

## #53 The Legs of Iron – The *Religious Thread* of the Western Roman Empire

**Key Understanding:** *The Roman Catholic religious thread.* It was the *Roman Catholic religious thread* of the Western Roman Empire that extended the Leg of Iron of the Western Roman Empire beyond 476 A.D., when barbarian forces deposed the last emperor of the West.



Clovis I, King of the Franks  
(lived 466–511 A.D.)

**Clovis I.** The collapse of the Western Roman Empire meant that no one power had political control of the West. Most of Western Europe came to be ruled by barbarian kings who were not aligned with the Church of Rome. The papacy gradually replaced the empire as the center of authority in Western Europe. In 496 A.D., Clovis I, the king of the Franks, was converted. His conversion brought Gaul (ancient France) into the church. From the 500's to the 700's, the papacy directed the conversion of other peoples in the West. These peoples included the Anglo-Saxons in England and the Croats and Magyars in central Europe. [The Magyars are the Hungarians, and they as a people became aligned with the Roman Catholic Church. The Croats also became Roman Catholic, eventually creating additional strife

between the Croats and the Serbs, who converted as a people to the Eastern Orthodox faith.]

**The Muslim adversaries.** In the meantime, the spread of the Roman Catholic faith in the West was threatened by the rise of the Arabs and their Muslim faith in the 700's. They conquered Northern Africa, and came across the Gibraltar Straits, conquering Spain. The church stood out as the major force for unifying and civilizing the West, but still, there was no political protector of the Pope.



Clovis being baptized  
into the Christian faith

**Charlemagne.** Then arose Charles the Great – *Charlemagne* in French – to birth the Holy Roman Empire (as it later became known) as the extension of the Western Roman Empire, with the Papacy having served as the bridge for over three centuries between the Western Roman Empire and what many scholars say was the Charlemagne-birthered Holy Roman Empire.

**Daniel 2:40 (KJV) And THE FOURTH KINGDOM SHALL BE STRONG AS IRON** [the Legs of Iron Roman Empire, extending through the Western Roman Empire, which ended in 476 A.D., and the Eastern Roman Empire, which ended in 1453 A.D. **The Leg of Iron of the Western Roman Empire was extended to include the life of the Holy Roman Empire, begun by Charlemagne in 800 A.D. Its political power was generally German based in the earlier centuries, and Austrian based in the later centuries through the Habsburg Dynasty.** In the meantime, the Leg of Iron of the *Eastern* Roman Empire was further

extended to include the life of the Russian Empire]: *forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

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