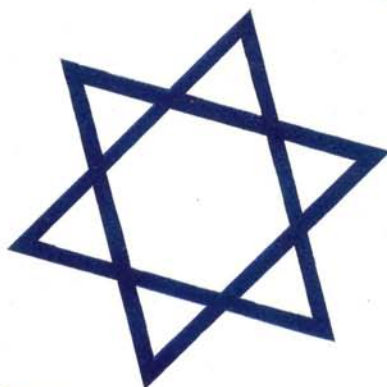


MILESTONES

1992



MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

**A Review of the
World Events of
1992 in the light
of Bible Prophecy**

Graham & Donald Pearce

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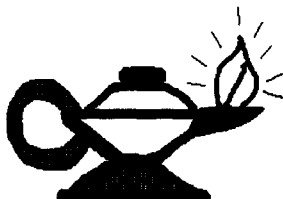
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PREFACE

1992 has been a year of indecision. In every sphere of human interest, international to domestic, 1992 seems a year of paralysis and growing disillusionment. The previous year saw a US President riding the crest of a popularity wave, having rallied 28 nations to take up arms and defeat the Iraqis when they suddenly invaded and conquered Kuwait and put at risk the life line of Middle East oil—the fuel of the Western world. It seemed that the President was certain to win a second term in office, but he was beaten by the tide of economic malaise and the invasion of external goods into the USA. So the man who coined the popular phrase “the new world order” and presided over the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe has now passed off the world stage. This political phenomenon has increased the sense of uncertainty in the world. The US is acting as though it is the only superpower among the nations, but it is now in the hands of a new driver whose track record hardly comforts the world.

Across the Atlantic indecision has been the distinguishing characteristic of the nations. The angels are busy changing (in more ways than one) the key players of the world stage. In what seemed to outsiders a case of political suicide Mr Major took Britain out of the EC Exchange Rate Mechanism in September. He began to preach to other members of the EC the virtue of keeping their own currency and identity. The highly publicised Maastricht agreement, which he had been determined to push through the British Parliament, may in fact never be ratified by the UK. Major’s change of heart and sermonizing to EC members may have strengthened the resolve of Germany and France to press ahead with their economic unification and those of the Benelux countries who are happy to keep up with their pace and confidence. But Mr Major stood firm with a lionhearted statement “I will never let our British identity be lost in a federal Europe!”

Through all the indecision the hand of Almighty God effects His will.

And what does Yeltsin do with Russia? The vast but humiliated nation is locked in indecision. How can a socialist economy, affecting 300 million people be suddenly changed about in 12 months? This is what the world asks him to do. His people too, are anxious, poor and fear a future of which they have no previous experience. Russia and the former Soviet Republics are in a grave state of flux and indecision. We would be very foolish to write her off because of her present

humiliation. Very major changes could occur in a short time with a nation so much in need and wanting strong leadership. While it may be difficult to visualize the Russians going back to Communism, it is quite easy to see them accepting with open arms a man of bold and hearty leadership qualities who can strike a sense of destiny and pride into this great nation. Our Biblical understanding has stood the analysis of 150 years and we see no reason to change it, even if present troubles have set back the Russians for a season.

While uncertainty has characterized much of the world, we have seen startling changes in Israel since the recent change of government. The peace process has taken a sharp turn to become a prominent issue in Israeli politics. The Knesset recently voted to make contact with the PLO legal and this decision paves the way for further developments in this area, despite the growing pressure from the radical Hamas faction in the Gaza strip.

Ezekiel 38:12-13 speaks of the prominence of peace in Israel at the time of Gog's advance. Paul too speaks about the vociferous declarations of peace and security which will precede the dramatic intervention of the Lord in world affairs.

It is also interesting that despite these movements towards peace, prosperity in the Western economies has proved to be elusive. In European political discussions the states of western and eastern Europe are spoken of as the "have" and "have-not" nations. The commentators have been emphasizing towards the end of the year the need for Western Europe to find some way of incorporating the poorer East into her economic plans, not only to expand her market and enjoy the primary materials of the East, but also to bind a former enemy into a league of friendship and common security.

The prevailing economic recession is very widespread. Whether in the US, Canada, UK, South Africa, Australia or New Zealand the same topics of recession, unemployment, and social degeneration are the matters of concern and no one man could possibly provide universal answers—before the coming of our Master. Two major issues stand out though. The first is the effect of **greed** of the 1980's. The avaricious policies of the financial high flyers of the previous decade have now affected many millions of the middle class who followed them in over-spending. It is not surprising the recession is deep and persistent.

Another major issue must be **automation** of manufacture and business. New processes have been brought in to reduce manpower and indeed they do, by many millions worldwide. So the work and livelihood of many is discounted in the mad rush to survive. The answer? There is none until the Lord is in the earth again.

These trends are in direct contrast to the teaching of the Master:

“Take no (anxious) thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink...” “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon”. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you”.

How greatly do these simple and faithful statements impinge upon our supple conscience today? We need time to ourselves so as to re-assess our priorities and objectively determine where we are going and where we should be going. The talk of papers and commentators, employers and fellow employees, is all about money, position, possessions and prestige. Let us be careful, brethren and sisters, lest the values of a very evil world eventually rub into our minds. The Bible at work for lunchtime reading is an excellent concept to refresh the mind, cleanse it from other competing thoughts, and embolden us to witness to the pure and satisfying days that are coming. Don't let up in our preaching. It is much too easy today to say inwardly, ‘oh, this person would never be interested, wouldn't even know what we were talking about’. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the very end, and we never know quite who might respond to the Gospel as some amazing things are recorded among the ecclesias even in these days.

Within our homes we have our dear children to foster lovingly in the Truth, disciplined indeed as occasion requires to save them from this present evil world (Prov. 13:24; 23:14), but specially and consciously prepared for the Service of Christ and his people, both now and in the age to come.

The indecision on the world scene must fill us with resolve. The work is great and the time is far spent. Many ‘mission’ fields are white to harvest...With the inspiration of a year's review, let us press on as valiant soldiers in the work of Truth.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light”.

B. N. Luke,
Secretary, January 1993

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Abbreviations

Daily Telegraph—DT

Guardian Weekly—GW

Jerusalem Post—JP

Comments added by the author—GP

Chapter 1:

AMERICA'S GROWING INFLUENCE IN ISRAEL & THE MIDDLE EAST

Introduction

Over the years we have seen the change from an East - West to a North - South conflict of nations. Since Brother Thomas' days our community has been watching developments in the Middle East, looking for the firm foothold of Britain and the young lions in this area. The events of "Desert Storm" saw a thrilling coming together of Britain and America and certain Commonwealth countries and other nations, in order to stand against the Iraqi aggression. Since then steps have continued to establish this "King of the South" power in this area. At the end of the chapter we look briefly at the Scriptural basis for this outlook. Suffice it to say, the foremost of these young lions is America, and so most of this chapter involves her moves.

THE CHANGE IN USA OVERSEAS MILITARY PLANS

The ending of the "cold war" has brought with it a "Peace Dividend" - most countries are cutting back on their defence expenditure. This opportunity to cut costs is being gratefully seized as the damaging effects of a world-wide recession are felt. America is no exception. She plans to reduce her defence spending by 4% per year over the next 5 years. Many of the cuts are planned for Europe. At the start of the Gulf war, America had 314,000 troops in Europe. She is planning to retain less than half that number. Her European based air force units are to be cut from 9 units to 3 or 4. With growing anti-American feeling in Europe and a desire by Europe to stand on her own feet, there will be increasing pressure to reduce even these levels. There is talk of halving these *reduced* levels.

The cutbacks have led to a shift in her defence planning. In the future it would not be so easy to mount another Desert Storm campaign, which involved moving an immense army with its weapons at least across Europe and much of it half way round the world. Moving men is not so difficult - it is the heavy equipment that causes problems. So the new concept is of **pre-positioning**. This involves storing equipment

close to potential trouble spots - so that only troops have to be flown in at a time of conflict. The Middle East is seen as a prime trouble spot. Alongside this pre-positioning of equipment, America plans to involve friendly states in these areas in regular joint exercises.

America had hoped to retain in Saudi Arabia the considerable quantity of supplies remaining after Desert Storm, but she has not had the cooperation that she wished. Saudi Arabia has, however, purchased her own armaments from America as we shall consider shortly, but these are not under the direct control of America. However the level of joint American/Arab exercises has increased by a factor of five in comparison with 1989.

America is increasingly relying on her navy to ensure a continued military presence in the area. Unlike armies and air forces which have to observe carefully the whims of the host country, the navy retains its territorial independence.

THE SPECIAL USA - ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

With the failure to pre-position weapons in Saudi Arabia, America has turned to Israel. In spite of their many ups and downs, the two countries have long enjoyed a special relationship.

This has been boosted during the past year. A Jerusalem Post article in September gave the details.

"US, Israel to upgrade military links

Israel and the US are engaged in the most sweeping review of their military relationship in at least 10 years, according to sources close to the negotiations....

In the area of military supply cooperation, at least three main issues are being addressed. First, the US is considering pre-positioning in Israel some \$3-4 billion in combat equipment for a full division, most likely belonging to the US European Command. Some \$100 million worth of equipment is currently pre-positioned in Israel. While the additional equipment would be for exclusive US use, sources say it would enhance Israel's role in the US defense and help deter an Arab attack. Pentagon officials had first asked Arab countries if they wanted to pre-position the equipment, but were turned down, sources suggested.

Second, existing legislation that has not yet been implemented is on the agenda. During the Gulf crisis, Congress allocated \$700 million in

surplus US stocks, plus another \$200 million in existing stocks. To date, the US has cited a shrinking Pentagon budget as a reason for rebuffing Israeli requests for the equipment, reportedly including Apache helicopters.

On the technological side, the administration wants to integrate Israel into its Global Protection System - the new name for "Star Wars." The US is also willing to discuss Israel's desire for more US high technology" (JP 26-9-92).

The article also stated that at the moment the US gives \$1.8 billion in military assistance, and \$1.2 billion in nonmilitary assistance. (60% of the \$7.4 billion in US foreign aid goes to three countries - Israel, Egypt and Turkey). In December it was reported that America had committed herself to this level of aid into 1994.

Some of the above steps have now been taken further.

Pre-positioning: In October it was reported that \$300 million in US owned equipment would shortly be delivered for pre-positioning in Israel.

Surplus stock: America has agreed to supply Israel with an unspecified number of advanced attack helicopters "in order to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge" (JP 10-10-92).

GPS: In 1986 Israel was invited to join the NATO allies in participating in the SDI - Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") programme. Israel is in fact the largest foreign participant. This October Israel was invited to join "GPS" - the Global Protection System.

At the moment this system is only at a concept stage. It involves America and Russia working together to provide a common missile defense system. America sees the future threat coming not from Russia, but from the many smaller countries which have or are acquiring missile systems. America wants to have Israel as an ally in the Middle East, protected by this warning/ counter attack system, and also providing her technical skills, which are greatly respected by America.

Other investments. In the next chapter we consider the latest investment plans by America in Israeli businesses.

Other benefits that Israel offers

Israeli skills

Israel was able to offer America valuable intelligence help in the Gulf War, by way of her advanced remote-controlled spy planes. These essentially are model aircraft on a big enough scale to carry remote-controlled television cameras. She was able also to help with Israeli-developed mine clearing equipment, and shared her know-how on reactive tank armour. She has many other skills to offer, and a paragraph in a recent article summed it up, under the heading:-

"Strategic ties worth enhancing

Israel has formidable military forces, intelligence capabilities, militarily relevant R & D skills, strategically located ports and airfields, training facilities, medical infrastructure, and high-quality equipment maintenance skills. Israel willingly allows the US to benefit from all this. Without Israel, the US could not duplicate these benefits, even if it spent many billions of dollars" (JP 24-10-92).

Naval facilities

With the increasing importance to the US of maintaining a strong naval presence in the Middle East, Israel has been able to play an important role. At Haifa, Israel has excellent naval facilities. Her high standards of workmanship, her use of American standards in engineering, her electronic skills, the extensive use of English, make it an ideal forward naval base for America. The sailors like the recreational facilities in a country which is so liberal compared with the Arab countries. So America is making increasing use of these excellent facilities which are relatively close at hand, saving the many ship-days required for a return trip to the States.

AMERICA'S TWO-CENTRE APPROACH

To avoid Arab hostility to their plans, for the past 10 years America has divided the Middle East into two zones. The Arab countries of the Gulf come under the US Central Command (CENTCOM), whose headquarters have been back in Florida. Negotiations are in hand to move the HQ to Bahrain in the Gulf. Israel, however, comes within the sphere of the US European Command (EUCOM), which co-ordinates America's activities in Europe and her navy in the Mediterranean. This

is one reason why Israel was not directly involved in the Gulf War, the other being that CENTCOM would not give Israel the codes necessary for their air force to know which planes were enemy and which were the allies. When General Norman Schwartzkopf became Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM, his area of jurisdiction did not include Israel. This policy of America has enabled her to minimize hostility on the part of the Arabs to what she does with Israel.

AMERICA'S GROWING INFLUENCE IN THE GULF

We shall look country by country at what has been happening in the past year.

Saudi Arabia

Both during the Gulf War and in the 2 years following, America has been selling advanced weaponry to Saudi Arabia. The aim is to double her fighter aircraft strength from the pre-war days of 60 aircraft to 120. It involves replacing older models by more advanced ones. The tank strength is to be greatly increased to around 700. An ultimate doubling of its army of 45,000 and a tripling of its 35,000-man national guard is envisaged.

Egypt

The Gulf War established Egypt as the main Arab channel to the American and Western European governments. Her cooperation has led to America writing off Egypt's military debts of \$7 billion, and she continues to receive substantial American aid. Military exercises between the two countries are held regularly.

Jordan

Jordan has been badly hit economically through her decision to back Saddam Hussein. Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States cut off aid worth \$400 million a year. Unemployment is running at 30% and inflation at 10%. In March, King Hussein of Jordan visited Washington and was warmly welcomed. He is also a regular visitor to London. America has restored her economic aid of \$30 million a year. Israel apparently pleaded with America to assist Jordan, as a weak Jordan

would not be in Israel's interests. Both London and Washington have urged the Gulf States to restore their aid to Jordan.

In August, King Hussein flew to America to have a kidney removed. As an unfit man, peace with Israel is now an even more desirable goal. In the next chapter we look at the breakthrough in Israeli/Jordanian relations.

Kuwait

The rebuilding of Kuwait has gone on at a remarkable pace, largely with American and some British help. Kuwait is reluctant to re-enter the Arab world.

"Sheik Jaber.. is reluctant to trust his friends. Egypt and Syria offered to lend ground troops as a deterrent against the threat of future Iraqi aggression in exchange for billions of dollars in economic aid. But Kuwait wants no Arab soldiers stationed on its soil. Instead, the Kuwaitis are almost totally reliant on the US for protection. They had hoped that American troops would stay, but have contented themselves with a 10-year security agreement allowing the US to maintain weapons and conduct exercises in Kuwait" (Time 27-1-92).

In November, Kuwait placed an order with America for 236 tanks, worth £800 million. Britain was very disappointed at not getting this order, blaming political pressure by the Americans.

