

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of the
World Events of
2009 in the Light
of Bible Prophecy***

Don Pearce

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Preface

“For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” Numbers 28:9

We hear quite often how faithful brethren and sisters through our ecclesias wait with anticipation for the next edition of the annual Milestones. Well Milestones 2009 will certainly reward their expectations: it is full of interesting facts which show that not only are great issues of the world falling out according to the Word of God long spoken through the prophets but also that the return of our Master is near at hand. We do well to watch and see the Divine hand in our world and to give vent to our joyful anticipation by willing service in the life of the Brotherhood of Christ in the latter days.

The accuracy of Bible prophecy is quite astounding and quite often intriguing. Take for example, the situation of Europe. We live in a time of democratic governments, when almost every moral law has been abandoned, yet democracy, the rule of the people's voice as against that of the former king or dictator or the Bible is put forward as the greatest virtue in the management of peoples. However in Europe what have we beheld during this last thirty to forty years? The retreat of democracy as 27 countries allow themselves to be federated into the European Union with the loss of a great deal of their former self-government or democracy. A British greengrocer can't stock or import the type of apple he wishes to unless he first consults the European controller! So never mind his customers' preference for the local Cox's Orange Pippin apples, he has to sell French Golden Delicious; and so also with many tens of thousands of commercial items, all through the 27 countries, or 'states' as they have now become. Who would ever have guessed that Europeans would succumb to all these foreign regulations. Yet this is what we have witnessed for 30 years and still the process goes on. Why is this so? Very often they find themselves compelled to buy products from people of different language, religion and general way of life. The local company gets overrun by the more perfect product of perhaps a slick and efficient German company, more local workers lose employment but still the process goes on. Going into Prague in the early morning the principal roads are clogged with 2 kms of trucks, from every corner of Europe, transporting in their foreign products to the capital of the Czech Republic; meanwhile the local companies languish for lack of orders. Despite this, every nation of Europe has striven to find entry into the European Union. Why are these things so?

The answer is that a short verse in Revelation chapter 17 said they would; “these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (v13). Like the proverb says, “People in a crowd often lose their sense of individual judgement”. So the nations of Europe, having fought for their individuality through the 19th and 20th centuries, now stampede to join

the confederacy that will yet “make war with the Lamb”! and the head of Christendom goads them on in their mad pursuit!

We salute the wonder of the Word of Prophecy.

Israel is a small nation in the midst of six bitterly opposed nations. Her land surface is about 1% of that of her Muslim neighbours. Her economy was a basket case and if it was not for the United States subsidising she must have gone bankrupt many times. The land was degraded, her hills were barren, her water limited, her natural resources negligible, most of her population arrived poor and destitute. Who would migrate to such a land, where the experience of war was almost constant? Who would take their family to such a land of trouble? Yet the facts in Milestones 2009 reveal an amazing economy growing at a prodigious pace, with a population of 7.5 million, (5.7 million of which are Jews) and exports of high tech products pouring out of the country and leading the world in many key technological and commercial fronts. Even oil and gas in the nearby Mediterranean are promising greater and cheaper efficiency. The “West Bank” (read Judea and Samaria) and Gaza are also thriving and growth is almost as great as anywhere in the world; all this in lands that the world is told are in abject misery and poverty. It seems that peace will now come through prosperity, an experience so totally foreign in the brief Palestinian history. When there is a common prosperity and a mutual benefit from it then borders aren’t so important and the security wall is no longer under construction! But isn’t Iran threatening Israel with possible atomic weapons and supplying Hamas and Hezbollah with rockets and other military equipment? Indeed, in fact the prosperity is in the very face of all this Iranian sponsored terror.

How can these things possibly be? Because the Word of prophecy spoke of “silver and gold, cattle and goods, a great spoil” in the rejuvenated land at the return of Messiah – Ezekiel 38:12, 13. This prosperity would be accompanied by a time of apparent “peace and safety” v.11 and we can see more clearly now how this may come about. Iran’s threat is felt as keenly by the Sunni Muslims of the surrounding Arab nations, who are now more concerned about Iran than they are about Israel. Iran’s belligerence is turning Israel’s enemies into quiet supporters.

We only have to trust in the Word of the Living God for all will turn out as He has said!

Let us rejoice in our heritage, free from the fears that rack the hearts of men today, building up our ecclesias, tutoring our children in the solid foundations of the Truth, preaching boldly the things of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ and strengthening the things that remain.

The Lord is surely near at hand.

We long to hear his welcome voice when also our eyes shall see the King in his beauty.

Brian Luke, Secretary

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Abbreviations used

EU European Union. Was the EEC, then EC, now EU
m = million; **bn** = billion; **GDP** = Gross Domestic Product
\$1= £0.62; €0.70; A\$1.11; CA\$1.05; NZ\$1.38 at 4-1-10 rates.
\$1 million = £619,000, \$1 billion = £619,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

Author’s notes

I would like to especially thank my family and Bre. Kevin Allison, Alan Clarke and the CSSS for their helpful comments on the draft. It is all put together in the last few weeks of the year, so please bear with its imperfections! *Milestones* quotes extensively from overseas sources, and as **I retain original spellings, etc., check whether it is a quote before blaming the proofreaders!**

Conventional religious terminology is used, sometimes put within “ ”, but often not. Readers will appreciate my understanding on the falseness of many of these terms. Conventional names are used: e.g. West Bank. Dates are always day-month-year. I am very grateful for items sent in; ensure the date and source are indicated.

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Chapter 1:

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

2009 – Another incredible Milestones year!

I admit that 2008 seemed a year when so many of the pieces of the prophetic jigsaw dropped into place, but 2009 has excelled! The times that we have waited for are surely so close.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Hab 2:3

Surely it is speaking with ever increasing urgency that the Lord's coming is at hand – “watch and pray”. Consider some of this year's Milestones.

The coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty alters the composition of Europe. It is no longer a collection of 27 different countries united in trade, but is now a federal state with a political identity, with a President able to speak on behalf of the EU. This surely is giving us the foundation for the latter-day Beast power. As in the previous Beast – the Beast of the Earth, it has Germany at its heart. Germany – with the Vatican – has been shaping EU policy. Her dream is an even wider cooperation with Russia, a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

The prophetic picture is of a Beast system and Dragon system. These two do not seem to merge but cooperate together. We see Russia and Europe – especially Germany – working together in ways which would be almost unbelievable just 20 years ago.

At the same time we see the growing power of the Vatican. The Harlot Woman of Rev 17 is described as *sitting on many waters*. With Russia becoming the 178th country to have diplomatic relations with the Vatican, she truly can be said to be sitting upon many waters. Eighty years ago the number was a mere 27 countries!

Her increasing reinstatement at the heart of Europe is something Bible students have long anticipated, but its speed continues to arouse the fears of Humanists who see this as an alarming feature.

One of the reasons the Vatican was so keen to see the Lisbon Treaty come into force was that it recognises the role of the Churches (read Vatican) in Europe's past and gives them a consultative role for the future. No wonder the Vatican celebrated the coming into effect of the Lisbon Treaty with a call to start using their rights under the Treaty to promote a “critical and constructive dialogue with the EU decision makers”.

We have seen amazing progress this year in healing the schism that split Christendom a thousand years ago. We expect Christendom to be united at

the time of the end. There have been good relations with the Greek Orthodox Churches for many years, but the big obstacle has been the Russia Orthodox Church. However, with the enthronement this year of Kirill as the new Patriarch, following the death in 2008 of Alexy II, this dream of unity moved several steps closer. Both the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Churches are now keen to work together. One of the obstacles in the past has been that there are a number of married priests within the Orthodox Churches. The Vatican's master-stroke in providing a home for disaffected Anglicans, enabling them to have a "church within a church", is part of her drive to unite with the Orthodox Churches. A similar accommodation would meet the needs of Orthodox Churches.

The pressure on Britain to leave the EU increased dramatically this year. Not only does the Lisbon Treaty take her along a path unacceptable to the majority of the British, but also the EU is determined to break London's position as the world's financial centre. At a time when the financial crisis has weakened her considerably, her contributions towards the bottomless budget of the EU are spiralling, due to the phasing out of the rebate that Mrs Thatcher won many years ago in exchange for CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) reforms. Because contributions are paid in euros, the falling value of the £ has pushed the cost up even more! It has doubled in 3 years - from £3bn in 2008/9 to £6bn in 2010/11. Now I wonder who the French and German drafters of the Lisbon Treaty had in mind when they built in a provision for a country to leave?

Meanwhile Israel's troubled relations with the world continued. *All nations against Jerusalem* is what the prophet spoke of and in 2009 we witnessed growing anti-Semitism. Not only do the Moslem extremists seek to see her driven into the sea, but many of the so-called Christian countries do too! This is what prophecy would lead us to expect. The list of Gog's companions points to an assembly of mainly Christian nations seeking her destruction. The UN Goldstone report was followed by an EU resolution seeking to force their ideas on the current situation.

Ezekiel 38 describes the latter-day Israel as a desirable prey, rich and prosperous. Finds of vast quantities of natural gas off the Israeli coast were reported this year, potentially enabling her to become a gas exporter! Israel's economy has been transformed in the past decade from a helpless basket-case to a world leading economy.

Ezekiel 38 also indicates that there are some who are friendly towards Israel at this time. 2009 has seen quite a shift in the moderate Arab nations towards a realisation that they are in as much danger from a Shiite, nuclear armed, Iran as Israel is. Israel is their bulwark against Iran. Increasingly this year we find them not only accommodating Israel, but turning to Tarshish and her young lions for help in defending them against Iran.

We begin our review of 2009 with words of encouragement!

Chapter 2:

ENCOURAGEMENT! THE MASTER IS NEAR

*Three main areas that we are going to cover in this year's Milestones are 1) the great changes in Europe with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty; 2) the growing influence of the Vatican and 3) the economic growth of Israel. These three areas of interest have many "side effects", altering the balance of the present world scene. In subsequent chapters we will consider the scriptural basis of our expectations. In this chapter we will seek encouragement for pilgrims on their journey to Zion and the reason why we believe the coming of the Master is so close. True we now have had 6 or 7 generations of Christadelphians, all confident, as were earlier generations of believers, that the Lord would come in their lifetime. But there has to be a generation who are the ones in whose lifetime the Lord comes. It is right that we do think of **our** generation as being that generation.*

Every issue of Milestones has revealed steps towards that coming. Bro Graham Pearce fell asleep some 15 years ago believing all his life that the Master was at the door and still the Master has not come. To live lives in constant anticipation is not easy, yet our Master urges us to Watch, lest we walk naked in that day. (Rev 16:15) Many have given up and allowed the world to engulf them. Yet each passing year demonstrates the evil of our world, its depravity, its violence, its godlessness, its hatred of those who would seek to live upright and godly lives. Even the world is alarmed at the destruction of the resources of this earth and the pollution of the land and atmosphere by man's thoughtless, greedy, exploitation of the world of nature. In December, the nations assembled in Copenhagen in a vain but desperate effort to try to put the clock back on man's misrule of this earth. There has to be a dramatic intervention by God in the affairs of men lest mankind destroys this earth. (Rev 11:18) How thankful we are that God has put all power and authority into the hands of His Son.

Necessary steps

Let's think how far we have come in my lifetime.

Israel. Israel has become a nation again (1948) as foretold in so many scriptures. She took Jerusalem (1967) as prophecy requires in order that the city can be taken from them, one last time. She has grown rich and prosperous just in the last few years, so that she is a very desirable prey as scripture indicates. (Eze 38:13) The big gas finds of 2009 increase the prospects of even greater wealth. The wave of Jews from Soviet countries in the 1980's and 90's – 1 million of them – brought with them entrepreneurial skills and many are now the technological high-flyers in Israel. They provide yet another reason for Russia to desire to come against Israel in order to take back these skilled, ex-Soviet, people.

Israel is despised by many nations around her. (Eze 28:24,26) She is the object of a steady campaign questioning her legality. Operation Cast Lead at the end of 2008 and into Jan 2009 increased the antagonism of nations against her. She is still being deeply troubled by the attitude of the UN, which has consistently sought to undermine her legitimacy.

She sees Iran's relentless pursuit to acquire nuclear weapons as a very real threat. She is driven to build and design ever more sophisticated weapons to counter this threat. Yet as a nation she ignores the only power truly able to save her, thus fulfilling the words of Ezekiel 39:26 that the time of peace that she eventually succeeds in winning through her prowess, is a time of *trespass* in God's eyes.

Iran. Listed the first of Gog's companions (Eze 38:5), the name of Persia was changed to Iran in 1935. From 1925 to 1979, Iran was ruled by a Shah, and was in the Western Camp. Following the Islamic Revolution, the Shah fled and the country became an Islamic Republic. So it is only in the past 30 years that Iran has orientated away from America and turned for support to Russia. Although Iran's nuclear program was launched in the 1950's under the auspices of America's "Atoms for Peace" programme, it wasn't until more recent times and especially since 2005 under Ahmadinejad, that the thin line between nuclear reactors for electricity production and a nuclear programme for weapons manufacture was crossed. *Milestones 2005* has the first reference to Iran's nuclear threat to Israel. So it is only in the past 4 years that Iran has posed a threat to Israel.

Europe. From being divided by the "iron curtain" for most of my life, we saw great changes just 20 years ago with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent break-up of the Soviet Union. This has fundamentally altered the face of Europe. Bible prophecy speaks of a latter-day Beast, together with a False Prophet and a Dragon system. The events of just 20 years ago have enabled these 3 systems to develop. The reunification of Germany in 1990 at a stroke made her the largest member of the EEC (now the EU). She has prospered economically, being today the world's biggest exporter just ahead of China and the US. The current financial crisis has brought Germany to the fore in European affairs and she is emerging as Europe's leader. This situation has been keenly anticipated by Bible students as it was clear that a consideration of the latter-day Beast system would lead us to expect it to be German based, a re-creation of the Beast of the Earth – the HRE. So again we are encouraged to see events which show us how close we must be to the Master's return. It is Germany that is forging strong links with the German Pope at the Vatican and with Russia.

Russia. Again what a change in the history of Russia during my lifetime. From Soviet Republic to a Russia toying with democracy and on to the Russia of today, very much modelled on the Tsarist Russia of pre-revolutionary times. Communism has proved to be a 75-year stop-gap. Putin's 8 years of reforms and now as the power behind Medvedev, has

demonstrated his uncompromising grip on power. Autocrat is the word used to describe Putin. Opposition has been stifled and press freedom has been all but silenced. Yet this is what the Russian people are used to. They seek for the glory that once belonged to Russia and look to Putin to make their country a world power again. The latter-day Russia is described under many prophetic symbols, one of them being likened to the Assyrians (Isa 14:25), whose cruelty was well known, with no pity for the people they conquered. We see a similar ruthless streak in Putin.

The Vatican. What a transformation we see here. With Russia now establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican, one can see from the map (p 40) illustrating the countries with which she has diplomatic relations that in the description of Rev 17 *she sits on many waters*. She reaches into the furthest corners of the earth. Yet for centuries this was not the case. Her power was concentrated mainly in Europe. Only 80 years ago she had diplomatic relations with only 27 countries, but now it is 178! It is really only since Pope John Paul II became Pope that the church has gained so much credibility. Nations now look to Rome for leadership. Rev 17 also speaks of the latter days as a time when the *Kings of the earth worship* the Harlot rider of the Beast. Again this is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Protestant, Muslim and even atheistic leaders visit the Pope and bring him gifts. Surely we must be so close to our Master's return.

Gog's companions. Take the list of nations in Ezekiel 38. Iran's links with the Russian Gog go back some 30 years - still comparatively recent. Libya a few years ago had turned from the Soviet, back to the West, but just recently has strongly moved back into the Russian sphere of influence. Iran's links to Ethiopia, or the modern day Sudan again only stretch back a few years. It was only in 2008 that we saw Russia push back into part of Georgia – part of the ancient Togarmah.

Middle East. Consider what a change has taken place in just the past few years. Just as Gog is described as the guard to his companions, so we find that the countries in the Sheba–Dedan area are looking to America and Britain to train their forces, supply their weaponry and to place their missile systems on their territory, to guard them against aggression from Iran.

The household. *[Thou] hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* (Rev 5:9) This wonderful picture of the redeemed singing their praises to their Saviour, describes them being called from all nations. Only recently has the true gospel gone out into many corners of the globe. In the past it was confined mainly to Europe, then to the English speaking countries, but now there are more non-English speaking brethren and sisters, than English speaking, another powerful pointer that we are at the time of the end!

Yet on the other hand we have warnings that **the** faith will be in decline. The greatest problem facing our community is the sapping of an energetic proclamation of that which separates us from the world of Christendom.

The unique heritage of the Hope of Israel is increasingly absent from our exhortations, prayers and talks. The spirit of today is to emphasise common ground; but it is the distinctiveness of our message that will appeal to those seeking the Truth. Increasingly in the UK, legislation seeks to prevent the forthrightness of the gospel message, in its uncompromising stance against those practices which are abhorrent in God's eyes.

In these financially difficult times great pressure is placed on employees as their employers seek to own them, especially those in managerial positions. Brothers and sisters are drained by the demands at work, and unable to commit to ecclesial life. Attendance at Sunday evening meetings, Bible Classes and Fraternals seems – in the UK at least – to be in steady decline; surely another sign that we must be close to the time of the end, for *when the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith on the earth?* (Luke 18:8)

So, in so many fields, we can be confident that our Master is at hand. Undoubtedly we have not yet arrived at the final picture when the nations assemble together; when Nebuchadnezzar's image stands upon its iron/clay feet to come against God's people. Britain's future role must find her outside the EU; the Vatican must be more firmly integrated into European politics and Israel will have established a position of security which she does not currently enjoy. However what we must always remember is that the invasion of Israel, which will be followed by the Battle of Armageddon, when God destroys Israel's enemies, and reveals Messiah to the remnant of his people left in the land, takes place **some time after** the return of the Master to his household. So whilst there may be steps still ahead, they can **all** take place between his return to judge his household and his going forth to save his nation Israel.

Do we have any scriptural hints as to the length of this time period? Under the Law, on the 1st day of every month, Aaron's sons blew the silver trumpets to mark the commencement of a new month. On the 1st day of the 7th month of the religious year (the 1st month of the civil year), the trumpet blowing took on a deeper significance. This day was the Feast of Trumpets.

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Lev 23:24,25

It was a *holy convocation*, in other words a day when Israel assembled before their God. It was to be a day of more extensive trumpet blowing. Moreover this day was to be treated as a Sabbath day, with no *servile work* – work of any kind. After all, it was the 7th month and seven speaks of a cycle, completeness; for it was on the 7th day that God rested. The coming Millennium will be God's 7th thousand year period. (2 Pet 3:8) Just as the 7th month began with a special Sabbath day – the Feast of Trumpets, so I believe the start of the Millennium will commence with the sounding of the

trumpet. Consider the trumpets; they were made from silver (Num 10:2), which speaks of redemption. How fitting that the type would see the Millennium starting with that culmination of the Lamb's work of redemption, the raising of the dead – associated with the *trumpet sound* (1 Co 15:52) – and calling (*convoking*) the saints to him – again the work of the trumpet blast as described in Num 10:2. A *cessation of work*, this will be the end of their pilgrimage journey.

On the 10th day of the month there was another very special day, the Day of Atonement, when past sins were covered, and Israel were “At-One” with their God. Could not this be a pointer to the events following Armageddon, when the Jews will look on him who has saved them so dramatically from their enemies, and seeing the marks of crucifixion in his hands and feet will be convinced of their national sin in rejecting their Messiah for nigh on 2,000 years. Humbled and repentant their sins will be washed away in the newly flowing river from Zion. (Zech 12:10-13:1)

Taking the principle of a day for a year, could there be a 10 year period from the call to the saints to judgement to the time when Israel are saved from their enemies? This would allow a period of several years for the events of the Judgement Seat, with Elijah's initial work in preparing the Jews in the land for that great day of calamity for Israel, followed by their invasion at Gog's hands. Then after a period of triumph over Israel, Gog meets his doom at the hands of Christ and the saints. On the 5th day after the Day of Atonement, on the 15th day of the month, commenced the 7-day Feast of Tabernacles. This feast was to remember the blessing of God, in bringing the harvest into the store. The ingathering of the Jews to their land will indeed be a time of rejoicing, even though it will be a time of trouble as Europe and Russia will not willingly let God's people go, following the defeat of their armies at the hands of Israel's King. So could there be a 5 year period covering the rebuilding of Israel after the terrible destruction in the land and the commencement of the Temple, followed by 7 years of rejoicing as the Jews are regathered from every land?

Or does this work take longer – *according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt* (Mic 7:15) - perhaps points to a 40 year period. Certainly there could be a 40 year period before all the nations have submitted and the kingdom established throughout the earth. A 40 year period preceded by a 10 year period would then give us a 50 year jubilee period.

The important thing is that if there is to be a period covering quite a few years from the return to the household to the revealing of Messiah to his nation, then we must not be waiting for every last piece of the jigsaw to be in place. Be watchful, our Master is at the door!

Let's now see what the scripture tells us about the latter-day Beast system.

Chapter 3:

THE LATTER-DAY BEAST

One of our main areas for consideration is the changes in Europe that are being brought about with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty. This is a big step on a long journey by the founding fathers of the European Union. Their dream was to resurrect the old Holy Roman Empire, where a strong Germany ruled Europe in conjunction with a powerful Pope. This is the picture anticipated by Bible students, for scripture makes it clear that there is to be a Beast system and a False Prophet system in the latter-days. Indeed in the final stage the harlot woman is to be carried by the Beast – an indication of the extent to which Vatican-Europe relations will develop.

So what scriptural clues have we in relation to the Beast system?

Daniel's Beasts

It is clear from Daniel ch 7 that the beasts described in this chapter, in some sense, continue until the return of Christ and the time of judgement.

... the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. Dan 7:10-12

This is similar language to that of Daniel ch 2.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Dan 2:34,35

So although each succeeding Empire absorbed the characteristics of that which went before it, we have to understand that they are all represented at the time of the end, with differences in the severity of God's judgements.

Both the above passages point to a coming together of the nations in a colossal confederacy which will be broken by God's outpouring of judgement.

These two visions speak of the same nations – one from man's viewpoint – nations as valuable metals, the other from God's viewpoint – that the nations are like wild beasts. If we map their territory we find that they cover a large part of Europe and Asia! Bearing in mind that Germany,

Poland and Russia at the time of these maps was wild barbarian country but from the countries listed in Ezekiel 38 we can safely add them to this confederacy.



