied on Dexippus, Eunapius, and Olympiodorus – sources with varying degrees of credibility. Exacerbating this dilemma, Imperial disinformation during Constantine's dynasty contributed to the confusion. The propagandists wanted to attribute all of the calamities occurring during this period to Gallienus to avoid blemishing the legacy of Claudius. The reason becomes obvious once we realize that Constantine claimed to be a descendant of Claudius, not Gallienus.

It was tortured reasoning especially since Gallienus was the first Emperor to issue an edict of tolerance toward Christians, creating forty years of peaceful

coexistence. But as a result of their creative accounting, Roman history was revised to such an extent, it becomes nearly impossible to know what invasions occurred, what battles were fought, and under whose reign they were repulsed.

While it doesn't much matter who fought whom, when, where, or why, Constantine's proven propensity for propaganda and revisionist history ought to send shivers up the spines of Christians. Constantine is the father of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church and his historical portraits are neither consistent nor accurate. The religion of Christianity was comprised and shaped by this man and his clerics – and they consistently wove a web of lies.

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church are the living legacy of Rome that is accused in Dany'el's prophecy of trampling the whole world while giving rise to the Beast. Therefore, this trend toward duplicity is troubling. Moreover, Christianity is based entirely on revisionist history. It is modeled upon religious propaganda designed to popularize a false reality – one which has “Jesus Christ” emerging out of the pagan legacy of Dionysus. This is one of many reasons the text of the Christian New Testament was manipulated, becoming unreliable.

Returning to the lore of Rome as seen through Constantine's jaundiced eyes, we find that the Battle of Naissus was the result of two massive invasions by Scythian / Iranian tribes (more likely Goths) between 267 and 269 CE. The first wave approached during the reign of Gallienus, when the Heruli sailing five-hundred ships ravaged the southern coast of the Black Sea. Somehow faltering at Byzantium (which became Constantinople and then Istanbul) and then at Cyzicus (a city on the southwestern coast of the Sea of Marmara), they were allegedly rebuffed by the Roman navy. They are said to have escaped into the Aegean Sea, where they assaulted the islands of Lemnos and Scyros, sacking cities in southern Greece in the process, including Athens, Corinth, Argos, and Sparta. Saving the day, an Athenian militia led by the historian Dexippus pushed the invaders to the north where they were intercepted in Macedonia by the Roman army under Gallienus.

The propagandists would have us believe that Gallienus subsequently negotiated a truce with the Heruli, but more recent research suggests that the victory Gallienus achieved at Nessos was so overwhelming that Claudius's claims to have ultimately defeated the Goths were contrived. Historians have also learned that after prevailing in Macedonia, Emperor Gallienus left hastily for Italy to suppress an insurrection led by his cavalry officer, Aureolus. But that misadventure did not go as well. Gallienus was assassinated outside of Milan in the summer of 268 CE as part of a plot pursued by his generals. They declared Claudius Emperor and headed to Rome to establish his claim. But Claudius was diverted, as he was thrust into combat against the Alamanni, who were again

provoking northern Italians. After prevailing over them in the Battle of Lake Benacus, he marched back to the Balkans to suppress the incursions occurring there.

All the while, a second and much larger seaborne invasion commenced. The Goths (called Scythians and Iranians by the Constantinian propagandists), led by the Heruli, assembled a force of six-thousand ships and three-hundred thousand men at the mouth of the Tyras River in what is currently called the Ukraine, not far from Odessa and the Crimean Peninsula. And while the numbers are clearly exaggerated, the Goths attacked Byzantium and Chrysopolis (on the southern shore of the Bosphorus Strait). Thereafter, some portion of their fleet was wrecked, either failing to navigate the currents in the Sea of Marmara, or by the Roman navy. The surviving contingent, however, sailed through the Dardanelles Strait and into the Aegean, where they plundered Crete and Rhodes. Then while building siege works to take Thessalonica and Cassandrea, the Goths retreated into the Balkans on rumors that Emperor Claudius was advancing – or so we are told.

Roman legend would then have us believe that this contingency of Goths ran into a Roman army near Naissus in 269 CE. The fiercely contested battle claimed many lives, with the Romans prevailing by feigning retreat. The Goths were ambushed, with some fifty-thousand killed or taken captive. Aurelian, who was in charge of all Roman cavalry during Claudius's reign, implemented the prevailing strategy.

The surviving Goths, who contracted an epidemic plague from the Romans, in their weakened state were harassed and starved, ultimately surrendering. Then as was the Roman custom, the able-bodied men were conscripted into the Roman Legions, where they brought the plague with them, killing Emperor Claudius, who died from it in 270 CE.

After his death, to instill a sense of Roman exceptionalism and to affirm the Empire's manifest destiny, Claudius would be renamed "Claudius Gothicus – Conqueror of the Goths." But in the real world, the Goths had not been conquered. The breakaway faction of Rome known as the Gallic Empire would continue to threaten Rome's Legions, commencing again a year later in 271 CE. It is interesting to note that at its peak, the Gallic Empire was substantial and included Germania, Gaul (France), Britannia, and Hispania (Spain).

With Roman Legions occupied along the Danube keeping the Vandals at bay during the winter of 270, we find the Juthungi tribe seizing the opportunity to invade Italia. Emperor Aurelian, who was in Pannonia chasing after the nomadic Vandals, hastily returned to Italy to defend the region around Milan. When he arrived, he sent the invaders a message, demanding their immediate surrender.

But they now considered themselves freemen and had no interest in returning to Roman servitude. So they fought, surprising the exhausted Roman army near Placentia, defeating them.

Buoyed by their success, the Juthungi moved towards Rome, panicking its defenseless inhabitants. So the Romans turned to their gods for help. According to *Historia Augustus*, the *Sibylline Books* were consulted and religious ceremonies were conducted to illicit the assistance of the Roman deities.

Should you be interested, the *Sibylline Books* were tightly controlled by the Roman Senate, demonstrating that in the Roman Republic and Empire, there were no distinctions between politics and religion. The texts were used to set religious observances, to resolve political disputes, and to preclude military defeats. The script itself was never made available to the public, but like the Roman Catholic Church and its Vulgate, interpretations were conveyed, leaving ample opportunity for abuse.

The *Sibylline Books* had superintendence in the worship of Apollo, the Father of the Gods, the “*Magna Mater* – Great Mother” Cybele, and Ceres (a fertility and harvest goddess who established Plebeian Law). In this way, they are quite similar to the Christian New Testament, which claims to take supremacy over the erroneously named “Old Testament.”

Returning to 271 CE, Emperor Aurelian avenged his loss during the Battle of Fano, defeating the Alamanni as they advanced on Rome. Aurelian was able to pin the Alamanni against the Metaurus River, just inland of Fano. Pressured by the Roman advances, many Juthungi slipped into the River and drowned.

The Juthungi requested peace, but Aurelian rejected their plea for safe passage out of Italy and back home. He was more interested in repairing his now shattered reputation. So Aurelian attacked the retreating Juthungi while they crossed the open plains near Ticinum, slaughtering all remaining survivors. For his victory, Aurelian assumed the title of “*Germanicus Maximus* – the Greatest Victor Over the Germans.”

As the ongoing “Crisis of the Third Century” continued to play out, Rome found itself unable to defend its eastern provinces from the Sassanid invasion. So a Palmyra chief, Septimius Odaenathus, stepped up and improvised an army capable of repelling the Sassanid onslaught. As a result, Gallienus made him a king and protector of the Eastern Empire. After Odaenathus’s death, his wife Queen Zenobia, assumed direct control of the provinces of the Eastern Empire that were under Palmyrian protection. A shrewd diplomat, she convinced many in Asia Minor to recognize her authority, and to view Palmyra as the capital of the Eastern Empire. She then expanded her holdings into Egypt, effectively building a Palmyrene Empire inside of Rome. She did this very cleverly by maintaining the

facade that she was in partnership with Rome, always placing her son in a subordinate position to Aurelian in all official documents and coins.

And that was all well and good, until she connived her way into Egypt, which was considered personal property of the Emperor. So Aurelian viewed her claim as nothing short of a declaration of war against him. Therefore, once Aurelian had his way with the Alamanni, he restored his army to full strength and commenced a campaign into the East to deal with Queen Zenobia in 272 CE, racing toward Antioch.

Realizing that her charade was over, Queen Zenobia, who was ruling through her son, had him declared “Augustus,” and mobilized an army, placing it under the command of General Zabdas. But Aurelian out maneuvered him, turning Zabdas’s superior heavily armored cavalry into a liability in the intense heat. After allowing the Palmyrene cataphracts to gallop through their ranks, the moment they grew weary, the superior infantry of the Romans overwhelmed them, driving Zabdas back to Antioch. Queen Zenobia and General Zabdas withdrew to Emesa during the night. Then fearing Aurelian’s reputation for savage retribution, Antioch surrendered.

Aurelian, of course, pursued the clever Queen to Emesa. And while his cavalry was no match for the Palmyrene cataphracts, Zabdas’s forces were sufficiently dispersed to allow the Roman infantry to carry the day – interesting in that enslaved Judean units armed with clubs turned the tide of the battle in favor of the Romans, slaughtering the Palmyrene horsemen. Also interesting, while Queen Zenobia was ultimately captured, she was not executed. Aurelian was perhaps learning that a nation cannot slaughter people into submission.

Two years later, in 274 CE, during the Battle of Chalons in Champagne, France, Aurelian and Tetricus met to decide the fate of the Gallic Empire after thirteen years of autonomy. Truth be known, infighting among the Gauls had weakened the breakaway entity to the point Tetricus couldn’t have beaten Liechtenstein. Predictably, Tetricus was captured early in the battle, and his army was torn to shreds by Aurelian’s troops. The only distinguishing aspect of the battle was the high death toll.

Then in 285 CE, we find Roman Emperors squaring off against one another yet again. On this occasion it was Diocletian v. Carinus. They were in the Margus River Valley in today’s Serbia, and therefore playing army in the Balkans. Carinus owned more soldiers, but having abused them, they were less reliable. Carinus had also made a lifetime of enemies, forcing Senator’s wives into his lair to satiate his twisted desires while also seducing the wives of his senior officers. So it wasn’t much of a fight. Emperor Carinus was killed during the battle by his own troops.