BRITAIN'S MIDDLE EAST ROLE

Saudi Arabia

Britain is continuing to supply Tornado fighter planes and sophisticated equipment to Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait

In February, Britain signed a defence pact with Kuwait:

"Britain and Kuwait sign defence pact

The Memorandum of Understanding also provides a defence framework which could provide billions of pounds of badly needed defence-industry orders.

Mr King, Defence Secretary, said the memorandum demonstrated Britain's 'firm intention to underpin security and stability in the Gulf region'.

Signing the agreement at Lancaster House in London, the Kuwaiti Defence Minister, Sheik Ali Saba al Salem al-Sabah, said 'I think the shadow of Great Britain would be the deterrent that we want'. Among the contracts Britain is hoping to conclude with Kuwait are the supply of 200 Challenger tanks worth more than £500 million, Sandown class minesweepers, Westland Black Hawk helicopters, Hawk trainer/fighters and Tucano trainers" (DT 12-2-92).

As mentioned on the previous pages, Britain in fact lost the tank order to America, after much political pressure had been placed on Kuwait by America. This led to the greater involvement of the British government in the supply of British equipment. In December Britain's Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the Kuwaiti government to act as the agent for British arms purchases by Kuwait's army, navy and air force. A £1 billion order for armoured vehicles is in the offing, which Britain is expecting to win.

In March the British Royal Marines held joint exercises in Kuwait, the first since the Gulf War. They are expected to exercise frequently in Kuwait. Although not allowed to retain equipment here, they are ready to be redeployed at a moment's notice. They also expect to hold additional exercises with American troops (DT 4-5-92).

Yemen

In March the British Overseas Development Administration approved a £4.65 million grant to help pay for 600 tractors for Yemen (DT 30/5/92).

India

Although India lies outside the Middle East, it seems appropriate to deal here with the continuing re-establishment of British and American links with India. In 1971 Mrs Indira Gandhi signed a 20 year defence pact with the Soviet Union and she purchased a great deal of Soviet military equipment. With her dramatic assassination in 1984, that pro-Soviet outlook was changed. Mrs Thatcher visited India in 1985 and the traditional ties between Britain and India were re-established. In the same year India and the US had signed an agreement covering high-technology trade and weapons. It takes time to realign a country's outlook. With

the collapse of the Soviet Union, that pathway is made easier. India is seeing that the future lies with her old allies. In 1991, India and the US signed an agreement for greater military cooperation.

Ever since the death of Mrs Gandhi, the US has tried to interest India in holding joint naval exercises, but was always turned down. This is now no longer the case.

"Plotting a new course

Joint naval exercises symbolize a dramatic convergence of interests between New Delhi and Washington in the post-cold war era.

..Last week it became apparent that the drift (*towards the Soviet DP*) had changed when India's Minister of State for External Affairs told Parliament that units of the Indian navy and the US Pacific fleet would hold joint naval exercises soon - the kind of cooperation India never attempted with the Soviets. marvelled Stephen Cohen, a highly-regarded expert on Asia: 'This is a miracle. It symbolizes a new openness and accessibility between the two countries'.

..India and the US have long had compelling reasons to forge closer ties. Not only are they both pluralistic democracies, but also the US is India's largest trading partner, its most important source of sophisticated technology and a major foreign investor. People-to-people contact is intense, with large numbers of Indian professionals working in the United States. Beyond that, there are some new shared concerns: the threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the importance of protecting oil supplies from the Gulf. ..

...A great strategic Indo-US alliance is hardly in the cards, but a historic change in the relationship between the two countries is well under way" (Time 30-3-92).

India is very strategically placed in relation to the Gulf. America sees the need to have friends located on both sides of the Gulf.

In January Mr Hurd the British Foreign Secretary was in India for talks on nuclear arms control.

"Mr Hurd said Britain and India had put their relationship back on a firm footing after years when each had tried to 'score points' off each other.

'Discussions and friendly dealings are now easier than in the past', he said. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, 'our interests have come more closely together'" (DT)

In November it was reported that John Major had changed his mind about visiting Japan next year, because he had received an invitation to attend the India Republic Day celebrations which are scheduled for the same time. This upset the Japanese, but indicates the importance that Britain places on re-forging her Indian links.

WHERE DO WE STAND PROPHETICALLY?

We have seen Britain as the Merchant of Tarshish power and her chief young lions entrenching themselves in the region ready for the day when the King of the North will come down. It is Ezekiel ch. 38 that uses this symbolism.

“Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezek. 38:13).

Sheba and Dedan were the sons of Raamah, the son of Cush, the son of Ham. (Gen. 10:6,7).

Sheba was one of the four main spice kingdoms. The “incense” road stretched 1,250 miles from Sheba in the SW corner of the Arabian peninsula to Israel, where the spices were shipped onwards to the Mediterranean lands. It boasted an advanced civilization. A vast irrigation dam on the river Adhanat supplied irrigation water to a network of water channels. Testimony to the skills of the builders is the fact that the dam gave 1000 years of service, before collapsing in BC 542. Some of the ruined walls still remain, towering some 18 metres (60 ft) above the desert sands.

Ezek. 27:22 lists Sheba and his father Raamah as traders with Tyre. From inscriptions found in Sheba, we learn that his father's descendants settled to the east of Ophir, near the land of Havilah, i.e. on the Persian Gulf. Both these latter two names we associate with gold, (Gen. 2:11; 1 Kings 9:28) and in Ezek. 27:22, Raamah and Sheba are noted as traders in gold as well as spices and precious stones.

Dedan was further north, in the NW corner of Saudi Arabia, on the “incense” road. Like his brother and father, he was noted as being a merchant in the fairs of Tyre. Dedan traded in *precious clothes for chariots* (Ezek. 27:20).

There are, however, another two brothers in the Bible named Sheba and Dedan. These were descendants of Shem, and were the grandchildren of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:3). They too seemed to be trading peoples. Their father Jokshan is associated with northern Arabia. Dedan's three sons were Asshurim (not to be confused with Asshur or Assyria), Letushim and Leummim (Gen. 25:3). Later Jewish writings speak of the Asshurim as travelling merchants; the Letushim as those who sharpened weapons, and the Leummim as the chief of those who inhabit the isles. In Ezek. 27:15, the men of Dedan are associated with the isles.

Both sets of brothers and their families are associated with what we today call Saudi Arabia and the bordering countries of Yemen, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Associated with this area are "the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof".

Tarshish was the grandson of Japheth (Gen.10:4). The Mediterranean Sea was once known as the Sea of Tarshish, and the Phoenicians had a type of sailing ship called a ship of Tarshish. Tarshish was a great naval power, becoming established in SW Spain. The ships of Tarshish traded with Britain, bringing tin to the markets of Tyre. There also seems to have been an eastern Tarshish, whose goods point to it being India. Solomon's fleet based in the Red Sea port of Ezion-geber, sailed regularly to Tarshish.

"For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks" (2 Chron. 9:21).

In looking for a latter-day nation to be represented by Tarshish, we see Britain as a premier trading nation, dealing in the markets of many countries. Although the number of her ships has declined, she still remains the centre for trading in the world's goods. Associated with Tarshish are *the young lions thereof*. This points strongly to Britain with the Commonwealth nations, and those countries formerly in the Empire, but now fully independent - as young lions are. Just as lions retain family bonds, so these many nations, united in language and outlook, still are ready to come together in a time of trouble, as we saw in the Gulf crisis. The United States plays a dominant role, as the British mother comes to "old age". She has the vigour of youth, Britain the wisdom of motherhood. How wonderfully we have seen the roles

these two countries are playing in the Sheba-Dedan area. How understandable too, is our interest in India turning again to the West and cooperating with the American fleet.

Many of the additional details in this chapter have come from "War in the Middle East - implications for Israel", published by The Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies, in Israel. Acknowledgement is also made to Bill Cooper's fascinating series of articles, tracing the nations of Genesis Ch. 10, in Volumes 4 and 5 of the Technical Journal of the Creation Science Foundation Ltd in Australia.

Chapter 2:

ISRAEL—STEPS TOWARDS PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Introduction

Readers of Milestones will know that year by year the happenings in Israel are examined to see what progress is being made towards the situation, so clearly foretold by Ezekiel, that she dwells safely and prosperously. Never before in the State of Israel's history have we seen so much evidence that that day must be near. We see the Gulf War as a turning point in Middle East history. Many changes are happening. With Israel talking peace with her neighbours and countries, and businesses no longer afraid of an Arab boycott if they deal with Israel, things seem to be coming together on the peace and economic front. We realize that this is a prosperity being brought about by man, but surely it is under the guidance of the angels. It is not until Elijah is sent forth, that they, as a nation, will begin to turn to God. We know too, that all this prosperity is to be swept away by Gog's invasion, when Israel's faith is tested. Then, and only then, do the final strands of the angelic work over millennia come together to make ready a people for their God. How thrilling it is to watch these final steps unfold. At the end of the chapter we examine again the Scriptural basis for our expectations.

We shall look at 4 areas in Israel where things have moved forward during the past year:

- * *THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT,*
- * *IMMIGRATION,*
- * *ISRAEL'S BATTLE FOR THE LOAN GUARANTEES,*
- * *THE ECONOMY.*

Then we consider the *PEACE TALKS*.

THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

The elections

1992 saw changes in both the Israeli and the USA Governments, which we believe to be significant. We later comment on the US change in relation to Israel, although it is still early days. In Israel the Labour

party of Mr Yitzhak Rabin swept to power in June, with a 12 seat lead over the Likud party, which had held control for 15 years. With later negotiations with smaller parties, he now has a 62-seat majority in the 120-seat parliament, thus ending years of government weakness because of the knife-edge balance between the parties.

The new Prime Minister

Mr Rabin is a very active 70-year old. He is a former army general whose military career spanned 27 years. He was at the helm during the Six Day war. He served as Defense Minister from 1984 to 1990 in the Likud coalition government. He is seen as a realist. He early stated his priorities as—

“peace with the Palestinians, better ties with the United States, government reforms and the redirecting of funds earmarked for Jewish settlements in the occupied territories to tackle problems such as unemployment” (DT 25-6-92).

His election was welcomed by most Arabs and Palestinians, who saw him as someone who was prepared to speed up Palestinian autonomy talks and negotiate on “land for peace.”

He has strong links with America. He served as ambassador to the US from 1968 to 1973. His father emigrated from the Ukraine to the States, remaining there for 18 years. His father then moved to Israel during the first World War and married a Russian refugee (JP 20-6-92).

Yitzhak Rabin was Prime Minister from 1974 until his government fell in 1977. The Entebbe raid was during this period, but his main achievement was the securing of the two disengagement agreements with Egypt which would later lead to the Peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. He also led the disengagement agreement with the Syrians over the Golan heights.

Straight into action

His new government was formed mid-July, and he lost no time in accelerating the pace of change. He immediately froze all new government housing contracts in the territories. Then, at the end of his first week in office, Mr Rabin flew to Egypt to visit the Egyptian leader, President Mubarak - the first time an Israeli Prime Minister had set foot in Egypt for 6 years.

Next, in mid August, he was off to America for a 7-day visit. He had long talks with President Bush, met with administration officials and talked to the Jewish lobby. He commented,

“My visit has also brought about a change in attitude towards Israel within public opinion, the administration and Congress. I hope we have witnessed the opening of a new chapter in our ties with the US”
(JP 22-8-92).

In September he visited Germany, and the two countries pledged to boost economic and technological cooperation.

Meanwhile, he has pressed ahead with peace proposals, forcing the pace of the talks. He is prepared to negotiate with Syria over the Golan, provided it does not lead to loss of security. He is prepared to have a lease agreement, whereby technically the land returns to Syria, but Israel remains in occupation. Alternatively he favours US or UN troops occupying the area, guaranteeing security.

He seems close to securing peace with Jordan. 1992 has been dramatic.

IMMIGRATION

The pace continues, but more slowly

The huge influx of immigrants from the newly-liberated states of Eastern Europe slowed down considerably this year. Israel was bracing herself for a million “Soviet” Jews over 5 years. Then came the Gulf War, with pictures of Scud missiles landing in Israel. Unemployment rates among the newcomers is running at about 24%. In 1991 there were 175,000 immigrants and this year only 65,000 are expected.

A considerable number of Jews are choosing to go to USA. The US government had set a limit of 53,000 which is only a little less than the expected numbers going to Israel.

The Jews are still there in Eastern Europe, but they don't feel the need to sever their ties with their adopted homeland, and make “aliya” to Israel. Also many are waiting in the expectation of being able to purchase their homes under the impending privatisation schemes in the Commonwealth of Independent States. They could then sell them before coming to Israel.

Scripture does make it clear however, that there are to be Jews, dispersed throughout the lands of the North, who will be called upon to return home by the Lord Jesus, so we should not expect them all to return now. Many Jews in western Europe are seriously thinking of moving to Israel, as they face an increasing tide of anti-semitism.

The costs

As East Europeans are allowed out with very little money and virtually no possessions, the State has to provide them with homes, food and jobs. There is also the normal flow of Jews coming from many other lands. Israel permits any Jew to “return” to the Land. Remembering the small size of Israel - in land area equivalent to Wales, and with a population of only 5 million, the prospective bill is staggering.

To help pay for the costs of looking after these immigrants, the Jews of the USA have pledged to raise \$1 billion to help towards resettlement costs of Russian and Ethiopian Jews. Code named “Operation Exodus”, they have reached 70% of their target in 2 years and they expect to reach the target by 1995. This sum is over and above the huge sums they already raise for other aspects of need in Israel.

The US Congress has this year made a grant of \$80 million for refugee resettlement in Israel - the highest level of funding ever awarded. But these sums are almost insignificant in meeting the staggeringly high costs. An in-depth study showed Israel would need \$26,500,000,000 to cope with a million new immigrants. The report also predicted that without these loans, unemployment would rise by 50%.

What a contrast between Israel’s efforts to bring her people home and the disregard by the Arabs for their fellow Arabs in the refugee camps. They have been used as pawns in their efforts to gain advantage over Israel. Now that the desire to “drive Israel into the sea” has been replaced by a desire to talk peace, their usefulness has diminished. The “intifada” which centred on these camps, has died down considerably. The power and influence of the PLO has waned. Yassar Arafat is not such a fit man after his brush with death in an air crash in April when the 3-man crew was killed, but the passengers escaped safely. Comments have been made that he is now more “erratic” in his decisions.

ISRAEL'S BATTLE FOR THE LOAN GUARANTEES

Israel turned to America for help. She asked America to be a guarantor to the tune of 10 billion dollars. (Remember these are USA "billions", in the UK we would say ten thousand million dollars! ie. bn= billion=\$1,000,000,000; US \$1 bn = £650,000,000). Israel wasn't asking for this amount of money, only that America would act as a guarantor, which would enable Israel to obtain up to this amount of money from the money markets at much more favourable rates than if not guaranteed.

Israel could borrow money without it, but the interest charges would be much higher. Through investment in jobs, Israel hopes to harness the talents of the skilled immigrants.

It has been a long struggle and for a long time it looked as if America would not act as a guarantor. President Bush used the occasion to force the pace of Middle East Talks.

Israel having agreed to the Peace Talks, the next stumbling block was the building of settlements in the so-called "occupied territories". These are the West Bank and Gaza strip areas which Israel took, together with East Jerusalem, in 1967.

The former Prime Minister, Mr Shamir pressed ahead with the building of many houses in the West Bank. The idea was to ensure a strong Jewish presence in the area. Most of the settlements were just inside the "occupied territories", making a semi-circle of Jewish homes around the area.

