

TAKING EUROPE FOR JESUS

BY JOSHUA SCHWISOW



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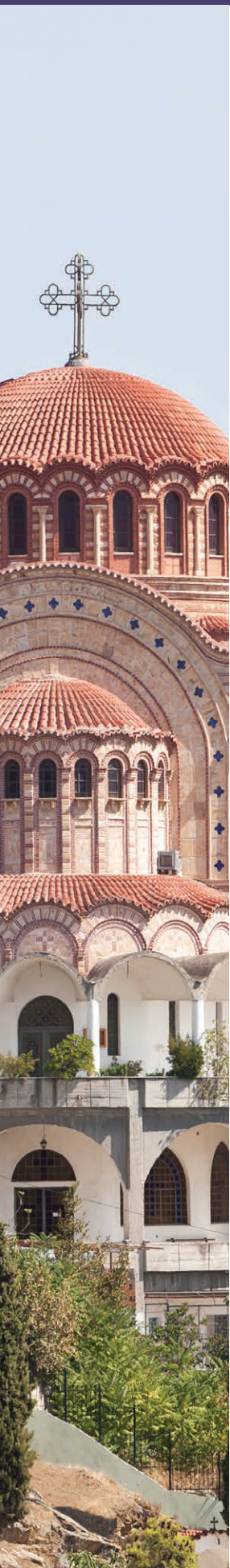
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	9
UNIT 1	13
PROLOGUE	15
CHAPTER 1 Introduction to Europe	17
CHAPTER 2 Rome: A Republic Turned into an Empire.....	33
CHAPTER 3 The Birth of Christianity in the Fullness of Time	43
CHAPTER 4 Roman Culture and Religion	51
CHAPTER 5 Rome's Persecution of Christ's People	59
CHAPTER 6 Irenaeus of Lyons: Fighting for the Faith Once Delivered	65
CHAPTER 7 Ambrose of Milan: Shepherd of God's People.....	75
CHAPTER 8 How Christianity Came to Great Britain.....	85
CHAPTER 9 Patrick: Missionary to the Irish	93
UNIT 2	103
CHAPTER 10 Columba and the Monastery of Iona	107





CHAPTER 11	
Church and Community Life in the British Isles	115

CHAPTER 12	
Bede: Historian of the English Church	121

CHAPTER 13	
Alcuin: Court Adviser to Charlemagne	129

CHAPTER 14	
Anskar: Missionary to Denmark and Sweden	139

CHAPTER 15	
Cyril and Methodius: Reaching the Slavs for Christ.....	149

CHAPTER 16	
Alfred the Great: Christian King of Wessex	161

CHAPTER 17	
Aethelstan: First King of England	169

UNIT 3	175
--------------	-----

CHAPTER 18	
The Crusade Against the Cathars.....	179

CHAPTER 19	
The Waldensian Movement.....	187

CHAPTER 20	
The Black Death.....	195

CHAPTER 21	
John Wycliffe and the Lollards	201

CHAPTER 22	
John Huss: The Preacher of Prague	211

CHAPTER 23	
Girolamo Savonarola: Reformer of Florence	223

UNIT 4	235
--------------	-----

CHAPTER 24	
The Reformation in France.....	239
CHAPTER 25	
Pierre Viret: Evangelist to France	247
CHAPTER 26	
The sufferings of the Huguenots.....	253
CHAPTER 27	
Lady Jane Grey: Nine Day Queen of England	261
CHAPTER 28	
Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Brethren	273
CHAPTER 29	
The Great Awakening.....	285
CHAPTER 30	
John Newton: God’s Amazing Grace to a Wretched Sinner	293
CHAPTER 31	
Charles Simeon: Perseverance in Suffering.....	307
CHAPTER 32	
Brownlow North: Evangelist to the British Isles.....	317
CHAPTER 33	
Charles and Susannah Spurgeon: A Spiritual Harvest in London	329
CHAPTER 34	
Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Preaching the Whole Counsel of God.....	343
CHAPTER 35	
Diet Eman: Faithful Christian of the Dutch Resistance.....	353
BIBLIOGRAPHY	365
LIST OF IMAGES.....	367



INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Dear Parents and Teachers,
Thank you for choosing *Taking Europe for Jesus* for your student's history studies. Before your student gets started, here is some introductory information so you can make the best use of this course.

Taking Europe for Jesus contains thirty-five chapters retelling some of the most significant stories from European Christian history. Because this course is designed for sixth grade readers, it is necessarily limited in its scope. We've selected some of our favorite stories, but many stories that could be told were not included. We hope this book will whet you and your student's appetite to delve more deeply into the many wonderful works of God in Europe.

For a more comprehensive look at world history (including Europe) you will find more detail provided in two other works published by Generations:

- *Preparing the World for Jesus* by Kevin Swanson (covers the BC period)
- *Taking the World for Jesus* by Kevin Swanson (covers the AD period)

Many of the chapters in this book are biographical in nature. We use biography to teach history for a few reasons. First, a biographical approach immerses the reader into a particular place and time with living color. The student gets to "see the sights" and "hear the sounds" by reading stories of real people. We also use biography because God accomplishes His purposes through faithful messengers. The gospel of Jesus Christ is spread throughout the world by His servants.

Taking Europe for Jesus is part of a larger series. In 2017, Generations published a high school textbook called *Taking the World for Jesus*. In that book, author Kevin Swanson recounted the history of Christian missions from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In our *Taking the World* series, it is our desire to retell that same history, continent by continent for younger children as well. These stories cover the history of Jesus Christ's rule being recognized throughout the world. The Bible says He is ruler over all kings on earth (Rev. 1:5). The stories in this series of history books recount how Jesus' rule was both further established and recognized all over the world.

Taking Europe for Jesus begins with an introductory chapter focused on European geography. This chapter is intended to orient the reader to the locations and sights they will encounter in the stories that follow. Chapters 2-5 focus on the birth of Christianity in the world of the Roman Empire. These chapters include some review of key biblical events in order to connect these redemptive events into the flow of history. Chapters 6-35 include a mix of biography, regional history, and key movements or events in European history from a Christian perspective.

In order to make this course visually engaging, we have included maps, historical artwork, and

photography. Taking time to examine the maps will help the student gain a grasp of the geography of Europe. Each chapter also contains Prayer Points. These are suggested topics to guide the reader into a time of prayer. We should give thanks and praise to God for His great works done in the past. And we should pray that God's kingdom would come and His will be done in the future. It is recommended that the parent/teacher and student take time to pray together after each chapter is read.

We have included numerous quotations within the chapters. In some cases, original quotations have been simplified to be more understandable for readers at a sixth grade level. However, every effort has been made to accurately communicate the meaning of the original quotations.

The bibliography at the end of the book contains a list of primary and secondary sources consulted in the research and writing of this book.

An accompanying workbook for this textbook is also available. It contains a lesson schedule, written assignments, and enrichment projects to further reinforce what is learned in the reading of this book.

We offer this resource to Christian families around the world with the prayer that Jesus Christ, our great King and Savior, would be glorified in our humble efforts.

For Christ's Kingdom,

Joshua Schwisow

The Generations Curriculum Team

December 2021



ANCIENT ROMAN AMPITHEATRE IN ARLES, FRANCE

UNIT 1

AD 33-500

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. (Acts 8:1, 4)

After our Lord's death and resurrection, He ascended into heaven. From that place of authority, Jesus rules over all things. Before He left earth, He gave His disciples a mission. It was a mission impossible to achieve by human strength. This was the mission: disciple all the nations by baptizing them and by teaching them the commands of King Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20). This mission was unachievable by human power alone.

