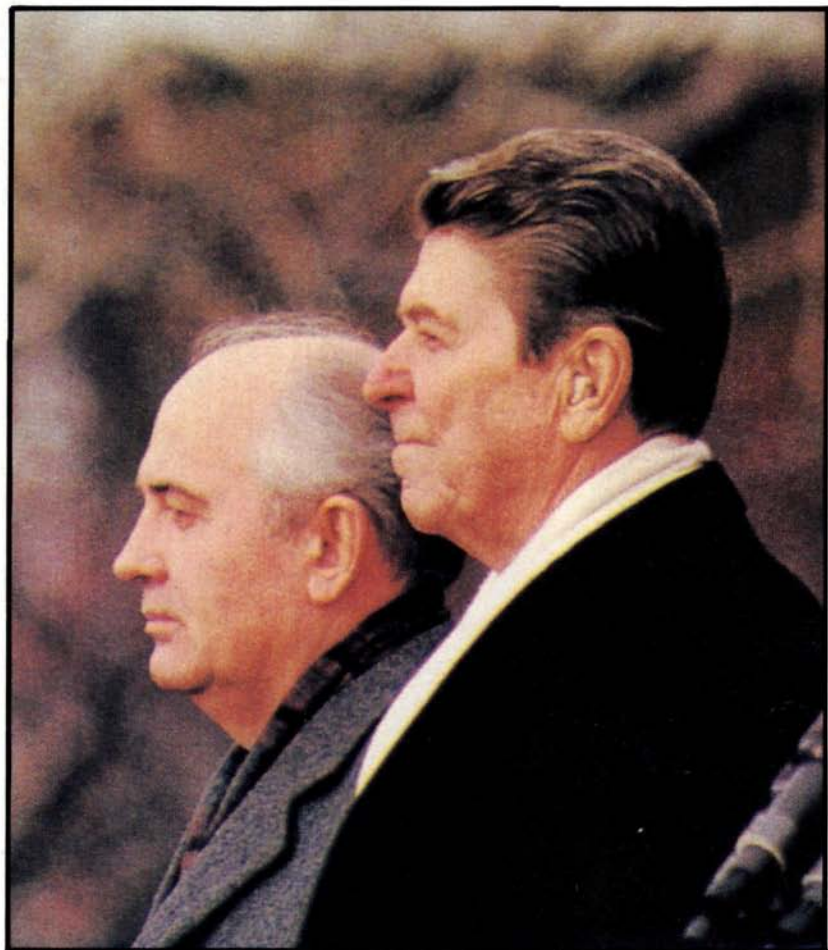


# MILESTONES



***“For when they shall say, Peace and safety;  
then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . .”***

**1 Thess. 5:3**

**G. PEARCE**

# **MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM**

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

**GRAHAM PEARCE**

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# PREFACE

## SURELY A 'MILESTONE YEAR'

It may well be that a few years on, if Christ has not come we shall look back on 1986-88 as a very real milestone in unfolding prophecy. The post-war era that has spanned some forty years, is ending and we are entering a new era which we may call the final phase of preparation for Christ's challenge to the world. Like every previous development, God works slowly and we must be patient; though remembering that at the time appointed events move rapidly.

Assessing 1987 we may summarize six features:

1. The battle of the Soviet for Western Europe is nearly over. The tide now flows strongly toward the Soviet and away from America. The post-war era of America caring for and revitalising sick, war-torn Europe is ending.

2. As we tentatively proposed last year, the pointers are now stronger for a period of 'peace' or detente, for a short period but we know sudden destruction will follow.

3. This year the Soviet has been making diplomatic headway in the Middle East and if a Summit ties up the nuclear treaty for Western Europe, as arranged in Washington, it is expected attention will be focussed on detente for the Middle East.

4. In a wider context, the world status of the Soviet is growing. In the build up of Russian power and influence, she is becoming a dominant world-wide power, with an important voice in diplomatic happenings. Already possessing navel power that could throttle world shipping (See *Milestones 1986* ) and overwhelming conventional strength in Europe, guided by the subtle and skilful hand of Gorbachev, she is leaving behind the caution displayed by the old Politburo leaders.

5. Gorbachev's drive to reform the economic climate in the Soviet and awaken the masses from the dead hand of the old bureaucracy is now underway. It is a gigantic task and he faces not only the opposition of the conservatives but also the lack of response from the workers.

6. It is widely accepted that there has been an ideological change in the outlook of the Soviet leaders. It is shown in the efforts to get rid

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of the threat of nuclear war, the seeking of international detente and a degree of liberalisation on the domestic front. This will become apparent in the extracts in chapter three. Before this we will again have a brief look at prophecy.

Dear brethren and sisters what great matters are coming upon the earth, things of which God spoke in ancient times by His servants the prophets and which we have been led to anticipate through the writings and counsel of our fathers in the faith. We are witnessing the build up of “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” in which the righteous and much needed judgements of God are about to fall upon a godless world. Are we ready for this hour to which so much of the prophetic utterance is directed? Generally speaking the world could not care less about Divine judgements. The unequivocal and bold announcement of impending Armageddon and the universal reign of Christ, is almost solely our message. Even though a large majority recognise the unparalleled nature of the world’s declension, few have any depth of interest and conversion is slow and difficult even though the signs of the times have never been so overwhelmingly obvious.

All the features of a Noachic generation are upon us; corruption and violence fill the earth, and the way of God they know not. No longer will they even voice the law of the Almighty as a guide to personal behaviour or as an influence in the writing of government legislation. Governments are powerless to stop the flood of modern folly. Mass killings by individuals in suburbia have struck a new note of terror into society. The cause is obvious, for even official education principles neglect kindness, love of neighbour and thoughtfulness as they teach the rising generation to live unto themselves. Added to this, the television of the world is full of shootings, murders, crime and guile. Almost no one sees the cause of the trouble and governments have high level urgency discussions about a possible tightening of our gun laws! Always it is the distant symptom that is addressed and not the central cause. The scourge of AIDS frightens all involved in immorality as thousands more die each year and many more thousands are struck with the dreaded virus. The cause is immorality and the most obvious example of Romans 1:26-28. Yet one government after another have been pushed by public opinion into a programme of research on the virus and the education of society (down to 12 year olds!) in the use of “safety” devices. Meanwhile Denmark in a brazen example of defiance of God and the

facts of research, passes legislation to allow the “marriage” of deviants and Amsterdam erects a city monument in their honour!

Oh the wickedness of men!—and the righteousness and necessity of the Father’s judgements.

Several passages in our early readings of the Psalms answer the circumstances of today remarkably and show that the heart of man has always the potential to evil that we see currently breaking out on every side. Consider the following:

“The heathen are sunk down in the pit which they made:  
in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.  
The LORD is known by the judgement which He executeth;  
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands”.  
(Psalms 9:15-16)

“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance,  
will not seek after God:  
God is not in all their thoughts”.  
(Psalm 10:4)

“If the foundations be destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?  
(Psalm 11:3)

“The wicked walk on every side  
when the vilest men are exalted”.  
(Psalm 12:8)

“The fool has said in his heart,  
There is no God.  
They are corrupt,  
they have done abominable works,  
there is none that doeth good”.  
(Psalm 14:1)

Yet all these Psalms are full of security and conquest for the humble, the faithful, the Godly.

“The righteous Yahweh loveth righteousness:  
His countenance doth behold the upright”.  
(Psalm 11:7)

“He shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness.  
Yahweh also will be a refuge for the oppressed,

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a refuge in times of trouble".  
(Psalm 9:8-9)

Dear fellow Christadelphians, let us resist the influence to conform with a passing world. Let us draw our families and the lonely and fatherless into our homes and build ourselves up in our most holy faith. Let us make the time-honoured practice of family daily readings around the meal table a practical reality. Fathers and husbands lead in these things, for, as head of the family, the onus of responsibility rests upon us. Mothers and wives cooperate in these arrangements. Maintain principle by both nurture (love, warmth) and admonition (discipline, the rod of correction) that our families may be strong and washed from the insidious deception that is all about them. Pray together in our families, fervently and earnestly and cause our little ones and our teenagers to know the reality of the coming Kingdom of God.

These are wonderful years of opportunity in a remarkable era. May our Father be with us in all His manifold ways and may this little work be a helpful stimulus for us to know the hour of our redemption.

B. N. Luke,  
Secretary,  
Christadelphian Scripture Study Service

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# Chapter 1: PROPHECY AWAITING FULFILMENT

It will be useful to recapitulate on the events that lie ahead in the prophetic programme, so that we have some guidance when pondering the pattern of today's unfolding events. We must warn ourselves against the attitude of being satisfied with seeing prophecy being fulfilled as an end in itself. As we have often said, while much is yet to happen before Christ challenges the nations, the vital question for us is, when will we personally stand in His presence for judgement. He returns unseen by the world, and this hidden return is likely to be near the beginning rather than the end of this period of preparation of the nations for their conflict with Christ.

Christ's challenge of the nations is the epoch of Divine retribution on the 'christian' nations of Europe for their hatred and persecution of the Jews and saints over the long centuries; including a final phase of hatred and persecution that will develop in the future (Rev. 16:21, 19:19). For the carrying out of the judgements the nations have to be brought into their appointed positions.

Daniel chapters 2 and 7 set this scene. The great Image of chapter 2 relates to the "latter" days (verse 28). The Image and its metals show the nations of Europe and the Middle East bound together as a mighty confederacy, to be broken by the Stone Power, "cut out of the mountain without hands". The Image stands on iron-clay feet and toes; so its standing ground is Europe.

Daniel chapter 7 describes the ill-treatment of the saints over the many centuries by the fourth beast and its special horn with eyes and mouth, that is, the Roman power and its Papal horn. At the time of its judgements, when the saints take the kingdom, the military power is represented by brazen feet stamping the residue; and the Papal horn is taking the lead against Christ, speaking "great words" (v. 11). From these details we deduce that all Europe must be confederated together to make up the fourth beast. The military power is brazen, pointing to the eastern Grecian part of the empire, centred in Constantinople. Russia will hold this position when fully developed. At this time 'christian'

## 10—PROPHECY AWAITING FULFILMENT

religion will hold sway, with the Pope as head. Together the Papal and Russian heads will represent the Babylonish head of the great Image of chapter 2—the directing and ruling power over the nations of Europe.

The traditional characteristics of both Russia and the Papacy are Babylonish—the absolute power holding nations in subjection, and hostile to the God of Israel and His people. This is before us in Isaiah chapter 14. The time of the chapter is Israel's exaltation (verses 1-3); and the 'proverb' is taken up against the king of Babylon: "How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" His oppression is described: "He who smote the people with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet". And later: "Is this the man that made the world to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" This is the despot called Lucifer, son of the morning, who says in his heart he will establish his throne in Jerusalem, and be like the Most High (verses 12-14).

This picture in Isaiah is briefly referred to in Daniel's description of the Time of the End, when the king of the North plants "the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain" and comes to his end (Daniel 11:46).

Another aspect of the same crisis is presented in Ezekiel chapter 38. The countries named, taking into account their migrations after Ezekiel's time, cover West and East Europe and various countries of the Middle East. Against this vast confederacy invading the land of Israel, God acts:

"My fury shall come up in my face. For in the jealousy and fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ...I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood...and overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD, (Yahweh)".

Such are the tremendous events of this future Day of the LORD, and we watch current events shaping affairs to the end God has determined. The climax is summed up in one word in the Revelation: "Armageddon"! "And he gathered them into a place called in the Hebrew

tongue Armageddon". 'A Heap of sheaves in the valley of threshing' is the meaning Bro. Thomas gives to this word.

It is after this terrific introduction of Christ and his saints to the world that the Papal voice continues to speak 'great words'; and after rejecting the command of Christ in the gospel call, "Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement (on Babylon GP) is come" (Rev. 14:6,7), the Western European nations join together in a final aggressive force in support of papal 'christianity', as described in Revelation chapters 17:14, 19:19. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lord, and King of kings".

Our present position in the preparation for the Day of the LORD is that we already see Europe moving toward integration; we see the coming together of the Papal and Russian powers; and the developing of a king of the north and a king of the south with respect to the land of Israel, as required by Daniel's details of the Time of the End.

## Chapter 2: THE UNITING OF EAST AND WEST EUROPE

We have been saying for some forty years that the first major item in the final preparation for Christ's intervention in world affairs is the unifying of Europe. Forty years ago, after World War II, this looked extremely unlikely. There was a strong East-West division, based on the fears of western Europe, of the U.S.A., and of the Pope, regarding Communism and the totalitarian rule in Russia and the eastern European countries. It has taken a process of some 25 years for this situation to be substantially reversed; and over the years we have traced the steps that have brought this about. Taking 1963 as a starting point, in that year De Gaulle of France having withdrawn from the NATO military alliance, visited Moscow and spoke of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. In the same year Pope John 23 'opened a window' in the direction of Communism by declaring in his encyclical *Peace on Earth* that practical cooperation with Communists was permissible. At the start of the 1970s West Germany started moving in the same direction. Chancellor Brandt concluded a treaty of friendship with Moscow in 1970 and with East Germany in 1973. The next chancellor, Herr Schmidt, set in motion trade cooperation and agreements; and we had the detente era of the 1970s. There was a great set-back in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and in the same year the placing of a new type of nuclear missile, the SS20, on the Soviet border facing West Germany. This nuclear threat was countered by Western Europe reluctantly agreeing to the United States placing Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in West Germany and England. Such was the state of confrontation when Gorbachev came on the scene in 1985; though the flow of trade between East and West Europe had continued to bind together the industrialists and people on both sides. One may remember the insistence of West Europe to go ahead with the gas line from Siberia in defiance of Reagan's strong pressure that the project should be abandoned.

It has recently become apparent that during this confrontation period the Soviet was forced to rethink its attitude and behaviour, especially towards West Europe. This is dealt with in chapter three. While debate was going on among the Soviet leaders, civil and military, God had

been preparing a man to bring about important changes. We can look back on Gorbachev's brief three years' activity and appreciate what has been accomplished. According to Soviet plan, the nuclear threat across the East-West border is about to be greatly reduced; thus taking away the genuine fear hanging over people's lives. Also the offers of stability and cooperation by Gorbachev have developed this year a growing confidence and trust by the people of West Germany in Gorbachev. And on the other hand, they are increasingly sceptical that the U.S.A. would come to their rescue in an armed struggle. Further, they are expecting the withdrawal of some American troops from Europe to lessen the annual cost of \$170 billion that America's military presence costs them—a matter of real interest in view of their vast trade deficit.

Faced with the enormous superiority of Soviet conventional arms, West Europe has no desire to provoke war and hostility, and to the rising generation to go along with the Soviet seems a sensible path. Thus Gorbachev has won the Soviet 'battle' for West Europe by 'peace'. In chapter four there is a fuller consideration of the events of 1987. But before moving to this, it will be helpful to look at the changes in Soviet thinking, as various writers have presented the matter. This background will throw light on the likely future actions of the Soviet.

## Chapter 3: BE THOU PREPARED AND PREPARE THYSELF.

It is the phase that Gog is to prepare himself that holds our immediate attention. The thought arises, are we now entering the phase where this preparation takes place—the casting off of the dead hand of the leadership of the old men; the radical reforming of industry and the economy; the transforming of the morale of the masses; so that in the sum total there will be a dominant, virile nation able to sweep all before it, as did Alexander of Greece, and other great conquerors in history? “Like a whirlwind...and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land” is Daniel’s description.

Whether this reflection is correct or not, we have had this year voices from several directions saying that the Soviet is undergoing major changes that have been under debate for several years, and with the approval of the Central Committee, are finding expression in the dynamic Gorbachev. We propose to quote extensively from five articles—written in different countries and with different points of view, but all believing that the Soviet is about to undergo quite major changes that should lead to a more powerful nation.

Three features run through the extracts; first, the state of the economy is appalling and demands great internal changes; secondly, cooperation rather than confrontation with West Europe and other regions is necessary to help forward the revitalising of the economy; and thirdly, removing the threat of nuclear war from Europe helps their military position, and also improves their peaceful image in both Western Europe and world-wide.

### “GORBACHEV’S SPEECH: A MAJOR CHANGE OF SOVIET IDEOLOGY”

Guardian Weekly 1-3-87

This article is reporting a speech by Gorbachev in February to the International Peace Forum. Gorbachev gave details of a major shift in Soviet foreign policy, a change which had come about after long debate

by foreign policy and military leaders. Whether the change is genuine, or is only part of a long-term deception by the Soviet, it probably indicates their outlook for the next few years. With Biblical knowledge, we have no doubt about Russian aggression in the future.

The essence of the reported shift in foreign policy is the giving up of Lenin's basic rule, that war is only the continuation of State policy by other means. Gorbachev said the Soviet had decided to seek world cooperation and a purely defensive military posture. The major drive of their propaganda is to eliminate nuclear war, which would harm the Soviet as much as their opponents.

Here are a number of actual quotations from Gorbachev's speech, as reported in this article:

"We do not know the ultimate truth—our national reconstruction is an invitation to any social system to compete with socialism peacefully. We will be able to prove in practice that such competition benefits universal progress and world peace...Our desire to make our country better will hurt none, with the world only gaining from this".

Gorbachev spoke of a long debate within the Soviet leadership:

"Before we saw things as they are, and became convinced that new approaches and methods are required for resolving international problems in today's complex and contradictory world, a world at the crossroads...We came to conclusions that made us review something that once seemed automatic, since, after Hiroshima, war, at least world war, ceased to be a continuation of state policy by other means...The nuclear powers must step out from the nuclear shadow, and enter a nuclear-free world, thus ending the alienation of politics from the general human norms of ethics".

Gorbachev went on to say:

"This is not a one-off adjustment of position, but a new methodology for international affairs; military doctrines must be purely of a defensive nature".

Gorbachev gave a number of illustrations of this debate that had been going on for several years. He quoted from an article by a senior foreign policy aide:

"In the nuclear age, war can no longer be considered as a means of achieving political objectives...There are no political objectives that justify the use of means that could lead to nuclear war".