"Israel's hardliner Housing Minister, Mr Ariel Sharon, said yesterday he had started 22,000 new houses in the occupied territories in less than two years and that another 1,000 homes would soon be under construction.

Israel has moved some 115,000 Jewish settlers to the West Bank and Gaza strip in the past decade" (DT 25-2-92).

With the change in government in June came a new impetus. Rabin was willing to slow down the controversial housing. In many areas new starts were stopped, only allowing existing starts to be completed.

So in October 1992, the US Senate gave its final ratification of the guarantee over a year after the Israeli application.

THE ECONOMY

Things have been very difficult for Israel. They are largely a nation of exporters, and the world-wide recession has hit their markets. The European Community takes 38% of Israel's exports. Israel's second biggest export market is America - taking 30% of Israel's goods. They are hoping that Clinton will lead America out of recession, and thus expand the US market for Israeli goods and hopefully increase world trade.

The ability to raise low cost loans under the US guarantees, should enable Israel to create many more jobs by wise investment in technology and research. Israel relies less and less on agriculture - the water shortages have led to many crops being abandoned as not bringing a big enough return for the amount of water they require. Many of the Jewish immigrants from the Eastern Europe are highly skilled people. Jewish skills in the fields of mathematics, medicine, science are renowned.

Inflation in July was reported to be at 12% - its lowest level for a long time, and falling. Unemployment is running at around 11%.

Growing links with other countries

The EC is drawing up a new trade agreement with Israel. The last agreement was in 1975, and needed updating. Although the EC will not accept Israel as a member, she has a free trade agreement with her. The value of Israel's exports to the EC in 1991 was put at \$4.3 billion, and imports from the EC at \$8 billion.

In November details were unveiled for greater American investment in Israeli business.

"Opic mission bearing fruit

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (Opic) announced last week that its investment mission, currently in Israel, has reached agreements with a number of Israeli bodies. The US government agency also publicized its intention to promote and capitalize a private-sector-managed Israel Growth Fund capitalized at between \$50-70 million.

'Israel has the infrastructure, the motivated and educated people, and the right climate for investment,' said the President, Fred Zedar.

The mission is concentrating on high growth sectors of the Israeli economy such as high-tech industries, telecommunications, construction, agri-business, consumer products and tourism" (JP 14-11-92).

Israel is also considering other schemes to attract job creating foreign investment. This one is staggering in its potential size:

"Negev may be tax-free zone

WASHINGTON. Israel is considering the establishment of a tax-free zone in parts of the Negev to attract at least \$500 million in American Jewish business investment, visiting Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said last week.

He told a press conference that two dozen American Jewish businessmen had promised to set up high-tech firms that would create 20,000 new jobs if such a zone was established...

He was assured of a \$500m.-\$700m. investment, should the plan go through. According to Bank of Israel officials, the total annual foreign investment does not now exceed \$250m" (JP 3-10-92).

A later report in January 1993 had this headline:

"Shohat okays free export zone"

... Shohat explained in a written statement that he had decided to approve the zone in the hope it will boost investment and create jobs...

Firms operating in the zone will not be subject to tax, customs and foreign currency laws during the first 25 years... On the other hand, they will not be eligible for government grants and loans...

According to Shohat's statement, there are 165 FEPZ's in 65 countries worldwide, employing a total of one million workers... (JP 23-1-93).

The Arab boycott

For years countries have been afraid to trade with Israel, for fear of the Arab boycott, which forbade Arab trade with companies who traded with Israel. With the gathering pace of the peace talks, calls have been made for Arab countries to drop this boycott. In August, America tried through the Group of Seven (G-7) industrialized nations, to bring about an immediate suspension of the boycott, but it was quashed by France.

However, in October, the Gulf States themselves unofficially recommended that they should remove all American firms from the

blacklist. It looks as if quietly the boycott is being dropped. Many countries in the past year have acted in defiance of it, establishing links with Israel, with few repercussions.

In September, **India** established full diplomatic relations, reversing a 40-year policy of not trading with Israel. The new ambassador took up residence in November. Also reported in November was the news of the first Indian investment in Israel - a textile firm setting up a factory in Beersheba, hoping to employ 175 workers. A direct air service, joint projects covering agriculture, tourism, and medical research are planned.

“There is a lot of will in India, as in Israel, to move ahead with the relationship with great speed” (JP 18-4-92).

China also established diplomatic links with Israel—the first time that both states had recognized each other since 1948. Israel sees China as a market for her expertise and equipment in irrigation and the supply of high grade seeds to improve yields. Israel is already planning two major infrastructure projects for the Chinese.

Investment from **Japan** is now poised to pour in. The following report details this and comments on the help the government gives to encourage investment.

“Japanese firms are ready to invest here

The climate for investments by foreigners in Israel is more auspicious than ever. The number of projects has not increased, but there are signs that we may be turning the corner, according to David Naveh, director of the Investment Authority.

The lead is likely to be taken by the Japanese. Research institutes in that country are sending teams over to examine possibilities and report to the business community in Tokyo...They recognize that Israel has become a free-market economy. Bureaucracy is no worse here than elsewhere, including Japan and the US; and the Arab boycott is obsolete.

..Industrialized countries of the Far East are less affected [*by recession DP*] and remain on a growth curve. Their problem is shortage of qualified manpower, which they find available in abundance in the Jewish state.

The government has stepped up the incentives, owing to its desire for increased employment... Few countries offer financial aid to new investors on such a scale....” (JP 8-2-92).

In December it was reported that top officials at Japan's Foreign Ministry had advised leading Japanese companies to stop co-operating with the Arab boycott, and urged Arab countries to drop it.

In December Israel urged Britain to end the boycott. Britain exports £500 million worth of goods annually to Israel - one of Britain's most important markets in the area.

Investment in the private sector is expected to increase by 25% next year and exports grow by 10% (JP 7-11-92). Israel, with a population of 5 million, exports \$18.5 billion.

Natural resources

In November it was reported that oil drilling was to recommence in the sea at the Negev-Ashkelon site after encouraging seismic findings. Methane gas in "relatively large quantities" was discovered in the Hula Valley area in November, but it will be some time before it is known whether it will be a commercially viable quantity.

The weather!

How rapidly things can change! There has been a desperate water shortage in Israel for the past few years. Israel has had to stop growing thirsty crops and concentrate on those which need less water. In spite of these strict measures, the water level in Lake Kinneret—the Sea of Galilee—had fallen to a very critical level. Then came "the winter the skies fell in." The Lake is full and overflowing. Water had to be released because of the danger of flooding, raising the Dead Sea water level by 1.2 metres, or 4 ft. The winter storms brought frost and snow, doing much damage to fruit and vegetable crops. Many animals froze to death in the exceptional conditions. But the water situation has been eased for a while.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS

With the ending of the Gulf War many politicians felt that the time had come to endeavour to establish peace between Israel and her hostile Arab neighbours.

Milestones 91 time-tabled the intense activity by America to get these countries to the conference table. It bore fruit with the historic

meeting in Madrid in November 1991, followed by a further meeting in Washington in December 1991.

During the first half of 1992, the Peace Talks were making slow but steady progress. Added impetus was given with the change in government in Israel—the new government under Mr Rabin is prepared to make more open concessions than the hardliner Mr Shamir. Still more impetus may be added with the election of the new American President, Bill Clinton. He is favourably disposed to the Jews—much to the concern of the Arab States. It is expected that a special Middle East envoy will be appointed. Two names have been mentioned - James Baker, who has overseen these efforts to date, or Jimmy Carter, the ex-president who arranged the Camp David talks which led to a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. We will have to wait and see.

The easiest way to pull together the many strands of the Talks is to look at them month by month. Most talks were *bilateral*, Israel talking directly with each Arab country separately, with several talks going on in parallel. Other talks were *multilateral*, where Israel met with many Arab countries at a time to discuss matters associated with the peace process, like arms control, refugees, and water sharing.

January

The third round of bilateral talks was held in Washington, with Israeli negotiators sitting round a table with their Palestinian and Jordanian counterparts. Talks also resumed between Syria and Israel. The talks made a little progress and were brought to an end when the Palestinians pulled out.

At the end of the month the first multilateral talks were held in Moscow. For the first time for 40 years, Israel sat around the negotiating table with a wide range of Arab states. A few Arab states, including Syria and Lebanon refused to attend, as did the Palestinians. Working groups were set up to discuss refugees, water resources, arms control and the environment. Mr Levy, the Israeli Foreign Minister said at the talk's conclusion that it had generated "a taste of the fruits of the coming peace... Our expectations were fulfilled." A commentator remarked that this session could mark the first melting of the ice between Israel and the Arabs (JP 8-2-92).

February

At the end of the month “round 4” of the bilateral talks resumed in Washington. There were few areas of progress. The Palestinians had presented a detailed plan for an interim self-governing body, which Israel rejected.

April

“Round 5” took place in Washington. As an opening gesture of conciliation, Syria lifted curbs on the 4,500 Jewish residents in Syria from travelling to America. They still were banned from going to Israel. Israel set out plans for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to hold municipal elections. Israel discussed the Golan heights with Syria, border issues with Lebanon and Arab recognition with Jordan.

May

Multilateral talks were held in Washington on arms control, in Vienna on water sharing, in Brussels on economic development, in Ottawa on refugees and in Tokyo on the environment. Because of their non-political nature these latter talks proceeded well with direct discussion between Israeli and Arab negotiators.

June

The elections in Israel took place with emergence of the Labour party and Mr Rabin as Prime Minister. The peace negotiating team had to be reformed.

July

The US Secretary of State, James Baker, was sent on his 9th regional tour in search of a breakthrough. With Israel’s promises of a substantial cut back on settlements, there was an optimistic mood. He called on the talk participants to come to Washington and resume talks earlier than the scheduled September meeting in Rome. Rabin flew to Egypt for talks with President Mubarak—the first top-level meeting between the two countries for 6 years.

August

In a bid to improve relations with the Arabs, the Israeli government repealed the law which banned contacts between Israeli citizens and members of the PLO.

Towards the end of the month the sixth round of bilateral talks was held in Washington. On the eve of the meeting, Israel announced conciliatory measures - an easing of travel restrictions on Palestinians and a release of 800 Palestinian prisoners.

Talks lasted a whole month, and were marked by a much more positive spirit. Israel indicated her willingness to swap land for peace with Syria, which was well received by Syria.

October

Round 7 of the bilateral talks began in Washington against a background of President Bush's falling popularity. The Daily Telegraph's Middle East correspondent sets the scene.

"Middle East peace talks inch slowly closer

The very unremarkableness of today's gathering is a sign of how far the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations has progressed. The same process is being duplicated in multi-lateral talks that have been taking place around the world in the past year, in which Israelis have met a host of non "front line" Arab states - the phrase already sounds dated - to discuss regional arms control, economics, and resources.

The mass of preconditions previously deployed by both sides to forestall negotiations now lie rusting on the junk-heap of diplomacy. The collapse of the old world order has persuaded both sides that cutting a deal is not only inevitable, it is even desirable. None the less, for a number of historical and practical reasons, progress seems bound to be maddeningly slow" (DT 21-10-92).

November

Talks with the Palestinians were more productive than usual. The Palestinian spokesman said,

"We are willing to discuss all issues of substance, and we are going to try our best in order to achieve real progress in this round."

The biggest breakthrough came with the talks with the Jordanians.

"Move hailed as declaration of principles preceding a peace treaty

—Israel and Jordan pledge not to use or threaten force.

Israel and Jordan have forsworn the use of force against each other in a landmark document hammered out during the peace talks in Washington last week.

Senior Israeli officials are hailing the move as a declaration of principle preceding a bilateral peace treaty, that goes beyond declaring an intention to end the state of belligerency between the two countries. Jordan has agreed in writing, for the first time, that the aim of its negotiations with Israel is a peace treaty. For its part, Israel has apparently agreed to negotiate an unspecified 'just solution' to the problem of Palestinian refugees who fled to Jordan in 1948 and those displaced by the 1967 war..." (JP 7-11-92).

Multilateral talks on refugees took place in Ottawa and on regional economic development in Paris. Israel had boycotted these meetings in the past because of the attendance of Palestinians from outside Israel. However, following the visit to Israel of the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Israel agreed to attend these meetings. The Israelis called the talks "a step forward... on a new road."

Also in the Hague the environmental talks continued, though listed as making "slow progress." Syria and Lebanon boycotted these talks.

December

Round eight became overshadowed by Israel's swift actions in reprisal for the cold-blooded murder of a kidnapped police sergeant major. Hamas, the group responsible for the murder, is a Muslim fundamentalist terror group, whose aim is to make Israel a Moslem land by killing all Jews who will not convert to Islam! The group has caused great problems in Egypt and Jordan. Its sister organization, equally fanatical, is the Islamic Jihad. Neither group is liked by the Palestinians, nor even the PLO. Israel seized the opportunity to round up the leaders of these two groups and deport them to southern Lebanon. The Lebanese were not willing to have them in their country, and at the end of the year there was stalemate as nobody wanted them, and they remained in a camp in the no-man's land between Israel and Lebanon.

There was a world wide outcry at Israel's action, but she has made it clear that it is not a permanent expulsion—they are banned for 2 years. The Palestinians in Israel are, in the main, glad to see them go. The intifada violence has shown itself to be counter-productive. They have far more to gain by talking peace.

The 8th round of peace talks came to an abrupt end with the Arab countries boycotting them in protest. The 9th round is not expected to start before February and Israel is expecting that when the dust dies

down, those who have been expelled will remain a forgotten people, and the talks will go on.

THE GROWING TIDE OF ANTISEMITISM

In July 1992, the World Jewish Congress sponsored the First International Conference on Antisemitism. They noted a **35%** rise in antisemitic incidents around the world in 1991 compared with the previous year. (1,900 incidents in 1991). This rising trend is part of the nationalistic passions sweeping much of Europe, fanned by the flames of the prospect of an unprecedented human tide of displaced peoples entering the west.

Based on a Gallup poll, it is estimated that 13,000,000 eastern Europeans wish to emigrate to western Europe. Although the Jews are not so directly affected, they are feeling the backlash of people's growing intolerance of this invasion. Resources are having to be diverted from other projects to cope with the problems. It is in this atmosphere of mistrust and fear that racial tensions mount. And as so often happens, it is taken out on the Jewish communities.

"..once again, German Jews are regarded as aliens, not quite at home, not welcome, not quite full citizens, not quite acceptable"
(JP 21-11-92).

The old stereotypes, last seen under Hitler, of the Jews being responsible for a country's problems, are emerging again. This Antisemitism is strongest in the Roman Catholic countries of Germany and Poland. In Germany, subtly, the awfulness of the events of the last war are being toned down. Memorial stones inscribed with the harrowing details of what happened to the Jews, are replaced by ones with bland statements such as, "to the victims of the 1939-45 war." Only because of a local protest, were plans overturned to turn the Ravensbruck concentration camp where 90,000 Jews perished, into snack bars, a supermarket and car showroom! Jewish cemeteries are being daubed with racial slogans, or vandalized.