However, the early Christians were not alone. The Holy Spirit empowered them. The Book of Acts tells us what happened. Jesus Christ continued his work from heaven. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. With this power, the Apostles and early Christians began to execute the mission. They took the faith all over the Roman world.

Christianity expanded rapidly into Palestine, Asia Minor, and into Europe. But it was not easy. Difficulty and danger came with every opportunity. The first three centuries of Christianity's expansion can be summarized in two words: **persecution** and **growth**. **Tertullian** was an early church father in Africa. He wisely observed "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." The blood of Christians was not shed in vain. It seeded the faith all over Europe. Through seven major persecutions, the seed was scattered. Eventually, however, the Roman persecutions ended. In God's providence, the **Emperor Constantine** (reigned AD 306-337) confessed the name of Christ. This brought about a period of peace for the Lord's people.

The Roman Empire reached its largest size around AD 117. But within 300 years, it collapsed. In AD 409, the Romans withdrew from the island of Great Britain. A year later, another monumental event occurred. The **Visigoths**, a Germanic people, attacked the great city of Rome. The city was plundered and burned. News of this event shook the world. It was a sign of Rome's weakening grip over Europe. **Jerome**, a Christian leader alive at that time, understood how times had changed. He wrote, "the city which had taken the whole world was *taken itself*." Then, in AD 476, the Roman Empire dissolved. The mighty empire was no more. But Christ's church marched on. It continued its expansion into every corner of Europe.

This period of European history was a dangerous time. Even after the Roman persecutions died down, this did not mean the end of obstacles or enemies for Christ's people. Early Christian missionaries in Europe did not wrestle against flesh and blood. They battled against the demonic hordes. It was these "principalities and powers" that had for centuries reigned supreme over much of Europe. Thankfully, the power of Jesus Christ is greater than all the forces of darkness. By one word, Jesus, in his earthly ministry, expelled the demons. And where the Holy Spirit empowered Christ's servants, the forces of darkness also had to flee.

By the AD 400s, there were numerous signs of how far Christianity had expanded. One good example is the missionary we know as **Patrick**. It was Patrick of Ireland who was called by God to take the gospel to the pagan peoples of Ireland. Great Britain and Ireland were considered “the ends of the earth.” Even there, the church was established. These once idol-worshipping peoples turned from idols to serve the living God. It was the power of Christ’s gospel that transformed Europe.

Timeline of Key Events

AD 33 Jesus Christ’s Death and Resurrection

AD 52 First Christian convert in Europe (Lydia in Philippi)

AD 64-68 Persecution under Nero

AD 89-96 Persecution under Domitian

AD 156 Death of Polycarp of Smyrna

AD 177 Persecution of Christians in Gaul

AD 303-311 “Great Persecution” under Diocletian

AD 325 Council of Nicaea

AD 354 Birth of Augustine of Hippo

AD 390 Birth of Patrick of Ireland

AD 404 Roman gladiatorial games come to an end

AD 409 Withdrawal of the Romans from Great Britain

AD 429 Germanus opposes Pelagianism in Great Britain

AD 476 Fall of the Roman Empire

PROLOGUE

One Saturday, in the ancient city of Philippi, a few men went down to the river. It was customary on the Jewish Sabbath for citizens of the city to pray at the river. A number of women gathered at the banks of the river to pour out their hearts in prayer to God. Among the women who gathered that day was a woman named Lydia. She was a seller of purple fabrics.

That day, a few men happened to attend the prayer meeting as well. Among them was the Apostle Paul. He, with his fellow companions, went down to the river because they knew it was a place of prayer. Perhaps on those riverbanks in Philippi they would find hearts ready to receive the good news about Jesus the Christ.

Paul and his companions met Lydia. Then they started up a conversation. Paul told Lydia about Jesus the Messiah. He explained how Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant Scriptures. He explained Jesus' death and resurrection. During that conversation, God showed His grace to Lydia. "The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). After receiving the good news, the Bible tells us, "she and her household were baptized" (Acts 16:15).

What is so significant about Lydia's conversion? Why recount her conversion at the beginning of this book?

According to the Book of Acts, Lydia may be the very first Christian from the continent we know today as Europe. Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, began His saving work in Europe starting with the salvation of Lydia and her household.

From the first century to the present, Europe has been shaped by the Christian faith. What started with one woman and her household would spread to every people group and nation in Europe.

This book is about that story: the story of how Jesus Christ transformed Europe.



LAUTERBRUNNEN VALLEY, SWISS ALPS

INTRODUCTION TO EUROPE

O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.
The earth is full of Your possessions.
(Ps. 104:24)

Welcome to Europe! In this book, you will embark on a journey through the history of this part of the world. Spanning from the time of Christ's ascension all the way until the present, you will learn of many of God's mighty acts of salvation and judgment in Europe. In story after story, you will see how Jesus Christ is Savior of the world and King over all things. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). He is also ruler of all the kings of this earth (Rev. 1:5). In the chapters that follow, you will find these two truths about Jesus Christ demonstrated in European history.

Before we begin that historical exploration, let's first learn more about this important part

of God's world. This brief geographical survey of Europe will help prepare you for the people, places, and events in the chapters that follow.

REGIONS OF EUROPE

Europe is the western portion of the landmass we call **Eurasia**. (Eurasia is the largest landmass in the world. It contains all of Europe and all of Asia.) Europe has different regions, and each region contains nations with various languages, unique histories, and distinct cultures. Take a look at the map and table below to see some of the different regions of Europe.

There are about fifty separate sovereign nations in Europe today. Many of these nations are members of a multi-national union called the European Union (EU). This union was formed in 1993.