Of greatest interest was his evidence that the military command had also been debating the matter in pamphlets and articles. There is a quotation from a pamphlet by Marshal Ustinov, who until recently was Soviet defence minister:

“to count on victory in the arms race and in nuclear war is madness...there can be no such thing as a limited nuclear war”.

The writer of this *Guardian Weekly* article concludes:

“A consensus has been achieved within the Soviet government that not only is nuclear war unthinkable, but that the very idea of war as a continuation of politics by other means must be rethought”.

A further conclusion is that Gorbachev’s ‘offers’ to the West have not been just his own policy, but that he has wide support from the Soviet leadership.

### **“GLASNOST MELTS THE ICE OF FORTY YEARS’ COLD WAR” (G.W. 10-5-87)**

The following are some extracts from an article by Jonathan Steele.

“The image of glasnost—the first Russian word to become a Western household word—is transforming the notion of a Soviet threat on which the Cold War has always rested. As Admiral Sir James Eberle, director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, puts it, ‘We are at an historical turning point as important as the one which led to the overplayed containment strategy that created the confrontation of the last thirty years.’”

“Certainly the road to Moscow is being more heavily travelled nowadays by Western foreign policy analysts, Kremlinologists, and politicians, than at any time in Soviet history, as a result of a new willingness to argue and a new Western willingness to find out. Mrs. Thatcher’s visit was only one of a host of trips by one-time sceptics of both Left and Right.”

“Yet with the exception of the ultra-sceptical French, perceptions about what is happening inside the Soviet Union, as opposed to what the West should do about it, are remarkably uniform. Gorbachev has already gone further in changing Russia than Krushchev did, most professional analysts and politicians agree”.

The writer then quotes what various leaders have said. Here are three quotations:

" 'He has set off a mass kind of political process, introducing politics into the system for the first time', says Sir Michael Howard, professor of modern history at Oxford. 'He's more skilful than Krushchev. He's not a one-man band. He's prepared his ground better. He represents a whole generation.' "

"Werner Holzer, editor of the centre-left daily newspaper, Frankfurter Rundschau, describes Gorbachev as a man taking great risks. 'He's attacking the privileges of the nomenklatura, the ruling elite. His reform proposals go against the ideological principles of monopoly of party power, and he's putting more emphasis on private production' ".

"West Germany's Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, agrees that while faster economic growth and technological progress are Gorbachev's main objectives, he needs people who are motivated to work, and have creative ability. This calls for an easier flow of information, constructive criticism, and greater legal consistency. Bringing Sakharov out of exile was not only a signal to the West. It was first and foremost a signal to the Russian people".

"Most analysts express considerable caution about how the reform process will develop, and how fast it will go".

## **"ARMS CONTROL: WHO'S PUSHING WHO?"**

Daily Telegraph 16-4-87

The purpose of this article was to outline the variety of topics being currently discussed—chemical weapons ban; reduction of conventional arms; Geneva talks on strategic weapons; medium and short-range nuclear weapons; British and French submarine-launched missiles; and space weapons. As an introduction to the article, the writer emphasised Gorbachev's determination to get rid of the nuclear threat in Europe. Here is part of the introduction:

"The Soviet leader marked out his position 14 months ago when he called for a world free from nuclear weapons by the end of the century. Reykjavik last October confirmed them. The rest has been tactics...Gorbachev has been softening up the West, notably the West Europeans, with a step-by-step approach. Let the West raise one objection and he allows it to rest for a while before offering something better. As his proposals sink into the rather confused perceptions of the public on arms control, he wins support".

"Why does Gorbachev, leader of a Great Power that has traditionally aimed for parity with its Western opponents, campaign for a goal that

would probably leave the Soviet Union, with a GNP less than half Japan's, outside the super Power league? One answer is that he knows the Soviet Union cannot win the technological side of the arms race. Even attempting to keep up is prohibitively expensive for a country that lags a decade behind the West, and whose public, given the choice, would opt for private cars rather than more squadrons of tanks."

"Another is that one of his primary goals is a nuclear-free Europe. Among the few surprises experienced by Sir Geoffrey Howe during Mrs. Thatcher's trip to Moscow was to find that even sophisticated, well-travelled Russians believe they are under threat from the West, even in Central Europe. Remove the weapons, let the Americans go home, and we could all be Europeans together, friendly and peaceful, runs the Gorbachev line".

"It is such arguments and counter-arguments that have shaped the twisting but always accelerating course of arms control dialogue since Gorbachev came to power in 1985. It is well to keep it in mind when looking at the positions taken and what has been achieved".

Ezekiel chapter 38 is an important chapter on prophecy relating to our time. We have seen being fulfilled with our own eyes the words "the desolate places that are now inhabited" etc. But there are several phrases in the chapter the meaning of which is not easy to assess. We are not now thinking of how the peace and "at rest" situation will come, but the earlier phases about Gog: verse 4—"I will turn thee back, and put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth..."; Verse 7—"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee..."; verse 8—"After many days thou shalt be visited...". We ponder these words and wonder how they will be, or are being fulfilled. It is clear that it is God through His angels behind the scenes who is the controller of what Russia does: "I will bring thee against My land" (v. 16).

Andre Fontaine, *Le Monde* 15-3-87.

Andre Fontaine is the senior Editor of the important and respected *Le Monde*, which contributes a section to the *Guardian Weekly*. The French point of view is more sceptical of Soviet good will. The following is the main part of his article.

"We would not be asking all these questions if we only took the trouble to read the main reports and speeches he has recently been making. However irreverent it may seem to some, these texts reveal

him as a man who relates to communism the way John Paul II relates to Christianity—that is, a believer firmly determined to bend every ounce of his energy, which is considerable, to ridding communism of all dross that has adulterated its purity.

"Gorbachev's gospel is that of Lenin, which he never tires of referring to—exaltation of the 'new man' who will emerge when the bolshevist ideal is attained. Even addressing the recent Peace Forum in Moscow, he left no illusions on that score: 'Our successes and failures will be measured by the yardstick of socialism and no other,' he emphasised.

"Whatever people may have said, he is not trying to fool us, to make us believe he has converted to Western-style democracy. He is a Leninist, and a Leninist he will remain. The kind of democracy he is championing 'has nothing to do with slack discipline, irresponsibility and anarchy'. He is only trying to put more efficiency and more morality—that word is continually on his lips, and rightly so—into the system for which he has inherited responsibility and which it is quite clear he considers to be fairer and more effective than ours.

"Will his message be heard? Will not the inertia, that Lenin in his day said was the most powerful of all forces, the corruption and careerism, in short human nature, get the better of his reforming zeal? But that is another question, and the answer to it will not be known too soon...

"What are causing problems for us now, on the other hand, are the initiatives that Gorbachev is taking in the diplomatic sphere. Here again, things turn out to be less mysterious than some people say or believe, when we take a closer look. The Secretary General has been repeating tirelessly: 'The USSR's foreign policy is determined by its domestic policy!' Which means that foreign policy adapts to domestic needs.

"Now those needs are enormous. Everything has to be taken in hand one way or another—the economy, the technology gap, education, the outlook of Soviet youth, national minorities, Poland, Mozambique, Afghanistan. Will power intellectual capital and hard cash must be invested in all fields. An impossible task in a climate of international tension and an arms race where most creative thinking and capital must be invested in works of death. It is a task which very often requires the West's cooperation. Which accounts for the recent invitation to set up joint ventures with Western firms...

"So, for some time, the policy of reconstruction at home has to go in step with a policy of all-round detente abroad. To begin with, it presupposes giving USSR's public image a face-lift. Which explains the concessions made to world opinion on human rights and the key role played by Andrei Sakharov, with every victory of his over the Soviet Communist Party's oppressive set-up in the end going down in the propaganda war as a point in favour of the Party. But this is only one aspect of the matter. Gorbachev is simultaneously wooing China, the United States, Egypt, Israel, France and West Germany. He seems to be looking for a way out of Afghanistan. Above all, he has put behind him for good his predecessor's hard-nosed attitude on arms questions".

## **"THE DELICATE DANCE OF THE RUSSIAN BEAR AND THE OUT-MANOEUVRING OF AMERICA."**

The Weekend Australian, August 22-23, 1987



After years of viewing its neighbours with suspicion and, frequently, animosity, the Soviet Union has adopted a startlingly different foreign policy. Brian Boswell in London looks at the effects of the change on both the Soviet Union and on the Western alliance countries.

It is useful to have the wider view as seen from Australia, so much more remote from Russia than Europe is. This article reveals the world-wide diplomatic pressures the Soviet is now exerting, and outlines the efficient organisation Gorbachev has built up for speedy action, as opportunity occurs.

"Soviet leadership' Soviet chief of staff, Marshal Akhromeyev, said, 'is now evaluating the situation in the world in a different light...it is counting on the goodwill and correct understanding by countries of

the Soviet position. And not just on understanding, but on corresponding political, and perhaps military reaction”.

“Last November when the Reykjavik talks broke down, the Soviet leader, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, was at the very toughest part of his restructuring campaign: he had opposition within the Kremlin and distrust about his intentions in the rest of the world.

“Both factors still apply. But in one of the most spectacularly successful applications of his ‘softly, softly’ policy, Mr. Gorbachev in the past nine months has managed to push the Soviet Union to parts of the world that other Soviet leaders could not reach.

“By quietly campaigning for a Middle East peace conference on the problem of the Palestinians, he has wooed formerly strong pro-Western supporters in the region.

“Last week the usually authoritative *Jane’s Defence Weekly* in London revealed that King Hussein of Jordan was negotiating a deal to buy Soviet Mig 29 Fulcrum fighters, and that a deal may already have been concluded. This must be seen as a stunning blow to the United States, which has always regarded Jordan as ‘one of ours’ - but illustrates just how Mr. Gorbachev’s new team has been able to move in and capitalise on the West’s mistakes.”

The writer then itemises the quiet diplomatic progress by Russia in most of the Middle East countries—Israel, Cyprus, the Gulf, Iran, Kuwait, Egypt and Syria; also Asia, China and the Philippines are mentioned.

“The main feature of all the events in Soviet foreign policy during the past nine months has been its ability to react quickly to changing situations. Once this was the province of Washington. Now Moscow seems to have settled into it far more effectively.”

“But since his (Gromyko’s) negative presence has been removed from the job, tactics have been placed in the hands of academic and diplomatic specialists, and decisions left to Mr. Gorbachev...

“Since mid-July it has been Mr. Primakov who has suddenly appeared as the chief ideological spokesman on Soviet-US affairs, arms control and the Soviet defence posture, lessening the military presence of Marshal Akhromeyev and broadening the perception of the Gorbachev regime as more open than any that has gone before it.

“This is already having an effect in Western Europe. Polls among young voters recently across the whole of the European community

have tended to show they believe Mr. Gorbachev personally is responsible for the latest advanced proposals on nuclear weapon cuts.

"Mr. Gorbachev is now said to hand down assignments frequently to planning staff on the academic institutes and order swift reports. In return, the academies also raise matters directly with him through Mr. Primakov or Mr. Yakovlev, when they see an opportunity they feel should be seized".

## **"SOFTLY, SOFTLY, APPROACH BY GORBACHEV IN ASIA"**

Xan Smiley in Moscow, June 1987.

The article is interesting as it shows Mr. Gorbachev's power extends to a region some 2,000 miles from Moscow. The Softly, Softly title seems rather a misnomer!

"Locals say that food supplies have improved since Mr. Koblin, 60, Mr. Gorbachev's protege, took over from Mr. Kunayev, 75.

"The new man has closed down scores of special shops, where some 30,000 people had privileged access to food, and has promised a crash programme to reduce the appalling house shortage, which had meant apartments, country dachas and small hotels and hunting lodges, all commandeered by Mr. Kunayer's party fat cats, along with a special 'central committee hotel', have been taken back and reallocated.

"Hundreds of corrupt officials have been sacked, and Mr. Gorbachev's slogans of gradual 'democratisation' on the factories, and 'openness' in the press are slowly being put into practice."

## **SUMMARY**

Summarising the significant items in these extracts:

1. When Gorbachev took over the leadership, he was faced with domestic stagnation and cold war stalemate, and he realised an arms race with the West was a technical war which Russia did not have the resources to win.
2. There had been a shift in Soviet thinking and policy, in order to improve their position. One does not have to see this as other than a temporary expedient.

3. There is no doubt that Gorbachev remains a nationalist Russian and Leninist.
4. Current foreign policy is being adapted to domestic needs.
5. The 'Cold War' proved harmful to Soviet interests, and detente is a better policy. Hence the changed tactics.
6. It would appear that Gorbachev's drive for economic reform at home, and peaceful cooperation abroad, has a fairly strong support from the Soviet leadership. But there are strong conservative reactions because of personal loss.
7. The Soviet people fear a nuclear war, and there is a strong desire to remove the nuclear war threat in Europe. This wins Western European support and cooperation.
8. Gorbachev finds time to carry out world-wide diplomatic moves in support of his detente policy, winning wide support and an enhanced status for the Soviet Union.

All these remarkable happenings are a heart-warming confirmation of our prophetic expectations and should inspire us to a greater witness of the impending intervention of God and the establishment of His glorious Kingdom over all the earth. Outstanding movements are happening in Europe and a brilliant Russian leader is now twice as popular and trusted in that continent as the President of the United States of America!

"...and be thou a guard unto them" (Ezek. 38:7).



## Chapter 4: GORBACHEV'S SUCCESS AT HOME AND IN W. EUROPE

The previous chapter was wide-ranging and provides a useful background to present and future events. This chapter is specific to events of 1987, chiefly as they bear on Western Europe moving towards the Soviet and away from America, and on Gorbachev's progress on his domestic front.

### ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT

Milestones 1986 detailed Gorbachev's moves in removing from power a variety of leading figures of the old guard; and his exhortations to the masses to awaken from their lethargy. In 1987 he has strengthened his base considerably, and as would be expected aroused opposition.

We will all have heard of the apathy among the masses in Russia. The following rather amusing illustration drives home the point:

"Most Russians like strawberries. Last week a large consignment arrived at Moscow airport from the warm south, but nobody collected them, and most rotted. All told, a third of all Soviet vegetables are said to rot because nobody bothers to get them to the shops in time. The entire grain deficit, which costs the Soviet Union several billion dollars every year, would be wiped out if drivers took the trouble to stop grain spilling or blowing off lorries.

"It is not just the incompetent sloppiness of the system and the comic bureaucracy that has to be seen to be believed. It is the apathy and—most ironic in a state where the people are said to own everything—the total lack of civic pride in public places and property...the dilapidation is astonishing—crumbling from stairways, cracked windows, potholes and kerbless pavements, masonry falling off unpainted walls—and nobody cares..."

It is this state of things Gorbachev seeks to transform by his 'Reconstruction' and 'Detente'. This year he set out to win the backing of the vast Soviet leadership for his detailed plans. Three occasions mark his progress. The first was in January at a plenary meeting of the central committee of the Soviet Communist party:

"Mr. Gorbachev has not yet been able to assert untrammelled personal control over the top ruling body of the Soviet party. But an important plenary meeting of the central committee ended yesterday with promotions for people known to be close to him" (D.T. 29-1-87).

The editorial a few days later with the heading "His Greatest Gamble", opened with these words:

"After months of delay which can only be devoted to minute preparation, Mikhail Gorbachev last week laid before his Central Committee a further indictment of the Brezhnev era, its stagnation and corruption. He accompanied his charges with the most radical proposals he had made so far to ensure that stagnation and corruption do not again come to symbolise the Soviet system".

The second occasion was in May, when the West German youth Mathias Rust flew into Moscow and landed at the Kremlin. The disgrace this brought on the military establishment for their lack of alertness was used by Gorbachev to make important changes in the military political leadership. "Soviet defence shake-up after plane lands at Red Square" was the heading. Gorbachev dismissed the Defense Minister, and replaced him by one of his supporters, thus getting a better grip on the military establishment.

The chief occasion of the year was in June when the Supreme Soviet gave its official acceptance of Gorbachev's reforms:

"Mr. Gorbachev promoted several key supporters to the Kremlin ruling Politburo yesterday, and won support of his party's Central Committee for one of the most ambitious reform programmes ever put forward in the Soviet Union" (D.T. 26-6-87).

After this reform programme had been debated, it was given official approval:

#### **"GORBACHEV'S REFORMS GIVEN SEAL OF APPROVAL"**

"The Supreme Soviet, the rubber stamp Soviet parliament, set the seal on Gorbachev's success in forcing his radical reform on his party by unanimously making them a New Law on State Enterprises".

"The law, which trims the power of central bureaucrats and gives greater independence to factories and their managers, comes into effect next January. The Supreme Soviet also passed laws to improve the rights of the individual and another to widen the tentative 'democratisation' process" (D.T. 1-7-87).

As January 1988 approaches panic is gripping factory managers, who have no idea how to run a factory efficiently, having in the past left everything to the bureaucrats in Moscow. Correspondents expect a state of chaos if the Law is really implemented.

## SUCCESS IN WESTERN EUROPE

We will not detail the many steps taken by Gorbachev in 1987, adding to the variety of offers he made in 1986. The essence of the various offers and counter objections was to lead America and Western Europe to what he considered a satisfactory INF Treaty (Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty). This was signed in Washington in early December. It is an agreement to abolish nuclear weapons and launchers in the 300-600 km. range ('short range' SLINF) and the 600-3,000 km. range ('Medium range' LRINF). This abolishing of nuclear land based weapons in these two classes is called 'double-zero' \*.

Why is this a success for Gorbachev? One aspect of his success is briefly expressed thus:

"The consistent theme in Gorbachev's diplomacy is to get American nuclear weapons out of Europe. In this he is striking at the central premise of the Atlantic alliance—America's nuclear umbrella—and persuading with greater subtlety a goal the Soviets have held for 40 Years".

