

#123 The Short Space Kingdoms – The V-2 Rocket: *Broken Clay* Germany’s Role in the U.S. vs. USSR Space Race

Key Understanding: *Germany’s role in the U.S. vs. USSR space race. Both the United States and the Soviet Union founded and developed their own Space Race programs by using captured German scientists and captured German equipment from the German V-2 rocket program.*

The V-1 rocket. Germany developed what were called V-1 and V-2 rockets during World War II. The V-1, a small pilotless aircraft with minimal guidance and a large warhead, was developed by the German Luftwaffe and was used between June 1944 and March 1945. It was fired at targets in southeastern England and Belgium, chiefly the cities of London and Antwerp. V-1s were launched from “ski-jump” launch sites along the French and Dutch coasts until the launch sites were overrun by Allied forces.

The V-2 rocket. The V-1 was replaced by the more sophisticated wonder weapon *Vergeltungswaffe 2* (Vengeance Weapon 2), or V-2 (*right*) as it became better known. The V-2 ballistic missile was also unmanned but of a far greater technological superiority. Production started in 1943. The primary deployment of the V-2 was not operational until September 1944. Throughout the remainder of the war, over 3000 V-2s were launched by the Germans, this time from truck-towed trailers, with over 1300 V-2s targeting London.



The V-2. First fired in 1942, the German V-2 rocket was the world’s first ballistic missile and first successful large liquid-propellant rocket. Developed by German engineer Wernher von Braun, the V-2 was used by the Germans to bombard England during World War II. It was originally designated the A-4, as it was the fourth in a line of rocket developments; however, Joseph Goebbels’s propaganda ministry renamed it *Vergeltungswaffe 2* (Retaliation Weapon 2). It was naturally shortened to V-2.

Wernher von Braun. At the end of the war, a race began between the U.S. and the USSR to retrieve as many V-2 rockets and staff as possible. Three hundred trainloads of V-2s and parts were captured and shipped to the U.S. In addition, over 100 principal German scientists/designers of the V-2 surrendered into U.S. hands, led by Wernher von Braun.



Wernher von Braun stands at his desk in the Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Alabama, in May 1964, with models of rockets developed and in progress.

Von Braun played a major role in developing the V-2. In 1944, Heinrich Himmler, chief of the Nazi secret police, tried to take over the German rocket program. He jailed von Braun, who refused to cooperate. Adolf Hitler freed von Braun later that year. After von Braun led the surrender of major rocket scientists to the U.S., they were sent to the U.S. to work on guided missile systems. In 1950, the Army assigned von Braun and his team to the Redstone Arsenal for the purpose of designing the first large U.S. ballistic missile. [Von Braun became a U.S. citizen in 1955.]

Von Braun's team developed the Jupiter rocket that launched Explorer I, the first U.S. earth satellite. Another of the von Braun team's rockets, called the Redstone, launched Alan Shepard into space on May 5, 1961. The Saturn 5 rocket that launched the *Apollo 11* astronauts to the moon in 1969 was also a von Braun project.

Revelation 17:10-11 (KJV) . . . and THE OTHER [the Seventh Kingdom, the USSR] IS NOT YET COME; and when he cometh, he [the Seventh Kingdom, the USSR] must continue A SHORT SPACE. [The Space Race defined the Cold War competition between the USSR, the 7th Kingdom, and the U.S., the 8th Kingdom.]

11 And THE BEAST [out of the Pit in Rev. 17:08, the United States of America] that was, and is not, even HE IS THE EIGHTH, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

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