

#64 The Legs of Iron – The German emperors thought of themselves as being the direct successors of those of the old Roman Empire of the West

We return to the subject matter of the Holy Roman Empire.

Key Understanding: *The German emperors of the Holy Roman Empire thought of themselves as successors to those of the Western Roman Empire. 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, including that of King Otto I and Frederick Barbarossa.*

King Otto I. King Otto I was crowned emperor in Rome in 962. This was an official beginning of the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire would be filled with complexities in the ensuing centuries. It was an empire made up of many German territories (or duchies) headed by German princes (or dukes), who closer to the beginning were the leaders of various old Germanic tribes, like the Bavarians. [For centuries, Germany was composed of many prince states (duchies) like Bavaria, Hanover, Brandenburg, etc.] Some of the princes came to hold a position of what was called an Elector, for sometimes it was necessary to elect from among themselves who the Holy Roman Emperor would be. Of course, the election was greatly determined by a great number of factors including tribal quarrels, inheritances, etc. **The German emperors thought of themselves as being the direct successors of those of the old Roman Empire of the West.**

There would also be conflicts between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, which also caused civil wars, with the nobles choosing sides. For example, in 1075, Pope Gregory VII disputed the right of Emperor Henry IV to appoint bishops. Many German princes sided with the Pope against Henry IV.

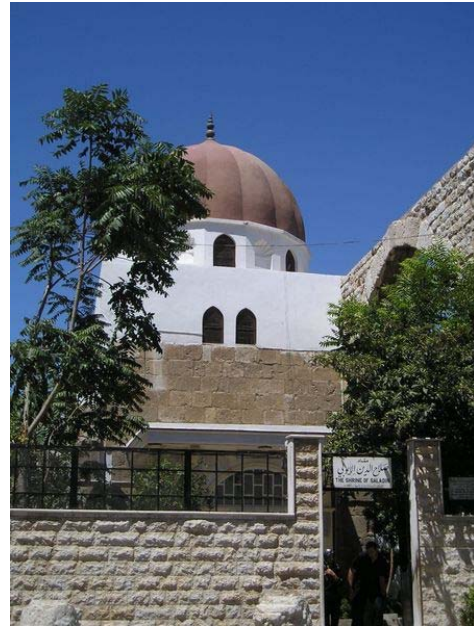
Frederick I Barbarossa. One of the most prominent Holy Roman Emperors (1155-1190) was Frederick I, or *Barbarossa* (meaning *Red Beard*), whom Adolf Hitler likened himself to. [The massive invasion in World War II of the Soviet Union by Germany beginning on June 22, 1941, was code-named Operation Barbarossa.] Frederick Barbarossa was the first to officially call the empire 'Holy'.

Along with England's Richard the Lionhearted and France's King Philip II, the Holy Roman Empire's Frederick Barbarossa led the Third Crusade to the Holy Land in 1189, but drowned on the expedition the next year while crossing a river. [Beginning a century before, in 1095, Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus asked Urban II, Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, for

The Holy Roman Empire in 1190 at the time of the death of Frederick I Barbarossa



assistance in fighting Muslim Seljuk Turks. The Pope in the West responded to defend Christianity against the Muslims and recover the Holy Land and Holy City of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was holy to the Muslims, as well as to the Jews and the Christians. In 691, the Muslims built the Dome of the Rock over the rock from which they believed Muhammad rose to heaven. During the 900's and 1000's, a number of Muslim groups fought for control of Jerusalem. In 1099, the Christian Crusaders were victorious after six weeks of fighting. Later, in 1187, the Muslim Saladin had defeated a Christian Army and recaptured Jerusalem. The purpose of the Third Crusade, begun two years later in 1189, was to once more take back Jerusalem for the Christians. They failed in their chief objective, though Richard the Lionhearted negotiated a treaty with Saladin to allow Christian pilgrims to enter Jerusalem freely, though the Muslims still controlled the city.]



The Tomb of Saladin near the northwestern corner of the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, Syria

See #64–Doc 1 below for a map of the **Holy Roman Empire during the time of Barbarossa**, who was the Duke of Swabia before he elevated to his more lofty position.

[Click here](#) for #64–Doc 1

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*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, including that of King Otto I and Frederick Barbarossa,** but more 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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