Let us give a little more explanation of this. For many years Nato has held the Soviet at bay by its doctrine of 'Flexible Response'. The Soviet has a massive superiority in conventional weapons, with which it could easily over-run western Europe. It has been held in check by the Nato plan to arrest the conventional arms advance into Western Europe by using nuclear weapons in increasing power and intensity, until the Soviet would give up rather than suffer more damage. This especially became the situation in 1983 when the U.S. installed Cruise and Pershing II missiles in West Germany and Britain. These are capable of accurately reaching any target in Russia. Soviet fears became very real. But with such nuclear weapons about to be removed, the Soviet is in a much more secure position; and able to blackmail Western Europe with its great conventional advantage. This superiority has been summarised thus:

"They have more men on the ground and many more men in reserve close at hand and not, like America's, far away. Their tactical airforce

outnumbers NATO's by two to one. Their artillery is more powerful by the same factor. Above all, their tank fleet, still the best crude index of offensive potential, is three times as large, and the bulk of it is concentrated in a cutting wedge opposite the most 'tankable' terrain in the central region". (D.T. Sept. 1987)

## **ALLIED FEARS**

NATO's leaders and others are well aware of how they have been outmanoeuvred by Gorbachev, and the greater risks they will now face. Here are some newspaper headlines expressing these fears as events developed during the year:

G.W. April 12, "The danger of the zero option"

D.T. April 17, "Gorbachev arms offers leaves NATO boxed in"

G.W. April 26, "The stark question for Europe"

G.W. May 10, "NATO fears 'slippery slope' to denuclearisation"

G.W. May 17, "Nuclear-free Europe a 'war risk'"

D.T. July 30, "The naked truth Europe must face"

D.T. Aug. 28, "Why 'double zero' equals double trouble"

D.T. Sept. 16, "NATO chief says INF pact will increase war risk"

D.T. Sept. 22, "The tank trap NATO must now avoid".

In these articles it is apparent that fears run deeper than the changed balance of the weaponry on each side. It is the fear that America may forsake Western Europe. American Cruise and Pershing II missiles under American control in Europe were a guarantee that America was committed to the defence of Europe. Remove these missiles and Western Europe feels much less certain of American support in a crisis. And this fear is reinforced by discussion going on in the U.S. regarding a likely reduction of financial and manpower support in the foreseeable future. The vast American national debt demands such action.

## **WHY THE REJOICING?**

In view of the advantage the Soviet has gained by this INF treaty, why, one may well ask, is there such general enthusiasm for the signing of the Treaty? It arises mainly from the pressure of public opinion, which expresses the people's feelings, not military prudence. The people of western Europe feel great relief that they will not be under continual

threat from the Soviet SS-20s facing them on the nearby border. Moreover, Gorbachev this year has managed to win their confidence, and the majority of ordinary people prefer to trust Gorbachev rather than Reagan.

The American people are also in favour. They have no great regard for Western Europe:

"The United States will not commit suicide for its allies. To a wide sector of public opinion in the US, 'double-zero' seems to be a step back from the suicidal brink. It appears differently to Europeans" (D.T. 28-8-87)

Then there is President Reagan. He is nearing the end of his presidency, and is most anxious to cover his various blunders by signing the 'peace' treaty, and go down in history as a peacemaker.

As we said at the beginning of this Milestones, it appears that Gorbachev is now moving to a peaceful take-over of Western Europe, and may expect to get the technical cooperation he needs. As this continues there will be a growing together of the Western and Eastern Europe. So God works slowly but surely.

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**\* Classification of Nuclear Weapons**

1. Strategic- long range for use, say, America to Soviet.
2. Intermediate- to be used for "flexible response", covered by I.N.F. Treaty.
3. Short range- same as #2.
4. Battlefield.

# **Chapter 5:**

## **WEST GERMANY AND THE SOVIET**

### **GERMANY AND THE PROPHETIC RECORD**

Germany is before us in two Biblical situations at the time Christ is setting up the Kingdom. The one is in the Revelation and the other in Ezekiel.

The situation in Revelation is fairly clear to those who are acquainted with the traditional interpretation of the book. After Armageddon and the pouring out of the 7th vial in chapter 16, the next three chapters deal with the judgement of the Great Babylon system. It is first presented in chapter 17 as a harlot on a beast, and then in chapter 18 as the destruction of the rich and wicked city Babylon. In chapter 17 there is a parenthesis from verse 7 to verse 14, explaining the history of the beast on which the harlot is sitting. In this parenthesis the final act of the beast is the warfare of its ten horns with Christ and the saints; and “the Lamb shall overcome them” (v.14).

### **THE BEAST AND THE TEN HORNS**

The beast and its ten horns that carries the harlot represents Western Europe supporting the papacy in the final conflict. This beast with ten horns first appears in chapter 13, where the ten horns are crowned. This takes us back to the 8th century when the barbarians who had invaded the West established independent kingdoms, and espoused ‘christianity’. At this time Pepin and then Charlemagne gave support to the Pope when he had rebelled against Constantinople. Charlemagne was the nominal head of these ten horn kingdoms. His headquarters was Aachen (now known as Aix-la-Chapelle), which is in Western Germany. We would expect the final manifestation of this beast in the future to be, in general terms, a replica of the Charlemagne situation—The Pope, the horn kingdoms, and Germany as the mouth, or military authority of the beast.

In Revelation 16:13, we have frog-like spirits going forth from the mouths of dragon, beast and false prophet. This belongs to the present time and the near future. So to some degree the beast already exists in

the Common Market, with Germany becoming the leading element. But the full development is still in the future after Armageddon. It will be the very last phase of opposition to Christ. Germany will take the lead in rallying the western European nations to support the Papacy.

The Revelation makes only a brief reference to the first great conflict with Christ. It is in the words: "He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon", the language indicating the conflict is in the land of Israel. Beyond this, the Revelation does not go into detail, because it is not part of the main theme of the book; and because it has already been fully described in the nation of Israel's part of the Bible, by the prophets.

## MAGOG IS GERMANY

We look again at Ezekiel chapter 38, to another phrase that is worthy of our thoughtful attention—"Gog of the land of Magog"...Verse 2 reads:

"Son of man, set thy face against Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" (R.V. and most versions).

Rosh is Russia (Gesenius); Meshech is Muscovy; Tubal is Tobolski - Siberia. But what of Magog? Josephus says the Magogi are the Scythae of the Greeks; and Diodorus Siculus (B.C. 100) says the Scythae spread as far westward as the Baltic and Gaul. 'From the Baltic to Gaul' covers the area of Germany. (For further information see *Elpis Israel* chapter 5 in Part three).

Notice that Magog has a different relationship with Gog compared with Meshech and Tubal. Gog is prince, or ruler, of these two, but the relation with Magog is not fully defined—"Gog of the land of Magog". It may indicate that they of the land of Magog are associated with Gog, confederated rather than fully in subjection. In another setting, in the symbology of Revelation the phrase is "Gog and Magog" (Rev. 20:8) as if in the original historical situation they were equal. We also notice that in Ezekiel 39:1 Magog is not mentioned: "Behold I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal", suggesting that this grouping is the core of the confederacy. But however much we speculate, it is clear that at the Armageddon era of the invasion of the land, Russia and Germany are under one leader, that of Gog.

We may wonder what the word Gog means. It is of interest that in the LXX 'Agag' is translated 'Gog'. The reference is Numbers 24:7, referring to the king of the Amalekites. "His (Israel's) king shall be

higher than Agag and his kingdom shall be exalted". Now Amalek is made the representative of Israel's enemies in all generations—"Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation". "I will utterly put out of remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Ex.17:16,14). It is interesting that Haman, the Jews' enemy in the time of Esther, was "the son of Hammedatha the Agagite" (Est.3:10). So Agag or Gog is appropriate for Israel's last enemy.

## **GORBACHEV'S INTEREST IN WEST GERMANY**

The above little study arises from Gorbachev's new approach to West Germany this year. Previously the Soviet has been rather hostile, because of Germany's links with NATO, because of fear of a revival of Germany's aggressiveness, and because of the bitter memories of Hitler's treachery in attacking Russia in 1942, after making a Treaty of Friendship in 1939 when the war began.

Gorbachev this year appears to be seeking cooperation with West Germany in a political sense as well as commercially, as had been the case over the past ten years. There have been two significant events this year. In July the President of West Germany, Richard Von Weizaeker, made a six-day visit to Moscow, where he was received with full honours. Afterwards Weizaeker said West German relations with the Soviet Union are set to "open a new chapter". Gorbachev's interview with the West German president was reported under the heading: "MOSCOW HOPES FOR A NEW OPENING WITH GERMANY".

Gorbachev's words of friendship were reported as follows:

"Mr. Gorbachev, for his part, handled the conciliatory side of the agenda. Stressing the principles of 'common security', he said the Soviet Union wanted to see no reduction in West Germany's security. 'On the basis of its own social system and the alliances' West Germany could play a major role in working for peace. In words of extraordinary generosity which few Western leaders of the wartime generation would have been able to say, and which mark the Soviet leader out as indeed a postwar man, he absolved the Germans of guilt. 'We never equated the German people with the Nazi regime. We do not excuse it of the calamities which Hitler's aggression brought upon us' he declared.



"It was time for both sides to get away from 'enemy images' and 'dinosaur-type psychology'. He touched on the issue of reunification in a firm but delicate way...He urged the West German president to help build a 'common European house' " (G.W. August 1987).

The second event this year was the visit of Herr Honecker, head of the communist regime of East Germany, in September. Such a visit had been sought by W. Germany for years. Nothing outstanding emerged from the visit; its importance is that it took place, symbolically lessening the Berlin wall that brutally separates the East Germans from their brothers in the West. An article in the New York Times about the visit commented:

"Before Mr. Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet leaders sought to cow West Germany with threats and nuclear overkill capacity. Mr. Gorbachev apparently hopes to sway West German opinion through smiles and massive cuts in Europe based nuclear systems that will enhance the Soviet Union's conventional superiority" (NYT 19-7-87).

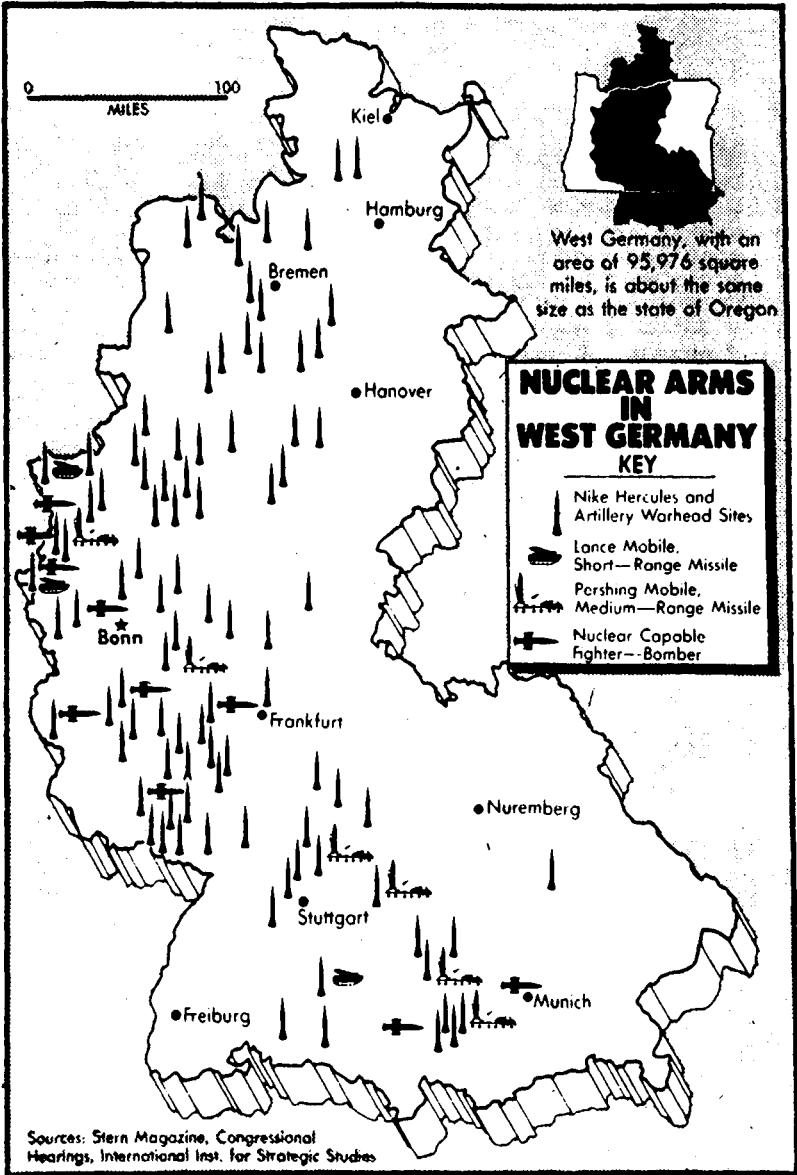
The article just referred to spoke of the extraordinary popularity of Gorbachev in the Federal Republic. This public opinion in favour of the Soviet was manifest during the INF Treaty negotiations. West Germany possesses 72 aging Pershing I missiles. Gorbachev insisted they must be given up. America left the decision to Dr. Khol, the German chancellor, as the missile launchers were not the property of the US. Herr Khol, like Mrs. Thatcher, felt that his little arsenal of nuclear weapons was an insurance policy. Nevertheless he was forced by public opinion to agree to them being dismantled, so that the treaty could go ahead.

Another influential figure in W. Germany is Herr Genscher, their Foreign Minister, in office since 1974, a socialist, and strongly in favour of supporting Gorbachev's reforms and detente.

"Genscher now sets three goals for a 'realistic policy of detente' seen by W. Germany: an overall disarmament process to enable the construction of cooperative security structures'; developing cooperation to help the Soviet Union modernise its economy and in turn stimulate growth and jobs in the West; all the time keeping firmly in mind that the Soviet is part of the West so as to 'overcome more and more of the obstacles separating those who live in the East from those who live in the West'." (D.T. 15-2-87).

Herr Khol, the chancellor, is more cautious. He is a Catholic and subject to the influence of the Pope. When the Pope attains his

objective of being acclaimed head of religion for all Europe, East and West, no doubt Germany will also be involved and have an honourable position.



## Chapter 6: THE SOVIET AND CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Year by year we look for those indications that show the Soviet is moving away from communist atheism. Such a move must come to allow some accord between the Soviet and the Vatican.

One would expect that Mr. Gorbachev in his economic reconstruction policy would give consideration to allowing more religious freedom in Russia and the Eastern European countries, as one element in getting the people into a more active and creative state of mind. It is widely recognised that communist doctrine has not destroyed the deep religious spirit of the Russian people. Gorbachev would have to tread such a path very carefully because of the basic atheist tenet of the Communist party, which, although only a small percentage of the Russian population agrees to it, all the Soviet leaders bow to it.

In addition to this practical interest Gorbachev may have in opening up religion, there is the constant pressure of the Catholic Church in the Eastern European countries for formal recognition of the Catholic faith.

Some development in this direction has taken place in 1987. In the New York Times in August, there was an article with a heading expressing this very theme. Here are a few extracts:

### **"THE KREMLIN SEEKING A NEW KIND OF COEXISTENCE WITH RELIGION"**

"Increasingly, however, Soviet officials have begun to admit that they may be losing the battle against religion".

"Especially in the last decade or so, the idealism of the 1917 Revolution and World War II now diminished, a religious revival has grown up to fill the ideological void. Igor. M. Ilinsky, a researcher for the Young Communists League, recently published results of a poll of young people that detected a growing fascination, especially among the well-educated, with religious literature and services".

"Access to religious material has eased somewhat. The government has promised to publish more Bibles, and foreign religious groups have been permitted to bring in shipments of Bibles and prayer books

for Christian and Jewish congregations. The Soviet Government has also stepped up efforts to restore the nation's churches and mosques as cultural showcases..."

"The optimistic among christians hope that the climate will improve with the approach of the 1,000th anniversary of the 'baptism of Russia', when Grand Prince Vladimar accepted Christianity from Constantinople in 988. This could well be the occasion for gestures that would win Mr. Gorbachev political dividends in the West. The visits of Mother Teresa and Patriarch Dimitrios, the first Greek Patriarch to come to Moscow in nearly 400 years, were clearly aimed at improving Moscow's image. If the Patriarch's meetings eventually lead to reconciliation of the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, that would add historic lustre to the occasion".

"One persistent rumour is that the Soviet leadership wants to mark the millennium with a visit by Pope John II, although the obstacles are formidable" (N.Y.T. 23-8-87).

A visit of the Pope to Moscow is also under study in Poland as the following quotations indicates:

#### **"RUSSIAN TRIP BY POPE POSSIBLE"**

"The Polish episcopate is studying the possibilities of the Pope and Mr. Gorbachev meeting...Discussions were seen to have progressed last month with an invitation to Cardinal Glemp, Poland's Primate, to visit Moscow..."

"Another major step towards an historical meeting between the Pope and the Soviet leader was taken three weeks ago (January 13th) when Gen. Jaruzelski, was granted a Vatican audience at the end of an official visit to Italy. Since then there have been contacts between the episcopate and Russian officials, with a view to drawing a symbolic line under decades of Soviet animosity towards the Polish Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic Church in general".

"Both Mr. Gorbachev and the Pope would like a meeting for entirely differing reasons, and a visit to Moscow by the Pope and possibly Lithuania may take place next year. Church demands would centre on being allowed to build new churches in Eastern Europe, and more freedom to distribute publications, and for pilgrims to visit Rome.

"Mr. Gorbachev has yet to overcome opposition from his Politburo and party leadership...But the advantages for Mr. Gorbachev would be considerable. A visit would help legitimise Soviet hegemony over

the rest of Eastern Europe and swing public opinion in the West more in its favour”.



Russian Orthodox Patriarch Pimen (left) greets Patriarch Dimitros of Constantinople, head of the Greek Orthodox Church, at the start of their meeting in Moscow. This is the first visit to Russia by a patriarch of Constantinople since the Orthodox schism in 1589.

## CHURCH AND STATE IN POLAND

The Pope probably thinks he has made good headway in Poland this year. The battle for establishing Roman Catholicism as an essential part of the leadership of the country continues. The 'love-hate' relation between Gen. Jaruzelski and the Pope reminds one of the Pope-Emperor conflict of the Middle Ages, as to which had more power and authority. The Pope concentrates his battle in Poland, where 95 percent of the population are Catholics. When he has won here, he will be well on the way to recognition in the whole of eastern Europe.