In Poland, where 90% of the Polish Jews population perished, a recent Jewish visitor records—

"If you think things have changed over the past 40 years, think again. On my trip to Poland with the March of the Living (1990), we discovered that Antisemitism was an accepted social norm in Poland. Most Jewish memorials and institutions were defaced with antisemitic

graffiti. Everywhere we went, we heard the word *Zyd* buzzing behind our backs. We were spat upon and sworn at.” (Letter JP 11-7-92).

In an Italian opinion poll published in November, over 10% of Italians polled thought all Jews should leave Italy. Throughout Europe, Jewish communities themselves are wondering whether they should think of leaving. How bad is it going to get, they ponder. Sadly we know, history will repeat itself. The work of the fishers and the hunters is not yet over (Jer. 16:16-18).

BRIEF SCRIPTURAL SURVEY OF WHAT WE ARE EXPECTING

Ezekiel is very specific that Israel is to be prosperous at the time of the Gogian invasion:

“To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions... shall say ...Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezek. 38:11-13).

Israel also is to dwell at peace.

“And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates... Therefore, ... say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?” (Ezek. 38:11, 14).

The prospects for this state of peace and prosperity are surely enhanced by the events of the past two years. There is a huge potential market for Israeli goods amongst the Arab nations. If peace is guaranteed by the United States or the U.N., then Israel will be able to prosper without the heavy burden of defence costs.

It will be a short-lived prosperity. It disappears into the hands of the Gogian confederacy. With the eventual saving of the remnant of Israel from her captivity by the hands of their Messiah and the saints, the spoil that is recovered will be used to build the Temple. The present-day achievements of the Israelis will have no place in the Kingdom. The

towns and cities that escape destruction at Gog's hands will find their end at God's hands *when He arises to shake terribly the earth.*

In the Kingdom age the blessings upon Abraham will extend to the Arab nations which have descended from him. The Moslem worship of one God, and their reverence of Abraham, will make them willing servants in that day when it will be revealed to both Jew and Arab, that "christianity" is not of the Christ, but is a corruption of the truth. Isaiah speaks of the offerings of Arab nations in the Kingdom.

"The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory" (Isa. 60:6, 7).

Much of this growing prosperity can come when Christ is back and the saints are at the judgement seat. The work of preparing saints for eternity will surely not be the work of a moment. As we see the signs around us, it behoves us all to watch and keep our garments with a sense of urgency. The Lord is at the door! The Lord has forewarned us that there will be shame for those who are not prepared for their Lord's return (Rev. 16:15). He expects us to use our eyes and discern the signs of the times.

Chapter 3: **THE VATICAN—AGE LONG ENEMY OF TRUTH**

Introduction

We know from Daniel's prophecies that the power of Rome is present right to the end as the enemy of God's people. It is represented by the iron of the image; the iron/brass of chapter 4; and the iron teeth in the mouth on the little horn of the 4th. beast of chapter 7.

The book of Revelation fills out that picture of the power of Rome continuing in the Papacy, treading down the Truth and persecuting the saints. It does however, indicate a period of setback.

"And the ten horns that thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev. 17:16).

The events of the French Revolution and on into the last century left the papacy without lands and the pope a prisoner.

How we have seen things change again in our century. No longer treated with contempt, the nations seek to visit the Pope and pay their respects to him.

How aptly the Lord revealed this phase to John:

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Rev. 18:7, 3).

We shall trace an aspect of this developing state of "sitting a queen"—that of the political nature of this system, which uses religion as the cloak for its ambitious ends.

Past issues of **Milestones** have dealt with many aspects of the growing role of the papacy in the reshaping of Europe. In 1988 on the occasion of the Pope's visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg,

he addressed the assembled politicians and outlined his vision of a united Europe.

“My wish, knowing the aspirations of the Slav people, is that one day, through the creation of free institutions with sovereign power, Europe may once again cover its true geographical and even more important, historical dimensions”.

He reminded them of Christ’s words about “what is Caesar’s” and “what is God’s”. His implication was—you politicians look after the affairs of state and I, as “supreme Pastor of the universal Church”, will look after the spiritual matters! He aims to be the spiritual leader of this vast continent. He is also prepared to exercise political power to gain that end. World leaders regularly come to seek his advice and pay their respects. With his vast network of bishops and priests, he is able to be in touch, and one step ahead of events as they happen. He is able to turn some things his way.

Published this year was a book entitled, “God’s Politician—John Paul at the Vatican”, written by David Willey, the BBC correspondent in Rome who has covered many of the Pope’s trips abroad. Quoting from the fly-leaf and the Prologue, he:

“... examines the transformation of the once-static Papacy into a high-profile office which wields great power behind the scenes.

John Paul II is one of the most ‘political’ popes of modern history. His Catholic followers will soon number 1 billion—a fifth of the world’s population—and he is recognized as a world leader on a par with Presidents Bush and Gorbachev.

The Pope’s prestige has grown through his unprecedented series of world travels. Fifty major foreign pilgrimages have taken him to over ninety countries of every continent of the world.

A master of the media, the Pope receives rapturous welcomes wherever he travels, particularly in the Third World. Yet his benign image is increasingly undermined: the Vatican is racked by financial problems, the practice of religion in the West continues to decline, and both leading Catholic theologians and the ordinary church members are growing critical of his authoritarian style of government”.

It is a fascinating book revealing much of the inner workings of the Papacy. It details many of his trips and his devotion to the “Virgin Mary”. It reveals the autocratic nature of his reign—iron-like indeed!

The political power he wields was illustrated by an 8-page special report in the *Time* magazine (24-2-92). It was headed:

"The Holy Alliance

Faced with a military crackdown in Poland, Ronald Reagan and John Paul II secretly joined forces to keep the Solidarity union alive. They hoped not only to pressure Warsaw but to free all of Eastern Europe".

These extracts from this article will give a sense of how he "sits as Queen".

"Only President Ronald Reagan and Pope Paul II were present in the Vatican Library on Monday, June 7, 1982. It was the first time the two had met, and they talked for 50 minutes...

They remained focused on a subject much closer to their heart: Poland and the Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe. In that meeting, Reagan and the Pope agreed to undertake a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire. Declares Richard Allen, Reagan's first National Security Adviser: "This was one of the great secret alliances of all time".

Both the Pope and the President were convinced that Poland could be broken out of the Soviet orbit if the Vatican and the U.S. committed their resources to destabilizing the Polish government and keeping the outlawed Solidarity movement alive after the declaration of martial law in 1981. Until Solidarity's legal status was restored in 1989 it flourished underground, supplied, nurtured and advised largely by the network established under the auspices of Reagan and John Paul II. Tons of equipment—fax machines (the first in Poland), printing presses, transmitters, telephones, shortwave radios, video cameras, photocopiers, telex machines, computers, word processors—were smuggled into Poland via channels established by priests and American agents... Money for the banned union came from the CIA funds, the National Endowment for Democracy, secret accounts in the Vatican and Western trade unions.

Lech Walesa and other leaders of Solidarity received strategic advice—often conveyed by priests or American and European labour experts working undercover in Poland—that reflected the thinking of the Vatican and the Reagan Administration. As the effectiveness of the resistance grew, the stream of information to the West about the internal decisions of the Polish government and the contents of Warsaw's communications with Moscow became a flood. The details came not only from priests but also from spies within the Polish government...

Reagan and John Paul II refused to accept a fundamental political fact of their lifetimes: the division of Europe as mandated at Yalta and the communist dominance of Eastern Europe. A free, non-communist Poland, they were convinced would be a dagger to the heart of the Soviet empire: and if Poland became democratic, other East European states would follow”.

And so the two leaders cooperated in their long struggle to overthrow communism. The American administration team looking after these matters were all devout Catholics—CIA chief William Casey, National Security Advisor Richard Allen, National Security Advisor William Clark, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and the Vatican Ambassador, William Wilson. What a team!

“They regarded the U.S.-Vatican relationship as a holy alliance: the moral force of the Pope and the teachings of the church combined with fierce anticommunism and their notion of American democracy”.

The Vatican network of priests provided an efficient channel to distribute goods supplied by America and to glean intelligence information.

“‘The Vatican’s information was absolutely better and quicker than ours in every respect,’ says Haig. ‘Though we had some excellent sources of our own, our information was taking too long to filter through the intelligence bureaucracy’.

On military questions the American intelligence was better than the Vatican’s, but the church excelled in its evaluations of the political situation. And in understanding the mood of the people and communicating with the Solidarity leadership, the church was in an incomparable position. ‘Our information about Poland was very well founded because the bishops were in continual contact with the Holy See and Solidarity,’ explains Cardinal Silvestrini, the Vatican’s deputy Secretary of State at the time.

...the objective was akin to creating a Christian Democratic majority in Poland—with the church and the overwhelming Catholic membership of Solidarity as the dominant political force in a post-communist Poland”.

Without going into the details of the campaign, these extracts give us an idea of the tremendous power of the Papacy. This was but one cooperation with America. How many other alliances are there with other countries? Remember the church controls the lives of countless politicians, ensuring the church gets favourable treatment and gets her

own way. And in how many aspects of everyday life do similar teams of devoted catholics operate, with their loyalties to the Pope being greater than to their country? The extensive list of those who mourn the overthrow of this system, given in Rev. ch. 18, gives us an indication of the vast network controlled by the Papacy.

Our brethren and sisters, especially our younger ones, need to be warned to view the church, not through the eyes of the media, but through the eyes of the Master himself. He sees her as an “harlot”, “drunk with the blood of the saints”. He warns that in our generation her sins are reaching to heaven, and that shortly he will pour out the wrath of God upon her. For it is the harlot power that rides the beast that brings the kings of the earth to make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them (Rev. chs. 17, 18).

Chapter 4:

BRITAIN AND EUROPE—THE YEAR'S EVENTS

The main events of the first five months can be summarized under 3 headings, arranged in approximate order of their occurrence.

- 1) Delors' request for more money!
- 2) The surprise Conservative Victory
- 3) The beginning of the Maastricht ratification debate.
- 4) A European Defence Force

We can then look at the rest of the year on a month by month basis.

1) DELORS' REQUEST FOR MORE MONEY

In February, M. Delors, the President of the European Commission, put out his "Delors 2" plan for funding the requirements of the Maastricht Treaty. The Treaty requires the poorer members to come up to the standards of the richest. He proposed that the rich countries should have to pay for this by higher contributions to the EC budget. He called for a 30% increase in the EC budget to cover this and other proposals. Britain would have to contribute an extra £1.75 billion a year for the next 5 years! France and Germany too would have to pay heavily. Mr Major protested vigorously that he would veto these plans by a "spending-mad Brussels".

2) THE SURPRISE CONSERVATIVE VICTORY

The British Conservative party had called for an election in early April. In the weeks before, the opinion polls had given strong support for the Labour party. The Labour manifesto was to provide a government that would undertake large capital expenditure, with higher taxes to finance their plans. They wanted to restore trade union power, adopt M Delors' "Social Chapter", and return to bureaucratic control by government leaders.

The Conservative campaign had been criticized as largely negative. Just before polling day Mr Major went into the attack, exposing the fallacies and spelling out the frightening consequences of a Labour victory. They still trailed heavily in the polls.

The election result was a surprise to all. The Conservatives were re-elected with a reduced, but still very comfortable margin. Mr Major rapidly produced a strong cabinet team to tackle the great difficulties that Britain was facing, as the recession continued to bite deeper, affecting all aspects of the economy.

3) THE BEGINNING OF MAASTRICHT RATIFICATION

Also in May was the two-day debate on the Maastricht Treaty. Mr Major sketched his successful efforts last December in winning concessions for Britain—no Social Chapter, no joining the common currency until conditions were right. He believed the British pressure last autumn on the EC countries had started a change of outlook, several countries were now feeling concerned to defend their national sovereignty rather than blindly follow the drive to a federal Europe under the drive of France, Germany and Brussels.

The anti-marketeters were active in their total opposition to the Maastricht Treaty: that a free market was fine for Britain, but closer links than that would take away the sovereign powers and freedom she had long enjoyed.

4) A EUROPEAN DEFENCE FORCE

When Dr Kohl of Germany and Pres. Mitterand of France have their two-day get-together once or twice a year one can usually look for something exciting and significant to emerge. So it was at their La Rocelle meeting May 21-22.

"Germany and France to set up military corps by 1995

An agreement establishing Franco-German military corps was signed yesterday by Pres. Mitterand and Dr. Kohl who invited other European countries to join up as soon as possible.

The broad plan is that 35,000 to 40,000 men including the existing Franco-German brigade of 4,000 will come under the command of a general staff to be set up in July in Strasbourg.

The corps itself will be operational by 1995 and will have defensive and peace-keeping objectives. It will do what its member states desire of it, but, above all, is seen by the French and Germans as the first step towards an independent military capacity for Europe" (DT 23-5-92).

The agreement contained two further important elements. These were the desire to enlarge the EC beyond its 12 members and for the force to take on a new role. We could almost have said 'we told you so'.

"Germany's force set for new role

Germany yesterday detailed a shake up of its armed forces with a reorientation towards rapid reaction on troop deployment outside the Nato area... and possible use in UN missions" (DT 19-12-92).

The German government is about to change its constitution so that it can exert itself outside Germany and outside Europe!

We look at the rest of the year on a month by month basis.

June

The first of a number of unpleasant surprises came at the beginning of June when the Danish national referendum rejected the Maastricht Treaty.

"Danes vote to scupper Maastricht

The Danish decision has incalculable consequences for the project of European integration. At the very least, it will force the 12 governments to re-enter negotiations on Maastricht, at a time when suspicion against the treaty has been mounting in almost every EC country.

Under article R.2 of the Treaty, the blueprints for a 'united states of Europe' cannot come into force unless they have received ratification by all 12 countries" (DT 3-6-92).

Two days later, when there had been time for the implications to sink in, the front page had several lead lines.

"Danish crisis paralyses EC ministers"

"British public has growing doubts on Maastricht"

"Vote uncorks Tory unease"

"Denmark derails clattering Euro-train"

When Mr Major returned from a week abroad, he found there was a growing revolt in the Tory government.

"Major flies in as Tories step up revolt over Europe

Leading Euro-sceptics served notice yesterday that they intend to step up their campaign against the Maastricht Treaty, to force the

government to abandon hope of bringing the Bill ratifying it back before the Commons" (DT).

His response to this growing pressure was expressed when he addressed the EC Summit at Lisbon at the end of the month.

"Curb the EC monster' call by Major

A campaign to curb the centralizing tendencies of the European Community was launched by Mr Major yesterday. He urged his fellow EC leaders to take account of public fears about a European superstate. People, he said, were worried about a 'voracious European monster out of control'" (DT 27-6-92).

July

A glance through the headlines in June reveals the shattering blow on the Maastricht Treaty.

What is quite interesting is that by the end of June Mr Major had got his bearings for the path ahead, and was outspoken in recognizing the flaws in the original Treaty and the need to lessen the federal drive of Germany and France.

The power wielded by the Brussels Commissioners of the Euro-parliament was expressed clearly in the matter of VAT at the end of July.

"Britain loses power to alter VAT rate

Mr Lamont, Chancellor of the Exchequer, went further than ever before last night in giving the European Community new permanent power over indirect taxation. A meeting of Common Market finance ministers agreed that the EC, not national governments, should set minimum VAT rates".

Early in June—before the Danish referendum—a Daily Telegraph editorial had set out a lengthy protest on the matter.