What we see is a coming together, for a brief time, of Russia, Europe, part of the Middle East and part of South Asia. It seems from various scriptures that this will be a voluntary coming together in the form of an alliance against the nation of Israel. Essentially it will be Roman in character, for it is the 4th Beast that continues until the time of the end with its iron teeth and brass claws, a hostile power to the things of God, led by the little horn that represents the Holy Roman Empire with its Papal eyes and mouth.

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. Dan 7:25,26

The Beast and Dragon of the Apocalypse

When we come to the book of Revelation we have greater detail concerning the powers that Daniel described. Under the description of a red Dragon we have a picture of the Roman world up to the time of Constantine, stretching all around the Mediterranean. It was a military empire and the Roman Emperor was worshipped as god. The conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity by Constantine is described in Rev ch 12. The pagan Dragon with its 7 heads and 10 horns was cast out of the political heavens, but the Dragon symbol does not disappear. It reappears in chapter 13 and also in chapter 16 (v12) with the Beast and the False Prophet and again in ch 20:2.

The Beast (Gk. *therion*) is first introduced in ch 12 – not to be confused with the four living creatures (AV beasts, Gk *zoon*) in chapters 4 to 7 and 14:4; 15:7; 19:4. The *therion* Beast is used elsewhere to describe wild, ferocious and even venomous creatures. For example the same word is used of the beasts in the wilderness (Mar 1:13); of the unclean animals in Peter's

vision (Acts 10:12); of the creature that bit Paul (Acts 28:4) and of the beasts of the earth (Rev 6:8). We first find it as a specific beast in Rev 11:7.

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

This period of history covers the dreadful persecutions of the saints and Protestant witnesses, by the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th and 17th centuries. The “beast” takes us back to Daniel’s dreadful beast of ch 7. It was to ascend from “the bottomless pit”. The Greek word is *abussos*, from which we get the word abyss. Liddel and Scott’s Lexicon gives the meaning as “bottomless, unfathomed, boundless”. In the Septuagint it is used of the sea in Job 38:30. In the greater detail of the Beasts in Rev ch 13, it arises from the sea. (v1)

Revelation ch 13 describes the various phases of the Beast, but it is evident that the Dragon power is still there for

... the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. v2

And

... they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? v4

When Constantine moved his government from Rome eastward to Constantinople, this became known as the 2nd Rome. It was here the military might of Rome was based and so the symbol of the Dragon was transferred to describe the military rule of Rome, now based in Constantinople and working with the Bishop of Constantinople and what became the Greek Orthodox Church. This was appropriate as the dragon originally related to Egypt in the east, Eze. 29:3, and Constantinople remained the seat of the Dragon until it fell in 1453, when the Dragon power took up a new centre in Moscow. Today the Dragon power can be seen in the military might of Russia working very much today with the Russian Orthodox Church. This is to be anticipated that as part of Russia’s southward move, she will take Constantinople and use this as her HQ for the assault on Israel and Egypt.

The Beast of the Sea

This is the first beast described in detail in chapter 13. When we look at the description we can see that it incorporates all the elements of Daniel’s four beasts, even to the number of heads and horns described by Daniel!

*And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast** rise up out of the sea, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

*And the **beast** which I saw was like unto a **leopard**, and his feet were as the feet of a **bear**, and his mouth as the mouth of a **lion**: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.* Rev 13:1,2

It certainly had the characteristics of the 4th Beast – speaking blasphemy and a persecuting power.

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Rev 13:5-7

The 7 heads are common to the Dragon and this Beast of the Sea, representing the 7 phases of government the Roman Empire went through. The Dragon's heads were crowned with 7 crowns – indicating the authority lay with the heads. In contrast the Beast of the Sea has 10 crowns on its 10 horns, indicating that power lay in the horns. When Constantine moved the Roman government to Constantinople in AD330, it left Rome vulnerable to barbarian attacks. There were 10 such tribes that moved into the Western Roman world, independent powers, so the crowns were on the horns.

With the chief government in Constantinople, and with only a lesser representative of the Emperor in the West living 175 miles/280 km away in Ravenna, the papal power grew in Rome to become the *mouth* of the Beast of the Sea. This mouth is described *as the mouth of a lion* v2, thereby linking it with the mouth to Babylon. (Dan 7:4) This is described in Rev 13:2 - *And the dragon [Emperor in the East] gave him [Beast of the Sea] his power, and his seat, [throne] and great authority.*

Following the wounding of the 6th Roman head and its revival, the Emperor in Constantinople supported the Pope's claim to be head Patriarch. This power enabled this Beast of the Sea to continue speaking blasphemous words for 42 months (v5). There are 1,260 days in 42 months (42x30), applying a day for a year we span from AD 529-533 when Justinian *gave his power to the Beast* to 1789-1793 the time of the French Revolution. An alternative starting date is AD 608-610 when Phocas also *gave his power to the Beast* which takes us to the time of 1868-1870 when Papal territories were removed and the temporal rule of the Popes ended. Rome became the capital of Italy with the Pope regarding himself as a "prisoner" confining himself to the Papal Palace.

The Beast of the Earth

This Beast arose from *the earth*, of totally different appearance. It had horns like a lamb, but *he spake as a dragon*! Its notable characteristic was its 2 horns. It evidently is closely linked with the Beast of the Sea for

... he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13:12

We have here a very descriptive symbol of the Holy Roman Empire. It was not “holy”, just as its appearance as a lamb masked the reality of its Dragon features – blasphemy, deceit, false signs. Interestingly the last reference to the Dragon links it with all that is evil.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil [diabolos—the accuser], and Satan [the adversary], and bound him a thousand years, Rev 20:2

It is described as *from the earth* because its centre was no longer by the Mediterranean Sea.

It had two horns – power was divided between two sources – the rule of the Emperor over temporal matters and the rule of the Pope over spiritual matters. The period of the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) was a time of great persecution for the believers.

Historically it arose though the advance of the Lombards against Rome in the 8th century. The Roman Emperor was not inclined to send help as there was a rift between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope. Instead the Pope turned to Pepin the King of the Franks – the rising power at the time - who came to the Pope’s aid and defeated the Lombards. Once more the Lombards attacked Rome and this time Charlemagne, Pepin’s son, delivered the Pope, who crowned Charlemagne as Emperor in AD 799, thus sealing this union of church and state. Following a period of decline, Otto I became the first of an unbroken line of Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire in AD 962. This was later changed to The HRE of the German Nation. On election, the German leader was crowned King of the Germans and when crowned in Rome by the Pope became Emperor of the Romans.

It came to an end in 1806 when Francis II abdicated and dissolved the Empire during the Napoleonic Wars as prophesied under the Vial judgements of Rev 16.

We have an important detail in ch 13:12 - *And he* [the Beast of the Earth] *exerciseth all the power of the first beast* [the Beast of the Sea] *before* [in the presence of] *him* [the Beast of the Earth]. So the lamb-like Beast of the Earth with its 2 horns highlighting that church–state partnership, operated with the 7 headed, 10 horned kingdom of the Beast of the Sea.

The Image of the Beast

Rev 13:14,15 indicates there was an image or a copy of the Beast of the Sea. This is an apt symbol for the Papal States where part of Italy was under the direct control of the Popes. They were kings as well as Popes. These states were lost in the Napoleonic wars.

The fall of the Beasts

All three phases of the Beast came to an end under the Vial judgements in the time of the French Revolution and its aftermath. Yet this was not the ending of the Beasts!

The wording of the Vial judgments is couched in such a way to indicate that though the Beast of the Sea, the 2 horned Beast of the Earth and the Image of the beast were to be broken, yet the dream would not be lost.

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and **they repented not** to give him glory.*

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

*And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and **repented not** of their deeds.* Rev 16:8 -11

Germany kept alive the dream of a revival of the old HRE!

The old medieval dream of a universal empire has never quite left the German's fantasy. This is why modern Euro-federalists evoke Charlemagne; the Holy Roman Empire was the very archetype of universal monarchy. Charlemagne and his successors laid down detailed regulations for every aspect of economic, political and religious life throughout the empire. Germany's fluid frontiers; the special role of the Holy Roman Emperor as the secular half of a bicephalous [2 headed] universal empire; ... all these encouraged the Germans to think of their country as an embodiment of universal sovereignty. *The Tainted Source* p137

Bismarck's dreams of a revived German Reich crumbled in the defeat of World War I. Hitler's dreams were crushed by the allies in WWII. Yet the founding fathers of the EU looked to try again, using peace and not war to achieve their aims – we shall see this in later chapters. So when we come to the time of the 6th Vial in Revelation 16:12-16 we find a Beast, a False Prophet and a Dragon. By this time the pope had lost his territory and was reduced to “eyes and a mouth” – a false prophet.

The final phase of the Beast

An extensive description of the last phase is found in ch 17.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Rev 17:3

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth

shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. Rev 17:8-13

And the ten horns which 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.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. Rev 17:16,17

We can see that it is connected to the Beast of the Sea in that it has 7 heads and 10 horns. It is also connected to the Beast of the Earth in that Beast and Harlot Woman are linked, not as 2 horns, but as rider and carrier, but the carrier is no longer like a lamb, more like Daniel's 4th beast.

It has its unique colour – scarlet, the colour that is associated with sin (Isa 1:18). It represents the final phase of the Kingdom of Men, to be destroyed by Christ and the saints.

It is not however a revived Beast of the Sea, for we are told that it is an eighth head. Back in history, the 6th – Imperial - head fell and was replaced by a 7th head – the barbarian head of the period (AD 476-554). This in turn fell, to be replaced by a revived 6th head. At its start we had an Emperor in Constantinople and a Pope in Rome. With the rise of the HRE the Emperor lost his power in the west. So we are being told that this is yet another form of government, an eighth, a beast in its own right, unique to this last phase of Daniel's 4th Beast, yet not totally different for this 8th is of the seven.

It is significant that John was taken to *the wilderness* (v3) to see this vision and he was told this Beast *shall ascend out of the bottomless pit* (v8), the same phrase we found in ch 11:7. The area of Germany, the main constituent of the beast, was in John's day beyond known territory, the land of the barbarians, the *wilderness*.

The ten horns link back with those of the Beast of the Sea, kingdoms covering the territories of the Roman Empire, and corresponding to the 10

toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. These are symbolic kings, and don't necessarily have to be 10 in number, but points us to the territory of the Roman Empire of old.

We are expecting Russia to move down into Constantinople. So what we see now as a Germany-led EU will continue to develop before moving to a co-operation of Germany and Russia with the Vatican Harlot rider which will pull together the territories covered by the ancient Kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome as well as territories from the northern *abyss*. Their object will be to destroy Israel! When Israel's allies in the south have been defeated and the northern alliance is in possession of Egypt, they will think they have achieved their purpose. Nebuchadnezzar's image will then be standing on its feet for the first and only time. If they understood the scriptures they would know the futility of this course of action! Israel's King will be in the earth and will come to save his people in their hour of trial.

The destruction of the Beast

This takes time. When the events of Revelation 17 take place, Gog, or Russia, who supplies the main military might of the invading force, will have been defeated on the mountains of Israel at the Battle of Armageddon, but supporting Russia will be the other countries listed in Ezekiel 38 who are his companions in this crusade against Israel.

Jesus, with the saints, having destroyed the enemy in Israel and having set up his throne in Jerusalem will call for the Jews to return to their homeland and in parallel the Aionian call will go out to all nations to submit to the new King as detailed in Revelation ch 14. We know that Europe will resist. In the language of Dan 7:11, the 4th Beast is to be burned with fire. This agrees with the picture painted in Rev ch's 17 to 20. The nations on the territory of the other 3 Beasts – mainly what are now Muslim countries submit and their power is "taken away". In Revelation the Beast and the False Prophet are destroyed (19:20) but the Dragon is bound for a thousand years. (20:2) Eventually that which is represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the metallic structure of the Kingdom of Men will be destroyed and its place taken by the "Little Stone" Kingdom of God.

It is an interesting study to look at the details given of the step-by-step establishment of the Kingdom and the bringing back of Zion's sons from the lands of their captivity, but not for this issue!

We now look at the events of 2009 which show us the coming together of a revived HRE in Western Europe – church and state working together and the foundations for that greater beast system, encompassing Russia and Europe.

Chapter 4:

THE UNITING OF EUROPE

Having achieved monetary Union with the euro, the next step which saw its fruition in 2009, was political union. We start with some history.

The Political union of Europe

This was always the ultimate goal. As Chancellor Kohl of Germany stated in 1995:-

We want the political unification of Europe. Without monetary union there can be no political union and *vice versa*. Quoted by *The Tainted Source*

Step by step the Euro-federalists have been moving towards this goal.

“One must act ‘as if’ in Europe: as if one wanted only very few things, in order to obtain a great deal. As if nations were to remain sovereign, in order to convince them to surrender their sovereignty. The Commission in Brussels, for example, must act as if it were a technical organism, in order to operate like a government ... and so on, camouflaging and toning down.”

“Therefore I prefer to go slowly, to crumble pieces of sovereignty up little by little, avoiding brusque transitions from national to federal power. That is the way I think we will have to build Europe’s common policies...” Giuliano Amato, Italian PM, later Vice President of the EU Constitutional Convention *La Stampa* 13-07-2000

“European monetary union has to be complemented by a political union – that was always the presumption of Europeans including those who made active politics before us. ... What we need to do is Europeanise everything to do with economic and financial policy. In this area we need much more, let’s call it co-ordination and co-operation to suit British feelings, than we had before. That hangs together with the success of the Euro.” Gerhard Schroder *The Times* 22-02-02

The 2005 Constitution for Europe was hailed as a milestone.

“This Constitution is, in spite of all justified calls for further regulations, a milestone. Yes, it is more than that. The EU Constitution is the birth certificate of the United States of Europe. The Constitution is not the end point of integration, but the framework for – as it says in the preamble – an ever closer union.” Hans Martin Bury, German Minister for Europe *Die Welt* 25-2-05

It was killed off when France and the Netherlands rejected it in 2005. Disheartened, but not ready to lose their cherished dreams of a united Europe, a new attempt was made. It involved a subtle, but rather messy, amendment of the Maastricht and the Nice Treaties. Virtually all the things

that the rejected European Constitution contained were inserted as modifications to the earlier Treaties.

“Public opinion will be led to adopt, without knowing it, the proposals that we dare not present to them directly” ... “All the earlier proposals will be in the new text, but will be hidden and disguised in some way.”
Giscard D’Estaing *Sunday Telegraph* 1-7-07

“The difference between the original Constitution and the present Lisbon Treaty is one of approach, rather than content ... the proposals in the original constitutional treaty are practically unchanged. They have simply been dispersed through old treaties in the form of amendments. Why this subtle change? Above all, to head off any threat of referenda by avoiding any form of constitutional vocabulary ... But lift the lid and look in the toolbox: all the same innovative and effective tools are there, just as they were carefully crafted by the European Convention.”
Giscard D’Estaing *The Independent* 30-10-07

The battle to ratify the Lisbon Treaty

Although the 27 EU leaders signed the Lisbon Treaty in December 2007, it could not come into force until each country’s parliament had ratified it. By the middle of 2009 there just remained Germany, Ireland, Poland and the Czech Republic to ratify it. The German constitutional Court ruled that it was incompatible with the German Constitution, and carried out some hasty but significant modification to their laws so that in September they had ratified it. All eyes were then on Ireland – the only country to hold a referendum on the matter and whose voters had rejected it in the 2008 referendum. The voting patterns were carefully analysed and the EU poured money into persuading those areas that had voted NO before to change their mind. With the Irish economy in a parlous state, voters were warned that if they rejected Lisbon a second time, they could not expect help from Brussels! We will look at the Vatican’s involvement in the referendum in a later chapter. With EU advertising, the threat of withdrawal of EU largess and the backing of the Roman Catholic Church, the October 13th referendum returned a majority in favour.

This now left Poland and the Czech Republic; countries that endured years of Communist control, and were now being asked to give up some of their freedom to central control by Brussels! The clock was ticking by – when the leaders signed up in Dec 2007 it had been anticipated that it would all have been wrapped up by the end of 2008 so it could start in January 2009. Poland signed up on the 23rd Oct leaving just the Czech Republic to sign. Their President, Václav Klaus, was known to be against deeper integration, and the other EU leaders grew increasingly anxious. To everyone’s surprise the President added his signature to the necessary documents on 13th November. After 9 years of battling there was little appetite for great celebrations; only relief that the battle was over. And so with little fanfare the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1st December 2009.

European Union celebrates first day of Lisbon Treaty

What is involved in this Lisbon Treaty? It carries many important implications of great interest to Bible students because we see this as the big step in shaping the Europe of the latter-days. The Bible picture is of a revival of the Kingdom of Men, with church and state working together as in the pre-French Revolution days.

It's most prominent innovations include the creation of a permanent president of the European Council and a beefed up foreign policy chief, who will head a new large diplomatic corps.

The arguably more profound change is internally, with member states' ability to veto being markedly reduced and a corresponding significant boost to the European Parliament's powers. MEPs now have a say over a wide range of new areas including farm and fisheries policy, transport, structural funds and justice and home affairs. *EUObserver* 1-12-09

It was a triumph for the Euro-federalist's dream of a united Europe – the dream of the founding fathers of the EU. Jerzy Buzek, the President of the European Parliament (not to be confused with the newly appointed post of President of the European Council – more of which later), “marked the day by sending flowers to be placed on the graves of Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, the “founding fathers of the EU””. *Daily Telegraph* 1-12-09

Here are some of the triumphal statements.

“This marks the beginning of a new era of European integration.” Jerzy Buzek

“It is a great day for Europe because this treaty, after a battle lasting nearly a decade, enters into force. This treaty is even more important than Maastricht or even the Treaty of Rome.” Guy Verhofstadt, a former Belgian prime minister

“The Lisbon Treaty is better than reported, with it Europe is going forward towards political union.” “We never gave up on it, even after the negative referendums in France, the Netherlands and Ireland. Some people were ready to give up but never us in this parliament.” Jo Leinen, a senior German Social Democrat MEP

Lisbon - A constitutional revolution by stealth?

Most Europeans are unaware of what their leaders have signed up to and this headline in the *EUObserver* 1-12-09 neatly summed the situation. So what has changed for the 500 million citizens of the EU? The EU population ranks No 3 after China and India, with twice the population of the US, though covering less than half the area of the US. To quote from the *EUObserver* article 1-12-09: - [my emphasis DFP]

Lisbon, like the EU Constitution before it, establishes for the first time a European Union which is constitutionally **separate from** and **superior to** its Member States, just as the USA is separate from and superior to its 50 constituent states or as Federal Germany is in relation to its Länder.

The 27 EU members **thereby lose their character as true sovereign States**. Constitutionally they become more like regional states in a multinational Federation, although they still retain some of the trappings of their former sovereignty. Simultaneously 500 million Europeans become **real rather than notional or symbolical citizens** of the constitutionally new post-Lisbon European Union.

This means that members of the European Parliament, who up to now have been “representatives of the peoples of the States brought together in the Community”, become “**representatives of the Union’s citizens**” (Art.14 TEU¹; cf Art.189 TEC²). Without being asked – apart from the Irish – we find that we are no longer just citizens of say Britain, but also citizens of the EU! This is the 3rd leg in a 3-part step to turn the EU into a State.

Three steps to a federal-style constitution

Lisbon’s constitutional revolution takes place in three interconnected steps. Firstly, the Treaty establishes a European Union with legal personality and a fully independent corporate existence in all Union areas for the first time (Arts.1 and 47 TEU).

This enables the post-Lisbon Union to function as a State vis-a-vis other States externally, and in relation to its own citizens internally.

Secondly, Lisbon abolishes the European Community which goes back to the Treaty of Rome and which makes European laws at present, and transfers the Community’s powers and institutions to the new Union, so that it is the post-Lisbon Union, not the Community, which will make supranational European laws henceforth (Art.1 TEU).

Thirdly, Lisbon then makes 500 million Europeans into real citizens of the new Federal-style Union which the Treaty establishes (Arts.9 TEU and 20 TFEU³). Instead of EU citizenship “complementing” national citizenship, as under the present Maastricht Treaty-based EU (Art.17 TEC), which makes such citizenship essentially symbolical, Lisbon provides that EU citizenship shall be “additional to” national citizenship.

This is a real dual citizenship – not of two different States, but of two different levels of one State. One can only be a citizen of a State and all States must have citizens. Examples of this are the USA, 19th Century Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Australia.

¹ Treaty on European Union, formal name of the Maastricht Treaty

² Treaty establishing the European Community = Treaty of Rome 1957

³ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Being a citizen means that one must obey the law and give loyalty to the authority of the State so that one is a citizen of the two state levels, the federal and the regional or provincial.

In the post-Lisbon EU, the rights and duties attaching to citizenship of the Union will be superior to those attaching to one's national citizenship in any case of conflict between the two, because of the superiority of EU law over national law and Constitutions (Declaration No 17 concerning Primacy). *EUObserver* 1-12-09

So the EU under Lisbon becomes a State, no longer a loose collection of 27 countries.

“Lisbon changes this situation fundamentally by giving the post-Lisbon Union the constitutional form of a true supranational Federation, in other words a State”. *ibid*

EU Leaders Name New President and Foreign Minister

The person finally chosen to be the new EU President had not been among the front runners. A quiet, little known man, Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy was a surprise choice, pushed by France and Germany. The Foreign Minister too was a surprise. European Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton of Britain now heads the long-winded office of “high representative for foreign affairs and security policy,” a title to detract from the real office, to appease those who opposed the original title of Foreign Minister in the failed European Constitution. Again France and Germany pushed for her. The choices were made by the 27 leaders behind closed doors – there is little transparency in the EU and the people get no say.

The potential cost of these new offices plus a diplomatic corps will have to be funded from somewhere. They have chosen the right man – he is an advocator of raising taxes. *The Times* 17-11-09 commented:- [My emphasis DFP]

The man tipped to be Europe's first president is **already considering new EU taxes** to fund the rising cost of Brussels and the welfare state. ... Herman Van Rompuy, the Belgian prime minister, broke his silence before Thursday's summit to choose the president—but only at a meeting of the **secretive Bilderberg group of top politicians, bankers and businessmen**. ... Mr. Van Rompuy's contentious remarks were aired privately amid the grand surroundings of the Castle of the Valley of the Duchess near Brussels. The château hosted the talks on the Treaty of Rome in 1957 that launched the European Union.

We will consider the importance of his Roman Catholic background in chapter 7. According to *Ferris News-Wheel* 20-11-09 the Pope was the first to phone to congratulate these two appointees.

It is understandable that President Sarkozy was pushing for a fellow Roman Catholic as President but why was he pushing for a British person as Foreign Minister? After all, the French pride themselves on their diplomatic corp. President Sarkozy revealed why a few days later.

