



MILESTONES

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

**A Review of 1989
World Events
in the Light
of Bible
Prophecy**

Graham Pearce

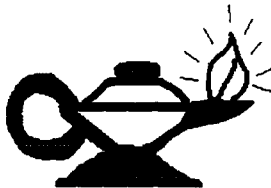
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- **CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURE STUDY SERVICE**
17 Braemar Road,
Torrens Park,
South Australia, 5062
Australia.

Typeset by:
The **WORD** Typeset
6 Ingomar Court
Hallett Cove, South Australia 5158

Printed by:
Stallard & Potter
2 Jervis Street, Torrensville
South Australia, 5031

for
CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURE STUDY SERVICE



Printed January 1990

PREFACE

No-one upon earth could have envisaged the extent and rapidity of developments that we have witnessed during 1989—especially in the last four months. All the East European countries, bound together in Communist theory and military alliance, have suddenly broken free of their Marxist shackles and lunged for freedom and capitalist prosperity. Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia—that for forty years or more have vaunted their Communist revolution before the eyes of the world—suddenly had their cities full of the masses, marching and clamouring for ‘revolution’! The socialist revolution was in ruins, a heartless failure in the realm of the human mind, and a disgraced theory in the field of economics.

As we write these words, only the Soviet Union looks likely to retain a ruling Communist Party. That all this change could have occurred in just twelve months is breathtaking! The Europe that we knew is gone. The Iron Curtain, as Sir Winston Churchill called it, has been shattered. Western Europe is yearning for unity and a new spirit of confidence is felt in all her capitals. It was my fortune to visit Paris during August to savour, among other things, the spirit of the French people as they celebrated their Revolution of 1789. France is confident. Paris is breathing a spirit of destiny, progress and a wilfulness to head Europe politically. It has no concern to keep England up with the progress of European unity. If Mrs. Thatcher wishes to veto certain proposals for monetary and economic union, as she can under the present rules of the EEC, then France’s initiative is to change the rules!

The Germanic peoples have experienced their most telling year since their post-war division. The West is booming economically and industrially and yearns to prop up its ailing sister of the East and weld them into one people. Here is the re-formation of that Central European people that has always been critical to the bringing together of Europe. Though Italy is prospering, it is through the Vatican that her principal role is seen. The False Prophet has reaped his most notable annual harvest with a truly sensational list of achievements, surely culminating in the visit of Mr. Gorbachev from the arch-foe Communist regime of the Soviet Union, to the ‘Apostolic’ Palace in the Vatican. In that amazing setting, with the Pope presiding in white robes of ‘holiness’ and under a painting of the Resurrection, Gorbachev confessed that “admittedly the Soviet Union had taken a too simplistic approach to religion in the

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Abbreviations:

Daily Telegraph — D. T.

Guardian Weekly — G. W.

Jerusalem Post — J. P.

Comments added by the author — G. P.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION—150 YEARS OF PROPHECY FULFILLING

What are we looking for today?

FROM THE DAYS OF BROTHER THOMAS

For 150 years our community has believed and lectured that we are in the Time of the End during which Christ returns to set up his Kingdom. When he returns, Russia and a mighty confederacy invades the land of Israel and is destroyed by Christ. The nation of Israel is delivered from its oppressors and Christ establishes his rule from Jerusalem over all the earth.

This general concept of the Time of the End prophecies was plainly set out at the beginning of our community, in Part Three of the book *Elpis Israel* (1849). Brother Thomas's conviction was expressed in a few sentences in the preface of the book:

"The Russian Autocracy in its plenitude, and on the verge of dissolution, is the Image of Nebuchadnezzar standing upon the mountains of Israel, ready to be smitten by the Stone.

"When Russia makes its grand move for the building up of its Image empire, then let the reader know that the end of all things as at present constituted is at hand".

This understanding of prophecy has been the basis of public addresses through the last and present centuries, and was often the starting point of interest that led people to embrace the Truth. It has also been a source of encouragement and steadfastness as brethren and sisters watched unfolding events fulfilling prophecy.

ACCEPTED INTERPRETATION CHALLENGED AND VINDICATED

In the last forty years this understanding has been challenged by several quite different concepts, with a disturbing effect on some brethren. The element of confusion introduced has brought discouragement; and more important, an increasingly critical attitude to the value of studying the

prophetic word. However, recent events over the same forty years have steadily vindicated our traditional understanding of the main lines of God's unfolding plan. For this we must be thankful. Furthermore, it is good that the reliability of Brother Thomas' exposition of scripture is being justified, and one may hope it will help to restore a respect for the work he performed in reviving saving Truth; and a willingness to read *Elpis Israel*, and also volume one of *Eureka*—an equally essential book.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN POWER IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In the second half of the 19th century, Russia was known as an expansionist power, and clashed with Britain in the Middle East on several occasions. The 1917 Communist Revolution stopped Russia's southward expansionist adventures for a while. Then in World War II, Soviet military power became manifest in Russia's successful resistance to the best divisions of Hitler's army displayed along a 1,000 mile front in the East. She sacrificed millions of men to defend her country.

In the 1945 Yalta conference, Stalin as a respected victor from the East, met alongside Churchill and Roosevelt. The Soviet was soon to be recognized as a superpower in the world. General Smuts, the South African elder statesman, warned Europe where their danger lay—'Beware the Russian Bear'.

In the 1970's and 1980's the growing might of the Soviet became manifest—the preparation for aggressive action in Europe with its vast army of tanks; its astonishingly rapid development as a world-wide naval power (cf. Daniel 12 "with many ships"); its establishing of strategic bases in various parts of the world; its aggressive steps in Afghanistan, Angola, and Cuba.

All this was watched with keen interest by those faithful watchers for Christ's return. One particular item, the gradual coming together of the Vatican and the Soviet from 1960 onwards, was seen as a key element of prophecy fulfilling.

Over the past 25 years and more, in various articles and addresses, we have followed these moves in East and West that are leading to the uniting of East and West Europe. We have had ample evidence that God is steadily working to His revealed prophetic plan.

TWO NEW STARS IN THE POLITICAL HEAVENS

As we entered the 1980's, two powerful men came on the scene, no doubt suitable and prepared by God to do His work.

John Paul II soon established a world reputation by his world-wide tours, his speech at the United Nations, and his powerful charisma that grips the vast crowds he loves to harangue.

As a conservative, he drew back from the socialist drive of the previous two popes, and restored the authority of the Papacy and the absolutism of its dogmas as necessary for salvation. This was a needed step for exercising Papal authority as 'spiritual' head of all Europe.

His Polish interests dominated his European actions, and increased the conflict with the Soviet. Through his Church hierarchies in the Eastern European countries, he brought such pressure to bear that concessions had to be made by the Communist government. As an ex-communist party worker, he knew how to handle the Communist party.

Gorbachev appeared on the scene in 1984. Like Pope John Paul, he had a brilliant mind and great strength—his cleverness and activity probably exceeding that of the Pope. His clear objectives and successes so far, have been recorded in recent issues of **Milestones**. He has been driven on by the desperate shortcomings of the Soviet economy.

AN APPOINTED WORK OF PREPARATION

This year it has become more apparent that Gorbachev is a man carrying out work God has appointed him to do. This has become clearer because his policy of glasnost (openness) has revealed the extreme demoralization of the people and the desperate state of the Soviet economy. The nation does not yet seem ready for the work it has to do in God's plan, though it is obvious that charismatic leaders can quickly galvanize the masses into foolish and destructive actions.

The heading we used in chapter three of **Milestones 1987** now appears more appropriate than was then realized:

"Be thou prepared and prepare for thyself".

It is now reasonably clear that Gorbachev is the man brought on the scene to carry out that preparation expressed in the early part of Ezekiel 38. The scripture speaks to Gog: "Be thou prepared, and prepare for

thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled with thee” [the Satellite countries]. Gorbachev has to carry through this gigantic task.

When we appreciate this, we will be able to see that all his policies and objectives spring from the one need—to promote the revival of the Soviet economy and people. All that has been happening this year and earlier, stems from this.

If, as we propose, Gorbachev is appointed to carry out the Ezekiel 38 ‘preparation’, it means he will be successful. God does not fail in what He has planned.

GORBACHEV’S MAIN OBJECTIVES

Gorbachev from the start had realized that the Communist dictatorship of Stalin and Brezhnev had failed. The desperate state of the economy after 70 years of Communist rule demonstrated this. And things were getting worse. He could see that fundamentally new policies were essential to revive the economy, restore the people’s self-respect, and improve the dreadful poverty and low living standards.

Mr. Gorbachev’s objectives remain unchanged, but they have become clearer, especially in his successes this year. Briefly they are:

1. Creating a climate of cooperation and ‘peaceful coexistence’ as world-wide as possible in order to get the financial loans and industrial aid to rebuild the Soviet economy.
2. Creating a state of peace and stability in Europe so that through being able to reduce armaments and their manufacture, and by reducing the number of men under arms, it would be possible for more people to be employed in the civilian sphere and less in the military.
3. Revitalizing the Communist party by removing the “Old Guard” and its stagnant bureaucracy, decentralizing leadership control, and bringing in laws for a new democratic socialism.
4. Though not openly expressed, there was the further objective of bringing all Europe under Soviet control, as Head of his ‘Common European Home’. How far Gorbachev consciously aims eventually to ‘conquer the world’ we do not know; but he certainly aims to make the Soviet a great and respected world power.

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

In carrying out these objectives, he has put into practice arms reduction, his new national security policy of 'defensive only', attention to human rights and freedom of the individual, both in the Soviet and in the Satellite countries.

These developments have made a big impression on the world, and particularly on America which cherishes 'human rights'. And there has resulted a growing confidence and respect for the Soviet. This means America and other countries are willing to risk making financial loans, trade and technological agreements. All this is exactly what Gorbachev needs to speed up restoration of the Soviet economy.

In the following chapters we expand on this success. Here, by way of illustration, we will mention three occasions of success in 1989: (1) his friendship with American President Bush; (2) his meeting with the Pope; (3) the transformation in the Satellite countries.

1. The Bush-Gorbachev Malta meeting at the beginning of December high-lighted the increasing cooperation and good-will with America. President Bush said that last year he was uncertain about Gorbachev's genuine intention to carry out reform, but now he is satisfied, and was ready to promote trade and give business training. A newspaper report of the meeting said:

"He (Gorbachev) had two broad objectives, to win support for perestroika and to establish with Mr. Bush steady, but unprovocative policies towards the changes in eastern Europe. To his delight, he got both.

"Better still, he learnt that Washington was not simply satisfied to let perestroika happen, but was willing to take an active role of encouragement by offering the Soviet Union a commercial agreement, lifting trade barriers and supporting observer status for Moscow in GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade" [G.P. a world-wide controlling body] (D. T. 5-12-89).

2. A day before this Malta meeting Mr. Gorbachev was received by the Pope at the Vatican in a very cordial manner. At the meeting, the way was prepared for Poland to have diplomatic relations with the Vatican, and for the Pope in due course to visit the Soviet. This was, indeed, a success for Gorbachev and the Soviet, lifting their respectability and status in the world.

3. The breathtaking changes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania all in one year, are the outstanding events of 1989. For Gorbachev this was success; it was in line with his objectives. This sudden release of 'people power', its causes and consequences, we deal with in chapter 4.

Other important events are the changing attitude of West Germany in refusing to do as it was told by its war-time victors; and the growing importance of the EEC, now extending its influence into East European countries (See chapters 5 and 6).

When we come to chapter 11 we attempt to sum up the complexity of today's European affairs and to indicate the possible developments of 1990.

BRIEF SUMMARY

To conclude this introduction, we give the following brief summary. 1989 has seen an improved spirit of cooperation, and this probably will continue in 1990. The main item will be increasing economic and industrial cooperation with the Soviet and within Europe generally, allowing that "prepare thyself" phase in the Soviet to continue. Also, the EEC now established as a well-organized trading unit will be in great demand by the new fledgling governments in Eastern Europe.

But alongside this will be a great problem pressing to be solved. All are seeking for peace and security, but what can be done about the two massive army structures facing each other in East and West Germany, established there for 40 years, ready to fight one another? There are over three million men on each side, and vast permanent infrastructures— aerodromes, bomb sites, defences, and nuclear weapon storage. Both the Soviet Union and NATO are fearful of great upheaval and instability if the armies are rapidly dismantled.

Gorbachev knows that the Old Guard and the army Marshals would not tolerate substantial changes, fearing insecurity. American military men and NATO hold the same view. But the greater problem concerns the people who are involved. Both East and West Germany are to hold free elections in May/June of 1990. And there is little doubt that the elections will say that these countries insist they will no longer have these armies on their soil. This indeed will be a great problem. Other elements of instability and trouble we have already mentioned.

Chapter 2: THE EXHORTATION: "I WILL HASTEN IT IN HIS TIME"

BREATH TAKING RATE OF CHANGE

The pace of change in the eastern European countries—Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Romania, etc. has been so breath-taking, the power of the people so dynamic, that one has the impression that Gorbachev himself has been somewhat overwhelmed by the rushing tide and is being carried along by it, unable to moderate the forward drive. The restlessness and the popular demands being realized are dangerous in both the Soviet and the East European countries. In their meeting, both Bush and Gorbachev pleaded for changes in each country to go slowly to preserve stability.

Such steady controlled change is unlikely as the events in Romania have demonstrated. 1990 may well continue with further momentous events in Europe; German re-unification and its disturbing effects; all sorts of trouble in the 'reformed' satellite countries with their new governments lacking in skill, maturity and stability; national and nationalistic clashes between countries; rivalry of individuals.

All is in the hands of God. Almost certainly we have reached that stage, manifest in previous "Days of the LORD", when God speeds up His work as it reaches its consummation.

This is a principle, and it will apply in our time. It is expressed in the concluding verse of that grand chapter on Zion's restoration, Isaiah 60:

"I the LORD will hasten it in his time".

And this is echoed in the judgement on Israel in Ezekiel 12:25:

"For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no longer prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD".

God gives the directive, and a host of angels carry out His will, Psalm 103.

Readers of the 1988 **Milestones** may remember that in the chapter on Jubilees, the 7 to 8 years left before the expected final 70th Jubilee is reached, seemed too short a time to allow all the events that have to happen—prosperity in Israel, the building of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, its destruction after invading the land, the deliverance of Israel from its oppressors, and Christ in Jerusalem to proclaim the Jubilee return. But at the pace of change this year, this does not now seem impossible.

OUR WARNING

Brethren and sisters, the principle we are considering in this chapter about the speeding up of events towards the end, is a warning to us. Our calling to judgement may be very near! We do well to call to mind the admonitions given in the scripture when the 'Day of the Lord' in earlier times was imminent.

Paul, in writing to the brethren at Thessalonica as the long-established Mosaic Commonwealth was about to be swept away, told them peace and safety would be followed by sudden destruction. His exhortation was, and is to us, that a brief spell of peace and safety has the effect of lulling to sleep, producing laxity, so that watching is given up. For such, the warning of Paul was and is:

"This know that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night".

Peter also felt it was necessary to give the same warning, as some said Christ's coming in judgement against the Jewish heavens and earth was not near.

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens and earth shall pass away with a great noise...Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness...Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 5:10-17).

CHRIST'S OWN WARNING

It is Christ himself who gives the warning to our generation in Revelation 16. We have watched the going forth of frog-like spirits—socialism and democracy—to Europe and the world for a very long time, preparing the nations for the greatest "day of the LORD".

While this is going on, Christ comes to judge his saints:

"Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (16:15).

Some will be watching, making proper use of prophecy to be alert and walking in holiness, while others will not.

The next item in the sequence of the Vials is: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (v. 16). Armageddon is the invasion of the land of Israel—as expressed in the phrase "in the Hebrew tongue". The **gathering** to Armageddon must take place before Armageddon itself.

What is this **gathering**? It must be the final phase of that prophecy in Ezekiel 38 for Gog to "be prepared". It is the gathering together of the nations of Europe particularly, the building of Nebuchadnezzar's Image on its iron-clay feet. It is the integration of the nations of Europe that we are beginning to see take place, probably to be finalized by the great Gog when Gorbachev has finished his preparation work. This gathering together for Armageddon may not be very far away.

And we **must** remember: the gathering to Armageddon is announced after Christ has come to judge his saints. The coming of Christ is involved in that verse: "Behold I come as a thief". There is no other place in the vials that refers to his coming.

MORE NOT LESS STUDY OF PROPHECY

Let us be attentive to the voice of prophecy God has put on record:

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

This means that it is the Father's goodwill that His children should be informed beforehand of things coming to pass, so that they may be prepared and watching. He expects us to take note, to understand, what He has written for our benefit. To not bother is an insult to God.

If we give time and study we shall be able to understand the style of prophetic presentation, even if it is in the form of symbol and not plain language. God told Daniel that the wise would understand.

In chapter 12, after assuring Daniel of a day of resurrection and reward when the wise shall shine as the stars, God told him the words of His prophecy could not in Daniel's time be understood:

18—THE EXHORTATION: "I WILL HASTEN IT IN HIS TIME"

"Go thy way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end.

"Many shall be purified and made white and tried...none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand" (vv. 9, 10).

Let us be encouraged by the words "**the wise shall understand**".

John in Patmos, like Daniel, was seeking to understand what lay ahead. And he heard the gracious news:

"Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda...hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5).

John was granted visions in symbol-form that sketched future history down to our time and to the setting up of the Kingdom. For 2,000 years the Revelation has been the 'Book Unsealed', informing and guiding the saints in the affairs of their own day—fulfilling what God said to Amos.

The wise today know in sufficient detail where they stand—near to the end of the sixth vial, in which the Lord returns.

Chapter 3: GORBACHEV'S PROGRESS AT HOME IN 1989

SOVIET ELECTIONS AND NEW PARLIAMENT

"The Soviet elections are a magnificent example of Gorbachevian cunning, paradox, and statecraft. Who is going to win?

"Answer: 'Gorbachev and, more importantly, the Soviet People. The election is certain to prove another immense step forward in the Gorbachev revolution' " (Moscow correspondent, D. T. 24-3-89).

