

SUMMARY OF HISTORY

Napoleon

1769. Napoleon is born on the island of Corsica.
1778. At the age of nine, Napoleon was admitted to a military school in France. From that time on, he knew no other life than the army.
1785. At the age of sixteen, he was appointed a second lieutenant in the artillery.
1789. Up to the outbreak of the French Revolution, Napoleon's career did not look very promising. But the Revolution suddenly opened up new prospects for him. After the fall of the monarchy, he stayed on to serve the Republic. He became an ardent French patriot and Jacobin.
1793. Napoleon's role in recapturing of the port of Toulon from the royalists and the English in winter of this year earned him a promotion from captain to brigadier general and attracted the notice of an influential politician, Barras, who later proved of assistance to him. Napoleon was now just 24 years old.
1794. The fall of Robespierre brought Bonaparte a temporary reversal of fortune. He was arrested as a Terrorist, deprived of his commission, and briefly imprisoned.
1795. Subsequently, however, Barras had him put in charge of the defense of the Convention when it was threatened by an uprising in October of 1795 and his success in this enterprise (he used the famous "whiff of grapeshot" against the Parisian insurgents) led to his appointment as commander in chief of the Army of the Interior.
1796. Barras, now one of the Directors in the new government, cultivated Napoleon's friendship by introducing the young general to one of his cast-off mistresses, Josephine de Beauharnais. She was the attractive widow of an aristocratic general who had died on the guillotine during the Terror. She was six years his senior, had two children, and was without a fortune, but the young Napoleon fell violently in love with her and married her on March 9, 1796.
- 1796-1797. Napoleon's Italian Campaign. Two days before his marriage to Josephine, he was appointed to command the French army in Italy. Here he first demonstrated his qualities as a military genius; brilliant in offensive warfare, he put emphasis on great speed and mobility and on surprise attacks to disconcert the enemy. This campaign was a success, removing Austria from the war (they were driven from northern Italy). Napoleon's reputation as an outstanding general was established and he was now a national hero.
1798. The French occupied Rome and proclaimed the Roman Republic. Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) was taken captive to southern France where he died in the next year!

- 1798-1799. Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign in which he is eventually defeated. He took an army by sea to Egypt, where he hoped to sever England's life-line to India. He easily defeated the Egyptians, but the English admiral, Horatio Nelson, sank the French fleet near the mouth of the Nile. Napoleon's army, trapped in Egypt, was soon decimated by disease and dysentery. In the midst of this crisis, Napoleon heard that the Directory was in danger of falling and that some of the Directors wanted to create a military dictatorship. Leaving his army in Egypt, he made his way secretly back to France to offer his services to the conspirators.
1799. On November 9, Napoleon forced the legislators to abolish the Directory and substitute a new government known as the Consulate. With this coup d'etat the French Revolution had come to an end. To Frenchmen exhausted by years of revolution, terror, and economic instability, Napoleon seemed to be the guarantor both of the gains of the Revolution and of order.
- 1799-1804. The Consulate. Napoleon held the title of First Consul but was virtual dictator of France. In August of 1802 he became consul for life. The only remaining step was to become Emperor!
- 1799-1801. During this period Napoleon led a series of successful campaigns against the coalition that England, Austria, and Prussia had formed to defeat him. Hostilities ended in 1801 and did not break out again on any major scale until 1805.
1801. During this interlude of peace, Napoleon took the opportunity to drastically reshape the map of Germany and the destiny of the old Holy Roman Empire. His power to do this stemmed from the Treaty of Basel (concluded by France with Prussia in 1795) and from France's treaties with Austria—Campofornio in 1797 and Lunéville in 1801. Through these treaties France acquired all the German territories lying along the left (west) bank of the Rhine. Langer comments (page 637) that the Treaty of Lunéville of 9 February 1801 practically involved the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire! So this is a significant date although the final demise of the Empire did not come until 1806 (see below).
1801. Concordat between France and the Papacy. In another important step toward becoming Holy Roman Emperor in every sense of the title, Napoleon came to an agreement with the Pope (Pius VII, 1800-1823) which reconciled their differences, but only for a short time. For details of the agreement, see page 535 in the Mainstream text.
1803. The Louisiana Purchase. President Thomas Jefferson successfully negotiated the acquisition of Louisiana from France for \$15,000,000. The greatest real-estate bargain of history, it doubled the size of the United States! This area included not only the present state of Louisiana and the vital port of New Orleans, but also the immense territory extending northwards as far as Canada and westward from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, a vast region encompassing well over one million square miles! This was another important step in the relinquishing of the birthright blessings by Reuben to Joseph in the modern period; and it also marked the close of the 2520-year period beginning in 718 B.C.