MOUNTAINS

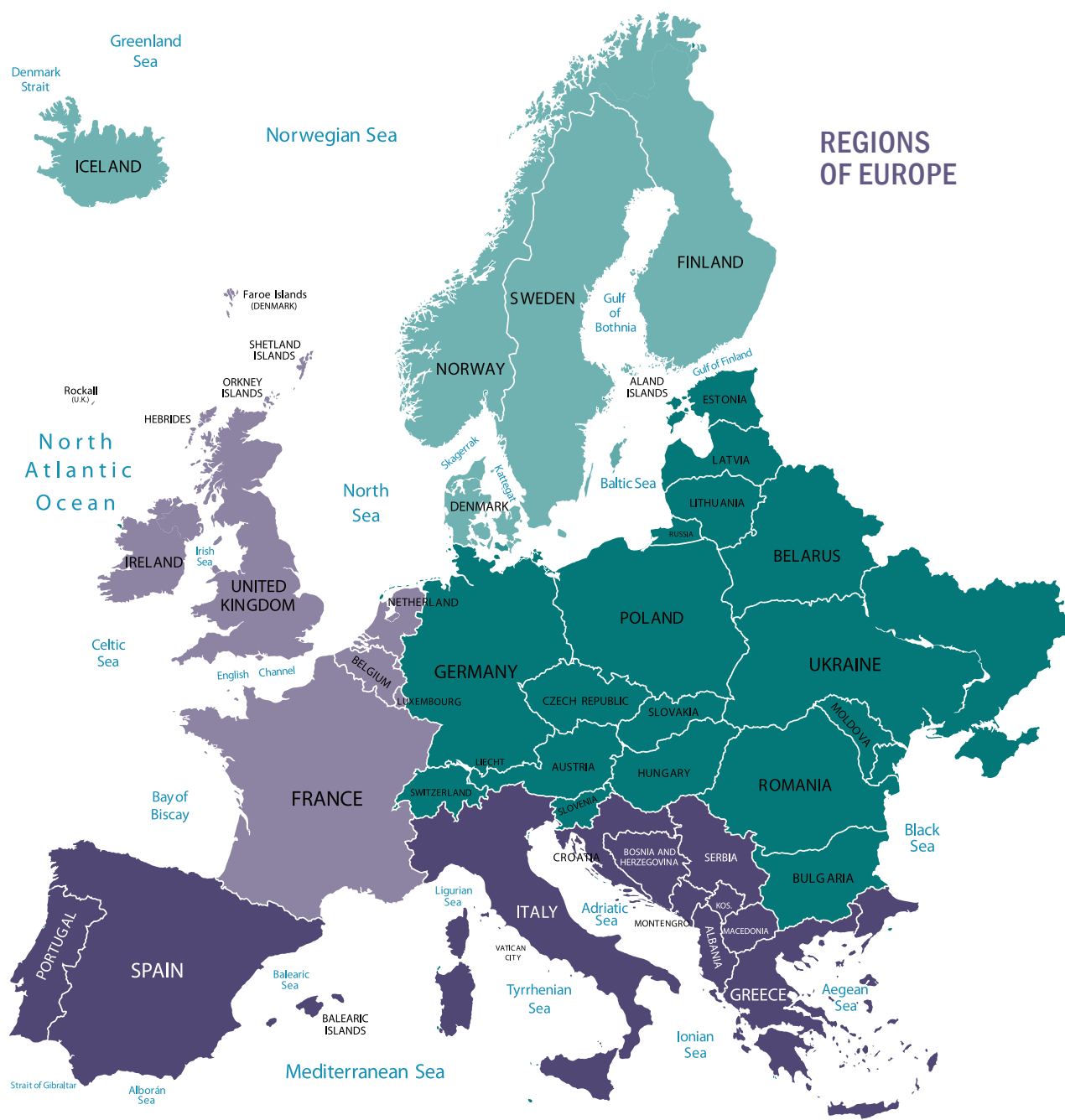
Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king's Son.
He will judge Your people with righteousness,

MT. ELBRUS, RUSSIA



Four Major Regions of Europe

Northern Europe	Sweden, Norway, Iceland
Western Europe	United Kingdom, France, Belgium
Southern Europe	Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece
Central and Eastern Europe	Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic



**And Your poor with justice.
The mountains will bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness. (Ps. 72:1-3)**

Europe contains a number of mountain ranges including the beautiful Alps. The tallest mountain in Europe is located in Russia. **Mt. Elbrus** stands at 18,510 feet (5,642m) above sea level. It is part of the mountain range known as the Caucasus Mountains. It is very close to the border of the country of Georgia. Mt. Elbrus is a currently dormant volcano. Because of its great height, temperatures at the peak can reach -50° Fahrenheit (-46° Celsius). Mt. Elbrus is a popular location for mountain climbers because it holds the title of “tallest mountain in Europe.”

One of the most beautiful natural land-

marks in Europe is the **Matterhorn**. It sits on the border of Italy and Switzerland in the Alps. At its peak, it stands at 14,692 feet (4,478m) above sea level. The Matterhorn is particularly noteworthy for its perfectly pointed peak. It is also shaped in such a way that it is very steep. The first known successful climb to the top was completed on July 14, 1865. The Matterhorn is an Alpine treasure in Europe, showing forth the power and beauty of our great God who made the mountains rise.

The tallest mountain in the Alps is **Mont Blanc**. It stands at 15,774 feet (4,808m) above sea level. It is located on the border of France and Italy. Because of its remarkable beauty, Mont Blanc and its surrounding landscape attracts many climbers, hikers, skiers, and snowboarders. As human beings, we are drawn



MATTERHORN, SWITZERLAND

MONT BLANC, FRANCE AND ITALY

Select Mountains in Europe

Mountain	Elevation	Location
Mt. Elbrus	18,510 ft. (5,642m)	Russia
The Matterhorn	14,692 ft. (4,478m)	Switzerland/Italy
Mont Blanc	15,774 ft. (4,808m)	France/Italy
Ben Nevis	4,413 ft. (1,345m)	Scotland
Mount Olympus	9,570 ft. (2,917m)	Greece
Mt. Radhošť	3,704 ft. (1,129m)	Czech Republic

to the grandeur of these mountains. Yet it is important that we as God's people give Him the glory for creating these anchors of the European landscape.

The island of Great Britain is also consid-

ered part of Europe. It does not contain mountains of such great height as the European mainland. However, there are mountain ranges in Great Britain. In particular, the northern region of Scotland is called the **Scottish High-**



CHURCH ON MT. RADHOŠŤ

lands. It is known as the Highlands because of its hilly terrain and numerous mountains. In the Grampian Mountain Range, you will find the tallest mountain in Great Britain. The peak of **Ben Nevis** is 4,413 feet (1,345m) above sea level.

One important European mountain of historical significance is **Mount Olympus**. It is located in Greece. Mount Olympus (9,570 feet, or 2,917m above sea level) is the tallest mountain in Greece. It figured heavily in Greek mythology as the home of the twelve



BEN NEVIS, SCOTLAND

Olympian gods. Pagan religions often associate various parts of God's creation with false gods. False religions often worship different parts of God's creation. However, we as Christians know that this mountain belongs to the one true and living God. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who created this mountain. It is God who rules over this mountain.