It was emphasized in last year's *Milestones* (chapter 2) that any national reforms in a democracy must have a legal foundation to be effective. The government and system must be ratified by Acts of parliament, passed by the governing body. Great speeches, demonstrations, promises are useful in moulding public opinion, but it is the passing of law that is decisive.

✓ Last year Gorbachev managed to get the ruling Central Committee of the Communist party to agree in broad terms to a new form of government in which deputies elected by the people (like our M.P.'s) would form a parliament dealing with the day to day running of the country. This was agreeing, to a considerable degree, to transferring power from the Communist party's leaders to the Democratically elected parliament. Gorbachev had made this agreement possible by gradually removing opponents from the Central Committee and replacing them by his supporters.

In March 1989 the elections were duly held, on the basis of one man/one vote throughout the vast Soviet Republic and with freedom for there to be more than one candidate. It turned out that in many regions there was only one candidate—the official Communist man, who automatically was elected. But where there was a Gorbachev supporter opposing an official Communist party candidate, he had an overwhelming majority and the 'Old Guard' lost. This was a great shock to the Communist leaders.

"KREMLIN STUNNED BY OLD GUARD'S ELECTION DEFEAT"

"Early impressions that the voters have humiliated an array of leading Communist party functionaries are confirmed by latest results of the Soviet general elections, while a dearth of commentaries in the official press suggests that a stunned Kremlin has yet to decide how to respond" (D.T. 29-3-89).

So the people had used their freedom to express their mind.

In May the re-formed Congress of People's Deputies was convened with its 2,250 deputies representing nearly 200 million Soviet citizens. They proceeded to elect their Supreme Soviet of some 500 members (the equivalent of our M.P.'s) and a cabinet of some 40 M.P.'s, with Gorbachev as President. This parliament now had authority as the government of the Soviet, and not the Communist Central Committee. But bear in mind that the majority of M.P.'s were still Communists.

President Gorbachev appointed Anatoli Lukyano (59) as his vice-president of the Supreme Soviet.

"Since Mr. Gorbachev became Kremlin Leader his rise has been meteoric. He has a shrewd, sober, cautiously-reformist mind" (D. T. 13-8-89).

In June the first session of parliament was held. The Daily Telegraph reported a remarkable list of decisions taken in the first brief session:— Judges to be selected by democratic councils and party members banned from interference; presumption of innocence added to Soviet law. It discussed and approved ministerial posts, including the minister of defence and the chairman of the KGB. Students were released from military service; factories were granted far greater economic independence, allowing them to trade directly with foreign countries; and a minimum monthly pension of about 110 dollars was to be paid (D. T. 13-8-89).

In September, just before parliament re-assembled, Gorbachev carried out a further purge of Communist Party leaders, aiming to weaken the power of the Communists and strengthen the new parliament:

"GORBACHEV AXES HARDLINERS"

"President Gorbachev struck a dramatic blow last night to remake the Soviet Communist party. A surprise television broadcast announced

that three full members of the ruling Politburo had been sacked. Two candidate non-voting members of the Politburo were also dropped. There were also changes on the party's policy-making Central Committee in the biggest reshuffle in Mr. Gorbachev's 4 1/2 years in power.

F "it was the most sweeping Kremlin change in 30 years, a stunning consolidation of Mr. Gorbachev's power" (D.T. 21-9-89).

Men who supported Mr. Gorbachev were promoted.

THE SCEPTICAL POPULACE

Without doubt, by September Mr. Gorbachev had marked up some more successes in the all-important legal side. But what about the attitude of the people? Legal matters were the province of the appointed representatives, but what had been gained, they asked? It had been widely made known by Gorbachev himself that far from there being no improvement in living standards, they would in the short time go down while difficult transitions were being made. The new freedom of speech allowed them to express their impatience, and express their nationalist ambitions.

Two quotations from a lengthy article in the French *Le Monde* in November will reflect the situation. [In the -40⁰F (& -40⁰C) winter in much of the Soviet, coal for heaters is the life blood of the nation].

"PERILS OF ECONOMIC PERESTROIKA"

"Transport, Pravda wrote, was suffering from 'thrombosis': it noted that 1,500 wagons were waiting to be unloaded in the Ukraine, and more than 700 in Kazahstan, and more than 400 in Armenia — altogether more than 30,000 wagons standing idle in the whole of the USSR, when an entire wagon load of coal was needed to heat a single school through the winter. "When on top of all this, there is a constant danger of miners' strikes breaking out again, then there is a real possibility of the USSR being beaten to its knees by the cold".

"...destitution is spreading, retired people are living in despairing conditions, community facilities are broken down and the severest shortage is still housing. Subjecting this country to a sudden cold-turkey austerity treatment when it is already shaken by latent rumbling is to quite simply run the risk of triggering a revolution by plunging millions of people into utter despair. It will require a dictatorship or result in one" (G.W. 12-11-89).

Will Gorbachev be able to pull things round in time? Will the people revolt? Will some kind of civil war break out that will give the Old Guard occasion to use the military to crush the disturbances, oust Gorbachev and revert to the old ways? This sort of outcome is still thought possible by U. S. military intelligence. We shall see as we proceed whether this would fit Biblical prophecy.

Gorbachev has several times this year insisted that he has the backing of a good majority of the Politburo for his reforms and that he is in no danger of being ousted. He has the solid support of the new Supreme Soviet parliament.

The army generals are discontented. In Stalin and Brezhnev's era they were all-powerful and could practically dictate to the Politburo because they were essential for maintaining despotic Communist rule. Gorbachev has muzzled this power and has brought them in some measure under the control of the new government; the minister of Defence is a Gorbachev supporter. An article spoke of their "disquiet", "frustration", "anger". If Gorbachev should begin to lose control, they would be ready to side with the Old Guard and crush any disturbances.

A GLOOMY END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT

The second session of the new Soviet parliament finished at the end of the year with an emergency session in which Gorbachev gave a gloomy report. So many of the reforms they had planned and hoped to implement have now to be delayed, and a new Five-Year Plan was announced. The seriousness of the delay is not so much its effect on the Soviet people, as on America, as the following newspaper report indicates.

"US GLOOM AS GORBACHEV CONCEDES ON ECONOMY"

"The post-summit euphoria in the Bush Administration on the vaunted 'new era in US-Soviet relations' has been deflated by the latest Soviet economic reforms, which are seen as a dismaying reversal of President Gorbachev's moves towards a free-market economy.

"Officials and academic advisers to President George Bush were unanimous that Moscow's latest economic package—which puts faith in a new five-year plan rather than free markets—has 'dropped Gorby's rating on the Washington credibility meter by a lot of notches'.

"This perception of a halt to economic perestroika is having important repercussions in Washington...The prospect of dramatic cuts in the Pentagon budget—and thus the fate of President Bush's dream of balancing the federal budget without new taxes—depends absolutely on whether Washington can continue to feel confident about Mr. Gorbachev and his reforms" (G.W. 24-12- 89).

RELIGION: AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ALLY IN GORBACHEV'S REFORMS

In 1988 official steps were in hand to draft new laws granting real liberty of conscience for 'believers'—a right which theoretically they always had!

Gorbachev's object was to harness the better disciplines and moral climate of those who recognized God and His authority (even if they be Roman Catholics), expecting this would enliven the rest of the workers.

Gorbachev had to proceed slowly, for he was flouting a basic principle of Communist membership. All Communists are committed to atheism and his move aroused alarm and opposition in the party. But he had a further urgent need to take this step. Obtaining cooperation and aid from America and Britain required this new policy of freedom of conscience and respect for human rights.

1989 has seen striking developments in the re-instating of the churches and religion generally. A further important factor contributed to this. There was the forthcoming trip to meet the Pope at the Vatican and to seek his cooperation. This required a more friendly attitude in Soviet reporting and actions. Chapter 7 deals with this more fully.

The following newspaper extracts will sketch the changes in the Soviet and what has taken place.

"Whatever else Mr. Gorbachev has done, he will go down in history as the church-friendliest Soviet leader. Every day this year an average of nine Christian churches have reopened, to the delight of their hundreds of parishioners. The Muslims are moving at a slightly less rapid rate, only about one mosque a day. Where else in the world has there been such a revival of organised religion?

"Two Soviet journals started publishing excerpts from the Bible this year. Literaturnaya Rossiya is doing long chunks from the Old Testament, while Slovo ('Word') is running the New Testament with commentaries. A popular children's magazine, Comic Pictures, is printing Bible stories in a cut-out form which children can glue

together. A few weeks ago the main television channel started a 'Sunday sermon' after the nine o'clock news" (G. W. 19-11-89).

"But faith has survived the tyranny. People had clung stubbornly to their traditions. Official figures speak of 70 million believers. In the Orthodox Church, where ritual has always been more important than theology, people in large numbers have their children baptized, marriages blessed, funerals conducted.

"A priest, who in crowded churches baptizes 100 at a time, described the rush to baptism, 'I feel like a squashed lemon afterwards', he said. 'The number of christenings has grown ten times. Some churches consecrate rivers and baptize 100-200 people, just as they did in the time of Russia's conversion to Christianity.

"Their fears (G.P. those of atheistic leaders) are underlined by the emergence of Christian democratic groups, and religion's broadening role as a focus for nationalism. Conservatives do not have to look far to see the worrying evidence of change. The word **God** has had its capital letter restored. A new cathedral is planned for Moscow. The Catholic church in Lithuania enjoys much greater freedom".

"The Pope's Christmas message was broadcast on Soviet television for the first time last year (1988). Legal Bible imports into the Soviet Union are at record levels. Freedom to speak and act more openly has given life to debate on society's need for moral handrails which communism has not provided. The idea of charity, of compassion, has re-emerged" (D.T. 21-11-89).

A remarkable expression of official recognition of religion was the holding of a church service in the Kremlin itself.

"CHURCH OF THE TSARS LIVES AGAIN"

"... Russian Orthodox priests celebrated the 400th anniversary of the Moscow patriarchate yesterday with the first service since 1918 in the Kremlin cathedral where the Tsars were crowned. The service in the famous five-domed 15th century Uspensky Cathedral was led by Patriarch Pimen" (Otago Daily News 10-12-88).

The reviving of Russian Christianity spreads round the world. A brother sent us a page from his local newspaper. (Otago is in the south island of New Zealand). The whole page was devoted to the "Millennium of Russian Christianity". It had a large photograph showing President Gorbachev in splendid surroundings sitting with the Patriarch and synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

For further reports on the Soviet and the Vatican, refer to chapter 7.

Chapter 4: HOW AND WHY THE SATELLITES GAINED THEIR FREEDOM

BREATH-TAKING CHANGES

In the Soviet Union Gorbachev, in his perestroika (restructuring), has brought about great changes. He has reduced the power of the Communist leaders, established a new 'democratic' parliament, moved responsibility for action to the local people, curbed the power of the KGB and the military, and encouraged debate and criticism of past oppression.

It might be expected that all this, though only partially successful, would stir the hearts of people in the adjacent countries who have lived for decades under similar oppressive, fear-creating conditions. What has been such a surprise is the pace at which 'peoples' power' has revealed itself in these countries, and the large measure of freedom obtained without bloodshed.

In **Poland** elections were held in June and the Communist government was soundly defeated and had to make way for a government in which the Solidarity trade union, banned for years, now has a dominant part. In **Hungary** the Communist party was dissolved in October and a new socialist government eventually formed with reformists having a majority. Old restrictions and the barbed wire boundaries round the country were soon removed. **Finland, Latvia, and Estonia** have been granted a large measure of economic independence, and their own form of socialism. **Czechoslovakia** has followed the same pattern as Hungary. **East Germany** has seen a dramatic change and much emotion because of the national links with West Germany. Its President Honecker resolutely refused to consider any change and reforms, but when the East Germans flooded through Hungary into West Germany in October, and then the Berlin wall was breached, the Old Order was swept away. Popular feelings ran high when the widespread corruption and wealth of the old leaders was exposed. In December **Bulgaria and Romania** were added to the list.

Truly it has been a year of breath-taking change, finding headlines like “a hurricane of change”, “an eruption of a volcano”, “storm”, “gale”, etc. Why has it happened like this? How was it possible? And, what is God’s purpose behind it?

GORBACHEV’S PERESTROIKA POLICY

Every effect must have a cause. As in other matters, we look in the direction of Gorbachev. When we bring Gorbachev into the picture there should be an awareness that all his policies spring from one fact, the dire state of the Soviet economy. It has reached a desperate crisis with the economy on the brink of collapse after 70 years of Communist misrule. There is a terribly urgent need to increase production and efficiency, and also to obtain technical and financial help to do this. Gorbachev realized this as soon as he took over at the death of Andropov, and he immediately adopted a new national policy, replacing aggression and hostility to the rest of the world by cooperation and friendship.

HOW THIS NEW POLICY AFFECTS THE SATELLITE COUNTRIES

Gorbachev had two main aims in his new policy. First he was anxious to develop a more friendly cooperative relation with these Satellite countries, because it was important for them to improve their economies. These countries must supply goods, food, raw material, and labour that is needed in the Soviet and their own impoverished countries in order to raise living standards and industrial output.

The second reason for his attitude to these countries was the need to make a good impression on America and other industrially developed countries. America from the beginning has said that financial and trade cooperation was dependent on the Soviet taking ‘human rights’ seriously. Gorbachev must support human rights—freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, welfare of the individual. How could he maintain oppressive regimes in the eastern European countries and at the same time profess his support for human rights? The answer was, he must be seen as acting on a basis of genuine reform in these countries.

THE REVERSAL OF THE 'BREZHNEV DOCTRINE'

To encourage people in these countries, and in America, to believe he was genuine in his reforms, and that what he was doing was not a short-term trick, he declared the reversal of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine'. The Communist leader Brezhnev had laid down in the 1960's—during the period of the Czechoslovakian revolt—the principle that one Communist country had the right and duty to suppress any deviation from orthodox Communism occurring in another Communist country. Now Gorbachev laid down the opposite principle: each country had the right to develop its own form of socialism, provided it remained loyal to the Soviet.

In practice how was this new principle to be expressed? For some months the people and leaders in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia did not grasp the great change involved, but its application became apparent when reform activities in these countries cautiously started and Gorbachev encouraged them instead of suppressing them. The Communist leaders in these countries expected Gorbachev to call out the Soviet troops and deal with the people in the streets. This did not happen. The reformers' caution and fears melted away, and they made bolder demands. Growing confidence gathered more people into the rising tide, and it became an on-rushing tide. This was particularly so in East Germany. Honecker continued to resist all reforms until October. After this, the flood of East Germans, who took the escape route through Hungary into West Germany, caused the 'dam' to break. Soon the Berlin Wall was breached, and Honecker himself was swept away.

THE NEW MILITARY POLICY: a third reason for rapid reforms

As early as 1987, Gorbachev announced a new military policy as part of the Soviet's changed attitude to other nations. He said they were developing a 'defensive only' strategy to replace the aggressive one, and he hoped other nations would do the same. (See **Milestones 1987** chapter 3). This new policy is being rapidly implemented. In fact, the Generals have been given only two years to complete the change. It involves the withdrawal and disbanding of a proportion of their troops on the north, south and west borders of the Soviet Union; the upgrading and producing of more suitable armaments and in smaller quantities; the

retraining of troops and devising new regional strategies for war situations. All this will provide more men for civil use. Even the Generals seem to recognize the need for all this, because the economic situation is so desperate—though lately they have become alarmed at the loss of security, as they see it.

All this has a bearing on what we have been calling the Satellite countries. Until now the Soviet balance of forces was estimated as 30% defensive and 70% aggressive. This meant that a large number of Soviet top-grade troops were permanently stationed on the borders, that is in these East European countries. It was the presence of Soviet troops more than anything else that these countries resented. It hurt their pride and sense of national independence. Visibly they were subject kingdoms. They hated these troops and their domineering ways.

Now all this has changed. The Soviet will rely on these countries to provide the first line of defence if a war started. They would have to defend their own countries against an enemy attack until Soviet reinforcements arrived. In such a situation it would be essential that they were loyal and willing to play their part, and not defect to the enemy—the NATO forces. So one can see that Gorbachev has good reason to develop a new spirit of friendliness with these Satellite countries, and grant them some freedom and independence—the only condition being that they remain loyal to the Soviet.

RELIGION: ANOTHER POWERFUL FORCE CARRYING THE REFORMS FORWARD

The changed attitude towards religion is probably a more powerful factor for reform in the Satellite countries than in the Soviet itself. These countries have a large proportion of 'believers'—Catholic and others—and the religious freedom now allowed would be a significant factor in the rapid change occurring in these countries this year. Concessions were made to the Catholic Church and, with the resulting cooperation, the priests would be willing to urge their members along the path of freedom and reform. It is significant that the two countries with large Catholic populations were the first to be able to carry through reforms.

In summary, if we put together these four aspects of Gorbachev's drive to strengthen cooperation in aid of the Soviet economy, we may agree that there is no mystery in why a so rapid and overwhelming spirit of reform and freedom has swept these countries this year. What

could happen next, we may ask? This we will consider later in chapter 11.

We will finish off this chapter by recounting some of the major events in the Satellite countries during 1989.

EVENTS IN HUNGARY

We start with Hungary, because of its importance:

1. It is the country farthest east in Europe that belongs to the Latin Catholic Church. So the Pope has a grip right in the middle of the Soviet's region of influence and control.
2. It has 1,000 years of European history behind it. Associated with Austria, it dominated Central Europe for 1,000 years under the dynasty of the Hapsburgs. Austria-Hungary provided the Holy Roman Emperors for most of that time, supporting the Papacy and also in conflict with it. The House of Hapsburg still has a representative in the present pretender Otto. Hungary may provide one of the links between East and West Europe when Europe is moulded into one.
3. It is the centre, geographically, of the Slav Balkan countries, bordering in Romania, the Soviet, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Yugoslavia. It can exert a wide influence.
4. The nation is the most active of the East European countries. It came under Stalin's grip in 1947 and revolted in 1956 (ruthlessly crushed), showing the independent spirit of the nation. When Gorbachev started his reforms in the Soviet, they readily responded. Its communist government itself was willing to make changes. Mr. K. Karoly Grosz became leader of the Communist party in May 1988, and promised to liberalize the political system.
5. Hungary is also important because, along with Poland, it has a predominantly Catholic population. Gorbachev is anxious to be on good terms with the Vatican, and so will maintain good relations with the Hungary hierarchy and the nation generally.

