A "Roman" Kingdom

The Bible predicts that the Roman Empire will be reborn in the end-times.

The European Union is both "Roman" and a "kingdom" in Europe. In 1957, six European countries came together to sign the **Treaty of Rome**. This formed the European Economic Community.[1] This was designed to create a "common market" in Europe, as well as creating "closer relations" to the countries within it.[2] The very first sentence of the Treaty stated the goal of "ever-closer Union" for the peoples of Europe:

> DETERMINED to lay the foundations of an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe,

Furthermore, in March 2017, the leaders of Europe met once again in Rome, Italy to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. At this meeting, they issued the **Rome Declaration**. In this statement, the leaders of European countries praise the progress of European unity since the Rome treaties:

> European unity started as the dream of a few, it became the hope of the many. Then Europe became one again. Today, we are united and stronger: hundreds of millions of people across Europe benefit from living in an enlarged Union that has overcome the old divides.[3]

Note how they say, "Europe became one *again*." There have only been a few times in the past where Europe has truly been united. Apart from Hitler's Germany and Napoleon's conquests, the only other time would be the Roman empire.[4,5] These European leaders would scarcely be referring to Hitler or Napoleon when making this remark. Therefore, they are likely referring to the times of unity that Europe experienced during the Roman Empire. How fitting that they would celebrate this in Rome, Italy on the 60th anniversary of the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

In this declaration, they called for more European unity. First, they intend to make Europe a safer place to live for its citizens. They intend to do this by cooperating more on the fight with terrorism and organized crime. Though they mentioned other goals, they finally mentioned *military cooperation* as one of their most important goals for the next ten years. By doing this, they

intend to become a stronger player in the world, to compete with other big powers, such as the U.S., Russia, and China.

EU Government

The European Union is also a "*kingdom*," with many features of statehood. The European Union has an executive branch, the European Commission, which proposes all EU laws.[6,7,8] It also has a legislature, the European Parliament, which approves these laws.[9] Furthermore, all the leaders of every country in the EU hold quarterly European Council meetings. These meetings are designed to set the political direction for the European Union in the coming months and years.[10]

The executive branch, the Commission, has a President which is appointed by the European Council, and approved by Parliament. Once he or she is selected, they choose a cabinet of experts. This cabinet chooses the laws which the Commission will propose to the Parliament. [11,12,13,14] Therefore, the group that proposes all the laws for the European Union consists of appointed officials, who have not been elected. For this reason, many critics of the European Union claim it is run by "unelected bureaucrats." [15]

Euro Currency

The European Union has an official currency, the Euro, which 19 of its member countries use as their money.[16] As a result, they have their own central bank, the European Central Bank.[17] This is comparable to the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank.

The finance ministers of each country meet as the "Eurogroup," and select a president from among themselves to chair its meetings. This group holds council meetings where they decide on the "governance" of the euro area. This group also leads the EU's loan rescue fund, the European Stability Mechanism.[18,19,20]

The European Ombudsman has criticized this group for its lack of transparency, because it does not publish any meeting minutes.[21,22,23] This is particularly concerning, because the Eurogroup holds real power in Europe. During the European debt crisis, which started in 2009, many European countries needed loans to get their economies back on their feet.[24] Many critics of the system believed that the design of the eurozone was one of the main causes of the debt crisis in the first place.[25,26]

However, it was the Eurogroup that had power over the €500 billion rescue loan money. Because of this power, the Eurogroup imposed harsh terms on the governments before lending the suffering countries the money they needed.[24] These countries were basically forced to accept these terms. Otherwise, they would have to abruptly leave the Euro currency, causing extreme economic pain in the short-run. Therefore, these countries, most notably Spain, Greece, and Cyprus, had aspects of their tax policy controlled by officials who held meetings far away from where they lived.[25]

Other Features of Statehood

In addition to all this, the EU has the Schengen Area, which includes most EU countries, as well as some on the outside. All European citizens can travel throughout the Schengen Area without a passport. Furthermore, those in the Schengen Zone can hold jobs in countries they do not even live in.[27] In the last few years, this deal was modified to cope with the migration crisis. The new changes allow countries to re-impose border checks for renewable, but temporary, periods of time.[28]

Ever since 2009, the European Union has its own "legal personality." It can sign international treaties with countries, within and outside of it.[29] Furthermore, the European External Action Service, the EU's foreign office, has the equivalent of embassies in nearly every country.[30] Furthermore, people who live within a member country have EU citizenship, in addition to citizenship in their home country.[31]

Federation or Alliance?

The EU's type of government is very hard to define. On the one hand, it is too strong to be considered just an alliance. An alliance, or confederacy, is a club of countries that are not under a single government. Instead, they have agreements with each other through a treaty. A good example of a confederacy would be the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is a military alliance.[32]

However, the European Union is too weak to be considered a complete "federation." In a federal system, each of the states are under a central authority, the federal government. The United States of America and Federal Republic of Germany are examples of federations.[33,34] Therefore, academics have invented a new term, "supranational", to describe the European Union.[35,36] It is a mixture of federation and confederation. Some

powers are left to the states, while others are left to the European Union. Yet some powers are "shared," where the member country can only make laws in this area if the European Union has not already done so.[37]

The creation of the European Union is especially unique. According to one former EU official, it represents the only time in history where countries have voluntarily given up their national sovereignty to a higher organization. Former EU foreign affairs chief, Javier Solana, puts it this way:

> In Europe, countries have made voluntary transfers of sovereignty. Voluntary! No one has forced them, is the first time in history where transfers of sovereignty are freely made.[38]

An "Empire?"