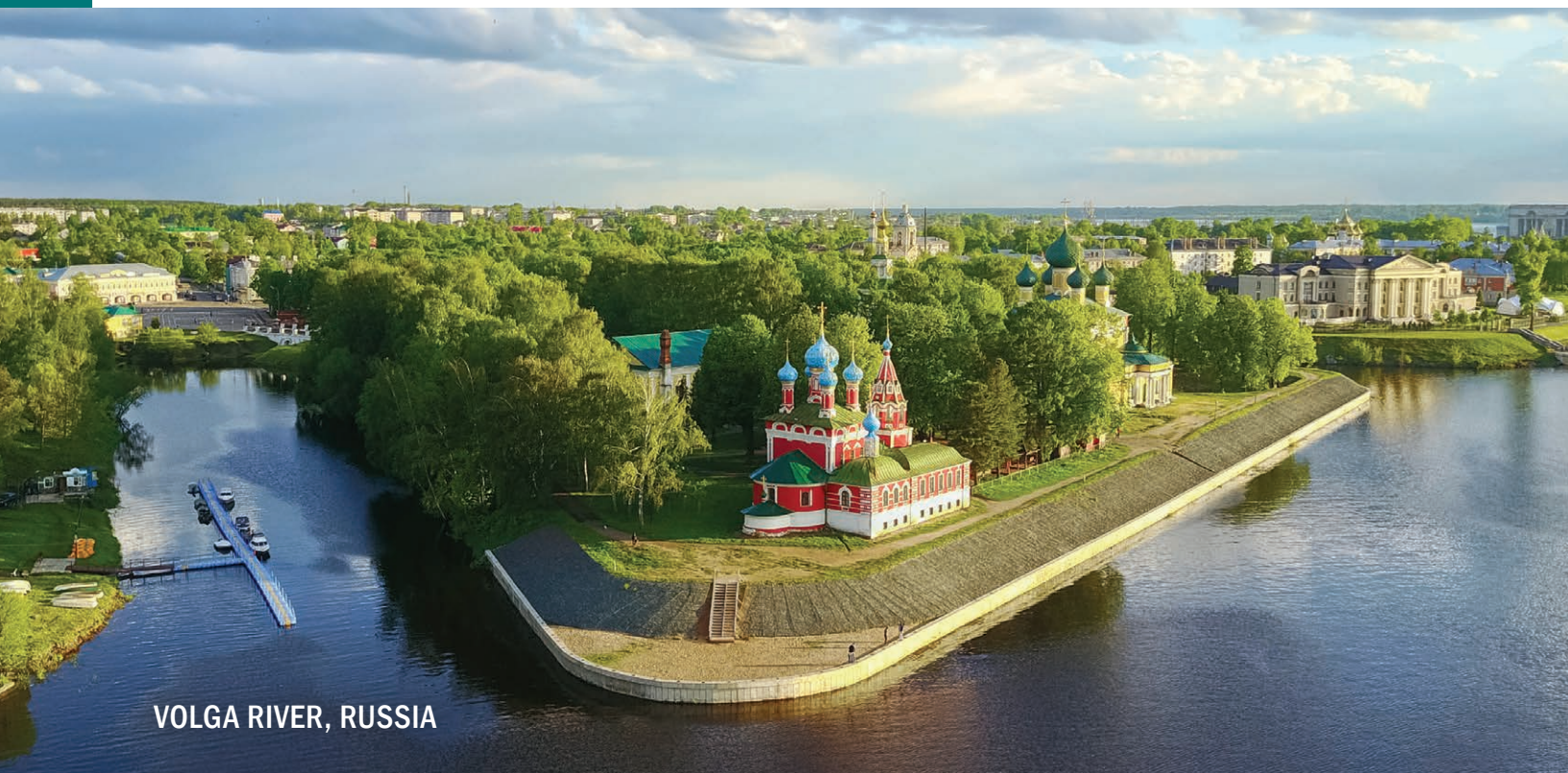
Finally, we'll look at one more mountain. This mountain is not nearly as well known as the others. But it is an important mountain for Christians. Among the beautiful mountains of the Czech Republic, there is one known as **Mt. Radhošť** (3,704 feet, or 1,129m above sea level). For centuries, it was a mountain associated with the worship of a god known to the Slavs as Radegast. This god was just one of many false gods worshiped by the Slavs. But one day, the statue of Radegast sitting upon the mountain was destroyed. It is believed that when missionary brothers Cyril and Methodius visited the mountain, they had the idol

torn down. Today, there is a church on the top of Mt. Radhošť. In a later chapter, you will learn more about what happened on this mountain.

RIVERS

**But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him,
And in My name his horn shall be exalted.
Also I will set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers. (Ps. 89:24-25)**

Water is essential for life. Without water, human beings cannot survive. That is why we see God's mercy in providing such an abundance of water to the nations of Europe. Our God is kind and merciful by giving rivers and sending rain even to those who are ungrateful (Matt. 5:45). Ever since people settled in Europe after Noah's flood, rivers have provided an important source of water. The rivers have also served as a means of transportation. They continue to be used to transport goods and services to this day.



VOLGA RIVER, RUSSIA



RHINE RIVER, SWITZERLAND

Major Rivers in Europe

River	Length	Location
Volga River	2,194 miles (3,531km)	Russia
Rhine River	760 miles (1,230km)	Switzerland, Austria, France, Germany, etc.
Danube River	1,770 miles (2,850km)	Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc.
Seine River	482 miles (775km)	France

The longest river in Europe is the **Volga River**. It is 2,194 miles long (3,531km). The entirety of the Volga River is found in the largest country in the world: Russia. The Volga is considered by many in Russia to be their “national river.” Because of its importance for transportation and commerce, many cities in Russia have been built along the banks of the Volga. One of

the largest cities built along the river is the city named after the river: Volgograd.

In western Europe, passing through Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, and other nations is the **Rhine River**. The Rhine is about 760 miles in length (1,230km). During the Middle Ages, the Rhine was important for the Holy Roman Empire. Because of this, many



SEINE RIVER, PARIS, FRANCE

castles from the Middle Ages were built along the Rhine River. One city that was important during the period of the Protestant Reformation is Strasbourg, France. Strasbourg is near the border of modern-day Germany and is built on the banks of the Rhine. Many Reformers such as Martin Bucer and John Calvin either lived in or visited Strasbourg.

The second longest river in Europe is the **Danube River**. It begins in Germany and flows all the way into the Black Sea in eastern Europe. It is 1,770 miles long (2,850km). A river tour on the Danube will take you to many different places in Europe from west to east. There is also a bike trail that takes you all the way from Germany to the Danube Delta, where the river empties into the Black Sea. If you cycled at fifteen miles per hour for eight hours per day, it would take you over two weeks to bike the length of the Danube. You would surely burn a lot of calories, and in the process, you would have seen a good portion of Europe!

One of France's longest rivers is the **Seine**

River. Though not nearly as long as the Volga, the Seine is quite a large river in France (482 miles long, 775km). It is a well-known river because it passes through Paris, the capital and largest city in France. The average depth of the Seine as it passes through the city is 31 feet (9.5m). Because the Seine flows through such a large city as Paris, people have built over thirty-seven bridges over the river inside the city.

CLIMATE REGIONS IN EUROPE

He sends out His command to the earth;
 His word runs very swiftly.
 He gives snow like wool;
 He scatters the frost like ashes;
 He casts out His hail like morsels;
 Who can stand before His cold?
 He sends out His word and melts them;
 He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.
 (Ps. 147:15-18)

Much of Europe is located at a high latitude. For example, much of it is at a higher

latitude than the United States. But in general, much of Europe has a milder climate than other parts of the world at a similar latitude. For example, the weather in northern portions of Canada gets much colder than areas in Europe at a similar latitude. Scientists believe part of the reason for this is the **Gulf Stream**. The Gulf Stream is a warm ocean current that begins in the Gulf of Mexico and pushes northeast across the Atlantic Ocean up into the waters around Europe. This keeps much of Europe warmer than other countries. However, Europe still has a diversity of climate regions. Temperatures in these regions range from the extremely hot to the extremely cold. The warmest temperature on record in Europe

was recorded in July 1977 in Athens, Greece. The temperature reached 118° Fahrenheit (48° Celsius). The coldest temperature on record was recorded in December 1978. The temperature dropped to -78° Fahrenheit (-58° Celsius) in a remote region of northern Russia (Komi Republic, Russia). What is the weather like in different regions of Europe? Using the list of regions above, here are a few examples of the different climates found in Europe.

In Northern Europe, particularly in the countries known as **Scandinavia** (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland), extremely cold temperatures and tundra can be found. The southern portions of Scandinavia benefit from the warming effects of the Gulf Stream. But







ARDENNES FOREST, BELGIUM

as you travel further north, the temperatures become much more extreme. At such high latitudes, daylight is very limited in the winter. This makes for a frigid, icy, and snowy environment. A city like Kautokeino, Norway is in the far north of Norway in an inland region. The average high in January is 14° Fahrenheit (-10° Celsius). However, the temperatures are still not as extreme as inland regions of northern Canada, for example.

In Western Europe, off the coast of the mainland, are the islands of Great Britain and Ireland. The warm Gulf Stream in the ocean keeps the climates of these two islands much milder than parts of mainland Europe.