It is expected full diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Hungary will be established before the end of January, 1990 (D. T. 24-11-89).

Events in 1989

Early in the year Gorbachev started withdrawal of troops from Hungary, thus lessening their fear that if they continued with reforms they would be suppressed by the military.

In **January** legislation was passed to legalize several opposition parties which gave them freedom to put forward candidates for parliament (D. T. 10-1-89).

In **May** they began dismantling their 'Iron Curtain'—a 170 mile chain of watchtowers and electronic surveillance along the Austrian border.

In **July** President Bush made a tour of the East European countries, and focussed his efforts on Hungary as the best place to encourage the improvement in human rights, a topic so dear to the U. S. A.. Hungary, for her part, is anxious to get on good terms with the U. S. A. and the EEC in order to get financial help to support her private enterprises and privatise her state industries.

In **September**, perhaps encouraged by President Bush's visit, they made a bold step, passing a law, to come into operation January 1990, giving Hungarians freedom to emigrate; and for those who had fled to the U.S.A. after the 1956 Uprising (about 250,000), opportunity to return to Hungary and renew their citizenship without any penalties.

It was in **October** that great events happened. Early in the month the Communist party dissolved itself and became the Hungarian Socialist Party. There was a newspaper headline: "**The light goes out on the Red Star of Hungary**".

The Hungarian parliament continued to dismantle State socialism (Communism) and to establish the legal standing of opposition parties. Free democratic elections would be held in the Spring of 1990. (D.T. 20-10-89). These steps had the quiet approval of Gorbachev. Freedom changes continued during November and December.

Though Hungary has its freedom to start rebuilding the country, it has not the means to do so. All these Satellite countries are extremely poor after decades of Communist rule, and have no hard currency to obtain essential machinery and equipment. Hungary has the highest State hard-currency debt, per capita, in the world!

EVENTS IN POLAND

1989 is seen by the people of Poland as the year of victory. It has been arrived at by a different route to that of Hungary.

As soon as the Polish Pope was installed at the Vatican in 1979, the battle between the Polish Communist government and the Church began, with the people represented by the Solidarity Trade Union. Solidarity was banned in 1980, and martial law was imposed and maintained throughout the 1980's.

The Communist government was forced to start negotiating in 1984 because of the desperate state of the economy—as bad as the Soviet, with an inflation rate of 200%. In addition to internal pressures, there was considerable pressure from America with its sizeable Polish population.

The first half of 1989 was a period of intense bargaining. In **April** the government agreed to hold elections, with Solidarity being allowed to share in the next government. In **May** parliament passed a law giving legal status and various privileges to the Catholic Church.

When the elections were held in **June**, there was a Solidarity landslide. It won 260 out of the 261 seats it was allowed to contest. After various protests by Solidarity in **August**, President Jaruzelski appointed a Solidarity Prime Minister, Mazowicki—a devout Catholic.

Mr. Gorbachev had steadily given his support to Solidarity, and when Mazowicki became Prime Minister the Daily Telegraph headline was: "Russia sends congratulations to Solidarity Prime Minister" (D. T. 28-8-89). It hardly needs to be added that Mazowicki is a close friend of the Pope.

THE POLAND-VATICAN AGREEMENT

The other big event for Poland this year has been the establishing of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The Polish Catholic Church and advisers from Rome played an important part in the Communist-Solidarity political bargaining in the first part of the year. When in August the Pope was satisfied with the situation, Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, was received at Rome with full ceremony and congratulations.

Following this, Poland was granted full diplomatic relations and exchange of ambassadors with the Vatican. This was a big boost in status for Poland, and an encouragement for Gorbachev. In **November**, when visiting the Italian trade union leaders and industrialists to enlist economic aid for the Soviet, Gorbachev was granted an audience with the Pope, a very exciting event for Bible prophecy watchers!

EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Republic of Czechoslovakia is a country that was formed after the first World War in 1918, by putting together a group of Slav nations. They are an active people and the country is more prosperous than its neighbours. Initially there was disharmony between various provinces, and the country was slow to grasp the reform opportunities Gorbachev's policies offered. But once started, the drive was very powerful with big changes in November and December.

Civic Forum became the voice of opposition to the Old Guard Communist government—the equivalent of Solidarity in Poland. Encouraged by events in Poland, Hungary and East Germany, the people once roused soon became vociferous. Massed gatherings of workers after a week or so broke down the resistance of the Communist government. Changes first came in the Communist party; then at the end of November the Prime Minister and the whole Government resigned.

"The entire Communist leadership resigned in Prague last night as Czechoslovakia became the latest Communist state in Eastern Europe to yield to popular pressure for reform" (D. T. 25-11-89).

By the middle of December, Civic Forum had forced the provisional government to agree to their having a majority of posts in the future government; and an agreement that the President of the Republic should be independent and not a Communist. At the end of December, Dubcek, the leader of the 1968 Uprising, was made President. He is seen as a symbol of victory over the oppression of 40 years.

EVENTS IN EAST GERMANY

The outstanding feature of East Germany's move to 'freedom' has been the obstinate stand of Honecker and how his Communist government was brought to collapse by the departure of hundreds of thousands of citizens from E. Germany to W. Germany. Honecker was adamant 'there

will be no dialogue here, no talk about reformed Socialism'! With over a third of a million Soviet troops living in his country, he felt safe. If there were any uprising it would be crushed. Yet, as in Czechoslovakia, November-December saw the collapse of the Communist government and all had changed.

President Bush toured the East European countries in **June** and again in **July** encouraging reform. In one of his speeches in early June, he suggested that the Berlin wall should be removed and Berlin made an open city, thus physically joining East and West Germany. This certainly struck an emotive cord—the possibility that in their time they might be free to mix with their compatriots. This could be taken as the starting point of the open agitation in Germany.

It was at the end of **September** that the migration of the East Germans began. The route was a hard one—through Poland or Czechoslovakia to Hungary, then through Austria, and so to West Germany. Mr. Gorbachev played an influential part in arranging this escape route.

“The weekend exodus to the West of 6,000 East Germans was worked out in a series of exchanges between President Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl of West Germany” (D. T. 3-10-89).

A week later Gorbachev visited East Germany and was welcomed by the people. He had private talks with Honecker, advising him to follow the pattern of reform in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. His advice fell on deaf ears, much to Gorbachev's displeasure. Honecker's attitude was damaging his new policy of freedom and human rights that was intended to impress America and the West.

The flood of East Germans fleeing to the West continued unabated. Many thousands, ten thousands, left all behind; men, women and children with all their possessions on their backs flooded into West Germany to be greeted with open arms and help by their western compatriots.

By **November** Honecker, ill and perplexed, resigned and Krenz his successor agreed to a path of reform, with replacements in the government. Already a quarter of a million people had left the country.

Then came the dramatic news announced with the headline:

“EAST GERMANY THROWS OPEN ALL ITS BORDERS”

“Krenz gambles on free travel policy to stop the Exodus” (D. T. 10-11-89).

And a newspaper commentary the next day:

“West Germany rediscovered its national pride yesterday in a flow of emotion that crossed party lines and reverberated through society, touching rich and poor with a single vision of a reunited nation” (D. T. 11-11-89).

Very soon the wall was breached at the Brandenburg Gate and many other places. Vast crowds moved to and fro from one country to another at weekends.

Political change did not slacken. By **December** the whole government had resigned, and the revelation of the corruption and grand style of living of the communist leaders caused great anger.

Although Gorbachev has been anxious for these reforms to take place, he is now faced with a great problem—the emotional forces released on both sides for reunification. We consider this in the next chapter.

ROMANIA (until recently Rumania) has filled the news for several weeks at the end of the year. It was a sudden unexpected uprising, a revolution that reminded one of the French Revolution, especially in the bloodshed. The people’s hatred and revulsion against Ceausescu and his private army (the Securitate) provide us, more than anything else this year, with a realisation of the harsh oppression under which the people of the Soviet Union and East Europe have existed. As in past oppressions, the human spirit breaks out and is both heroic and brutal.

With Ceausescu and his wife executed, one of the Opposition groups, The Front for Salvation, has become the provisional government with Manescu as its leader. He is a man with some international standing.

A newspaper article on Romania’s future (D. T. 24--12-89) indicated that the country has a very hard time ahead; “living standards have fallen to the lowest in Europe”. Industry is out of date and there is insufficient energy. Because it has for so long been isolated from the rest of the world, it lacks trained people in engineering, economics, and all modern business practices. “The situation facing Romania is far worse than that facing any of the other East European countries”.

Romania has a history going back to the 1st century. It was conquered by the Romans at the beginning of the 2nd century, and has had many invaders over the centuries.

King Michael of Romania is a much respected character. He is related to the British Royal family. He regards himself as the rightful, legal ruler of Romania, forced to abdicate under duress and has been in exile for 40 years. He is willing to save his country if called upon.

There are other exiled monarchs hoping to return—King Simeon to Bulgaria; crown Prince Alexander to Yugoslavia; King Leka to Albania. Bro. Thomas thought there would be a return to monarchies.

It is believed Gorbachev will find he has a troublesome neighbour now Romania is 'free'. An article heading expressed it in these words:

"THE POISON THAT GORBACHEV HAS UNCORKED"

"...the new freedom in Romania directly threatened the Soviet Union...it may add yet more venom to the nationality quarrels which, we can now see, are likely to dominate the Soviet Union in 1990. The Romanians are a strongly nationalistic people, and, as far as Russia is concerned, they have something to be nationalist about.

"On Romania's north-eastern border, across the river Prut, lies the Soviet Republic of Moldavia. Its population of five million contains three million Romanians.

"The Soviet forcibly 'russified' these Romanians in language and education, and suppressed their particular form of the Orthodox religion. The Romanians are despised by the Russians" (D. T. 27-12-89).

Reform changes have also been under way in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.



Chapter 5:

A CHANGED WEST GERMANY

WEST GERMANY IN A UNIQUE POSITION

By now we are all aware of West Germany's importance. Briefly, the reasons for her present importance are:

1. Militarily it is vital to NATO, being in the front line of NATO's defence, facing the massed might of the Soviet-Warsaw pact forces positioned in East Germany. (Substantially unchanged at the end of 1989).
2. Economically it has become by far the most powerful country in Europe.
3. Both sides, East and West are fearful of its growing power.
4. For over forty years it has had to be subject to the control and direction of U. S. A., Britain, and also the Soviet, after its defeat in 1945. It refuses to accept this status any longer.

Each item taken separately is important; when put together they are very important. Germany is now regarded as the pivot of all Europe.

This year West Germany has reached a national crisis. Its people are examining their national identity, and are turning that back on the past.

WEST GERMANY'S NEW MOOD

A marked change has appeared in the attitude of West Germany to its neighbours. It became apparent to news readers in April-May against a developing situation on arms control.

Gorbachev had been pursuing his objectives of getting rid of nuclear weapons, of general disarmament and of reductions in the size of armed forces. He expressed these ideas in various offers to NATO. If these offers were agreed to, NATO would be put in a weak position. So to maintain security, and as an insurance against a possible Soviet about-turn, NATO insisted on continuing its past doctrine of 'flexible response'.

This doctrine means that if NATO finds it is unable to stand up to a conventional type invasion of Soviet massed tanks and men, it will in a

crisis start using medium and short range nuclear weapons to halt the invasion, increasing their use as necessary.

So, despite Gorbachev's generous offers of disarmament, NATO insisted on preserving its 'flexible response'; and, moreover, replacing outdated nuclear equipment by improved, more efficient weapons. Such weapons necessarily are placed in the front line, which means on West German soil.

It was at this point that West Germany asserted its independence and, in effect, refused to 'do as it was told' by its 40-years-ago NATO victors.

After 40 years a new generation exists that does not feel any guilt for Hitler's war, and refuses any longer to be regarded as an occupied country. Gorbachev is very popular with this young generation; they have been charmed by his visits and walk-about. They think he is to be trusted more than American leaders. They ask, where is the danger from the Soviet that we need nuclear weapons sited on our soil? Gorbachev has made plain he has no intention of attacking us. And even if this were to happen, their nuclear missiles would be landing on our cities, and ours on East German cities, killing our German kith and kin. So the strong emotive force of German nationalism comes into play.

This new independent spirit of the West Germans is strengthened by their awareness of their growing economic strength. Also the industrial leaders, keenly interested in cooperation with the Soviet to increase trade, want freedom and independence to choose their own path.

GERMAN REUNIFICATION

The demolition of the Berlin Wall has stirred strong feelings for reunification of the two Germanys. Dr. Kohl, Chancellor of West Germany, has led this movement. Without consulting with America or France, in November he put forward a 10-point plan for eventually achieving unity. This expression of independence, and the consequence of the two countries uniting, caused alarm in West Europe. If united they would be very powerful, militarily and economically, bringing fears of the old-style aggressive Germany.

At the EEC Strasburg Summit in December, West Germany was prevailed on to agree that reunion should only be promoted as part of the structure of a new 'peaceful' Europe.

West Germany, in putting forward reunification, was in breach of the Helsinki Agreement. But it must be remembered that in 1952 the occupying powers had agreed the two Germany's should be united eventually by peaceful means.

WEST GERMANY'S SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE—WHERE IS IT LEADING?

We have already detailed how West Germany refused to fit in with NATO's wishes. Two news extracts will put the real meaning behind this action.

"Great shifts in international politics are comparable to the subterranean movements of the tectonic plates. Once in motion, they are both unstoppable and unpredictable, in that we cannot know in advance when precisely the enormous pressures building up will find release. Such a release, it can be argued, came last week when the West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, publicly asserted for the first time since the end of the second world war that German national interests must take precedence over those of the United States and Britain in the formation of his country's foreign and security policy.

"The issue is Germany's right to act as a truly independent state, after 40 years of incomplete sovereignty, and its ambition to lead Western Europe into a rapprochement with the Soviet Union which will ultimately heal the division of the continent for which Hitler's Reich bears such responsibility. We are speaking of Germany's attempt to rediscover its place in history, to discharge its debt to Europe east and west, and to take up once again the prominent role in human affairs to which its power and vigour entitle it" (D. T. 7-5-89).

WEST GERMANY LOOKS EAST

An article in the Washington Post viewing NATO from America used the bold headline

"THE LURE OF THE EAST"

"A Western orientation is an aberration in German history. Germany has had recurring bouts of 'backward-looking Utopianism' that involve turning towards the East" (G. W. 21-5-89).

The article continues that this attitude had formulated the S.D.P.'s (Socialist Democratic Party) *Ostpolitik* policy, and the West German treaties with the Soviet and several other East European agreements,

over twenty years ago. It is the same man today Dietrich Genscher who is pushing for further West German-Soviet cooperation.

On the same page was another similar article in which occurred this sentence:

“the dispute is not really about missiles...but about a West Germany that has become more assertive, that yearns to once again become the Central European power, that wants to decide for itself what is and what is not in its national interest.”

GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO WEST GERMANY

The eastward orientation of West Germany was apparent when Gorbachev visited the country in June. He was given a tumultuous welcome by the people, reported with such headlines as ‘Gorbachev wins hearts of West German workers’, ‘Gorbymania is natural joy over peace, says Bonn’, and ‘Bonn gives Gorbachev a pop star welcome’.

On the more serious side, solid agreements and friendship were set out in the joint “Bonn Declaration”:

“GORBACHEV JOINS KOHL IN CALL FOR A UNITED EUROPE”

“President Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl signed a joint communique yesterday which set the seal in German-Soviet reconciliation. On the second day of the Soviet leader's West German visit, the two sides also gave new momentum to trade, joint ventures and cultural contacts by signing 12 agreements.

“Solemnly invoking Mr. Gorbachev's vision of the ‘common European home’, the joint document advocates ‘overcoming the division of Europe’ through mutual cooperation.

“Asked whether a comparable statement of political philosophy had ever been agreed with another Western state, the Soviet spokesmen, Mr. Gerasimov, replied firmly ‘Niet’.

“The ‘Bonn Declaration’, as it was immediately christened, is seen by both sides as the most important landmark in their relations since Willy Brandt denied opposition at home by crowning his *Ostpolitik* with the Moscow Treaty in 1970. This tacitly recognized Germany's post-war frontiers.

"The new declaration combines the results of last October's Moscow summit and the present one in Bonn, which the two leaders see as 'expressing the deep, long-cherished yearnings of the peoples to heal the wounds of the past' (G. W. 14-6-89).

WEST GERMANY POISED FOR ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

Since these events and West Germany's expression of independence, attention has been given to its growing economic power and self assertiveness. The following extracts are from a two-page article in the Washington Post with the above title.

"Poised at the crossroads of a dynamically changing Europe, West Germany is prepared to take its place as the world's next economic superpower. With speed that no one could have anticipated even a year ago, Western Europe is moving toward a more united economy just as eastern Europe is beginning to build a free-market system. Both developments invite German leadership. For in Europe, no other country even begins to rival Germany's potential as an industrial producer, salesman and investor.

"The Germans have been there before. If, as many expect, Germany takes advantage of the new freedoms of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to strengthen its economic clout in the East, it would restore a commercial relationship that dates back to the Middle Ages—one that was disrupted only in the past few decades of the Cold War. Germans have traded with the East for centuries, up and down the natural thoroughfares of the Danube River and across the Baltic Sea. The banking houses of old Germany were as familiar with the streets of Prague and Budapest as they were with those of Paris and London.

"Today, West Germany is enjoying an economic boom that has surprised the experts. Already it is the world's leading exporter, surpassing even Japan, and it is the dominant economy in the 12 nation European Community as the trading bloc moves to build a single internal market in Western Europe by the end of 1992.

"Looking east, where the centrally planned economies of the communist world have begun to rush headlong toward a more capitalist model, West Germany alone among the Western countries has the wealth, location, experience and incentive to shape developments there as well".