"The right to set taxes

What next? How long will it be before the Commission sets its sights on income tax, capital gains tax, even property tax? Each extension of EC power is justified as the logical consequence of earlier extensions. It is therefore imperative to make a stand now over VAT" (DT 3-6-92).

August

In strange contrast to this was the message from Brussels:

“EMU won't fly after all”

(E.M.U. - European Monetary Union, a play upon the Australian Emu, a bird that cannot fly).

The drifting apart was a simple fact no one could deny. It was being appreciated at last that ‘convergence’ of national currencies to provide a single European currency operated by all or most of the 12 EC members was utterly unrealistic. World recession, growing national debts and borrowing, had changed the whole climate towards the functionality of the Maastricht Treaty. Moreover the Major-Lamont preaching over a year or more had made each country more aware of its own national interests and less of the Community as a whole.

The new situation was reflected in a headline near the end of August:

“Euro-money loses its lustre” (DT 24-8-92).

Two other factors affecting Europe for the rest of the year were also emerging.

1. West Germany's growing problem in subsidizing East Germany.
2. The power of the German Bundesbank in influencing exchange rates.

Regarding factor 1: West Germany has had to transfer DM 400 billion to East Germany—a colossal subsidy. About 3 million out of a total 7 million E. Germans are unemployed. Manufacturing production has fallen by 66% since reunification. These figures (DT 8-7-92) convey one of several problems Germans are facing.

As to factor 2—the power of the German Central Bank—it is more than a big bank. It has been described as the German people's Institution that should be seen as having a similar significance as the Queen and royalty to Britain!

Throughout 1992 there have been frequent references to the influence it has on the finances of EC countries. One article of more than usual interest was in the Washington Post section of the GW.

“Bundesbank could decide course of European union

Berlin:— How seriously does Germany's central bank take its role as guardian of the country's beloved mark? This seriously: On the 30th anniversary of the mark's creation, the bank held a solemn commemoration—in a Frankfurt church!

Its tools are limited—officially the bank's main weapon is its ability to cut and boost interest rates without having to get the government's permission—but its status as the most respected force in Europe's richest and most powerful country imbues the Bundesbank with potentially decisive control over the future of European union.

"The Bundesbank is still the most reliable institution in Germany, more trusted than politicians, more trusted than business...To give up the bank and the mark is, for many Germans, too high a price for European unification" (GW 4-10-92).

The Bundesbank's hostility to the Maastricht Treaty was similarly expressed in the following:

"The German Bundesbank and the Bank of England have had their doubts all along and admit, if pressed, that they would not shed a single tear if the whole Maastricht project vanished into thin air" (DT 12-6-92).

September

September began with a foreboding of the troubles ahead.

Sept. 4th **"Lamont buys time with £7.5 billion loan to bolster sterling"**

Sept. 12th **"An exchange market disaster that was waiting to happen: steps towards crisis"**

Britain was not alone during the first week of September: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Italy were driven to use very high interest rates (20-24%) or to devalue.

Sept. 16th **"Black Wednesday"**

Panic measures were of no avail, and the stock market's declared confidence in Sterling had disappeared. Britain suspended its participation in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and devalued the pound. The front page headline the next day was—

"Doubt and disbelief wreck dream of one-money Europe"

Sept 22nd: French referendum vote produced a narrow 'yes' for Maastricht ratification (51.5% - 48.5%). This was only achieved by Mitterand carrying out a vast and expensive campaign, gambling his personal prestige to win victory.

"Cabinet split over U-turn on Europe"

Mr Major and senior Cabinet members called for taking a "profound look" at where the EC was going. Most significantly, there was

emerging an increasing number of Euro-sceptics who thought Britain would be better off remaining outside the ERM. Reactions from the Continent were:

“Chancellor Kohl of Germany led a group of EC leaders last night in flatly ruling out any reforms of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism demanded by Mr Major as a condition of Britain’s re-entry.

Meeting in Brussels, the Christian Democrat prime ministers of Europe effectively blamed sterling’s collapse last week on London’s failure to ‘apply correctly’ the rules of the system” (DT 26-9-92).

“The Eurocrats of Brussels are under siege, their vision of a united Europe with a single currency shattered after financial markets delivered a cynical judgement on their efforts.

Member states will not implement measures which now obviously run contrary to their domestic interests... “ (DT 28-9-92).

October

EC AND BRITISH HOSTILITY

Relations between Britain and the EC deteriorated considerably and the hostility continued to the end of the year. The scene had been set in September when Britain was forced to devalue and withdraw from the ERM, complaining that the German Central Bank had not given adequate support to sterling in its difficulties.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE

The two debates during Oct. 7-10th that interest us are the one on Europe and the one on the economy. Major faced fierce criticism on government policy toward Europe, especially from Lord Tebbit.

Certainly the highlight of the Conference was the Prime Minister’s final speech on the last day. No doubt he had been much influenced by the criticism he had heard, and he spoke boldly, defiantly and confidently with a call to rally around him to pursue a new national recovery plan for growth, for more jobs, more roads, more houses; and forget about Maastricht for the present.

A phrase he used provided the headline for the report of his speech.

“I will never...let our British identity be lost in a Federal Europe”.

He received a standing ovation, and all went home happier than when they came.

NEW STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

It was the coal pit crisis that brought about a rapid re-shaping for economic recovery.

"Major admits 'scales have fallen from his eyes'

The pit crisis has certainly dispelled any lingering illusions the Prime Minister had about the ERM. He told colleagues he is no longer pursuing a 'holy grail' and that the scales have fallen from his eyes. His rhetoric has changed dramatically" (DT 22-10-92).

SUPPORT FOR A 'TWO-TRACK' EUROPE

Meanwhile Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterand were pursuing other options to Maastricht.

"German support for 'fast track' option

Support for a 'fast track European monetary union gathered pace in Germany at the weekend amid reports that Bonn and Paris were forging ahead with plans to set up a common currency and a Franco-German central bank" (GW 4-10-92).

Their plan was broadcast by a sensational front-page article by the 'European' paper entitled

"Secrets of the Elysée's D-Mark deal

Kohl and Mitterand have launched a daring plan to create an inner circle of rich EC states by effectively merging the Deutschemark and franc and leaving most of the rest of Europe out in the cold.

Amid fading hopes that all twelve EC states will now ratify the Maastricht treaty on political and monetary union, the move would create what amounts to a single European Currency by Germany and France within a few months.

In fact the mark will now underpin a powerful grouping of countries that will become the economic powerhouse of Europe—France, Germany and the Benelux countries" (European 27-9-92).

This plan of a small group of EC countries operating a single currency and a Central Bank and forging ahead as an elite group guiding (controlling) Europe fits Chancellor Kohl's style. He also insists the

Euro-parliament shall have more power so that federating Europe shall continue apace.

But while Chancellor Kohl and Pres. Mitterand were consolidating their position to establish an elite fast-track group of EC countries to guide or control Europe, there was a general state of flux, confusion, and second thoughts in the EC Community.

By now it had been grasped that the Maastricht expectation, that each member would progress in its prosperity and gradually 'converge' to participate in a single currency and establish the European Monetary Union (i.e. Federal Europe) was no more than a theory and as unrealistic as Mr Major had always told them. Broadly speaking there was a kind of nationalism developing in each country where self-interest put one's own country first.

This questioning of the value of Maastricht was as strong in Germany as other EC countries, despite Kohl's drive for its ratification and basis for the future.

November

This month stands out in importance as Germany plunged into recession, unemployment and bankruptcies—the outcome of the joyful reuniting of West and East Germany in 1990. West Germany has been greatly impoverished in the vast task of rebuilding and re-educating East Germany after 40 years' neglect while under Communist control from Moscow.

Additional factors have added to their burden: over-optimistic valuation of land and businesses at the time of reunion now require more money; world recession adds its factor; and not least the flood of refugees that continue to arrive from Eastern European countries. Add to all this the fact that both West and East Germans have been living beyond their means, enjoying yearly high wage increases. Rather suddenly all are becoming conscious of developing recession, redundancies, unemployment, bankruptcies. Workers and management talk about "the slumps".

These developments until recently were largely discounted by Chancellor Kohl in his relentless drive in support of Maastricht and the ERM. But now he is being challenged by his own people. In recent local party elections opposition parties have won victories that have made him listen to their voice.

The opposition thinking is along these lines: We are fearful of the economic future, of declining prosperity, of unemployment; We have no wish to respond to J. Delors' ambitious plans asking for our money to develop his federal Europe; He and his Commissioners are wealthy, extravagant and inefficient.

After the emergency Birmingham Summit, an article reporting Kohl-Major talks also included some information on the growing anti-Maastricht attitude in Germany.

The Maastricht process has lost its aura of inevitability in Germany. Sixty of the country's top economists warned that monetary union, as it is currently proposed, is likely to have devastating consequences, leading to high unemployment in much of Europe and growing nationalist resentment.

Opinion polls suggest that more than three quarters of Germans oppose swapping the Deutschemark for a single currency.

Herr. Kohl remains deeply committed to the ideal of European union, but even he has become increasingly vocal in his criticism of the EC" (DT 17-10-92).

A variety of newspaper headlines proclaim the rapid buildup of German recession.

"German slump fears growing" (DT 27-10-92)

"German economy goes into decline" (GW 19-11-92)

"Cracking up" (Sunday Times 28-11-92)

"German unification costs to soar rescuing lame ducks" (DT 30-11-92)

This is indeed a 'gloomy' picture.

December

After November's gloom, how astonishing the headline announcing Dr. Kohl's triumph in getting the German parliament to ratify the Maastricht Treaty by an overwhelming 543 votes to 17! (DT 4-12-92).

The article that announced Dr Kohl's triumph, reported his speech to the German parliament in which he directly criticized Britain, as the headline said:

"Kohl accuses Britain over EC unity

The German vote, applauded by all sides of the Bundestag represented a resounding endorsement of Chancellor Kohl's commitment to Maastricht and the European ideal.

Herr Kohl was unable to resist swipes at Britain and Denmark in his opening address. 'Economic unity without a political framework is absolutely doomed to destruction. We are not prepared to countenance any treaty changes or special requirements'.

Kohl also laid down, no doubt with Britain in mind, the strict terms in joining, or rejoining, the single currency and Monetary Union:

"Only countries which fulfilled the criteria of low inflation, low budget deficits and stable exchange and interest rates would be able to participate in economic and monetary union.

Prior to the Edinburgh Summit (Dec 10-17) Britain had made a gesture in giving the Maastricht Treaty its first approval. All the other countries had ratified (except Denmark), and there was general satisfaction that a federal Europe would now launch on course.

"Delors forms cabinet for federal EC

M Jacques Delors, European Commission president, took a step towards creating a European cabinet with an announcement yesterday of a major shake-up of his 17-man team of Brussels commissioners. From next month—well before the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty—there will be commissioners in charge of foreign affairs, immigration and police and justice co-operation... a move that will delight federalists and dismay British Euro-sceptics (DT 23-12-92).

What more evidence could be asked for that the European Parliament and its supporting Commissioners are intent on a federal Europe.

Chapter 5:

MR MAJOR'S SUCCESSFUL TWO YEARS AS PRIME MINISTER

Most observers would say 'successful' was quite inappropriate, but as a people with Bible in hand and aware of various prophecies that we expect to see fulfilled, we mean just that—it has been two successful years. Let us list what he has accomplished:

1. Because of his stand on British sovereignty and the £, the spirit of nationalism has been stirred up in most EC countries. They are less interested in a federal Europe, and more interested in their own sovereignty. We know from the Revelation that at the last Western Europe will be a group of independent powers—a confederation—as in Rev. 17:12-13, the beast with its ten horns.

"...the ten horns... receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast".

2. After a slow change of view Mr Major has started a "new strategy for economic growth" which is beginning to revive Britain—while most European countries are facing economic decline.

This is in line with the last part of Isaiah 23 where the trading nation (of Tyre) appears to be in a prosperous state when Christ comes.

"... her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchants shall be for them that dwell before the LORD".

3. Britain's isolation from Europe has been strengthened by Mr Major's declaration that, at least for 1993, he will keep outside the ERM and allow the pound sterling to float. This must surely create a deep impression among the EC twelve that Britain is half-hearted about genuinely being part of Europe. As it has been for years, Britain is anxious to be at the heart of Europe in so far as it provides vast trade opportunities, but with no interest in being part of a federal Europe.
4. By year-end, only the British and the Danes had not ratified the Maastricht Treaty.

When we survey these inter-related factors during his two years premiership, we may ask, has prophecy anything further that we may expect Britain's ruler to do? Has he not made it plain that Britain will have no part in a federal Europe? According to prophecy she has other work to do when Christ returns. Isolated from Europe, Britain has a work when Christ returns in co-operating with the Commonwealth under the hand of the Monarchy.

Chapter 6: AMERICA'S 'NEW WORLD ORDER'

America seeks to establish world free trade which is beneficial to all and especially to America, who as the world's super-power, seeks to hold the controlling hand in the work of the UN, especially in its peace keeping role. She sees in the recent proposed American free trade Agreement, covering the US, Canada and Mexico as the bargaining force as she deals with Europe, the Far East, and third world groups.

Subject to Congressional approval this new free trade Agreement would come into force on January 1st 1994.

The market's size is impressive. Encompassing 360 million people, with an annual output of £3,850 billion, it would match the size and trade of the EC.



Its size is giving concerns to Brussels.

What are its implications for Bible watchers? Britain is to be drawn away from political union with the EC as we have seen in the previous two chapters. She has grown on trade and as the latter-day Tarshish we would expect her to trade in many markets to make herself rich.