Western Europe also contains many beautiful forests such as the **Ardennes Forest** in Belgium and Luxembourg. This region of Europe is a dense green in the summer and as the season turns to fall, a dazzling array of colors emerge as the leaves turn colors and

begin to fall.

Southern Europe contains some of Europe's warmest weather. The nations of southern Europe such as Spain, Italy, and Greece have extensive coastline on the Mediterranean Sea. The proximity of the sea to these nations produces a unique climate region characterized by dry summers and warm, wet winters. One of the warmest spots on the coast of the Mediterranean is the city of **Marseilles** (pronounced Mar-say), France. It is considered the sunniest city in France. It also receives many dry winds coming up from the Sahara Desert in Africa. This makes Marseilles have very dry, very hot summers. One of the driest places in all of Europe is the **Bardenas Reales**. It is a desert region in southeast Spain. Because of how dry and hot this region is, some of the ground will actually crack apart. It looks very much like a dry and parched desert.

Portions of central and eastern Europe



UKRAINE COUNTRYSIDE

contain some of the most fertile land in all of Europe. Ukraine in particular is known as the “breadbasket of Europe” because it contains some of the best farmland in all of Europe. Western Ukraine receives abundant rainfall, and most of Ukraine has a temperate climate that is good for growing food. Ukraine contains about one fourth of the world’s most fertile soil called “black soil.” Ukraine is one of the poorest nations in Europe, but it has abundant agricultural potential because of its soil and climate.

FASCINATING CREATURES OF EUROPE

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing praises on the harp to our God,
Who covers the heavens with clouds,
Who prepares rain for the earth,
Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.
He gives to the beast its food,
And to the young ravens that cry. (Ps. 147:7-9)

God’s glory is not only displayed in the mountains, forests, hills, and rivers of Europe. It is also seen in the diversity, complexity, and beauty of the animals, birds, and fish of Europe. Here are just a few of the fascinating animals of Europe God has made to show forth His glory.

Children living in the far north of Scandinavia have to deal with the drastic shifts of sunlight from winter to summer. While summer brings very long days to this northern part of the world, winter means just a few hours of sunlight a day. But Scandinavian children may get a chance to see beautiful **reindeer** walking the forests near their home. In Siberia, Russia, and in Scandinavia, the beautiful **arctic fox** may also be spotted. **Polar bears** can be found in the arctic regions of Europe. In the Carpathian Mountains of central Europe, **brown bears** can be seen in the forests.

Near the **Iberian Peninsula**, a population of **Iberian lynx** can be found. This lynx is a wild cat that lives in Spain and Portugal. Its primary food source is rabbits.

Many of the European nations benefit from long coastlines. This makes fish an important source of food as well as an important part of trade and commerce. Common fish in the northern waters of Europe include **cod**, **her-ring**, **halibut**, and **haddock**. In the Mediterranean Sea, such beautiful creatures as **whales**, **dolphins**, and **seals** are common.

One of the most impressive birds found in

Europe is the **Great Grey Owl**. It can be found in northern regions of Europe such as Finland. This owl is considered the world's largest owl by wing length. The wingspan of this marvelous bird can reach up to 5 feet (152cm).

On a hike through the Scottish Highlands, you might have the chance to see a **European pine marten**. It is a small mammal similar to a weasel or badger. These little creatures can grow



IBERIAN LYNX



PINE MARTEN



REINDEER IN NORWAY



GREAT GREY OWL

up to 21 inches in length (53cm) and typically weigh around 3 pounds (1.36kg).

Europe, like the rest of this world, awaits Jesus' return at the last day. When our Lord returns, He will bring about a new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21-22). The creation groans, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19-22). One day, death and corruption will come to an end. One day, Jesus Christ will return. And there will no longer be death anymore. Animals that once fought and ate each other will lie down together in peace. ■

**"It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy
mountain,"
Says the LORD. (Isa. 65:24-25)**

PRAYER POINTS: EUROPE

You've now gotten a small glimpse into the continent of Europe. Now, our response should be to praise God for His great power and majesty displayed in the beauty of His creation. Take time now to pray a prayer of praise and adoration to our great God!

- **Praise God for His Power:** We learn how powerful our God is when we look at the great mountain peaks of the Alps. Our God spoke the mountains into existence. The God who established the great mountains and stretched out the ocean and sea around Europe is worthy of our worship. Praise the God who made all things by the Word of His power!
- **Praise God for His Goodness:** Though we live in a fallen world, wounded by the fall into sin, God is still good to His creation. He continues to provide the sun to give us warmth. He sends rain to the peoples of Europe so they can eat. He gives them rivers to grow their crops. He provides food for His creation. He providentially cares for every creature and plant in Europe. Not a sparrow falls apart from the will of our Heavenly Father. Behold the goodness of God.

Basic Facts about Europe

Total Estimated Population	746 million
Total Area	3,930,000 square miles (10,180,000km)
Number of Countries	50
Number of Languages	50+
Largest Country	Russia
Smallest Country	Vatican City (in Rome)



ANCIENT ROMAN FORUM, ROME ITALY

ROME: A REPUBLIC TURNED INTO AN EMPIRE

Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other. (Isa. 45:22)

About 750 years before the birth of our Lord Jesus, a city was founded. What began as a small settlement on the Italian peninsula eventually became one of the largest human empires. The settlement known as Rome would become the Roman Empire. At its height, this empire ruled over the area all around the Mediterranean Sea, including parts of Europe, modern-day Iraq, and Iran. It was during the time of this Empire that the Lord Jesus Christ was born (Luke 2:1). The Roman Empire was vast for a time. But like all human kingdoms, it did not last. Nevertheless, the Roman Empire left its stamp upon Europe in the centuries that followed its

collapse. How did this Empire grow to such large proportions?

Small settlements are found in all times and places in human history. Wherever people settle, they build dwelling places, they raise food, and they care for animals. Humans dwell together and build villages, towns, and cities. God created man to take dominion of the earth. This is natural to human existence. But massive empires do not form through peaceful dominion work. Instead, the colossal empires of men are usually formed through war and conquest.

It shouldn't surprise us that the seeds of the Roman Empire were built on a brotherly feud. According to Roman legend, Rome began when two young men, Romulus and Remus, set out to build a new city. The two brothers fought each other over who would be the leader of this settlement. It was a battle for pre-

RUINS OF THE DOMUS FLAVIA PALACE IN ROME





eminence and power. In order to end the feud, Romulus killed Remus. Now, nothing stood in Romulus' way. He then made himself ruler of the new settlement. Romulus named the city in his own honor: Rome. Murder became the pattern for future leaders of this empire. The history of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire is a long tale of many wars, political murders, and violence. Evidence of these corrupt foundations can be seen in the gladiator games of Rome. Many of the peoples of Rome found delight in watching real human blood shed for sport.

What a difference there is between the kingdom of Jesus and the kingdom of Rome! The kingdom of Jesus Christ is built on the sacrificial self-giving of its own King. King Jesus came from heaven to earth to save His own people. Human empires are never built in this way. Human lives are taken in order to secure power for those rulers at the top. In the chapters that follow, you will learn more about the confrontation between these rival kingdoms. Jesus' kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness,

peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17), came into conflict with the Roman kingdom.

