**WILL BRITAIN LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION?**

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Rod King

*Is Great Britain about to leave the European Union (EU)? Most pundits would say that it is unlikely. However, in the wake of recent events, it could happen—with or without Britain’s initiation.*

Why?

Because there are fundamental differences in the way many British people see their place in Europe compared to their continental neighbours. And, those differences seem to be growing more clearly defined, as the French- and German-led EU makes more and more decisions that Britons feel are against their interests.

“Euro-sceptics” (as are called those who are wary of Britain’s EU membership) are still not well represented within the ruling coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. When Parliament last October voted on granting a referendum that would have allowed Britons to call for their country’s withdrawal from the EU, the result was 483 against and 111 for. Clearly, the majority of British politicians want to stay within the European Union. The “Europhiles” will often say: “Our destiny lies with Europe.”

But what do the British people think?

According to a poll conducted by the *Guardian* newspaper on October 24, 2011—the same day on which Parliament voted—their views are quite different. Seventy percent of those polled wanted a referendum for the whole of the United Kingdom to decide whether to leave the union or remain. Only 23 percent said they did not want the plebiscite. Of those asked, 49 percent said that they would vote for Britain to depart, while 40 percent would vote to stay.

Despite this divergence of opinion between politicians and the public, if the percentage of Britons seeking withdrawal from the EU were to rise much above 50 percent, it would be hard for any major party to ignore the fact. So, are there provisions within the Treaty of Lisbon for a member state to exit? Yes, there are. The treaty, which was adopted by EU member states in 2008, makes some interesting provisions for any country seeking to withdraw from the union.

Under “Final Provisions” of the Treaty on European Union, (Title VI, Article 50, paragraph 1 of the Treaty), we read: “Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements.”

However, paragraph 2 adds: “In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union.” Considering this provision, some commentators have pointed out that the Council could make the terms for departure so draconian and costly to any member state wishing to depart that it would be better to stay within the union. It could be just too costly for Britain to leave.

In 1975 the British public cast a similar vote, and 67 percent chose to stay within the European Economic Community (EEC)—the forerunner of the European Union. Nearly 40 years later, the UK public is not as convinced as it was then about the benefits of being tied to the European Union.

**BRITAIN SAYS, “NON!”**

At a recent meeting of EU leaders in Brussels, David Cameron vetoed a plan to impose a transaction tax on EU financial institutions. The British view the tax as an effort by the German- and French-led EU to hobble London as a world financial centre and grab a slice of the proceeds. They fear that such a move would lead to huge UK job and tax losses, whilst driving this global business outside the EU altogether to somewhere more competitive.

Britain’s relationship with Europe has long been tenuous. Many still recall how French President Charles de Gaulle snubbed the British in a speech on May 16, 1967. He said, “We understand for what reason Britain—who is not continental, remains, because of the Commonwealth and because she is an island, committed far beyond the seas, who is tied to the United States by all kinds of special agreements—did not merge into a Community with set dimensions and strict rules.” His whole speech has become known as “Le Grand ‘Non’” (in English: “The Big ‘No’”).

Rivalry between Britain and France is nothing new. It is important to remember that Great Britain gained control over valuable French territories at key moments in world history. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, following the Seven Years War, France ceded to England virtually all of its North American land possessions east of the Mississippi River. French explorer Jean-François Laperouse arrived in Australia’s Botany Bay in 1788, just 5 days after the British colonising First Fleet had landed there. The capture of Cape Town during the Napoleonic Wars denied France a toehold in Southern Africa.

Why did these events occur? Britain’s rise was foretold in Bible prophecy! If you have not already done so, please request your free copy of our booklet, *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*. You may order it online at *TomorrowsWorld.org* or request a copy from the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 30 of this magazine).

So, will Great Britain exit the European Union? For many decades, the *Tomorrow’s World* magazine and its predecessors in this Work have proclaimed that Britain will not be among the final “ten nations” that will give “their power to the beast.” [Revelation 17:12–13](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rev%2017.12%E2%80%9313) tells us, “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.” The “beast” is the biblical name for the leader of a powerful end-time political combine that will dominate Europe and ultimately the whole world.

As of today, these “ten kings have received no kingdom as yet.” This suggests that, for the final end-time prophecies to occur, there may have to be a radically different map of Europe than the one with which we are now familiar. Might some national boundaries shift? Might there be some reinstitution of the old royal families of Europe? We do not yet see these details clearly. However, we can state with clarity from Bible prophecy: Britain will not be one part of these ten kingdoms.

Why?

One answer is that the ten kings “are of one mind” (v. 13). In general, Europe is traditionally Roman Catholic in its thinking. Britain, on the other hand, is shaped by its Protestant background. Britain has been a champion of free thought, parliamentary democracy and liberal economic principles. By contrast, much of Europe has been ruled by totalitarian governments under which labour and business are under the control of a powerful leader. Prophecy shows that, once again—as in the days of the Holy Roman Empire—Church and State will rule the continent, supported by ten powerful “kings” who will give their power to the beast.

Will Britain leave the European Union? It may very well not have a choice. It may find itself excluded by a new European power that is yet to be established.

Throughout 2012 and beyond, students of Bible prophecy need to watch developments in Europe. Decisions made by European leaders will affect you, wherever you live. Watch closely what happens to Great Britain as it is attacked and even ignored, more and more, by its European “partners.” Britain may not leave the European Union right away. But it will not be amongst the final ten kings who will give their power to the beast.