With the EC regulations becoming increasingly unpalatable to Britain, then the chance to link herself with such new markets as this American one must appear attractive. If Britain and America are at last coming out of recession, just as Europe is going into recession, then the scope for expansion in Europe is limited. It will possibly be much greater in America. A cartoon (see next page) in the Daily Telegraph, 14-12-92 was very telling. It had a caricature of Britain as the old lion poised between America, which was beckoning, and the EC, with Delors holding the tail. The thrust of the article that went with it is summarized in the heading:

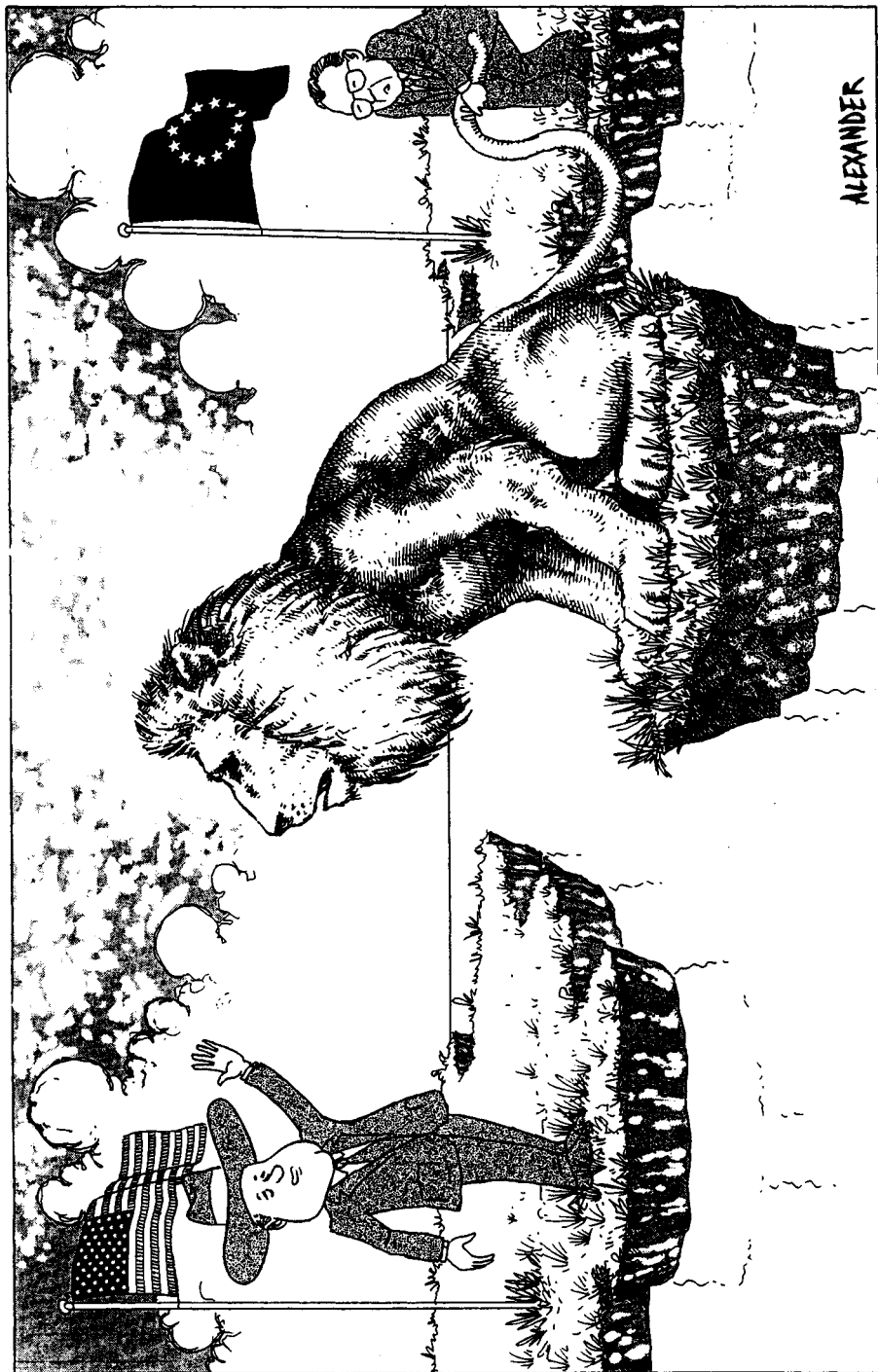
"If the EC binds us in chains, is there an alternative?"

It showed what a reasonable proposition it is for Britain to look towards America. It would strengthen the special relationship between the two countries. We have to await events.

The GATT talks have again become bogged down because of the fears that the French have that their farmers will be ruined by the protocols. GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was established in 1948 to help post-war recovery. 103 countries are linked by the agreement which extends similar tariffs to all the member countries. Since its inception there have been 7 "rounds" of multilateral talks, which have resulted in lowering tariffs on imported goods. Many countries seek to impose high duties in order to protect their own industries from cheap imports. The GATT agreements are essentially a balancing of 'give and take', to avoid these protectionist measures.

This is the 8th "round", known as the Uruguay round, and it has been dragging on for several years. If no is made, then it is feared that the world will break up into trading blocs—the EC, the new North American Free Trade Agreement, and a grouping of Far eastern countries, each of which would put up barriers against the other's goods.

If they finally break down, it would hasten the withdrawal of America from Europe—a step we are anticipating. Again we will have to wait events.



ALEXANDER

Chapter 7:

RUSSIA: A SUMMARY OF EVENTS

THE END OF THE USSR & RESIGNATION OF GORBACHEV

It was the last week of 1991, and the historic moment had arrived for the resignation of President Gorbachev and the end of the USSR with its 15 republics. They were to be replaced by President Yeltsin and the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The heroic and tragic reign of Mikhail Gorbachev came to a close without fanfare on Wednesday. The man who changed the world ... slipped away.

However expected, his passing came as a shock. Mr Gorbachev was to sign a decree ending his function as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Mr Gorbachev duly signed and handed the document to Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, the last Defence Minister of the Soviet Union and the man who will oversee the transfer of the armed forces to a joint commonwealth command.

At 7.35 pm the hammer and sickle flag was lowered from the main Kremlin flagstaff overlooking Red Square, and the white, blue and red tricolour of Russia raised in its place. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was no more.

After a brief 12 minute speech Mr Gorbachev "wished everyone all the best", and pledged his support for Mr. Yeltsin's reforms (DT 27-12-91).

News that Mr Gorbachev's resignation that evening as President of the USSR was imminent had been circulated world-wide, and during the day leaders from many nations were expressing their sorrow and applauding his achievements.

President Bush was quick off the mark, immediately setting up diplomatic relations with Russia and other republics in the new CIS:

"New Russia given US Recognition" was the bold heading, with a sub-heading: "Tribute from the West for deporting Gorbachev,

Bush - He transformed totalitarian dictatorship.

Major - He changed the world for the better.

Reagan - He will live for ever in history”.

In a televised Christmas day speech President Bush lavished praise on Gorbachev, and also welcomed Yeltsin.

Nevertheless in his televised Christmas address, Mr. Bush had words of praise for Mr. Yeltsin; although briefer and less lavish.

“The United States recognizes and welcomes the emergence of a free, independent and democratic Russia, led by its courageous President Boris Yeltsin,” he said. “I look forward to working closely with President Yeltsin in support of his efforts to bring democratic and market reform to Russia” (DT 27-12-91).

The “Commonwealth of Independent States” (CIS) had been established at the beginning of December 1991. The leaders, under Yeltsin, had set out in a protocol the objectives and various definitions. The protocol declared “With the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic ceases to exist”.

So the vast USSR was replaced by a group of republics centred on Yeltsin and the Russian Federation. Yeltsin’s claim for assuming this control was that in March 1991 there had been an election in which the whole of the USSR voted, and Yeltsin was voted President of the Russian Federation by an overwhelming majority. In addition, of course, he had been acclaimed the national leader after he had routed the plotters in the August 1991 coup.

The CIS Protocol had been signed by Ukraine and Armenia, as well as Russia. By this they gave their support for Yeltsin’s reforms.

The Ukraine, one of the richest and most well-developed republics, was soon to be in conflict with Yeltsin over military and “wealth” matters.

Phase 1: January to April 1992

Under Yeltsin’s “market economy” drive, the un-subsidized prices came into force at the beginning of January. It was now the middle of a Russian winter, with snow and sub-zero temperatures. The previously heavily subsidized prices rose some five-fold, even on basic foods. Many people could not afford this and were hungry and bitter. The well-to-do grumbled, but had to bide their time for any action.

A headline on January 10th read:

"Russia sets up crack force to put down riots as prices soar".

This was followed on January 13th by:

"Russian mass rally demands restoration of communism".

By February the impact on the people of the removal of the large government subsidies on basic food prices was very apparent in a headline on the 3rd:

"Yeltsin flies home from the west to face a double crisis

Mr Yeltsin knows he will stand or fall on the success of economic reforms, which unleashed price liberalization on his people a month ago.

Most of the population have lived through the most traumatic month since World War II, with prices jumping by up to sixfold. According to figures released yesterday, the minimum monthly salary a Russian needs to survive is 1,300 roubles (about £6). The average wage is 700 roubles..." (DT 3-2-92).

The second item in the 'double crisis' centred on the alarm of the Military—army, navy, air force— that some of the Commonwealth of Independent States appear determined to create their own armies. Such fragmentation of the (former Soviet) armed forces would make nonsense of State security.

"The preservation of a unified standing army is at the heart of all future co-operation. Ukraine, Moldavia, and Azerbaijan have insisted on setting up their own forces, while Belarus and Uzbekistan have agreed to a two-year delay with reservations" (DT 17-2-92).

Mr Yeltsin is under pressure from the US to get the armed forces problem settled and national security established, because of nuclear weapons.

Abroad Mr Yeltsin, during a visit to the US, spoke at the UN Security Council Summit meeting:

"President Yeltsin bolstered efforts to put the UN at the centre of a new and peaceful world order yesterday, calling for a merger of American and Russian "Star Wars" technology in a global protection system. Making his international debut at a unique summit in New York of the UN, the Russian leader made an impassioned plea for radical nuclear disarmament.

The closing statement authorized the UN to embark on an enhanced role as a peace-maker and peace keeper, able to intervene in disputes around the world. It said there was "the best chance of achieving international peace and security since the foundation of the UN" (DT 1-2-92).

The enthusiasm for peace was matched by a personal rapport.

"President Bush accepts Mr Yeltsin as a satisfactory replacement of Mr Gorbachev

Both men agreed, after years of mutual distrust, that henceforth it would be strictly 'George and Boris'" (DT 1-2-92).

"Attempt to revive the Soviet Union founders in farce"

This newspaper headline in **March** describes a poorly organized rally by hard-line Communists seeking to revive the old Soviet Union of Gorbachev's era.

"Hardliners' hopes of wresting power from President Yeltsin's radical government slithered and died yesterday in the mud of a dairy farm outside Moscow" (DT 18-3-92).

Events in **April** were kinder to Mr Yeltsin than in previous months. The month started with agreement on a "Treaty of Cooperation" between 18 out of 20 Russian Confederation republics. Thus was a successful conclusion to Mr Yeltsin's efforts over more than 12 months.

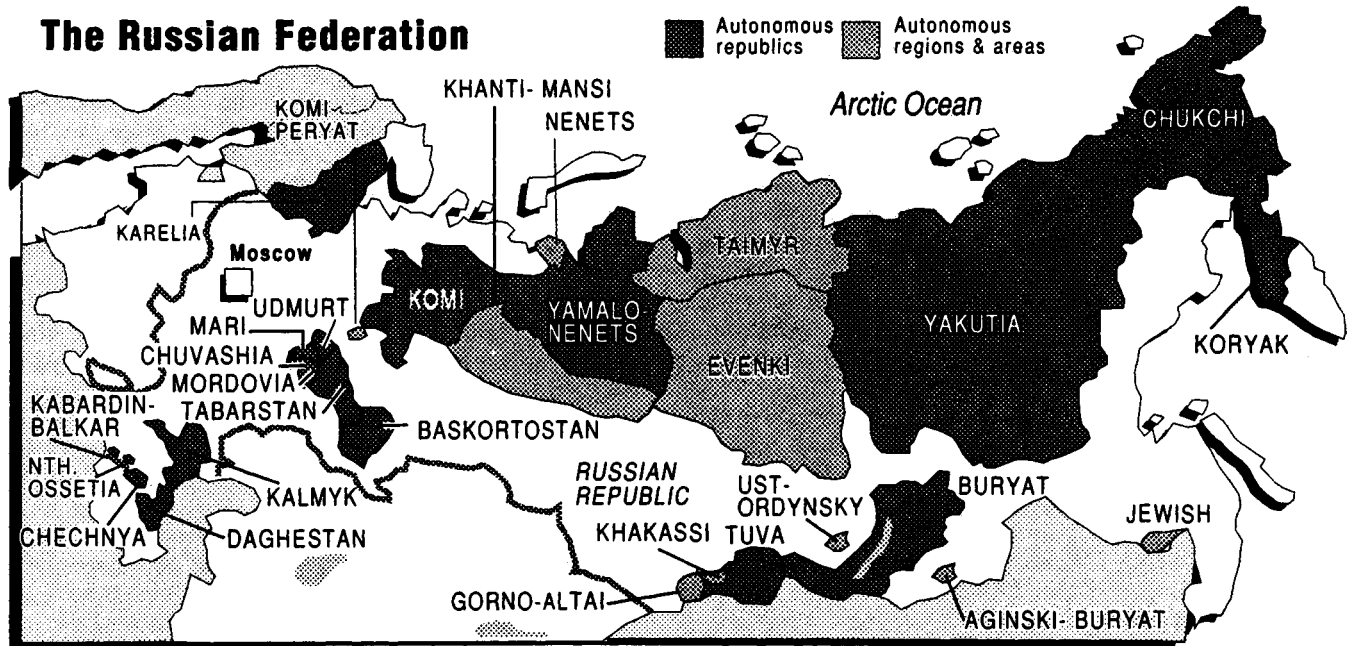
The Guardian Weekly Moscow correspondent gave his assessment of the treaty with the heading

"Victory for Mother Russia"

President Boris Yeltsin last week scored an important victory as 18 of the republics in the Russian Federation signed a treaty to stay with their giant neighbour, Russia, on a looser but still subordinate basis. The treaty signed last week is meant to outline what rights and powers remain with Moscow and what the republics get. It leaves Moscow with the right to control defence and security and set federal taxes" (GW 12-4-92).

In Ezekiel chapter 38 these countries called "Mother Russia" are a big part of the named countries making up the northern host (See map on next page).

The Russian Federation



But the uncertain state of affairs in the new Confederation of Independent States was a matter of growing concern to those involved in approving financial aid for reconstruction, etc.

"£14 bn aid package for ex-Soviet States

President Bush yesterday pledged American support for an internationally co-ordinated \$24 billion (£14 billion) aid package to the former Soviet Union, warning of dire consequences should democracy fail in the new republics.

'The revolution in these states is a defining moment in history. The stakes are as high for us now as at any time in this century,' Mr. Bush said warning of the 'exorbitant' cost to the United States if democracy failed in the Commonwealth of Independent States" (DT 2-4-92).

Phase 2: May to July

Under continuing intense pressures, allegations were being made in May that Yeltsin was losing his calm and determination. He was criticized for allowing Kremlin communist leaders their privileges and luxuries; for failing to communicate with the press, and for his lack of contact with the public.

Nevertheless he was still popular with the people, who clung to him as their only saviour. The Yeltsin-Gorbachev antagonism had the heading

"Yeltsin's policies scorned by angry Gorbachev"

(DT 20-5-92).

In June a 2-day state visit to Washington launched Mr Yeltsin onto the world-stage.

The day Mr Yeltsin arrived in Washington, a writer commented on the uncertainties that lay ahead.

"Summit faces snags over aid and arms

President Bush and Yeltsin venture today into the uncharted terrain of a US-Russian summit without the Cold War.

Both sides realize they need a mutual commitment to cut nuclear arms if they are to reach a plausible deal on aid and a far-reaching treaty of friendship and co-operation" (DT 16-6-92).

The second day was Yeltsin's great day. He was to address the joint assembly of Congress and Senate (a rare privilege); and in the evening attend as chief guest at a State banquet in the White House.

Remembering America's fixed hatred of Communism (called "the evil empire" by Pres. Reagan) Yeltsin had no doubt as to his correct theme in addressing Congress: So the headline report ran:

"Communism is dead, Yeltsin tells Congress

Communism is dead in Russia and will not rise again. President Yeltsin told a joint session of the House and Senate of the United States Congress yesterday.

'History must not be allowed to repeat itself,' said the Russian leader, who received a thunderous standing ovation of more than two minutes when he entered the chamber, echoing to cheers and chants of Boris!

'The world can sigh with relief. The idol of communism which spread social strife, enmity and unparalleled brutality everywhere, which instilled fear in humanity, has collapsed'" (DT 18-6-92).