Nicolas Sarkozy hails EU shake-up a victory for France

Branding Britain as the “big losers” he claimed that more important was: -

... the elevation of Michel Barnier, France’s former agriculture minister, to the key financial post of commissioner for the internal market, which puts him in charge of supervising the City of London.

In provocative remarks which are certain to inflame tensions, Mr. Sarkozy told Le Monde newspaper that the negotiations which resulted in Tony Blair being jettisoned and Herman Van Rompuy, the Belgian Prime Minister, being appointed the new EU president, were a “French victory”.

He said that Britain was against Mr. Barnier’s appointment to the financial post, but that he got it through after persuading José Manuel Barroso, the European Commission president, to back the idea.

Mr. Sarkozy said: “It’s the first time in 50 years that France has had this role. The English are the big losers in this business.” *Daily Telegraph* 28-11-09

It is clear that many battles lie ahead for Britain as she is being outmanoeuvred at every step. With British elections having to be called sometime in 2010, the Conservative Party is confident of regaining power, to the dismay of France and Germany.

Interestingly, for the first time, there is an opt-out clause built in to this Treaty. Under earlier Treaties, once an EU member always an EU member. French ex President Giscard d’Estaing who was the chairman of the drafting committee of the forerunner of the Lisbon Treaty – the European Constitution – has spoken before that it makes sense for Britain to leave and go her own way. He ensured that it would be possible for countries like Britain to leave, rather than face years of continual wrangling.

Race to establish EU foreign service before UK Conservatives come to power

Open Europe 11-12-09 indicated the speed at which the EU leaders were working to avoid set-backs in case the Conservatives win.

The Times looks at the creation of the European Union’s External Action Service (EAS), established under the Lisbon Treaty. The article notes that federalist EU politicians are seeking to establish a strong EAS before a potential “obstructionist” UK Conservative government takes office. Andrew Duff, a Liberal Democrat MEP, is quoted saying, “We would like everything in place before David Cameron becomes Prime

Minister...it is a form of pressure that David Cameron is putting on us - but it is very good pressure because it means that we have to press on.”

Since Lisbon Treaty came into force, relations between EU countries are domestic policy not foreign policy

Again *Open Europe* 11-12-09 revealed that the changed situation brought in by Lisbon alarmed and shocked many government ministers. Overnight they have lost power! With a united Europe, other countries within the EU are now no longer “foreign”.

On his *Coulisses de Bruxelles* blog, Jean Quatremer notes that European Foreign Ministers have discovered “with horror” that under the Lisbon Treaty they no longer get to take part in EU summits of heads of state and government, and that the EU Foreign Minister, Cathy Ashton, goes in their place. *The Times* quotes *Bildt* saying that since the Lisbon Treaty came into force, relations between member states are no longer considered “foreign policy” but are now “domestic policy”. EU leaders no longer need their top diplomats beside them at EU summits.

Van Rompuy to travel to Spain to explain “he is now the boss”

Although the EU now has a president, Van Rompuy, there is confusion over his role. On 1st Jan 2010 he formally takes up his role as President of the European Council for a 2½ year term. Until now this position has been informally filled by the head of the country that has been elected for 6 months to be President of the Council of the European Union. This 6 monthly Presidency still continues, but they will no longer also be President of the European Council – this is now Van Rompuy’s post until 31st May 2012. His is the senior post.

The President of the European Council is the person responsible for chairing and driving forward the work of the European Council, the institution which provides political direction to the European Union. The President also represents the EU on the world stage. *Wikipedia*

The function of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union is to “organise and chair all meetings of the Council. This includes working out compromises capable of resolving difficulties”. *Wikipedia*

A change was made in 2007 so that the post was shared by three countries for 18 months, with each of the trio being President for 6 months. This was to give smoother functioning of the post and help smaller countries with less EU experience. The trio countries for the 18 months from Jan 1st 2010 are Spain, Belgium and Hungary. So Spain takes the lead for the 1st 6 mths, followed by Belgium, with Hungary being President for the first half of 2011. The role is obviously reduced now there is a “permanent” President of the European Council.

The full extent of the changes ushered in by the Lisbon Treaty will probably trickle out slowly; the European leaders will not wish to give the Conservative Party any ammunition in the run-up to the British elections!

Drive to an EU army

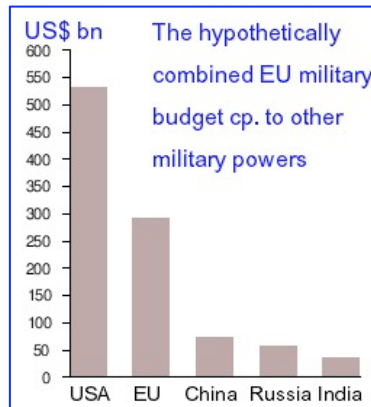
Under Lisbon the EU becomes a powerful trading block, responsible for 30% of the world's trade,¹ cp. the US at 23%. With its new constitution, the EU can turn to other matters of State. High on the agenda is Europe's own army. For many years France and Germany have been calling for such an army, independent of NATO and America. Britain has been opposed to this, saying it would merely be duplicating what NATO is already doing.

It is interesting to note the observations made in a 2007 defence strategy paper authored by the German Bertelsmann Group.

“In this strategy paper it is asserted that a precondition for the rise of such a superpower is a European Constitution, on which basis all necessary political areas could be taken under EU control. ***This will at last make it possible to build a European army under the control of a Brussels high command and so under German influence, which has the nuclear potential of France and Great Britain at its disposal.*** In looking at further prospects, the text reads, ‘Superpower Europe is finally abandoning the idea of a **civil power** and is providing for itself without restriction the means of conducting the policy of **an international superpower**’” [My emphasis DFP] *German-Foreign-Policy* 2-2-07.

Built into Lisbon Treaty under Article 42(1)(2) is the provision for creating such an army.

The common security and defence policy shall be an integral part of the common foreign and security policy. It shall provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets. The Union may use them on missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. The performance of these tasks shall be undertaken using capabilities provided by the Member States.



¹ Nominal gross world product. *Wikipedia*

The common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides.

It also allows certain nations to press ahead with this, even if others are opposed to it. Article 42(6) states: -

Those Member States whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions shall establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework.

This allows France and Germany to now push ahead with their plans,

As a first step, SWP [the German Institute for International and Security Affairs], is demanding that those states “prepared to do so” proceed with their “military integration.” This would permit “the German naval command and the German Baltic naval bases to take over functions for other nations as well.” In the long run, the SWP is clearly pleading for the creation of an EU army, though this “term is controversial for the majority of the EU states,” because they are not prepared to give up their national independence in a very key sector. But in the long run, the EU army is indispensable. Berlin’s government advisors judge that “to continue to maintain 27 national armed forces represents a definite waste of the limited financial resources.” The one to benefit most from the amalgamation of the national armed forces into an EU army would be the state that wields the most influence inside the EU. According to the Lisbon Treaty’s rules of voting it would be the country already economically and politically predominating in Europe - Germany.
German Foreign Policy 9-10-09

History in the Making

This was the headline to another *German Foreign Policy* article 13-11-09, following the first time a German leader had participated in an Armistice Day parade in Paris, celebrating the end of World War I.

The ceremony that since 1920 had been dedicated to the memory of France’s victory over the German aggressors was transformed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy into a memorial for the war dead on both sides. “On this November 11, we are not celebrating the victory of one people over another, but rather remembering a test of fate that had been equally horrible for both sides,” the president said.

A few war veterans voiced uneasiness at hearing the German anthem and seeing German uniforms at the Arc de Triomphe, where they had not been heard and seen since the German invasions of France.

We shall now see Germany’s position as the EU leader.

Chapter 5:

GERMANY, EUROPE'S NATURAL LEADER

The Frankish Kingdom of Charlemagne having expanded into Germany soon found that it was Germany that emerged the leader! So history repeats itself - following the defeat of Hitler, France was the natural leader of Europe, shaping much of the European policy, but Germany has now emerged as its leader. Bible students have long anticipated the re-emergence of Germany and it has taken 60 years for circumstances to favour them. Let's briefly look at this change and then see Germany operating not only within Europe, but, as we shall see in chapter 9, the driving force to link up with Russia – the final step in the establishment of the last phase of the Beast.

20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall

Looking back through *Milestones 1989* and *1990*, one is struck by the speed at which the Soviet crumbled. With the Berlin Wall breached, Nov 1989, thousands of East German's poured into West Germany seeing for the first time the wealth and the freedom that the West had long enjoyed. There was talk of the two Germanys reuniting but this was initially a distant dream, yet it happened within a year of the wall being breached. It seemed so incredible! Yet what a lot has happened since then! The Soviet has fallen; Russia has re-emerged; a united Germany has powered ahead; and the Common Market is now a United Europe.

Ready to challenge US dominance

This rather long quotation from *German Foreign Policy*, 10-11-09, neatly summarises the ambitions that Germany has for the EU of today – a counter to US dominance.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, the German Chancellor is calling for the establishment of a new world order. Monday, at a conference focusing on the consequences of the GDR's collapse, Angela Merkel declared that the United States must be prepared to subordinate itself to multinational organizations, because without "more multinational cooperation" this will "not be a peaceful world". Merkel's remarks reflect Germany's drive, over the past 20 years, to break US hegemony and itself become a world power. Berlin has significantly increased its power, with its persistent expansionist policy over the past few years - also through military means. In 1990, Washington put through West Germany's annexation of the GDR against the resistance of Britain and France. But today on the occasion of the anniversary celebrations, criticism of its rival can be heard in Washington. Germany has become "more powerful, more influential and more dominant than ever before," according to the US press. In

reference to Berlin's striving for domination, critics are warning that Germany remains "difficult" and "not entirely a settled place."

Rise. The German Chancellor is not by chance expressing the craving - stronger than ever - for participation in world policy decisions on the 20th anniversary of the demise of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) annexation of the GDR and the opening of traditional German eastern regions of expansion have been decisive factors for the rise of this larger Germany in world policy-making. In the 1990s Bonn, then Berlin, accompanied its conquest of economic and political hegemony over Eastern and South-eastern Europe with the German army's first military intervention since 1945. Based on its newly strengthened position, the FRG continued its expansion to Asia and Africa - also accompanied by military interventions, for example in Afghanistan or Sudan. Berlin's standing is being strengthened by its domination of the EU, which, since 1989, has also made enormous progress. Through Brussels, Germany has at its disposal a competitive currency to the US dollar and soon a European foreign minister and EU armed forces ("Battle Groups") for intervening globally. The Lisbon Treaty, soon to take effect, will oblige EU member states to a military build-up.

World Power. In the long run, this represents a power potential that need not shy away from being measured against the USA. For some time, German political advisors have been anticipating this development. Werner Weidenfeld, ex-Chancellor Helmut Kohl's advisor, had considered already in 2003 that the "the European Union's potential" comes "closest to the world power, USA." In that same year, the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP), of which Weidenfeld is the director, pronounced the alternatives confronting Brussels: "suffer demise or rise to world power." In 2006, the foundation of the German Bertelsmann media group considered that soon "the unipolar moment will be over, in which the US will be the sole center for world policy." The future world constellation will be clearly reminiscent of "the struggle of the major 19th Century European powers." The foundation reports that "in think tanks and government staff rooms this perspective is already taking shape and, in a few areas of great power policy, it seems to already become decisive." Appreciations such as these form the backdrop for the German chancellor's demands that the USA give up power.

Not Entirely Settled. Germany's strivings for world power status is creating irritation in Washington. Today the US press writes that Germany functions with an intensifying "sense of self-interest" lacking consideration for its allies. The most significant example is its close cooperation with Russia, which in the view of several EU states, weakens, or even endangers, the cohesiveness of that international alliance. In an article appearing in the German press, John Kornblum, a former US ambassador to Germany, wrote that Germany followed its

“own instincts, with little apparent concern for European, let alone Atlantic unity.”

More Dominant Than Ever. Just last week a US journal published reflections on Germany, which has continued to grow “more powerful, more influential and more dominant than ever before.” Merkel speaks constantly of “friendship,” after which “she returns home and works to make Germany stronger and more dominant in the region.”

Germany – World's Spy Champion

Let's consider a few of the aspects of Germany's desire to lead Europe. Information is power, so the saying goes. Germany has a highly advanced spy-satellite system. Who needs spy satellites, unless they have a desire to use that information to promote their position militarily? This is an extract from an article by *German-Foreign-Policy.com* 6-3-09

Having launched a new reconnaissance satellite-based system, the German Bundeswehr is celebrating its enhanced capacity for carrying out independent military operations. The SAR-Lupe system, which had achieved full operational capability at the end of 2008, has catapulted the German Armed Forces into a position of world leader in radar based reconnaissance. With this “new instrument” Berlin can “at its own political volition, gather exclusive and global data independently.” This new reconnaissance capacity has drastically reduced its “dependence on other countries” in the field of security policy. The spy satellites will not only provide information to the Bundeswehr but also to the foreign intelligence service. The images that can be retrieved by radar day or night and under any weather conditions will also be at the disposal of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation.

Berlin-Moscow. The “space partnership” with Russia has enabled Germany to develop its reconnaissance satellite-based system. By giving technological support to the development of the German system, Moscow has intensified its cooperation with the German armed forces, in spite of the protests from neighboring states, particularly Poland. According to its own indications, the system provides high definition images – in contrast to traditional optical systems – under any weather or light conditions, will, via satellite, enable the Bundeswehr to obtain information of the highest quality from nearly any spot on the globe – around the clock and under all weather conditions “without having to physically intrude onto the territory of other countries.”

The 5 satellites are capable of detecting objects 1m/40” in size in normal mode or in “spotlight” mode objects 50cm/20” in size!

The German elections

Elections in Germany are held normally every 4 years, and this year was election year. Angela Merkel managed to hold her position as Chancellor – the equivalent of Prime Minister – but with a changed coalition, there being

no one strong party in Germany. The new government brings together her Christian Democratic Union party, the Christian Social Union of Bavaria and the Free Democratic Party. Her former coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party, lost much of the voters' support. The new coalition is much more to her liking, the previous coalition with their rivals made governing difficult. Merkel's Federal Minister of Defence is a dynamic 38 year old, who was voted the most popular politician in Germany in a 2009 poll. As a descendant of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, he is a person to watch.

Zu Guttenberg is connected through part of the family line to the house of Habsburg. Strauss and Otto von Habsburg shared a common dream of a united Catholic Europe. To Otto von Habsburg, the dream was of a revived Holy Roman Empire

Take zu Guttenberg's impeccable Frankish-Bavarian Roman Catholic connections into mind and add them to the thread of political thought that has pervaded Bavarian politics for decades under Strauss and Stoiber—the dream of a united Catholic Europe under German leadership. The current Baron Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg's official title was granted to his forebears during the 18th century. His correct title is *Reichsfreiherr*, "Baron of the Holy Roman Empire." *The Trumpet* 28-9-09



Baron Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg

In just three short weeks, he has met NATO's chief, visited his troops in Afghanistan, met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and allied leaders, met with Defense Secretary Gates in Washington, been keynote speaker at the CSIS forum in Washington, flown to Halifax to give both the introductory address at and be a contributor to the first International Security Forum in Canada (hosted by the German Marshall Fund), returned to Berlin to receive Germany's "most popular politician of the year," and attended to a top-level shakeout in his own department.

Meeting this latest Iranian challenge would be right up Guttenberg's alley. The Peterson Institute reported on Guttenberg's affiliation with Germany's interests in Iran: This, more than any other region, is "where he has substantial experience including frequent travel to the country. He has been engaged in transatlantic dialogue on Iran's nuclear ambitions and he has also been part of a widely recognized working group on Iran." *The Trumpet* 30-11-09

This well-loved, active, well connected Defence Minister, could take Germany a long way along the path that he and Merkel dream of, a powerful, German led, Europe.

The levers of power

Germany seeks to control as many important posts as she can.

European Central Bank. Germany insisted that this should be based in Germany and modelled on the German Bundesbank. Germany has stated that in exchange for not putting a German forward for the new EU Presidency, she wants the ECB president's post to go to a German when the current French president, Jean-Claude Trichet's term of office finishes.

The ECB has resisted many calls to lower interest rates to help struggling euro-zone members – its policies have helped Germany as this article from the *Daily Telegraph* 22 -12-09 shows.

The super-strong euro is having sharply varying effects on the different countries in the eurozone and causing the rift between north and south to widen further, according to a new report by Standard & Poor's (S&P).

Italy, Spain, Greece and Ireland have all seen sharp deteriorations in their real effective exchange rates since 2005.

This is likely to reach the pain barrier soon if rate rises by the European Central Bank (ECB) push the euro to \$1.70 against the dollar by the end of next year, as S&P expects.

The headache for the ECB is that Germany seems well able to cope with a strong currency after screwing down wages and raising productivity, even if Club Med is squealing. German firms have gained some 18pc in labour cost competitiveness against Italy and 15pc against Spain since 2005, and far more going back to the mid-1990s when the exchange rates were set in stone.

Jobs are already telling the story. Unemployment fell slightly to 7.5pc in Germany in October, but continued rising in Spain to 19.3pc. The underlying rate in Greece is 18pc with the expiry of workfare schemes.

European External Action Service (EEAS). Germany has set her sights on putting a German into the new European diplomatic corps which has come into being with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.

According to news reports, the German government is demanding that the post of EEAS General Secretary be given to a German. Leading personnel from the Chancellery and the Foreign Ministry are being suggested. The general secretary heads the administration and is second only to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, who is considered to be very weak, meaning that a German EEAS general secretary would have a free hand. The structuring of the EEAS is one of Berlin's most essential objectives since the Lisbon Treaty took effect, reinforcing the EU on its path toward becoming a world power. As was expressed in Berlin's foreign ministry, the basic features of the new administration must be institutionalized by April 2010, so that the British Conservatives,

expected to be the victors of the next parliamentary elections in the spring of 2010, will not be able to have any influence. They are capable of putting up serious resistance to German hegemonic policy. *German Foreign Policy* 8-12-09

EU Parliament. German chairs are to be found on many of the more important committees. The EU has a Conference of Committee Chairs, consists of all the chairs of all the standing and special committees. This overall committee is chaired by – a German, Klaus-Heiner Lehne, who also chairs the committee on Legal Affairs. Germans also chair the following committees: – Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; Culture and Education; Industry, Research and Energy; plus a special committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis.

Merkel calls on America

Angel Merkel addressed both houses of the American Congress in early November. This was only the second time that a German Chancellor has addressed Congress – the first being Adenauer in 1957. Her call was for America to work with Europe in establishing the institution of a “global economic order.” Having talked of the events of the fall of the Berlin Wall 20 years earlier, she spoke of a 2nd wall that needed to fall.

But what is also clear is that this freedom does not stand alone. It is freedom in responsibility and freedom to exercise responsibility. For that reason the world needs order. The near-collapse of the international financial markets showed what happens when there is no such order.

If there is one lesson the world has learned from last year's financial crisis, it is that there is no alternative to a global framework for a globalized economy. Without universally-binding rules for transparency and supervision there can be no greater freedom but rather we risk the abuse of freedom and thus instability. In a way this is a second wall that has to fall: a wall standing in the way of a truly global economic order, a wall of regional and exclusively national thinking.

The vehicle for this she proposed should be the G20. This consists of 19 countries plus the EU (although Britain, Germany and France are 3 of the 19 countries. This gives the G20 quite a slant toward the EU thinking. Set up in 1999, the G20 countries represent around 90% of global national product and two-thirds of the world's population.

It was the G20 that late last year (2008) got their members to agree to a world regulatory body to regulate the financial institutions of the world, and re-launched the Financial Stability Forum as the Stability Board. Mario Draghi continues as its chairman. A committed Roman Catholic, he is governor of the Bank of Italy, and has close connections with the Vatican, the Vatican Bank and the European Central Bank.

We now turn to what has been happening with the Vatican.

Chapter 6:

THE HARLOT RIDER – 7 POINTS OF IDENTIFICATION

The final phase of the Vatican is depicted as the Harlot rider of the European Beast. Before looking at the remarkable progress that the Vatican has made in exercising power with the European Beast, let's look at seven points of identification.

Apart from the first point, these are taken from Rev ch 17 which paints the picture of Papal Power at the final stage of her existence, prior to being cast into the lake of fire, when, at the hand of Christ and the saints, Europe is described as a lake of fire.

1) Timing.

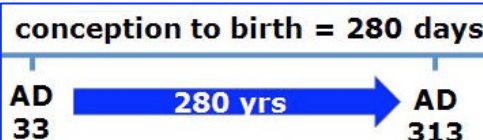
We read of the unfaithful woman in Rev ch 12 about to give birth to the man-child who would be caught up to power – a picture of Constantine embracing the Christians and sweeping to power, driving out paganism and making Christianity the state religion. The Decree of Milan AD 313 established State protection for Christians, legalised its worship and restored its formerly confiscated properties. Later Christianity was established as the State religion, and formed the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church, the system that Paul warned would develop, but not in Paul's day.

And now you know what restrains him, in order that his true character might be revealed in his time. Weymouth 2 Thes 2:2

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 2 Thes 2:3,4

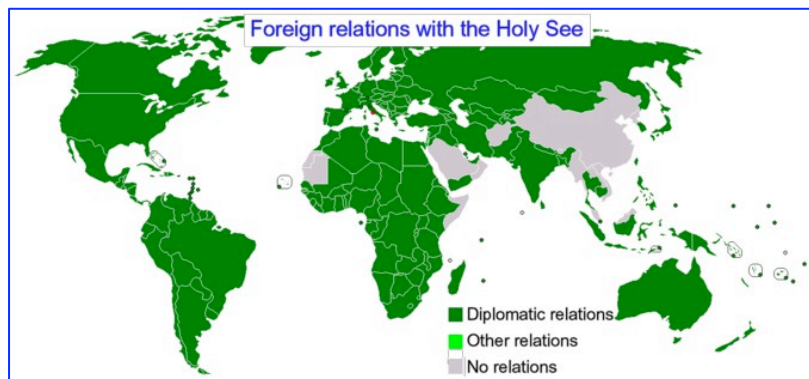
The period of human pregnancy is 280 days – 9 months. Applying a day for a year we see that within 280 years of AD 33 the truth was corrupted and brought forth fruits of corruption. From Ananias & Sapphira's twisting the truth, and the Judaizers' desire to bring back the rituals of the Law, the man of sin developed to come to maturity under Constantine. At the end of AD 312 rallying his followers under "the sign of the cross" he conquered Rome at the battle of Milvian Bridge. In AD 313 Constantine ended the



persecution of the Christians, issuing the Edict of Milan proclaiming religious freedom.