"West Germany has shown greater interest than any other Western country in encouraging the reform process under way in Eastern Europe, and it has underlined its commitment by offering more economic aid than anyone else to promote the changes. West German officials stress, however, that they hope and expect the Western efforts in integrating the East into a more dynamic European economy will be a shared effort and not one undertaken by just Bonn.

"In September, shortly after the Hungarian government permanently opened its borders for East Germans and others to emigrate westward, the authorities quietly approved government-backed loans totalling more than \$500 million to Budapest. West Germany has been even more generous with Poland's recently installed, non-communist government. Unlike other Western nations, Bonn has granted export credit guarantees worth up to \$1.6 billion through 1992 without waiting for Warsaw to sign a standby credit accord with the International Monetary Fund.

"Bonn also forgave Poland from having to repay more than \$400 million in long-overdue credits and agreed to allow Warsaw to repay the remaining \$300 million in Polish zlotys instead of in precious hard currency.

"West Germany also has made clear that it is prepared to offer hundreds of millions of dollars worth of aid to East Germany if the East Berlin government carries out major reforms to make its political system more democratic and its economy more closely geared to market forces, something the new East German Government said last week it intended to do!" (W. P. 26-11-89).

The reunification of the two Germanys will accelerate the economic growth and power of Germany still further.

At present the East German industry is not efficient because of its stagnation under Communist rule, but loans from West Germany will soon modernize its out-dated equipment. The East Germans are as capable as the West Germans, and are better disciplined.

"In East Germany, what Max Weber called the Protestant work ethic has survived intact, along with the Lutheran and Calvinist theology which nourished it. West Germans, by contrast, live chiefly for their pleasure, eschewing pay increases in favour of longer holidays and shorter working hours" (D. T. 25-11-89).

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

The importance of these developments in Germany must be obvious from our Biblical point of view. Germany will be the leader of West Europe, and the Soviet of East Europe (the beast and the dragon of Revelation ch. 16 and 17.)

For the immediate future Germany will have the important part to play on the economic plane, taking the lead in rebuilding the economies in the Soviet and the Eastern European countries—that “be prepared” requirement for Gog and its associated people. But this close business relation, working together on a day-to-day basis, will forge links that will, at least in part, contribute to the building of the great Image on its iron and clay feet.

What a swiftly changing Europe we are watching. It is hard to decide what is the most outstanding event of the year—freedom in the East European countries; the Soviet-Vatican cooperation; the EEC’s increased status; the West Germany independence and lead in Europe. The exhortation comes to mind again: “I will hasten it in his time”.

AMERICA’S VIEW OF EUROPE

The NATO military leaders, with an American as chief, still wish to keep a nuclear deterrent and a divided Germany for security reasons; though in the popular view in the Germanys this is outdated because they believe there is no risk of war. In contrast with the military view, President Bush sides with Germany. Countering the fears of Mrs. Thatcher, Mitterand and others, he said:

“There’s a lot written on the fear of reunification that I personally don’t share” (D. T. 26-10-89).

Several factors appear to have shaped Bush’s attitude. He now has confidence in Gorbachev. He believes the Geneva talks will result in extensive disarmament agreements in 1990, and sees developing a coordinated Europe that he described as the European Commonwealth of Nations—equivalent to Gorbachev’s Common European Home. This will allow the withdrawal of most American troops and the substantial reduction of the vast billions of dollars per annum expended in the NATO occupation and arms race. He is responsible for handling the very large U.S. foreign debt, we must keep in mind.

Regarding the military side, he has agreed with Gorbachev that NATO and the Warsaw Pact should change their roles from military hostilities to political cooperation. It sounds a rather strange idea. But it is probably their strategy in bringing about the reduction and elimination of the respective armies in a slow way.

Gorbachev's ultimate aim is a militarily-weak Germany, free to expand economically, joined by other 'neutralized' countries—the Baltic States, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc. giving a peace zone right across the centre of Europe. President Bush is said to accept the plan. Whether they will attempt this 'leap forward' in the near future, time will tell.

Chapter 6:

EEC SET TO GUIDE EAST EUROPEAN ECONOMIES

1989 PROGRESS: SOCIALISM DOMINANT

The integration of the EEC countries has forged ahead in 1989. There is no doubt that the EEC, led by powerful West Germany and artful France, will become an increasingly influential factor in the rapidly changing European scene.

As we watch events from our Biblical watchtower, there are two events near the end of the year that hold our attention.

EEC SUMMITS AND THE STRASBURG SUMMIT

The EEC holds a summit twice a year, when the Presidency changes to another country. In the second half of 1989 Mitterand of France was President. These summits are the important points marking the development of the community.

Under Mitterand's presidency there has been great activity leading to consolidation at the Strasburg Summit in December. Mitterand and Delors, the head of the EEC Commission, have worked closely together, sharing the same keenness to establish a confidential western Europe. Delors is French and a devout Catholic. We can suppose the Pope works through him.

At the Strasburg Summit four vital steps were approved:

1. Acceptance of a Social Charter, to be applied in all member countries.
2. Agreement that all members should work towards Monetary Union.
3. The recognition that the Treaty of Rome should be modified to give the Commissioners and the European Parliament powers to establish monetary union with a Central European Bank, fixed exchange rate mechanism between countries, and financial direction from Brussels.

4. A conference to be held in December, 1990 to start on the task of carrying through the Treaty of Rome revision.

At the Summit Mrs. Thatcher continued to give her support for the Single European Act of 1985, which has the purpose of creating a single European Market by 1992-3, but she opposed the objectives expressed in these four clauses.

Regarding support for the Single Market of 1992, Mrs. Thatcher is rather incensed at the way some governments cheerfully support decisions and then do little to carry them out. At her Lord Mayor's Banquet speech she pointed out that Britain had already fulfilled 65 out of the 68 conditions that had been agreed as necessary to start the Single Market; whereas some other countries have only fulfilled half or less of the steps. The socialist countries are loathe to give up their various government subsidies, which of course would give their firms an unfair advantage in the Single Market trading.

HOW MITTERAND HOPES TO DEAL WITH TROUBLESOME BRITAIN

Mrs. Thatcher is a troublesome member of the EEC because in their view her arguments take up time, generate uncertainty and hinder progress!

Just before the December Summit, France, supported by Holland and Germany, announced a plan that could solve this problem.

The plan relates to the EFTA nations. EFTA—European Free Trade Association—was formed by the EEC in 1958. At that time it comprised seven nations, called 'the outer 7'—Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland and Austria. Belonging to EFTA was in line with Britain's free trade traditions. The EFTA nations were granted basic free trade rights with the six EEC nations. Britain withdrew from EFTA when she joined the EEC.

In March of this year the remaining six EFTA nations expressed their intention of playing a bigger part in Europe:

"The six members of EFTA gave notice yesterday of their intention to play a major role in the future integration of Europe through greatly strengthened relationship with the Common Market" (D. T. 16-8-89).

In response to this the EEC announced in November an improved status for EFTA. Its members would be allowed free movement of capital, people, services and goods. Other nations could join EFTA.

The following extracts are from the newspaper report of this improved status of EFTA:

“Britain was given the scarcely-veiled threat yesterday of being relegated to a second-tier European free trade association if Mrs. Thatcher and her Ministers continued to stand alone against movement towards greater EEC monetary and political union.

“Underlying it is the idea of an inside track ‘United States of Europe’, excluding Britain, which would proceed to an ever closer political and economic federation” (D. T. 28-11-89).

Mitterand did not directly mention Britain, but clearly inferred that her rejoining EFTA with its improved status could provide a solution to the constant disagreements between Britain and the rest. In this new EFTA—EEC linking, EFTA members would have the right to share in the discussion of policy, but could have no voting rights. Britain could not be bound to Brussels directives as at present, and could retain her full sovereignty and pursue her own foreign and financial policies.

With our knowledge of Britain’s different destiny from that of Europe, this French plan was exciting news. It pointed to the possible way in which eventually Britain will move out of the European Union—the beast with its ten horns.

The feelings of the eleven members against Mrs. Thatcher are reported as follows:

“Mr. Mitterand drew almost frenzied applause from the European Parliament as he directly countered the Prime Minister’s argument that the events in Eastern Europe should give pause before rushing to monetary union”.

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE EEC

The following chronology of major events will give a sketch of developments through the year.

February.

- * The Bruges Group was launched—individuals from all over Europe seeking to defend Mrs. Thatcher’s principles.

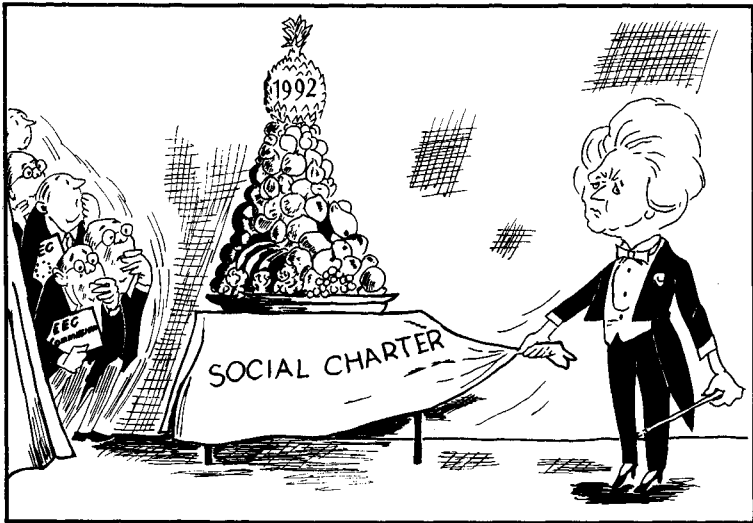
March.

European Economic Space

- * An 18-nation bloc of ~~EFTA~~ nations initiated, aiming to exert a major role in the process of European integration.

May.

- * Draft Workers Charter (or Social Charter) launched by the Commission. This established worker's rights through all countries—right to strike, minimum wage levels, participation in Company policy and financial control, maximum working hours, health care and safety. Standards to be operated in all countries.



June.

- * Elections for Euro—M.P.'s for the Strasburg parliament. The result was an increase in the numbers of socialists in the parliament, and when joined by the Catholic Christian (Socialist) party they had a majority. This strengthens the Socialist drive of the Commission.
- * At the EEC Madrid Summit, Mitterand outlined three steps to complete the establishment of the community by a modified Treaty of Rome.
- * Mrs. Thatcher agreed Britain would in due course join the Exchange-rate Mechanism, in which countries keep their exchange rates in close harmony, and if necessary give support when a country finds itself outside limits.

July.

- * France takes over the Presidency and Mitterand sets up a "five-man extraordinary committee at senior ministerial level to ensure that EEC policies are in line with Socialist objectives". "The French are determined over the next six months of their presidency to show that plans for a 'Workers Europe' are as important as the Business man's Europe of 1992" (D. T. 1-7-89).
- * The Commission issues its European Company Statute with its compulsory worker participation. For Mrs. Thatcher this meant a return to a Labour party type of government with its bureaucratic control of industry and the stagnation that resulted. She angrily retorted it would destroy all the gains made from 1979 onwards.

August. A holiday month.

September.

- * At the end of the month the Commission adopted a revised Social Charter. It was said the revised charter was more socialist than the original.
- * Britain takes issue over intended consumer laws giving EEC control over all forms of so-called 'dangerous' consumer products—medicine, food, household appliances.

October.

- * Intense activity as the December Summit approaches and Mitterand is determined to win his battle.
- * Mrs. Thatcher under pressure from a section of the Conservative party to participate in Monetary Union.
- * A meeting of Employment ministers of the various member countries to examine the EEC directives on employment collapsed after two days discussion. Mrs. Thatcher was in no mood to alter recent British 'employment' laws.

November.

- * Pre-Strasbourg activity.
- * EFTA nations given enhanced status with the EEC.
- * A November 30th headline declared:
X **"CABINET PREFERS EEC ISOLATION TO SOCIAL CHARTER"**

"Instead of being a harmless declaration of aims, Mr. Fowler said 'the proposals were a basis for action that encompassed 17 legally binding directives to be agreed by 1992 that covered hours of work, holidays and rest periods, and both part-time and temporary employment'. He said the imposition of minimum wages would result in a loss of 750,000 jobs, it is estimated".

- * The storm of change in the Eastern European countries and the crumbling of the structure of post-war Europe, brought from the EEC President another urgent call to give a clear endorsement of his aims at the Strasbourg Summit.

December.

- * Strasbourg Summit: the decisions made have been briefly stated at the beginning of this chapter. They included the acceptance of the Social Charter and working towards monetary union.
X
- * Mrs. Thatcher, knowing the mood of the Summit, played a low key part. But she said the fight was only beginning and there was plenty of time through 1990, 1991 and 1992 for her to argue her view of the Single Market—"a Europe that is open, enterprising and free-trading".
- * As post-war Europe continues to change, there is more talk about the 'Common European Home' with its separate compartments and

nationalities, but existing in friendly relation to one another. Within this context the EEC sees for itself an enlarging sphere of interest, bringing Eastern European countries into its orbit, by being linked as 'EFTA-class' nations.

AFTER THE STRASBURG SUMMIT: EEC AMBITIONS

Mrs. Thatcher's objections to EEC European Union now appear to the other members as unimportant and irrelevant. They have settled their course and laid foundations for political as well as economic integration. Now they are fired with new ambitions to become the pivot of the New Europe that is on many lips. [The guiding hand of the Papacy?]

In the French *Le Monde* (17-12-89), referring to the agreement at Strasburg to have a conference in December 1990 to settle the necessary alterations to the Treaty of Rome, the editor wrote:

"When the European Community decided to work out before the end of 1990 the instruments of an economic and monetary policy, it confirmed that it wanted to change its character and intended to **provide for itself the means of realizing its ambitions by becoming the nucleus of a future greater Europe**" (G. P. emphasis).

"This was the message for which Washington, Moscow and of course the Central European countries had been waiting. First because for a new order to become organized out of today's chaotic mutations, it needs a fulcrum. A strong (EEC) Community provides such a fulcrum, an essential one".

Note the view expressed that Washington and Moscow accept this future key role for the EEC.

The Sunday Telegraph expressed similar ideas:

"M. Delors, President of the EEC Commission, and his team believe the powers of Brussels could widen enormously, as it becomes the centre of 'concentric circles' of economically associated countries and cadet member states.

"If countries can genuinely reform themselves politically and economically, there is no reason why they should not move closer to the EEC, or even join it' an official said.

Reduce

"In the past few days there has been a flurry of trade agreements, cooperation agreements, and new institutions designed to bring East Europe under the wing of Brussels" (3-12-89).

The ambition of the EEC to penetrate the Eastern European countries, and influence their economies in a similar way to how Germany has been doing, took another step forward a few weeks after the Strasburg Summit:

"EEC AND EFTA IN 'DYNAMIC' JOINT STEP"

"The Common Market took the first step yesterday to admitting the six countries of the European Free Trade Association as joint participants in an 18-nation 'European Economic Space'.

"Mr. Waldegrave, Foreign Office Minister, said the agreement would lead to 'nothing less than the integration of EFTA into the Single Market', which would provide 'a dynamic boost to the economies of Europe'" (D. T. 20-12-89).

'European Economic Space' is a newly coined phrase for an open market for goods, people, services and capital, as a later paragraph in the same article makes clear:

"The European Space, which would provide an entirely open market for goods, people, services and capital, is designed to serve as an eventual receptacle for reforming East Bloc countries. It also caught Moscow's imagination".

This means the East European countries would become members of EFTA.

Note the last sentence of the above quote. Fitting in with this reference to the Soviet's eagerness for this EEC cooperation is another expression a few days later:

"But while the transition to a market economy in the Soviet Union is likely to be tortuous, the Kremlin clearly wants to move more swiftly in putting its relations with its former East European satellites on a sound economic basis. Ryzhkov [a Russian Official] called on Comecon to transform itself into 'a united market of socialist countries'. 'The proposal is for this trade, starting in 1991, to be based on current world prices and a convertible currency'" (G. W. 24-12-89).

AMERICA'S REVISED VIEW OF THE EEC AND EUROPE

Another important aspect of the changing Europe is the new interest America is showing in the EEC.

"George Bush is too much of a gentleman to kick an Iron Lady while she is down. So when he called for a 'new Atlanticism' in Brussels, he did not ink in the details of the transformed relationship between America and Europe that he foresees as the Cold War winds down.

"But his meaning was clear to those attending the NATO summit: Britain, and Margaret Thatcher, will play a less significant role in Mr. Bush's new alliance architecture. West Germany and the European Community will now be central to America's political and security calculations in Europe. Otherwise, Mr. Bush would not have openly endorsed at NATO the drive for greater European unity that Mrs. Thatcher so strongly opposes.

"An American decision to begin moving away from the 'special relationship' that U.S. and British leaders have proclaimed since World War II would be a bitter pill for Mrs. Thatcher to swallow at any time. Coming a few days before the vital European Community summit on the pace of economic integration, Mr. Bush's neglect must have been especially galling.

"Any hopes that Mrs. Thatcher harbored for a U.S.-U.K. sequel to the smash hit of the 1980's, the Ron and Maggie Show, went up in smoke in Brussels. In the decade ahead, the George, Helmut and Jacques Show will be the main feature on the screens of the Atlantic alliance.

"The change is far more than cosmetic or bureaucratic. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher stood astride in the Atlantic community like twin colossi throughout the 1980's. Their vibrant endorsements of capitalism were backed by the affluence and job-creating abilities of their economies; their determination to re-arm the West was validated by the desperate and irrational actions of dying Soviet dictators. Their brightly coloured values dominated a decade in the West.

"The collapse of Communism and Soviet control in Eastern Europe (and increasingly within the Soviet Union itself) seems only to confirm the Thatcher-Reagan triumph as the decade ends.

"The overwhelming economic power and surprisingly adept diplomacy of West Germany are to be the new Atlanticism's key assets in dealing with Eastern Europe. Britain saw its role in the special relationship as providing worldly experience and wisdom to America's strength, playing Athens to Rome. But America needs bankers, not teachers, as allies right now" (G. W. 24-12-89).