The occasion of the State Banquet was repeated under the heading:

"Boris Basks in his moment of glory

It was a sweet occasion for the man once dismissed by the powers that be in Washington as an unreliable buffoon with an alarming vodka habit.

Yeltsin and his wife Naina—she especially, was an unknown quantity—have impressed and charmed Americans on their first state visit.

It's not quite at the level of the old "Gorbymania", when Washington ground to a halt as locals thronged for a glimpse of the Soviet couple, but there is a calm admiration for the leader of Russia and his wife.

On his return from America in **July**, Yeltsin faced a state of near despair among the people. Everything was getting worse. They had now endured six months of un-subsidized food prices. Yet shops were often still empty—either through breakdown of distribution; or republics refusing to send their usual supplies to other republics or the indolence of workers. The people were hungry or could see no prospect of improvement.

Phase 3: July-September

In the middle of July the IMF Austerity Plan was imposed. Its aim was a short sharp shock treatment to get the economy going. It produced

little response in the dispirited vast millions of the Russian people. Critics argued it was an unrealistic approach to such a backward, undeveloped nation.

"The IMF austerity plan" (GW 19-7-92)

The following extracts from the European Security Analyst in June may help us to appreciate the chaotic state of the country:

"Rescue plan

As the US foreign policy establishment stampedes toward a megabillion dollar comprehensive 'aid' programme for the ex-Soviet Union, consider the following facts:

- The debt of Russia is running at 25% of its total Government expenditures for the first quarter of this year. There is a massive underpayment of taxes by business enterprises and local governments.

- Wages have dropped so low relative to freed prices that some 90% of Russians now live below subsistence levels.

- Various forms of Western aid to former Soviet states totalled about \$50 billion in the last 20 months, and the money has virtually disappeared without a trace or a dent on the economic picture. Tens of billions in hard currency controlled by Communist Party officials also vanished in the last two years.

These sad facts—plus civil and ethnic wars and the lack of co-operation among the former Soviet republics—suggest that the new states are nearing military, economic and political anarchy.

Two views emerged amongst overseas governments—those like Pres. Bush who was so fearful of the complete collapse of the Russian economy, and anti-reformists taking over and re-establishing the Kremlin rule that he advocated piling in more and more aid. The view of other governments like Britain considered it prudent to hold back substantial aid, but sending know-how specialists to teach and advise on banking, financial control, factory management etc.

By August Yeltsin's opposition parties appeared to be gaining the upper hand.

Yeltsin in June and July had yielded to pressure from the anti-reform opposition—the military, factory owners and their managers, and Kremlin Communist leaders. He had replaced some members of his

government, bringing in men who insisted on slowing down the pace of reform to ease the burden of austerity on the people.

The seriousness of the general situation was expressed in a Daily Telegraph editorial of August 7th

"Yeltsin under threat

Economic reforms appear to have lost their way... The possibility cannot be discounted that a second August coup is fast approaching—if not against Mr Yeltsin himself, then certainly against the pro-Western economic reformers led by Yegor Gaidar, the Acting Prime Minister.

Moreover, disillusionment with economic reform is far greater than it was a year ago".

This 'disillusionment' was a very practical matter. On another page an article was headed

"Russia prints 30 years cash in a month to pay wage bill

The cash shortage has left many workers without pay for months..." (DT 7-8-92).

With all this turmoil of pro-and anti-reformists, and the flood of paper money, Mr Yeltsin had to face an embittered Mr Gorbachev who declared Yeltsin did not know how to manage reform.

"An embittered Mr Gorbachev attacked Yeltsin's government yesterday and said he had not lost hope of reconstituting some confederation of former Soviet states.

The radical governments of Gaidar had brought Russia to the brink of economic collapse..." (DT 18-8-92).

Abroad the IMF and World Bank viewed with alarm the way things were going in Russia; particularly the failure of their Austerity plan to get into its stride.

According to the IMF plan, inflation by now should have been brought under control. Far from this being so, hyperinflation was on the horizon (Hyperinflation is a 50% or more increase in inflation over a month GP).

The Daily Telegraph commented on the situation using the strange but grim heading:

"Russian meltdown

The rouble has fallen by around 99.7 %! against the pound since the old exchange controls were relaxed.

This immense depreciation is merely one symptom of a monetary malaise which can only be described as terminal. The roots of the rouble's fall lie in the fiscal and monetary collapse of the planned economy.

The slide towards hyperinflation inevitably undermines what little Western resolve remains to assist Mr Yeltsin" (DT 19-9-92).

Meanwhile the military machine created alarm abroad:

"Russia 'has broken its germ war pledge'

Foreign governments expressed great concern that Russia was still producing germ warfare weapons, and had not destroyed her stocks. It is believed Yeltsin is unable to get the Military to carry out the pledge he gave six months ago" (DT 1-9-92).

Concerning the sale of weapons to Iran, Russia said it was part of an Agreement made several years ago. Also it was one of their few sources of hard cash.

Phase 4: October to December

By late **October** there was a growing determination by opposition parties to Yeltsin's market economy and the IMF Austerity plan, to remove Yeltsin and his government. The defiant mood of anti-reformers that developed during October is revealed in the following newspaper headings.

"Russian parliament in Yeltsin Showdown" Oct. 22nd.

"Yeltsin calls advisers to crisis meeting" Oct. 26th

But Yeltsin is not easily defeated. He is a great fighter when challenged as indicated in an article in DT:

" Yeltsin ready to impose direct rule on Russia

President Yeltsin said yesterday that he would be prepared to impose direct rule on Russia and suspend parliament if it was in the people's interests..." (DT 31-10-92).

A broad picture of the conflict in Russia was sketched in the Times. The burden of the article was conveyed in the sub-heading "Eastward look the land is dark and growing darker".

"The Bear's troubles

While the world looks across the Atlantic for a new dawn, the land is darkening in the East. Boris Yeltsin is being cornered by his enemies and by the forces that threaten to return Russia to an evil totalitarianism. Failure stares his reform government in the face. Hyperinflation has impoverished the nation. The stench of facism rises from the crowds who parade their ethnic hatreds and jeer at Russia's fledgling democracy.

As political frenzy grows Yeltsin is having to wheel and turn to beat off challenges on all sides... Like Mikhail Gorbachev, he is having to make concessions and tactical alliances: placating the military by lengthening the withdrawal from the Baltics, slowing down privatisation, retreating from the monetarist policies of his prime minister and IMF, acceding to the demands of the heavy industry lobby for easier credit and the continued support of ailing factories" (DT 2-11-92).

December

December 5th saw the opening of the specially convened Congress of People's Debates, when the massed forces of anti-reformists hoped to remove Yeltsin and his government.

It was two weeks of wrangling and bargaining, with Yeltsin fighting a lone battle to keep his Prime Minister and architect of the economic reforms, Yegor Gaidar. In the final voting in the second week of the Congress, Gaidar was ousted.

"Gaidar sacrificed to hardliners by Yeltsin

Suffering one of his most serious political defeats, President Boris Yeltsin bowed to pressure from Russia's conservative parliament and dropped his radical Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar (European 20-12-92).

The year ended with a confused picture of a Russia at the cross-roads. Anti-reformers had won a victory over the IMF's "short-sharp shock" austerity plan. Yeltsin had visited Communist China and came away impressed by the Chinese economic model. In a report from Beijing, quoted in the Washington Post, Yeltsin said:

"Russia... has much to learn from the Chinese, who began their economic reforms 14 years ago... The Chinese tactics of reform is not to hurry...and I think that, for us, has a certain significance" (27-12-92).

Russia remained a country in turmoil, yet still the country with the greatest arsenal of nuclear weapons. Russia together with two of the

former Soviet republics, are three of the four biggest nuclear weapon powers in the world.

Chapter 8:

A GROPING RUSSIA MUST REGAIN HER CONFIDENCE

At the end of 1991 Yeltsin established a market economy in Russia which has had disastrous results ever since. Bowing to political pressure he was forced to restrain these reforms before the 12 months were out. The year 1992 can therefore be characterized as the year of economic about-face.

This dramatic turn-around, combined with an appreciation of the Chinese-style economic reform (see previous page) has the world watching, anxious to see the consequences of the new policies. It would seem essential to us that Russia needs to be strong to fulfil her role assigned by the Divine Will. But how will she turn around the present economic disarray? It is difficult to imagine Russia returning to a true Communist economy. Let it be noted that whilst China itself has a Communist style government, yet her economy has been adopting many features of a free market for many years. The more probable scenario is that the Russian economy will gradually improve through a pragmatic policy of change towards more individual incentive and less centralization. This policy will allow closer relationships with Germany and other European countries.

We wait with eager anticipation to see what the angelic messengers are developing for us as they move the nations closer to the great and dreadful day of Yahweh.

What can we expect to see?

To answer this we need to review the main prophetic descriptions of Gog and his huge confederacy, and channel our expectations accordingly.

Ezekiel 38 reveals to us:

- the development of a dominant leader who will exercise dominion over the Russian Federation (Rosh, Meshech and Tubal) as well as over Germany and central Europe (Magog).
- the linking of ties between Russia and ancient Persia (Iran, Iraq), ancient Ethiopia (countries south of Egypt to the horn of Africa), Libya, Gomer (France and western Europe) and Togarmah (Turkey).

Daniel 2 amplifies this picture by revealing a confederacy stretching from the shores of the Atlantic right across to Afghanistan and possibly West Pakistan.

Daniel 8 portrays this latter day aggressor as the little horn of the goat which is a symbol of a power enthroned in Istanbul (ancient Constantinople) and dominating the Byzantine regions of the ancient Roman empire, but giving support to the western Papal counterpart. It will continue to support the priestcraft of both.

Daniel 11 portrays Gog as the king of the north, that is, a power occupying the ancient Seleucid territory of Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and West Pakistan, moving to take Turkey and invade “the pleasant land”.

Isaiah 10:16 and Micah 5 describe the latter day spoiler as the anti-typical Assyrian, not because it is an Iraqi power, but because it will occupy the ancient territory of the Assyrian empire and will be as fierce and barbaric as the Assyrian of old.

All of these prophecies corroborate each other. There is no piece of the jigsaw that doesn't fit and whilst trends in previous years have certainly propelled Russia along the path of closer integration with Magog and Gomer and closer connections with its religious heritage, we have yet to see a trend which will re-consolidate its influence in the area of Iran and Iraq and surrounding countries.

The speed with which we have witnessed the dismantling of Europe and the economic links being forged between Germany and Russia have tended to make us impatient as we have witnessed the slow ponderous steps of uncertainty in 1992. Out of this human chaos God will prod the Russian bear to reassert its role of guardianship over its allies and confederacies. We await with renewed interest the results of these skilful and divine manipulations.

Chapter 9:

THE BALKAN TROUBLE SPOT

The troubles in the former Yugoslavia have been dominating the headlines this year. Civil war in its worst forms—rape, massacre and pillage—has shocked the world. The situation is confused and we can only attempt to see the implications of this conflict.

The general area is known as the Balkans, named after a range of mountains, now in Bulgaria. The whole area has been one of conflict for centuries, being the meeting point of east and west. It was right through this region that the Roman Empire was divided into the Latin speaking western half and the Greek speaking eastern half. Later it was religion that separated east and west, the Roman Catholic west and the Greek Orthodox east. They correspond to the territories described in the Apocalypse as the beast and of the dragon.

The Roman empire developed from the Greek empire so that Daniel saw it as the little horn of the goat of chapter 8. The Roman world absorbed and preserved the Greek culture and education. For the early centuries, the city of Rome was the capital of the empire, and as such the 'seat of the dragon'.

Then Constantine—who was born in the Balkans—gained control and became Emperor of the eastern and western Roman empire. He saw that a new capital was needed to hold the empire together and to be closer to the potential trouble-spots—the Germanic tribes by the Danube and Persians in the east. He eventually chose Byzantium, a small trading town strategically placed just to the south of the Black Sea, close to the west of the Bosphorus, the important passageway linking the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. He rebuilt the city in AD 324 and named it after himself—Constantinople. It was known as 'the second Rome'. It was now the military centre of the Roman world and was now the 'seat of the dragon'. Here was established what was called the Byzantine empire, which flourished as the west declined under barbarian invasion.

"It endured for some eleven centuries, and formed a strategic bridge between antiquity and the modern world. It not only preserved the two unifying elements of the Roman Empire—Roman law and State organization, and the inherited tradition of Hellenic culture—it added a third and even more powerful organizing force: Christianity" (Time-Life Books).

It was from Constantinople, the centre of the Greek Orthodox church that “christianity” spread north-westward into the Balkans and northward reaching Russia a thousand years ago, and greatly influencing her development based upon Byzantine lines.

“Russia owes her religion and the greater part of her medieval culture to the Byzantine Empire, both directly and through her connections with Constantinople, in the ninth and tenth centuries, and indirectly, through Slavo-Byzantine schools of the tenth century Bulgaria.

Byzantium brought Russia five gifts: her religion, her law, her view of the world, her art and her writing” (Oxford Slavonic Papers, *Russia’s Byzantine Heritage*).

The church’s policy was to grant independence to the newer churches. The Russian church became independent in 1448. With the fall of Constantinople, Moscow became the ‘third Rome’, the centre for Greek, Byzantine thinking, and the base for spreading ‘christianity’ eastward. The seat of the ‘dragon’ had now moved to Moscow.

Meanwhile, with the scourge of Islam under the 6th Trumpet of Revelation ch. 9, the Balkan region increasingly fell under Muslim control. The last remnants of the old Byzantine empire disappeared with the fall of Constantinople in AD 1453. The Turkish Ottoman empire held sway over the Balkan region, until the 19th century, when step by step the “River Euphrates” was dried up. Serbia led the way being granted near-autonomy in the early part of the century and becoming fully independent in 1882. It was the expansionist plans of Serbia and Bulgaria that led to the start of the World War I.

After the war, the area was divided up by the Allies. The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—later to be renamed Yugoslavia in 1918—was set up and Bulgaria trimmed back in size. Yugoslavia contained an explosive mixture of Croats (Catholics), Serbs (Greek Orthodox), Bosnian-Muslims and Slovenes (Catholics). World War II resulted in bitter fighting between the 3 groups. The hand of the Catholic church in actively supporting the Croats in the massacre of the Serbs (and Jews and Muslims), is well documented (e.g. ‘The Vatican against Europe’, Edmond Paris). The aim was “to kill one third, drive out one third and convert one third forcibly to Catholicism”. 500,000 were massacred, 300,000 deported and 240,000 forced to “convert”. The memory of these happenings is at the root of the terrible revenge that the Serbians are now exacting in their battles against the Croats.

The problem that faces the region is that the West favours the Catholic Croats, Russia and Greece the Orthodox Serbs, and Turkey the Muslim Bosnians.