2) She “sits on many waters” Rev 17:1

As we saw in ch 2 she has diplomatic relations with 178 countries – a truly “universal” church. In centuries past her attention was limited to the



countries of Europe, now she reaches everywhere, and efforts are being made to extend her reach to Muslim countries and other areas where Christianity is suppressed. She claims 1.1 billion followers, 1/6th the population of the earth and 50% of Christianity! Truly Babylon **the Great**.

Just days ahead of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Czech Republic, Vatican analyst John Allen is saying that the papacy's social and political influence is one of the most unique and far-reaching in the world today. From the fall of communism to Western-Muslim relations to the AIDS crisis, he says, the Pope is a key international player.

“No global leader makes a trip to Italy without calling on the Pope, and usually that meeting draws far greater interest than a similar session with the Italian prime minister,” Allen writes, adding that the Pope is the most-quoted religious leader in the world.

“Yet the most ardently convinced atheist ought to realize that religion remains an enormously important motivating force in human affairs, and that the pope is the most important religious leader on the planet.”
Catholic News Agency 25-9-09

3) With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication v2

As the above quote indicates, “No global leader makes a trip to Italy without calling on the Pope”, at the funeral of John Paul II – organised by the present Pope – virtually all the world leaders came and paid homage to him. Prince Charles postponed his wedding by a day, in order to attend! What a contrast with say 50 years ago; the acceptability of this system is quite remarkable. No other religious organization matches the description in our heading.

4) Arrayed in purple and scarlet ... gold ... precious stones ... pearls v4

The harlot woman is richly arrayed in these things, a wonderfully apt symbol for the Roman Catholic Church. Purple is the colour for royalty – she *sits a queen and am no widow* (Rev 18:7). Scarlet speaks of sin (Isa 1:18); the Lord Jesus spoke that *her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities* (Rev 18:5). Purple and scarlet are the colours of her vestments - bishops wear purple and cardinals scarlet. Her churches are full of gold, precious stones and pearls. The verse continues: *having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*. Golden cups are used when they celebrate “mass,” but what an apt symbol this is for her corrupting influence, deceiving her adherents into thinking that she is teaching them the truth. (Rev 18:6)

5) MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT v5

That was the name emblazoned on her forehead. *Mystery* was one of the names that used to adorn the papal tiara! Many of her sacraments are “mysteries” which only the priesthood can understand. *Babylon the Great* is an appropriate appellation too! Babylon in the past stood for the false system of religion set up by Nimrod and for all that opposed the Truth – the Kingdom of Men – and was the destroyer of God’s people.

Babylon in Hebrew signifies *confusion* from the incident at Babel (same Hebrew word), but in Chaldee signifies *gate of God*. This is exactly what she claims

This one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic and Apostolic Church ... the followers of other religions ... are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation. *Dominus Iesus* June 2000

The present Pope, then Cardinal Ratzinger, was closely involved with this encyclical. The name emblazoned on her forehead continued with:
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS

She claims to be the *Mother Church* and her “deficient” children have to return to her fold. “The Roman Church is the Mother and Mistress of all churches” stated the 16th century Council



of Trent. At the base of the entrance pillars to the Basilica of “St John” Lateran in Rome, is a Latin inscription reading: *Holy Lateran Church, mother and head of all churches in the city and the world!* We see the steady movement of her daughters Romewards, and shall look at this in more detail in chapter 7.

The final part of her title is ***AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.***

How is she mother of abominations of the earth? The previous verse speaks of the *golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*: This is an apt symbol for the doctrine that she teaches, that she offers the nations to drink (v2). Unlike the pure wine of truth offered in Is 55:1, hers is adulterated, it does not enlighten mankind in the Hope of Israel, but is designed to subject and fleece her followers, to deceive them by her false doctrines. The only hope is “*to come out of her*” 18:4. Her temples to mammon are full of idols, many with feet worn away through the kissing of her adherents, abominable idol worship that displeases God for it focuses on the object, not on the Creator.

6) Drunk with the blood of saints v6

No other Christian organisation has shed so much blood in its long history. From crusades and inquisitions, to purging of Jews and Orthodox in WWII, many true saints, Jews and Protestants, have suffered torture and death at her hands. Her deeds are well documented; estimates vary but it could well run to many millions! She even struck medals to commemorate her deeds as this one issued by Gregory III to commemorate the massacre of the Huguenots in 1572.



7) The 7 heads are 7 mountains on which she sits v9

The 7 heads were the different forms of government the Roman Empire had gone through. Ch 17 shows us an 8th head, but is of the 7. The centre of these governments is Rome with its 7 hills; this is where we find the harlot sitting. So there is only one corrupt Christian organisation that is centred in Rome. No others fit! Although her territory is today the smallest state in the world and not situated on the original 7 hills, yet it is still in Rome, the 7-hilled city. Interestingly the growing developments in Western Europe grew out of the Treaty of Rome that established the EEC. The European Constitution was also signed in Rome in 2004, which because it was not ratified was modified and re-launched as the Lisbon Treaty. Interestingly all the papers from each country as they ratified it were lodged in Rome with the Italian government.

We now see this harlot system as she prepares to ride the European Beast.

Chapter 7:

THE VATICAN AND HER MANY TOILERS

We have seen in the previous chapters the rapid development of Europe, coming together under German's leadership. We now turn to the equally amazing developments in the Vatican. The progress that she has made to re-establish herself at the heart of Europe is extensive – though she has still some way to go. What is interesting is that the mood of many politicians has changed; no longer is Europe quite such a secular place. Helped by strong Roman Catholics in high positions, the Vatican is able to make progress. The chapter heading was one that was used in the National Secular Society's website! They were anxious to draw attention to the many ardent Roman Catholics in influential positions! We start by looking at how the Lisbon Treaty now puts the Vatican in a strong position.

The Vatican and the Lisbon Treaty

There was much satisfaction in the Vatican when the Lisbon Treaty finally came into force on December 1st 2009. They had used their influence to embed into its pages a very satisfactory position regarding her status in relation to the politics of the EU. There was concern that Ireland might not vote for the acceptance of the Treaty in their 2nd referendum in September. A very revealing article appeared in *The Irish Catholic* newspaper 3-9-09, written by the former Taoiseach (Prime Minister), John Bruton. It told of the importance of this Treaty to the Vatican, because, unlike earlier Treaties, it had secured a firm position for the Churches. As the Roman Church is the only powerful one in Europe, read “the Vatican” for “Churches”! I have emphasised key points. His article was headed: -

Catholics and Lisbon

I would like to look at the Treaty from a Catholic point of view — from the point of view **of values and the institutional position of the Church.**

The best place to start is with **what the Catholic Church said it wanted before the drafting of the Treaty started.** On May 22, 2002, the Catholic Bishops of the European Union made six recommendations for inclusion in the Treaty. These were:

- A Treaty guarantee of respect for the status of Churches
- A recognition of the religious heritage of Europe
- A recognition of the principle of subsidiarity
- That the pursuit of the common good be one of the core principles of the Union
- The recognition of fundamental rights, including religious freedom in its individual, collective institutional dimensions, and

- An invocation of God in the Treaty

Five of the six recommendations of the bishops were accepted and are now incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty. The sixth, an explicit invocation of God, for **which I worked hard myself** in the Convention, has not been accepted. But, in any negotiation, winning five of the six points one seeks, is a reasonable record.

I know from discussions I participated in the Praesidium of the Convention that **the Vatican lobbied very strongly indeed to get this language into an EU Treaty, and regarded it as of paramount importance**. If the Lisbon Treaty fails, **that goal will be lost**.

In 2002 they were drafting the Constitution for Europe, which, on its rejection by France and the Netherlands in 2005, was redrafted as the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. The Archbishop of Ireland also threw his weight behind a Yes vote, and following inordinate amounts of EU money thrown at securing a YES vote, was duly accepted by 67% of the voters.

When the Treaty finally came into force the Vatican mobilised her troops.

Catholic Church reminds EU that Lisbon Treaty gives it arm-twisting status

Once more I am indebted to the Humanists for this detail. The *National Secular Society* 4-12-09 under the above headline had this rather caustic comment to make. Obviously they are deeply unhappy at church-state cooperation. Their cries of alarm indicate the very real threat that they perceive to their humanist teachings. A director of the society claimed that “This is probably the most sinister document I have read for some time. It gives clear warning that the Catholic Church intends to insinuate the Vatican’s hard-line Catholic doctrine right to the heart of Europe.”

The Lisbon Treaty came into effect this week, and first to celebrate was the Catholic Bishops Conference (COMECE) which issued a press release reminding EU members that religious groups – particularly the Vatican – are coming to claim the privileges that the Treaty promises them.

The Press Release says: “The Treaty introduces into EU primary law an Article of notable importance for the Churches. By means of Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the EU recognises the identity and specific contribution of Churches and engages on this basis an ‘open, transparent and regular’ dialogue with them. Thanks to this Article, Churches and religious communities will be able to strengthen their Dialogue with the European Commission, Council and Parliament and so contribute more efficiently to reflecting on European policy. Inspired by Catholic social teaching and strengthened by their background experience, Churches will be enabled to pursue a critical and constructive Dialogue with EU decision makers on the policies put forward by the EU. ...”

“COMECE calls on Churches and Christians all over Europe to seize this dialogue opportunity, based on their expertise and their humanity, to make a contribution to the European project. COMECE, together with its ecumenical partners from CEC (Conference of European Churches), will make soon specific proposals to the European Commission, Parliament and Council on how to develop this dialogue into regular institutional practice.”

The Lisbon Treaty has brought a new, influential President into play, whose Roman Catholic credentials are high, so much so that the *National Secular Society* 20-11-09 ran the headline: -

“Does the Pope have another little toiler at the top of Euro politics?”

Before we cheer too loudly at the defeat of Tony Blair’s effort to become president of the European Union, we should take another look at the man who did eventually win the title, Herman van Rompuy, presently Prime Minister of Belgium. He is described in the *Guardian* as a leading light in “Roman Catholic and Christian Democrat politics”. On the *Today* programme it was revealed that he is a practicing Catholic who likes to go on a monthly religious retreat.

Speaking five years ago, as an opposition politician, Mr Rompuy argued that Muslim Turkey could not be considered a candidate for EU membership. “Turkey is not a part of Europe and will never be part of Europe. An expansion of the EU to include Turkey cannot be considered as just another expansion as in the past,” he said. “The universal values which are in force in Europe, and which are fundamental values of Christianity, will lose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country such as Turkey.”

This was followed by a later article (27-11-09)

“It is in fact true that van Rompuy is a serious Catholic, the author of a book entitled *Christendom*”.

- He makes monthly retreats to a Benedictine monastery;
- He gained a degree in economics at the Catholic University of Leuven – but also one in philosophy.
- He is a leader of the Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams, Belgium’s Flemish Christian-democratic party
- On October 19, he delivered a paper to a conference on the last encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI about the Church’s social doctrine. He supported the Pope’s idea that social doctrine needed a “world leader” to ensure that it was based on morality.”

This must surely bring advantage to the Vatican, whose followers' first duty is to the Church. Benedict has been active in redirecting the laity to be useful in promoting the Church in their every-day lives.

First, for Pope Benedict, the laity (Catholic and otherwise) have a direct duty to work towards a just ordering of society as citizens, with a specific responsibility to take part in public life. "Building a just social and civil order," the pope writes, "...is an essential task which every generation must take up anew" *Jesuit Social Research Institute* 15-9-09

The laity has an "irreplaceable" task, "as it takes place in daily life, in ambits which the priests can only reach with difficulty."

"Participation in public and political life is a specific task of the laity," he reminded, assuring that "one and all have the right and duty to participate in politics."

"The Church does not identify with any party, with any political community, or any political system," the Pontiff said. "Rather, she always reminds that lay people involved in political life must give a courageous and visible witness of Christian values, which must be affirmed and defended in case they are threatened."

The laity must carry out this task "publicly either in debates of a political nature or in the media," he explained. *Catholiclaitymission* 6-12-09

The President of the European Commission, who is also an influential figure, is also a Roman Catholic, as are eight of the 27 leaders of the European Council, which comprises of the heads of state or government of the 27 EU "states", as they have now become since December 1st.

Putting Christianity at the heart of Europe

Benedict indicated his goal of restoring the Roman church fortunes in the title that he took at his election as Pope. Benedict had important links. The original Benedict - known as "Saint" Benedict lived 480-547 at a time of darkness for the Roman Church. Rome had been sacked shortly before his birth, and he died before the efforts of Justinian the Roman Emperor in Constantinople finally succeeded in defeating the Ostrogoths who were then in control of Rome.

Through the system of monasteries which "St" Benedict set up, he succeeded in restoring the Roman Church to a relatively strong position. Benedict XVI (April 2008) said of his predecessor that he "exercised a fundamental influence on the development of European civilisation and culture" and helped Europe to emerge from the "dark night of history" that followed the fall of Rome.

He perceived that the Roman Church faced similar challenges today. His previous namesake, Benedict XV also played a similar role at another dark period. "He guided the church in a troubled period because of the First World War", Benedict said of his predecessor. He was Pope from 1914 to

1922. The Vatican was bankrupt and had little influence. Again his efforts in producing the first ever Code of Canon Law were credited with “stimulating religious life and activities throughout the Church”. He also began the rapprochement of the Vatican with various European states. These came to fruition after his death with concordats with several countries, the chief of which was the Lateran Treaty made with Italy in 1929, which dramatically restored the fortunes of the Vatican. (See *Milestones* 2005 ch 13)

Benedict has put his skills to good use. Although John Paul II had been an actor and drew crowds, the phrase being used is that the crowds came to **see** John Paul II, but the crowds come to **hear** Benedict XVI. It is said that he attracts bigger audiences than his predecessor. Benedict has long campaigned to put Christianity into the heart of Europe and this has struck a chord, especially with the younger generation, who, tired of the emptiness of life, are seeking a rock upon which to build their lives.

Bullying Vatican threatens a secular Europe

The change in leadership in France and Germany from Chirac and Schroder to Sarkozy and Merkel has been of great help to the Vatican. The old guard were for keeping church and state separate, religion should not be mixed with politics. The new leaders have a different attitude. Sarkozy is happy to promote the Church and so is Merkel, in spite of being a Lutheran. The Lutheran Church is no longer Protestant; they happily cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church. The secularists have reacted with alarm at the advantages which the Vatican carries within the EU political circles. In February a march was held in London entitled ‘London for a Secular Europe’ to protest at Rome’s influence. The above was the headline in the *British Humanist Association* website on 14-2-09

At a time when we see the increasing influence of religious institutions in the UK and across Europe, despite our increasingly diverse and secular societies, it is becoming evermore important to make the case for equality, rights, democracy and secular states. “The Vatican’s observer status at the UN and concordats with EU member states are not just an abstract, symbolic state of affairs, or a remnant of tradition. This failure to truly break the bind of church on state is having real, measurable, shocking impact across Europe and across the world. This is a timely, necessary demonstration of the demand for a secular Europe.”

Catholic Church pushing further into European politics

This was from another humanist website, that of the *National Secular Society* 11-12-09 reporting of a new group of German politicians.

A group of Catholic politicians in Germany has launched a group called The Circle of Committed Catholics in Politics and Society aimed at pushing the Vatican’s agenda into German politics. It has attracted 500 members since its launch on 15 November.

Issues that the group will be promoting are “absolute loyalty to Rome and the Pope” as well as opposing abortion, civil partnerships, embryonic stem cell research and the opening of more nurseries and kindergartens. The latter is because the members of the group believe women should stay at home to look after children. The Archbishop of Cologne welcomed the group, saying it would lead to “far greater emphasis on Christian values”.

It was in Germany that a victory was achieved in the matter of Sunday trading. Benedict is keen to see Sunday restored to the position that Constantine decreed – a Sabbath day.

Germany Reaffirms Sunday Law

Sunday is observed as a religious day in Germany with shops shut with few exceptions, except in Berlin which has 10 Sundays a year when shops are allowed to be open. However, legislation was passed on 1st Dec 2009 overturning this exception by Berlin and as from 2010 general shops must remain shut.

The actual law establishing Sunday as Germany’s weekly day of worship is enshrined in an appendix to the Basic Law under the heading, “Extracts from the German Constitution of Aug. 11, 1919 [Weimar Constitution].” There we find, under the subhead “Religion and Religious Societies,” Article 139, which reads: “Sunday and holidays recognized by the state shall remain protected by law as days of rest from work and of spiritual improvement.” *The Trumpet* 1-12-09

Reaching out to other helpers

Faced with a Europe that has been openly secular the Pope has been rallying his troops. The other threat as far as Europe is concerned is the advance of the Moslems. However the Moslems would be powerful allies against secularism. So his strategy is to enlist all the support he can get, so as well as having a dialogue with the Moslems, he is reaching out to others who can help him in the battle against secularism. He is bringing back Catholic groups that have broken away because of what in the past was perceived as the laxity of the Roman Church when it tried to modernise. He has created a channel for disaffected members of the Church of England to have a church within the Roman Catholic Church and is reaching out to other valuable allies – the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches!

In effect, Benedict’s outreach to Lefebvrites¹ and dissident Anglicans forms part of a trend I’ve described as “evangelical Catholicism.” One cornerstone is to reassert markers of Catholic distinctiveness, such as

¹ Archbishop Lefebvre founded the very traditional “Society of St Pius” and in 1988 he consecrated four bishops without Vatican approval, causing automatic excommunication for himself and the four under church canon law. He died 1991. Benedict lifted the ban on the four bishops in 2009.

Mass in Latin, and traditional moral teaching, as a means of ensuring that the church is not assimilated to secularism. This defense of Catholic identity is job number one.

Historically, “evangelical Catholicism” is a creative impulse rather than something purely defensive, with roots in the papacy of Leo XIII in the late 19th century and his effort to bring a renewed Catholic tradition to bear on social and political life. Nevertheless, fear that secularism may erode the faith from within is also a powerful current propelling evangelical Catholicism forward.

To over-simplify a bit, Benedict XVI is opening the door to the Lefebvrites and to traditionalist Anglicans in part because whatever else they may be, they are among the Christians least prone to end up, in the memorable phrase of Jacques Maritain, “kneeling before the world,” meaning sold out to secularism. *National Catholic Reporter* 6-11-09

Chiesa 20-10-09 commented on the move to bring over disaffected Anglicans.

Knock and It Shall Be Opened to You. As Long As It's According to Tradition

The entry of anti-modernist Anglican dioceses and parishes into the Catholic Church has been announced. The ecumenism of Pope Ratzinger appears increasingly influenced by fidelity to tradition. That's the way it is with the Lefebvrites. And even more so with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Once the apostolic constitution has been published, the Anglican parishes and dioceses that in recent years have knocked on Rome's door for admission to the Catholic Church – from Great Britain, from the United States, from Australia and from other countries – will be able to do so in the ways indicated in this same constitution. Married priests and bishops, having received sacred orders, will be able to resume the practice of the priesthood, as is already the case for the married priests of the Eastern rites, including the Catholics. Their communities will be structured into “personal ordinariates” led by bishops who are not married, but celibate, another point in line with the constant practice of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Their liturgies will continue to follow the Anglican rubrics, which in any case are very similar to their Catholic counterparts.

It is estimated that there are about forty bishops and a hundred priests on the waiting list, together with their respective communities. The litmus test of conversion will be acceptance of papal primacy, and agreement with the doctrine expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The move to welcome disaffected Anglicans came very suddenly. The editor of the *Inside the Vatican* magazine, Robert Moynihan, who had attended many Vatican press conferences, wrote of the strangeness of this one. Instead of the 7 days notice of major press events they were given a

mere 18 hours notice. The person in charge of Catholic-Anglican dialogue wasn't there – he was in Malta. Thirdly there was no press-release handed out because it was still in preparation! In London there was a simultaneous press conference held. Even Archbishop Williams was only given a few hours notice of this move by the Vatican to take away part of his flock. The *Daily Telegraph* religious writer Damian Thompson commented (20-10-09): -

This is astonishing news, Pope Benedict XVI has created an entirely new Church structure for disaffected Anglicans that will allow them to worship together – using elements of Anglican liturgy – under the pastoral supervision of their own specially appointed bishop or senior priest...

In theory, they can have their own married priests, parishes and bishops – and they will be free of liturgical interference by liberal Catholic bishops who are unsympathetic to their conservative stance. There is even the possibility that married Anglican laymen could be accepted for ordination on a case-by-case basis – a remarkable concession.

Both Archbishop Nichols and Archbishop Williams “are surprised by this dramatic move.”

The *New York Times* describes it as “an Anglo-Catholic mansion within the walls of the Roman Catholic Church.” How many take up this offer remains to be seen. The interesting thing is that this hurried-through step is part of a larger plan to reach out to the Orthodox churches where there are sections with married priests. It appears to be the test of a blue-print that can be used to bring the eastern churches back to Rome. As Moynihan stated in a later article (10-11-09) they are to “be united but not absorbed, by giving them their own structures”. One can see how the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches could be drawn back to their mother by being allowed to keep their existing rites.

In message to Orthodox Patriarch, Pope notes ‘urgency’ of ecumenical work

Before looking in the next chapter at the quite remarkable softening of attitudes between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, let's look at the easing of the relationships with the Greek Orthodox Churches. The division between them goes back to AD 1054, when the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope issued notice of excommunication against each other.

The rift has been gradually healing; at the Second Vatican Council in 1965 Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Athenagora expressed their sorrow and mutually lifted the excommunications between them. John Paul II visited Turkey in 1979. In 1995 Patriarch Bartholomew I was the first to visit the Vatican and in 1999 John Paul II was the first Pope to visit an Eastern Orthodox Country – Romania – since the Schism. Bartholomew revisited

the Vatican in 2004. In 2006 the Pope visited Turkey and closed his visit with a joint service with Bartholomew I. Every year, for several years now, Roman Catholic delegates have visited Constantinople on the feast day of “St Andrew”, and likewise Orthodox delegates attended the feast day in Rome of “St Peter & St Paul”.

Pope Benedict XVI sent his greetings to the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople on November 30, as the Ecumenical Patriarch celebrated the feast of St. Andrew, the patron of Constantinople. In a message to the Orthodox leader, the Pope spoke of the “urgency” of pursuing Christian unity, saying that the Christian world must speak with one voice in response to today’s challenges.

The Pope acknowledged the progress toward ecumenical accord, noting that he and the Orthodox leader have regularly exchanged visits and messages of friendship. He thanked Bartholomew for regularly sending delegations to Rome for the patronal feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, and noted that Cardinal Walter Kasper, the president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, was leading a Vatican delegation to this year’s celebration in Istanbul. *CatholicCulture.com* 30-11-09

Vatican Sends Anti-Communist Message with Sainthood Picks

Benedict’s predecessor, John Paul II was not afraid to use every weapon at his disposal in overthrowing communism – perceived as the great enemy of the Church. Many recent articles looking back at the fall of the Berlin Wall 20 years before, expressed the central role that the Pope had played in bringing down the communist power. That opposition to what communism stood for still continues as the headline to this section from *Lifesitenews.com* 21-12-09 indicates.