This placed Diocletian in sole control of the Empire. He was unique among Roman Emperors, in that he was born of lowly status and had worked his way up the cast system by being in the right place at the right time. He was Emperor Carus's cavalry commander at the time the Carus and his son, Numerian, were both killed sparing with the Persians. The Legions declared Diocletian Emperor, solely because he was the highest-ranking surviving officer. But there was a rival. Carinus was also one of Carus's sons, so when Diocletian attacked him, he was revealing a deeply flawed character.

Diocletian humble beginnings didn't influence his reign. He presented himself and his royal court as above the population. He spared no expense promoting lavish ceremonies. His personal extravagance required greater taxation, which he also imposed. He then tried unsuccessfully to control the inflation that he had caused with the Edict on Maximum Prices. Administratively, Diocletian appointed fellow military officer Maximian, as Augustus and Co-Emperor a year into his reign, in 286 CE. Seven years later, he appointed Galerius and Constantine as Caesars and Junior Co-Emperors. But it is his persecution of Christians late in his reign, sometime after 303 CE, that colors his historic portrait. Second only to Rome's war against Judaism, it was the Empire's last, largest, and bloodiest official persecution of a religion.

Diocletian began the process inadvertently, trying to restore Rome's lost luster. It is why he surrounded himself with patriotic proponents of the pantheon of Roman gods, with men like Constantine and Galerius. Both were fierce advocates of the old ways and of new wars. Purging the army of Chrestucians, later known as Christians, came next. It was done for practical reasons. The Followers of the Way were pacifists.

While we will never know for sure, it is said that Galerius urged Diocletian to begin a general persecution of Christians. Roman lore would also tell us that Diocletian was wary of this advice, so he asked the oracle of Apollo for guidance. The counsel was predictable and was used to endorse the carnage which followed. Then once the Imperial Palace was burned under a cloud of suspicion, Christians were blamed and burned as they had been under Nero. It was particularly sad that they were willing to suffer in this way for their religion, recognizing that they had been beguiled by an even more duplicitous Roman – Paul.

—*~*~*

Speaking of duplicity, the pagan warrior who militarized, politicized, and legitimized Christianity, Constantine, wasn't willing to share power with anyone,

which made him the next Roman in long line of egotistical men who fought other Romans for control of the most depraved civilization in human history. His initial rival was Maxentius. He was not only the legitimate heir to the throne, he had just completed fortifying Rome with one-hundred thousand soldiers. But since Constantine couldn't play nicely with others, the Empire was split between these men.

The Junior Co-Emperor initiated hostilities against his brother-in-law, Emperor Maxentius Augustus in 312 CE by crossing the Alps from Gaul with forty-thousand troops. Constantine was resisted at Susa, Italy, when they refused to open their gates to the usurper. So the Junior Co-Emperor took the city by force and burned it, only to extinguish the flames thereafter to gain the support of the people. This example of what's now known as the Stockholm Syndrome would be deployed again.

Constantine would first encounter his brother-in-law, Emperor Maxentius Augustus at Turin, Italy. Displaying a head for conflict, not family, Constantine elongated his line, hoping that the superior heavily-armored cavalry of his foe would ride into the middle of his line, leaving his opponent's flank vulnerable to his more maneuverable cavalry. Wielding heavy clubs with iron spikes, Constantine's horsemen ripped Maxentius's riders off of their mounts, clubbing them to death on the ground. The Junior Co-Emperor then ordered his infantry to advance against fellow Romans, cutting the retreating army of Emperor Maxentius Augustus down as they fled. Celebrating death, the citizens of Turin cheered while the Roman troops loyal to Maxentius were slaughtered with their backs up against the city's walls.

Later that same year, Milan changed allegiance, drawing Constantine further south towards Rome. Following this defection, Verona, which was an imposing Maxentian stronghold, became the next target. But when the city was encircled to begin the siege, the Emperor's army attacked. Constantine's Legions prevailed, however, forcing their foe to retreat into the city. But as Constantine continued his siege, Maxentius summoned additional troops, forcing the Junior Co-Emperor to fight on two fronts. And yet, even with his army divided, Constantine prevailed, routing the newly arrived recruits while demoralizing those still garrisoned in Verona. With the surrender of the city, and the death of Emperor Maxentius's most trusted General, all opposition to Constantine in northern Italy collapsed. One city after another changed their allegiance.

Soon thereafter, the history of the world would change at the Battle of Milvian Bridge. If only there had not been the claim of a vision, if only Constantine had not won.

The problem isn't just that Constantine legalized Christianity. Gallienus's edict a century earlier had actually been far more effective. Even Galerius, the man accused of inspiring the persecution, ended the harassment with a declaration enormously favorable to the new religion. In fact, Constantine's edict wasn't even specific to Christianity, but instead was written on behalf of every religion – not unlike the U.S. Constitution.

The problem with Constantine wasn't just that he was an anti-Semite who passed laws in opposition to Jews and the Torah. Hadrian had been infinitely worse, and Vespasian and Trajan had been equally as bad.

The problem wasn't just that Constantine was first and foremost a warrior, a man whose life had been devoted to killing. Roman Emperors were always chosen based upon their military prowess and vengeful nature.

The problem wasn't just that Constantine was an egomaniac, willing to lead Romans into battle to slaughter fellow Romans simply to satiate his lust for power. Civil wars had become commonplace in Rome.

The problem wasn't just that Constantine feigned his conversion and remained a pagan. Romans had made hypocrisy and duplicity performance arts.

The problem with Constantine is that he blended all of these adverse characteristics together, in addition to all of his pagan beliefs, creating an immensely popular, deadly and demonic, duplicitous and hypocritical, politicized and militant, anti-Semitic religion driven by rival egomaniacs that was economically and socially integrated into Roman society. The problem with Constantine is that he boasted of an encounter with Satan that he attributed to God, beguiling billions as a wolf in sheep's clothing. The problem with Constantine is that he integrated Christianity into the fabric of the Beast that is Rome, making the nation and the religion homogenous. The problem with Constantine is that he initiated the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church as an extension of the Roman Empire, so that the Beast would live on and trample the world – right up to the very end.

There is no common accord when, where, what, or how Constantine experienced the vision that would change Rome and then the world. Some say it was during the day and emblazoned before the sun, while equally credible sources suggest that it was during a dream in the middle of the night. It is most commonly stated that during the evening of October 27, with both armies preparing for battle, Constantine had a vision which “led him to fight under the sign of the Christian god.” If only this pagan recognized that the sign of God was actually circumcision not Chi-Rho, the world would be markedly different today.

This dream version of the revelation is recorded by Lactantius, who reports: “the night before the battle, Constantine was commanded in a dream to delineate the heavenly sign on the shields of his soldiers.” (*On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 44.5) Lactantius describes that sign as a “staurogram,” or Latin cross, with its upper end rounded in a P-like fashion. But in reality, there is no evidence whatsoever that Constantine envisioned anything or ever deployed the sign.

The historian Eusebius provides two conflicting accounts. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, he promotes the belief that god helped Constantine, but he does not mention any vision. Then in his second depiction, *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius, who had become the Emperor’s premier propagandist, provides a detailed account of a vision and stresses that he had heard the story from the Emperor himself. According to this version, “Constantine was marching with his army, when he looked up to the sun and saw a cross of light above it, and with it the Greek words ‘Εν Τούτῳ Νίκα,’ usually translated into Latin as ‘*in hoc signo vinces*,’ with both phrases meaning ‘In this sign, conquer.’” Eusebius, however, does not specify the actual location of the momentous event, or even indicate when it occurred, but testified that it was absolutely not near the camp outside Rome where the battle was waged. And that is to say, Constantine couldn’t remember the details because it did not actually happen. The alleged sign on the shields was never reported inscribed nor seen by any of the participants or witnesses. Moreover, there is no evidence to even suggest that the Greek letters Chi Rho were identified with any individual or with any religion before Constantine. It is a religious myth, one developed five years later on Roman coinage to facilitate Constantine’s grandiose ambition and to legitimize his role as Pope of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.

Those who have studied Constantine, speak of a solar halo phenomenon, common in the presence of thin clouds or dust, which was then recast to fit with Christian beliefs. Coins that overtly depict Constantine as a “companion of Mithras” were minted as late as 313 CE, a year after the battle. The Roman solar deity, “*Sol Invictus* – the Unconquerable Sun,” was not only pictured with a halo, Constantine’s official coinage continued to feature the Unconquerable Sun as the companion of the Emperor through 356 CE, doing so with much greater frequency than his predecessors. His gold coinage, or *solidus*, depict his bust with intertwined Sol Invictus – Constantine Invictus scripts. Moreover, the official cults of Sol Invictus and Sol Invictus Mithras, were especially popular with the Roman Legions. Statuettes of Mithras as the Unconquerable Sun were carried by the Legion’s Standard Bearers along with their Eagles. These likenesses even appear on the Arch of Constantine, which was positioned to align with the Colossus of Sol Invictus (formerly the Colossus of Nero) outside the Roman Coliseum – the most depraved pagan amphitheater in human history. This is all to

say, Emperor Constantine was a pagan – as are those who believe the religion he fashioned to promote his legend.

It would have been reasonable to assume that Satan facilitated the vision, as he had with Sha'awl two and a half centuries earlier, because the experiences are somewhat similar. But there is absolutely no possibility that Yahowah was involved, wanting to ally with one Roman over another. God's depiction of Rome is as condescending, foreboding, and dismissive as words allow.

The two Roman generals, Junior Co-Emperor Constantine and Emperor Maxentius Augustus, met again on October 28, 312 along the banks of the Tiber River just eight miles from Rome. Constantine camped in Prima Porta, famous for its statue of the Divine Augustus. After his stay, the modest the Junior Co-Emperor would erect the Arch of the Divine Constantine to mark the spot.

It was assumed that Emperor Maxentius Augustus would remain in Rome and endure the expected siege, a strategy he had deployed successfully twice before. In preparation, he had even stockpiled sufficient food supplies. But instead, he met his brother-in-law in battle formation after consulting the oracle of the Sibylline Books. Since the religious sage declared “on October 28 an enemy of the Romans would perish,” he assumed that his rival and usurper was doomed.

History tells us that Maxentius organized his superior forces in long lines along the Tiber River next to the Milvian Bridge. Defending the portal was critical if the Emperor was to keep Constantine's Legions out of Rome. He knew that the fickle Senate, in an act of self-preservation, would endorse whoever the Legion's closest to Rome favored. But inexplicitly, Maxentius positioned his troops with their backs to the river, removing an obstacle from his opponent and creating one for himself. He was so close to the Tiber, he left no room to reposition his forces or strengthen his lines.