Similarly a Daily Telegraph editorial on the 14th of December said:

"NATO Foreign Ministers hold their first Council in Brussels today since the political map of Eastern Europe altered beyond recognition. Their meeting follows the announcement of wide-ranging proposals by the leader of the alliance, the United States, to adapt the channels of East-West dialogue to the changed circumstances. In a speech to the Berlin Press Club on Tuesday, Mr. James Baker, the American Secretary of State, spoke of 'a new architecture for this new era'. Much of what he said was couched in general terms and his allies will need to discuss it both within NATO and the EEC before they can give a detailed response.

That said, the speech was welcome in its reaffirmation of **North American participation in the building of Mr. Gorbachev's common European home, and in its proposal for strengthened institutional and consultive links with the EEC, seen as a lodestar of economic liberty to Eastern Europe**" [G. P. emphasis].

These extracts express a very clear-cut change in American thinking, from the past 50 years of limiting support to W. Europe and hostility to the Soviet (Reagan's 'evil empire'), to now seeking to create and strengthen a united Europe.

What influence this will have, we must wait and see. Bear in mind that for all these 50 years America has supported Vatican interests and is likely to continue doing so.

A few words of explanation may be useful as to why Gorbachev is so anxious for the EEC to help and give guidance to the East European countries, when only a year or more ago the Soviet was opposed to the developing strength of the EEC. It is another expression of his desperate need to speed up progress in the Soviet economy. As we have said, Soviet improvement depends a great deal on improvement in the East European countries.

The East European countries with their inexperienced, unskilled new governments will be struggling to get organized and to start reviving their economies. So, they are looking to the EEC as a mature well-established trading unit that can give them technical know-how in all the complexities of modern business, trade, and finance.

EEC, with its Brussels Commission and skilled men in finance and trade, and with its Euro-parliament providing representatives from member countries, has had 40 years perfecting its functions. Thus it can offer these countries professional guidance and advice.

EEC help is also particularly acceptable to the Soviet in that, while it provides the essential help to revive the economies, it has no political authority to make treaties that would upset national boundaries in Europe and bring instability in the difficult period which Gorbachev faces in coping with the conservative, Old Guard, communist leaders.

Working with the EEC is made easier because most of its member countries have a socialist government and an affinity with Soviet philosophy.

Chapter 7: VATICAN—SOVIET COOPERATION IS UNITING EUROPE

A 30 YEAR DEVELOPMENT PERIOD

The beginning of better relations was in 1963 when Pope John 23 declared Catholics could cooperate with Communists on a practical plane.

This was followed by the Second Vatican General Council (1963-5) with its big number of new directives aimed at giving the Catholic Church a more friendly tolerant image, suited to the prevailing Socialism and Democracy.

The next Pope Pius VI (1963-1965) whole heartedly moved to the left—he has been called the 'Pink Pope', even having bishops trained in the principles of Lenin-Marxism, to be blended with Catholicism.

Polish Cardinal Wojtyla was installed as Pope John Paul II in 1979. He reemphasized Catholic Church authority, and while championing the cause of the people and human rights, discouraged the previous left movement.

He has made great efforts to free the Polish Catholic church from Soviet 'oppression', and the Pope and Gorbachev inevitably have reacted one on the other for the past five years. There have been numerous visits of officials, in both directions, between Vatican and Kremlin.

1989: THE POPE AND GORBACHEV'S CORDIAL MEETING

The main events leading to the meeting of the Pope and President Gorbachev in December are:

1. The Polish Communist Government granting legal status to the Catholic Church in May, together with various privileges.
2. The official support of religion in the Soviet and the widespread eager response of the people (see chapter 3). The Russian people

are traditionally 'religious'. The Communist Party that has held them in subjection for 70 years is only a small percentage of the total population.

3. The granting of 'human rights' and a degree of freedom in the Soviet and East European countries.
4. The rapid crumbling of the post-war Europe and people looking for a peaceful, cooperative new Europe. There have been numerous meetings of world leaders discussing future peace and security—Bush-Pope, Gorbachev-Pope, Bush-Gorbachev, Mitterand-Moscow, Gorbachev-Kohl, Bush-Mitterand [5 meetings this year], Thatcher—Pope, and so on. No doubt President Gorbachev and the Pope both are anxious to establish their leadership in this new Europe and have seen the advantages of working together.

GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO THE VATICAN

So important is this event in our Biblically-enlightened eyes that perhaps we were surprised how little attention was given to it by the media—scarcely more than one day's front page. The media and their readers are far more interested in exciting mass demonstrations, resigning Communist governments, and human rights.

The following extract from the Daily Telegraph of December 2nd conveys its historic character and atmosphere.

"GORBACHEV ENDS 70-YEAR BREACH WITH THE VATICAN—THE POPE IS INVITED TO VISIT RUSSIA"

"On the eve of his summit meeting with President Bush, Mr. Gorbachev clasped hands with the Pope in historic reconciliation yesterday. Kremlin and Vatican were joined at last in common purpose. The Pope blessed the leader of Soviet Communism, and the way was opened to the establishment of diplomatic ties and for the Pope to achieve his heart's desire, a visit to the Soviet Union.

"A truly extraordinary event has taken place,' Mr. Gorbachev said, as he and the Pope concluded 75 minutes of talks, half an hour more than scheduled.

"They spoke alone, in Russian, in the Pope's private study, and the warmth between them was evident.

"The first meeting between a leader of the Roman Catholic Church and leader of the avowedly atheist Soviet Union was charged with that particular atmosphere of hope and excitement that always accompanies the beginning of a new chapter.

"Everything that was said and done at this summit in the Vatican's splendoured halls had upon it the imprint of history. Not long ago it would have seemed a dreamer's notion to see the head of the Soviet state utter the words 'Your Holiness' in the very sanctum of the Catholic faith.

"The two men pledged progress in the name of peace and freedom. The Pope bidding farewell as Mr. Gorbachev set off for his summit in Malta, said: 'My best wishes for you and your mission, for your family and for your country, invoking upon all of you the blessings of Almighty God.'

"The Pope and Mr. Gorbachev share common ground in their hopes for the future in Europe: a new political shape, ethos and consensus, and, above all, peace and stability. Both, in their different ways, are the catalysts of the present momentous changes" (D. T. 2-12-89).

So one 'Summit' ended and Gorbachev moved on to another 'Summit' with President Bush at Malta. What a year of great events in the Soviet, a new democratic government; in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, communist rule overturned, and Bulgaria, Rumania going the same way. The Berlin Wall swept away and East and West Germans freely mixed together; treaties for reducing arms and men in Europe to be signed in 1990; EEC developing into a major force in all Europe; Vatican-Moscow cordiality.

Post-war Europe is disappearing from view. Unless God intends otherwise, we see a new Europe of cooperation being shaped.

Chapter 8: A FURTHER LOOK AT PROPHECY

EZEKIEL 38, ISAIAH 14, DANIEL 2

We have worked our way through the different centres of interest in Europe—the Soviet; the group of East European countries; West Germany and France; the EEC; and the Vatican. Before we endeavour to piece together an overall view and consider what may lie ahead in 1990 and beyond, we will first take a further look at some prophecies bearing on the present.

EZEKIEL 38:1-7

Verse 7 “Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled with thee, and be thou a guard unto them”.

In the 1987 *Milestones* a suggestion was made that this language could be applied to the Soviet today. With information we now have in 1989 the application appears much more certain. It is only this year we have learnt how demoralized the people are, and how desperate the economy is after 70 years of bad Communist rule. Russia and her confederates have to be strong and virile—like the earlier Assyrian, of which they will be the latter-day equivalent in invading the land. They are not quite ready to do the work God has appointed for them. How appropriate therefore is the charge given to Gog by Scripture—prepare thyself, and those that are with thee—the Satellite nations. So a short period of ‘peace’ lies ahead for this preparation to be made.

This phrase seems appropriate to describe the kind of linking there will be between the European countries and the Soviet. To be a guard has the idea of protection and watching over. May it not be used here for the way in which Gorbachev is allowing some freedom from the past despotic grip, to permit their economic and moral development? It is a loosened grip, but he has laid down the essential limit—they must remain loyal to the Soviet. The Soviet is to be the guard, the head and guide for action.

The RV and RSV change “turn thee back” to “turn thee about”. ‘Turn about’ need not be limited to a geographical sense of withdrawal from foreign adventures, as the Soviet has recently been doing. It could also cover her national revival—a change about from the present depressed state.

verse 4 “I will turn thee about”; “I will bring thee forth”; verse 8 “After many days thou shalt be visited (by angels?)”.

Notice how the present ‘preparing’ situation is emphatically God’s work. This means that the work Gorbachev has in hand will not fail, he will not be swept aside or overcome, despite the tremendous problems and opposition.

When he has done his appointed work, a greater military leader will be brought on the scene to carry forward God’s plan.

ISRAEL AT PEACE AND PROSPEROUS

There is a threefold insistence on this strange situation, for there to be peace in a violent wicked war-stricken world. The phrases are:

v. 8. “they shall dwell safely **all** of them.”

v. 11. “I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, **all of them** dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gates”.

v. 14. “In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it.”

v. 12. “gotten cattle and goods...to take a spoil”; “to carry away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil”.

This three-fold insistence of scripture on a time of peace and prosperity has caused men of faith to believe this must come to pass, however strange it seems. And last year, and more so this year, it begins to look possible.

For little Israel to be at ‘peace’ implies a fairly widespread ‘peace’ existing and this seemed so impossible. But now there are moves in this direction. (We continue to put commas round peace, for it will be a very troublesome ‘peace’: “there is no peace saith my God for the wicked”. Isa. 57:21)

The drive for peace and cooperation by Gorbachev has been wider than Europe. His speeches at the United Nations, at the European Parliament and at the Guildhall, all have taken the grand theme of a world-wide relaxation and cooperation. And other leaders have taken up the theme. One supposes that only in such a wide establishing of this relaxation could little Israel be at rest, and becoming prosperous.

v.10 “shall things come into thy mind (Gog) and thou shalt think an evil thought.”

The AV margin has the alternative “conceive a mischievous purpose”. These little phrases are worthy of consideration. They are enlightening and add to the idea of some kind of ‘world-wide peace’ having been established. An ‘evil thought’, ‘mischievous purpose’ carry the idea of deceit, breaking one’s word. It suggests treaties have been made and now Gog intends to break them and make a surprise attack when not expected.

These are some suggestions for consideration. The end of the whole matter is certain. God is in control.

v. 16 “**I will bring** thee against my land...”

v. 18 “my fury shall come up into my face....”

v. 23 “I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations.”

verse 1 “Gog of the land of Magog”

We have seen in earlier chapters the key position Germany holds in Europe today; and probably more so in the future. This brings a reflection on verse one. In the RV, RSV, and Young’s Literal Translation, the text reads, “Gog of the land of Magog”. The word “of” usually means from, out of, of that origin. The text reads as though the future great leader of the confederacy is of German origin. We expect Germany and Russia to cooperate. They did at the start of World War II with a treaty in September 1939 to cooperate in conquering Europe, and agreeing in their future zones of interest in the Middle East. Perhaps Germany is more likely to provide an aggressive, efficient and outstanding military leader than Russia.

A Soviet head, of German origin, would be pleasing to the Pope in helping to establish his spiritual authority over all Europe. Germany

cooperated with the Vatican, through the Jesuits, in preparing their war of aggression in 1939.

We must not carry the idea of Gog being of German origin too far. Scripture shows Gog is an Eastern military power as we shall see in the next section. Germany is the head of the final opposition to Christ, after the Gogian-Armageddon overthrow. This last stage of conflict with Christ is by the beast and ten horns of Revelation 17 and 19. Germany will be the leader, the head and mouth of the beast, along with the papacy.

THE GOLDEN HEAD OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE

We are all familiar with the Image of different metals shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. We use it in public addresses to show that the metals represent the four world empires of history. But the main purpose of the dream, as verse 28 states, was to inform us "what shall be in the latter days"—the days in which we live. In the latter days the people represented by the metals are to be confederated together, and are likened to a mighty Image. The Image represents the greatness of human power about to be broken in pieces and ground to powder by the Stone—Christ and his associates. Its power and greatness is emphasized in verse 31:

"This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible."

We are approaching that time when the Image will be erected, so let us consider those features we are to look for in its development.

The erected Image can be viewed in three parts.

1. **Its feet** - iron-clay; standing on ground in Europe.
2. **Its body** - the four metals; the nations of Europe and the Middle East in confederation.
3. **Its head** - golden Babylon.

The head is the most important part. It represents the leader of the confederacy. The head is the brain, the directing power, the decision maker.

How do we see the emerging of a "golden Babylon head" today?

We believe the head, the leader of the Confederation, will be the joint rule of the Vatican and Russia; the one is the 'Spiritual' head and the other the civil/military head. We already see this shaping in the cooperation of John Paul II and Gorbachev.

The papacy and the Catholic Church are scripturally identified in Revelation 17 as 'Babylon the Great', and as the 'Golden City' of ch. 18. This is straight-forward. But there are brethren puzzled as to how Russia can be regarded as the other component of the Golden Babylonish head. It will be useful to give a brief explanation.

CONSTANTINE MOVES THE EMPEROR'S THRONE TO THE EAST

We need to go back in history. The starting point is the Roman Emperor Constantine in the early 4th century. He moved the throne of the Roman empire from Rome into the eastern part of the empire, to Constantinople. The empire for most of its long existence has been in two parts, the Latin West and the Greek East, represented by the two legs of iron of the Image. In times before Christ the Roman power spread from Italy eastward and did not destroy the previous Greek empire, but rather absorbed it, with its culture. It was into this Greek part of the Roman empire that Constantine removed the throne, establishing it in his new city of Constantinople.

From this new centre Constantine and the following emperors ruled the whole of the empire, leaving the Bishop of Rome working for his own glory in the West. So we come to the time of the emperor Justinian in the 6th century when by his decree the Bishop of Rome attained his desire of being declared head of all Christianity in both East and West.

Justinian was an outstanding ruler and extensively revised Roman law, and at the same time fitted into the revision the new status of the Bishop of Rome—later to become the Pope. This structure of Roman law, both religious and civil, has in broad terms continued down to this day.

Bro. John Thomas considered that this Justinian—Bishop of Rome rule in the 6th century is expressive of what will occur in the future: a civil/military leader in the East and the spiritual head in the West with centres at Constantinople and Rome. This future will be the brief

revival of the original Christian Roman empire, and it is appropriate that its final glory should be on the same pattern.

CONSTANTINE INTRODUCES A BABYLONISH HEAD TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE

We go back to Constantine. Constantine not only moved the seat of the empire to the East, but he gave a Babylonish character to the emperorship. He made a great change from the earlier Roman emperors by adopting the style and absolute authority of the old Kings of Babylon (as illustrated in the time of Esther). He regarded himself as God's representative on earth; to be worshipped by men—as was to be the case with the Pope later on... Moreover, he claimed to be High Priest with authority over the Roman Christian Church he had recently established, dealing with their disputes and controlling their decisions. He would gladly have regarded himself as a golden Babylonish head! But the real Babylonish head lies in the future, when both sides of the headship will make the final fulfillment of Daniel's words.

"The King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods" (Daniel 11:36; also 2 Thess. 2:4).

RUSSIA'S RELATION TO CONSTANTINOPLE

Russia comes into the picture by its links with Constantinople, or Byzantium, as it was usually called. Christianity, the Greek Orthodox Church, progressed north from Byzantium into the Slavic countries, and into Russia on the 10th century. Russian law, its culture, and mode of government derive from Byzantium. The following three quotations are copied from *Milestones* 1983 (pp 11-19).

"Byzantium brought Russia five gifts; her religion, her law, her view of the world, her art and her writing.

"We may conclude that Russia's present civilization was the Byzantine culture of East Rome in whose terms Russian history remains intelligible at least to the middle of the fifteenth century.

"The Russians were as keen as the Bulgarians and the Serbs on Byzantine political thought. They acknowledged the Basilius (Emperor) of the Romans as the representative of God on earth and

the head of Christendom, submitted to his laws, and referred to him all important decisions in religious matters”.

ISAIAH 14 SHOWS THAT THE LATTER DAY KING OF BABYLON IS THE INVADER OF ISRAEL AND THEIR FINAL OPPRESSOR

Isaiah 13 is God’s judgment on the **Chaldean** Babylon which took place about a century after Isaiah’s prophecy. Chapter 14 is based on chapter 13 and belongs to the future. The reading of the chapter will show our heading is correct.

1. The first few verses show the prophecy is still future because the verses say Israel is redeemed and blessed by God after the oppressor is destroyed.

verses 1-3

“For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and see them in their own land: and the strangers will be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

“And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

“And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall give them rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve”.

2. The oppressor that has been destroyed is declared to be the King of Babylon and the golden city—echoes of Daniel 2 and its golden head.

v. 4

“That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!”

3. This oppressor, the king of Babylon, invades the land intending to rule from Jerusalem.

vv.12-14:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Lucifer means ‘Daystar’) son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High”.

The phrases “exalt my throne above the stars of God”; “ascend above the height of the cloud”; “heaven”; describe Israel’s rulership in the time when Isaiah’s prophecy was given—the High Priest and elders with the shekinah glory as the overshadowing cloud.

4. As the final invader of the land, this King of Babylon must be linked with Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Gog’s (Russia’s) invasion of the land. The two accounts are parallel. Both terrible oppressors, both final oppressors (ch. 39 makes that clear), both destroyed with divine vengeance. There could not be two different invasions of so terrible a character in the same epoch.

We must conclude that the Russian Gog and the latter day King of Babylon, the head of the Image, are the same, described by each prophet in a style suitable to his time.

5. How expressive the descriptions of the King of Babylon as Lucifer—morning star. He hopes to be the sun shining upon the world as the great conqueror. But he meets another greater morning star, **the bright and morning star** “I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16). **He** has the right to David’s throne not the king of Babylon. **He** will be the sun of righteousness truly shining over the whole world.
6. This chapter gives us a graphic picture of the coming dictator—a terrible despotic power who will follow after Gorbachev.

v. 6 “He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger.”

v.16 “Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

v. 17 “That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?”

