APPENDIX A

A History of the Commentary of Daniel 2:40

The purpose of this Appendix is to provide a more complete history of the commentaries of Daniel 2:40 than that given in the Introduction. The details given here are meant to provide the rationale for the statements made in the Introduction pertaining to these same commentaries.

The reader is also reminded that the purpose of this history is not to argue that Rome is not the fulfillment of Daniel 2:40 though this history does contribute to the argument for such a position. Rather, the argument against Rome fulfilling Daniel 2:40 is reserved for Chapter 1 where that false notion is more thoroughly treated and refuted. The main purpose of this history is to show how the commentaries supporting this erroneous position regarding Daniel 2:40 got started, and evolved, and to show how these same commentaries actually contributed to the sealing of Daniel even for people living in the end-times.

The Verse, Daniel 2: 40

Daniel 2:40 says, "Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others."

This verse is part of the text in Daniel 2 that gives us the interpretation of the dream of the metal statue. Daniel 2:40 tells us that the empire represented by the iron legs must crush and break into pieces "all the others," that is, all the preceding empires in the

statue which were Babylon, Persia, and Greece, i.e. the gold head, silver chest, and bronze belly and thighs, respectively. Suffice it to say for now that, at the very least, the empire that does the crushing must completely conquer the empire that is to be crushed. Conquest would include occupation of the enemy capital city, capture, exile or death of the ruling dynasty of the conquered empire, and conquest of most of the enemy empire's land area and population.

It is the identity of the iron leg empire that is in question. Depending on which empire it is, it completely changes the picture of end-time prophecy. Is it Rome or some other empire?

What runs counter to all the arguments of the popular view of a Roman Antichrist is the hard fact of ancient and medieval world history that Rome *never* conquered Persia. They were archenemies who were at war with each other on and off for six centuries, with neither empire able to conquer the other. Rome would conquer a few outlying province of Persia, and Persia of Rome, but that is as far as it went.

It Started With A Supposition ...

Probably the first Christian scholar to write a commentary on Daniel 2:40 was Hippolytus, a bishop of Rome just after AD 200. He wrote "the legs of iron ... expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present."[1] There are three reasons that can be proposed here for his position. First, he believed that Rome was going to be the only world power for the remainder of world history. He had written in another work that he believed and presumed that Christ would return in AD 500.[2] He also wrote that Rome would last until that time, and be the world power for a total of 500 years (from AD 1 to AD 500).[3] So, in his opinion there was going to be no other power. Secondly, Hippolytus lived in the city of Rome and saw persecution day to day, and how Christianity was being pressured.

Third, some Roman historians faithfully recorded either the false claims of Emperor Trajan who tried to conquer Persia, or wrote how those in government gave him more credit than his achievements

were due. One historian who was a contemporary of Hippolytus, Cassius Dio, wrote that Trajan was given the title of "Parthicus" ("victor over Parthia," which was Persia) and the senate granted him "the privilege of celebrating as many triumphs as he should desire."[4] In fact, Trajan only conquered two outlying regions of Persia— Armenia and Mesopotamia. Trajan may have been victorious in a couple of battles, but conquest was something else. It would be the same as a Persian general being a victor over Syria and Egypt and claiming he had conquered Rome. At this time Rome had been at war with the Persians but had not conquered them. Therefore, this first commentary was a *supposition* based on Hippolytus' own presumptions about the end-times, and the false reports surrounding an egotistical emperor.

... That Became Assumption ...

The next commentator in this history is the great church father, Jerome, who created the first widely used Latin translation of the Bible known as the Vulgate. Jerome wrote a commentary on Daniel dated AD 408. He expressed his opinion regarding which empire was represented by the iron legs when he wrote, "Now the fourth empire, which *clearly* refers to the Romans, is the iron empire which breaks in pieces and overcomes all others"[5] (author emphasis).

There are a few reasons why Jerome might have expressed his supposition so boldly as to say it "clearly" was the Romans. He lived in the Eastern Roman Empire, in Antioch and near Jerusalem. He saw how Rome crushed Judea 300 years before, and how Rome subdued everything it conquered. This might have given him an impression of the power of Rome. Jerome also had the "benefit" of histories written in the third and fourth centuries. Eutropius, the historian, wrote that Trajan "conquered and kept ... Ctesiphon" and "obtained the mastery over ... an extensive region of Persia."[6] Both statements are false: he was not able to keep the Persian city of Ctesiphon, and his conquests took away only the outlying provinces of Persia, much as Egypt was an outlying province of Rome. The written histories of

Trajan's conquests would have presented a false idea to Jerome and reinforced what was also available earlier to Hippolytus.

We do have a clue as to his assumptions on this matter, due to an interesting but very tragic development. This development would have been a divergence of real world events from prophetic interpretation in his time. Two years after Jerome wrote his commentary on Daniel, Alaric the Visigoth leader sacked Rome. Jerome was aware of this for in a letter he writes "a dreadful rumour came from the West … as I dictate, sobs choke my utterance … the City which had taken the *whole* world was itself taken" 7 (author emphasis). In writing "the whole world was itself taken" he made the *assumption* that the iron leg empire was Rome and it had *already* taken Persia. This position would have been bolstered by the fact that Rome was already in decline and its best days were behind it. The belief that Rome had already taken Persia could have been based on Hippolytus' position as well as the exaggerated histories regarding Trajan. One thing we do know is that Jerome never saw Islam and its complete conquest of Persia.

Going forward over eleven centuries we arrive at the time of the great theologian, John Calvin, at the time of the Reformation. During those interim centuries between Jerome and Calvin, Rome and Persia were at a standoff for over half that time until Islam came along and conquered Persia thoroughly. Over the remaining centuries up to Calvin's time, Islam changed Persia's religion and culture and alphabet and laws. Islam thoroughly conquered and crushed Persia.

In the 1560s, John Calvin, probably one of the most influential theologians of the last 500 years, stated which empire fulfilled Daniel 2:40 when he wrote, "Here the Fourth Empire is described, which agrees only with the Roman, for we know that the four successors of Alexander were at length subdued."[8]

Calvin gives us the benefit of providing an argument for his position of Daniel 2:40 referring to the Romans. Alexander's Greek and therefore bronze empire of the statue broke into four successor empires. He wrote that Rome subdued all four successors