Initially, the cavalry on both sides engaged, with Constantine's horsemen prevailing. Then the Junior Co-Emperor's infantry pushed Maxentius's infantry back and into the Tiber River. At that point the Emperor wanted to retreat back into the city and make another stand from inside Rome. But since he had already destroyed the original Milvian Bridge in preparation for a siege, the substantial rock bridge had been replaced with a temporary pontoon conduit. With panicked troops scrambling for their lives, the only escape route collapsed. Constantine took advantage of his brother-in-law's misfortune, slaughtering the men who were now stranded on the north bank of the Tiber. The troops which were not killed, were taken prisoner. Most of those who tried to swim across the river drowned, including Emperor Maxentius Augustus.

The following day, Constantine entered Rome as a conquering god, personally staging a grand religious and political celebration in his honor. He fished

Maxentius's body out of the river, decapitated him, and paraded his head through the streets for all to see. Shortly thereafter, religious structures such as the Temple of Romulus and the Basilica of Maxentius were rededicated to Rome's new god: Emperor Constantine. Then Rome's new divinity condemned his brother-in-law to "*Damnatio Memoriae* – Damnation of Memory." All of Maxentius's legislation was invalidated. And the fine fellow who did these things is the founder of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church.

In reality, at this point Constantine was only Emperor of the Western Roman Empire. Licinius was still in control of the East. He had come to that position as the close childhood friend and most trusted confidant of Co-Emperor Galerius. He had received the title Augustus in 308 CE, when he was put in command of the Provinces of Illyricum, Thrace, and Pannonia. Thereafter, he successfully fought the Sarmatians in 310 CE. So upon the death of Galerius in 311, Licinius entered into an agreement with Emperor Maxentius to share the Eastern Provinces between them. Also noteworthy, in 313 Licinius married Julia Constantia, Constantine's sister. It was during the wedding that Emperors Licinius and Constantine jointly issued the Edict of Milan, allowing freedom of religion "on behalf of any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens" – including pagan gods but excluding the God of the Jews throughout the Empire. Subsequent edicts returned confiscated Christian property and provided Christian clerics with a tax-exempt status.

Licinius wasn't Emperor Galerius's only appointment, however. Daia, the son of Galerius' sister, rose in rank after joining the Roman army. So in 305 CE, when his maternal uncle Galerius became the Eastern Augustus, he adopted Daia and gave him the rank of Caesar, making him the Junior Eastern Emperor over Syria and Egypt. Therefore, when Maxentius and then Constantine leagued with Licinius, Daia became envious.

As our saga continues, Junior Emperor Daia decided to attack Emperor Licinius Augustus. He left Syria with seventy-thousand troops, but by the time he reached Bithynia, as a result of harsh weather he encountered along the way, his army had been gravely weakened. Nonetheless, in April 313, he crossed the Bosphorus to blockade Byzantium which was held by Licinius's troops. He prevailed after an eleven-day siege. He quickly moved on to Heraclea, which he attacked immediately thereafter.

With half as many troops, Emperor Licinius arrived at Adrianople, in East Thrace along the border between modern-day Greece and Bulgaria. As Licinius readied his troops for the battle, he also claimed to have had a vision in which a spirit recited a generic religious benediction which could be prayed by the followers of every cult. So Licinius repeated it to his soldiers. Then on April 30,

313, the two armies clashed at the Battle of Tzirallum in Eastern Thrace (later renamed Constantinople then Istanbul).

In the ensuing scuffle, Caesar Daia's forces were routed. So ridding himself of the imperial purple and dressing like a slave, Daia fled. But once he reached Nicomedia, he somehow came to believe he had the chance to prevail, so Daia attempted to stop the advance of Licinius who was pursuing him at the Cilician Gates. His second attempt didn't work and Daia retreated to Tarsus where Emperor Licinius killed him.

In 314, another in the long line of Roman Civil Wars commenced, this one instigated by Emperor Constantine against Emperor Licinius. The paranoid and manipulative Constantine accused Licinius of harboring Senecio, his *Dux Limitis* (consul and/or general). Constantine had accused Senecio of plotting to overthrow him. By way of background, Constantine had promoted Senecio's brother, Senator Bassianus, who was also Constantine's brother-in-law, to the rank of Caesar. Then once empowered, Constantine accused him of promoting a conspiracy to assassinate him. So Constantine killed Bassianus and wanted to do the same to his brother, Senecio. But when Licinius refused to hand him over, this was used as a pretext for war.

Emperor Constantine marched his Legions into Pannonia, which was Emperor Licinius's territory in present-day Croatia. The opposing Roman armies met on the plain between the rivers Save and Drave. The infantry fought to a bloody draw, but Constantine positioned his cavalry against Licinius's flank, breaking his ranks. Twenty-thousand of Emperor Licinius's were killed in the ensuing mêlée. By nightfall, Licinius and his cavalry fled under the cover of darkness.

Emperor Licinius, after collecting his family and treasury, moved into Thrace, where he commenced peace negotiations with Constantine. Initially successful, both men shared power throughout 315 CE. But the next year, a new war erupted once Licinius promoted one of his generals, Valerius Valens, to the rank of Augustus, thereby securing his loyalty. The move irritated Constantine, who tried to intimidate Licinius into demoting Valens to keep his rival vulnerable.

The founder of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church conveyed his condescending ire in the following note: "The Emperor made clear the extent of his rage by his facial expression and by the contortion of his body. Almost unable to speak, he said, 'We have not come to this present state of affairs, nor have we fought and triumphed from the ocean till where we have now arrived, just so that we should refuse to have our own brother-in-law as joint ruler because of his abominable behavior, and so that we should deny his close kinship, but accept that vile slave [i.e., Valens] with him into Imperial College.'"

All the while, Constantine moved his army through the Balkans and established a base at Philippi. He struck Licinius at Mardia, Thrace, located in modern-day Bulgaria in the fall of 316 CE. The outcome was predictably gory. After fierce fighting between Romans, both sides endured massive casualties. While they struggled to a draw, during the night, Licinius retreated with much of his army intact. Constantine declared victory.

Thinking that Licinius might flee to Byzantium, Constantine pushed his bloodied Legions in that direction, which unintentionally and dangerously caused his rival's forces to be between himself and his supply lines with Rome. So while Constantine was vulnerable, Licinius was in too precarious a position to retaliate. Instead, Licinius requested a truce, which Emperor Constantine denied until he learned that his royal entourage and his baggage had been captured. Then in the ensuing agreement, Constantine forced Licinius to cede to him all European Provinces except for Thrace, to depose and then execute Valens, and to acknowledge and declare that Constantine was superior. This means that they had fought and men had suffered and died over their egos.

With Constantine able to gloat for having gained control over the Balkan Peninsula, there was an uncomfortable peace between the grand and lesser Emperors for seven or eight years. Licinius kept busy fighting the Sarmatians, beginning in 318 CE. But the truce wore thin three years later, in 321 CE, when Constantine also engaged against the Sarmatians, pursuing them and allied Visigoths across the Danube and into Licinius's territory. Constantine followed that battle with another invasion in 323, this time pursuing the Goths into Thrace. So Licinius duly noted that Constantine had broken the treaty by using Thrace as a repository for Roman foes.

Considering the truth an insult, Constantine wasted no time going on the offensive. He invaded Thrace with an army comprised of grizzled veterans. And now that he controlled the Balkans, supply lines were no longer an issue. Of the crusade, one of his publicists would later write: "Constantine, tempted by the advanced age and unpopular vices of his colleague, again declared war against him."

Emperor Licinius positioned his army at Adrianople, in East Thrace, near the border between Greece and Bulgaria. Constantine advanced from Thessalonica in the west. They met at the Hebrus River near Adrianople, a site which nearly defined the purpose of their meeting. With both armies aligned in typical Roman formations, they glared at each other for several days. With the Hebrus River between he and his rival, and with Licinius better positioned on higher ground, the normally aggressive Constantine was hesitant.

Then as Eisenhower would do with Patton, positioning him at the head of a fake army to deceive the Germans into believing that the Allies would be crossing the English Channel at Pas de Calais, the shortest distance, Constantine ordered his men to conspicuously stage most of their equipment at the most suitable crossing, where the Hebrus narrowed and where his men would be best protected by thick forests, thereby giving the impression that he was going to build a bridge at this point. But it was a ruse. Constantine secretly moved his archers and cavalry across the river upstream and caught his rival off guard. A great massacre followed, with Constantine's army slashing thirty-four thousand Romans to death over the course of several hours.

This time, Constantine murdered his countrymen by prominently displaying the Rho Chi Labarum Standard, with the P for the Greek letter Rho superimposed upon the X for Chi, encircled by a halo comprised of little suns and moons. Without the halo, this Rx nomenclature became the international symbol for drugs, which is something to ponder since *chrisos*, the basis of *Christos* and thus Christ, speaks of the application of drugs.

Needing some of those medication, Constantine who had been slightly wounded in the thigh, halted the attack at sunset. This allowed Licinius and what little was left of his army to retreat. They withdrew to Byzantium and to the safety of his fleet of nearly three-hundred fifty ships – one of the largest in the world at that time.

Again with egos outweighing lives, Emperor Constantine besieged Byzantium, the city he would one day rename Constantinople in his honor. At the same time, he dispatched his son, Crispus, in command of the Roman navy. His orders were to gain control of the Bosphorus Strait – the narrow waterway separating Thrace from Asia Minor. He was successful initially, but not in the Bosphorus, instead at the western end of the Sea of Marmara in the narrow waters of Hellespont, known today as the Dardanelles.

Crispus at the command of just eighty ships was able to prevail against the Licinian fleet of two-hundred vessels principally because the Strait was too narrow to maneuver a large navy. The Licinian fleet withdrew to the eastern end of the Dardanelles, but at the same time, Crispus augmented his fleet with ships that sailed in from the Aegean Sea. The opposing navies met again off shore Gallipoli, but as they did, a storm blew most of Licinius's ships into the shore, wrecking all but four of them. As a result, Constantine could now safely cross the Bosphorus into Bithynia. But upon hearing the news that his navy had been destroyed, Licinius left Byzantium and repositioned his army at Chrysopolis, along the Asiatic shore of the Strait.

This brings us to 18 September 324 and to the final battle between the rival Roman Emperors and brothers-in-law. The Empire wasn't big enough for them to share. Constantine wanted it all, to be both god and man, general and politician, pope and king.