The Vatican has sent the world a message of Catholicism’s fundamental opposition to communism with the announcement this weekend from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Three of the greatest twentieth century opponents to the communist and socialist ideologies, Pope John Paul II, Pope Pius XII and the Polish Solidarity priest Jerzy Popieluszko, all moved a step closer to canonisation. The two popes were declared “venerable” for their heroic virtues and the Vatican announced that Pope Benedict XVI had approved the decree of beatification for Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko, the “Solidarity chaplain” murdered by the communist secret police.

We now move to one of the remarkable stories of 2009 – the desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to cooperate with the Vatican!

Chapter 8:**WILL THE “THIRD ROME” REUNITE WITH THE “FIRST ROME”?**

We have seen remarkable happenings in Europe and the Vatican, we now look at that other great power in the Kingdom of Men – that of Russia. Since the fall of the Soviet there has been a remarkable revival in the Russian Orthodox Church. The New Russian leaders have worked with the Church, seeing the value it has in moulding the often difficult lives of their citizens. First Yeltsin, then Putin and now Medvedev, openly display their Orthodoxy, attending religious ceremonies and in turn the religious leaders attend political meetings. It must be the kind of relationship that Benedict dreams of – and is determined to bring about. The prize of some agreement between the two Churches is immense and would strengthen Benedict's hand considerably.

Bible students have long puzzled over how the two main branches of Christendom could come together, for when Nebuchadnezzar's image stands for its first and only time upon its legs it will have one golden head with its papal eyes and mouth directing its movements. So we should expect to see close cooperation between the “third Rome”, Moscow and the “First Rome”, the Vatican. The events of this year have justified our community's long held belief that such a coming together would happen. Its speed of happening has been thrilling. We are not there yet but who can doubt, when we pull the events of 2009 together, that it will soon happen.

We start with the election of the new Patriarch.

The death of Alexy II, the end of an era

In spite of Pope John Paul II's efforts, Alexy had a distrust of the Pope from Poland – a country formerly within the Soviet Empire. Things improved somewhat with the election of Benedict XVI as both leaders were German; however, the long anticipated meeting between the two great leaders of Christendom did not take place.

The prize of unity is great. Out of Christendom's 2 billion population – one third of the world's population – the Roman Catholic Church claims over half with 1.1 billion followers. The Russian Orthodox Church is the second largest claiming 160,000 out of a total for all the Orthodox Churches of 250,000.

From Moscow a patriarch for the third millennium

The new patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia will be elected at the end of January 2009. It will be a moment of great importance, not only in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, but also in the universal history of Christianity. In many respects it will be something new, not so much in the election itself, but in the circumstances that surround it.

The Patriarchate of Moscow is something of an anomaly in Christian history. Since its establishment four centuries ago it has gone through periods of confusion and has been beset by contradictions. The first patriarch was chosen in 1589 as a result of forceful steps taken by Russia's rulers at a time when the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople was in disarray, torn by internal crises. Emancipation from the latter was accompanied by the adoption of an absolutely unprecedented political-religious ideology that elevated Moscow to the status of a 'Third Rome', heir to the first two (Rome and Byzantium), with a mandate to realise in apocalyptic way the destiny of Christianity. Only in the 19th century, following the rise of nationalist movements in Europe, did other 'national' Orthodox patriarchates (14 altogether today) assert themselves.

The death of Aleksij II provides a great opportunity for the spiritual renaissance of Russia's Orthodox communities, opening the door to ecumenism and a common mission among Christians. The tight relationship between the Orthodox Church and the state is represented by the ideal of the "Byzantine Symphony," based on concordance between the two and on their overlapping boundaries.

In addition to Aleksij the other strong figure of the post-Communist period is without a doubt Metropolitan Kirill (Gundjaev) of Smolensk, 62, who has been a bishop since 1976 (elevated at the age of 29). It is no coincidence that he was elected "patriarchal lieutenant" and is seen as a natural candidate to the succession.

In the past 20 years Kirill has shown a traditional habit of seeking compromises with those in power, albeit without the same degree of subordination that prevailed under the Communists. Indeed he played an important role in the political transition of the last ten years, acting as the ideologue and inspirer of the renewed pride in Russia as a Christian Orthodox superpower, standing somewhere between the Protestant-Catholic West, increasingly decadent and secularised, and the emerging East, torn by its many religious fanaticisms. *Asia News* 19-1-09

Archbishop Kirill was indeed elected to be the new Patriarch by the 711 delegates gathered from more than 60 countries. Initially there were 3 candidates, but one withdrew, leaving a decisive 72% vote in favour of Kirill. This choice gave a clear indication of the direction that the Orthodox Church wanted to go. Archbishop Kirill (or Cyril) had been Head of External Affairs,



involving close contact with the Vatican and the EU. He knew Ratzinger before he became Pope Benedict - in 2006 he wrote the foreword to the first Russian-language edition of Pope Benedict's book “Introduction to Christianity.” He is well acquainted with the organisation of the Vatican.

The enthronement ceremony on Feb 1st 2009 was a glitzy affair attended by both Putin and Medvedev and the cathedral was filled with celebrities and political leaders, and the first person to receive communion from him was President Dmitry Medvedev's wife, Svetlana.



This report in the *Moscow Times* 8-2-09 indicated what his priorities would be.

The new patriarch can be expected to reopen schools, expand seminaries, renew monasteries and in general restore the outward signs of Russian Orthodox religious life. But Kirill, who was the key figure behind the unprecedented promulgation of the church's social teaching in a document in 2000, can also be expected to take bold new steps to go beyond renewing the institutional structure of the church.

One big question concerns his relations with the pope and with the Roman Catholic Church. Kirill will be looking for allies in his effort to move Russian and European society in a religious direction. But he will not strive for a theocratic state. Indeed, it is precisely his acceptance of the need for dialogue with non-Christians in a modern, pluralistic state that has prompted some of the more conservative elements in the Orthodox Church to be sharply critical of him as too “progressive.”

Archbishop Hilarion has taken over Kirill's former job of Head of External Affairs – the equivalent of Foreign Minister.

Relations Warm Between Russian Orthodox Church and Vatican

The *New York Times* 22-5-09 carried this headline to an interesting article on the dedication service of a church that had been built in Rome in the time of the Tsars, which had been handed back to the Russian Orthodox Church by the Italian government.

Festivities in Rome this weekend for the dedication of an Orthodox church on the grounds of the Russian Embassy near the Vatican attest to a surprising but marked warming of relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican in recent months, according to church officials and analysts.

Reflecting Russia’s geopolitical dance with Europe, the Moscow Patriarchate has found common ground with Benedict, and since Patriarch Kirill was enthroned, he has appointed church officials who portray the pope as a like-minded man of the church, not politics.

The Russian Church, said Archbishop Hilarion, would like to promote the role of Orthodoxy in the European Union. “Now several Orthodox states are part of the European Union,” he said, alluding to Bulgaria, Romania and Greece.

These three Orthodox countries account for 8% of the EU’s population.

Then followed a series of startling headlines following the meetings which Archbishop Hilarion had held with his Catholic counterparts.

Orthodox visit to Rome showcases improving relations *Catholic News Agency* 15-9-09

Is Catholic-Orthodox Unity in Sight? *National Catholic Register* 14-9-09

Needed: Both Lungs *National Catholic Register* 18-9-09

Then, on Sept 18th, the talks culminated in an hour long meeting with Benedict at the Pope’s summer palace. They share many common interests. This headline *Zenit* 21-9-09 was designed to catch a Bible student’s eye!

Will the “Third Rome” Reunite With the “First Rome”?

The progress made was quite startling.

In an interview today in Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* newspaper, Archbishop Paolo Pezzi [Catholic Archbishop of Moscow] said the miracle of reunification “is possible, indeed it has never been so close.” The archbishop added that Catholic-Orthodox reunification, the end of the historic schism that has divided them for a millennium and spiritual communion between the two churches “could happen soon, also within a few months.” *Catholic News Association* 15-9-09

This takes us back to what Archbishop Pezzi said recently. “On issues of modernity, Catholics and Orthodox Christians feel the same way,” he said. “Nothing separates us on bioethics, the family and the protection of life.”

There seems to be less and less that separates us on other issues, as well. Orthodox are closer to Rome than perhaps any other church or faith community. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches have the same seven sacraments, valid apostolic succession and valid priesthood. Except for the primacy of the papacy, we believe the same tenets of faith. We venerate many of the same saints. We shared everything for the first millennium of Christianity (including the Church Fathers) and much else since the split of 1054. Several centuries later, many Orthodox reunited with Rome, bringing with them their rich liturgical traditions, Christ-centered and Marian theology and hesychastic [quiet contemplative

prayer favoured in monasteries] spirituality as Byzantine Catholics.
National Catholic Reporter 18-9-09

A few weeks later Robert Moynihan, the editor of *Inside the Vatican* reported on his blog site, 12-11-09 about his interview with Hilarion when he asked him about his visit to the Pope, which had only been scheduled for 10 minutes, but lasted an hour. Hilarion wouldn't reveal what passed between them, but Moynihan quoted an *Interfax* report.

“Archbishop Hilarion highlighted the importance of mutual testimony by Orthodox and Catholic believers of *traditional Christian values before the secular world*. He noted the identical views of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches on such matters as family, maternity, demographic crisis, euthanasia, and many other ethical problems.”

Moynihan commented: -

In short, what Hilarion is working on is a worldwide “alliance” between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches.

The story continues with further headlines: -

Russian Church hails progress toward summit *Javno*: 11-11-09

Russian Orthodox and Catholic Church may end 950-year rift *Daily Telegraph* 13-11-09

Medvedev to meet with Pope in Vatican December 3 *Rian* 26-11-09

New hints of movement toward Vatican-Moscow ‘summit’ *catholicculture* 2-12-09. This reported on the forthcoming meeting between the Pope and the Russian President.

On the eve of a meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Russia's President Dmitri Medvedev, there are new signs of substantial progress in relations between the Holy See and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow, and hint that a “summit” meeting between the Pope and Russian Patriarch Kirill might be under discussion. The Russian Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow has published a collection of speeches by Pope Benedict XVI, and a government official in Belarus has suggested that his country might be an appropriate place for the much-anticipated ecumenical summit.

The new book produced by the Moscow patriarchate, *Europe, Spiritual Homeland*, is a collection of talks by Pope Benedict over the past decade—both before and after his election as Roman Pontiff—addressing the spiritual crisis in Europe. The book, published in Italian and Russian, carries an introduction by Archbishop Hilarion, the chief ecumenical officer of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russia and the Vatican establish full diplomatic ties

The meeting between the two men was very cordial and at the end it was announced that the two countries would upgrade their diplomatic links.

Russia and the Vatican have agreed to establish full diplomatic relations, the Kremlin has announced.

Until now, Moscow only had an office of representation at the Vatican. The new status means full-fledged embassies will be established in Moscow and Rome. *BBC* 3-12-09

For Rome and Moscow, It's Spring Again

The background to this meeting was quite remarkable. *Chiesa* 11-12-09 carried a long and extraordinary account, of which this is a flavour. [My emphasis DFP]

For the first time, the Russian Orthodox Church publishes a book with texts by a pope. The author is Benedict XVI. The topic is Europe. **The objective is a holy alliance in defense of the Christian tradition.**

Six days earlier, on December 3, Pope Benedict XVI had received in audience Dmitri Medvedev, president of the Russian Federation, to whom he had given a Russian-language copy of the encyclical "Caritas in Veritate," and with whom he had discussed "cultural and social topics of common interest, like the value of the family and the contribution of believers to the life of Russia." **But it is not only with the authorities of the Russian state that the Church of Rome now has relations defined by both sides as "friendly."**

With the Orthodox Church of Moscow as well, spring appears to have sprung.

One signal of this came at the same time as Medvedev's visit to Italy. A book was presented in Rome on December 2, **published by the patriarchate of Moscow and containing the main speeches about Europe made over the past ten years by Joseph Ratzinger, as cardinal and pope.**

The entire volume is in two languages, Italian and Russian. The title is taken from an expression that Benedict XVI used in Prague: "Europa, patria spirituale [**Europe, spiritual homeland**]." And **its extensive introduction is signed by** the president of the patriarchate's department for external Church relations, **Archbishop Hilarion** of Volokolamsk, an authority of the highest order: suffice it to say that the previous occupant of this post, Kirill, is today the patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Moscow "and all Rus."

The introduction to the book is of great interest for grasping the perspective from which **the patriarchate of Moscow looks at its own role in Europe.**

It is a Europe forged by Christianity, but now attacked by a "militant secularism" against which two forces above all are leading the counteroffensive: the Church of Rome in the West, and the Orthodox Church in the East.

The image that emerges from it is that of a Russian Orthodox Church that refuses to let itself be locked up in a ghetto, but on the contrary hurls itself against the secularist onslaught with all the peaceful weapons at its disposal, not excluding civil disobedience against laws “that oblige the commission of a sin in the eyes of God.” It is a text that is also striking for its frank, politically incorrect language, unusual for the pen of a high Church authority. But before reading it, it is interesting to take note of a few of the book’s unique features. Its publication is not the result of official ecumenical contacts. Neither the pontifical council for Christian unity headed by Cardinal Walter Kasper nor any other Vatican office is at the origin of it. The actual organizers and publishers are on the one side the department for external Church relations of the patriarchate of Moscow, and on the other side an international association based in Rome: “Sofia: Idea Russa, Idea d’Europa.”

This association is run by Pierluca Azzaro, a professor of the history of political thought at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, who also edited the book. And he acts through the “Foro di dialogo delle società civili di Italia e di Russia,” with Italian co-president Luisa Todini, CEO of a big construction company and former European parliament in the party of Silvio Berlusconi, and Russian co-president Vladimir A. Dmitriev, chairman of Vnesheconombank.

The Forum was created at the end of 2004, through the joint initiative of Berlusconi and Russian president Vladimir Putin. And it was this Forum that organized the public presentation in Rome last December 2 of the book by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, at the offices of the ministry for economic development, with the participation of two other ministers, for culture and for education, and a sizable crowd of businessmen, diplomats, experts in geopolitics.

Hilarion’s introduction to this book was headed: -

The help that the Russian Orthodox Church can give to Europe

When traveling in Europe, especially in the traditionally Protestant countries, **I am always astonished at seeing not a few churches abandoned by their congregations**, especially the ones turned into pubs, clubs, shops, or places of profane activities of yet another kind. There is something profoundly deplorable in this sad spectacle. I come from a country in which for many decades the churches were used for nonreligious purposes. Many places of worship were completely destroyed, others were turned into “museums of atheism,” and still others modified to be used as secular institutions. This was one of the traits of the so-called “militant atheism” that dominated for seventy years in my country, and collapsed only in fairly recent times. But what is the cause of similar phenomena in Western Europe? Why has the space for religion in Western society been reduced in such a significant

way in recent decades? Why does religion have less and less space in the public sphere? And again: why has this contraction of the religious presence in Europe coincided with processes of consolidation on the political, financial, economic, and social level? **The Russian Orthodox Church, with its unique experience of surviving the harshest persecutions**, struggling against militant atheism, reemerging from the ghetto when the political situation changed, recovering its place in society and redefining its social responsibilities, **can therefore be of help to Europe**. ... Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union, unlike many countries in Western Europe, **are experiencing a period of religious revival: millions of people are returning to God; everywhere churches and monasteries are being built**. The Russian Orthodox Church, which today is undoubtedly one of the most rapidly growing Churches in the world, has no shortage of vocations: on the contrary, thousands of young men are entering its theological schools to consecrate their lives to God.

I believe that solidarity among European Christians must become increasingly more manifest, with the gradual progression of the process of defining a common European system of values. It is only together that Christians, with the representatives of the other traditional religions in Europe, will be able to safeguard their own identity, combat militant secularism, and confront the other challenges of modernity. **The Russian Orthodox Church is ready to collaborate on the interconfessional level, the interreligious level, the political level, the social level, and all other levels with those who are not indifferent to the future identity of Europe, with all those who believe that traditional religious values are an integral part of that identity.**

The Secularists were soon protesting - their headline read: -

Russian Orthodox Church will join with Vatican in bid to crush secularism

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican – which have been engaged in a power-struggle for centuries – are moving to form a strategic alliance under the banner of fighting secularism.
Secularism.org.uk 18 12-09

We await further developments, but it is easy to see what a powerful force the two Churches working together will be to put “Christianity back into the heart of Europe”. Although there are many aspects of the standards they are seeking to uphold which we would applaud, a strong Church would spell a greater risk of difficulty in witnessing against its false teaching, and make persecution a greater possibility.

We continue by looking at the other remarkable sign of the times – the increasing involvement of Russia in Europe.

Chapter 9:**RUSSIA AND HER PLANS FOR EUROPE**

We have seen some incredible happenings in Europe and the Vatican, and in our last chapter we saw the considerable progress towards the uniting of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. We now turn to another matter which is proceeding steadily, and that is the relationship with Russia and Europe and Germany in particular. This has been proceeding for some years, but last year's invasion of Georgia, dampened matters somewhat. A year and a half on, we review the progress. As we have remarked before, prior to the gathering of the nations to Armageddon, we know from Rev ch 16 there is a Dragon power and a Beast power, together with the False Prophet. So we are not expecting a military takeover of Europe by Russia, but a peaceful cooperation between them, largely influenced by the Vatican.

First a few words about Russia's economy.

Russian Economy Will Probably Shrink 8.7% in 2009

According to *Bloomberg* 23-12-09 the Russian economy is expected to have shrunk by 8.7% during 2009. It has been the toughest year since the 1998 financial crisis. However inflation rates have fallen, interest rates are lower and the deposits of the Russians have been safe so far.

As an energy superpower - the world's leading gas exporter and no. 2 in oil exports - Russia is hoping for a sales boost if the world economy recovers. The steadily rising prices have benefitted her economy, but should there be another economic downturn, Russia would be hard hit.

The "who rules Russia" conundrum still rumbles on. Putin gave a clear hint in his end of year talk that he would seek the President's job once again at the next elections due in 2012, The law has been changed making it now possible to stand as President again. Much can happen before then!

Russia proposes new Euro-Atlantic security treaty

Mr Putin proposed a new "collective security pact" when he came to office, but few took any notice. When, 8 years later, Mr Medvedev came to office he too talked of such an agreement for this post-cold war era. Again few took much notice. Germany was the most interested country. As we saw in last year's *Milestones* (ch 5) the first visit Medvedev made to the west was to Germany, and this was one of many topics they discussed. Again the two leaders met in St Petersburg and this was one of the items on the agenda. It was discussed at a conference President Sarkozy called in Oct 2008 and a month later Sarkozy was calling for a summit meeting to discuss these ideas. Then in February 2009, it was Angela Merkel who was calling for Russia to be more involved in Europe's security.

“Russia is also part of Europe,” said Merkel, speaking at the 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy on Saturday. “Therefore, relations with Russia are of extraordinary importance.”

Merkel also said that the European Union should pay attention to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev’s proposal for a regional pact for Europe that included Moscow.

In a joint article last week, Merkel and Sarkozy wrote in *Le Monde*, “We want a closer political and security dialogue between the EU and Russia, enabling her to play a more proactive role in the Euro-Atlantic security area.” *The Trumpet* 10-2-09

Then in November 2009, Medvedev published on his official website, details of his proposals, which took in more than a Russian-European Peace pact, but one that included America! Headed **European Security Treaty** it set out a 4 page framework for such an agreement, but indicated that it would welcome participation from NATO and anyone “between Vancouver and Vladivostok”.

Russia published on 29 November its proposal for a new Euro-Atlantic security treaty that would restrict its ability to use military force unilaterally if the United States and its European allies agreed to do the same.

Medvedev said Russia envisaged a pan-European security treaty that could be joined by all nations and groupings, including NATO, and “a list of rules for the future”.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said the European Security Treaty is needed to replace Cold War-era institutions like NATO that are ill-suited to defusing tensions in a multipolar world, but his proposals have received a muted reception in the West.

The document, published on the Kremlin web site, reaffirms the role of the United Nations Security Council, in which Russia has a veto, as the ultimate arbiter of international conflict. *EurActiv with Reuters* 30-11-09

It is hard to see America wanting to commit herself to Russia, but it is far easier to see an agreement, backed by France and Germany between the EU and Russia. Its effect would be to isolate America still further from Europe – a situation that has long been expected. Europe feels strong enough to be an equal partner with Russia.

“Russia’s slick oil pipeline will change world economy”

This was perhaps a slightly tongue-in-cheek headline in the business section of the *Sunday Telegraph* 27-12-09, but detailed the strong position that Russia was now in. In the past her pipelines had pointed westward, supplying the lucrative markets of Europe. This is no longer the case with the completion of the first section of the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline in Nov 2009.

Over the next few days, on Russia's Far Eastern coast, something will happen that will profoundly impact global politics, diplomacy and the future shape of the world economy.

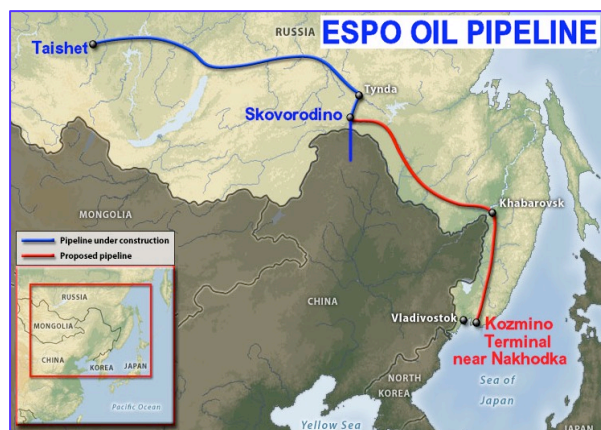
The new Kozmino sea terminal, close to Vladivostok and able to accommodate huge oil tankers, will swing into operation. The opening symbolizes the launch of a major new pipeline, connecting Russia's Eastern Siberian oil fields with fast-growing Asian markets, not least China.

Russia's existing energy export pipelines point West – and are focused on supplying Europe. But that's about to change. Linking East Siberia's vast reserves with the Pacific Ocean, the first 2,700km branch of the new ESPO pipeline also opens this week. So from now on, Russia will be able to diversify crude exports away from traditional Western markets and focus on meeting Asia's near-insatiable energy needs, not least via tankers docking at Kozmino.

