

Whilst the year A.D. 476 has commonly been given for the downfall of Imperial Rome, the disintegration of the Empire was actually a long-drawn-out process which lasted for over 200 years. Between A.D. 350 and 550, Rome's territories were penetrated by successive hordes of Germanic invaders. Some of these barbarian tribes passed quickly into oblivion, leaving scarcely a trace. Others succeeded in carving out more definite and permanent territories from the body of the prostrate Empire. Our map shows the approximate location of ten of the more representative and permanent of these barbarian kingdoms. However, boundaries were continually fluctuating, and no single still map can give an accurate picture of the rapid succession of changes during this period of vast political upheaval. An adequate portrayal of the partition of the Roman Empire would require a motion picture of the events of two centuries.

The following chart lists the original kingdoms and their modern successors:

Anglo-Saxons	England	Visigoths	Spain
Franks	France	Suevi	Portugal
Alemanni	Germany	Ostrogoths	Disappeared from history
Burgundians	Switzerland	Vandals	Disappeared from history
Lombards	Italy	Heruli	Disappeared from history

6.—ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A UNITED EUROPE (vv 42, 43)

The Roman Empire has been described as "History's 'Humpty Dumpty'". After Rome's downfall in A.D. 476, "all the king's horses and all the king's men"—the warriors and diplomats of fifteen centuries—have failed to "put Humpty Dumpty together again." Six notable rulers who have tried vainly to unite Europe were:

Charlemagne (of the Franks) ..	8th century	Napoleon (of France)	19th century
Charles V (of Spain)	16th century	Kaiser Wilhelm (of Germany)	20th century
Louis XIV (of France)	18th century	Adolf Hitler (of Germany)	20th century

Repeated efforts have also been made to weld the fragments of Europe by intermarriage between ruling families, especially in the period between 1850 and 1914. These, too, have failed. Says historian Charles Downer Hazen: "Europe has always refused to be dominated by a single nation or a single man. It has run the risk several times in its history of passing under such a yoke, but it always, in the end, succeeded in escaping it" (*Modern European History*, p 229).

Why have all past efforts to unite Europe failed? Because men have attempted to do what God has said never will be done!

"The kingdom shall be divided" (v 41).

"They shall not cleave [cling, adhere] one to another" (v 43).

7.—THE CLIMAX OF HISTORY—GOD STEPS IN (vv 44, 45)

(See Chart No. 7—Stone Descending on Feet of Image)

For centuries the prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come", has been uttered by the lips of millions (see Matt. 6:10). Here is God's dramatic answer!

When this prayer is answered, the long, dark night of tragedy and sorrow will end forever. Time will melt into eternity. Heaven will touch earth in healing and beauty. Man's dream of eternal peace and security will be realised at last!

Conclusion Before we conclude our study of Daniel 2, let us put ourselves into the prophetic picture.

Why do you think God has given US an opportunity to hear these things? Is it just an accident? Just a freak of chance?

Ah, no. This question was asked of a young Australian couple at the close of a Bible lesson like this. After some moments of thoughtful silence, the young woman replied: "I suppose it is because He wants us!"

He does indeed! And it is wonderful to be wanted—especially by God!