In dire straits and fighting for his life, Emperor Licinius replaced Valens, the general that Constantine had wanted executed, with Sextus Martinianus, naming him co-Emperor. They attempted to unify their armies and supplement their force with Visigoths under the command of Aliquaca, but Constantine may have struck before any of this transpired.

Constantine's historians tell us that after summoning "divine guidance" in a tent meeting with his god or gods, Constantine attacked his brother-in-law. The religious nature of the battle was undeniable, with Emperor Licinius prominently displaying images of Rome's pagan gods throughout his battle lines. His troops also carried images of Licinius with a halo, implying that he was the son of the Sun. On the other side, Constantine's soldiers drew upon occult powers with talismans worn as magic charms and amulets in addition to their *RX Labarum* above a red field with three golden suns. And while I realize that the order of the letters is typically revered as *XR*, all of the images I've examined show the *Rho* superimposed upon the *Chi*.

In this regard, it should be noted that Constantine and his Legions worshipped Mithras, a Persian, Hindu, Chinese, Greek, and Roman solar deity. The god's name means "Covenant," making it a clever counterfeit. According to the ancient mythology, Mithras was the son of the Sun, born of a virgin known as the "Mother of God." Therefore, Mithraism's Trinity explains there were three golden suns on Constantine's war banner.

Salvation through baptism and Sunday worship were among countless similarities between Mithras and Christianity. And as was the case with Dionysus, the devotees of Mithras observed an annual Last Supper featuring wine and bread, symbolizing the body and blood of their pagan god. Mithras' birthday was observed at the same time Christians celebrate Christmas. On Easter Sunday, Mithras who had died for the sins of the faithful was resurrected, making Mithras very similar to Tammuz, Osiris, Adonis, Dionysus, Bacchus, and the Christian Jesus.

Also interesting, especially considering Paul's influence on Christianity, Mithraism was developed in the city of Tarsus, Paul's birthplace. The followers of Zoroaster are credited with developing the sun god into a religious cult, one which became especially popular in the first century CE, particularly among Roman soldiers.

While the religious artwork may have taken days to construct, the battle was over in minutes. Emperor Constantine struck the center of Emperor Licinius's line and it buckled. According to the historian Zosimus: "There was great slaughter at Chysopolis," affirming that it was indeed a religious spectacle. More than twenty-five thousand Romans died this day. But Licinius escaped, gathering thirty-thousand troops around him at Nicomedia.

In a brief moment of sanity, Constantine's sister, who was Licinius's wife, convinced him to surrender. Responding to her tears and pleas for mercy, Constantine vowed to spare the life of brother-in-law. But once his sister was out of earshot, he ordered his execution, breaking his vow. He justified the hanging by accusing him of treason – which is an odd charge to pin on an Emperor. Consistent, a year later, Constantine's nephew, the son of Licinius, fell victim to the Emperor's suspicions. He was killed as was Martinianus, the short-lived Co-Emperor.

Constantine, ever the egomaniac, and always seeking to promote his legacy, made every effort to besmirch the reputation of his former Imperial colleague. To this end, he circulated stories about Licinius's cruelty – which is funny considering Constantine's propensity to be savage. The Emperor claimed that Licinius had murdered Severianus, the son of Emperor Severus, as well as Candidianus, the son of Emperor Galerius. On a roll, Constantine claimed that Licinius had ordered the execution of the wife and daughter of Emperor Diocletian. It was all propaganda on the part of Constantine, who turned Licinius's capitol, Byzantium, into Constantinople – a shrine to his ego.

Then, just as Muslims would strive to minimize the obvious concerns about the initial duplicity and ruthlessness of Muhammad's religion by inappropriately casting aspersions against pagan Arabs preceding Islam, Christianity's newly minted apologists attempted to minimize concerns over Constantine's questionable behavior by besmirching the character of his predecessors. Licinius was portrayed as anti-Christian. But this was not the case. Contemporary evidence demonstrates that he co-authored the Edict of Milan which ended the Great Persecution. Licinius was even more aggressive than Constantine in reaffirming the rights of Christians in his half of the Empire. And like Constantine, Licinius orchestrated the affairs of the Church, establishing its hierarchy while determining its doctrine.

And yet according to Eusebius, Constantine's lead propagandist, Emperor Licinius simply feigned sympathy for the sect while actually being a bloodthirsty pagan who had to be stopped by the virtuous Constantine. On Licinius's death, his memory was branded with infamy, and his statues were toppled. Every law, edict, and judicial proceeding during his reign was overturned. In other words, Constantine treated Licinius's legacy the same way he had treated Maxentius's

reputation. But in doing so, it's Constantine's reputation for duplicity and revenge that is laid bare. Christianity could not have had a much more pathetic man than Constantine to transform the Empire into a Church.

✠✠✠

Since we have now chronicled the lives and wars of the most influential Romans, and have detailed the character flaws among men like Trajan, Caligula, Nero, Hadrian, and Constantine who shaped the Empire and cultured its animosity toward God, His People, Land, Torah, and Covenant, we will now move more quickly through Rome's flickering future.

Constantine's son, Constantius II, kept the Persian army under Shapur II from acquiring territories that had been lost by the Eastern Roman Empire in 344 CE. But shortly thereafter there would be another Civil War, this one waged between 350 and 351 CE. Constantine II, who was given control over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, resented his brothers Constantius II, who ruled over Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria, and Constans I, reigning in Italy, North Africa, and Illyricum. They did not respect the fact that he was older and therefore the senior Augustus. So he invaded Italy, only to be killed in an ambush, further empowering Constans. But alas, Constans was despised by the Legions, causing him to be the victim of a military coup. With two of the three princes gone, the army promoted a barbarian officer, Magnentius, declaring him Emperor.

Constantius II, following in his father's footsteps, responded by attacking Magnentius in 351, defeating him in one of the bloodiest battles in Roman history. Magnentius lost two-thirds of his army while Constantius sacrificed half of his, squandering the lives of fifty-thousand men in a single day.

But we are told that it was a religious affair. Magnentius evidently restored some pagan rites and Constantius is said to have prayed while men were bludgeoning other Romans to death. His Church would have us believe that the "bishop of Mursa, Valens, told the pious Constantius that an angel had reported news of the victory, thus ending any chance of a pagan revival." But these same men would choose to fight again two years later in the Battle of Mons Seleucus. Constantius's forces prevailed and Magnentius committed suicide. Now Christian pagans would be defending pagan Rome from invading pagans, ending any chance that the prophecy was accurate.

A handful of years later, in the Battle of Reims in 356 CE, Caesar Julian the Apostate was defeated by the Alemanni a pagan tribe. But the following year, the

Alamanni tribal confederation lost a subsequent battle to Deputy Emperor Julian near Strasbourg, France, thereby reducing the nuisance of the Gallic marauders.

In the East, the Persian Sassanids under Shah Shapur II besieged the Roman city of Amida in 359. After crushing the Arabs slightly south of their position, Shapur sought to recapture additional territories the Persians had lost to Rome. Realizing this, Constantius II wanted the region to be as inhospitable to the invaders as possible, so he ordered “the Romans living around Carrhae to flee, moving their families and livestock to safety, setting their entire country on fire behind them, leaving nothing but scorched earth.”

But the wholesale destruction panicked the Roman military stationed in the region and they retreated chaotically to escape the Persian advance. Then once in Syria, the Sassanid Persians were actually provoked into attacking Amida. Shapur’s son, Grumbates, was shot and killed by a Roman archer. Shapur reacted by comparing the provocation with that of Patroclus at Troy. So the Sassanids attacked. Festooned with a golden and jeweled ram’s head, Shapur rallied his men who succeeded in their pursuit of the city only to find it inflected with the plague.

Shortly thereafter, Emperor Julian was killed in the Battle of Ctesiphon fighting against Shapur and the Sassanids. While the battle ended in a draw, His successor, Jovian, signed a truce, whereby five Roman Provinces along the northwestern banks of the Tigris were ceded to the Persians.

The Romans would fight another Civil War in 366 CE at Thyatira, Phrygia, this time between Emperor Valens and Procopius. It was yet another case of a general being heralded Caesar by his Legions. Valens prevailed, capturing, imprisoning, and then killing Procopius.

By 368 CE, the Romans were battling the Alamanni again. Emperor Valentinian managed to win the conflict but may have lost the war as a result of sacrificing too many of his troops fending off the Germans.

The Goths would be targeted next. They were accused of rebelling and then of plundering the Balkans. Western and Eastern Legions converged in present-day Bulgaria to stop them. Men on both sides fought to achieve a bloody draw. Then in 378, the invading Lentienses, a branch of the Alamanni, were defeated when their king was killed.

Later that same year, Emperor Valens would confront Gothic tribes north of Adrianople in the Roman Province of Thrace. It was an overwhelming victory for the Goths who had no interest in fighting. They had been displaced by the Huns, and simply wanted to settle in the region. But the Romans were not good at sharing.

On the morning of August 9th, Valens left the Imperial treasury in Adrianople and marched his troops seven hours over difficult terrain. When he arrived at the Gothic camp, his men were exhausted and dehydrated. Worse, they were disorganized and the Goths held the high ground. Despite their disadvantage, the Romans struck first but were pushed back. The Gothic cavalry, arriving late, galloped through the haze of dust and smoke to surround the Romans, routing them. The Emperor was abandoned by his guards and Valen's fate remains unknown. His body was never found. But this was clearly the beginning of the end for Rome.

In 380 CE, in the Battle of Thessalonica, the Goths pummeled the Romans yet again. Eastern Emperor Theodosius, who led the Byzantines, surrendered. Then to further insure their impending demise, Rome fought two additional Civil Wars, the first pitting Magnus Maximus against the Eastern Roman Empire led by Theodosius. The usurper was defeated, and Maximus was captured and executed.

In the second of these two internal conflicts, Byzantine Emperor Theodosius engaged the army of Roman Emperor Eugenius. This conflict was seen as a major milestone because Eugenius, the king of the Western Empire, while professing to be a Christian, has been presented as having had some pagan sympathies – which is to say that he was willing to let people make their own choices in this regard. So his defeat meant that the politicized Christianization of the Roman Empire was complete. Christianity wasn't just accepted; it was required. Greco-Roman polytheism was replaced by the Babylonian Trinity. Although in reality, there was little difference.