Both the Bible and the records of history record this: Jesus' kingdom overcame the Roman Empire. As the Bible foretold, Jesus' kingdom would become the greatest kingdom in the world. That is what God revealed to Daniel. God told Daniel about a kingdom as strong as iron. This was a kingdom made by men. But Jesus' kingdom is stronger than all manmade kingdoms, and Daniel learned that Jesus' kingdom would destroy all others and would last forever:

And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. . . . And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:40, 44)

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is a kingdom that can never be destroyed. Christ rules over the world. All the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord (Rev. 11:15). Jesus Christ is "ruler over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). This is the perspective Christians bring to history. It is the perspective we must have as we learn more about the Roman Empire.

THE HISTORY OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

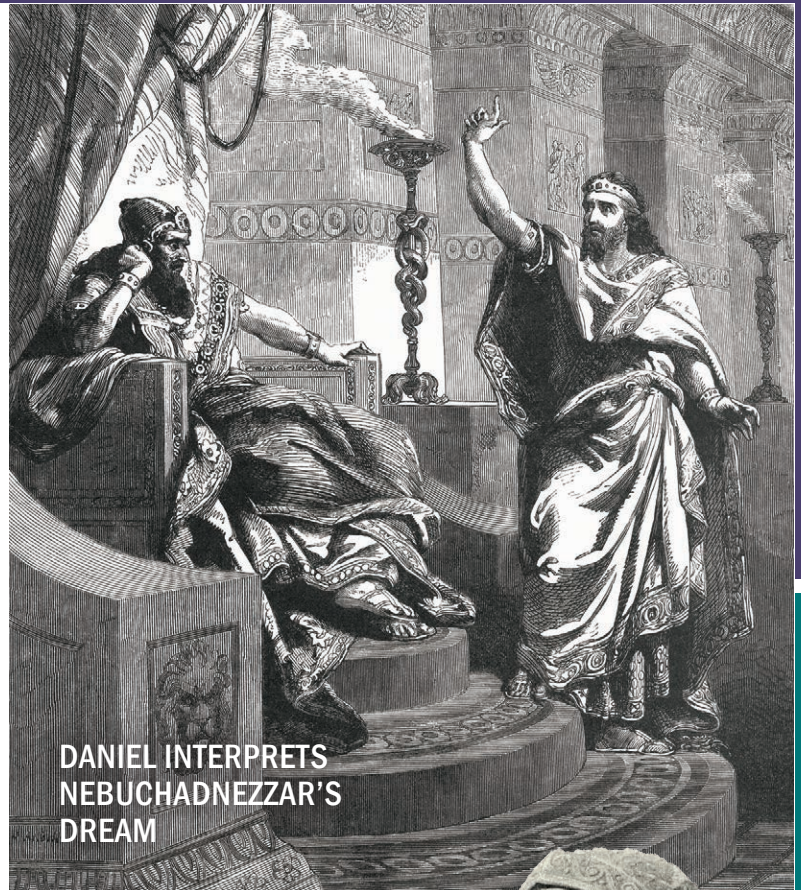
From 750 BC to 509 BC, Rome was a small city-state led by a king. Around 509 BC, Rome's **monarchy** came to an end. This marked the beginning of the Roman **Republic**. Under their new form of government, Rome was

ruled by members of the Senate. The people of Rome also elected Roman citizens to serve in legislative assemblies. This republic would last until 27 BC. At that time the republic became an empire. Shortly before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, a man named Augustus became the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

Before Rome became an empire, it progressively gained control throughout the Mediterranean world. Through various wars and conquests, Rome became the dominant power in this part of the world. But Rome faced a competitor. Another contender for power arose on the coast of North Africa. That rival was another city-state known as **Carthage**. Founded some seventy-five years before Rome, Carthage also gained territory through conquest. As Rome expanded its power, Carthage vied for control of the Mediterranean. Rome's struggle for dominance in the Mediterranean led to three major wars against Carthage. These wars are called the **Punic Wars**. Most historians divide these wars into three.

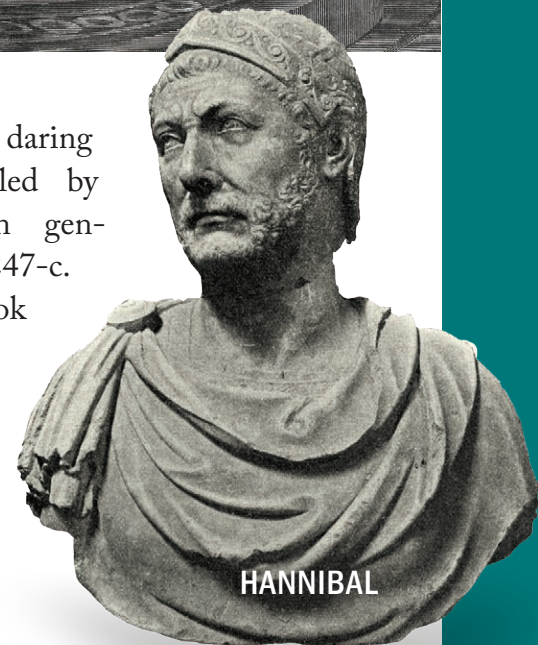
- The First Punic War (264-241 BC)
- The Second Punic War (218-201 BC)
- The Third Punic War (149-146 BC)

Among the most famous events of ancient



DANIEL INTERPRETS
NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S
DREAM

history is the daring military attack led by the Carthaginian general **Hannibal** (247-c. 183 BC). This took place during the Second Punic War (218-201 BC). Hannibal led a massive army over the treach-



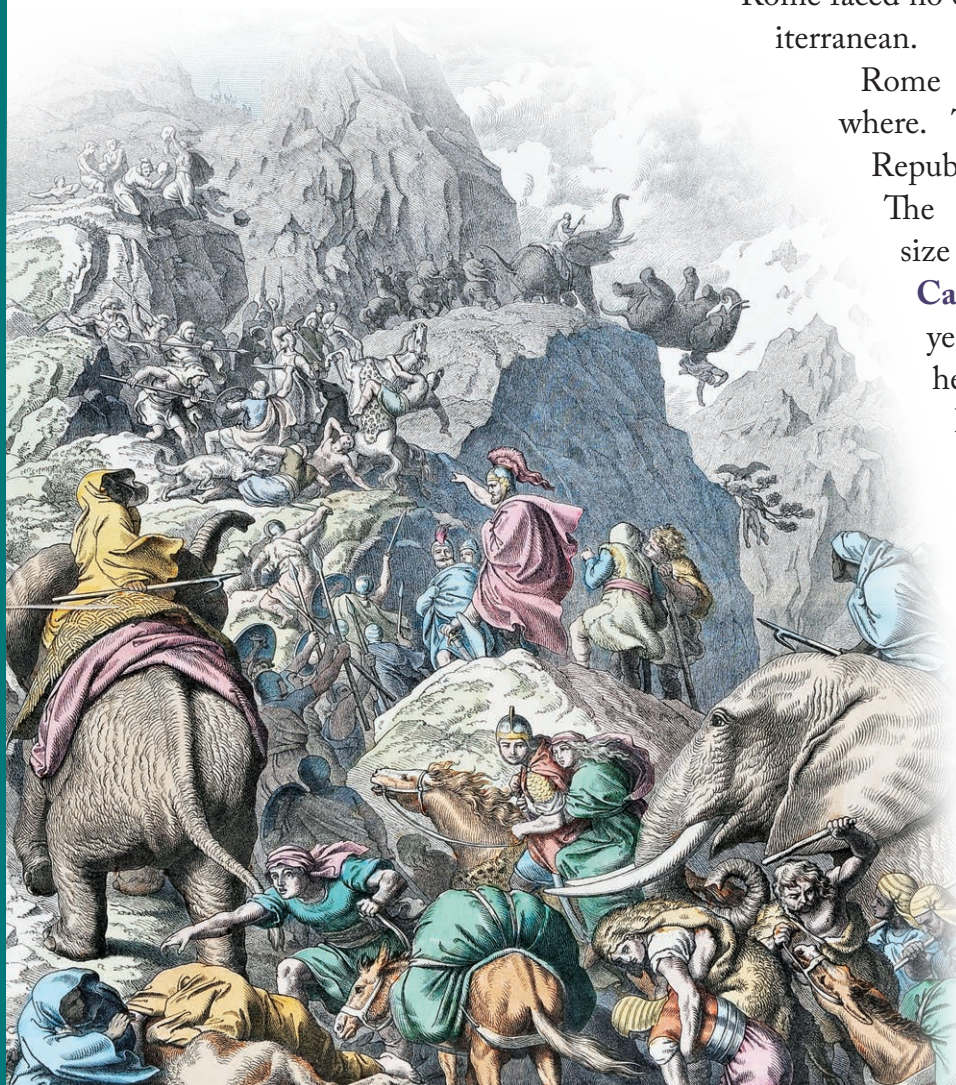
Monarchy • A monarchy is a form of government in which a single monarch (either a king or a queen) rules over the people.