As we reported in 1986, when Mr. Gorbachev visited Poland he gave his support to the line being taken by Jaruzelski and his speeches shewed he had accepted the power of Roman Catholicism in Poland, that there had to be cooperation between Church and State. Poland's economy is in a far worse state than that of the Soviet. Its foreign debt is £ 25 billion, and its share of world trade a mere 0.9 percent. Gorbachev's economy reforms are vital here, and there is the need to root out the dead wood of corrupt, inefficient Communist leadership, and stir up the people to action. Gen. Jaruzelski has said he recognises this, and to carry out such reforms he needs the cooperation and support of the Church leaders. So the Pope is in a strong position.

The Pope gave an audience to Gen. Jaruzelski in January, as we have already reported. This was of great value to the General; it gave him standing in the eyes of his Catholic population. The meeting was reported in the Times, and the report was quoted in the Protestant reformer for March 1987:

"The Pope yesterday held unusually long political talks with Gen. Jaruzelski, and in an extraordinary gesture towards the Polish Communist leader, received his daughter, Monika, presenting her with a rosary. Dressed in black Monika Jaruzelski curtsied when the Pope gave her a rosary for herself and another for her mother".

This would seem to indicate that his wife and daughter are Catholics! No doubt the Pope's good-will was a softener for his demands on Jaruzelski. Later in the year the Pope was to be invited a third time to visit Poland.

## THE POPE'S THIRD VISIT TO POLAND

Before the visit to Poland took place, there was an important meeting between Gen. Jaruzelski and Cardinal Glemp, the Primate of Poland:

"Communist leader Wojciech Jaruzelski and Poland's Roman Catholic Primate signalled an apparent breakthrough in church-state relations yesterday after talks to prepare for a June visit by Pope Joun Paul II.

"A communique indicated an agreement was near on granting legal status to the Polish church for the first time under Communist rule, in return for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and the Vatican."

"The meeting between Jaruzelski and Glemp followed a visit to Poland last month by Vatican envoy Archbishop Achille Silvestrini, which focussed on the prospects for legal status and diplomatic recognition. The communique said Silvestrini's talks with government and church leaders 'assumed a favorable course' (D.T. 8-5-87).

One might have expected the Pope's visit that took place in June would go smoothly and without hostility as on his second visit, in view of these favourable developments. No! The Pope felt in a sufficiently strong position to make outspoken speeches against the behaviour of the government. The Daily telegraph report of the visit had the heading: "VISIT THAT HIGHLIGHTED CONFLICT BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE". The government for their part asserted their civil authority, and wherever the Pope went, he was predated by large forces of police and militia, that made sure there were no unruly demonstrations stirred up by his speeches.

But though the government leaders were visably irritated by the Pope's behaviour, in behind the scenes meetings the Pope won the day. There was an assessment of the visit in the Jerusalem Post, that is illuminating. It showed how much the government needs the Church's support; and on their part, the Church's willingness to distance itself from the Catholic-oriented free trade union Solidarity, which has caused so much trouble to the government. On this point it reported:

"Solidarity leaders are perplexed by the open animosity of the head of the Polish Catholic Church, Cardinal Josef Glemp. 'Poland will do much better' Glemp declared recently, 'without Solidarity'. He regards Solidarity as an obstacle to his own Catholic movement".

The major part of the *Jerusalem Post's* assessment of the visit is as follows:

**"IMPROVEMENT IN THE STATUS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH"**

"Both John Paul II and Cardinal Glemp have resolved to lead the Polish Catholic Church along the path of quiet diplomacy and constructive, patient development of its institutions. The Pope's Polish visit could not have come at a more appropriate time. Gorbachev's new Soviet policy caught the Jaruzelski government unprepared and presented it with a set of new problems. Once Polish authorities realized the new Soviet liberal policy had a chance of success, they decided they could no longer remain passive. Hence the Polish government's readiness to broaden its contacts with the Catholic Church, recognize some of its organisations and close those which support Solidarity. The government declared amnesty and agreed to set up a number of free trade unions except Solidarity.

"The Polish government welcomed John Paul II's visit and paid for most of his expenses. It suffered with magnanimity some of his human rights declarations. The real negotiations were conducted behind the scenes, resulting in: the prospective signing of an official Church-government agreement; the restoration of the funds and the recognition of the 'Caritas' charity organization; the according of official status of six illegally established seminaries for Polish clergy; the repairing of old, and the building of new, churches; and providing government housing for the Polish clergy.

"Over 3,000 Church compounds are now in a planning stage. Each compound will comprise a cultural centre, a cinema, a discotheque, a cafe, a library and a cultural club."

"It is obvious to foreign observers that the Polish government is seeking Catholic Church support during the present dangerous economic stagnation...Government-Church cooperation, blessed by behind-the-scenes Soviet observers, becomes a new important development. It is expected to benefit both sides..."

One thinks the Pope was satisfied with his visit!

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WALDHEIM'S AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE**

The Pope's cordial reception at the Vatican of Dr. Waldheim, President of Austria, aroused great anger among the Jews, and disapproval by French Catholics and others. Waldheim is widely regarded as having been actively engaged in the Jewish holocaust of the last war.

What is of interest to us is why did the Pope grant this audience? The *Jerusalem Post*, as one would expect, had much to say about Wald-



heim's visit for several weeks. It emerged in these articles what was behind the papal audience. Here are extracts from three articles.

"John Paul II, the first Polish Pope, is deeply concerned about the future of the Catholic Church in his native country—and in the Soviet bloc. It is in this context that Kurt Waldheim's recent visit to the Vatican should be seen.

"Waldheim's visit was greatly appreciated by the Soviet regime. His prestige will now be further strengthened...by the visit of the head of the Soviet government, Nikolai Rishkov, to Vienna (Austria).

"The Kremlin regards Austria as the gate to the neutral West, and both Waldheim and Rishkov will have many subjects to discuss. The USSR was highly critical of Jewish attacks on Waldheim's reputation, and he is still regarded as a Soviet friend and ally. The invitation to Waldheim, then, was a well-planned and pragmatic step taken by the Vatican to further its East European policy of ingratiating itself with the Soviet leaders" (J.P. 29-6-87).

"Waldheim's meeting with high Soviet officials in Austria shortly after his Vatican reception, was significant. It was observed that, as president of Catholic Austria—a 'stepping stone nation' between Eastern and western Europe—and considering the many contacts accumulated during his diplomatic career (he has been head of the United Nations GP) his potential as a mediator for the Vatican was considerable" (J.P.21-8-87).

"But the real reason for the Waldheim visit, in Wigodev's view, may well be that the Pope 'wants to get to Russia, and has embarked on a policy of Ostpolitik'. Austria is a bridge between East and West, and the Soviet Union has so far studiously refrained from condemning Waldheim".

[The three articles from which these extracts have been taken were by different writers].

The Pope appealed for unity in his last address on another of his visits to West Germany in May. The following report appeared in relation to this:

#### **"THE POPE URGES UNITY FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE URALS"**

"The Pope, at the end of his West German trip yesterday, called for a united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, and denounced restrictions of religious freedom in Eastern Europe. He made the last

major address of his five-day trip at a Mass for 55,000 people outside Speyer's 900-year old cathedral, before meeting Chancellor Helmut Kohl" (D.T. 5-5-87).

Both Gorbachev and the Pope repeatedly express their 'vision' of a united Europe in terms of Biblical prophecy, each seeing his own high position in this confederacy.

## THE GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCH—FIRST TO MOSCOW, THEN TO ROME

It is back in our first *Milestones to the Kingdom* in 1977, that relations between the Pope and the Orthodox Greek Church were dealt with. The section has the heading: "The Vatican woos the Eastern Church", and it briefly reported the steps towards reconciliation that had been taken in the previous years. As many readers may not have the 1977 issue, the main part of the section is reprinted below (taken from page 50):

At about the time of this conference the Vatican started moves to bring about reunion with the Orthodox Church. The series of events, no doubt carefully regulated by the Vatican, make interesting reading. "On the initiative of the Holy Father two special emissaries left Rome on June 17 to make a formal visit to His All Holiness Athenagoras, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople". The Catholic Times declared (July 14) "It is certain that this is the most significant event in relations with the Orthodox Church since the abortive attempt to heal the Great Schism at the Council of Florence in 1439".

The next happening is in October 1962: "A 10-man mission from the Vatican arrived last night in Ankara—the first of its kind to visit Turkey" (Times 5-10-62). They bore a message of greeting to the Turkish president from the Pope.

Then came the dramatic meeting of Pope Paul and the Patriarch Athen-agoras at Jerusalem in January 1964, with its "kiss of peace". The Pope followed this quickly with a letter to Athenagoras, couched in the best diplomatic style of the Vatican: "Most beloved brother in Christ, this letter will be delivered by our beloved brother Mgr. Joseph marie Martin...By this visit we wish to renew the kiss of peace exchanged on the Mount of Olives, and to tell you anew how often your person and that of your clergy and faithful, is present in our prayer, etc".

Some 18 months later came the great announcement:  
ORTHODOX PATRIARCH SOLEMNLY ENDS EXCOMMUNICATION.

"The Oecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, leader of the Orthodox Church, the great eastern branch of Christendom, annulled at noon today the excommunication pronounced by the Orthodox Church on the Church of Rome in 1054. This act, taken in conjunction with a similar one by the Pope in Rome, is clearly a milestone to Christian reunion" (Times 8-12-65).

In May 1967 the Pope took a further step to bind the two Churches together. He personally visited Athenagoras at Constantinople. St. John-Stevas wrote: "Today's journey of Pope Paul VI to visit the Patriarch Athenagoras is a major ecumenical event". He reported Athenagoras as saying: "When the moment came for all the bishops of the Church to meet together, both East and West, then the Pope would preside" (Times 25-7-67). When Patriarch Dimitrios (the present leader, GP) was installed in place of Athenagoras in 1972, he sent his blessings to the Pope, to whom he referred as 'our eldest brother and first among equals' " (D.T. 19-7-72).

Patriarch Dimitrios has been in action this year, as our heading indicates. It is very interesting that the old centre Constantinople is coming into prominence. The Greek Patriarch visited Moscow early in the year to confer with the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, as already mentioned in an earlier quotation, aiming at reconciliation. This was the first visit of a Patriarch since the schism took place some 400 years ago. Now in December we have Dimitrios in Rome for a five-day 'holy summit' with the Pope (D.T. 4-12-87).

Clearly Church detente as well as political detente for all Europe is now active. How so many moves today indicate we are getting near to great events, when, perhaps quite suddenly, the pieces of the jig-saw drop into place.



**The Pope and Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios of Constantinople embrace after a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica 4-12-87**

## **ANOTHER MARIAN YEAR, AIMED AT THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Earlier this year the Pope proclaimed another Marian year, running from June 1987 to August 1988, with special attention to the 'Virgin Mary'. It is a 114 page letter entitled *Redemptoris Mater* (The Redeemer's Mother). It is directed, at least in part, to the Orthodox Russian and Greek Churches. Its timing clearly relates to the Russian 1,000 year anniversary next year.

"An encyclical published last week promotes Mary's role as a shared inheritance for Protestants and Catholics as well as a powerful unifying force between Rome and the Orthodox Churches of the East."

"The encyclical, the most authoritative form of Papal communication, considers Mary to be 'a model of the virtues' for Christians of every denomination. The Pope praises her place, in this role, in Orthodox worship and notes that his Marian year is also the millennium of the baptism of St. Vladimir, the official birth of Christianity in Russia.

"Admiring the Orthodox loyalty to Mary, he writes: Such a wealth of praise...could help hasten the day when the Church can begin once more to breath fully with her 'two lungs', the East and the West".

How excited our brethren of the last century would be to read the items we read today!

The following interesting report is just to hand:

### **"GORBACHEV APPEAL TO GOD"**

"His arrival speech over, Mr. Gorbachev may have thought that the microphones were switched off when he turned to George Shultz on the windy tarmac of Andrews Air Force Base and said with fervent solemnity, 'May God help us'.

"Americans have been surprised by this appeal to the Almighty from the leader of the world's officially atheist state.

"Yet Mr. Gorbachev's mother, who still lives in the North Caucasus...goes to the Russian Orthodox church each Sunday. When Mr. Gorbachev goes home, as he does each year on his birthday, his mother prepares the traditional Easter cake carved with the initials XB, standing for 'Christ is risen'...

"He has been careful not to attack Russian Orthodox Christianity. The Church has received unprecedented state support and encouragement for next year's celebration of the 1,000th anniversary of the establishment of Christianity in Russia...

"The country is in the grip of a religious revival. Young people are flocking to the churches, spurred by interest in the Russian national heritage, of which the Church is seen as the custodian" (Guardian 20-12-87).

## **TWO EVENTS THAT ILLUSTRATE; SHE SITS UPON MANY WATERS**

Rome's prime aim is to restore her old position of spiritual head of Europe, not only over western but also eastern Europe as well. This aim is aided by the Pope's world-wide activity, not only by his visits but by various other means. The words of Revelation chapter 17 verses 1 and 15 certainly came to mind in reading about an event reported in the journal Audio Visual. This is a technical journal, and it reported on the vast technical resources, expertise, and coordination used in setting up a world-wide network for a T.V. broadcast starring the Pope, shown on a Saturday night and seen by approximately one billion people. The article had the heading:

### **"GLOBAL SPONSORSHIP AS THE POPE PRAYS"**

"The night in question was the eve of a year that the Catholic Church has declared a Marian Year—12 months in which special attention will be devoted to the worship of the Virgin Mary and the cause of world peace.

"In the television programme prefacing the year, the Pope had a starring role—saying the Marian prayer (the Rosary) in Rome's St. Mary Major and receiving, live, responses in five languages from 16 different countries participating in the television spectacular."

"In the end Limehouse—chosen because of its track record and a London Base geographically central to the project—was the recipient of feeds from 1,000 technicians and 75 cameras in 17 countries" (Audio Visual Sept. 1987).

The Patriarchs of Constantinople and Russia have no hope of competing with the Pope!

Another grand global event was reported in the *Jerusalem Post*. The heading read:

### **“POPE SCHEDULES MULTI-RELIGIOUS DAY OF PRAYER”**

“An unprecedented multi-religious day of prayer for peace, the first ever called by the pope and to be held at Assisi (Some 50 miles north of Rome GP) on October 27th, will have deeper significance through John Paul’s plea for a global ceasefire to last ‘at least during an entire day’”.

“On the 27th, 200 religious leaders will represent three and a half billion believers throughout the world, of whom roughly a third are christians”.

“Other religious groups, such as Bahai who are not recognised by the Vatican as a major religion, will be present for prayer at Assisi on their own initiative and with the Vatican’s consent.”

“The prayer day is to start at 9 a.m.... In the afternoon all will walk to the Basilica and form a circle from which, symbolically, each group will step out consecutively and offer their traditional prayers for peace”.

“Catholics, Protestants, representatives of international Christian and inter-religious peace organisations plus twenty bishops providing the pope’s entourage will constitute roughly 130 Christian delegates. The remaining 70 non-Christians are leaders of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikh, Shintoism, Zoro-astroans and the so-called ‘traditional religions’ of American Indians and Africans”.

So eventually the Pope will gather all nations to fight against Antichrist who has appeared in Jerusalem, and challenged the world in the name of the God of Israel. We note that the Jews were unwilling to be present in the Pope’s day of prayer for world peace.

In concluding this chapter, if we run our mind over the matters reported in this chapter, it may not represent a great ‘Milestone’ year for the Pope, but perhaps it is the preparation for a Milestone in 1988, especially in Soviet-Vatican relations.

## Chapter 7: MOVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST CHESS BOARD

For years the Israeli-Palestinian antagonism was the focal point of international interest in the Middle East. This year the picture has changed and Israel is no longer in the limelight. International interest has widened to the whole of the Middle East, particularly concerned with the outcome of the Gulf War between Iraq and Iran. We catch with special interest, taking note of the grouping together of the various states, north and south, and the involvement of the Great Powers. It is a very complex situation, and growing more so each year. In this chapter we report on the 1987 state of the Middle East chessboard.

### THE GULF WAR BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT

In the 1986 *Milestones* a sketch was given of the Iraq-Iran war, which after 7 years' fighting seemed to have reached a stalemate, with the prospect of another Iranian offensive viewed with scepticism. "A war the media now ignores" was the picture.

1987 has brought quite a change. The promised Iranian offensive began in January with a two-pronged attack—see sketch map—and some progress was made at Basra, the second major city in Iraq after Baghdad. Basra, in fact, is the more important city of the two because it is in the centre of the tremendous oil reserves and the oil installations. Iraq had protected Basra with fortifications in depth, and the Iranians were still ten miles away. Nevertheless, America and the Gulf States were alarmed at the prospect that south Iraq might be overrun.





The people of the south of Iraq are mostly Shi'ite Moslems, the same as the Iranians, and if the country was invaded they would be ready to side with Iran—preparations had been made to set up an Islamic Republic there. This would bring the fanatical fundamentalism of the Ayatollah right into the middle of the Arab States.

## **EVENTS DRAWING THE U.S. DEEPER INTO THE GULF SITUATION**

**Stage 1, January:** The alarm at the Iranian 'victory' near Basra brought response from the U.S.:

"The United States moved five warships into the north of the Gulf last night and instructed an aircraft carrier battle group to move closer to Lebanon".

"Port calls were cancelled for the nuclear-powered carrier Nimitz as it moved into the eastern Mediterranean. A third carrier, the Kitty Hawk, has been despatched from the Philippines to the northern Arabian sea" (D.T. 29-1-87).

**Stage 2, May:**

"President Reagan this week raised the military stakes in the Gulf by placing US forces in the region on a higher state of alert...Mr Reagan toughened the US stance in the wake of Sunday night's unprovoked Iraqi Exocet attack on the frigate USS Stark, which crippled the ship and killed at least 28 American crewmen" (G.W. 28-5-87).