It should be noted that the supposed hero, Theodosius the Great, as he was now called, was the last Emperor to rule over both halves of the Roman Empire but his reign would shape Europe for a thousand years. Much of the horror imposed on the continent by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church can be laid at Theodosius's feet. He inaugurated the feudal system and imposed religious mandates that plagued the masses, robbing them of personal freedom. He forced the church's and state's interpretation Christianity on everyone, declaring that the Eastern Orthodox Church was the official state religion of the Roman Empire. It was not open hunting season on pagans and heretics. Every polytheistic ritual which hadn't already been incorporated into the Church's nomenclature was banned. The mantra was: convert or die.

The imposed orthodoxy was Constantinian – which is now the only surviving form of Christianity. Every Christian denomination in the world today, no matter if it is Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant, was conceived and established in Nicea in 325 CE – and is thereby plagued by its creed. The bishops of the emerging Church throughout the Roman Empire convened the Council of Nicea on Constantine's orders. The purpose was to remove Yahowah and His Old

Testament from their religion and replace Him and His Word with Iesous Christos and their New Testament. To accomplish this less-than-divine duplicity, the Christian man-god had to be equal to and then equivalent with the Father – “*homoousios* – the exact same essence and being” – turning the man into the totality of God. It was, of course, a Gnostic notion promoted by Paul.

But there were men at the time who knew that this was nonsense. Yahowsha’, by His own admission, revealed that He was a diminished manifestation of Yahowah. He had to be. The very transition from spirit / energy to matter / a physical being requires a degradation of scale equivalent to the speed of light multiplied by the speed of light: $E=MC^2$. All of God won’t fit into our solar system, therefore it cannot be confined to the body of a man. Yahowsha’ is a part of Yahowah set apart from God to reveal Yahowah to us and to fulfill His promises. Nothing more. Nothing less. Yahowsha’ did not come for us to pay attention to Him, for us to worship Him, for us to pray to Him, but instead to reveal Yahowah to us and make it possible for us to know the Father. Those who focus on Yahowsha’ rather than looking through Him to Yah, miss the purpose and benefit of His mission. In perspective, it is akin to worshipping a toenail clipping rather than looking up and coming to know the individual from which it came.

The most outspoken advocate of the truth at the time was Arius. He cited Yahowah’s and Yahowsha’s testimony to prove that according to God, Yahowsha’ was not equivalent to the Father. But this truth had to be irradiated for the new religion to prosper in the anti-Semitic culture of Greece and Rome. As a result, Arians were labeled heretics and Iesous Christos became the “Lord God,” entirely divine – with “the fullness of the godhead residing upon him bodily.” With all of Christendom agreed politically and religiously, the only things left to accomplish were to establish the uniform observance of the pagan celebration of Easter, promulgate cannon law, degrade the Torah, outlaw God’s actual instructions, and then impose the resulting religion on everyone. The first step in the process was initiated in Paul’s letters to the Galatians and then to the Romans. The second step was inaugurated under Constantine and the Nicean Council. The third materialized seventy-five years later under Theodosius when he imposed the resulting religion. Nothing has changed since. The Beast that was the Empire of Rome was soon to be severed and then die, only to be resurrected as the Christian Church. And it is Christianity that will give rise to the Beast of the Tribulation.

There would be more meetings and decrees to be sure, but the world was profoundly punished during the Easter Nicean Council in 325 when “Jesus Christ” became the principle Christian god. It was pummeled again in 380 when the Trinitarian religion was imposed as the only legitimate Imperial and Catholic

religion in the Edict of Thessalonica. While Rome was two distinct Empires, West and East, it was one religiously.

The following year, Theodosius reiterated his ban on all religions except the officially accepted version of Christianity. And with this decree, he began to prosecute any magistrate who failed to enforce his laws against polytheism. Persecution followed, with Christians being the doling out the abuse. All non-Nicean Christians were excommunicated from the Church. Roman holidays, as had been the case with Yahowah's Feasts, were now outlawed. Witch hunts were pursued vigorously. All temples were either shuttered or transformed into churches. Theodosius even banned the Olympics due to its association with Mount Olympus. He encouraged the destruction of any ancient edifice that had any association with any god other than his own Christian god, unless, of course, they could be converted into palaces for his lords or churches for his priests.

Like Constantine, his comrade in crime, Theodosius was a product of his environment. He began his career in the military, accompanying his father into Britannia. Together they quelled the "Great Conspiracy." His father, however, was disgraced and executed after losing two Legions to the Sarmatians (Iranians) in 374 CE. Theodosius, not wanting the same fate, retired to live the life of a feudal lord as a provincial aristocrat on an enormous family plantation in Galicia (extreme northwestern), Spain. But four years later when Gratian invited Theodosius to take command of the Illyrian army following Valens's death, it served as his *de facto* invitation to become Co-Augustus of the Eastern Roman Empire. Within five years, Gratian was killed during a rebellion, enabling Theodosius to fight his way to supremacy.

While the Church regales him, he was hardly a bastion of virtue. In 390 CE, after one of his garrisons in Thessalonica abused the indigenous population, they rebelled, and in the ensuing chaos, the Roman commander was killed. So in retaliation, Theodosius ordered a garrison of enslaved Goths under his command to "kill all of the spectators in the Circus." Theodoret, a contemporary witness, reports: "The anger of the Emperor rose to the highest pitch, and he gratified his vindictive desire for vengeance by unsheathing the sword most unjustly and tyrannically against all, slaying the innocent and guilty alike. It is said seven thousand perished without any forms of law, and without even having judicial sentence passed upon them; but that, like ears of wheat in the time of harvest, they were alike cut down." And yet this horrible man's shadow would linger over Europe and the Church for one-thousand years – establishing and imposing the only surviving form of the Christian religion along with its preferred financial system, feudal fascism.

But there was yet another incident in Theodosius's morbid existence that would influence the world for the next millennia. As a result of the massacre of

civilians in Thessalonica, the Bishop of Milan, Saint Ambrose, excommunicated Theodosius for a couple of months, readmitting him to the Eucharist after proper penance and payments. His contribution to Christendom was the removal and transfer of an enormous obelisk from Alexandria, Egypt to Constantinople. The Obelisk of Pharaoh Thutmosis III, now a monument to Emperor Theodosius the Great, still stands in the Hippodrome, the long racetrack in the center of the city. The Christian obelisk was replete with sun-god slogans and imagery devoted to Amen Ra. It had originally been dedicated in Karnak, the Vatican of the Egyptian priesthood. The Church, in order to make the pagan object Christian, carved a supporting base that shows Theodosius and his royal family set apart from other nobility, offering a laurel wreath – another symbol of the sun.

This obelisk was actually part of a pair of religious icons. Its partner, now called the Lateran Obelisk of Constantius II, was shipped to Rome a few years earlier. The Pharaoh Thutmosis IV / Emperor Constantius II Obelisk currently stands next to the Papal Palace in the Vatican. It is also covered from tip to base in pagan religious pontifications. The most famous Roman Catholic obelisk, the one in the center of the Vatican, was brought from Egypt to Rome by Caligula. It all reveals that there is no distinction between this evil Empire and its Church. One simply emerged out of the other.

Militarily, another factor that would loom large in Theodosius's reign as Pope, Lord, Emperor, and General was his predilection for using barbarians to suppress barbarians. Goths were allowed to settle alongside Romans so long as they gave their sons to the Legions. But they were as prone to pounce on their masters as they were to leave and go back home.

A moment ago, we discovered that Theodosius would fight not one, but two civil wars in pursuit of his ambition. In the second battle of egos, Theodosius sought to rid the Empire of Eugenius, simply because he was reluctant to impose his religion on all Romans. During the ensuing conflict, Christian propagandists masquerading as historians want us to believe that the Christian Eugenius placed a statue of Jupiter on the battlefield. To position this as the ultimate battle between good and evil, he is said to have had images of Hercules drawn on his Legion's banners. In this way, we are told, he had hoped to reclaim Rome's greatness. It wasn't true, but truth has never been Christianity's strong suit.

With the landscape duly colored, the Lord Pope General Emperor Theodosius, Rome's fascist and dictatorial Christian, deployed a Gothic army comprised principally of pagans. With them holding little value, he sacrificed them first, having the Goths charge headlong into the Roman lines, hoping to prevail by attrition. It produced nothing but blood and death. Then the following day, some Western troops deserted, which the Christian Emperor looked upon as an omen from god, even though they were also pagans.

But the plot would thicken. A fierce tempest blew over the Western Empire, allegedly casting their arrows back at them. Theodosius announced that it was an answer to his prayers and the fulfillment of a prophecy. Buffeted by the winds, the Western Empire's lines broke, enabling the Lord Pope Emperor General Theodosius and his Eastern Empire, aided as they were by barbarian mercenaries, to claim supremacy over the West, turning out the lights on Rome and eventually the whole of Europe.

Roman Emperor Eugenius, a fellow Christian, was captured. He was brought before the Emperor of the East where he begged for mercy. None was shown and he was beheaded.

In the real world, there was no divine wind. If there was a breeze at all, it blew before the battle was even waged according to contemporary sources. The whole religious underpinning was contrived by the Christian theologian Rufinus to demonstrate the validity of his faith. This fanciful myth was promoted by the propagandist poet, Claudian, to make war seem godly. Pagans were fighting pagans under different names, but it was now: "Onward Christian Soldiers Marching Off to War." But in reality, all this battle did was hasten Rome's demise. Theodosius died a mere four months later, leaving the crumbling Empire to be governed by his incompetent children, Honorius and Arcadius.

But for the moment, the Empire was united as was Christianity. And soon thereafter, the pagan aristocracy in Rome reinvented themselves as papal families providing decadent popes for the new Church. It all became Machiavellian.

☛☛☛

We have now arrived in the fifth century. It opens in 402 CE with the Battle of Pollentia. Stilicho, who was the son of a Vandal father, was serving as Consul on behalf of Theodosius's children, who were still too young to govern. He was assigned the task of subduing the disgruntled Visigoths. They were rebelling because Rome reneged on most every promise. Taking back what they felt they were due by force, they plundered the territory immediately adjacent to Constantinople. The Empire was in such deplorable shape, the city bribed the Visigoths to stop robbing them. But that did not work, so the Visigoths, who were now Christians, devastated the Peloponnese and the Balkans. After doing so, their leader, Alaric, tried negotiating with the Western Empire for status, as well as rations and supplies for his troops. But turnabout wasn't considered fair play, and he was rebuffed. The Roman government which had imposed all manner of

onerous deals on those they considered barbarians, thought it beneath them to make deals with barbarians.