Most significantly of all, this first phase of ESPO means Russia can pump oil to within just a few kilometres of China's border. Moscow and Beijing recently signed a head-spinning \$100bn (£63bn) crude supply deal, with Russia pledging to quench China's massive oil thirst for the next 20 years.

ESPO is what political strategists might call a "game-changer". It means Russia will be able to send its oil either east or west – so can drive a harder

bargain when selling crude to Europe. Alongside the ESPO oil pipeline, the Russians are constructing a gas pipeline too – due to open in 2012. That will similarly alter the power balance of gas negotiations, at a time when Western Europe is becoming ever more reliant on Russian gas.



The new 2,750km pipeline terminates at the moment at Skovorodino. The 2,100 km extension to the port of Nakhodka near Vladivostok is planned for completion in 2014. A short branch line from Skovorodino into northern China should be completed next year. In preparation for the

completion of the pipeline, Russia has already completed the terminal port at Kozmino, near Nakhodka. This was opened by Mr Putin 28th December. Until the pipeline extension is completed, huge trains each carrying nearly 5,000 tonnes of oil in 82 tankers will move the oil from Skovorodino to Kozmino. They hope to transport 40,000 tonnes a day! From Kozmino the oil will then be shipped to Chinese ports.

In April Russia and China signed a deal for the supply of 300 million tonnes of oil over the next 20 years. As part of the deal China is loaning \$25bn to be used to complete the ESPO pipeline.

Germany approves Nord Stream Pipeline

Meanwhile over in the West the very expensive 1,223 km Nord-Stream pipeline has passed the majority of the approvals from the governments affected by its route. The Germans gave the final part of their approval on the 28th December, leaving only the 2nd part of the Finnish permit outstanding.

“We are firmly on schedule to start construction of the pipeline in spring 2010 and to transporting gas in 2011”, said Nord Stream’s managing Director Matthias Warnig. *Nord-stream.com* 28-12-09

It will link Germany directly with Russia and make Germany Russia’s onward distribution hub. It is scheduled to carry 55 bn m³ of gas a year. It will boost Germany’s economy and give Germany great power over the onward destinations of the gas. Deals have already been agreed - before the pipeline has been built - to supply gas companies in France, Germany and the UK.

Berlin and Moscow working together

The German leader, Angela Merkel, not only speaks fluent Russian, but understands the Russian mind, having lived in East Germany, behind the Iron Curtain, for the first 33 years of her life. She is keen to see a growth in the considerable economic linkage between the two countries. Germany has much to offer Russia by way of heavy machinery and Russia is her main source of energy. It puts Germany in a strong position and helps her in her plan for Germany to be the leader of the EU.

The scheme to purchase the Opel subsidiary of General Motors would have brought great benefits to the German car industry, opening up the huge Russian market, but the deal fell through eventually when General Motors decided not to sell off her European arm. A Russian car maker with the backing of a Russian bank working with a Canadian car parts firm would have bought Opel, assisted by heavy subsidies on the part of Germany to avoid extensive layoffs from the Opel factories in Germany.

Germany and Russia will benefit “if our potential is united”

Stratfor 11-6-09 reported under the headline **Berlin Warms Up To Moscow**, the warm ties between the two countries.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier is in Moscow, on a charm offensive with key members of the Russian leadership: his direct counterpart, Sergei Lavrov; President Dmitri Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Asked to describe relations between the two countries, Steinmeier said, “Russia is an indispensable partner for Germany and the European Union,” and remarked on “German-Russian cooperation as a model of interaction, so that both sides will benefit if our potential is united.”

One cannot fault the rest of the world if it takes in Steinmeier’s comments with a bit of apprehension: The last time Germany and Russia “united their potential,” the result was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which carved up Eastern Europe between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich in 1939. Furthermore, the warming between Russia and Germany comes after a tense set of meetings between U.S. President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, which occurred during ceremonies marking the 65th anniversary of D-Day. That encounter made painfully plain the emerging fissures between the two allies — on everything from how to address the financial crisis to how to deal with Opel, the subsidiary of troubled U.S. automaker General Motors.

Germany and Russia to develop a common school textbook

In July was the 9th Petersburg Summit, where Russia and Germany meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. Alternating between the two countries, this meeting was in Munich.

The results of the two-day Petersburg Dialogue conference were presented. Around 300 delegates from both countries had been debating how Germany and Russia could tackle the current economic crisis together. Ideas like the creation of a joint German-Russian commission for fighting corruption were discussed. In addition, there were also concrete successes to celebrate, such as the foundation of a German-Russian energy agency and Berlin’s commitment to provide guarantees for German exports to Russia as part of a €500 million scheme.

The two sides also agreed to develop a common school textbook together. Work on the project is set to begin later this year. If anything concrete comes out of the efforts, it will be a remarkable success. Russians and Germans currently have a very different view of their shared history. A common school textbook could help to promote mutual understanding between the two nations. *Spiegel* 17-7-09

A burgeoning relationship between Moscow and Berlin

Stratfor 17-7-09 gave an extra slant on the meeting.

The meeting produced talk of a Russian-German manufacturing alliance, a 500 million-euro (\$705 million) joint investment agreement, several business deals that included infrastructure and transportation development, and a lot of chatter on Europe’s energy issues, such as the

proposed Nord Stream and Nabucco natural gas pipelines. The business deals are further evidence of a burgeoning relationship between Moscow and Berlin that is evolving into more than just a partnership of convenience based on German imports of Russian natural gas.

More important than the nitty-gritty details of the talks (none of which were wholly unexpected) was the fact that the German and Russian leaders were meeting shortly after both met with U.S. President Barack Obama. If one was ignorant of Germany's status as an unwavering U.S. ally, with troops in Afghanistan and nearly 70 years of pro-American foreign policy, it might be tempting to conclude that Merkel and Medvedev were comparing notes on their visits with Obama — which could constitute a level of geopolitical coordination far more important than deals to build new rail cars. In other words, Berlin and Moscow could be seen as getting quite close to each other, to a degree that cannot be accounted for solely by Germany's energy dependence on Russia.

But this is exactly how ex-communist states in Central Europe perceive the relationship between Berlin and Moscow, precisely because they do not consider Germany to be a staunch and unwavering U.S. ally. In fact, Central European states — Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania — see much in German foreign policy that might be drifting away from the United States.

Moscow supports Merkel ahead of elections

The two leaders met for the third time in August to finalise a deal for a Russian shipyard to take over an ailing German shipyard, saving 1,600 jobs out of a total of 2,500 — an important consideration ahead of the German elections in September.

“Moscow is trying to help Angela Merkel and one of the reasons is because her position is extremely important for the fate of Gazprom's Nord Stream project.” *Kommersant* 14-8-09

Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Russia Friday and both called for deeper economic ties amid talk of several major Russian-German industrial deals in the works.

“We should think how, by strengthening our bilateral economic strategic ties, we could help our economies and people overcome consequences of this difficult global crisis and emerge stronger,” Medvedev said.

“I believe that we need to use every chance that the global financial crisis offers to develop the Russian-German economic relations,” the German chancellor said. *thelocal.de* 14-8-09

Berlin-Moscow Economic Axis

Following Merkel's election the expectations were that the ties would continue to strengthen even more. The *German Foreign Policy* 1-10-09 ran

a long article on the strength of the ties between the two countries – here are three points.

All Time High. The continual rise in the economic significance of the German - Russian cooperation can be clearly seen in the commerce and investment statistics. In 2008, the German - Russian foreign trade volume grew by a well above average 19.8% to more than 68 billion Euros, placing Russia, for the first time, ahead of Poland, as Germany's leading trading partner in Eastern Europe. German exports reached a volume of 32.3 billion Euros, just under the export volume to the much more populous China (34 billion Euros). According to Russian statistics, more than 6,000 German companies are registered in Russia, who had invested US \$17.4 billion by the end of 2008. But the true volume of investments is significantly higher, due to the fact that a large portion of German investments are transacted over third countries, such as Austria or the Netherlands.

Motor of Growth. The long-term sustained growth of German-Russian as well as German East European trade stands in sharp contrast to the development of transatlantic business relations. The German-East European trade volume has more than doubled over the past five years and last year rose to 307 billion Euros - with a German foreign trade surplus of 25 billion Euros. This region accounts for 17 percent of German foreign trade, while German-US commodity exchange amounts to just 6.5 percent. Even the booming China accounts for merely five percent. The trade volume between Germany and the USA sank not only in relative terms but also in absolute numbers, from 126.5 billion Euros in 2006, to 117.5 billion in 2008. With the opening up of Eastern Europe, 20 years ago, an "unprecedented success story" began, this region is the German industry's "decisive driving force of growth".

New Point of Focus. A new point of focus for expansion is the Russian agriculture and food sector. Russia, which has more arable land than all EU nations together, has recently declared the modernization of its dilapidated agriculture a strategic development objective, earmarking nearly 20 billion Euros in subsidies for this purpose until 2012. Not only the numerous agro-technological companies (seed, agro-technology, plant protection), who have been active in Russia for years will benefit from these subsidies, also the German agro-engineering industry that delivered 750 million worth of goods to Russia last year - an increase of 20 percent. In all, German companies delivered 2.7 billion Euros worth of agricultural products in 2007 to Russia, which has contributed to the fact that Germany now ranks third on the world scale - behind the USA and the Netherlands - in the export of agricultural goods.

EU-Russian relations

Twice a year there is a meeting between the leaders and officials of both sides to discuss matters of mutual concern. The May meeting in Russia

took place in the far east of Russia, giving an opportunity to show the European leaders and their spouses a part of Russia not normally visited by westerners.

Some commentators said that the venue, Khabarovsk, located 8,000 km away from Brussels and 30 km from the Chinese border, was intended to underline the vast stretch of Russia's domain. *New Europe* 4-10-09

The meeting in fact turned a bit tense. Russia felt threatened by the EU's new eastern partnership with former Soviet countries and the EU was insisting that Russia join the WTO before they would look at Russia's strategic partnership plans.

EU trade commissioner Catherine Ashton told Reuters that Brussels will not sign a new strategic pact with Russia unless it enters the World Trade Organisation (WTO) first, a condition that would require Russia to lift tariffs on Siberian overflights, timber exports and imports of cars, steel and milk. *New Europe* 4-10-09

The November meeting in Stockholm went better.

The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, has emerged from the 24th EU-Russia summit in the Swedish capital describing it as "one of the best meetings we have had."

There was genuine relief among EU leaders – reciprocated, to an extent, by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev – that the downward spiral in the relationship of the last few years appears now to have been brought to a halt.

The two sides come closest to sharing common ground on energy cooperation, where they are "partners of necessity," to quote Medvedev. Russia is the EU's biggest supplier, while the EU is Russia's biggest customer.

But Russia keeps fending off EU attempts to put the relationship on a purely commercially regulated basis – preferably within the new EU-Russia partnership accord, which is in the process of being negotiated. *Radio Free Europe* 18-11-09

We now move away from Europe and Russia to start our section on Israel and the Middle East by looking at Israel's remarkable economy.

Chapter 10:

ISRAEL'S GROWING PROSPERITY

Israel's relations with the world have deteriorated during the year, she is despised and hated by most nations, as we shall see in the next chapter. There has been a bright side, one of great encouragement to "watchmen on Jerusalem's walls" (Isa 62:6), that of Israel's growing prosperity. It is hard to realise how recent a phenomena this has been. We look briefly at the reason why we are expecting this and then look at encouraging signs in her economic development.

The scriptural basis for an economically strong Israel

The chief passage that describes the situation is Israel, prior to the Gogian invasion, is in Ezekiel 38.

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? Eze 38:13

Couched in the language of Ezekiel's day we can see that silver, gold, cattle and goods represent prosperity. Israel has long ceased being big in agriculture, a shortage of water has meant that she has had to turn to other ways of prospering. She is a world leader in agricultural research – her products and ideas are used around the world. She is a leader in plant breeding, finding drought and disease resistant varieties. But it is in the world of "high tech" that she has really prospered in recent years. Israel has encouraged "out of the box" thinking. She has had to be 2 steps ahead of her enemies and this has led to many innovative solutions which she now exports.

Israel's economic transformation

A book entitled *The Israel Test* by George Gilder was published in 2009. He paints the transformation in Israel's economy in recent years. He wrote a summary of his ideas in an article for the *New York City Journal* Summer 2009, where he links the rise of Israel's fortunes to Mr Netanyahu.

As I investigated companies like Camero, it became clear to me that Israel had achieved an economic miracle that was important to the United States and to the world. As late as the mid-1980s, Israel was a basket case, with inflation rates spiking from 400 percent to nearly 1,000 percent by early 1985. As recently as 1990, Israel was a relatively insignificant technology force, aside from a few military and agricultural initiatives. Yet in little more than a decade, the country has become an engine of global technology progress. Still more important, Israel's technology leadership has made it a vital ally of the United States

against a global movement of jihadist terror. How did it make such an astonishing leap?

For all the achievements of Israelis working for Intel and other foreign firms, Israel's native technology sector languished. Redemption came in unexpected forms. One was an infusion of genius: nearly a million immigrants, chiefly from the Soviet Union, whom Israel absorbed in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Impelled by constant harassment from the U.S. government—including Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson's emancipation amendment, which for a decade was attached to any American legislation of interest to the USSR—the Soviet government finally agreed to a frontal lobotomy of its economy. Under Gorbachev, it released the bulk of the Soviet Jews, who had continued, despite constant oppression, to supply many of the technical skills that kept the USSR afloat as a superpower.

The influx of Soviet Jews into Israel represented a 25 percent population increase in ten years, a tsunami of new arrivals that would be equivalent to the entire population of France being accepted into the United States. Largely barred in the USSR from owning land or businesses, many of these Jews had honed their minds into keen instruments of algorithmic science, engineering, and mathematics. Most had wanted to come to America but were diverted to Israel by an agreement between Israel and the United States. Few knew Hebrew or saw a need for it. At best, they were ambivalent Zionists. But many were ferociously smart, fervently anti-Communist, and disdainful of their new country's bizarre commitment to a socialist ethos that punished achievement.

At the same time as the flood of Soviet immigrants, a smaller but seminal wave of Americans arrived in Israel from such companies as IBM and Bell Laboratories, with knowledge of Silicon Valley and an interest in opportunities in Israel. Capping off and funding these catalytic outsiders was a generation of eminent American retirees who arrived in Israel with billions of dollars of available capital, petawatts of imperious brainpower, a practiced disdain for bureaucratic pettifogs, and Olympian confidence in their own judgment and capabilities.

Mix the leadership of these dynamic capitalists with a million restive and insurgent Soviets, and the reaction was economically incandescent. Today, immigrants from the former Soviet Union constitute fully half of Israel's high-tech workers.

In the mid-1980s, Yitzhak Shamir's Likud government, with Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu as its United Nations ambassador, did cut taxes—increasing the rewards of work and investment by some 30 percent, dramatically boosting economic growth, and reducing inflation. As prime minister in the 1990s, Netanyahu also ushered in dramatic deregulation, along with tax cuts that brought in floods of new revenue. Further spurring local entrepreneurs was the Yozma program in 1993,

which waived double taxation on foreign venture-capital investments in Israel and put up a matching fund of \$100 million from the government. Demand for the money became so intense that the government hiked the amount and doubled the matching-funds requirement.

The force driving the Israelis decisively out of their socialist slough into the modern world of finance was once again the ingenuity of Netanyahu. As finance minister, Netanyahu used the financial crisis of 2003 and 2004, precipitated by the latest campaign of Palestinian terror, as a lever to transform Israel's economy from a largely socialized domain dependent on foreign finance into one of the world's most open and flourishing financial systems. In the process, he created what occasional advisor Keinan today calls "the greatest opportunity in our lifetimes."

In under 25 years—starting from those first modest tax reforms of the mid-1980s—Israel has accomplished the most overwhelming transformation in the history of economics, from a nondescript laggard in the industrial world to a luminous first. Today, on a per-capita basis, Israel *far* leads the world in research and technological creativity. Between 1991 and 2000, even before the big reform of 2005, Israel's annual venture-capital outlays, nearly all private, rose nearly 60-fold, from \$58 million to \$3.3 billion; companies launched by Israeli venture funds rose from 100 to 800; and Israel's information-technology revenues rose from \$1.6 billion to \$12.5 billion. By 1999, Israel ranked second only to the United States in invested private-equity capital as a share of GDP. And it led the world in the share of its growth attributable to high-tech ventures: 70 percent. Today, Israel's tech supremacy is even greater. A 2008 survey of the world's venture capitalists by Deloitte & Touche showed that in six key fields—telecom, microchips, software, biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, and clean energy—Israel ranked second only to the United States in technological innovation. Germany, ten times larger, roughly tied Israel. In 2008, Israel produced 483 venture-backed companies with just over \$2 billion invested; Germany produces approximately 100 venture-backed companies annually. The rankings registered absolute performance, but adjusted for its population, Israel comes in far ahead of all other countries, including the United States.

Netanyahu's vision is an Israel that, as a global financial center, could transform the economics of the Middle East. Israel could become a Hong Kong of the desert. Just as Hong Kong ultimately reshaped the Chinese economy in its own image when Deng Xiaoping mimicked its free economy, Israel could become a force for economic liberation in the Middle East, reaching out to Palestinians and other Arabs with the blandishments of commercial opportunity. After all, it has long been Israeli enterprise that has attracted Arabs to Palestine. Between 1967, when Israel took over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 1987, when the first intifada erupted, those two territories were one of the fastest-

growing economies on earth. GDP surged 30 percent a year for a decade, the Arab population nearly tripled, six new universities were launched, and Arab longevity jumped from 43 years to 74.

Netanyahu has long believed that the peace process as we know it is irrelevant, focused on a handful of issues that breed anger and perpetuate conflict. Meanwhile, true peace—and the promise of a decent life—lies waiting to be picked up by those Palestinians and Israelis who are willing, and now increasingly able, to invest in creation over destruction.

What is so interesting is the role that the ex-Soviet Jews have played in this revival. There are more ex-patriot Jews in Israel than anywhere else in the world! What an attractive spoil it would be to Russia to seize these high tech experts to take back to serve her own needs.

Israel leads the world

There have been numerous articles recently indicating the world lead that Israel now enjoys in so many fields. Bear in mind that Israel's population size ranks her 96 out of 223 countries; just over $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1% (0.11%) of the world's population lives here! Here are some extracts.

The advances in military hardware make Israel the envy of the world's military forces. Israel leads the world in military technology, her satellites are much lighter, her robots more advanced, her ability to present pictures of the enemies movements in real time are second to none. She has also developed a light source which can penetrate walls so that using a small computer, an Israeli soldier can see the enemy inside a building, without the light source being visible!

Israel one of most scientific nations

Israel is the fourth most scientifically active nation in the world, according to data compiled by Israel's Council of Higher Education and presented on Monday at Bar-Ilan University.

Israel placed just behind Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark for the number of scientific publications per million citizens.

By comparison, the US ranked number 12 on the list for scientific activity. *Israel Today* 17-11-09

Israel is Taking the Lead in Health Tech

The star of innovation, Israel is rising in the global health sector.

Having already mastered telecommunications and defense, analysts say health could be the next big thing for the Israeli high tech industry.

"Israel is a very advanced innovation hub," Sherif El Diwany, head of the Middle East & Arab Business Council of the World Economic Forum told The Media Line at the conference. "It is the number two innovation center in the world according to our studies."

The World Economic Forum, based in Geneva, is known for its annual summit in Davos, Switzerland, attracting the elite of the global business community. Over 1000 companies worldwide are members of the forum, 10 of them Israeli. *MidEast News Line* 16-12-09

Israel Becoming Patent Hub

Israel's patent friendly legal system, its abundance of lawyers and its high rate of innovation are turning the country into a patent hub. *MidEast News Line* 18-12-09

Israel plunges into water technology

"Israel is definitely one of the leaders, if not the leader, when it comes to water. ... I think of Israel as the Silicon Valley of water," said Shawn Lesser, president of Sustainable World Capital, an Atlanta investment group that focuses on clean energy and water technology companies.

Only recently has Israel begun to realize the enormous opportunities of exporting its technology.

Israel's Trade Ministry hopes the country can export \$2.5 billion in water technology in 2011, a jump from \$1.4 billion last year and \$750 million two years earlier.

"We're emphasizing growth in all sectors of water technology – drip irrigation, desalination, conservation, wastewater - everything," said Oded Distel, director of the ministry's national water technology program. *Associated Press* 17-12-09

Israel stocks recommended until 'dust settles' in Dubai

Sustained by its resilient currency and strong economic performance, Israeli shares are expected to beat other rising stocks, at least until Dubai's "dust settles," according to Bank of America-Merrill Lynch in a report released on Monday. Dubai's stocks have nosedived ever since the government declared that Dubai World may put off paying debts of \$59 billion, a downturn that has affected other regional indexes. "Israel has never had the political opportunity to invest in Dubai. As a result, despite its geographical proximity, neither Israel nor Israeli companies have any material direct or indirect exposure to Dubai or the United Arab Emirates," analyst Haim Israel wrote in the report. In the third quarter, the Israeli economy has grown at a rate of 2.2% annualized after expanding 0.8% in the prior three months, its first jump in half a year. *ICEJ* 1-12-09

Barclays: Israel's economy ready to roar

Israel's economy is "ready to roar", according to Barclays Capital analysts Daniel Hewitt, Koon Chow, and Arko Sen. Finding that Israel passed through the global recession with only light damage, the analysts say the economy is ready to resume growing.

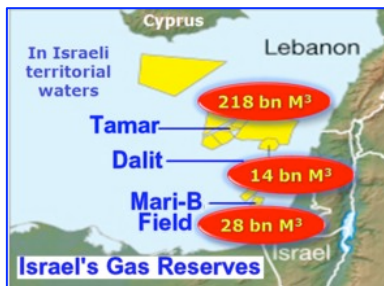
The analysts see three main reasons why Israel made it through the recession better than other economies. Israel's financial sector was not as vulnerable, "radical" monetary loosening by the Bank of Israel limited a decline in domestic demand, and that decline was also offset by improvements in net exports.

Barclays expects Israel's real GDP to grow 2.9% in 2010 and by 3.1% in 2011. *Globes* 10-12-09

Israel 'Super Gas' Field is World's Largest since Jan 2008

After years of searching Israel has found substantial reserves of natural gas, with the potential of making Israel economically independent of other countries for energy supplies. Indeed Israel could be a lucrative energy exporter!

The Mari-B Field has been supplying gas to Israel since 2003; its reserves are estimated at 28 bn M³. In 2008 drilling started in the Tamar field and in January 2009 it was announced that substantial amounts of gas had been found. "This is one of the biggest finds ever, and could even turn Israel into a natural gas exporting country" predicted one of the drilling consortiums. As the year went on the estimates continued to climb. This is the biggest gas field to have been discovered since Jan 2008. Estimates are put at 218 bn M³.