With the terrible powers of destruction man possesses today, we have some idea of what lies ahead. No wonder Habakkuk was afraid when he heard:

“My belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble” (ch. 3:16).

Habakkuk had a parallel prophecy with Isaiah. In chapter one there is a description of a the Chaldean invader—

“that bitter and hasty nation, they are terrible and dreadful”.

Chapter two has the future invasion, with the same latter-day Babylon despot:

“He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death; and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him nations, and heapeth unto him all peoples (v. 5).

But the chapter ends:

“The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him”.

Whatever ‘peace’ Mr. Gorbachev may establish, it will be short-lived. There will be a time of trouble of unprecedented magnitude. But for the saints—“The just shall live by his faith” (v. 4).

Chapter 9: BRITAIN'S RELATION TO THE EEC

Britain's part in EEC developments has been outlined in chapter 6. That chapter was a general account of the EEC. This chapter and the next is an examination from the British point of view, looking more particularly at the guidance Bible prophecy provides. We will start with this.

LATTER-DAY BRITAIN IN PROPHECY¹

We believe Britain of the latter-days is referred to as Tyre and Tarshish in the following Scriptures:

Psalms 45:12; 48:7; 72:10

Isaiah 2:16; 23:15-18; 60:8-9

Ezekiel 28:14-19, 38:12.

It is clear from a perusal of these scriptures that Britain is appointed by God to do His work at the time of the setting up of the Kingdom. It is a work of service to Christ; the nation is subject to him—see Isaiah 60:9:

“Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee”;

¹ [This brief summary does not attempt to go into the detail which has appeared elsewhere on this subject over the years. Almost 20 years ago Bro. Graham wrote an extensive eight page chapter entitled ‘Tyre and Tarshish of the Latter Days’ in his book *Russia, the Vatican and the Invasion of Israel*, and this is the basis for the conclusions expressed here. One sentence bears repeating since it is very much to the point: ‘The starting point is to appreciate that there is to be a specific Tyre and Tarshish in the latter-days, the counterpart of the historical names; just as there is to be a latter-day Babylon, the counterpart of the Chaldean Babylon.’ He goes on to demonstrate that this is Britain. In the 1985 **Milestones** there is a chapter on ‘The Commonwealth of Nations and its Future’, pages 49-64. In the 1987 **Milestones**, chapter 10 was on ‘Britain’s Prosperity and Isaiah 23’. In the 1988 **Milestones** there were three pages on ‘Britain’s prosperity fulfilling Isaiah 23:17-18’. Publisher]

and Psalm 45:12:

And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour”.

This position of Britain is to be contrasted with that of Europe presented in Daniel 7 and Revelation. The fourth beast is to be slain and given to the burning flame; or in similar terms in Revelation 19 the beast and its ten horns are cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

It should be obvious that Britain, Biblically, has no place in Europe when Christ comes.

BRITAIN'S PRESENT INTEREST IN EUROPE

When the EEC was started in 1958, Britain under a Labour government declined to join. In 1963 the Conservative government made application, but because of strong opposition by France the application was turned down. A second application in 1973 by Mr. Heath's government was accepted, and Britain signed the Treaty of Rome. Mrs. Thatcher and the Conservatives, together with the industrialists, have maintained a steady interest in membership. Until recently the British people generally have been indifferent or opposed.

Mrs. Thatcher expressed her approval of a European Single Market by signing the Single European Act of 1985.

It is from this point onward that divergence of intention and interest became apparent. Mrs. Thatcher's interest is limited to trade and business—exactly what the name EEC expresses—European **Economic** Community. But France began to reveal a wider objective, to create a political unity as well as economic; and politically it should be socialist in character.

Socialism is anathema to Mrs. Thatcher. It means inefficiency, bureaucracy, loss of freedom for the individual, who gradually becomes a mere cog in a machine driven by central control.

The two main opponents, Mitterand and Thatcher, clearly expressed themselves at the Strasburg Summit in December 1989. Mitterand as President of EEC made plain that the 11:1 voting and agreement showed that the Community was united (except for Britain) in moving to a socialist political unity to operate over all Europe as soon as possible.

MRS. THATCHER HAS NOT CHANGED

At the Summit Mrs. Thatcher maintained her position that Britain would join in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) as soon as possible (1) when inflation was under control, (2) when other members had fulfilled their agreed steps for the 1992 start. Beyond that she would continue to argue for her alternative plan for maintaining national currencies, and allowing active and freely competing economies.

Mrs. Thatcher has been charged with going back on her promise at the July Madrid Summit. This is not true. She only agreed to step 1 in Mitterand's 3 steps.

HOW DOES BRITAIN COME OUT OF EUROPE?

This is a question of continuing interest to students of Bible prophecy who are watching current events. There is a fundamental difference of outlook between Britain and the Continental nations and the impact of this on events will gradually separate the two. We go into this fully in the next chapter "Two Kinds of Freedom".

This different attitude to freedom will continue to sharpen in 1990-91. The issue is not yet appreciated by many. For the present, people generally are anxious to cooperate with Europe, to swim with the tide, with hopes of greater prosperity and peace—more pleasure, more holidays on the continent. How foolish, they say, to maintain an unnecessary opposition in an 11:1 majority; why be disliked and unpopular? And the business/industrial world with its "love of money" still wants to be in Europe.

As Mrs. Thatcher continues her simple-minded defence of British freedom to conduct its own affairs, and exposes the harmfulness of socialist bureaucracies, the real issue with Europe will become clearer. It will increasingly aggravate European hostility and resentment of the "trouble maker".

The detail of how an unbridgeable gulf will develop we do not know. We have stated at the beginning of chapter six how Mitterand intends to handle the matter, putting Britain into the EFTA '2nd class' in the future EEC/EFTA grouping of countries.

TWO OTHER FACTORS THAT WILL DRIVE BRITAIN OUT OF EUROPE

1. Britain humbled

As we have pointed out, Britain has a work to do when Christ returns. As with others she has to be prepared. Certainly Britain is not ready at present to be subject to the King. The people need a moral revival from their decadent permissive style of life. They need to return to Biblical standards of morality. Judgement, hardship, trouble, including right instruction are necessary. Exactly how this will come we do not know. It may only come after the saints have been taken away. The sequence in Isaiah 66:18-20 indicates proper enlightenment is not until after Armageddon. Giving instruction is expressed in verse 19, where 'drawers of the bow' is more suitably translated "sounders of the truth" (Bro. J. Thomas).

The removal of the saints may have some effect. The possible return of those rejected at the judgement seat could have a dramatic effect. Britain might come within the scope of the Elijah mission of Malachi chapter 4:4-5 (addressed primarily to the Jews).

2. The Commonwealth

In Ezekiel 38 Gog has its confederacy invading the land; but there is another confederacy in opposition.

"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions... shall say unto thee; Art thou come to take a spoil..." (v. 13).

"All the young lions thereof": peoples independent of the Old Mother lion, but confederate with her. This is the Commonwealth and the USA, positioned in Sheba and Dedan south east of the land of Israel.

There is a real affinity between Britain and the Commonwealth nations. They speak the same English language, and converse with one another with a high degree of understanding and sympathy. The older members have long ties, and in earlier days were educated and governed from England. Today there is a great deal of cooperation in education, science, finance, and health.

We expect that as Britain becomes estranged from Europe she will restore her old strong trading links with these countries.

There is no doubt that the Commonwealth of nations, with the Queen (or King) as head will give allegiance to King Christ and do his bidding. Britain does not belong to the European nations of the Image confederacy.

Chapter 10: Two Kinds of Freedom That Separate Britain From Europe

"I should like to applaud and endorse Mrs. Thatcher's statement that human rights are to be found in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount—in the Jewish-Christian tradition"

(D. T. 13-8-89).

MRS. THATCHER AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

This year has been the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. Its battle cry was Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; and its platform the Declaration of the Rights of Man. France has been proudly proclaiming its great contribution to 'human rights', initiated by the French Revolution and developed throughout Europe, and indeed the rest of the world over the past 200 years.

Mrs. Thatcher has been strongly criticized by the French for objecting to the French claim as being the initiator of 'freedom' & 'human rights'; and for finding fault with the anniversary's grand ceremonies, speeches and lavish decorations. French President Mitterand and the French government expressed their displeasure when she was in Paris at the time of the celebrations by putting her 'in the back row' of guests at the official dinner. The crowds in the streets booed her, but she kept smiling.

A few weeks earlier in a speech Mrs. Thatcher has stated that human rights were properly defined long ago in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and have been carried through the centuries in the Jewish-Christian tradition.

On reflection, this view expressed by Mrs. Thatcher is the key to her implacable hostility to the socialist bureaucracy in Brussels taking over the major control of British policy and replacing the Sovereignty of parliament to govern the British people. It directs our attention to the fact that there are two different concepts of freedom on the Continent and in Britain, including most of the English-speaking people. To

understand this will be of value as we watch events, waiting to see how eventually Britain is isolated from Europe.

THE TWO FREEDOMS CONTRASTED

The difference between freedom in Britain and freedom on the Continent is expressed in two words: Democracy and Socialism.

The emphasis in a democratic government is the status of the individual—respect for his rights and freedom, respect for human dignity; care for the individual's well-being, his rights protected by law, protection from molestation and violence.

A socialist government has a different emphasis; the State is important, the individual is its servant, and has to take what the State chooses to provide.

Using the dictionary to fill out the meaning of these two words we have:

“Socialism. A political and economic theory and movement for the reform of society by the substitution of collective for individual ownership of capital and property; contrasted with, and opposed to capitalism or individualism; State or municipal ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange”.

“Democracy. A form of government in which all classes, including the lowest, have a voice in government, directly or through their chosen representatives.”

“Democrat. One who upholds the political rights of the people”.

A much used phrase today is “Democratic Socialism”, which in some ways is a contradiction in terms. Socialism that calls itself democratic infers there has been some kind of election control—often under such official control that it makes sure there is a pre-arranged result. But however free the election, the individual still loses some of his freedom. He has handed over to the State the control of the basic things of life and he has no choice but to take what is offered by the State. Usually the start of socialism has the object of taking from the rich to give to the poor, bringing all to a common level.

Socialism is State control, control from the centre, and requires a bureaucracy, a specialist group of people who wield power and direct affairs without any outside control or check. With time, inefficiency and

corruption are inevitable. Individual initiative is suppressed and in practice the people become passive and accept the system.

Against this technical background let us see how history has shaped the spirit of the British nation and the spirit of the Continental nations.

IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH FREEDOM

The history of the freedom of the individual in Britain is a complex matter and needs analyzing. Consider these factors:

1. It has been a slow and gradual shaping over centuries.
2. After the Bible translation into English it has been moulded by Bible influence.
3. In the turbulent times since the French Revolution two centuries ago there has been the restraining influence of parliament.
4. Monarchy provides stability.
5. The effect of the sea and being an island.

1. Long centuries of development from Magna Carta

Freedom in Britain stretches back to the early 13th century in Magna Carta (the Great Charter). Some 500 years later the freedom of the individual was reinforced in the time of Cromwell by the "Bill of Rights". And ever since it has been protected by the accountability of the government to the parliament of the people. Freedom is deep-rooted in a long history—it has long been part of the British way of life.

The following newspaper reports are relevant.

"ORIGINS OF FREEDOM

"They should also be reminded of Britain's grounds for superiority in questions of freedom. Here, liberty has been securely established because it has evolved gradually. **Magna Carta**...at least began the limitation of the power of an absolute monarch. Half a millennium later...in terms of individual liberty, our **Act of Habeas Corpus in 1697 was revolutionary**; as a pre-eminent historian of this period, Sir George Clark, contended: "The contrast with the French *lettres de cachet* was sharp", and nowhere in the world had an executive allowed such a check on itself" (D. T. 28-8-89).

From Mrs. Thatcher's Bruges speech:

"We are rightly proud of the way in which, since Magna Carta in 1215, we have pioneered and developed representative institutions to stand as bastions of freedom. And proud too, of the way in which for centuries Britain was a home for people who sought sanctuary from tyranny" (G. W. 2-10-89).

Magna Carta

Britain had been largely under Catholic control for centuries with power in the hands of the Church and barons. Local people were serfs dominated by the Lord of the Manor. Magna Carta was a rebellion for freedom. King John was forced to sign it by the demand of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the barons. It laid down the laws and customs of the land in writing.

Regarding the Bill of Rights, Enoch Powell wrote:

"In giving 'the force of law' to the Declaration of Right—the terms and conditions on which the Crown was offered and accepted on February 13, 1689 'declared and enacted that all and singular the rights and liberties asserted and claimed' in the Declaration 'are the *true ancient and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this kingdom*'"
(D. T. 4-1-89).

2. British freedom moulded by the Bible

The first English translation of the Bible by Wycliffe was in 1380-2. Printed versions of Tyndale and Coverdale were in 1525 and 1537 respectively. By a law passed in the year 1539, the Bible had to be chained [thus the 'Chained Bible'] to the podium of every Church in England.

The knowledge of God's word had a profound effect on the quality of life in Britain. The Bible brings recognition of a Supreme Being and our responsibility to Him and to His laws. It brings also a respect for law in general and its restraint.

The availability of the Bible brought moral and religious revival from time to time. It developed a spirit of caring and compassion; of discipline in daily life.

Writing about the British revulsion to the violence and bloodshed of the French Revolution, a letter writer to the Daily Telegraph had this to say:

"Despite this, with the exception of a few pockets of insurrection, the response of the English people in general to the philosophy and procedures birthed by the French Revolution was one of **horror and total rejection**.

"Why? One reason, I would suggest, is that English society had, for at least two-and-a-half centuries, been shaped by the influence of the true Jewish-Christian tradition, based firmly upon the Bible. This influence started with the Reformation, (indeed, earlier, with Wycliffe and the Lollards), continued through the Civil War and the Restoration, and culminated in the 18th century revival and the spread of Methodism. John Wesley was still preaching in 1789: not the rights of man, but his need to repent of his sinful life...living a life pleasing to God, in obedience to His laws. Wesley and Whitfield between them changed England from a debauched and drunken nation to a sober {in the physical sense of the word} and God-fearing (a term much misunderstood and scorned today) people" (D. T. 13-8-89).

3. Britain's stability in the 19th century

Flowing out from the French Revolution, further revolutions swept through all Europe in the 19th century and after; bringing war, bloodshed, turmoil, destruction, hostility between nations, political crises and upheavals. Britain in her 'island fortress' was outside this. It was an age of prosperity and expansion, of great influence in the world. This was so because of Bible influence and good government allowed by God. It was a time of non-conformism, people leaving the established Church and building chapels and 'worshipping' God in a simple style. It was the age in which Brother Thomas lived and opened up the Scriptures.

On the Continent, atheism and Catholicism had the opposite effect.

4. Stability from a Monarchy

Monarchy generally is a valuable aid to national stability. Parliaments, Republics, Presidents, powerful Prime Ministers come and go; but the Monarchy endures. There is no upheaval as the Monarch passes: the king is dead—long live the king, as his heir takes over. This continuity gives assurance and a feeling of national security.

In addition, the pageantry and ceremonies associated with Monarchy provide a strong link with the past. They are designed to do this. In this continuity there is maintained the character of unchanging strength and stability.

In Britain the status of the monarch was laid down in the time of Cromwell and the Bill of Rights. The monarch must declare at his/her ascension to the throne to defend the Protestant faith and respect the Word of God. The monarch is subject to parliament, but has three rights: the 'right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn' (D. T. 5-6-89). In time of crisis this has been a valuable function, bringing wisdom and far-sightedness to bear, defusing the dangerous tension.

5. The effect of the sea and being an island

British character had been moulded over the centuries by the sea. A sea-faring nation facing the dangers and hardships of contending with the mighty power of the sea develops a down-to-earth and realist character which pervades life generally, and the government. It tends to give a calm, not easily-excited temperament. Mrs. Thatcher is typical of this British spirit. While the EEC plans grand schemes, passes laws to establish them, Mrs. Thatcher is forever calling them to get down to detail, to reality, and face the problems that must be solved, however unpleasant the consequences.

Another influence of the vast ocean surrounding the island is its beckoning to adventure into the unknown. It develops courage and personal initiative, diligence and carefulness; and above all the spirit of freedom.

* * * * *

All these five factors we have considered explain and express British freedom. How real all this is we shall see when we contrast it with the character of continental freedom.

THE HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM ON THE CONTINENT

History's record is that on the Continent the individual has had little freedom. For 1,000 years it was the serf/lord relationship that moulded the character of the nations. Emperors and princes were despotic and there was no redress. There was no freedom of conscience, no religious freedom, no human rights and a person was guilty until proved innocent. There were a few occasions of reform, such as the Reformation in the 16th century. There were pockets of Bible believers,

such as the Waldenses and later the Brethren in Christ who suffered frequent persecution.

Such a long period of inescapable bondage should not be passed over lightly. The national spirit was gradually moulded with time, and became deep-rooted.

THE KIND OF FREEDOM PRODUCED BY THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution was the reaction of the oppressed human spirit after centuries of church-nobility indifference to the well-being of the State and people, a reaction against those who cared only for their own well-being and aggrandizement, ignoring the people's hardship and poverty. The demand for freedom was expressed in the famous phrase 'liberty, equality and fraternity'.

In the early stage of the Revolution, good laws and reforms were enacted. But soon the wrath and vengeance of the populace took over and France was drenched in blood. Kings and aristocrats were guillotined; destruction and death were indiscriminate. Freedom it was, but uncontrolled and violent in the extreme. This was the Reign of Terror, June 1793 to July 1794. The vengeance then turned upon the Catholic priesthood 'a hideous persecution of the priesthood, in which an uncounted number of priests died under the rigours of transportation or of violence' (Belloc, *The French Revolution*).

This was a victory in which there was nothing worthy of glory, as Mrs. Thatcher said at the 200th anniversary. This was a nation who at this stage decreed there was no God, and gloried in deifying Reason in the form of a young woman. It could hardly be otherwise. The people had been without the instruction and restraints of the Word of God for long, long centuries. This was a freedom very different from British freedom.