Before his death, Emperor Theodosius set these pieces into motion. He had signed a treaty with the Visigoths, who at the time were the Empire's most formidable foe. He would call the rabble subjects, and thus serfs, but their kings were allotted vast territorial concessions. Soon thereafter, one of the enriched monarchs, Alaric, unified the Visigoths, becoming king of kings. Desirous of learning the Roman ways in order to help his people survive them, Alaric accompanied Theodosius's army. He saw how the Romans willingly sacrificed the lives of his people in their battles, witnessing half of the Visigoths deployed in combat between the Eastern and Western Empire die in a single day. He realized that Romans sought to weaken the Goths by having them bear the brunt of Roman battles. Conflicts between Emperors became a game, with barbarian lives used as pawns. So rather than continue to fight with Rome, he began fighting against Rome.

And while Alaric would try, his early attempts to invade Italy were repulsed, initially by the aforementioned Stilicho. Then suddenly, Stilicho did an about face and allied with those he was opposing. His motives were simple enough; he wanted to reclaim Illyricum for the Western Empire and thought Alaric could help. However, when the Vandals crossed the Rhine and invaded Gaul, the invasion was called off, leaving the Visigoths with the cost of preparing for the battle without anyone to plunder. So Stilicho persuaded a fickle Roman Senate to reimburse Alaric, essentially buying him off with the promise of status and thousands of pounds of gold. But then the Senate changed its mind and displaying their inbred prejudice, began to demean Stilicho, Alaric and the Visigoths, creating the resentment that would lead to Rome's demise.

Realizing that the city could no longer be defended against the aspiring Visigoths, the capital of the Western Empire was moved to Mediolanum, and then from there to Ravenna. Worse, as Alaric marched toward central Italy in early 402 CE, the Roman Legions were distracted fending off a Vandal rebellion in the north, giving the approaching Visigoths unimpeded access.

Alaric, however, and the marauding Visigoths, took a momentary break from their siege of Italia to celebrate Easter in Pollentia (modern Pollenzo, Italy). With them distracted with religious observances, Stilicho attacked, resulting in a draw that left many Christians dead on both sides. But by sneaking behind the battle lines in a terrorist ploy, Consul Stilicho had managed to capture Alaric's wife, children, and extended family. The Christian propagandists reporting on the battle, men like Claudian, praised the strategy, calling it divinely inspired: "Thy glory, Pollentia, shall live forever.... Fate pre-ordained thee to be the scene of our victory and the burial-place of the barbarians." Easter, indeed.

By 405 CE, Stilicho (the Easter kidnapper) approved another treaty with Alaric, conceding to his earlier demands. The Visigoths were afforded the titles and status they desired along with four-thousand pounds of gold for his troops in exchange for Alaric promising to respect the authority of the man who had robbed him of his wife and children. The Senate wasn't impressed with the gift or Stilicho's negotiating skill so they labeled him "an enemy of the people." It wasn't a criminal offense to kidnap a monarch's wife and children, but it was treasonous to deal with a barbarian, even if the savages were Christians. For his trouble, Consul Stilicho was executed.

This brings us to a glorious moment in this hideous journey through Roman history. It is 410 CE. By August Rome will be in ashes, a tumbled heap of ruins – its just dessert. The spiritual heart of the Roman experience, "the Eternal City" would receive a fatal blow. If only it hadn't been resurrected, the Empire becoming the Church.

The fall had been inevitable. Rome treated so many people so badly for so long, it was only a matter of time before someone gave them a taste of their own. On this day it was Alaric and the Visigoths.

The chain of events was simple enough. The Huns, a loose federation of nomadic tribes originating in China and Mongolia, migrated west toward the Caucasus Mountains and Caspian Sea around the first century. They would resume their westward migration in the fourth and fifth centuries, appearing north of the Black Sea in today's Ukraine around 370 CE. They would then cross the Volga and attack the Alans, whom they subjugated. From that point, the Huns began plundering Gothic settlements. Unsatisfied, the Huns would pursue the Visigoths, displacing native peoples who sought asylum initially in the Balkans and then in northern Italy. It was the domino effect, with one people pushing into another, toppling over the next.

But the Romans did a strange thing. Rather than befriend the victims of the Huns, they opposed the Goths. Then noting their ability to fight and their lust for plunder, the Romans afforded the Huns Foederatus status, providing them with all manner of inducements and benefits in exchange for military assistance. That made the Huns mercenaries in the modern vernacular. Allowed to settle in the Pannonia Province, the Huns used it as a base to raid the Eastern Roman Empire, attacking Thrace and pillaging Cappadocia, before invading Syria. And while they turned north and east from there and did not pursue Rome, the mass migration they had initiated by destroying the Gothic kingdoms pushed the Visigoths in Rome's direction.

The other overriding problem was that the Romans had been racists and imperialists, subjugating and oppressing everyone within reach of their massive

military. They taxed their subjects to death, making them serfs to a Beastly Lord. They were carnal and corrupt and couldn't be trusted. The real barbarians were those dressed in elegant togas.

Thereafter, the young Honorius, the eldest son of Theodosius, craved adventure and journeyed east to settle a brewing succession battle in the Eastern Empire, something his former consul, Stilicho, had discouraged while he was alive. Somehow it led to a mutiny, one orchestrated by Olympius, a Roman bureaucrat, who murdered most of Stilicho's appointees. Olympius persuaded the gullible Honorius that anyone loyal to the late Stilicho was a threat. The solution, he said, was to appoint him *Magister Officium*. And during this time of intrigue and misadventure, Rome's military commanders became especially vicious toward the Gothic slaves in their service, many of whom were captured by Stilicho and forced into the army. Some thirty thousand escaped Italy and joined forces with Alaric, providing him with motive and means to sack Rome.

Collectively they would hold Rome accountable for the misery the Empire had inflicted on them and so many others. They would invade Italy and lay siege to Rome in the autumn of 408 CE. With its dying population starving and diseased, Senators offered Alaric five-thousand pounds of gold and thirty-thousand pounds of silver, in addition to undisclosed amounts of silk and pepper to lift the siege. But Alaric didn't trust the Senate.

So the Senate, which by this time had become a breeding ground for popes, dispatched Pope Innocent to Ravenna to encourage the child Emperor Honorius to make a deal with the Goths. During an interim meeting with Innocent, Alaric requested that the provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum be given to him as a home for the Visigoths and that he be appointed a general in the Roman army. However, when it came time to engage Honorius, he wouldn't even meet with the man who he considered inferior. With extreme prejudice, he composed a letter refusing his requests, foolishly insulted Alaric because he considered him a barbarian. Then, making matters worse, Honorius tried to sneak Illyrian soldiers into Rome. Alerted to the backhanded ploy, Alaric intercepted them. Outraged by the insults and diplomatic failures, he besieged Rome a second time, this time beginning his assault by destroying the food supplies warehoused in the harbor at Portus.

The Senate and its Pope capitulated, giving Alaric more than he had previously requested. Rather than declaring him one of a hundred "*dux* – generals," he was named: *Magister Utriusque Militum* – Supreme Military Commander. His brother-in-law, Ataulf, was afforded the title "*Comes Domesticorum Equitum*," which made him part of the Roman Elite Guard over equestrian units which protected the Emperor and served as his staff officers. Properly commissioned, they marched toward the boy who roared, seeking to depose Honorius. And this time, little Honorius was shaking in his sandals, ready

to surrender, that is until an army from the Eastern Empire arrived at his doorstep. But that is not to suggest Rome or the Goths were suddenly united. Heraclian, the governor of Africa, cut off Rome's food supply from Egypt. And Sarus, a fellow Gothic commander who was allied with Honorius and who had an ongoing blood feud with Ataulf, attacked Alaric.

So Alaric, recognizing that Honorius was behind the assault, returned to Rome a third time. When he arrived on August 24, 410, slaves inside the city opened Rome's Salarian Gate allowing the Visigoths to enter without a fight. They looted the city for three days, ransacking the mausoleums of Augustus and Hadrian, shattering the urns that contained the ashes of these despicable men. But beyond this, the barbarians were better behaved than Romans. They pillaged the Basilica Aemilia, where the merchants that had pillaged them sold their wares, and the Basilica Julia, which housed the offices of the Roman bureaucracy that had taxed and oppressed them. The Roman citizens that had plundered them and enslaved them, were taken hostage.

Ever willing to attribute all manner of absurdities upon the gullible, Roman patriots and pagan theologians said that the sack was divine punishment for turning away from the traditional gods. Seeing just the opposite, Saint Augustine wrote *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos - The City of God against the Pagans* to describe Christianity's relationship with competing religions and with the Roman government. In the aftermath of Rome's sacking by the Visigoths, the man considered the most influential Father of the Church, wanted to reassure Christians that even if the earthly rule of the Roman Empire was imperiled, it was the City of God that would ultimately triumph.

In 419 CE, a coalition of Suebi (Baltic Germans) allied with Imperial Roman forces to combat a confederation of Vandals (East Germans) and Alans (Iranians) in Leon, Spain. Then in 432, Romans clashed with Romans when the Junior Magister Militum Flavius Aetius and the Senior Magister Militum Bonifacius spared. Bonifacius, while victorious, was mortally wounded, taking some of the luster away from his success. As for Aetius, he fled to the Huns and returned with them to fight another day.

So now with Flavius Aetius perched on the throne, he would send his Huns after the Visigoths in 436. Surprising them, the Huns defeated the Visigoths, with Rome claiming it as a victory of sorts.

Then in the Battle of the Utus in 447, the Byzantines would face off against the Huns again, but this time they were led by the infamous Attila. And yet with the Christian influence over Rome, the Empire had long since abandoned any pretence of historical accuracy, so it is difficult to know what actually occurred. The Huns didn't leave us a written legacy and the Christians had a predilection for

revisionism. Our view is therefore obscured, precluding a reconstruction of the events.

But this we know, beginning in 443, the Byzantines stopped paying tribute to Attila the Hun. Thereupon, in 447, he invaded the Balkans. A Roman force moved northeast to intercept him. They engaged in the Province of Dacia Ripensis, and thus along the Danube. The Byzantines lost. The city of Marcianopolis, Thrace, in modern-day Bulgaria, was completely destroyed. Constantinople, the capital of Byzantine Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church, was now vulnerable, especially in light of the fact that an earthquake earlier that year had destroyed its protective walls. But since the city's inhabitants were suffering from the plague, Attila the Hun wisely decided against infecting himself and his men.

There were safer hunting grounds with easier prey. So Attila pillaged and plundered the Balkan Provinces, including Illyricum, Thrace, Moesia, Scythia, and Dacia. In haunting echos of past glory, he was finally turned back at Thermopylae – the site of Spartan heroism against the Persians long ago, and the place Greeks thought was the gateway to Hades. But that was just the lull before the storm.