It turned out that the attack was a mistake and Iraq was 'forgiven'. Three other factors were behind the U.S. deeper involvement. First, Irangate findings had been published that established America had negotiated an arms deal with Iran, and so it was important to counter the Arab bitterness at their betrayal, and to assure them of strong support. Secondly, a Soviet deputy Foreign Minister had visited Kuwait, Oman and other Gulf States, thus beginning to penetrate right into the south of the region. Thirdly, Iran had set up launch sites from which missiles could reach Kuwait's oil export terminal, and she publicly threatened to attack.

The tiny State of Kuwait is regarded as important not only as the oil centre, but because if invaded by Iran—geographically and strategically an easy task—Iran would be able to bypass Basra and easily take South Iraq. Also Iran would hold both sides of the Straits and have a stranglehold.

**Stage 3, May-June:** With land warfare again becoming largely a stalemate, both Iran and Iraq were increasingly attacking Gulf shipping, Kuwait asked for protection for her tankers, and after the Soviet had readily responded, the U.S. had to respond by 'reflagging' 11 Kuwaiti ships, and prepared to give them naval escort through the Straits.

**Stage 4, June-August:** This saw the gathering of warships from seven nations, each nation ostensibly there to protect their ships. By the end of September more than 100 warships were in or approaching the Gulf—see diagram.

At the end of August the U.S. established a Gulf Command to coordinate and control operations:

"The Reagan administration, signalling a long-term US presence in the Gulf, has ordered more minesweepers to the region and plans to set up a special Command to direct operations" (D.T. 21-8-87).

During this period the Soviet was keeping a low key. It kept only two frigates and three minesweepers in the Gulf compared with America's fleet of 40 or so in the Gulf or near at hand, including seaborne forts on barges. So the Soviet sent out its propaganda to the Arab States that America was seeking military domination, whereas the Soviet was seeking peace.

**Stage 5, September to December:** In this period the U.S. and Europe sought to impose a UN cease-fire on both sides, resolution 598. The U.S. was most anxious about this. It did not want to keep such a vast gathering of its warships in position, but dare not even withdraw a portion, because this would have a serious effect on the confidence of the Arab States, and turn them towards the Soviet.

Iraq had agreed to the cease-fire, but Iran's answers were always equivocal, neither a clear yes or no. This dragged on to December, and it emerged that behind the scenes the Soviet was supporting this attitude, while officially supporting the pressure on Iran. In addition to this, the European pressure on Iran was made ineffective by France's bargaining with Iran in December.

France's bargain with Iran was quite extensive, involving scaling down military aid to Iraq, imminent restoration of diplomatic relations with Iran, and a general reviewing of its Gulf policy, to scale down any threat to Teheran (G.W. 6-12-87).

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THIS YEAR'S DEVELOPMENTS**

Comment may best be put in three groups: the Gulf States, America, and the Soviet.

### **1. THE GULF STATES**

These are Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrein, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and for our purpose including Jordan. The peoples of these countries all regard themselves as true Arabs, the majority in each country holding the Sunni Moslem religion with Mecca as the chief Holy city. It should be kept in mind that the Iranians are not Arabs and the majority belong to the more extreme Shi'ite Moslem religion.

This southern group of countries are bound together, not only by their Arab origin, their religion, and their fear of their Shi'ite minorities, aided by Iran, stirring up rebellion; in addition they are all strongly opposed to Communism, even if they find it necessary to keep on fairly good terms with the Soviet. Over the past seven years or so, circumstances have drawn them together and they have formed a Gulf Cooperative Council, and have coordinated their military systems under the title of Peninsula Shield Force. Militarily they are not strong enough to defend themselves against an attack by Iran. Until this year they have carefully avoided being hostile to Iran in the Iran-Iraq war. This year the situation changed and they were aroused to hostility when Iranian pilgrims stirred up riots in Mecca.

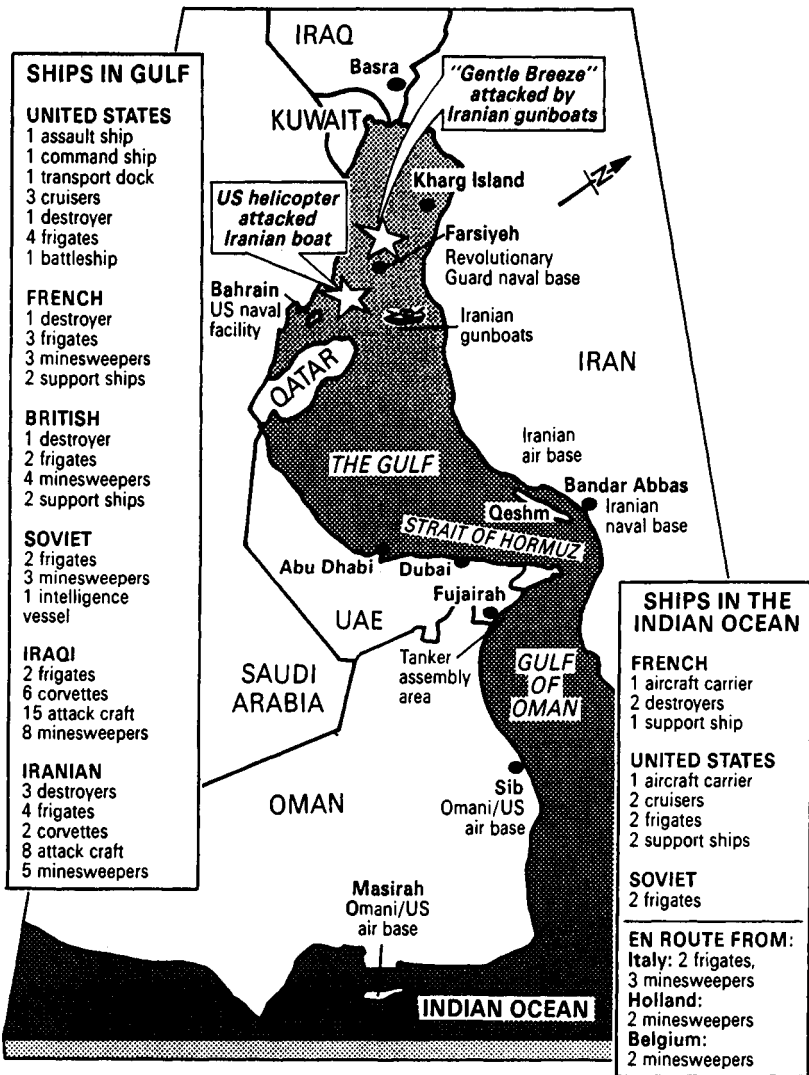
### **The separation of Iran from the Gulf States**

We have already noted briefly a new aggressiveness of Iran towards the Gulf States on the ground that they give support to Iraq. This came to a head in July, when Iran threatened to attack the Gulf countries' oil and industrial installations. Two headlines ran as follows:

**"IRANIAN ULTIMATUM PUTS GULF STATES IN 'GRAVEST DANGER'"** (D.T. 29-7-87)

**"UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' ALARM AT THREATS"** (G.W. 9-8-87).

**FORCES IN THE FIRING LINE**



At the same time as these bombing threats, the Ayatollah addressed 153,000 Iranians as they set out on their annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, instructing them to stir up trouble there, in the name of their 'true' Moslem religion and Shi'ite faith. After prayers at Mecca they started chanting anti-American slogans, then there was rioting in the city, burning cars, etc. In the ensuing violence, 275 Iranians were killed. There followed the Ayatollah's call for revenge.

#### **"IRAN VOWS REVENGE FOR MECCA DEATHS"**

"The rioting in Mecca is a signal that the Mullahs have decided to destroy the pro-Western governments in the Gulf" (G.W. 9-8-87).

#### **"IRAN'S ALL-OUT WAR ON MODERATION"**

"The violence in Mecca, the sacking of the Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian embassies in Tehran, and the Iranian threat to 'uproot' the Saudi regime mark a new and more dangerous phrase in Iran's Jihad—or Holy War—on behalf of 'true Islam' " (D.T. 3-8-87).

Saudi royalty reciprocated:

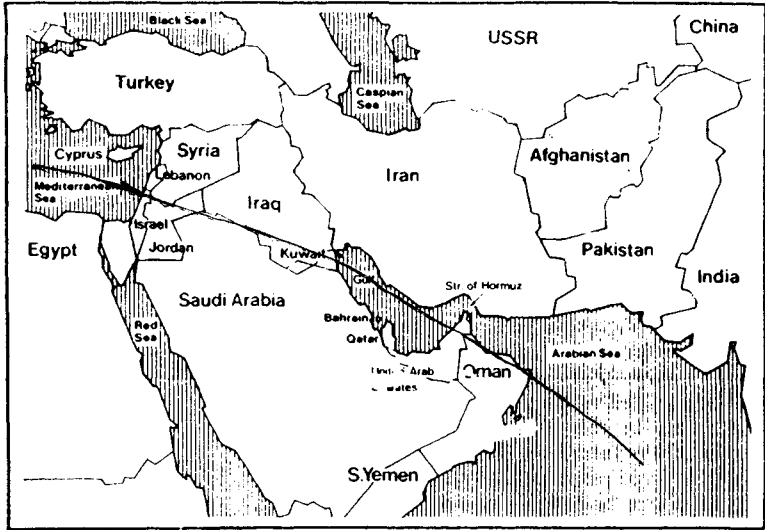
"Saudi Arabia's royal family continued its unprecedented public attacks on Iran with a warning that Ayatollah Khomeini was now 'fair game' for the Saudis" (D.T. 29-8-87).

Both Saudi Arabia and Jordan, the strongest nations of the group militarily, have declared themselves ready for direct confrontation with Iran (D.T. 23-11-87, D.T. 29-8-87).

We can suggest three consequences of the year's events as far as the Gulf States are concerned:

1. The group of States, facing common problems, have drawn closer together. Years ago they were quite independent of one another, and sometimes hostile.
2. They have been made to feel more dependent on the U.S. They have faced the reality that they could not defend themselves. They still have not allowed America land bases, but if an attack was imminent no doubt they would. The King of the South grouping is more visible, especially as it is now joined by Egypt.

3. The break with Iran is very interesting. It is a further step in dividing the region into its prophetic parts—King of the North and King of the South. See the line drawn across the following map.



Britain remains well respected by the Gulf States. As ships gathered in the Gulf in September, the Daily Telegraph correspondent reported:

“Britain’s request for shore facilities for four Royal Navy minesweepers due to arrive in the Gulf later this month has met with provisional approval from local leaders”. The head of the seven member United Arab Emirates wrote to Mrs. Thatcher that “all reasonable assistance” will be provided (1-9-87).

## 2. AMERICA’S SITUATION

We have seen how circumstances have forced America this year to establish a large naval presence in the Gulf, and declare she is the protector of these south Arabian States and the vital oil supply. There are now two U.S. military Commands in this Middle East region. There is the Central Command Middle East, controlling all army, navy and airforce operations in the region; this was set up some years ago. Now,

this year there has been created in addition the Gulf Command, for coordinating naval activities.

The *Jerusalem Post*, April 30th, referred to “the 35,000 man American Central Command Force”. This is a surprisingly big number of Americans in the area. One supposes they are stationed in Egypt. There is also the Rapid Deployment Forces plan, introduced some years ago, which has established bases for weapons, stores, etc., in prepositioned sites in these countries, ready for use by troops brought in during a crisis. So now we can see what a massive presence America has in the region. She is the main military power of the ‘King of the South’. As we shall see in a moment, there is the corresponding development in the north.

### **America’s wider considerations**

But America has wider considerations for the move into the Gulf this year. First, the European scene is changing. With a developing ‘peace’ between Western Europe and the Soviet, and the expected departure of at least some American troops, NATO is likely to become weaker, and public opinion more anti-American. At present the whole of the southern flank of Europe—the northern seaboard of the Mediterranean—is dependent on the protection of the American Sixth Fleet. The Soviet may, by continuing detente with Europe, and bargaining with America, make the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean impractical. At this very moment America is under pressure regarding several of her bases. In Spain, Portugal, and Greece there is demand to reduce the US presence. On this the Guardian had an article:

#### **“BUDGET CUTS, HOSTILE HOSTS JEOPARDISE U.S. OVERSEAS BASES”**

“Reagan administration officials facing delicate renegotiations over the fate of U.S. military facilities in four NATO countries and the Philippines, are worried that deep cuts in foreign assistance, and rising hostility of the foreign governments pose serious threats to continued American access just when the need for the bases is growing”.

So in global considerations, Western Europe may have to be downgraded in importance as far as America is concerned. And this gives more emphasis on a strong position at the Gulf, which is absolutely vital in American considerations.

But this is not the whole story. We have reported in earlier *Milestones* that the Pacific and Japan are becoming of equal importance with Europe in a commercial sense (*Milestones 1984* pp. 20-22). The Pacific is even more important in a military sense. The Soviet has already established itself well into the south Pacific and the Indian ocean. Taking this into our reckoning we can see how the Gulf becomes the pivotal position in the sweep from the Israeli bulwark on the West, through South Arabia, the Gulf, and on to India, Australia and New Zealand. Yes, we can foresee with prophetic vision the young lions gathering together. Likewise the prophetic eye can see another grouping; vast, in the north region, and under the guard of the Soviet.

### 3. THE SOVIET SITUATION

First, a report of a few moves, then their possible implication. With regard to the Soviet in the Middle East region, there are at least four happenings of significance: renewed cooperation with Iran; the diplomatic drive into the south Arabian States; the success of Soviet ships being regarded as legitimate in the Gulf area, even by America; and the reorganised offensive force on the south border of the USSR that could threaten invasion of the region through Iran to the Gulf.

#### Soviet-Iran

Progress in cooperation with Iran has been considerable over the year. At the end of 1986 a major step was taken:

#### **"RUSSIA AND IRAN SIGN ECONOMIC DEAL"**

"Under its terms the two countries agreed in principle on the resumption of flights between Teheran and Moscow, the creation of a joint shipping line in the Caspian, rights of transit for Iranian lorries through the Soviet Union, and rights of passage for Iranian ships in Soviet waters.

"Soviet technicians will resume work on several power plants and the Soviet Union will equip several jointly constructed factories which have stood empty throughout the decade".

"Like the West, the Soviet is anxious to repair relations with Iran, seen as the eventual winner in the war of attrition with Iraq" (D.T. 18-12-86).

In September further progress was made:



"On Tuesday Iran's Deputy Minister, Mahommed Larijani, held his second talk in Moscow in two months. Mr. Shevardnadze afterwards stressed the need to develop "Soviet-Iranian relations in a spirit of good-neighbourliness and understanding and to expand and deepen mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation'.

"There have been unconfirmed reports that the Russians have discussed building an oil pipe-line...from Iran to a Soviet port on the Black Sea" (D.T. 10-9-87).

The situation was referred to again in November:

"In addition, the recent Soviet-Iranian discussion on improving trade ties and establishing rail and energy pipeline links between the two countries have added fears that Moscow is taking advantage of the tensions in the Gulf to position itself—at the expense of peace initiatives—to lay the groundwork for a long-term relationship with Iran" (D.T. 1-11-87).

'At the expense of peace initiatives' became clear in December. The 'peace initiative' was the pressure of America, Europe and the Soviet to get Iran to observe a cease-fire, this being negotiated by the United Nations Secretary-General. By secret agreement with Iran, the Soviet prevented the oil embargo being imposed on Iran for its continued refusal to agree to a cease-fire.

It emerged that the Soviet had made other concessions to Iran:

"The arrangement Iran has struck with the Soviet Union is still largely secret, but its outlines are clear from some western and Arab diplomats here. Iran has reportedly cut its support for Afghan guerrilla forces and stopped stirring up religious sentiment among Moslems inside Soviet Central Asia, while the Soviet has reciprocated by helping stall a vote in the Security Council on sanctions against Iran" (G.W. Dec. 1987)

## **The grouping of the northern countries under Russia**

The second significant report of the year concerned the reorganised Russian forces on the south border, ready for a southward offensive. This was first reported in the *Jerusalem Post*, August 1986, and is referred to in the *Jerusalem Post* of April 30th, 1987:

"...Pentagon analysts say the Soviet forces in the southern region, facing Iran and Turkey, have been reorganised from a defensive army

into a major offensive force of some 384,000 men, 5,400 tanks, 5,600 artillery pieces, 9,000 personnel carriers, and 1,000 tactical jet aircraft.

"What is there to stop the Russian divisions? In plain geographical terms it can be said that one could drive a tank from Red Square in Moscow to the Gulf oilfields; but a tank starting for the Gulf from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington would have to cross thousands of kilometres of water".

The article later commented that it is the possession of power at a strategic position that is important; it can get results without actually being used. No doubt the Soviet new army was an additional factor that alarmed the US and caused their move into the Gulf. But it would also have its effect on the countries ranging along the southern border of the Soviet.

Such a massive force must give the Soviet an ability to influence neighbouring States to conform to Soviet intentions. Taking the countries ranging from West to East, we note their present positions. **Turkey** is at present independent of the Soviet. **Syria** is closely tied to the Soviet, heavily armed by the Soviet far beyond Syria's defensive needs and supervised by several thousand Soviet technicians. Syria has recently reduced her armed forces, and this, it is proposed, is a Soviet step which might be used to promote peace proposals (J.P. 30-4-87). **Iraq** is desperately weakened by the long war with Iran, and is dependent on the Soviet for 80% of its arms. It would have to toe the line laid down by the Soviet in a crisis. **Iran** with its long border of 1,000 miles or so with the Soviet has come closer this year to the Soviet. **Afghanistan** is now in a condition of stalemate with regard to the 1979 Soviet invasion, and it is generally agreed that the Soviet is anxious to pull out its 115,000 troops when a friendly Soviet regime under the exiled Afghan king can be arranged. Dr. Kissinger expressed the view that at the Washington Summit more in this direction was agreed with Reagan than was expressed in the official communique. When this has taken place it will greatly improve Iran-Soviet relations.

So we can see a northern group being prepared under the hegemony of the Soviet—the King of the North, just as we see a similar but less powerful grouping in the south.



THE RETREAT FROM KABUL?