A contemporary British view of the French Revolution is expressed in these contrasts.

"George Cruikshank in 1792 drew up a list of the features of British and French versions of liberty. The British list included religion, morality, loyalty, obedience to the laws, independence, justice, industry, national prosperity and happiness. The French list included atheism, rebellion, anarchy, murder, equality, injustice, idleness, famine, national ruin and misery." (D. T. 18.8.89).

After the French Revolution, waves of further revolutions swept through Europe. They were of the same pattern—change and reform carried out by violence and bloodshed; and then more oppression. This was the case in the mighty Russian Revolution in 1917; and oppression soon returned under the despotism of Stalin and Brezhnev. Again, there was no enlightening or restraining hand of the Word of God. They too made Man's Wisdom and Reason their idol.

A sentence in a Daily Telegraph Editorial summarizes the situation.

"In France, as in Russia after 1917, and as in much of the Third World since decolonization, sudden change and transfer of power to a class unused to governing bred anarchy and destruction, corrected only by the iron hand of totalitarianism" (D. T. 28-8-89).

It is a strange twist of events that 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' were originally intended for the individual, but they have also worked out on a national level with each nation demanding its liberty and rights, bringing hostility and wars between neighbouring states. The following is from *Apocalypse and History* (Brethren Boulton and Barker), quoting from Philip's "Modern Europe".

"It was due to the revolutionary wars that nationality, endowed with a new and intenser meaning, became, during the nineteenth century, the principal force in moulding the political form of Europe.... The idea of national unity, once proclaimed, spread with astonishing rapidity, till in all Europe there was not a race with a grievance, real or fancied, against the established order but based its resistance on the natural right of 'a nation' to be mistress of its own destinies...The nineteenth century opened with a vision of the brotherhood of man. It closed on the grim reality of armed nations face to face, guarding jealously their exclusive privileges, and justifying the ruinous burden of their armaments as the necessary insurance of their material welfare."

It may be felt too much time has been spent explaining what our chapter heading describes as "The Two Freedoms". But a perusal of the chapter as a whole will bring home to us that the spirit of freedom on the continent, obtained by overthrowing governments, using bloodshed, violence and war, usually followed after a while by further oppression, is a very different spirit from that developed in Britain and moulded by the Word of God. Britain has been under God's control for His purpose, a purpose to be revealed in the near future. Britain has no abiding place in Europe. She will be separated.

For the present, in her love of money and pleasure Britain has taken the wrong path and must be humbled and reformed. The old national spirit is still alive below the surface and will be revived by events God will bring upon her.

FREEDOM ON THE CONTINENT IN 1990

The recent euphoria in Eastern Europe at the sudden freedom and hope of better things is already being clouded by many difficulties and problems to be solved. In Europe generally, there is a hopefulness of future peace and freedom from fear, of security and prosperity.

Whatever the hopes people have for the future, any fulfillment will be short-lived. The newly 'freed' countries have no ability to create sound and stable government. Their new leaders and governments are generally untrained and unsuitable, even from the world's point of view. From the Bible point of view, how can they create good laws to restrain human nature and care for the poor and weak? They have no Bible background to guide them. Their religion is either the authority of the Catholic Church or atheism.

After the thrill of freedom they will at best establish Socialist bureaucracies again, with its elite class in power. The mass of people will soon come under some form of oppression—a repeat of the Russian revolution. We know the Biblical prophecy of Europe's future oppressor.

Chapter 11: AN AMAZING YEAR PREPARING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN

POSSIBLE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

First we pick out from the previous chapters significant events and trends in 1989.

Chapter one looks back over 150 years, and in more detail, over the past 20 years. We can be confident that we have a correct grasp of God's unfolding purpose in the Time of the End. Slow and sure it has been, but now there is a quickening as the final Day of the Lord draws near.

Chapter two is an exhortation based on chapter one with the heading "I will hasten it in his time". Let us be warned that the slow steady pace of earlier years is changing to a quicker tempo. The day of the judgement seat is near.

Chapter three: Events in the Soviet

Despite great problems and opposition, Gorbachev has continued his reforms and has established a new parliamentary system and laws that give a degree of freedom, and curb the power of the Communist Old Guard.

Religion is now fully re-established in the Soviet.

Chapter four: Freedom in the Satellite countries

The alarmingly rapid moves to overthrow the oppressive communist governments in these countries were supported by Gorbachev, strange as that seemed to be. In order to revive the Soviet economy it was essential to gain the confidence of America so that it would risk giving financial and technical help. To gain this confidence Gorbachev had to be seen to be a supporter of human rights. Hence the changed Soviet policy in Eastern Europe.

The pace of change, the surge of 'people power', has brought unrest and instability, which at the end of the year hangs as an ominous cloud. Even more rapid upheavals are likely in 1990.

Chapter five: A changed Germany

The new defiant, independent mood revealed in West Germany this year is no less important than the new spirit of freedom in the East. German reunification in some form is near. A reunited Germany with tremendous economic potential, cooperating with the Soviet and Eastern Europe will need a few years to develop. But already this cooperation is evident, and West Germany is speeding the revival of these countries.

West Europe, fearing a revival of German military power and ambitions, is seeking the reuniting of the Germanies within the framework of a United Europe. Gorbachev's Common Home for all Europe is frequently voiced. America supports the concept of a united Europe.

Chapter six: EEC progress

At the end of the year we see the countries of Western Europe united in a determination to carry their agreed economic unity on to a grander scheme. They now aim to establish a political unity as soon as possible; and to use the economic skills and organization of the EEC to move into Eastern Europe. This will contribute to the uniting of East and West Europe.

This agreed intention made known at the Strasburg Summit, December 1989, had only been hinted at in 1988! No doubt pressure by the Pope and his Jesuits is behind this.

Chapter seven: Vatican-Soviet Cooperation

The cordial meeting of Pope John Paul and President Gorbachev at the Vatican in December was truly an historic event. To Bible watchers it was seen as a climax to 30 years of growing tolerance, each side gradually perceiving the mutual advantages of cooperation. It was an event that had been 'in the air' for several years; but in 1989 it happened. How many important events happened in this year!

The Pope has agreed in principle to visit the Soviet.

Pressure from the Catholic Church and their hierarchies for maintaining freedom and human rights in Eastern Europe will be a restraint on Gorbachev against returning to violent suppression in those countries.

Chapters 8,9,10: The position of Britain

These chapters deal with Bible prophecy, and its requirement that Britain should be separated from Europe.

British character has been shaped by Bible influences over many centuries, in preparation for a work of service she has to do for Christ when he returns.

Again, it was 1989 that saw the setting of the course for the future. The rejection of Mrs. Thatcher's view and wishes, strongly argued for the past two years, by the Community's 11:1 vote was a watershed. And this was strengthened by her defiant answer that she will go on arguing her case for national sovereignty and competing currencies between member countries. This will add to the growing hostility towards Britain, and further isolation.

ALL IN ONE YEAR!

What an **amazing** number of important and significant events were concentrated in the year 1989—tremendous changes in one year!

1. Soviet legal reforms for freedom and official acceptance of religion.
2. The spirit of freedom overthrowing communist governments and their oppressors sweeping like a flood-tide across Europe.
3. Germany declaring it will no longer be a subject nation, and in the future will make its own decisions as to how it uses its tremendous strength and potential.
4. The EEC setting out at the Strasburg Summit to bind Europe together economically.
5. The meeting of Gorbachev and the Pope at the Vatican and their mutual interest in cooperation.
6. The separation of Britain from Europe coming to a head.

When the framework of 1989 Milestones was planned in October, the intention was that chapter eleven should attempt a forecast of likely events in 1990-1991. But at the beginning of 1990 the overall situation has become so complex that the detail of what may happen is beyond assessment. It is likely the storm of change will be unabated—possibly increased. There is little doubt that it will be a very troubled time, as is already clear at the beginning of 1990. Freedom has intoxicated the people and violent aggressive forces have been liberated, forces that will be very difficult to curb.

The Soviet leadership will shrink back from overthrowing Gorbachev because of the greater chaos that would bring. And also it would destroy the confidence built up with America and other countries, a confidence that is needed to get the financial and technical aid for rebuilding the economy. Ezekiel 38:7 indicated there is to be a preparation period for Gog, and Gorbachev appears to be the man for doing this.

The upheavals now manifesting themselves will keep rather than hinder this process. America, Britain, and West Europe are all so fearful of the consequences of a collapse of the Soviet regime, that they will give aid even more generously than at present.

One wonders whether Gorbachev will be pushed along the path of speeding up further change, instead of slowing it down, as he has been trying to do. It would involve getting general agreement, at least in principle, for a band of 'neutral' countries across the middle of Europe, stretching from the Baltic States, through Germany, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, to act as a buffer between NATO and Warsaw armies. This would allow time to carry out a more planned reduction of armed forces. This neutral band of countries, each having its limited 'defensive only' armed forces has been Gorbachev's aim from the beginning. It would probably satisfy the security fears of the military and Old Guard in the Soviet. Likewise it might satisfy America and NATO to give up their 'flexible nuclear response' philosophy. It would prevent the military expansion of Germany, and it would offer Germany freedom to put its energy into economic growth and prosperity.

Another major change has just come into view. The important announcement by Gorbachev was reported as follows:-

"NEW FEDERATION PROMISED FOR SOVIET REPUBLICS"

"A new constitution was being drafted by a committee of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow which would assure them 'wide-ranging political independence, an unprecedented independence both political and economic.' A law was also being drafted to provide a mechanism for republics to leave the Soviet Union." (D. T. 12-1-90).

This can be expected to produce loosely federated countries in East Europe and the Soviet Union, but still recognizing a military association with Russia. This would enhance the meaning of that phrase

addressed to Gog that we have examined in Chapter 8, "Be thou a guard unto them."

Despite all difficulties we can expect that the other instruction to Gog in the same verse, "Be thou prepared and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee" will go on in 1990. It is a work of God and will be successful.

Another expected development is the regional co-operation of most of the East European Countries that made up Comecon—the equivalent of the EEC. Leaders of these countries are at present discussing the reform of Comecon to make it a market-oriented unit that could have a currency related to world currencies instead of the Soviet 'closed shop' inward looking association of the past.

"COMECON'S REFORM STARTS TO SHAPE UP"

"Free-market economic reforms to overhaul the Soviet-led trade group, Comecon, which could radically alter East-West trade relations, appeared to be taking root yesterday as the 10-member association began crucial talks.

"Proposals include the creation of a convertible currency, open markets and liberalized trade with the West. Soviet delegates said last night that a general agreement on reform would probably be reached but there was disagreement over its timing.

"Prime ministers from several eastern European countries led the way in an attack of the present Comecon formation, calling for the dismantling of Stalinist structures and the creation of a trade alliance" (D. T. 10-1-90).

A reformed Comecon Community will allow Eastern Europe to trade with Western Europe on equal terms, negotiations being conducted between the EEC and Comecon. This is what the EEC is looking for, in order to penetrate the Eastern markets.

President Bush and President Gorbachev are hoping that the Disarmament Talks going on at Geneva will result in a treaty by the middle of 1990 for substantial troop withdrawals. If this happens it will be taken as an expression of confidence that there will be no more war in Europe. We can see that in several ways Gorbachev is hoping events will bring him into calmer waters.

How busy the angels must be in causing such a variety of people and leaders to take the steps that are required in God's purpose.

Chapter 12: ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

A YEAR OF PEACE BUT LITTLE PROGRESS

Israel was not in the limelight in 1989, other than the routine reporting of the continuing clash of the Intifadeh (uprising) and the Israeli army. The exciting events in Europe have drawn away most of the media reporters to that area. Gorbachev has had his hands full with European and Soviet affairs, and Bush likewise has been fully occupied with settling in as a new President, deciding on foreign policy and coping with Panama and Central American problems. Probably both Presidents agreed to put the Middle East 'on the back burner' as the phrase is, for 1989. It may also be they felt the dramatic change in the stance announced by the PLO and Arafat needed a quiet period to be adequately assessed.

THE PLO AND ARAFAT'S CHANGE OF POLICY

1988 ended with a dramatic event when Arafat publicly declared the Palestine Liberation Organization recognized Israel's right to exist in Palestine; and that in future he would press the rights of the Palestinians by negotiation.

This change had been largely brought about by Soviet pressure on Arafat—concerned at the instability in the Middle East. It must have been apparent to Arafat that progress was not being made by his terrorist policy based on the Palestine National Council of 1969 for "the liquidation of the Zionist presence" in Palestine. Israel had not weakened, and world opinion had alienated them.

IMPACT OF THIS CHANGE OF POLICY

1. On world opinion. The new stance gave Arafat immediate respectability and a large degree of acceptance. He was given recognition by America, Britain, France, the EEC, the United Nations and of course by the Soviet and the Arab countries. During the year the PLO had meetings with the British Foreign Office. In May Arafat had a successful visit to Paris and received official support from President Mitterand.

2. On America. During 1988 America had indicated that when the PLO changed its policy, America would change its 'No talks with the PLO' policy that has operated for over a decade. Immediately in January 1989, it had a preliminary meeting, and in March there was a formal meeting in Cairo. The American side pressed for further changes in PLO behaviour.

3. On the Arab countries. These countries regarded the result of Arafat's announcement as a victory. At an Arab summit in Casablanca at the end of May there was unanimous support for Arafat to take charge of the Palestinian cause, and to handle the negotiations in cooperation with Egypt (D. T. 23-5-89).

This summit had the additional importance that it welcomed Egypt back into the Arab League. It was turned out when it signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Egypt is under American influence and control because of its economic dependence on her. So Egypt has adequate contacts both with America and Israel and can carry on PLO negotiations with them. This was the strategy discussed at Casablanca.

Egypt is widely respected and listened to in the Arab world and is a moderating influence. Also, the southern Arab states, under the influence of Britain and America are now less hostile to Israel, and hope there will be a 'peace' settlement; but on their terms, and with a degree of compromise.

4. On Israel. Israel's government and people were stunned by America accepting Arafat's turnabout, and breaking the agreement that there should be no negotiations with the PLO. Some used the extreme language of 'betrayal'. But America had several times warned Israel during 1988 that this change was coming.

After a few month's reviewing the new situation Shamir swung back to his usual strong uncompromising position: 'no land for peace', and the nation showed its usual resilience. The national mood generally was for a tough stance and general support for Shamir.

In an assessment of Yitzhak Shamir just before going to Washington in March, two extracts express his outlook:

'Shamir's stridency is not the shrillness of desperation but of triumph. In a remarkably short time he has recovered from the diplomatic blows dealt to him by Washington's resumption of talks with the PLO and the

sudden surge of pressure from the West and Moscow for Israel to start talking peace”.

“Shamir is convinced that Israeli sovereignty over the Occupied Territories is an attainable end. He has not been shifted from that by the 15-month-old *Intifadeh*, nor the PLO's peace initiative or the diplomatic moves that have sprung from them” (D. T. 10-8-89).

Arafat's emergence as a politician and negotiator posed a great challenge to Israeli diplomacy to maintain their position in the new situation. The world was now looking for Israel to come to terms with the PLO and make a settlement for 'peace'.

THE SHAMIR PEACE PLAN

How would Shamir handle this challenge? In early May he produced his four point Peace Plan and presented it to President Bush. A description of the Plan was given in the 'Conservative Friends of Israel' report on a visit to Israel by a small delegation. The following is their report:

“THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL PEACE INITIATIVE OF 14 MAY 1989”

“The Israeli Government's peace initiative sets forth the guidelines for achieving a breakthrough towards resolving the Arab-Israel conflict and towards ushering in a new era of regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations. Its four points call for:

- (1) strengthening the peace treaty with Egypt;
- (2) ending the state of war between the Arab states and Israel;
- (3) rehabilitating the Palestinian refugee camps and
- (4) holding elections among Palestinian Arab inhabitants in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

“Those four political points are mutually reinforcing. Progress in one facilitates progress in each of the others. This is why we believe that all four points should be pursued in parallel, and with equal vigor.

“Israel's goal is to move as quickly as possible towards elections among the Palestinian Arab residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, elections which will enable them to choose freely and openly their legitimate representatives. Israel intends to quickly conclude negotiations for a five year period of Palestinian self-rule, which will give the Palestinian Arab inhabitants effective control over most aspects of their daily lives.

“As for a permanent solution the parties participating in the negotiations to achieve it shall include Israel and the elected representatives of the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, along with Jordan and perhaps Egypt. Israel is committed to begin negotiations on a permanent settlement within three years of the start of the period of self-rule.”

Shamir's peace initiative is based on the Camp David Accords with President Carter in 1978, and which became the basis of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of March 1979. The treaty required the Israeli government to move forward and arrange for Arabs in Israel and the Occupied Territories (excluding Jerusalem) to have control of their own life in civil and political matters—Israel maintaining a military oversight. The Shamir Plan was in line with this. It was a skilful move: Israel would be fulfilling their treaty obligations.

It had the great advantage for Israel of keeping development and negotiations under the control of Israel and including the other treaty signatory—Egypt. Shamir hoped in this way to avoid negotiations with the PLO, and avoid being brought under the pressure of an international peace conference to settle everything.

Only resident Arabs in Israel and the occupied zone would have a vote, and if the following negotiations were successful there would be a breathing space for Israel of two to three years. For the Palestinian this would be a partially satisfactory step in the right direction.

WASHINGTON'S VIEW

President Bush accepted Shamir's proposals as useful in keeping the peace momentum going, but regarded it as inadequate to meet the new climate. He knew the proposals would not be acceptable to the Arab nations and the PLO. Before meeting Shamir he had made it clear the PLO view must be given more weight. Two quotations show this:

“BUSH CALLS FOR AN END TO ISRAELI OCCUPATION”

“President Bush has again indicated America's determination to push Israel toward a Middle East settlement.

“After meeting Egypt's President Mubarak at the White House yesterday, he called for an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

“Mr. Bush also supported the ‘achievement of Palestinian rights’ and the idea of an international peace conference that was ‘properly structured’, meaning that the conference must lead to direct negotiations” (D. T. 4-4-89).