In hopes of delaying the inevitable, Emperor Theodosius II, a Junior Augustus, and Honorius's nephew, decided to bribe Attila, paying him an enormous annual tribute to dissuade him from destroying Constantinople, Byzantium, and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Like his namesake, Theodosius II made his mark on Christendom. He is noted for compiling all of the laws and edicts promulgated by Constantine, thereby creating the *Corpus Juris Civilis* of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which by this time had become synonymous with Byzantium. He also presided over a significant religious dispute. After meeting Nestorius, a renowned monk, Theodosius II appointed him Archbishop of Constantinople in 428 – further demonstrating that there was no distinction between church and state. But Nestorius quickly became involved in an argument whereby he tried to find a middle ground between those who insisted on calling the Mary “*Theotokos* – Mother of God” and those who rejected that title because God, as an eternal being, could not have been born. Nestorius's compromise, a heresy later called Nestorianism, was initially supported by the Emperor, but opposed by Archbishop Cyril of Alexandria. At the request of Nestorius, the Theodosius II convened a council in Ephesus in 431. They condemned Nestorius and affirmed the title *Theotokos*, making Mary the “Mother of God,” just as the Babylonians had done with the Queen of their Trinity.

In 451 CE, during the Battle of Chalons, General Flavius Aetius and the Visigoth King Theodoric I were allied against Attila the Hun. The Visigoths, who at this time comprised the preponderance of soldiers in the Roman army, kept the Huns from conquering Gaul.

Attila, as was his custom, had his diviners examine the entrails of an animal sacrifice the morning before battle. The soothsayers allegedly predicted the Hun's defeat, even that one of the enemy leaders would be killed. Wanting Aëtius to die and to hedge his bets, Attila decided to engage, but delayed until sunset so that he and his troops could escape if their fortunes turned. And as it would transpire, Theodoric was thrown from his horse and trampled to death by his own men. The following day, with the battlefield littered with dead bodies, the Huns stayed in their camp while the Visigoths sang heroic songs to their fallen king.

The Vandals were up next, drawn into the conflict to oppose Emperor Petronius Maximus who had usurped the throne. His reign would be short-lived, even by Roman standards. As wealthy Senator and prominent aristocrat, he had been instrumental in the murders of General Flavius Aetius and Emperor Valentinian. And murder had its rewards. He was designated the "*Comes Sacrarum Largitionum* – Count of Sacred Largess," because he led the restoration of the Old St. Peter's Basilica. But it didn't do him much good. He would be dead within two months, killed during the third sack of Rome.

The dual murders were interesting in their own right. Rome evidently fiddled as the city burned. Emperor Valentinian and the High and Mighty Maximus placed a wager on a game that Maximus lost. Without his purse, Maximus left his royal ring as collateral, guarantying that he would pay the debt. But according to Roman lore, Valentinian used it to court Lucina, the beautiful wife of Maximus, whom Valentinian had lusted after. Believing she had been summoned by her husband, Lucina found herself at dinner with Valentinian. He raped her. So much for Valentine's Day.

Lucina, upon returning home, accused her husband, Maximus, of betrayal, believing that he had sent her to the Emperor to curry political favor. This in turn gave Maximus every motivation to eliminate an obviously detested and despicable individual. But he had to be careful, knowing that while Aetius was the Supreme Military Commander and a Maximus loyalist, he could not exact the vengeance he craved on Valentinian without it costing him his own life. Then as the story goes, Maximus cozied up to a eunuch serving Valentinian, the *Primicerius Sacri Cubiculi* Heraclius, who had quietly shown his contempt for General Aetius. Conspiring together, they convinced Emperor Valentinian that Aetius was planning to assassinate him, urging Valentinian to strike first, which he did with the help of his eunuch on September 21, 454.

With the general dead, Maximus asked Emperor Valentinian to appoint him Supreme Commander. But he refused based upon the eunuch's council. Now with two reasons to kill the king, Maximus nurtured two willing accomplices in Optilia and Thraustila, both Scythians who had fought under Aetius, but were now serving as Valentinian's escort. Maximus simply told the truth, albeit not the whole truth, revealing that Valentinian had killed their General. Then after offering them a reward for the betrayal of the Emperor, on March 16, 455, they executed him along with the previously complicit eunuch. The Scythians took the imperial diadem and robe and brought them to Maximus, who used them to claim the throne. To his credit, the Scythians were properly paid for the fine work that they had done. Then working quickly, Emperor Maximus married Licinia, Valentinian's widow.

With no time for a honeymoon, the murdering Maximus sent a mission to Toulouse to gain the support of the Visigoths, recognizing that Rome's foe now comprised most of its army. At the same time, he canceled the betrothal of Licinia's daughter, Eudocia, to Huneric, the son of the Vandal King Geiseric. Instead, he wanted his son, Palladius to wed Eudocia, all to strengthen his ties with the Theodosian dynasty in Constantinople. But it proved to be a miscalculation. The Vandal King claimed that the canceled marriage invalidated his treaty with Valentinian, which was sufficient to motivate the Vandals to invade Italy.

Within two months of Maximus assuming the throne, the Vandal fleet was en route to Rome. Recognizing that the Visigoths would not arrive in time to save him, Maximus was minimized when he rode out of the city on May 31, 455 without an escort. He was stoned to death by a soldier who mutilated his body and tossed it into the Tiber River. Maximus's son was also killed.

Three days later, Vandal King Geiseric captured Rome. In actuality, the gates were thrown open to him on the order of Rome's actual authority, Pope Leo, who requested that the Vandals not destroy his Basilica or any of the religious buildings of ancient Rome that the Church had converted for their use. In that they were all Christians, the Vandal soldiers would plunder the city for weeks, but respecting the pope's directives, they minimized their use of arson, torture, and murder, but not stealing or kidnap.

The English term "vandalism" is derived from this period, because the Vandals stripped away most everything, including the bronze roof tiles of the Temple of Jupiter. The women of the royal court were kidnapped and forced to "marry" Vandal chieftains, which is to say that they were raped. And countless shiploads Roman citizens, now captives, were sent off to Africa to be sold as slaves. But St. Peter's wasn't burned and the priests and pope were not harmed.

After begging the Visigoths to rescue them from the Vandals, the Western Roman Empire under General Aegidius confronted the army of their fickle friend and often foe under King Theodoric at the Battle of Orleans. Two years earlier, the general had announced Northern Gaul's secession from Rome, as Imperial assassinations continued to plague the crumbling Empire. Having been stripped of his title by Ricimer, Rome's emperor *de jour*, Aegidius decided to invade Italy. Meanwhile, the Visigoths saw an opportunity to expand their territory. The opposing armies met in 453 CE in north-central France. The result was scored as a marginal victory for the breakaway sub-province.

Deprived of the soldiers required to menace the world, the battles were now fewer and further between. It wasn't until 486 that a Roman rump state would fight again. The breakaway province of Northern Gaul, which was now called the Domain of Soissons, would fight the Franks in 486 CE. Clovis, who had dared the Gallo-Roman leader Syagris to fight, led the Franks. He prevailed, thereby substantially expanding Frankish holdings.

The last battle of the fifth century was waged sometime around 495 CE, but the sources are now exceptionally sketchy. The Battle of Badon Hill was allegedly fought between Britons and Anglo-Saxons – stirring the legend of King Arthur. Gildas, writing *The Ruin of Britain* not long thereafter in the early sixth century, claims: “The Saxons dipped red and savage tongue in the western ocean.” Obviously an impressionable Christian, Gildas would write: “From that time, the citizens were sometimes victorious, sometimes the enemy, in order that the Lord, according to His wont, might try in this nation the Israel of to-day, whether it loves Him or not. This continued up to the year of the siege of Badon Hill, and of almost the last great slaughter inflicted upon the rascally crew. And this commences, a fact I know, as the forty-fourth year, with one month now elapsed; it is also the year of my birth.”

Consulting a late tenth-century source, one equally prone to embellishments, in the *Annals of Wales* we read: “The Battle of Badon, in which Arthur carried the Cross of our Lorde Iesus Christi for three days and three nights upon his shield, and the Britons were the victors.”

This brings us to the only reason for recounting this otherwise meaningless affair. The propensity of Roman Christians to develop mythical characters and then set them into the flow of their revisionist history to sensationalize the merits of their ancestors and promote unifying religious, political, and military propaganda speaks to how they created the false characterization of Yahowsha', removing from Him everything that actually mattered, while replacing the truth with a plethora of pagan predilections.

There would be fourteen wars waged by the Romans in the sixth century. The Byzantines would fight the Sassanid Persian Empire eight times, prevailing on six occasions. They would engage the Vandals twice, winning both battles.

In the West, Rome would be sacked again in 546 CE, this time by the Gothic King Totila. But even this battle was a spillover from the twenty-year war between the Ostrogoths and Byzantines. The Gauls, seeking to recapture Latium, moved against Rome, laying siege to the city for many months. Inside, Bessus, the Commander of the Imperial garrison, wouldn't allow anyone other than the pope to leave. He then profited by selling grain to the civilian population at greatly inflated prices. We are told that Plebeians were eventually reduced to eating nettles, dogs, mice, and finally each other's dung. Many committed suicide. Pope Vigilius, who had fled to the safety of Syracuse, dispatched his fleet of ships to Rome but they were intercepted by the Goths. Meanwhile, the remaining Imperial forces, led by Belisarius, remained mostly idle in their camp at Portus, awaiting reinforcements.

Totila's men would scale Rome's walls during the night of December 17, 546. As they opened one gate, the Roman defenders fled out through another, leaving only five hundred people in what had once been the heart of the Empire. Eighty-six of them were killed, mostly civilians huddling in churches. What little was left in Rome was plundered by Totila, whose intent was to turn the gated ruin into an enclosed pasture for his sheep. But with visions of carnage swirling in his head, he relented to pursue the Byzantine army in Apulia – the slender, southern-most Italian peninsula set between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. And as he rides off into the sunset, leaving nothing but the Church of Rome in the dust, thus ends our romp through the gory and glorified history of Rome.

Those who are impressed by architectural grandeur and military might revere Rome. Those who are opposed to arrogance, decadence, savagery, and paganism are less impressed, and view the Roman Empire from Yahowah's perspective: monstrous, fearsome, horrifying, appalling, and evil with the power, capacity, and will to destroy.