### **Biblical descriptions of this northern group**

We may remind ourselves that in the original King of the North, the Seleucid's territory for most of the time was confined to the region now occupied by Syria. But in their most expansive period their control extended right across through Iraq and Persia. This will be the full extent of the future King of the North, together with the peoples from the north countries.

This wide extent is also expressed in the Image of Nebuchadnezzar when it stands erect in the latter day. In this final confederacy the gold and silver metals cover these regions.

Again, more specific to the northern invasion of Israel in the future, the prophets several times express this as the coming down of the Assyrian. The second half of Isaiah chapter 30 is one place where the description is of the invasion of the latter-day Assyrian. The Assyrian empire covered Syria, Iraq and Iran. So we should expect these countries today to be under preparation for welding together by Russia to make the latter-day Assyrian at the appointed time. This year is seeing, in small measure, 'prophecy fulfilling'.

## Present Soviet intentions in the Middle East

Although we can see this northern group being developed by the Soviet, it is not to be expected that something dramatic will occur in the near future (unless God has willed otherwise). As in Europe, the present policy of Gorbachev in the Middle East is detente, and improving the status of the Soviet here, especially in matters of politics and diplomacy. Its aim is to be the equal of the U.S. in any 'peace' negotiations. For several decades the Soviet has been largely excluded from Middle East negotiations. This year, following the U.S. loss of prestige through the Iran arms deal calamity, the Soviet had made headway in its 'peace' approach to most of the south Arab States. In addition it has continued negotiations with Israel and has espoused the international conference approach to a settlement of the Israel-Palestine problem. A conference, if it took place, would give the Soviet a seat at the table. This progress was summarised in an article from the New York Times published in the Jerusalem Post:

### **"GORBACHEV'S GAINS: DIPLOMACY WIDENS INFLUENCE"**

"Since Mr. Gorbachev came to power two years ago, and especially in the past few months, the Soviet bid for increased influence has touched almost every country in the region. Moscow has courted moderate Arab States, from Egypt and Jordan to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and restored diplomatic relations with Oman and the United Arab Emirates."

Regarding Egypt, in a desperate state economically, the Soviet has suspended Egypt's payments of its large debt for an indefinite future. For Jordan, the Soviet offered to supply its latest fighter aircraft.

The article's reference to Israel is most interesting:

"Most striking, Mr. Gorbachev has indicated an apparently genuine interest in moving toward diplomatic relations with Israel. 'The absence of such relations cannot be considered normal' he said last month, in a dinner speech that must have given mild twitches to the guest of honour, Mr. Assad (of Syria). Israel has the right to a 'secure existence' Mr. Gorbachev said, adding that military force in the region 'has become completely discredited'".

The end of the article says:

## **60—MOVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST CHESS BOARD**

**"The Russians say what they seek is not a new sphere of influence, but partnership with the United States in pursuing peace and stability in the region. Middle East conflict is a threat to Moscow's southern flank and a drain on its arms export budget (N.Y.T. 26-5-87).**

**It will not be surprising if Mr. Gorbachev makes offers to the US similar to those this year in Western Europe, involving each side restraining its client States, and with some proposals to settle the Israel-Palestinian dispute, aiming to keep the region more stable until the Soviet is ready for that final overflowing! But as always we add, if this is what God's plan allows. The only solid matters are when we see events actually taking place and fulfilling prophecy.**

## Chapter 8: ISRAEL: DOES 'PEACE' SEEM POSSIBLE?

### WHY WE EXPECT 'PEACE'

Untold hundreds of hours have been spent seeking a peace settlement for Israel. The 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty appeared as a hopeful move. But the great Israeli victory of 1967 had created great obstacles to a further reduction of hostilities—providing Israel with much greater military security. Syria was the most implacable enemy, having lost the Golan Heights—“the heart of Syria”, as President Assad likes to call them; the West Bank occupation was like a running sore with the PLO stirring up trouble as much as possible in the refugee camps; and because Israel now dominated Jerusalem it was hated by all the Moslem countries. Add to this the vast armaments held by each country, the spirit of hatred and violence, and one would say humanly speaking, how could there be peace?

If it were not for the clear words of Ezekiel 38, this is what we would say. We should not be looking for signs that some kind of short-lived peace was coming into sight. But the record is clear, verse 8 speaks of a people brought forth out of the nations, to a land that had long been desolate, “and they shall dwell safely all of them”. This is before the Northerner comes down on the land, as verse 14 and 15 make clear:

“In that day when my people of Israel dwell safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts...as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days”.

Yes, it appears God intends to bring about a strange situation in the furtherance of His purpose with His chosen people. They will become prosperous (having a “great spoil”) and self-satisfied before being broken beyond human redemption, in order that they may be so humbled that they will truly accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

Peace in Israel at this time may seem inappropriate, while the nation still largely ignores God's laws. But God explains:

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among

the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name...and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes" (Ezekiel 36:22-23).

So we continue to take note of events year by year. There does appear in 1987 a greater possibility of some peace on the horizon than in previous years, though no obvious development has occurred. In 1987 the minds of the Great Powers and of the Arab states have been concentrated on the Gulf war rather than Israel. Yet even the Gulf war may contribute to a 'peace' development. The two super powers are facing each other, north and south; neither want confrontation and they may seek a neutral zone between themselves. They might agree to impose some kind of peace, each having a better grip on their client states than they previously had.

### **ISREAL'S PRIME MINISTER CONTINUES TO VETO AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE**

As reported in 1986 *Milestones*, Mr. Peres of Israel and King Hussein of Jordan tried hard to bring about an international peace conference that would support negotiations between Israel and Jordan. But when Mr. Shamir of the Likud party took over the premiership from Mr. Peres (Labour), he was resolutely opposed to such a conference; or rather, opposed to Mr. Peres' idea of making territorial concessions to Jordan as a way to peace, as had been the case with Egypt.

But the idea of such a conference did not die, and the continued efforts in 1987 show what a wide interest there is in a peace settlement. America, the Soviet, Britain and the E.E.C. all at different times gave their support for such a conference. Likewise all the moderate Arab states—Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Gulf States were interested. Efforts went on until the middle of the year. In May the *Jerusalem Post* reported negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet:

"The U.S. and the Soviet Union will open high level discussions next month on the convening of an international conference to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict" (J.P. 30-5-87).

In June there was a headline:

**"HOWE URGES MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS"**

"Britain yesterday called for an international Middle East peace conference to bring Israel and Jordan to the negotiating table and give the Soviet Union its first real opportunity in more than a decade to play a significant role in the arrangements".

"Sir Geoffry Howe, foreign Secretary, said in a keynote speech to the Commons that convening the conference would be one of the central short-term aims of the new parliament" (D.T. 27-6-87).

Visits by Mr. Peres and King Hussein of Jordan to the United States urged Mr. Reagan to put pressure on the Israeli Prime Minister to agree to such a conference. But all to no avail. Mr. Shamir would not budge. God can thwart the plans of men if it is not His will.

So all the interested parties had to accept the situation that while Mr. Shamir is Prime Minister—until the elections in autumn 1988—the matter is in abeyance. With new elections in Israel, there is hope that the majority vote will be for Mr. Peres' willingness to negotiate along the lines already agreed by Mr. Peres and the king of Jordan. By that time there also will be changes elsewhere; a new President in the U.S.A.; possibly a further Arms Reduction Agreement; Mr. Gorbachev less harassed at home, and more ready to turn his attention to the Middle East; the Ayatollah, said to be a sick man, passed off the scene.

## **A MORE FAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR 'PEACE' IN THE MIDDLE EAST?**

We have indicated there may be several factors to create a more favourable climate that could lead to a short-lived peace for Israel. Let us examine some of these situations.

**1. The Soviet:** The development of Soviet influence and status in the Middle East is one of the most significant of these factors, when coupled with Gorbachev's apparent willingness to give favourable consideration to Israel. We have already quoted him as saying recently that Israel has a right to secure boundaries, and that peace is essential. The U.S. and Britain have both said the Soviet has a right to be at the conference table on the Middle East: quite a different attitude to the past when all efforts were to exclude the Soviet from the region. For success it would need the Soviet as well as the U.S. to give their backing to a peace arrangement between Israel and Jordan. We should keep in mind that it was Soviet backing in the United Nations in 1947 that led to the State of Israel. In fact, the reason for her action then is just the same



now. At the 1945 Peace Conference the Soviet was treated as an equal and welcomed into the polity of nations by Roosevelt, and was well on the way to achieving that international standing it had sought for years. How affairs then went wrong is a story on its own. But after forty years or so, Gorbachev is aiming to revive the 1945 spirit.

Soviet presence in the Middle East was commented on in an Analysis article in the *Jerusalem Post* in October:

"But the Middle east is a rapidly changing region. The Iraq-Iran war will not last for ever and there is every indication that the Soviet Union may assume the role of peace-maker with major strategic consequences in the region" (J.P.10-10-87).

The most recent pointer to the Soviet influence is King Hussein of Jordan agreeing to visit Moscow. It is not only the significance of such a meeting taking place, but the report was very interesting:

"The Soviet Union, long absent from key Middle East peace negotiations, is taking important steps to recover a role at the heart of the region's most intractable problems.

"Mr. Gorbachev has assured King Hussein of Jordan, who ended a rare visit to Moscow yesterday, of Soviet flexibility in trying to find a Palestinian-Israeli Compromise."

"At the same time, Soviet diplomacy on the Israel-Palestine front is beginning to shift. The Soviet Union has been sounding increasingly keen to nudge Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians towards negotiations within the framework of an international conference" (D.T.24-12-87).

**2.Jordan:** Jordan this year has increased its status among the Arab nations. It managed to convene a full Arab Summit at Amman, the first for five years, and carried it through with some success. One success was the bringing of Egypt back into the Arab fold, after its 'disgrace' in making peace with Israel in 1979; and Egypt did not have to break its treaty with Israel. Also it was a success to have hard-line Syria present and taking part in the discussions. Most of the discussion was about the Iraq-Iran war, and there was a vote of censure on Iran, despite Syria's presence. It would seem the Arab countries had become more sober and realistic in the face of common problems. Nothing very hostile against Israel emerged. Jordan was not criticised for its behind-the-scenes negotiations with Israel (J.P.28-11-87).

With its improved status Jordan may feel more free to pursue peace negotiations. Over the year it has shown continuing keenness for negotiations with Israel, but only under the umbrella of an international conference, because it regards Soviet and Syrian backing as essential. No doubt this was a reason for Hussein's visit to Moscow.

Jordan and Israel continued their behind-the-scenes negotiations. Progress was reported early in May:

**"MID-EAST PEACE TALKS DEAL"**

"Israel and Jordan were reported yesterday to have reached an agreement on fundamental guidelines for convening an international conference to solve the Arab-Israel conflict without Palestine Liberation Organisation involvement.

"It represents a major breakthrough in attempts to revive the Middle East peace process.

"King Hussein of Jordan has agreed to basic principles set out by Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Simon Peres, including the crucial issue of Palestinian representation according to Israeli foreign ministry officials.

"The agreement is the result of weeks of secret negotiations between Israeli and Jordanian officials in which the United States has acted as inter-mediator" (D.T.2-5-87).

As one would expect, Jordan considered it politically expedient to officially deny the accord.

A more intimate picture of King Hussein's attitude was provided by the *Jewish Chronicle* in November. Their foreign editor travelled with other correspondents when Sir Geoffrey Howe visited King Hussein. The editor was surprised at the Jordanian reaction when they knew he was a Jew from the *Jewish Chronicle*; he was quite warmly welcomed. He gives his assessment of King Hussein under the heading:

**"JORDAN IS READY TO MAKE PEACE"**

"King Hussein's genuine desire to establish a formal peace with Israel should not be doubted. However, since most of his subjects are Pal-estini-ans, he must have a cover.

"This would be provided by the proposed international conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the United Nation's Security Council.

"As in the case of Egypt, the population of Jordan, including the Palestinians, is ready to follow the king's lead to peace with Israel...His rule is undisputed, and the respect he is held in is high" (Jewish Chronicle 13-11-87).

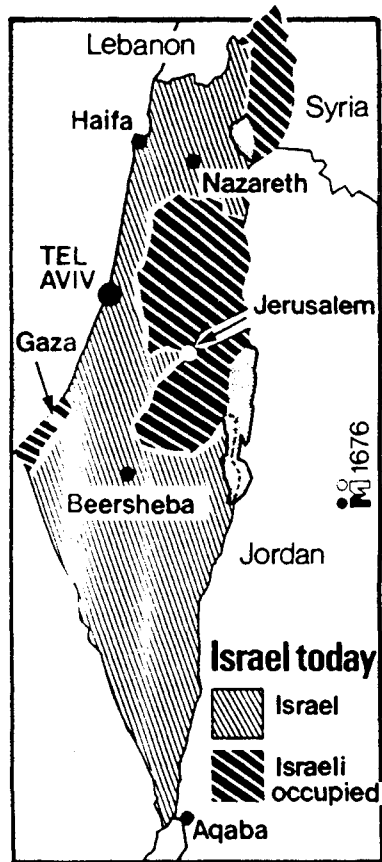
The King takes a constructive attitude towards the 'Occupied territories'. For many years the West Bank Palestinians have been largely under the influence of Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Lately King Hussein has been taking a stronger line there to assert Jordan's authority and maintain an administrative control alongside Israel. The PLO's influence is largely the refugee camps where it is so easy to stir up trouble.

The phrase 'West Bank'—that is west of the River Jordan—is rather a misnomer. The area is a large one, as the accompanying map shows.

Early in January Jordan launched a \$1.25 billion five-year West Bank development plan to improve conditions in the West Bank and remove the refugee camps:

"King Hussein's 1.25 billion dollar five-year West Bank development plan, if wisely executed, could make a lasting contribution to peaceful coexistence between Jew and Arab in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza strip. His initiative deserves the support of all who want peace for its aims to solve human problems that should have been solved long ago" (J.P. 10-1-87).

It is not clear how far the plan has been put into operation. But it is another pointer in the direction of better relations between Jordan and Israel.



Israel has also attempted to soften its control in the occupied territories. Two headlines in January read:

**"Israel highlights a 'softer line' on the Palestinians**  
(J.P. 10-1-87), and

**"Arab local leaders happy after meeting with Arens"**  
(Minister for Arab Affairs, J.P. 24-1-87).

3. **Israel:** Whether there can be a peace agreement depends very much on how far the Israeli government would realistically negotiate—give some ground. The question is, Will the nation at the elections next year move towards the Labour plan of compromise, or will they follow the Likud party which stands firmly on Israel's right to all the West Bank and more?

There has been great debate on this vital matter ever since the failure of the Lebanon war—the 'Peace for Galilee' war as it was hoped to be. The Israelis ask, are they for ever to exist by force of arms, preemptive strikes, military suppression and curfews? Such behaviour is not the spirit of the Jew. Many are looking for a way out; but there is always the stark question of security. If there could be a valid guarantee of their security; if Russia gave a guarantee along with America; if Russia kept in check the northern Arab States; if diplomatic relations with the Soviet were established; if Jews could leave Russia—perhaps with one reservation they would say, Yes. The reservation would be the same as that of Britain and France—if the peace is betrayed we have the nuclear bomb. Their recently tested Jericho rocket is capable of hitting major Arab capitals (D.T.22-7-87).

One recent pointer to the changing climate in Israel is the formation of an action group of intellectuals and officials:

"The only piece of good news to come out of the Middle East in the past three months is that a move has been initiated inside Israel to return to that neglected principle of a Palestine shared between its two claimants.

"The initiative has come from the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East, which claims support of several hundred leading figures in Israel, including 10 former cabinet ministers and 65 present and former members of the Knesset, as well as writers, artists, and rabbis.

"They have appealed publicly for an end to 'terror and violence... and to the rule of one people over another'. Instead they urge, 'the time has come to establish a peace of mutual recognition, based on territorial compromise and self-determination', which alone can guarantee 'the security of Israel, the realisation of Palestinian aspirations and regional stability'" (G.W.8-11-87).

## TERRITORIAL SECURITY OUT OF DATE?

Israel's military leaders also are facing a problem that makes them look for an alternative to their past insistence on holding on to land for security. The changing situation was expressed thus:

"In the next war, God forbid, the nature of the surprise Israel will have to face will not be—even in a best case scenario of a one to one Syrian-Israel confrontation—a commando attack on the Golan, but a potential salvo of dozens, and possibly hundreds, of highly accurate and highly destructive SS-21 ground-to-ground rockets, fired against predetermined targets in Israel. All Israel's ports, airports, oil refining facilities, pre-positioning sites, vital junctions and population centres are within range of these missiles" (J.P.10-10-87).

Having a strip of land—the West Bank—to allow a few minutes flying time in aerial combat ceases to have much meaning. The missile development of the past decade has radically reduced Israel's military security. It can be argued that some state of peace with neighbours would give greater security than seeking to hold or obtain more land in Palestine.

Another problem that present attitudes cannot hope to solve is the rapid growth of the Arabs in Israel and the occupied territories:

"An apparent growing swath of Israeli opinion holds that unless the Palestinians acquire a homeland soon, Israel's national character may be radically diluted by the fast-growing—and up to now second class Palestinians—always a more telling argument within Israel than military or terrorist threats" (D.T.18-11-87).

It is not only the challenge of the growing proportion of Palestinians in Israel, but also Israel's inability to govern them. Military suppression is only a temporary solution. The rioting and violence in the Gaza strip in the latter part of December has been an ugly expression of Israel's inability to cope with the situation. In the refugee camps the teenage population has been brought up under appalling conditions; they

have little chance of work, nobody seems to care about them, so violence flares up sparked off by some incidence. Infiltrated terrorists are ready to stir up trouble. Under present methods there can be no improvement. The situation is becoming serious, and something other than a 'military' solution is needed. The situation adds to the troubled conscience of the ordinary Israeli. The harsh brutal treatment used by the special border police on the Arab youth makes at least some Israelis ashamed. They want a better way of coping with the problem.

These are some of the factors that increasingly persuade Israeli public opinion to look for another road to take, than that which they have taken since 1967. Increasingly they may be willing to negotiate a peace settlement rather than standing still and hoping time is somehow on their side.