“Mr. Shamir is up against a far blunter American administration than a year ago when he saw President Reagan.

“Pressing for a ‘sense of urgency’, Mr. Bush has outraged Mr. Shamir and his backers by calling for an end to Israeli ‘occupation’ of the West Bank and Gaza, and also by supporting a ‘properly structured international conference that could play a useful role at an appropriate time’.

“Although still cautious, this phrase goes further than Mr. Bush has done before towards endorsing the conference which the Israelis resist as a Soviet and Arab plot to isolate them.” (D. T. 6-4-89).

The actual meeting with Mr. Shamir was described as friendly and business-like, but neither side altered their stand.

THE MUBARAK PEACE PLAN

During the summer months Mubarak of Egypt continued his go-between mission. He welcomed Shamir’s proposals as keeping the peace momentum going, and gave his general support. But knowing that Shamir was insistent on ‘no talks with the PLO’, and that the Arab League had unanimously placed negotiations in the hands of the PLO and Arafat, it was useless in giving Shamir’s proposals in their present vague form to Arafat. So he filled out the proposals with ten points of detail, bringing in the Palestinian point of view. The five most significant of the ten points were:

- An Israeli commitment to the principles of exchanging land for peace.
- A freeze on building new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.
- Elections should lead to final settlement of the dispute based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338.
- A prior commitment by Israel to respect the results of the poll.
- Guarantees of all points by the United States. (D. T. 28-9-89)

Mubarak took the 'Ten Points' to Washington in September and President Bush gave them his general support, though knowing that there would be strong objections from Israel.

In October, U.S. Minister of State Baker gave Israel a five point proposal of assurances. These according to the CFI memo, already referred to, were accepted by the Israeli inner cabinet on November 5th. But afterwards they asked for further assurances. Baker was unwilling to concede any of these, and stood by his balanced support for the Palestinian side as well as the Israeli side. This brought the front page headline in the Jerusalem Post of January 13, 1990:

"U.S. HOLDS BACK ON ASSURANCES: ISRAEL BITTERLY DIS-APPOINTED"

So as 1990 begins there has been no worthwhile 'peace' achievement, other than highlighting the present stance of each side after many hours and weeks of argument and meetings.

Probably Bush and Gorbachev are pleased the year has been occupied in this way while each has been fully occupied with his own problems. It might be considered a useful 'softening-up' period in preparation for the time when they are ready to turn seriously to a Middle East settlement.

Before we reflect on the future for Israel, it is necessary to bring our review up-to-date on the Soviet in the Middle East.

SOVIET CONCERN FOR SECURITY ON ITS SOUTH BORDER

The Soviet attitude to the Middle East has changed in the past few years. It is no longer an expansionist power for the present. With dismantling of armies in Europe in order to speed economic revival in the Soviet it feels there is greater need for a settlement in the Middle East to improve security on its southern border. Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel all now possess nuclear missiles capable of targeting on Soviet cities. Behaviour of the Arab countries is uncertain and unreliable, especially in its Moslem extremist elements. The Soviet is anxious for better stability in the region, and avoiding religious upheavals. Gorbachev's aim in the Middle East is the same as in Europe—a reduction of armaments, and agreement amongst all countries for peace and

cooperation. He regards a stable Israel—as a big influence in maintaining stability. America holds the same view as the Soviet.

SOVIET DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE

In the early part of 1989, while diplomatic activity in Israel and America was quiet, the foreign minister Shevardnadze took the opportunity to tour the Middle East in support of the Soviet-Arab Peace-Plan and PLO—Israel negotiations. The following is a report:

“MOSCOW TO PRESS FOR MIDDLE EAST TALKS”

“The Soviet Union is to launch its own Middle East shuttle diplomacy this week when Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, Soviet Foreign Minister, begins a **five-nation tour** to press for an international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli dispute.

“The trip, beginning in Syria on Friday and taking in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Iran highlights renewed Soviet interest in the region and its desire to take part in the peace process.

“‘We seek to attain a tangible breakthrough in settling this old conflict’, said a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Moscow. He did not say whether Mr. Shevardnadze would have new proposals to break the deadlock.

“In contrast to the American style of diplomacy, high-level Russian visits are rare in the Middle East. In recent years, however, the Soviets have worked diligently to improve their standing with conservative Arab states.

“Moscow has established diplomatic relations with Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. It is negotiating to establish links with Bahrain. It has also signed important economic agreements with Jordan, Iraq, and Iran.

“With the military pull-out from Afghanistan almost completed, the Russians are expected soon to upgrade relations with Saudi Arabia.

“But most crucial to the Soviet Union’s hopes of playing a major role in the Middle East is the warming of relations with Israel.

“Soviet pressure was a major factor in the Palestine Liberation Organization’s decision to recognize Israel’s right to exist; and to renounce terrorism.

"But its attempts to help find a compromise in the region could cause further friction with its main ally, Syria." (D. T. 14-2-89).

The following details are taken from a report a week later:

"The Soviet foreign minister met the Israeli foreign minister, Mr. Arens, in Cairo.

"Western diplomats regard the encounter as another sign of increasing warmth between Israel and the Soviet Union. The Kremlin knows that its influence in the region (in the Middle East G. P.) will be limited as long as it has no diplomatic links with Israel" (D. T. 21-2-89).

While in Cairo Mr. Shevardnadze delivered a speech—from which we will take a few extracts—to an audience of Egyptian politicians, diplomats and journalists entitled:

"THE MIDDLE EAST—A CHANCE FOR AN HISTORIC COMPROMISE"

"A compelling hour-long speech in Cairo in which he threw the full weight and prestige of the Soviet Union into an attempt to promote peace"

"He said a decision to declare the Middle East a nuclear and chemical weapon-free zone would be 'helpful', and he backed the idea of establishing demilitarized zones."

"Mr. Shevardnadze said the most important part was to begin an international conference."

For the rest of the year Soviet diplomatic efforts have been low key, but having established diplomatic arrangements with various Arab States, it now has easy access to the important people in these countries.

ISRAEL ITSELF: A DIVIDED GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE

The government and people of Israel are under increased pressure from the PLO's new policy to negotiate with Israel—pressure from world opinion; pressure from America on whose continuing aid they are dependent; continuing pressure from Russia which still holds many Jews; pressure from the impact on daily life from the Intifadeh disturbances.

Israel has a government of national unity which operates to the end of 1990, with Mr. Shamir as the strong Prime Minister controlling

policy. We have already indicated his tough attitude of no compromise. He believes the land is God-given to Israel, and God will see that they have it. (Only a half truth of course; God has turned them out of the land for rejecting Messiah, and will not restore them until they accept Jesus as Messiah under the new covenant).

The other main party to the national unity government is Alignment; They and several other small parties (Labour confederation) make up what we would describe as Labour. Mr. Peres their leader was Prime Minister before Shamir took over. While avoiding direct talks with the PLO (this is illegal) he has for years carried on 'peace' negotiations with surrounding countries. Under the new premises he is even more anxious to start negotiations that would include PLO representatives. His party is willing to negotiate on the basis of some land sacrificed for peace.

WHAT MAY FOLLOW THE ELECTIONS AT THE END OF 1990

When voting comes for new elections at the end of 1990, or earlier if Labour should resign, the voters face a dilemma. Probably by that time there would be a majority who would vote for some negotiations to start, but they would not be willing to give their vote to Labour because Peres and other leaders are not forceful characters, to whom they would entrust negotiations, especially in an international conference. Even Shamir is unhappy over an international conference because it is likely he would get trapped by skilful opponents.

So, if things are essentially unchanged at the end of 1990, the likelihood is that Shamir would be returned with an increasing number of votes to carry on peace negotiations. And he would probably do this with success for Israel.

INCREASING DESIRE FOR PEACE

As time goes on the desire for some kind of peace settlement increases, and a point comes when both sides compromise. The desire for peace is on both sides. We will list the actors for both sides.

The Arab nations

1. Arafat has admitted he only expects a partial settlement, a first step which could be seen as a victory and source of satisfaction to the Palestinians.
2. Their main backer, the Soviet, is very anxious for a settlement and is indifferent to the detail so long as there is one. Gorbachev has no intention of trying to satisfy all the Arab claims, but rather, as with the U.S.A., seeks a yielding on both sides. For the present he has no wish to destroy or harm Israel.
3. The moderate Arab nations are now less hostile, and their rulers want stability for their own security against Moslem intrigue.
4. The Intifadeh is weakening because it has failed to break Israel's morale. The PLO is needing some kind of settlement in the near future to gloss over this failure.
5. The Palestinians have a fear of losing everything if they are too intractable. They fear Israel led by Shamir ignoring world opinion and incorporating the 'Occupied Territories' in to the State of Israel.
6. The miserable lives led by the half million refugees in the camps in the Occupied Territories for 40 years provides strong pressure for a settlement that gives them a better life.
7. Arab-Israeli citizens also want a return to a normal life. Their support for the Intifadeh brought various restrictions from the government—closed schools, curfews, financial and business restrictions.

The Israelis

1. They are weary of the tension that affects everyone, as in Ulster, in maintaining alertness against terrorist attacks and murder.
2. There are the mental, moral disturbances of conscience in soldiers being called upon to contain the Intifadeh violence by using force and shooting at women and children. It is something foreign to their national standards.
3. There is a very strong desire for peace. The nation has not got an aggressive character.
4. There is anxiety for improved relations with Russia for the sake of Jews still there.

5. There is strong pressure from American Jewry, who provide vast sums of money, and are now critical that Israel has not started negotiations.
6. There is a recognition that the successful defence of the country in a future war is doubtful, not only because of new weapons and surprise attack, but because they would have many Arabs in the country who would be 'fifth columnists' if no peace is obtained.
7. There is the crippling annual defence budget called for in the endeavour to be ready for another war.

THE RIVAL CLAIM

Recognizing there is a widespread desire for some settlement, what are the claims from each side over the West Bank? **The Palestinians** claim it for their independent Palestinian State. **The Israelis** aim to keep military control of the region and grant full autonomy to the Arabs there.

How substantial are the claims of each side?

The Arabs

They base their claim on the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, which showed on the Plan map [page 99] that the West Bank was intended for the Arabs. But this plan was not proceeded with. Moreover the Arabs rejected the plan—obviously wanting all Palestine. It is of interest that the Jewish Agency in 1946 also put forward a partition Plan in which this area was allocated to the Arabs. This they had turned down but it shows the mood of the Jews at the time.

The Israelis

Their claim is more substantial.

1. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised to make Palestine a "National Home" for the Jews when the war ended. [At that time Palestine included the land to the East of the river Jordan]. General Allenby advanced from Egypt and during 1917-18 drove the Turk out of Palestine and captured Jerusalem. After the war the League of Nations granted Britain a Mandate over Palestine west of the River Jordan, and including the present 'West Bank'. The British Mandate area was occupied by returning Jews and some Arabs from 1920 to after World War II.

2. In 1967 Israel was attacked from all directions, and at a critical point Jordan joined in with 'a stab in the back', driving westward to take Jerusalem. They were repulsed and driven out of the West Bank. So Israel claims the area by conquest after Jordanian aggression.
3. The Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, approved by the United Nations and internationally recognized, give Israel a strong claim. In pursuing the Shamir Peace Plan Israel has the justification that it is fulfilling its obligations under that 1979 treaty.

The present National Unity government laid down in December 1988 that it would seek to fulfil these treaty requirements. In a tabulation of "Basic Policy Guidelines of the Government's Progress" clauses 9 and 11 read:

Clause 9:

"The Government will work to continue the peace process in keeping with the framework for peace in the Middle East that was agreed upon at Camp David, and to resume negotiations to give full autonomy to the Arab residents in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District." (Samaria includes the West Bank G.P.)

Clause 11:

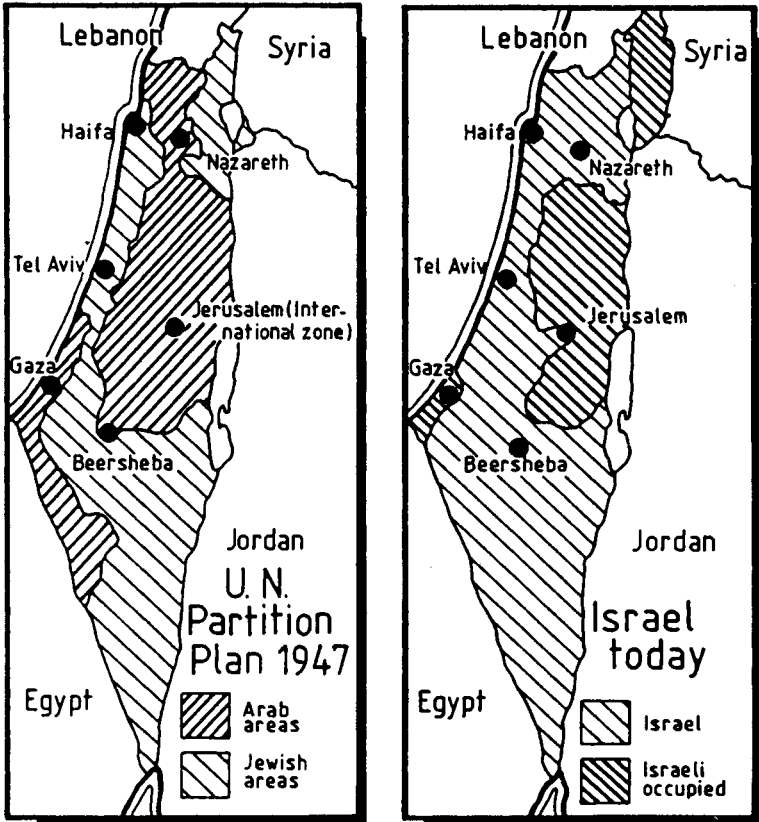
"The Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District will participate in the determination of their future, as stipulated in the Camp David Accords. Israel will encourage representatives of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District to take part in the peace process." (Taken from 'Conservative Friends of Israel' report.)

The Shamir Peace Plan is repeating these intentions.

So when negotiations start Israel has a strong historical and treaty claim to have control of the area. If Shamir is leading Israel's side he will forcefully press these claims, and it is possible that they will be reluctantly agreed to by the Conference, rather than continue the deadlock of his intransigent stand. No doubt Israel would have to yield in some directions, and Shamir would probably do this so long as the claim to control the West Bank is allowed. A U. S. Peace Keeping force including others, would probably be introduced to satisfy both sides; and a 'Marshall Aid' would be needed to get rid of the refugee camps.

WHAT THE BIBLE INDICATES

In all these speculations, useful to help a forward looking view, there must always be added 'If God so wills'. The scripture does point to these suggestions being along the right lines. At the time of the northern invasion Israel is a people "that dwell in the midst of the land". Ezek. 38:12. Looking at the map below, the midst or central part of the land is just where the West Bank is. Whatever other part Israel may give up it could hardly be the West Bank, which she now occupies.



NEWS ABOUT SHEBA

Sheba is part of the Southern Confederacy opposing the Northern invader of the land, as described in Ezekiel 38.

“Sheba and Dedan and the Merchants of Tarshish and all the young lions thereof” (v. 15).

Sheba in the days of Solomon and Tyre is believed to have been in North Yemen near the Gulf of Aden.

Britain withdrew from Aden in 1967 and its deep water port was taken over by the Soviet for a valuable naval base. South Yemen became a Communist State. What the situation would be when Christ returns we have often wondered.

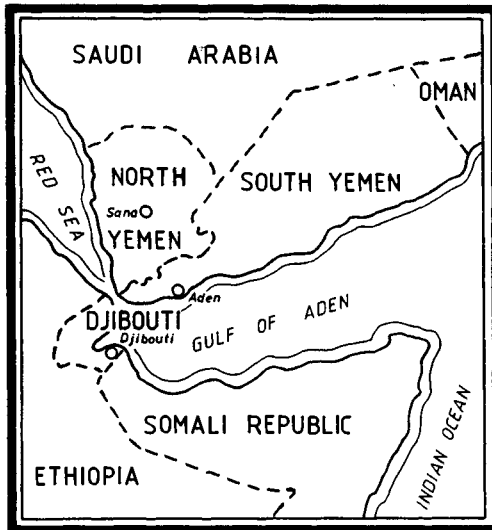
Interesting news was made known under the heading

“PERESTROIKA BRINGS THE TWO YEMENS TOGETHER”
(D. T. 2-12-89).

North and South Yemen have agreed in principle to merge into a single state. “Some experts believe it (the Soviet) is giving a free hand to make changes”.

“NEW CHAPTER IN BRITISH TIE WITH SOUTH YEMEN”

“Mr. Waldegrave signed a memorandum of understanding which, he said, would pave the way for British technical aid.” (D. T. Dec. 1989).



MILESTONES

As the **dramatic** events of the last two months of 1989 swept across Europe, it reminded us of a tsunami—that high sea wave following an earthquake which surges up and over any normal barrier placed to keep the sea where it should be. The phenomenal speed with which events occurred in the “sea” of nations overwhelmed participants and spectators alike. It is probably fair to say that even the diligent student of prophecy found the swiftness of the action breathtaking. It is highly obvious that the Angels are “hastening” events, as Brother Graham expresses it in chapter 2. Christ could come at any hour! Do we really believe this?

The last pieces of the complex jigsaw puzzle of Daniel's Image are being placed in their proper position and those who can see through prophetic eyes can easily project the almost complete picture upon their mental screen. We do not know the exact sequence in which some of the remaining pieces will be placed where they belong, or the time. In His wisdom God has determined that we cannot. But we do know what the completed picture looks like; and that Christ returns for judgement before the Gogian confederacy invades the Holy Land. We should know what we have to do to be found worthy—in God's mercy—of reigning with the **King of kings** in that glorious age very soon to dawn!

Therefore, in the days or hours that are left unto us before our Master returns, let us—urged on by these *Milestones to the Kingdom*—anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see what is required of us and **do** it, before He shuts the door.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments...they have right to the tree of life...and they **shall** see his face; and his name **shall** be in their foreheads...and they **shall** reign for ever and ever.” (Revelation 22:14, 4, 5).