Much like the empires of the past, the European Union spans multiple ethnic groups and languages under one political authority. As a result, Jose Manuel Barroso, former president of the EU's executive branch, compared the European Union to an "empire."

> Sometimes I like to compare the EU as a creation to the organization of empire. We have the dimension of empire," […] "What we have is the first non-imperial empire. We have 27 countries that fully decided to work together and to pool their sovereignty. I believe it is a great construction and we should be proud of it.[39]

By "non-imperial" he means that the EU differs from past empires, in that it was not formed through violent military conquest. Instead, it was born through the peaceful consent of the participating countries.

End Notes:

1. Italy. European Economic Community. *The Treaty of Rome*. Rome, 1957. https://ec.europa.eu/romania/sites/romania/files/tratatul_de_la_roma.pdf
2. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Treaty of Rome." Encyclopædia Britannica. March 18, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Rome.
3. "The Rome Declaration." Consilium. March 25, 2017. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/.
4. Salmon, John Hearsey McMillan, and Marie-Louise Stig Sørensen. "History of Europe." Encyclopædia Britannica. July 19, 2016. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/The-Napoleonic-era.
5. "German-occupied Europe." Wikipedia. October 15, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German-occupied_Europe.
6. "Executive Branches." EU-US Relations | European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington. Accessed October 20, 2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedstates/en/eu-us-relations/executive-branches.
7. "European Commission - European Union - European Commission." European Union. October 02, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en.
8. "Planning and Proposing Law." European Commission - European Commission. August 01, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law_en.
9. "European Parliament - European Union - European Commission." European Union. October 01, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament_en.
10. "European Council - European Union - European Commission." European Union. May 24, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council_en.
11. "Jean-Claude Juncker." European Commission. August 27, 2018. Accessed October 20, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/president.
12. "How Are the Commission President and Commissioners Appointed? ." European Parliament News. Accessed October 20, 2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/faq/8/how-are-the-commission-president-and-commissioners-appointed.
13. "Race Is on to Find the next European Commission President." POLITICO. October 09, 2018. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.politico.eu/article/european-commission-presidency-race-contenders-barnier-lagarde-vestager-juncker-macron/.
14. "EU Presidents – Who Does What? - European Union - European Commission." European Union. November 10, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/presidents_en#.
15. "Is the EU Really Run by Unelected Bureaucrats?" London School of Economics and Political Science. June 23, 2016. Accessed October 21, 2018. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/06/21/is-the-eu-really-run-by-unelected-bureaucrats/.
16. "The Euro - European Union - European Commission." European Union. October 16, 2018. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/money/euro_en.
17. "About." European Central Bank. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/html/index.en.html.
18. "Eurogroup, 1 October 2018." Eurogroup - Consilium. October 05, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/eurogroup/.

19. Walker, Andrew. "What Is the European Stability Mechanism?" BBC News. July 07, 2015. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/business-19870747.
20. "About Us." About Us | European Stability Mechanism. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.esm.europa.eu/about-us/intro.
21. Mahony, Honor. "The Rise of the Untransparent 'Eurogroup'." EUobserver. May 6, 2015. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://euobserver.com/economic/128582.
22. Craig, Paul. "The Eurogroup, Power and Accountability." European Law Journal. October 30, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/eulj.12251.
23. "Eurogroup Confronts Own Deficit: Governance." POLITICO Europe. May 26, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.politico.eu/article/eurogroup-urged-to-tackle-its-own-deficit-governance/.
24. Levy-Abegnoli, Julie. "The Parliament Magazine." Greek Crisis: Eurogroup Sets Strict Demands in Exchange for Funding. July 14, 2015. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/greek-crisis-eurogroup-sets-strict-demands-exchange-funding.
25. "Design Failures of the Eurozone." Design Failures of the Eurozone | VOX, CEPR Policy Portal. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://voxeu.org/article/design-failures-eurozone.
26. Garnham, Peter. "Fundamental Flaws in Design of the Eurozone." Financial Times. April 9, 2010. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.ft.com/content/07197f4a-4333-11df-9046-00144feab49a.
27. "Schengen Area." Migration and Home Affairs - European Commission. December 06, 2016. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en.
28. "Schengen: Controversial EU Free Movement Deal Explained." BBC News. April 24, 2016. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13194723.
29. "EUR-Lex Access to European Union Law." Glossary of Summaries - EUR-Lex. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/union_legal_personality.html.
30. "European External Action Service (EEAS) - European Union - European Commission." European Union. October 24, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/eeas_en.
31. "EU Citizenship - European Union - European Commission." European Union. June 25, 2018. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/eu-citizenship_en.
32. "NATO / OTAN." What Is NATO? Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.
33. "Federal Republic of Germany." Deutschland.de. September 24, 2018. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/federal-republic-of-germany.
34. "Branches of the U.S. Government." USAGov. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government.
35. "Supranational Decision-making Procedures ." Supranational Decision-making Procedures | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European Parliament. Accessed October 21, 2018. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/8/supranational-decision-making-procedures.
36. Krase, Jackson. "The European Union: Supranational or Intergovernmental?" Medium. July 28, 2017. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://medium.com/@jskrase/the-european-union-supranational-or-intergovernmental-7980f7b5b4a1.
37. "FAQ on the EU Competences and the European Commission Powers." European Commission. January 04, 2012. Accessed October 21, 2018. http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/competences/faq.

38. StopMakingSenseTV. "Javier Solana: Europe Must Be a Laboratory for a Possible World Government System." YouTube. June 05, 2015. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBP-9xLOJXk.
39. "Barroso Says EU Is an 'empire'." EUobserver. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://euobserver.com/institutional/24458.