4. **Syria:** This country is the other important element in the peace settlement picture. When Israel took the Golan Heights in 1967, Syria became an implacable enemy, always obstructing peace attempts.

Again, the prospects are better than they have been.

"Syria is the major reason why the Jordanians retain any hope at all of an international conference. They believe that President Hafez Assad, for his own reasons, has decided to moderate his position. Asked why the Damascus regime was more prepared now to participate in the peace process, a Jordanian official cited several factors which apparently have had an effect on Syria.

"Among them were the difficulties resulting from Syria's escalated involvement in Lebanon, and Iran's apparent refusal to help the Syrians consolidate their position there; the very serious deterioration of the Syrian economy; the fact that the continuing Iran-Iraq war has drained Arab financial resources that might have been earmarked for Syria; and the sharp European and American economic and diplomatic sanctions imposed on Syria last year after it was implicated in several terrorist incidents" (J.P.2-5-87).

"Assad at 57, faces growing internal political pressures. Some observers maintain he has never fully recuperated either politically or physically from a severe heart attack in 1983" (J.P. 16-5-87).

In the past year the Soviet has piled vast arms into Syria. It does not look like peace! But this may be Soviet 'cleverness'. It gives Gorbachev more leverage when negotiating with the U.S. He will have plenty of 'spare' troops he can offer to withdraw!

## Chapter 9: ISRAEL: RELIGION IN FERMENT

'Religion in ferment' is a heading to one of six articles that have appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* this year, all centred on the increasing conflict between observant and secular Jews in Israel today.

The 'religion in ferment' writer contrasts 'christian' countries today with Israel. In Britain, for instance, the christians are a minority, but exist happily side by side with the majority who have no interest in religion. There is no hostility between the two sections, no debate, all is comfortable and at peace—the peace of death. In Israel by contrast, there is vigorous debate, aggressiveness, occasional violence, that reveals a concern about religion—there is life. This is a development that has been unfolding from the day of the founding of the State of Israel; and has become a more dominating part of life in the last few years.

### THE PIONEERS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The great characters that formed the State of Israel were nearly all secularists. They had a real sense of their Jewishness, of Israel as their homeland, of Hebrew language as the proper bond of all Jews. They recognised in a general way the superior moral standards of their visionaries—the prophets, but everything was seen on a natural basis. They did not believe in a real God, in a God who had shaped their destiny. When Ben Gurion, the outstanding leader in the beginning of the State of Israel, was asked by his daughter if God existed, "He replied that he did not know". Sadly Ben Gurion and his assistants had no faith in a living personal God, and the Law of Moses had little place in their lives.

These Jews who built the State of Israel, and held responsible positions in the government had Askenaz origins; they were the Jews from Europe, as distinct from the Sephardi Jews from Eastern countries who came later. They were educated in the ways of the western world, they were capable men able to organise a nation into a state. They sought to build a state for Jews, but it was to be a state like other states, a democracy, a member of the United Nations, a modern state worthy of western civilisation, and accepted like all other states. It was

a state with all the usual functions of defence, technical education, science, economics and communications as conceived today—matters to which they said the Law of Moses was irrelevant.

With regard to religion, there was a declaration at the founding of the State guaranteeing freedom of religion, conscience and culture. This is referred to today as 'the status quo'.

## THE SEPHARDIM

The Eastern Jewish exiles returned during the 1950s. They belonged to the Sephardi Jewish faith. They were poor, ill-educated, out of tune with modern civilisation, and were generally despised by the Askenazi Jews. But most of them were devoted to the Torah—the law—not only in its ritual as the orthodox Askenazi Jews, but also having some appreciation of the God of Israel, and believing that the word of the prophets was being fulfilled in their return.

They have now been in Israel for some 30 years and a second generation exists. By now they are largely integrated into Israel's civil life. In the 1970s Mr. Begin, an Askenazi Jew from Europe, saw fit to espouse their interests, and they gave him their vote in the 1977 elections, when he and his Likud party came to power. From this point the Sephardi Jews became more influential. Also having a higher birthrate than the European Jews in Israel, they are approaching a majority.

These Sephardi Jews are exerting a religious pressure in Israel today, to bring the Law of Moses into daily life, a factor so noticeable that one of the six articles has the title "The Sephardi Revolution".

Altogether there are four groups that represent the growing religious element in Israel. They are: the Orthodox Askenazi Jews; the Ultra-Orthodox; the Yeshiva; and the Sephardim. They are all discussed in the articles referred to.

### 1. Orthodox Jews

The word Orthodox is applied usually to the European Askenazi Jew who respects the Law of Moses, sees the Law as a moral guide in life and politics, and is observant of the sabbath, religious marriage and the variety of rituals. This is certainly a considerable step forward from the secular position, though it may be little more than formalism for many, as we know from experience in this country.



The present Minister for Religious Affairs in the cabinet, Zevulun Hammer, is an Orthodox Jew, and in his position exerts a considerable influence in the schools on the rising generation. "He puts his faith less in legislation and more in education". Regarding the sabbath:

"We cannot treat the occasion as an ordinary unconsecrated day like the other six. Temporal occupations are put aside, place must be made for spiritual activities—if not religious worship, then reading, conversation, and family life".

Again, "Israel embodies a higher purpose—for all of us. We need to find an elevation of the heart in our Zionist homeland. We did not come to Israel just for negative reasons...There is something greater uniting us, a spirit whose fount and origin lie in Judaism...Heaven forbid that the light shed from Zion should be no more than the light of a discotheque" (J.P.26-9-87).

## 2. The Ultra-Orthodox

These are the zealots demanding that all who live in Israel shall conform to the Law of Moses and its ritual, and requiring Israel to turn away from today's science, economics, politics, etc. They are growing in boldness and are showing a new aggressiveness. They clash with the secular population who wish to enjoy their day of rest with entertainment and sport. They demand the closing of cinemas, football grounds, taxi and bus services. The secularists are becoming hostile through this disturbance of their peace and there have been violent clashes in Jerusalem. Their behaviour is the subject of several of the *Jerusalem Post* articles. It is admitted that they are making some headway.

Zvi Weinman, an ultra Orthodox Rabbi, expresses the demand that Israel must be more than a state of the Jews, it must be a Jewish State:

"If we don't believe in religion' says Weinman 'what are we doing in this land? God promised it to our ancestors on condition we observe the Torah. If we do not, then we are conquerors. We were united over the ages not by common ethnic descent, nor by common history, territory or language (we were scattered among the nations) but by a common Faith. In Judaism, nation and religion are one. Only when they are joined together can a Jewish territorial nationality be created" (J.P.26-9-87).

### 3. Yeshiva Students

The Yeshiva are students who have accepted religion—the study of the Torah and the Talmud—as their vocation. They belong in general to the Ultra-Orthodox. Their training centres are called Yeshivot. In the *Jerusalem Post* March 7th 1987, there was a whole page article dealing with the Yeshiva students under the heading “Army of the Lord”. It outlines the present position and reveals that there are an extraordinary number of Yeshiva students in Israel, and they are very generously cared for by the government. The article is critical of their favoured position. “Some 16,000 Yeshiva students in Israel are draft-age personnel who receive military deferment.” Taking all ages, the Ministry of Religious Affairs gives the total as 60,000. The government funding is estimated at well over 100 million dollars per annum.

“Never in the long and rich history of the Jewish people have there been as many Yeshiva students in one country as there are in Israel today”.

“The Six Day war was a turning point” says Lippel, Israel’s former director-general of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. “It sparked off a religious awakening and a growing sense of messianism”.

How far their study of the Torah and Talmud will lead the nation to the Bible is perhaps a doubtful matter.

### 4. The Sephardim Revolution

Many Jews of the Sephardi Jewish faith would be classed as ‘Ultra Orthodox’. They want no compromise with modern liberal attitudes, with its disregard of the word of God. The Sephardim Revolution reported in the *Jerusalem Post* appears to be a broad-based ‘back to religion’ movement among the population. It is represented in parliament by a small party, Shas, with four members, who are useful in having some influence on the nation’s leaders. The ‘revolution’ is independent of the Establishment, and is not highly organised; though it is creating movements—Or Hahaim Teshuva (‘return to religion’) is mentioned.

The driving force is Obvadia Yosef, a Sephardi rabbi. He is not only chief Rabbi, but also an influential figure as a judge—a member of the Rabbinical High Court...He is described as a man of outstanding scholarship and highly respected:

“The man is regarded as one of the outstanding halachists of this generation. The sheer breadth of his scholarship is staggering”.

"His role as a religious leader is now probably beyond comparison with anyone in this country".

"Within the Askenazi world of Yeshivot, both in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak (university), he is accorded, at least grudging respect, but more often the highest esteem, simply on the basis of his scholarship".

"Yosef is effectively the patron of the Or Hahaim network (back to religion) which has grown from nothing in the last decade or so, to the point where it now claims 153 different institutions throughout Israel".

The following further extracts will help to indicate what the 'Revolution' is about:

"It is important to understand that Shas (the political party, GP) is no more than one expression of the overall revolution that Ovadia Yosef is leading. It is the political arm of a larger movement. In many respects, the political activity is no more than a means to an end, not an end in itself.

"The main thrust of the movement, which has no name, but which we will call Shas for convenience, because the acronym for Sephardi Torah Guardians tells us most about what it is. And what it wants is education..."

"Take the show put on last week at Tel Aviv's Yad Eliahu stadium. On the same day that most of the country was tuned in to the State Football Cup final, the Or Hahaim 'teshuva' movement organised a 'grand demonstration' at the largest venue it could find. The idea was to bring together thousands of the movement's supporters, to hear some passionate oratory from its founder and head, Rabbi Reuven Elbaz, hailed as the number one 'returner to the fold' within the growing penitent movement in Israel."

"Elbaz's message to his audience on Tuesday night was simple. Kids have no hope to grow up as Jews within the secular system. They will end up in a spiritual vacuum that will suck them toward violence, drugs, sex, possible inter-marriage, certainly a split-away from their traditional parents. His solution: education through Talmud Torah schools in every locality. Here they would grow up with right values, become a source of pride to their parents, and not drift away from tradition."

Rabbi Yosef's quiet speech to the gathering was in the same vein:

"He spoke of penitence as helping to escape the spiritual void that secular society lived in. But he warned his audience, Torah study was the route to achieve these goals..."

Israel Lippel, already referred to as a former director-general of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, gives us a more authoritative assessment of increasing religious interest in Israel:

"And even in the general population there is a growing willingness to accept religious injunctions. I think that in a year or two football stadiums will be closed altogether on Shabbat and games held on some other day. If they had made this proposal five years ago there would have been a revolution.

"The religious parties today are also much more extreme on nationalist issues than a few years ago. This is a society in crisis and turning more and more to religion for an answer. Man cannot live by bread alone—you need to aspire to something larger. Socialism is not the answer today and to many religion seems to offer an answer." (J.P. 7-3-87).

## WHERE IS IT POINTING?

Now this increase in religion—in the law and the prophets—serious and genuine though it be, does not mean that the Abrahamic promises are understood, or they have given up heaven going, etc., but it surely can be regarded as a movement in the right direction, rather like the Non-Conformist movements of a century and more ago in this country. It can be a preliminary preparing of the ground for the work of Elijah:

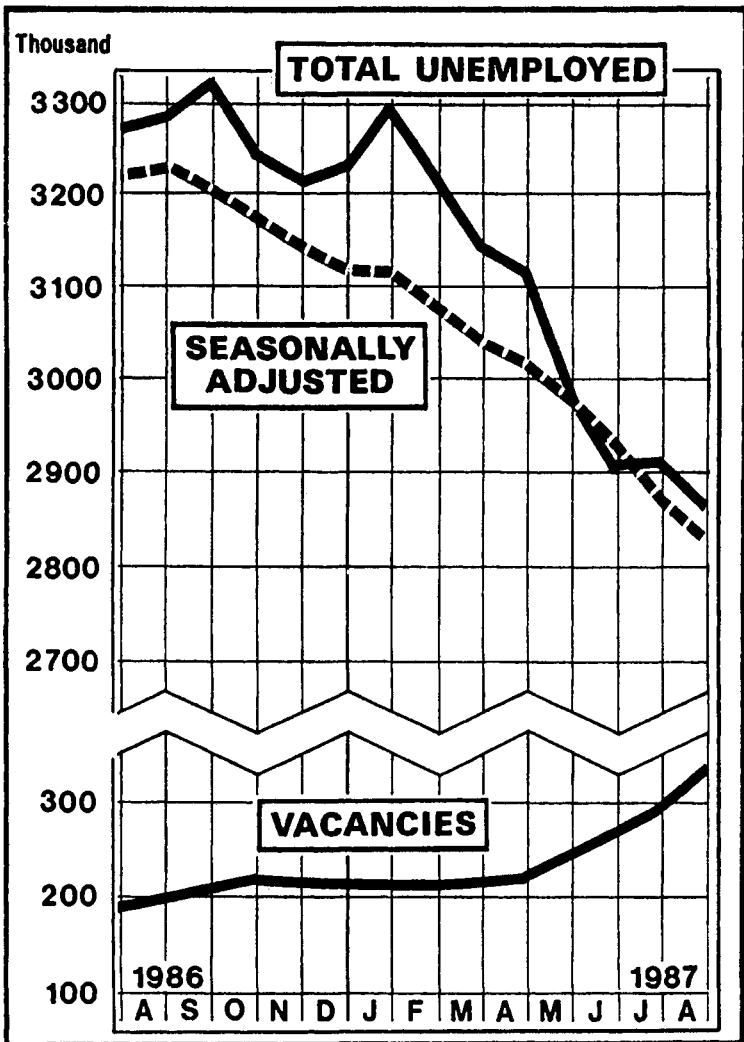
"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth (eretz-land) with a curse." (Mal. 4:4-6).

Elijah's mission to those in the land will bring greater enlightenment and preparedness among a proportion of the population concerning the appearing of Messiah, just as did John Baptist's preaching before the first appearing of the Lord.

And after the nation's calamity and humiliation, the present Israeli government, with its preoccupation with science, technological research, economics, communications, diplomacy, public debate, will pass from the scene and life will be based on a full implementation of the laws, statutes and judgments (Exodus chapters 20-23) put on record for the ordering of all aspects of life.



## Chapter 10: BRITAIN'S PROSPERITY AND ISAIAH 23

Britain emerged from two world wars—with only twenty years between them—drained of wealth and worn out. When the war was over government and people took the easiest path they could find; industrialists in general showed little drive and initiative; trade unions dominated the work force and brought great inefficiency. The nation's strength and standing in the world declined. The only bright spots were North Sea oil, and the skills of the City of London.

In the last ten years there has been a great change, and prosperity is increasingly apparent under the determination and drive of Mrs. Thatcher. Wealth is derived from three main sources: the export of oil; invisible earnings of the City; and through manufacturing efficiency and export of manufactured goods. In these several fields Britain has made a remarkable recovery.

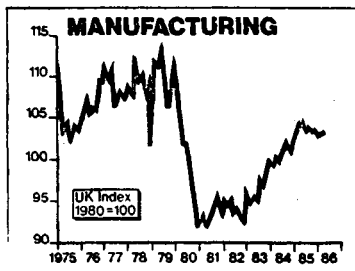
### OIL EXPORTS AND FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

North Sea oil came on stream in 1975. Exports and saved imports are estimated to have provided by 1986 £100 billion for the nation.

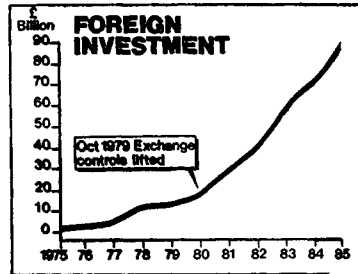
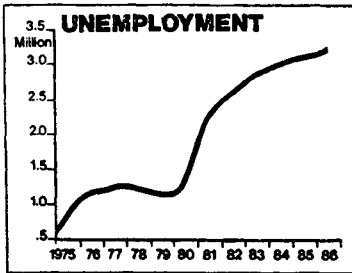
"That windfall has allowed us, as individuals and as a nation, to build portfolios overseas which were worth £250 billion according to official guesses, at the end of last year."

Large companies in America have been bought, Pension Fund managers have invested world-wide. The dividends from this have come back to Britain.

"In the past decade, the surplus on banking, insurance and tourism, has doubled to £5 billion...and will grow rapidly." (D.T. 29-7-86).



The three graphs show the decline in manufacturing and corresponding rise in unemployment, to be contrasted with the increasing rate of foreign investment.



## THE CITY OF LONDON'S CONTRIBUTION

The foreign investment just referred to is one aspect of the City's dealing. Trading on the Stock Markets, handling forward purchase of raw materials and food commodities with its commissions, arranging transport and insurance, are all a part of their activity. "£96 billion a day flows through London's financial markets" (G.W. 17-5-87). The recent contribution of the City to Britain's balance of payments in 1986 was £9.5 billion, an increase of 42% on 1985 (D.T. 21-7-87).

With the decline in the dollar, sterling is returning to its old status and importance.

## MANUFACTURING AND EXPORTS

The great change in Britain's outlook in 1987 relates to its increased industrial activity and fall in unemployment. The graph on page 76 takes us to September. By the end of November, unemployment had fallen to 2.6 million.

Factory output figures for July was reported under the heading "Factory output hits a record for Thatcher". And again for October: "High output dispels fear of recession" (D.T. 17-9-87, 16-12-87).

"Fears of a recession were swept aside yesterday after news of a further surge of industrial output in October. The economy has now

built up such a head of steam that it could be months before the stock market crash slows it down. Manufacturers are producing goods faster than at any time since the early 1970s."

"The fact is that Mrs. Thatcher, after eight years of unremitting effort, is at last forcing British industry and commerce to adopt a more positive approach to earning our living in the world. We are becoming leaner, harder, fitter, and thank God, more ruthless. This is a cultural change of enormous importance, a real watershed in our history. The effects are cumulative and now plainly perceived at home and abroad. We are back in the world race to keep in the front rank of the trading powers: in with a chance after decades of decline" (D.T.3-11-87).