The Tamar gas field, 50 miles off the Haifa coast, keeps getting bigger with every report, and the gas discovery now is estimated to be the world's largest in 18 months. The Scotland-based Wood Mackenzie research and consulting firm assessed the value of the field at \$8 billion, approximately double that of local analysts.

Changing gas prices could make the gas worth anywhere between \$3.5-\$17 billion in the future, and partners in the offshore project are preparing for the first deliveries of gas in 2012. An era in which Israel will be more self-sufficient in energy needs also will help make the shekel more attractive. Cheaper foreign currencies will help lower the price of imports for consumers but could cause further problems for the exporters, whose profits are dented after income in dollars and euros is exchanged for shekels. *A7 News* 26-8-09

Reports of gas finds from the smaller Dalit field were announced in March, with estimated reserves of 14 bn M³.

Meanwhile drilling has started for oil around the Dead Sea and in December it was announced that "significant quantities" of oil were found in a well in the area of Rosh HaAyin, to the NE of Tel Aviv.

These are truly exciting times for those looking for a prosperous Israel fit to be a spoil to the Gogian forces. Russia, as the world's largest energy exporter by far, has sought to control as much as she can of the supplies. Israel's finds would be an attractive possession.

Israel closes decade with population of 7.5 million

At the close of the first decade of the third millennium, Israel has 7.5 million residents, including 5.7 million Jews (75% of the population) and 1.5 million Arabs (20% of the population). The remaining 319,000 residents are made up of Christians and followers of other religions.

Among those contributing to the population increase are 14,500 immigrants who moved to Israel in 2009, a slight climb from 2008.

The population of Israel has grown at a steady rate of 1.8% every year since 2003. *Haaretz* 30-12-09

Jerusalem woman leaves behind 1,400 descendants

Israel Today 21-9-09 reported that a 99-year-old Jerusalem lady had just died, leaving behind an estimated 1,400 direct descendants!

She and her husband, who were married in 1929, took seriously the biblical commandment to "be fruitful and multiply," and had 11 children. Each of them were blessed with large families, totaling more than 150 grandchildren for the couple.

Those grandchildren went on to have some 1,000 offspring, who in turn have provided at least several hundred great-great-grandchildren.

With much longer lives before the Flood, it is easy to see that the population of the earth by Noah's day could have been very large indeed.

Building Peace in the West Bank

We now turn to the remarkable changes in the economy of the Palestinians living in the West Bank. The Israeli government has been pursuing a path of peace from the ground up. The futility of peace talks with Arabs, whose only desire is to see Israel driven into the sea, has been clear to see. Netanyahu especially has been a strong advocate of increasing the Palestinians' living standards so they are not interested in spoiling it all with war. Throughout the year there has been a steady stream of articles describing the transformation in the West Bank, since the Israeli military, assisting US trained Palestinian police forces, have rooted out terrorist strongholds in the region. The transformation has been remarkable.

Israel has virtually stopped doing any work on the building of the security barrier since the start of 2008. What has been built has been very successful in stopping terrorist attacks, and the situation on the ground has meant that only around 490 km. of the planned 805 km. barrier have been finished.

Many hundreds of road blocks have been removed and checkpoints dismantled. Crossing points have been opened for longer hours and travel

conditions for the Palestinians have eased considerably in return for the dramatic reduction in terrorist offences. This has been a big boost for trade; instead of having to travel to Jordan for luxury goods, shopping malls have sprung up in many West Bank towns. Here is a typical report of life now for these Palestinians as seen through the eyes of the *Wall Street Journal* correspondent, Tom Gross on Dec. 2nd 2009.

A promising, independent Palestine is quietly being developed, with Israeli assistance.

It is difficult to turn on a TV or radio or pick up a newspaper these days, without finding some pundit or other deploring the dismal prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace or the dreadful living conditions of the Palestinians. Even supposedly neutral news reporters regularly repeat this sad tale. “Very little is changing for the Palestinian people on the ground,” I heard BBC World Service Cairo correspondent Christian Fraser tell listeners three times in a 45 minute period the other evening.

In fact nothing could be further from the truth. I had spent that day in the West Bank’s largest city, Nablus. The city is bursting with energy, life and signs of prosperity, in a way I have not previously seen in many years of covering the region.

As I sat in the plush office of Ahmad Aweidah, the suave British-educated banker who heads the Palestinian Securities Exchange, he told me that the Nablus stock market was the second best-performing in the world so far in 2009, after Shanghai. (Aweidah’s office looks directly across from the palatial residence of Palestinian billionaire Munib al-Masri, the wealthiest man in the West Bank.)

Later I met Bashir al-Shakah, director of Nablus’s gleaming new cinema, where four of the latest Hollywood hits were playing that day. Most movies were sold out, he noted, proudly adding that the venue had already hosted a film festival since it opened in June.

Wandering around downtown Nablus the shops and restaurants I saw were full. There were plenty of expensive cars on the streets. Indeed I counted considerably more BMWs and Mercedes than I’ve seen, for example, in downtown Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

And perhaps most importantly of all, we had driven from Jerusalem to Nablus without going through any Israeli checkpoints. The government of Benjamin Netanyahu has removed them all since the Israeli security services were allowed, over recent years, to crush the intifada, restore security to the West Bank and set up the conditions for the economic boom that is now occurring. (There was one border post on the return leg of the journey, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, but the young guard just waved me and the two Palestinians I was traveling with, through.)

He wrote of the large villas being built in booming Hebron; the difficulty in finding a restaurant table in busy Ramallah, of new towns being built; of

markets full with produce using Israeli help and technology to grow them; of an economy that has boomed 7% or - was it really 11% - in 2009. He commented too on Gaza: -

In Gaza too, the shops and markets are crammed with food and goods. But while photos from last Friday's Palestine Today newspaper, for example, depict sumptuous Eid celebrations, these are not the pictures you are ever likely to see on the BBC or Le Monde or the New York Times. No, Gaza is not like a "concentration camp," nor is the "humanitarian crisis in Gaza is on the scale of Darfur," as British journalist Lauren Booth (who is also Tony Blair's sister-in-law) has said.

He explained what is quietly taking place on the ground: -

Nablus stock exchange head Ahmad Aweidah went further in explaining to me why there is no rush to declare statehood, saying ordinary Palestinians need the IDF to help protect them from Hamas, as their own security forces aren't ready to do so by themselves yet.

The truth is that an independent Palestine is now quietly being built, with Israeli assistance. So long as the Obama administration and European politicians don't clumsily meddle as they have in the past and make unrealistic demands for the process to be completed more quickly than it can be, I am confident the outcome will be a positive one.

Israelis and Palestinians may never agree on borders that will satisfy everyone. But that doesn't mean they won't live in peace. Not all Germans and French agree who should control Alsace Lorraine. Poles and Russians, Slovenes and Croats, Britons and Irish, and peoples all over the world, have border disputes. But that doesn't keep them from coexisting with one another.

There have been many similar stories, for example Kalkilya was the focus of bomb making and terrorism but a new program is aiming to turn this Palestinian city into the strawberry capital of the West Bank, using Israeli guidance, equipment and marketing skills. Or the 1,000 new housing units being built in Jenin – a former terrorist hotspot, but now peaceful and thriving.

Of course it could all be cut short if the Arab leaders called for another intifada and the people responded. Interestingly when such a call was made in October following rioting on the Temple Mount, the Palestinians ignored such a call; they did not want to throw away their gains. Prosperity changes one's outlook!

From this bright picture we turn to the political situation, where Israel is despised by the world's nations.

Chapter 11:

ISRAEL'S UNEASY RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD

And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. *Zech 12:3*

Is this not the kind of picture we see – the majority of nations despising Israel and refusing to accept that this is their homeland? In all sorts of situations we have seen Israel struggling to defend its every action before a hostile world. The year started with Operation Cast Lead still raging from its commencement on December 27th and it was to run until Jan 18th. This brought the wrath of the world against Israel, with the kind of biased reporting that Israel had experienced in the Lebanon War in 2006. The subsequent UN Goldstone report was used to isolate Israel still more.

Add to this the pressure from a less sympathetic American President taking office on 24th Jan determined to make his mark on the Middle East situation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular.

The year started too with Olmert as a disgraced Prime Minister, retaining office until a new government could be elected which took some time after the voting had been completed in February due to the complex Israeli system – Netanyahu succeeded Olmert on March 31st.

First let's set out very briefly our attitude to Israel.

Israel – what should be our attitude?

For mainstream Christianity, Israel is not a special people. They had their opportunity, but in rejecting their Messiah they have been cast off. For some in the brotherhood this would sum up their attitude too. But is this right, is this God's attitude? A balanced reading of God's Word indicates that although they have been cast off, they have been punished for what they did. That punishment was designed by God to change their national character. Two millennia of persecution have kept alive the hope of a homeland. That became a reality in 1948.

They now face their final trial with one more coming destruction at the hands of their enemies. That trial will purge out the majority who are living in the land – a fearful prospect from a human point of view, but it will reveal a remnant in Israel who, though still blind to the truth about their Messiah, will put their trust in the God of Jacob in their hour of trial. Their eyes will be opened when they see in the hands and feet of their deliverer the marks of crucifixion. They will be deeply repentant and will have their sins washed away as they are baptised into Christ.

As Paul reminds his readers: -

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.
Rom 11:25-27

Although the current Israel government is as far from God as most governments, we have been called as watchmen on Jerusalem's walls, to seek the day of Israel's peace.

We start our section with a review of the Operation Cast Lead battle in Gaza.

Israel wins the War, loses the PR battle

Israel took every care to minimise civilian casualties, dropping leaflets to warn of an attack, or even delivering a cell phone message to move out of the area whilst she targeted Hamas' command structure. With Hamas using civilian houses, schools and mosques to store weapons and to fire rockets at Israel, this was no easy task. The level of civilian casualties is widely disputed – Israel was able to show later that many that Hamas claimed to be civilians were in fact part of Hamas. Although Israel used precision weapons, much damage was caused by secondary explosions when the Hamas' weapon stores were hit.

Western reporters had to rely on Palestinian handlers for much of their information. Israel was often able to show the falseness of many of the claims against her, but as happened in the Lebanon War, it was too late; the damage had been done to Israel's reputation. The fact that Hamas had for years been indiscriminately firing rockets at Israeli civilians was ignored in what was claimed as Israel's disproportionate use of force.

At the end of 2009 on the anniversary of the commencement of the war, Hamas organised a rally in commemoration, but few Palestinians in Gaza bothered to turn up. The press still depicts the abject poverty of those in Gaza, yet pictures speak otherwise. The sister of Cherie Blair, Tony Blair's wife, hit the headlines with her well published blockade running trip to Gaza. Pictures of her shopping in well stocked shops didn't quite match her claims for the desperate plight of the people of Gaza! Interestingly in November, the Gaza website www.paltoday.com/arabic/News-64161.htm displayed over 30 pictures showing crowded shopping malls, market stalls groaning under the weight of fruit, well stocked clothes shops and food shops. This Arabic site was commemorating how well they are on the eve of the Muslim festival of Eid. The English version of their website is quite different, carrying a "heart-rending" story of a lady waiting for her father to be released in the prisoner swap for Gilad Shalit, and no sign of those 30 pictures!

Israeli elections

These are nearly always a bit of a nightmare because of the electoral system that Israel uses. At least Israel has free and fair elections, which is more than the vast majority of Middle East countries! The elections on Feb 10th brought an unexpected whisker thin majority for Tzipi Livni's Kadima party who won 28 seats, with Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party with 27 seats. Labor was pushed into 4th place with just 13 seats, overtaken by the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is our Home) party led by Avigdor Lieberman, with 15 seats. But this was just the start of the election process. The Knesset has 120 seats, so a leader has to pull together a coalition of other parties to ensure at least 61 seats to make a viable government. Shimon Peres, the Israeli President, called upon Netanyahu to form a government. Although Livni had one more seat, she had tried the previous autumn to form a coalition in order to avoid calling these elections, but failed to find enough support.

After a long process, Netanyahu managed to get a collection of parties together to give him 69 seats, without Livni's Kadima party, who refused to join. The new government took office on March 31st 2009. This was Netanyahu's second time as Prime Minister. He is the first Israeli prime Minister to be born after the State of Israel was formed in 1948.

Born in Tel Aviv, his family moved to the US when he was 14, returning to Israel after he had graduated. In 1982 he was appointed as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, and subsequently as Israel's Ambassador to the UN from 1984-1988. He returned and entered parliament in 1988. He was Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999, during which time he was involved in the failed 1998 Wye River Accords, negotiating with Yasser Arafat and Bill Clinton. From 2003 to 2005 he was Finance Minister in Sharon's government.

His background qualified him for the task of leading Israel in the difficult aftermath of the Gaza War, the financial crisis and the renewed Peace Talks.

His first problem was dealing with the demands put upon Israel regarding the settlements by Obama, who seemed to ignore past acceptance of some Israeli expansion of settlements to cope with natural growth. Israeli settlers tend to have large families, which demands extra accommodation. Obama's administration stuck firmly to a complete cessation of building on the West Bank and Jerusalem. This was further than Netanyahu was prepared to go. Jerusalem was their capital, and interference from other countries as to what they could or could not do, was not acceptable. He eventually did agree to a 10 month freeze on any new permissions being granted for new building in the West Bank, existing projects that had already started were excluded.

Netanyahu knew the futility of the Peace Talks; Hamas openly and Fatah not quite so openly see the end game being the total eradication of the State

of Israel! Hamas refuses to amend her charter and Fatah's charter too calls for Israel's destruction

Article 19: "Armed struggle is a strategy and not a tactic, and the Palestinian Arab People's armed revolution is a decisive factor in the liberation fight and in uprooting the Zionist existence, and this struggle will not cease unless the Zionist state is demolished and Palestine is completely liberated." *Fatah website*

The Palestinians have had several opportunities to establish their own state, but have not taken it up; was it because that would have given tacit agreement to Israel's right to a homeland?

UN against Israel

Virtually ever since the UN agreed to Israel being set up, it has devoted an inordinate amount of time in condemning Israel's action. In spite of gross atrocities around the world, UN resolution after UN resolution is targeted at little Israel. The Goldstone report was no exception. Even its author complained of the biased way his report had been used.

"This draft resolution saddens me . . . there is not a single phrase in the UN resolution condemning Hamas as we have done in the report. I hope the council can modify the text." *nydailynews.com* 29-11-09

The *Eye on the UN website* carries frequent articles on the extraordinary concentration on Israel. As it points out: -

The UN's discrimination against Israel is not a minor infraction, nor a parochial nuisance of interest solely to those concerned with equal rights of the Jewish people and the Jewish state. Instead, the world body's obsession with censuring Israel at every turn directly affects all citizens of the world, for it constitutes (a) a severe violation of the equality principles guaranteed by the UN Charter and underlying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and (b) a significant obstacle to the UN's ability to carry out its proper mandate.

None of this means Israel should be above the law. Every country, including every democracy, commits human rights violations, and states should be held to account accordingly, both domestically and internationally. Yet Israel does have the right to be treated equally under the law. The UN Charter and the rules of natural justice demand no less. It is legitimate for UN bodies to criticize Israel, but not when they do so unfairly, selectively, massively, sometimes exclusively, and always obsessively.

Likewise, it is perfectly legitimate to call attention to the rights of the Palestinian people and their often difficult conditions. But it is something else entirely to abuse their cause for the sole objective of scapegoating Israel and the Jewish people.

EU against Israel

The EU has an uneasy relationship with Israel. Although Israel has associate status with many of the EU institutions, generally the EU, like the rest of the world seeks to condemn Israel's actions. The maiden speech of Baroness Ashton, the new EU "Foreign Minister", to the EU Parliament was used to knock Israel.

"East Jerusalem is occupied territory together with the West Bank. The EU is opposed to the destruction of homes, the eviction of Arab residents and the construction of the separation barrier," she told MEPs, characterizing Israel's move to impose a 10-month freeze on Jewish settlement expansion outside the city as only "a first step."

"We're deeply concerned about daily living conditions of people in Gaza," she said of Israel's blockade of aid shipments. "Israel should reopen the crossings without delay." *UPI* 16-12-09

She also queried the effectiveness of the role of the Quartet (US, EU, UN & Russia) in dealing with these matters.

The churches against Israel

The Vatican has a long history of opposition to the State of Israel, but so do many of the evangelical churches, seeing no purpose in God's plan with Israel; the promises to the Jewish fathers have been inherited by "the church" and Israel's role has finished. The majority of "christians" in Israel are Arab, and their leaders are mainly against Israel. This was demonstrated in a statement put out in December, bemoaning the situation for the Christians in Israel. There was no word of the fact that in Israel Christianity has grown, in sharp contrast to the West bank and Gaza where persecution has driven many to emigrate. There was no mention that in the pre-Christmas period, the Israeli authorities had taken extensive steps to make it as easy as possible for those wanting to visit Bethlehem.

In a lengthy declaration labelled as a message of "faith, hope and love," dozens of Arab Christian leaders from various churches represented in the region denounced Israel as the main obstacle to peace and rejected the validity of the biblical link between the Jews and the land.

Published on Friday by regional leaders of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican and Baptists churches, the document, titled "A Moment of Truth," lamented that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process had reached an impasse, and that there was now little hope of reversing "Palestinian suffering."

"We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land," read the statement.

“Today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people.”

Israel was solely blamed for the situation. In a section titled “The reality on the ground,” the Christian leaders listed the reasons peace had not been reached, including Israel’s security wall, the presence of Jews in Judea and Samaria, Israeli checkpoints, the jailing of Palestinian terrorists, and Israel’s control of a unified Jerusalem. *Israel Today* 11-12-09

The Vatican upsets Israel again

2009 marked the visit of Pope Benedict to the area in May. The Vatican had been hoping that Israel would have agreed by then to hand over various properties in Jerusalem and elsewhere which the Vatican claims a historic right to. Talks have been going on for many years about this matter as well as talks about the tax position of the income from the many church enterprises in Jerusalem. As the year ended the talks broke down again, Israel making it quite clear that there was no chance that control over these sites would be handed over.

Other matters have troubled Vatican-Israeli relations. Earlier in the year the Vatican lifted an excommunication ban against four ultra-traditionalist rebel bishops, one of whom, Bishop Richard Williamson, is a Holocaust denier.

In an interview with Swedish television conducted last November but broadcast last week, Williamson said that he believed that there were “no gas chambers.”

“Between 200,000-300,000 perished in Nazi concentration camps, but not one of them by gassing in a gas chamber,” he said, adding, “I believe that the historical evidence is hugely against 6 million having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler.” *A7 News* 25-1-09

Another matter causing upset was the unexpected inclusion of Pope Pius XII in the list of people that the Vatican had advanced the cause of their “sainthood”. He, along with John Paul II, are now declared “venerable” (worthy of veneration) – the first of three steps before becoming a “saint”. There has been long controversy over his role during WWII regarding the fate of the Jews. What had he done to save them from the gas-chambers?

The Peace talks – what talks?

We will look at Iran against Israel in next chapter. There is little to report on the progress of the Peace Talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Obama having set the preconditions that Israel must stop all settlement building on the West Bank and Jerusalem; provided the Palestinians the perfect excuse for them not to go any further with talks until Israel had complied. Although Netanyahu has travelled a long way to please Obama,

a Jerusalem freeze is a step too far, building work is still continuing. The Palestinians should on their part be renouncing violence, revising school text books and TV programmes that speak of eliminating Israel and that encourage martyrdom. These were commitments in the Oslo accords in 1993, but nothing seems to have been done; Obama has given them no incentive to change. So at the end of the year there has really been no progress to report.

The Vatican and the Arabs

The Vatican has a special diplomatic relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO); not having a country there can't be an Ambassador, so there is "an Office with a Director". Abbas visited the Pope in October – his third meeting. His predecessor Yasser Arafat met Pope John Paul II seven times, many more times than any other leader!

In April the Vatican signed an agreement with the League of Arab States, a regional organisation with 22 member states spanning North Africa and the Middle East.

"The agreement further consolidates the existing ties of collaboration between the Holy See and the League of Arab States, especially at a political and cultural level, in favour of peace, security and stability, both regionally and internationally. Furthermore, it proposes instruments for consultation between the two sides, with particular emphasis on initiatives of inter-religious dialogue". *Vatican Information Service* 23-4-09

Study cites dramatic rise in anti-Semitic attacks in Europe

The number of anti-Semitic incidences in Europe in the first three months of this year exceeds the total number of such occurrences during all of 2008, according to a report issued by the European Jewish Congress.

The report cites the reaction to January's Israel Defense Forces operation in Gaza as one of the key triggers of anti-Semitic attacks against Jewish communities in Europe. In addition, the current financial crisis is giving rise to age-old anti-Semitic stereotypes suggesting "Jewish control of the global financial system."

EJC members from all over Europe, who gathered in Brussels for the special session, reported a significant rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. The head of the Jewish community in Finland, Rony Smolar, said its 25,000 members are subject to repeated harassment due to its support for Israel. *Haaretz* 2-4-09

What lies behind anti-Semitism?

Anti-Semitism goes way back, so it can't be linked solely with the existence of the State of Israel surrounded by a sea of Arab nations. George Gilder in his book to which we referred earlier *The Israel Test* endeavours

to put his finger on why there is so much dislike of the Jews. In his view the root cause was, and is, envy. The Jewish race, left to themselves prosper, and the non-Jews, rather than sharing in that prosperity, seek to undermine it. Why are the Jews so successful? He quotes from *Why the Jews? The reason for Antisemitism* by Prager and Telushkin. (2003 ed.)

“Anti-Semites have hated Jews because Jews are Jewish....” – essentially for the Jewish belief in their chosenness, in their own national identity, and the universal reach of their one God and his moral law. They live well, leading “demonstrably higher-quality lives” than do others who do not believe and practise these things.

We have seen how Israel leads the world in so many fields. We know for example that the number of Jewish Nobel prize winners far exceeds their proportion of the world's population. Gilder has some remarkable statistics. Jewish mean IQ is 110, ten points over norm. The proportion with IQ's of 140 or higher is around six times the proportion of everyone else. In a 1954 study of the IQ in the New York public school system 24 out of 28 (85%) of those with an IQ over 170 were Jewish.

The “frog spirit” of today flows out from the French Revolution, the spirit of humanism, of equal rights, that all should be equal and therefore the rewarding of the gifted is despised, and their wealth should be distributed to everyone else. It is easy to see how these humanist spirits are focussing the eyes of the world upon Israel and her prosperity.