The Daily Telegraph, indicated the extent of the Eastern Orthodox church, under the heading:

“West fears Orthodox bloc led by Russia could divide Europe” (6-1-93) (See first map overleaf)

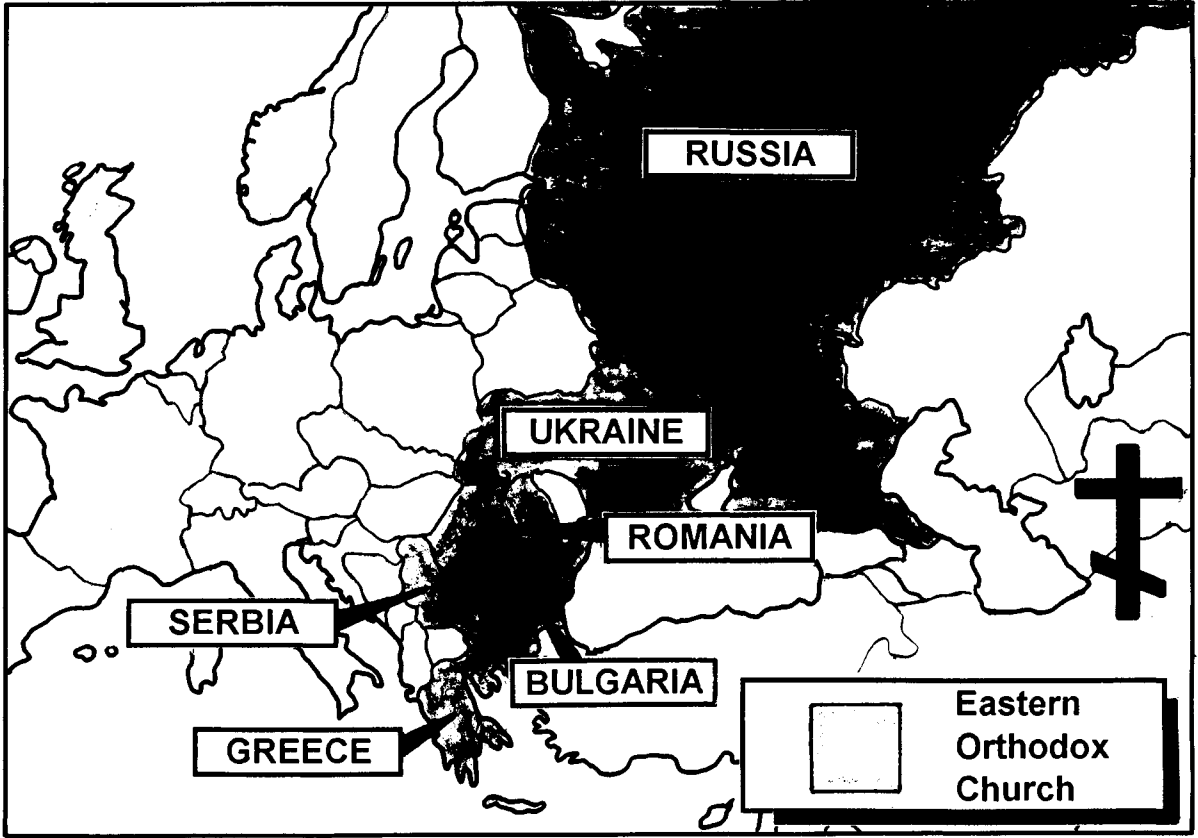
It also pointed out the growing disparity between the countries of central Europe—Poland, Hungary, and the new Czech Republic, where reform is proceeding, and the Orthodox countries of Romania, Bulgaria and the Balkans, which “appear to be stuck in the past”. “Western officials now wonder if these countries, despite their avowed commitment to reform, will ever leave the Russian orbit.”

Yugoslavia

The former Yugoslavia has been divided up in several small states. See the map entitled “The four main flashpoints” overleaf.

Bosnia-Herzegovina. The population is a mixture of Bosnian Muslims (Slavs who converted to Islam under Turkish rule) - 43%; Serbs (Greek Orthodox) - 31%, and Croats (Roman Catholic) - 17%. The problem is that they are not neatly sectioned off in different parts of the country, but are a bewilderingly complex pattern of enclaves and enclaves within enclaves. The Muslims want an independent state. The Croats want to absorb their compatriots into Croatia, and the Serbs are busy trying to absorb as much territory as they can conquer into Serbia. The Serbian President, Slobadan Milosevic, came to power in 1987 as a communist strongman, with the strong Yugoslav army under his control. He has led the Serbian expansion. The Serbs are strongly anti-Europe.

The West is having to take into account Russia’s pro-Serbian feelings, in the decisions that it takes to solve the area’s problems. Although the UN imposed an economic blockade of Serbia, Russia is daily sending barges laden with oil across the Black Sea and up the Danube to Serbia. She is reported to be training and reorganizing the Serbian air force, and is willing to supply arms and ammunition. Greece too has defied the blockade and has been supplying oil to Serbia. The leader of the Greek church issued a call to all Greek Orthodox to support their brothers in the faith in embattled Serbia.



THE FOUR MAIN FLASHPOINTS



Further south in the Serbian area of Kosovo, 90% of the population are Albanian Muslims.

Republic of Macedonia (Muslims). This is a potential trouble spot. Its Slav majority is seeking independence. Within her borders are 400,000 ethnic Albanians—Muslims and many Bulgarians.

The Serbs have already suggested to Greece that they carve up Macedonia between them but Greece mistrusts her Muslim northern neighbour and is unhappy at the use of the name of Macedonia, which is identical to a province of Greece. However, Turkey is ready to come to the defence of the Muslims in Macedonia, as well as those in Bosnia and Kosovo.

So we have a potential powder keg, which could involve Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Turkey, Serbia and Russia. Greece is a member of the E.C., Turkey is not, but is in NATO. Ironically, Turkey is now seen as “the regional ‘strong man’ with a powerful capacity for restraining the slide to war”!

PROPHETIC SUMMARY

What are we seeing? The division of Europe into the two legs is continuing. In the west is the ‘beast’, in the east the ‘dragon’. The ‘dragon’ we have seen is associated with the ‘little horn of the goat’. For the time being religion with its different cultural outlooks is ensuring that there are the two legs of Daniel’s image. In the final conflict the image stands upon its feet, its constituent nations united in their opposition to the events in Israel, as the Elijah work of reformation proceeds (Mal. 4:5, 6). Will it then stand with one leg, the eastern, ‘dragon’ leg, upon the mountains of Israel, to be destroyed at Armageddon and the western leg, the ‘beast’ with the ‘false prophet’ that rides upon the ‘beast’ destroyed when Europe becomes a lake of fire? The ‘little stone power’ that smites the image will eventually fill the whole earth, bringing peace and blessing to all mankind.

Chapter 10:

WHY CHRIST'S COMING TO THE HOUSEHOLD IS NEAR AT HAND

As we view the partially restored nation of Israel in the land today, we are often made keenly aware of their state of unbelief. In spiritual terms the nation is as yet a valley of very dry bones, just as Ezekiel says in the early part of his 37th chapter. What is to change this situation? Clearly it must change, for Paul says 'And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again' (Rom. 11:23). Something has to occur then, so that belief may be generated in the Jewish nation and people once again.

It can be said of modern Israel: "...how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14, 15). The generation of Israel living today have not heard of their **true** Messiah. They have heard of a "Jesus" which apostate Christendom preaches, but of the true Jesus who is both Son of Man and Son of God and whom God raised from the dead almost 2,000 years ago, they know nothing. Now as this is the case, Paul's statement in Romans requires that they be sent preachers, teachers, in order that they might both hear and believe. In fact the Apostle proceeds to quote from Isa. 52:7 where the context is that time "when the LORD shall bring again Zion" (v. 8). This introduces us to the idea that Israel's time of restoration is also a time of instruction.

An interesting pattern of events is suggested from a consideration of Jer. 3:14-18, where we read the following:

- * "...I will take you [Jews throughout the world] one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (v. 14). Notice that this is not a full restoration; not everyone is included, but it is a *partial* restoration such as we see today.
- * "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (v. 15). The partial regathering of verse 14 is immediately followed by a period during which pastors or shepherds teach the nation.
- * "When ye be multiplied and increased in the land..." (v. 16). Another phase of restoration follows and things associated with the Old Covenant are in the past.

- * “Jerusalem the throne of the LORD...”. Finally the Kingdom is fully established.

The sequence of events suggested here requires that teachers appear on the scene very soon after the partial and primary regathering of Jews to the land **has been developed to the required extent**. In chapter 23 also, when rebuking the shepherds responsible for Israel’s scattering, Jeremiah again turns to the time of the nation’s restoration and the establishment of the kingdom. Again God says through the prophet that he will gather the remnant of His flock (v. 3) and then set up shepherds over His people to feed them (v. 4). The pattern is the same as that seen in chapter 3. The idea here in chapter 23 naturally links with the similar description given by Ezekiel in his prophecies of the restoration, where yet again the same pattern of events is set before us.

Once this is established as the sequence of events to be expected, then it will be seen that it has tremendous importance for us today. We already see a partial regathering of Jews in the land, so that the scene is now set for teachers to feed the people with knowledge and understanding of the Truth. These teachers will be sent by “the Deliverer” (Christ returned) whose first work with the nation will be to turn away the ungodliness that we see among them today (Rom. 11:26). The teachers that he will send will doubtless include many risen saints.

EZEKIEL’S RESTORATION PROPHECIES

After news is received out of Jerusalem that the city has been smitten (Ezek. 34:21), the prophet Ezekiel is told that there is to be a period of desolation for the land because of the abomination which Israel had committed (v. 28, 29). This desolation has covered long centuries. Then in chapter 34 God says that He will seek out His flock of Israel who have been scattered as a result of the works of false shepherds and will gather them from the countries of their dispersion and then “feed” them (v. 11-14). The chapter describes the gathering and feeding of the flock of Israel, the provision of the Good Shepherd “my servant David a prince among them,” and a new “covenant of peace” with God’s people. The chapter thus summarizes the whole process of restoration which is then dealt with in more detail in the chapters which follow.

The general pattern of events may be seen from the accompanying chart showing the construction of Ezekiel’s Restoration prophecies. The sequence of events runs left to right (note the 4 headings along the top);

the chapter sequence is given down the left side. The pattern of events seen here harmonizes with what we saw from Jeremiah, and it emphasizes to us that Israel's teachers must appear on the scene reasonably early in the restoration process.

A detail from Ezekiel 37 indicates that this work of breathing spiritual life into the national body of Israel is to be carried out by the saints. Ezekiel is told to "prophesy" (v. 7) and this carries the idea of *teaching*, so that in this work of prophesying we can see that Ezekiel—a man of sign—represents those who will instruct the nation. But these are not mortal teachers. In verse 9 we are told that the "breath" or spirit is to come from "the four winds". Now in Zechariah 6:5 "the four spirits of the heavens" are representative of the saints in cherubic manifestation. The four "winds" and the four "spirits" are the same, so that the spirit of truth which is to infuse the national body of Israel is here seen to *come through the risen saints*—perhaps under the direction of such worthies as Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Elijah.

It will be a thrilling time when this happens. Ezekiel says that as he prophesied (37:7) "there was a noise". The Hebrew word has the sense of a *voice* or *sound* (see Strong's # 6963) and the result of it is a "shaking" or "an earthquake" (RV). So we can expect that the sounding of the Truth will bring about a tremendous change in the nation—the idea is that of restoration.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

This understanding of the sequence of events in the restoration of Israel will lead us to appreciate more keenly just how close we now must be to Christ's coming. He is "the deliverer" who will supervise the work of giving spiritual life to the nation, but before that he will **first** raise those who are sleeping and judge those both living and raised (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:10).

To see these things as a reality is to be moved by them. This is the effect of understanding the prophetic word. In Hebrews 11:7 we learn that "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house..." It will be so with us also if we see these things as a reality before us. Once we appreciate that Christ's coming is close at hand and that very soon we must leave behind the cares of this world and all those ambitions or accomplishments that may be tied to it, it will have a profound impact

upon our lives. We shall perceive the urgent need to seek the way of holiness and maintain our separation from the surrounding ungodliness of the world. We know that we will have to give an account of our stewardship—what have we done with the precious deposit of Truth placed in our care? Have we shown that quality of love for one another that he has commanded us to show (1 John 3:16)? These are questions to ask ourselves, and it is the realization that prophecy **requires** Christ's coming to take place at this point in the sequence associated with Israel's restoration, that will motivate and stir us to make the things of the Truth our priority in life. But if we do not appreciate the nearness of Christ's return, we will almost certainly be taken unawares, not watching and consequently unprepared.

As indicated in our chart, we shall be called to judgement some time before the gathering of Gog's armies against Israel, so that we do not have to await that event for Christ to come. The resurrection, the judgement and some instruction of Israel is to happen first. Today we should be ready and prepared for that call to come to the household—we have every reason to expect it—so let us cast aside every weight, every hindrance, that we may receive the news of his coming with peace and joy in our hearts—and not the fear that comes from shame.

Paul Billington

CONSTRUCTION OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES SHOWING THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

EVENTS ->	1. Israel Judged	2. Preparation for restoration	3. Final humbling. Enemies destroyed	4. Kingdom established
Chapter 33	Israel judged. City smitten			
34	Israel scattered as result of false shepherds	v. 12 on. Israel to be sought out restored & fed by good shepherd		David the prince among them (v. 23 & 24) Covenant of peace (v. 25 on)
35			Israel's enemies (represented by Seir) to be desolated	
36	Reasons for cutting off reviewed v. 1-7	v. 8 on:—God will restore Israel - "Even all of it" v. 25-33. Moral regeneration (Result of Saints work) Giving of new heart & spirit. v. 26		ISRAEL: The Holy Flock v. 38
37	Israel cut off. v. 1-3 (Dried bones)	Ezekiel represents shepherds who are to prophesy (teach) v. 4	"Our hope is lost" (Land invaded) v. 11.	Covenant of peace - v. 26 David II is king v. 22 & 24
38		Partial & primary restoration in the midst of the land	Land invaded by Gog. Israel's enemies are destroyed	
39			Land cleansed, enemies destroyed - Israel's final restoration (v. 25)	
40-48				The Kingdom of Christ established. A house of prayer for all nations etc

WHY CHRIST'S COMING TO THE HOUSEHOLD IS NEAR AT HAND—79

Acknowledgements

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1992 was not an example of 'The New World Order' which former President Bush talked about so much in 1991. In fact the year brought international turmoil and the downfall of Bush... but not of Saddam! It seems he may be the hook necessary to keep the King of the South in place.

In the former Soviet Republics, satellites and other East European countries, the downfall of the Soviet Union and many Communist governments was not the panacea they looked for. For example, in what used to be Yugoslavia, there was 'ethnic cleansing' at its worst. In the words of Eduard Shevardnadze "the dark forces are growing stronger" and these were seen in Western Europe as well where neo-Nazism boldly raised its ugly head. This social conflict—borne partly from economies in trouble or tatters, partly from ancient racial hatreds, partly from the strife of differing religions and language, and partly from incompetent and unstable governments—is the cauldron from which Gog could arise.

One 'Major' *milestone* was the departure of Britain from the ERM and his clear statement about the EC: "I will never...let our British identity be lost in a Federal Europe".

In the Middle East there were steps towards peace and prosperity for Israel. America is pre-positioning military hardware in Israel, and Israel was prepared to offer advanced remote controlled spy planes to America and strategic facilities to the American navy. This cooperation between America and Israel would help greatly in preventing an Arab attack.

Israel and Jordan have foresworn the use of force against each other and Israel has agreed to negotiate an unspecified 'just solution' to the festering problem of Palestinian refugees who fled Israel during Arab-Israeli wars. **Peace** talks between Israel and her Arab enemies continued in various forms and venues throughout most of 1992.

These events should remind us that Christ's return is very near. What are we doing about it?

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments... Behold I come as a thief" (Rev. 16:15).