Attitudes towards Mrs. Thatcher are very different depending on political outlook, but the above can hardly be challenged. And there is no reason to doubt the comment that "morale among entrepreneurs, the professionals, the bourgeoisie capitalist who are the bedrock of a Western democratic society, has never been higher".

Britain is better placed than most countries to face the world recession, great or small, that is expected.

## **THE HARLOT OF ISAIAH CHAPTER 23**

Christadelphian literature from the days of Brother Thomas has recognised that this chapter, while primarily dealing with ancient Tyre, also covers Britain as the last representative of Tyre and Tarshish. Tyre's 'migration' is expressed in verse 7: "Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn".

The chapter foretells the disaster that came upon Tyre at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, but also prophesies that she would revive after 70 years:

"And it shall come to pass after the end of 70 years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (v.17). These prophecies came to pass.

Then follows the last verse 18:

"and her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for



them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing."

This verse as a follow-on from verse 17 is puzzling. Ancient Tyre certainly revived after 70 years, but how can one say her wealth then became holiness to the LORD, and was available for those dwelling before the LORD?

It has been recognised that this could have some sense if applied to the latter-day Tyre—Britain. But in making the application there was the difficulty of identifying the "70 years" decline followed by revival.

Perhaps we can now see the application. The change of fortune has only begun in the past few years, shall we say 1984-1988. Take away 70 years and we are in the first World War 1914-18.

Britain had been a great Power during the nineteenth century, developing its far-flung empire and trade, enjoying peace and prosperity for most of the century. But moral decline had already set in with the impact of Higher Criticism and Evolution on the authority of the Bible. The 1914-18 war was God's chastisement and it brought Britain low; or rather she gradually declined. It would be quite reasonable to see the 70 years' decline starting from the first World War. And the 70 years brings us to the present.

We see no glory to God in this revival. The revival is all self-interest and materialism, all means being used to win the potential order. It is harlot-like. We note the language used in a previous quotation, "We are becoming leaner, harder, fitter, and thank God, more ruthless".

Why is God bringing about, or allowing, this revival? Probably on the same basis as Israel's prosperity (Israel is to have 'A great spoil') before being overrun by the Northern invasion, that she might have her pride humbled. This present effort of Britain will be a struggle in the face of a world-deteriorating situation, and events will probably isolate Britain from Europe. Then there will be calamity:

"Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind" (Psalm 48:7).

"For the day of the LORD shall be upon everyone that is proud and lifted up... And upon all the ships of Tarshish...and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down" (Isa.2:13-17).

'Ships of Tarshish' were the trading ships of the Phoenicians. In Britain's future she will probably suffer both a naval defeat and trading calamity.

Thus prepared she will do the King's bidding. Greatly humbled by the hand of God, as Israel also will be humbled, she will come as a suppliant to the King. When the King and his Bride rejoice together in Zion:

"and the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift (of tribute), even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour" (Psa.45:11).

She will receive her instructions from the King:

"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" (Isa.60:9).

Then, as Isaiah 23:18 says, Britain's wealth and merchandise shall be holiness to the LORD, and will provide clothing for the returning exiles to Zion.

## Chapter 11: THE EEC: AN UNHAPPY YEAR

The European Economic Community, often referred to as the Common Market, was established by the Treaty of Rome in the late 1950s. Last year an important step was taken in the signing of the Single European Act amending the original Treaty of Rome. The object of this Act is to create an 'Internal Market' by 1992, defined as "an area without frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services, and capital is ensured". The Act also gives new powers to the authorities running the E.E.C.—the European Parliament and the Commissioners. Increasingly national parliaments will have to conform to the requirements of the E.E.C. Authority.

### FAILURE TO FULFIL OBLIGATIONS

This year was the occasion when the intention of the Act had to be acted on, not in word only, but in deed. And nationalism was found to be too strong to conform to this unification. This was not surprising to the Bible student, for prophecy had long put on record that the beast in the final conflict with Christ has its power as distinct horns—ten independent Powers.

The issue this year was clear and simple. Some two-thirds of the 25 billion, approximately, handed over each year by the participating nations to the E.E.C., is used up in supporting farmers to produce more than can be consumed, giving an ever increasing surplus mountain. It sounds ridiculous. Mrs. Thatcher and the British government have been arguing for reform for years.

To carry out its functions, the E.E.C. authorities recently have demanded more income, and this year Mrs. Thatcher made a resolute stand—not a penny more until this vast support to farmers is corrected. West Germany takes the largest part of this support money, and Chancellor Kohl equally resolutely said that politically he could not agree to facing 700,000 angry farmers. The battle has gone on all the year with no solution at the end. An additional emergency meeting was held in Copenhagen in December resulting in no progress. "Another disaster for Europe" is how the French *Le Monde* described the Summit.

The picture through the year is expressed in some headlines. In February there was some hope:

**"FOREIGN MINISTERS SEEK REFORMED E.E.C. BUDGET"**

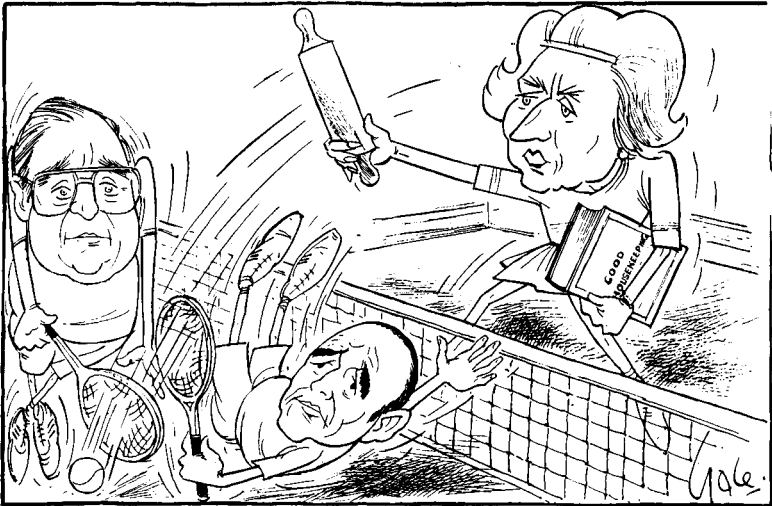
"Common Market Foreign Ministers began informal negotiations designed to lead eventually to the most radical reform in the EEC's financial structure since it was created 30 years ago" (D.T. 23-2-87).

By July the headline ran:

**"LONE STAND BY THATCHER ON EEC COSTS": "Chirac scorns 'housewife's' views"**

"After two days of often heated and bitter negotiations the meeting broke up last night..." (D.T. 1-7-87).

The French scorn of 'housewife' budget discipline, produced the accompanying cartoon.



ADVANTAGE HOUSEWIFE

Chancellor Khol and Prime Minister Chirac

It was the same again in September:

### “EEC BUDGET MEETING ENDS IN DEADLOCK”

“An all night meeting of the Common Market Budget Ministers, designed to agree spending levels for the EEC in 1988 broke up early yesterday morning in complete deadlock” (D.T. 19-9-87).

### FAMINE AND HEALTH

“Britain will make a determined attempt this week to rescue the Common Market’s faltering drive for agreement on sweeping financial reforms. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Secretary, takes the task to Brussels today, where the EEC foreign ministers begin a meeting” (D.T. 23-11-87).

And so to the Emergency meeting in Copenhagen in December, which again failed.



Reagan and Gorbachev look on at the EEC meeting!

Britain is well placed to continue its unpleasant insistence on financial reform:

“The Common Market Commission appointed Mr. David Williamson, the chief advisor to Mrs. Thatcher on EEC affairs, to be its new Secretary-General yesterday.

“The permanent £70,000—after tax—job is the most powerful in the EEC bureaucracy and will give Mr. Williamson, 52, the opportunity of shaping EEC’s character for many years” (D.T. 17-9-87).

## WHITHER GERMANY?

It happens that West Germany takes over the Presidency of the Common Market for six months on January 1st. Dr. Kohl, as President, has a hard task of providing the next meeting in February with an acceptable plan that will solve the financial crisis. Commenting on this, the *Daily Telegraph* Common Market correspondent wrote:

“As West Germany braces itself to take over the six-month presidency of the Common Market on Friday, the strength of Bonn’s commitment to the community is being increasingly doubted in other EEC capitals.”

“More realistically though, the impression has grown that, faced with a threat to its 700,000 farmers, Bonn is making swift retreat from its previous enthusiasm for the EEC”.

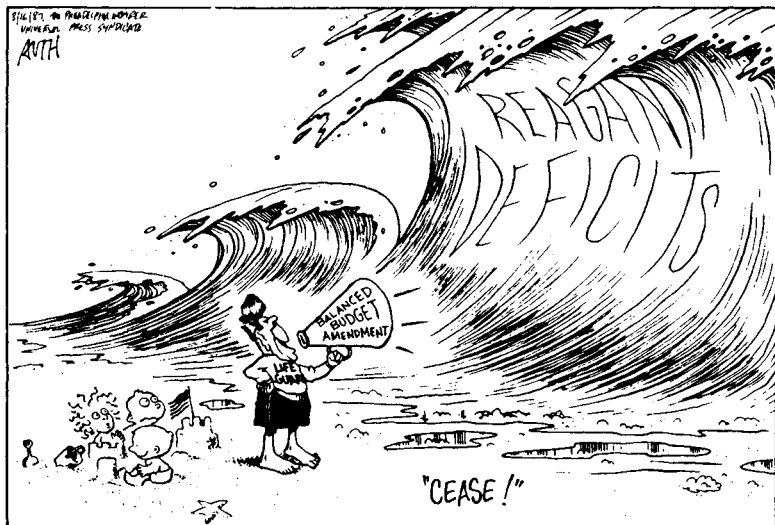
In the light of these comments we may begin to wonder whether West Germany might seek its interest in the direction of the Soviet, rather than being hampered by EEC restrictions. We remember that Mr. Gorbachev has been wooing West Germany this year. Another factor relates to America and its financial deficit.

We are well acquainted with the trade deficit the U.S. has been running for years, with their government not feeling concerned about it. The *Washington Post* had a sombre article pointing out that a crisis is getting near:

### “SPECTRE AT THE FEAST”

“In the days when the United States was a creditor, it drew a steady stream of investment income from abroad to raise the American standard of living. But now that the country is a debtor, the stream has reversed and—for the first time since 1914—the net flow is going abroad. That’s another signal of an approaching crisis.

“This country’s international deficit was running in the summer quarter at a rate of 173 billion dollars a year. That’s the amount the rest of the world has to put into this economy, in dollars, to keep its economy in balance. But the rest of the world is getting tired of it. The appeal to put billions more into the dollar, a declining currency that its own government refuses to defend, is very limited. Not only the United States, but all the trading nations together are headed for a disaster unless they can change course rapidly and forcefully”.



The writer was far from hopeful of this in a presidential year. The trade deficit was worse not better at the end of the year. October showed a 25% increase on the September figure.

Now this financial situation, supported by several other factors relating to the US and Western Europe, makes it certain that troops and to some extent weapons will be withdrawn from Europe. It is West Germany that will face the consequence of this. As another writer says:

"If you take US troops and weapons away, Germany will be hopelessly exposed on the NATO front line, and will move inevitably towards a unified but neutralised Germany."

A move in this direction would have the support of West German public opinion; and its industrialists see great opportunities in collaborating with the Soviet. If West Germany does, in its self-interest, move in this direction, it would make the Soviet take-over of Western Europe that much easier.

## FRENCH-GERMAN COLLABORATION

It may not be appreciated that in the growing 'cooperation' between France and Germany the driving force comes from France. This is noticeable in events this year. Under the revived W.E.U., Western European Union, France and Germany this year had joint military exercises. (The W.E.U. is a group of seven European nations concerned with defence matters, distinct from NATO, which looks to the U.S. as its head). After the exercises, it was President Mitterand who—without any consultation—announced he was proposing there should be set up a Defence Council for coordinating the two countries' military analyses" (G.W. 11-11-87).

A month later it was again France, through its Prime Minister, Mr. Chirac, which proposed the setting up of a Franco-German economic and financial committee" (G.W. 22-11-87).

France was the main instigator of the Common Market concept in the early 1980s, as a way to integrate Germany into a group of nations on an economic basis and avoid repetition of another military aggressive Germany dominating Europe. It is this fear that still operates, and one can realise France fears a link up of West Germany and the Soviet as occurred at the beginning of World War II.

If there is a movement by Germany as has just been outlined, it would bring a degree of paralysis of the Common Market, and we might wonder whether Britain might follow Germany's example and pursue her own path.



## Chapter 12: VIOLENCE AND GROWING FEAR

We are all familiar with the words of Luke chapter 21:

“...the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth”.

‘Men’s hearts failing them for fear’ has not yet arrived, but we can see an increasing number of factors and happenings that are accumulating, and which will lead to this situation. The increase in violence, a marked feature of 1987, should find reference in Milestones, as our world moves on to its Noah-like finale.

### VIOLENCE

In Britain armed personal violence is a striking feature of the year. Armed robbery, security guards shot, police in shoot-outs, mindless shootings in public places, increasing number of murders and family shootings. Add to this the ever-growing extent of mugging and rape.

“Some parts of London and other major cities have become too dangerous for milkmen, postmen, rent-collectors, maintenance men, police and emergency services to work without special precautions” (D.T.9-2-87).

People even in their own homes do not feel safe. Such is the growing state of personal insecurity.

On a larger scale, in so many countries there is civil strife and killings, in addition to larger wars in the Iraq-Iran region and Central America. Think of Ulster, Lebanon, Israel and its refugee camps, Argentine, North and South Africa, India and the Sikhs, Sierra Leone and the Philippines.

In this consideration of violence is the fear of nuclear war, and the use of poison gas. The Chernobyl disaster and the wide debate this year about nuclear weapons in Europe has concentrated the minds of the public on the fearful consequence of nuclear action. At the moment they clutch at a straw and find hope in the intended reduction in Europe; but 96 percent of the nuclear weapons will still remain.

When we think of growing violence, the mind goes back to the account of Noah's day.

"And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them...Make thee an ark..." (Gen. 6:13-14).

Such was the state when Noah began to build the ark, and if he was 120 years building it, what was the violence like at the end of this time? How much worse will violence become in our time?

Other happenings beside violence are bringing people to a state of fear.

## **FAMILY INSTABILITY**

How much unhappiness and insecurity does the break-up of family life produce; and this continues to increase at an alarming rate. This year there has emerged one related aspect, the evil of child abuse: "Massive increase to 30,000 on child abuse registers" (D.T. 11-12-87).

The long-term effect of divorce has been commented on, that it will lead to more violence:

"Disaster looming for families as divorces rocket"

"Complacency will only bequeath unmanageable social institutions and angry personal and civil disorder on an unprecedented and terrifying scale".

## **FAMINE AND HEALTH**

This year has seen the appreciation of the effect of the AIDS virus, and the frightening projection of future deaths. "Ten million may have the AIDS virus." Apart from western civilisation, it is reported that "AIDS is wiping out Africa's urban middle class". It is now found in 75 countries.

Soaring birth rates, drought, famine and water pollution affect large parts of the world. Even for the well-off their minds are disturbed with looking after those things that are coming on the world.

## **WORLD ECONOMIC INSTABILITY**

The October Stock Market crash is not a one-off happening. More likely the rapid uncontrollable movements in money matters due to electronic communication, suggests that panic of this sort will

continue, fed by national self-interest and greed. And the layman having shock headlines thrown at him on the TV and newspapers easily absorbs the state of insecurity. Three days in a week the headlines ran:

**"SHARES PLUNGE AFTER COLLAPSE OF WALL STREET"**

"City has worst day for a century".

**"WORLDWIDE CHAOS ON EXCHANGES"**

"Share traders round the world were in a state of shock last night, after another terrible 24 hours".

**"SHARES DIVE AS MARKETS PANIC AGAIN"**

These were early days in October, and at the end of the year, barely less impressive headlines were still appearing.

And the world recession that is expected to develop, still lies ahead. It all adds to men's sense of insecurity and growing fear.

**ABNORMAL NATURAL EVENTS AND DISASTERS**

It is a feature of the ending of any period of man's wickedness and misrule, that God shows His displeasure in abnormal 'natural' happenings. His control of the weather is referred to a number of times in the Old Testament. Famines and droughts were brought about by God on lands and even cities:

"I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city" (Amos 4:7).

Through Haggai He tells the returned exiles that their pitiful state was His doing:

"I smote you with blasting and mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD".

The Master warned his disciples to expect such things as the Mosaic Age drew to an end:

"And there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginning of sorrows" (Mark 13:8).

Over the past few years there have been an increasing number of reports of abnormal weather patterns from various parts of the world. Weather swings between extremes instead of being stable. At the practical level this affects agriculture and harvests. Men become alarmed when destruction occurs on a bigger scale, as it did in South East England where a hurricane wreaked havoc. As such happenings become more frequent, it will add to 'hearts failing'.

Man-made disasters are increasing and will increase. These are generally due to man's carelessness or over-clever inventions. England has had this year its Zebrugge ferry disaster, the King Cross tube station horrific fire, and various air and rail crashes.

All these unhappy happenings, as they increase, will add to men's hearts failing them for fear.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

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Lord, Thy judgements now are waking,  
Let not Thy compassion sleep;  
But while earthly thrones are shaking  
Sure and firm Thy purpose keep;  
O Lord hear us, be Thou near us  
When the storm shall o'er us sweep.



Peace and safety . . . This was the dominant theme which we heard during 1987. Chernobyl was perhaps the catalyst which changed the minds of Europeans and especially those in the Soviet Union, about nuclear weapons. So we have ended the era of the cold war and have entered the era of 'peace' where Russia is in tactical retreat to bolster up its economy and to supply consumer goods.

On the religious scene, the Pope has his own brand of "peace". He has sought reconciliation with not only the Greek Orthodox Church but also the Russian Orthodox.

In the Middle East peace for Israel is on the horizon, with Russia wanting to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Gorbachev recently told Syria that Israel had a right to existence and that war had failed miserably to achieve anything.

So, "peace" is on the lips of many.

With this book in your hands you "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you like a thief".