1804. Bonaparte is proclaimed Emperor as Napoleon I (1804-1814 or 1815). He was proclaimed by the senate and tribunate on May 18, and consecrated at Paris by Pope Pius VII on December 2. In the climax of the impressive ceremony in Notre Dame, Napoleon took the crown from the surprised pope, turned his back on him, and facing the audience, placed the crown upon his own head. In this manner he proclaimed to the pope and all others present his independence of any earthly authority! By this, and many other acts, Napoleon demonstrated that he regarded himself as the successor of Pepin and Charlemagne—that he was the new Holy Roman Emperor!

1805. Large-scale hostilities began again in 1805. From this time on, until Napoleon's defeat ten years later, France was almost constantly at war! The key events of 1805 were these:

Formation of the Third Coalition. Joining England were Austria, Russia, and Sweden. Spain was allied with France.

Battle of Ulm. On October 17 Napoleon defeated Austria.

Battle of Trafalgar. On October 21 the English navy, under the command of Lord Donald M. Nelson, famous British admiral, defeated the French and Spanish fleets but lost his life in the battle. This was the single most important defeat of Napoleon before Waterloo because it meant that France had lost control of the sea. If the British had lost this battle, Napoleon would ultimately have won the war and been able to keep Europe in total subjection, Russia notwithstanding. This victory broke the naval power of France and established Britain as the mistress of the seas throughout the 19th century! And Napoleon was never able again to threaten England with invasion. However, he continued to be able to dominate all military campaigns on land on the Continent.

Battle of Austerlitz. On December 2 of this eventful year, Napoleon won his most spectacular victory. The combined Austrian and Russian armies were defeated, the Austrians hastily agreed to a truce, and the Russians retreated!

1806. With Austria defeated and Russia in retreat, Napoleon followed up his victory with a complete reorganization of the German states. He abolished the Holy Roman Empire (see next item) and eliminated many of the smaller German principalities. Out of these petty states he created a satellite system composed of fourteen larger states which were united in a Confederation of the Rhine of which Napoleon was president. So, as in each era of the Roman Empire, this resurrection also had two parts as the image in Daniel 2 had two legs—France itself and the German Confederation. Without this German support, Napoleon's power would have been greatly diminished.

End of the Holy Roman Empire. Napoleon brought an end to the office of Holy Roman Emperor. On August 6th, 1806, Francis II, the Austrian Emperor resigned from the imperial office, giving up the old imperial crown. One thousand and six years after the crowning of Charlemagne at St. Peter's in Rome in 800 A.D., the world's most venerable institution had fallen!

1806. Battle of Jena. Napoleon defeated Prussia. The main Prussian armies were completely routed and quickly fell to pieces. Napoleon occupied Berlin. (October 27.)
1807. Battle of Friedland. Napoleon defeated the Russians in June. Thus, in three campaigns in three successive years, Napoleon had defeated the 3 strongest powers on the Continent—Austria, Prussia, Russia—and established his position as master of Europe.
- Treaty of Tilsit. A few weeks after Friedland, Napoleon and Emperor Alexander I of Russia held a dramatic meeting near Tilsit. Alexander recognized Napoleon's supremacy in the west, and Napoleon agreed not to intervene in Russia's internal affairs or her Balkan policy. He was now at the summit of his power. All Europe, save England, was to some degree under his rule. But from this point on his fortunes were on the descent.
1809. Problems with the Papacy. There had been growing friction between Napoleon and Pius VII from 1805 on after the imperial coronation. There had been difficulties in working out the Concordat of 1801; and Napoleon had used high-handed methods in depriving the Pope of some of his territories. On May 17, 1809, the Papal States were declared incorporated with France. Pius replied by excommunicating Napoleon (June 10), whereupon the emperor had him arrested (July 6) and taken to Savona, near Genoa, where he was held prisoner. Pius continued his attitude of opposition and in 1812 was removed to Fontainebleau. (He was freed after the fall of Napoleon and lived to 1823.) Remember, the "woman's" ride on the "beast" is not always smooth! These hostile relations between church and state are significant because it means that from this point on the Church will support all the enemies of Napoleon!
1812. Invasion of Russia. As Austria and Prussia prepare to fight Napoleon again, he invades Russia in June. In September the French occupied Moscow, but the Russians have left the city vacant. Napoleon's troops are forced to retrace their steps out of Russia. They suffer severely from hunger, cold, and Russian snipers! Napoleon left his army and hastened to Paris arriving in December.
1813. Battle of Leipzig. In October Napoleon is defeated by Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Napoleon lost about two-fifths of his men and retreated back across the Rhine.
1814. In April Napoleon abdicated; he is exiled to the island of Elba.
- 1814-1815. The Congress of Vienna ended the wars of the Napoleonic era.
1815. The Hundred Days (March 20 to June 29) marked the period of Napoleon's brief return to power in France.
- Battle of Waterloo. On June 18 Napoleon is defeated by the English army led by the Duke of Wellington, and by the Prussian army led by Blücher and Gneisenau.
- Second Abdication of Napoleon. On June 22 Napoleon abdicated for the last time. He is banished to St. Helena where he died May 5, 1821.