—

Let's reestablish our bearings. We have just completed the first seven verses of Dany'el 7. By way of review, they reveal...

“In the first year of (*ba chad shanah la*) Belsha'tsar (*Belsha'tsar*), the king of (*melek*) Babel - Confusion (*Babel*), Dany'el (*Dany'el*) saw (*chazah*) a revealing vision (*chelem*) and (*wa*) supernatural revelations (*chazuw*) in his

mind (*re'sh*) while upon his bed (*'al mishkab*). Thereupon (*'adayn*), in (*ba*) the prophetic revelation (*chelem*), he was prompted to write a complete copy of (*katab*) the things (*milah*) being communicated (*'amar*). (7:1)

I, Dany'el (*Dany'el*), responded (*'anah*) and then said (*wa 'amar*), 'I am able to see (*hawah chazah*), with my sensory perceptions, the vision (*ba chazuw*) during night (*'im lyly 'a*).' And then (*wa*), behold, right there (*'aruw*), four (*'arba'*) spirits (*ruwach*) out of the heavens (*shamaym 'a*) churning up (*guwah*) the approach to the Great Sea (*la yam 'a rab 'a*). (7:2)

Then four (*wa 'arba'*) great beasts (*rab chyuwah*) were coming up out of the Sea (*calaq min yam 'a*), being transformed and different (*shanah*) one from the other (*da' min da'*). (7:3)

The first (*qadmay 'a*) was similar to (*ka*) a lion (*'aryeh*) but with (*wa*) wings (*gaph*) of (*dy*) an eagle (*nashar*) upon her (*la*). I kept watching (*hawah chazah*) while (*'ad*) her wings were plucked off (*marat gap*). But then (*wa*) she was lifted up (*natal*) from the earth (*min 'ara' 'a*) and (*wa*) upon (*'al*) feet (*ragal*) like a human (*k 'anash*), she was established and made to stand upright (*quwm*). Then (*wa*) a human (*'anash*) heart and thought processes (*labab*) were given to her (*yahab la*). (7:4)

And then behold (*wa 'aruw*) another (*'achoran*) beast (*chyuwah*), a second one (*tinyan*), actually resembling (*damah la*) a bear (*dob*). And on one side (*wa la satar chad*), she was established (*quwm*). And (*wa*) three (*telat*) ribs (*'ala'*) were in her mouth (*ba pum*) between her teeth (*ben shen shen*). And (*wa*) thusly (*ken*) they said to her (*'amar la*), 'Rise up (*quwm*) and devour (*'akal*) an abundance (*sagyi'*) of human flesh (*basar*).' (7:5)

At this same site (*ba danah 'atar*), I kept focused and observant (*hawah chazah*) and then, behold (*wa 'aruw*), another (*'achoran*), this one resembling (*ka*) a leopard (*namar*). And upon her (*wa la*) were four wings (*'arba' gaph*) such as (*dy*) a bird (*owp*). They were on her back side (*'al gab gab*). There were also four heads (*wa 'arba' re'sh*), all associated with this awesome beast (*la chywah 'a*). And governmental dominion (*wa shalatan*) was imparted (*yahab*) to her (*la*). (7:6)

In this same place (*ba danah 'atar*) I remained observant (*hawah chazah*) during the night vision (*ba lyly chazuw 'a*), and right there, behold (*wa 'aruw*): the fourth and final (*raby'ay raby'ay*) awesome and monstrous beast (*chywah*), the most fearsome and frightening, yet also revered and respected by some, – dazzlingly beautiful yet terrible and terrorizing, often longing for revenge (*dachal*), horrifying and appalling, awful and evil, dreadful and horrific, sickening and gruesome (*wa 'eymatan*), yet (*wa*) exceedingly and

qeren ‘a da’) **along with** (*wa*) **a mouth** (*pum*) **speaking powerfully and abundantly as an esteemed authority** (*malal rab* – prolifically conversing from a position of high status, pontificating verbosely as a great individual, conveying big words which are considered high and mighty, while discussing the big and important issues regarding the almighty).” (Dany’el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:8)

I caught myself laughing out loud. Sha’uwl, the founder of the Christian religion and the author of half of the faith’s “New Testament,” chose the Roman name “Paulos” which means “lowly and little.” Paul, evidently, serves as the archetype for the “Antichrist.”

While this was written in Aramaic, Yahowah uses ‘*achoran* to address the “last” days leading up to and during the Tribulation. So this final horn emerges long after the fall of the Roman Empire – although not its Church. The horn, as always, speaks of power, of influence, and therefore of kingdoms and institutions. Horns were initially used in the crowns of kings and leading clerics, and thus speak of governmental and religious leaders.

In trying to ascertain the identity of the newly fashioned, lowly and little horn emerging in the last days from among the ten divisions of Rome, we should commence our search by trying to identify a country has been recently established, that is small, even insignificant. And fortunately, we have been given several marvelous clues which will help us hone in on the country and its emerging leader.

Let’s begin by considering, then eliminating, the candidates. The potential geographic regions include: Britain, France, Spain, Germany, and Italy in the West and Greece, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and Libya in the East. In the United Kingdom, we find that Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have recently become independent, and Scotland is about to become so, but they are based upon very old and established communities and they are not lowly economically. Moreover, as we shall learn in the next chapter, the emerging Beast is every bit as much Greek geographically as he will be a legacy of Rome religiously, so the newly emerged nations in Britain are way too far northwest to be considered.

There are no new nations which have been carved out of France, Spain, Germany, or Italy, disqualifying these countries as the birthplace of the Beastly horn. The only small nations which have emerged from them are Monaco and the Vatican, but both have long histories and neither is lowly economically. And as I’ve mentioned, further disqualifying France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, Dany’el 8:7-11 reveals that this unique and verbose leader will come out of the Macedonian Empire, which grew southeast of Greece.

Among the Roman divisions in the East, there have been no modern, lowly, or little countries carved out of land originally part of Egypt or Libya. Turkey and Syria both emerged out of the demise of the Ottoman Empire, but that was one hundred years ago and neither country could be considered insignificant. So that leaves us with a lone candidate: Greece – but not in the sense of the modern nation, because it became sovereign and independent when it seceded from the Ottoman Empire in 1828. And yet regions within the ancient Roman Province meet every condition delineated in the prophecy – including those described in Dany’el 8 (where in 8:9 it is the homeland of Alexander the Great) and 11 as well as those found in Revelation 13 and 17.

The Romans called Helena “Macedonia” in tribute to Alexander the Great. This region included the entire Greek Peninsula, all of present-day Macedonia, and most all of Albania, in addition to the western Aegean Islands. While it may be superfluous, in the second and third centuries CE, greater Macedonia was divided into the provinces of Achaea (the southern tip of the Greek Peninsula), Macedonia (northern and eastern Greece, southern Albania, including today’s Macedonia, and southwestern Bulgaria), Epirus (extreme northwestern Greece), Thrace (southeastern Bulgaria and extreme northwestern Turkey), Sparta (southeastern Peloponnese), and Crete (in the Mediterranean Sea south of Greece and west of Turkey).

Recognizing that modern-day Greece is neither newly conceived, small geographically, insignificant in population, nor immaterial internationally, there are only two candidates left to consider: Albania and modern Macedonia. Albania was established after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe following the Balkan Wars, declaring its independence in 1913. While it is no doubt small, it is part of NATO, suggesting that it isn’t completely insignificant. And since it will be one-hundred thirteen-years old at the time addressed in this prediction, I suspect that’s too senior to qualify. And that leaves us with Macedonia.

The Republic of Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia and became a sovereign state in 1991. It is tiny, less than ten thousand square miles. Its Gross Domestic Product is just \$22 billion. A scant two million people call this landlocked country in the central Balkan peninsula of Southeastern Europe home – a quarter of which are Muslims who want to leave the predominantly Eastern Orthodox nation. It has been rejected by the European Union and by NATO. Further, its flag and national anthem pay tribute to the sun, Satan’s principle guise. It is an interesting blend of Socialist Humanists, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and fundamentalist Muslims. Moreover, since Yahowsha’ affirms in His dissertation on Dany’el 7, 8, and 9 that the Beast will “come up out of the sea,” meaning that the Towrahless One will be a Gentile, it is interesting to note that there are less than 200 Jews residing in Macedonia today.

In compliance with the prophecy, Macedonia is surrounded by a number of small nations, several of which could easily be amalgamated into it. The options include: Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia. However, since the prophecy reveals that three of the previous Roman principalities would be cut off, we should be looking for larger and older prey.

Even a cursory economic evaluation of annual national deficits and cumulative debt reveal that a time is quickly approaching when the European Union will divest itself of Greece and Italy – making them susceptible to a Macedonian alliance. But don't forget about Turkey. It has consistently been denied admission into the Eurozone. Therefore, as worldwide recessions turn into depressions, Turkey might readily join such an alliance – in fact, I'd bet on it.

However, in Dany'el 8:9, after revealing that the Terror of the Tribulation will come out of the place Alexander descended upon the world, Macedonia, we discover that his influence will expand southward and eastward toward the Promised Land. That excludes Italy south of Rome, but becomes a perfect fit for Greece and Turkey. And then as we continue to move toward Israel, either Syria or Lebanon would qualify for the third assimilated nation. By this time, based upon Yasha'yah / Isaiah 17, the Syrian government will have fallen to Islamic terrorists.

If you are looking for the Towrahless One, known to Christians as the "Antichrist," the prophetic evidence reveals that you'll find this unique and verbose statesman among Macedonian politicians. And based upon the "lowly and little" reference, I suspect he will be a Pauline Christian, a devotee of the Eastern Orthodox Church and a product of a Socialist Secular education. He will be an Anti-Semite and Muslim sympathizer. I would also expect him to cultivate a following in Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon, perhaps even Rome, creating an economic alliance that will quickly grow into something more, especially as the world maneuvers in reaction to the fall of the Syrian government and the threat of world war.

The following statement suggests that the Towrahless One will keep the leaders of the assimilated nations in place, but will orchestrate their influence within his alliance. And if true, this next statement should be associated with the previous one.

"I continued to watch (*hawah chazah* – I kept focused and observant (peal perfect)) **while** ('*ad* – until and as) **those thrones** (*dy karatse*' – these positions of power) **were set in place** (*ramah* – were imposed and completely positioned (piel perfect))." (Dany'el / God Judges and Vindicates / Daniel 7:9)

And we shall as well. Yahowah is revealing our history, past, present, and future. He does not want any of us to be left in the dark.