Republic • A republic is a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives. A republic has an elected or nominated president/leader rather than a king. The government of the United States of America is a republic as defined by the Constitution of the United States.



THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT ITS LARGEST (AD 117)

erous Alps into northern Italy. Instead of approaching Rome from the sea, Hannibal had an ambitious plan. His strategy was to attack the city of Rome from the north. With some 26,000 men, this mighty Carthaginian gen-



eral almost brought Rome to its knees. In battle after battle, Hannibal defeated the Romans until he was within six miles of the great city of Rome itself. At that point, Hannibal's advance was stopped by the Romans.

As Hannibal invaded the Italian mainland, the Romans responded with another strategy. The Roman armies led an attack against Carthage. This forced Hannibal to return home to protect his own city.

The Romans then successfully conquered Carthage. By the end of the Third Punic War (149-146 BC), Carthage was destroyed. This final victory insured Rome's place as the greatest military power in the ancient Western world. Rome faced no other major rivals in the Mediterranean.

Rome continued its advance elsewhere. The might of the Roman Republic grew decade after decade. The Republic reached its largest size under the leadership of **Julius Caesar** (100-44 BC). In the last years of the Republic, Rome held control of a vast territory. Rome's government ruled over North Africa as well as modern-day Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, and the Netherlands. Shortly after the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire would also conquer the British Isles.

Rome's conquests were often cruel. Peoples of other lands were subjugated by violent force. In most cases,



JULIUS CAESAR (100-44 BC)

Rome had little interest in the cultures of the peoples they conquered. Romans believed their culture, their government, and their religion were the greatest on earth.

ROMAN AND GREEK CULTURE

However, there was one notable exception to this pattern. The Romans had an appreciation for Greek culture. Before Rome's dominance, Greece became a large empire through the military conquests of **Alexander the Great** (356-323 BC). Alexander's kingdom was short-lived. But his military conquests had a significant effect on the ancient world. Through Alexander's conquests, the Greek language spread.

Eventually, the Greek language became one of the most popular languages in the Mediterranean world. As God purposed it, the New Testament was written in Greek. It was the common language of Jesus' time. This enabled many people in many lands to receive the good news about Jesus Christ.

Alexander's kingdom was enormous. It came into his possession in a short period of years. But it also rapidly dissolved. When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, the empire was split up into smaller kingdoms. Greek dominance faded. Yet Greek philosophy, Greek politics, and Greek language remained influential.

Rome eventually conquered Greece as well.



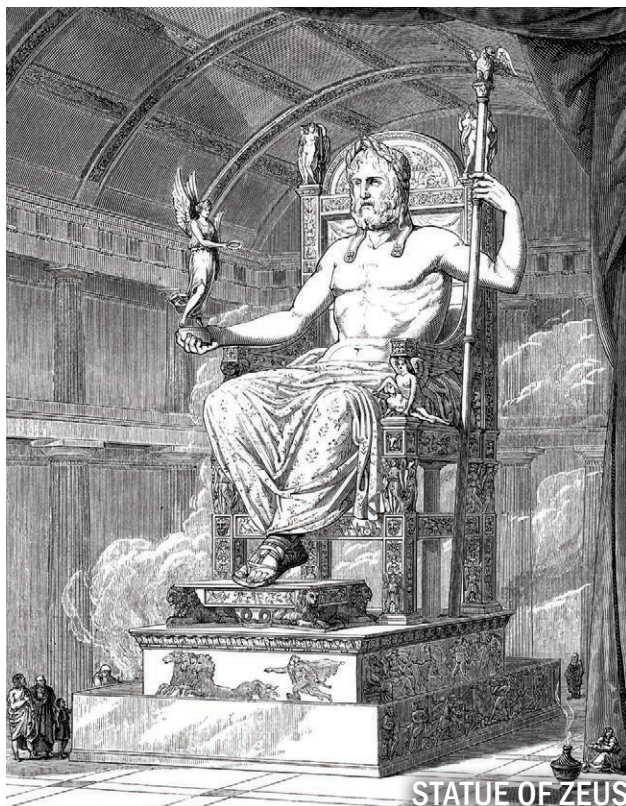
ALEXANDER THE GREAT (356-323 BC)



Rome began to adopt Greek ideas, Greek education, the Greek fables, and the Greek false gods. They would re-name the gods to give them a Roman flavor. For example, the Greek god Zeus was re-named Jupiter, Ares became Mars, and Hera became Juno. To the Romans, Greece was the great example of cultural development in art, literature, philosophy, and government.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. (Ps. 96:5)

The Romans and Greeks worshiped many false gods. The Roman gods were much like sinful men and women. They were gods made in the image of man. The Bible teaches that man is made in God's image. But false religion reverses this order. False gods are always made to be more like human beings than like the true God. This reveals something important



about Roman religion. The Romans were most impressed with the glory of man. That's why their gods were so much like themselves.

THE END OF THE REPUBLIC

In the Book of Daniel, the proud Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar appears. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed with all the works he had done. He exalted himself as he reflected on the glories of his vast empire. But God judged him for his pride.

The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!" (Dan. 4:30-31)

Like Nebuchadnezzar, Rome was proud of its achievements. There was nothing in the history of the kingdoms of men like the great city of Rome and its "glorious" empire. God's Word warns against this pride. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). The Lord always brings proud nations down. This is what happened to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4.

Rome's republican form of government did not last. The strain of governing so large an empire was too great for it. Internal wrangling for power weakened the Republic. The character of the nation was corrupted. Rome was incapable of handling such a big empire. For centuries, Roman society prided itself on respecting the rights of the people. Rome valued equality in government.

But the Romans failed to realize that man is sinful and proud by nature. Sinful men always seek more power. Leaders in the Roman government were not satisfied with limiting their own power. The lust for power and glory even-

tually led to the end of the Roman Republic. About thirty years before the birth of Jesus Christ, Rome became an empire led by an emperor.

Octavian—who is also known by the title “Augustus Caesar”—reigned as emperor between 27 BC and AD 14. He brought in the era known as the *Pax Romana*. This Latin phrase means the “Peace of Rome.” By this time, Rome had subdued most of its enemies. Apart from a few conflicts on the far perimeter of Rome’s reach, the empire experienced a season of relative peace for two hundred years. When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world, Rome was ruling much of the known world. It was at its highest level of power, prosperity, peace, and pride. Was this the kingdom the world had been waiting for? Augustus Caesar himself was referred to as “the savior of the world.” Was he?

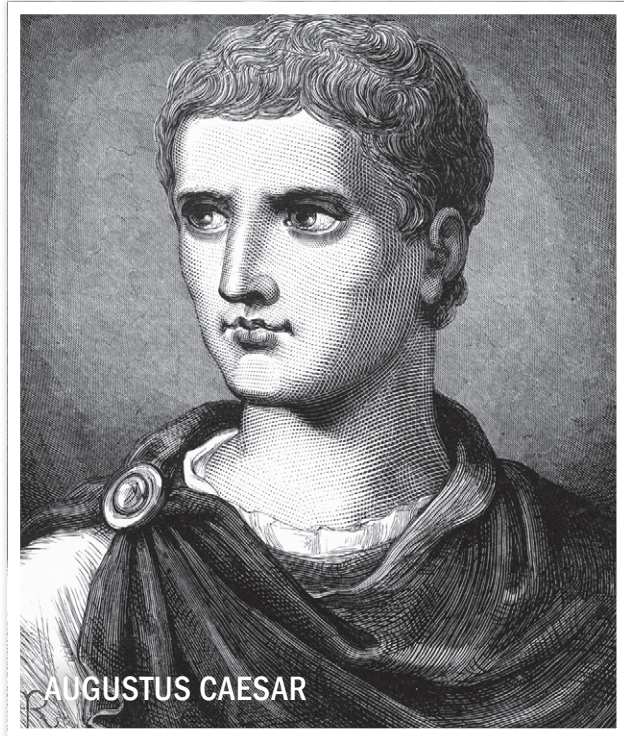
A Roman philosopher named **Epictetus** (c. AD 50-135) knew that the Roman Emperor could not really save the world. He wrote,

While the Emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearns more than even for outward peace.

Epictetus was not a Christian. But what he wrote here was wise. The peace of Rome did not bring peace between God and man. Augustus Caesar could not save the Romans from their sins. The world needed another Savior.

The true Savior from God was born in a small village. One night, near Bethlehem, a lowly group of shepherds heard the good news. A multitude of angels appeared and sang the praises of God.

“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”
(Luke 2:14)



One of the angels declared, “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Luke 2:10). The good news was this: in the city of David, a Savior was born. The angels announced the birth of Christ the Lord.

That night, the King of kings and Lord of lords was born. He came and established His kingdom that will never be destroyed. Jesus Christ came to “save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Augustus Caesar’s claim to be savior of the world was false. That title belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

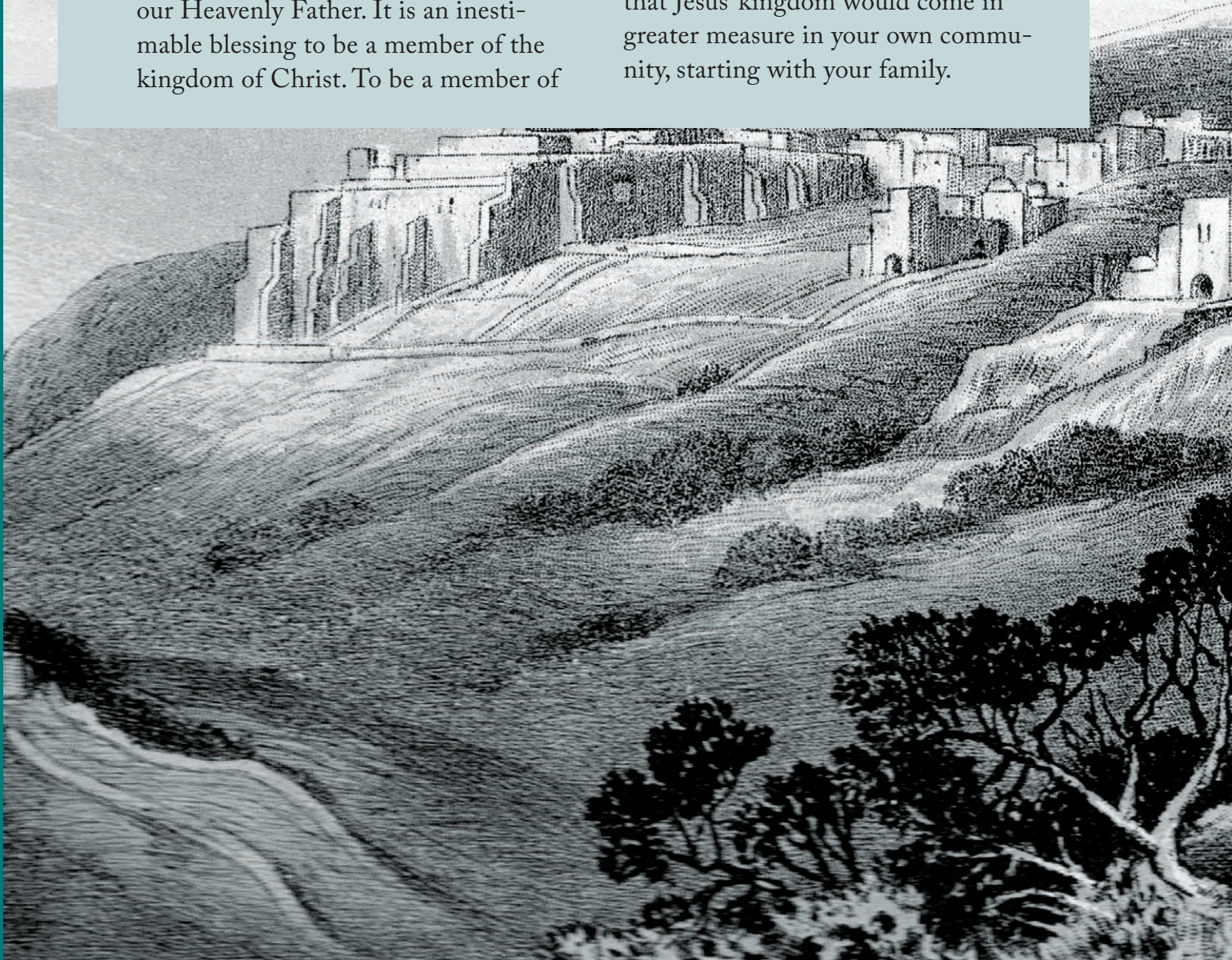
And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. . . . Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. (Luke 2:1-5)

PRAYER POINTS

- **Praise Our God for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ:** The kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus is a kingdom that can never end. It is the kingdom that crushes all other previous kingdoms and then fills the whole earth. Let us praise God for His power in establishing this kingdom.
- **Thank God for Participation in the Kingdom:** Our Lord Jesus said, “it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). By faith, we receive this kingdom as a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is an inestimable blessing to be a member of the kingdom of Christ. To be a member of

this kingdom is to experience fellowship with Jesus Christ, to receive the gift of eternal life, and to enjoy all the fruits of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

- **Pray for the Advance of Christ’s Kingdom:** Our Lord instructs us in His prayer to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Throughout the duration of this course, pray continually for the advance of Christ’s kingdom throughout the world. Pray that Jesus’ kingdom would come in greater measure in your own community, starting with your family.





BETHLEHEM