Gilder shows that before the 1st Intifada in 1987, the West Bank and Gaza comprised of one of the most dynamic economies on earth with a decade of growth rate roughly 30% per year from 1969 to 1979. During this time the Arab population rose from roughly 1 million in 1967 to almost 3 million in some 261 new towns. During this period, when the West Bank and Gaza were run by Israel, the economy boomed and the Palestinian standard of living rose dramatically. Life expectancy rose from 48 years in 1967 to 72 in 2000. From zero universities in 1967 to 7 in the early 1990's with some 16,500 students.

It all unravelled with the Intifada, targeting Israel businesses. With Arafat in control from 1994, the Palestine economy shifted from exceptional growth to receiving more foreign aid per capita than any other people on the face of the earth! The PLO leadership was based entirely on terrorism, hatred and corruption.

One can see why Netanyahu believes in actions not words to rebuild the Palestinian economy. Consider the implications of the Arabs' obsession that Israel settlements be removed. Do they want their new homeland *Judenfrei* Jew-free? Yet in Israel 25% of her population are Arabs.

We turn to Israel and the wider Middle East situation.

Chapter 12:

ISRAEL & HER MIDDLE EAST NEIGHBOURS

In the previous chapters we have seen on the one hand Israel's growing economic strength, yet on the other the hatred from which she suffers. In this chapter we look at the threat from Iran, and the changing relations with the more moderate Middle East countries. We try to see an answer to Israel dwelling safely at the time of her invasion.

An Iranian nuclear bomb, or the bombing of Iran?

President Obama thought that his administration would be able to reason with the Iranians and make them see the error of going nuclear! Like many a leader before him, he found that the ideals one campaigns for can turn into nightmares when faced with facts on the ground. Obama found that whilst a commitment to a policy of engagement with Iran was a successful vote winner, it didn't work out in reality!

So at the end of the year America is no further forward in stemming the Iranian threat of possessing not only nuclear weapons, but having the means to deliver them on target anywhere within 2,000km of Iran's borders. Israel is only 1,200km away. Israel has had to bide her time awaiting Obama's efforts and watch the progress that Iran has made in that time. Israel knows that the only reason that Iran is developing such missiles is to fulfil Ahmadinejad's oft stated purpose of eliminating "the Zionist entity." Israel is under no illusions; she faces a difficult choice as the above *Economist* 3-12-09 headline put it.

An earlier article in the *Jerusalem Post*, 29-9-09 stated.

If everything taking place right now on the Iranian front continues as expected, it is then that Israel will need to make one of its most difficult decisions ever - to attack Iran or allow it to continue with its nuclear program.

By the spring of 2010, Israel will know the results of the dialogue between the world's leading powers and Iran, as well as whether the world will impose real, tough sanctions.

The assessment in the defense establishment is that the fallout from such a strike would be three times that of the Second Lebanon War, the First Gulf War and the attacks on the Israeli Embassy and Jewish center in Argentina in the 1990s combined.

Israel is making preparations to attack Iran, on her own if necessary. She is contemplating attacking from the sea, from the air and by ground troops. She is assembling a veritable arsenal of weapons to help her. She has carried out drills to simulate how she would be able to cope with a chemical rocket attack. At the end of the year the government was planning

to issue gas masks to all during February. The only country in the region with chemical weapons, apart from Israel, is Iran.

Iran unrest isn't a riot, it's an earthquake

As we finish the year Iran is gripped in a fierce internal struggle which could well spill out into civil war. The result of the Iranian elections in June which saw Ahmadinejad re-elected was widely disputed, amongst allegations of voting irregularities. The protests that followed were quickly put down, many protestors were imprisoned, and others "disappeared". Iran's prisons are notorious for their brutality; quite a few prisoners don't survive.

In December the death of Montazeri, a popular Ayatollah, and mentor to the dissidents, sparked further protests.

To refer to what has been happening in Tehran over the last few days as "riots" is to gravely underestimate the power of the unrest erupting in the country since the June elections. The latest events are best described as further symptoms of an ongoing earthquake.

The country has seen major events since June - the death of Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, the reformists' spiritual leader; the heckling of a speech by former president Mohammad Khatami; the violence of the Ashura holiday; the show trials; the revelations about torture and executions. These factors have been coming together to create the perfect backdrop for the street protests that have refused to abate for nearly half a year.

The longer the demonstrations go on, the clearer it becomes that they're not aimed only at President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, but also at Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The chants of "Death to the Dictator" and the placards with caricatures of the leader indicate that the protest movement is changing gears.

Khamenei's rule and the regime that he represents are not endangered yet, as Khamenei controls the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij paramilitary. The authorities' response seems to indicate the regime still sees suppression by force as the best remedy for discontent. The free use of live ammunition against protesters, which has claimed the lives of nine so far, is ample illustration of the official strategy. However, those casualties, and especially one of them, the nephew of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, are likely to inspire more rallies and demonstrations in the coming days.

These events may well turn out to be a critical standoff between the regime and the opposition, between theologians opposing Khamenei and the radical clerics supporting him, and between the anti-Ahmadinejad conservatives in the Iranian parliament and the president's supporters.
Haaretz 28-12-09

It remains to be seen whether Israeli action will be needed or civil war brings the rule of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei to an end.

In either situation, if the source of power to both Hamas and Hezbollah as well as to some extent Syria, were to disappear this could transform the Middle East, provided the moderate Middle East countries continued with their re-orientation towards accepting Israel as a bulwark against any future Iran plans to take over the Middle East. There are many imponderables – the only certainty is that through angelic oversight a situation will be reached whereby Israel dwells securely and prosperously. We may not be here to witness this, the Master could well be back before these final events unfold.

Iran's encirclement of the moderate Arab nations

We examined in *Milestones 2006* ch 7, the divided Muslim world. Iran and Iraq are mainly Shiite, the rest Sunni. The differences between them are marked, and Iran's ambition is to impose Shiite rule on the region. Iran is not an Arab country, but is descended from the Persians. Until the fall of the Shah of Persia in 1979, Iran was very pro-West. Her relations with Russia in recent times go back to the ending of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. During this war the Soviet supported Iraq, but afterwards Iran started to turn to Russia. By the mid 1990's Russia had agreed to restart Iran's nuclear programme which had been started by America in the 1950's, but had been all but abandoned after the 1979 revolution.

Let's trace Iran's encirclement of the Middle East countries.

Syria. Beyond Iraq lies Syria, whose ties with Iran are deep, in spite of American pressure to wean Bashir Assad away from Iran. The majority of weapons flowing to Hezbollah come through Syria. In December the two countries signed a new defence agreement.

Lebanon. Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Hezbollah began to form, trained and sponsored by Iran. This Shiite movement has grown considerably since then and represents a formidable foe to Israel on her northern border. Since the 2006 Lebanon War she has rebuilt and greatly strengthened her weaponry, thanks to Iran.

Gaza. To the south of Israel in the small enclave of Gaza we find Hamas, who, like Hezbollah, are provided with their weapons by Iran. Israel has been successful in blowing up or capturing some of these supplies, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. Again Hamas have now acquired a new arsenal of advanced weapons since Operation Cast Lead.

To the south of Gaza lies Egypt – Israel handed back the territory she had taken in Sinai back to Egypt in 1979 in exchange for peace. Egypt broke off relations with Iran back in the same year and though Iran has made advances towards Egypt, she is wary of her intentions and considers Iran to be a threat to the region.

Sudan. We saw in *Milestones 2008* the far reaching defence agreement between Sudan and Iran. In March Israel blew up 17 trucks of Iranian weapons destined for Hamas travelling through Sudan.

Ethiopia. Iran has made overtures to Ethiopia and trade between the countries is growing. The Iranian Minister visited in February in order to promote economic and political ties between the two countries.

Eritrea. Ahmadinejad declared in 2008 that there was no limit on the two countries cooperation; in May this year they agreed to increase their bilateral trade, with talk of “warm diplomatic ties”. In the war in Yemen, Iran was using Eritrea as a ferrying point to send arms to the Iranian backed rebels and wounded rebels were being taken to Eritrea for treatment.

Djibouti. We move down to Djibouti; again we find that Iran has been courting this small but prosperous country too. Ahmadinejad was here in February to bolster ties and to “deepen their political relations”.

Somalia. We then come to Somalia on the Horn of Africa, a centre for the pirates that are troubling the shipping in the region. The Somali Foreign Minister was in Iran seeking for help at the end of December. Iran actively pledged to help, with the Iranian “private sector ready to assist in industrial and economic reconstruction projects”. Iran is suspected of using Somalia as a base for getting weapons to Hamas.

Yemen. Finally we cross to Yemen – now revealed as one of the centres for Al-Qaeda. Here a long running battle has been taking place between the government forces and Iranian backed rebels. The north of the country is very desolate and rugged – ideal for terrorist hideouts. Saudi Arabia backs onto Yemen and has been helping Yemen against the rebels. Now other Gulf States have pledged their support.

We can well understand why the Gulf countries feel more threatened by Iran than Israel!

Arab fear of Iran tops hatred of Israel

William Cohen who was Secretary of Defense under Clinton, who had made 6 Gulf trips in the past 6 months, said that previously he would get a lecture about Israel.



“I no longer receive that, and when I go and travel, what I hear is, there is greater fear of Iran than there is animus toward Israel.” *Int Christian Embassy Jerusalem* 29-7-09

There have been several reports of Israel working with these moderate states to plan a strategy against Iran.

Israel, Arabs Join Hands

This was the headline to a *Debka* report 8-5-09 reporting the shared alarm between Israel and the Gulf States over Obama’s plans to engage Iran in dialogue rather than action.

“For the first time in my lifetime, Arabs and Jews see a common danger,” said Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu Monday, May 4: “There is a great challenge afoot. But that challenge also presents great opportunities.”

The report spoke of the cooperation between Israeli, Egyptian and Saudi intelligence services concerning Iran.

Debka's Middle East sources report that this is not the first time Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt have worked quietly together on the same side.

They had cooperated in 2006 in the Lebanon War and in Operation Cast Lead in 2008/9. Five weeks later *Debka* reported a second such meeting.

Then in November *Debka* was reporting a top-level meeting in Jordan involving US, Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian intelligence service to coordinate their information on Iran. Immediately after the meeting the Egyptian intelligence chief flew to Saudi to brief the head of Saudi intelligence.

Gulf state officials secretly approach Israel on strategies to stop Iran

The Israeli chief of Staff to Ehud Barak, Israel’s defence Minister, spoke of his being approached by Gulf State officials.

“We are on the same side,” Herzog quoted the GCC official as saying. “We feel threatened by the Iranian nuclear projects, by their political ambitions, by their subversion and so on. And frankly,” he said, “we are skeptical of whether Iran could be stopped.”

Herzog reported similar conversations with officials in Egypt, Jordan and North African states. He said all of them sought talks with Israel regarding the Iranian threat.

“The No. 1 topic that comes up is Iran,” Herzog told a May 7 briefing at the Washington Institute. “They are scared by the Iranian projects and ambitions. They are willing to do a lot in order to stop it. They don't know exactly what.” *Geo Strategy Direct* 17-6-09

Dubai. Iran May Lose Its Back Door for Beating Sanctions

The financial crisis has had an undesigned consequence. Dubai was the entry point into Iran for many goods; the sea crossing to Iran is comparatively short. This trade was a lucrative source of income, especially as many of the items were on the West's banned list. With the virtual bankruptcy of Dubai, oil-rich Abu Dhabi has had to step in to bail her out; her ruler is strongly against Iran, and it is anticipated that this supply route will be severely curtailed under his control. *Debka* 4-12-09

U.S. military helping Egypt erect underground steel barrier along Gaza

Egypt is at last responding to American pressure to stem the flow of weapons through the vast network of an estimated 1,400 tunnels which span the border between Gaza and Egypt. At the year-end, work is underway with American help, to build an underground steel barrier along the Gaza-Sinai border extending 18m (some reports say 30m) down, with a system of listening devices to detect fresh tunnelling. In addition an underground pipe carrying sea water will flood the ground down to about 80m, the depth of the deepest tunnels to prevent their use. An electronic fence will be constructed, similar to that on Gaza's border with Israel.

Saudi Arabia, US sign pact for strategic cooperation

We refer readers to ch 11 of *Milestones 2008* for the reason why we anticipate that in this area "Tarshish and her young lions" will be operating in these last days in fulfilment of Ezek 38:13.

Saudi Arabia and the United States have discussed prospects of expanding military cooperation during a strategic meeting attended by Prince Khaled bin Sultan, assistant minister of defense and aviation for military affairs, it was announced on Thursday.

"The meeting reviewed military cooperation and ways to realize the joint interests of both countries." *Arab News* 20-11-09

Iran threats drive Arab Gulf states into arms buying spree

As a result of the Iranian threat, the Gulf States have been turning to American and British weapons suppliers to update their forces.

The growing threat of Iran's nuclear program and its ballistic missile arsenal has numerous states in the Middle East rushing to bolster their air defense systems, with the United Arab Emirates setting the pace with US\$ billions in defense spending.

The United Arab Emirates recently launched a competition between American defense giants Boeing and Lockheed Martin for a new battle management system. They hope it will allow military commanders to see a common operational picture of air, land and sea assets, and coordinate law enforcement and border control with the goal of creating

a “defensive bubble” around the countries of the Persian Gulf. *Int. Christian Embassy Jerusalem*. 24-11-09

US generals and soldiers flood Israel

In November, Israel and America held one of the largest joint land exercises ever held in Israel, involving a large number of American generals and at least 1,500 US soldiers.

Dubbed “Juniper Cobra,” the exercise, which is held every year, but never before on such a large scale, is scheduled to last three weeks.

One of the visiting US generals told Israel media that the exercise is in response to “specific threats,” which every one took to mean primarily the Iranian nuclear threat. There was much speculation that the exercise signaled the US had nearly given up on diplomatic efforts to curb Iran’s nuclear program, and was gearing up for the aftermath of an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities. *Israel Today* 4-11-09

Burgeoning Indian-Israeli Military Ties

Military ties between the two countries have grown considerably; both countries feel threatened by terrorist extremists.

One of the world’s biggest powers and one of its smallest countries have discovered enough in common to forge a thriving friendly relationship based largely on mutual defense interests.

First, Israel has become India’s No. 1 supplier of arms and ammunition, overtaking Russia. India accounts for roughly half of Israel’s exports of defense items and about one-third of India’s import list.

Second, after purchasing the Israeli Arrow anti-missile missile’s Green Pine radar, Gen. Kapoor has said his government also wants to buy the missile itself, though not the Arrow 2 which is in service with Israel’s Defense Forces, but Arrow 3 and Arrow 4, the Super Arrow which is still in development. *Debka* 11-12-09

Israel and India enjoy close defense ties and Israel last year overtook Russia as the number-one supplier of military platforms to India after breaking the \$1 billion mark in new contracts signed annually.

According to press reports, India is interested in working with Israel on submarine-launched cruise missiles, ballistic missile defense systems, laser-guided systems, satellites as well as unmanned aerial vehicles. *Jerusalem Post* 8-11-09

It is thrilling to see the growing ties between Israel and one of the “young lion” countries, especially as in Old Testament times India was a Tarshish power.

We turn in our last section to look at Britain’s woes

Chapter 13:

BRITAIN'S TOUGH YEAR

With elections looming by June 2010 at the latest, Britain's government has little power. Deeply unpopular with the electorate according to the opinion polls, the Labour Government's days appear to be numbered. In addition the scandal of Members of Parliament exposed for illegally claiming large sums for expenses, has rocked parliament. A record number will not be re-standing in the forthcoming elections.

Financially 2009 was a miserable year for Britain as the government borrowed heavily to pull the country out of the economic recession. Britain is the last major country to come out of recession. The value of sterling has fallen sharply against the euro and the dollar. Britain is now perceived as a greater credit risk than Italy! The EU is determined to bring sweeping regulations to control the City of London, in punishment for its role in the current financial crisis. Why is Britain in this mess? Is it the Hand of God because of Britain's frequent turning her back on God's nation, Israel? A new government might bring a different attitude.

David Cameron: my belief in Israel is 'very deep and inside of me' and 'indestructible'

The potential new leader for Britain would be David Cameron. At the Conservative Friends of Israel Annual Lunch in June he addressed his audience about "what they needed to know about him". This is a brief summary.

First, I passionately believe in the right of Israel to exist, to defend itself and to live in peace and security. Not just because of the tragedies of history. Not only because of the realities of today. Not simply because of my Party's unstinting support for Israel through the decades. But also because it's something I feel very deep inside of me.

The belief I have in Israel is indestructible – and you need to know that if I become Prime Minister, Israel has a friend who will never turn his back on Israel.

That brings me to the second thing I believe. I do believe in a two-state solution. A State of Israel, with her existence recognised by all her Arab neighbours. And a state for Palestine, with her existence recognised by the world. Two-states, two democracies, living side by side, in peace – I do not believe there is a sustainable alternative.

And I agree that Israel must be assured that any withdrawal from territory will not lead to rockets showering down on innocent men, women and children as has happened all too often in the past and in the present.

So for the Palestinians themselves, their obligations are clear: Prove you are a reliable negotiating partner. Bring order to your own society. And renounce violence completely.

The third thing I believe is this: I do not think, as some do, that ending the Israel-Palestinian conflict will somehow miraculously solve all the problems of the Middle East.

The fourth thing you need to know about me: I will stand firm against anti-Semitism in all its forms and wherever it occurs.

The fifth thing you need to know about me is this: I am a committed Atlanticist. No nation is perfect but America remains the world's indispensable power. The truth is we cannot achieve half of what we want to achieve unless we work with the world's superpower. So when it comes to the special relationship with America: I feel it, I understand it, I believe in it.

We desperately need to bring some responsibility back to our economy, to society and to our political system. In our economy, that means government living within its means.

That society will be founded on one word: responsibility. And in this endeavour, I know in the Jewish community, the Conservative Party will have an enduring ally. Personal responsibility, civic responsibility, social responsibility. These are the values that go to the heart of the Jewish faith. These are the values we all share. And it is these values should be the stars that guide us today.” *Conservative Friends of Israel* 6-7-09

We await the outcome of the elections with interest, and hope for a more family orientated, Israel supporting, economically prudent Britain.

Conservatives will seek a “manifesto mandate” to renegotiate Britain’s relationship with the EU

The other thorn in Britain’s flesh is the EU. A typical recent example – Heathrow Airport has 4 of the new body scanners which could detect hidden explosives worn on the body as used by the person who nearly succeeded in blowing up a plane over Detroit in late December. They have been in wraps for months because we have to get EU approval for their use, and so far it has not been discussed in the EU! Britain is the most eurosceptical member, or state as we now have been reduced to, in the EU according to the polls.

Conservative leader David Cameron yesterday unveiled the Conservatives’ policy on Europe. He said that he would seek a mandate for his new position through the General Election. He said an incoming Conservative government would introduce an “Irish-style referendum lock” on any future Treaty handing over further powers from Britain to the EU, and that there would be “full parliamentary control” over the self-amending and ‘ratchet’ clauses in the Lisbon Treaty.

He also announced a UK Sovereignty Bill, saying, “as well as making sure that further power cannot be handed to the EU without a referendum, we will also introduce a new law, in the form of a United Kingdom Sovereignty Bill, to make it clear that ultimate authority stays in this country, in our Parliament. It is about an assurance that the final word on our laws is here in Britain.” *Open Europe* 5-11-09

Britain must take back control of its own laws

Our headline appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* 4-4-09 concerning Britain opting out of the very expensive and non-British, jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.

Lord Hoffmann, one of Britain's most senior Law Lords, has fired a well-aimed bullet at the heart of one of the great sacred cows of contemporary political and legal life: the European Court of Human Rights which sits in Strasbourg. This institution, as Lord Hoffmann pointed out in a lecture to the Judicial Studies Board, has arrogated to itself the power to be the ultimate arbiter on any issue which the Court interprets as involving human rights. Since, as the Court's practice demonstrates, it thinks that almost every legal matter involves fundamental rights, it has given itself the power to dictate to Britain – and the other 47 countries that have signed the European Convention on Human Rights – what laws should be obeyed.

Blair's decision to give up chunk of EU rebate has cost the UK £9.3bn

The cost of belonging to the EU has accelerated, due to the weakness of the pound – we have to pay in euros – and to the tapering out of the rebate Mrs Thatcher won many years ago.

The *Telegraph* reports that Tony Blair's decision to cut a large part of the UK's rebate from the EU budget has cost the economy £9.3billion. Figures calculated by House of Commons researchers show that Britain will have lost out on €10.5billion (£9.3billion) by not receiving the full rebate between 2007 and 2013, calculated at 2004 prices - equivalent to £344 for every household in Britain. *Open Europe* 9-11-09

There have been a few bright points!

Britain overtakes US as top financial centre

The United Kingdom has overtaken the United States to take the top spot in a ranking of the world's leading financial centres.

The ranking, compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF), places the UK at the top of a leader board of 55 of the world's largest financially-focussed countries.

The US, which had previously held the top spot, slipped to third, behind second-placed Australia. *Daily Telegraph* 8-10-09

Weak pound 'starting to reap rewards'

The biggest sterling devaluation since the collapse of the Gold Standard in the 1930s is starting to reap rewards, economists declared yesterday, as fresh figures showed a dramatic improvement in Britain's current account and household balance sheets.

The UK should bounce back to its first current account surplus in more than a decade within the next 18 months, experts said, after the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that the current account deficit was half analysts' expectations at £4.7bn in the third quarter. The deficit for the second quarter was also sharply revised down £4.4bn from an earlier estimate of £11.4bn.

The news undermines claims that despite depreciating by almost a quarter since the early days of the crisis, sterling had done little to help support the economy through the recession. A weak currency often boosts trade but, until recently, the current account balance, which includes trade in goods and services as well as financial flows, had remained at record lows. *Daily Telegraph* 23-12-09

Pope to visit Britain 2010

The Pope is scheduled to visit in September for 4 days.

Tentative plans for the trip reportedly include a papal address to a university audience at Oxford; an address at historic Westminster Hall, where St. Thomas More was tried and condemned; and quite possibly the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman. *Catholic World News* 10-12-09

What plans will our community make to proclaim a witness against this evil system? Remember she is described by Jesus as *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*: Rev 17:6

Apart from the final page being an exhortation, our review of 2009 comes to an end. As always there is far more left out than is put in! However, this hopefully brings encouragement that from the abounding signs our Master's return must be so close. In these dark difficult days we have the privilege in seeing so much. May indeed 2010 be the year that brings our Lord's return.

Chapter 14: Exhortation

FOR YOU WILL LIGHT MY LAMP, YAHWEH

For you will save the afflicted people, But the haughty eyes you will bring down. For you will light my lamp, Yahweh. My God will light up my darkness. Psa 18:27,28 Weymouth

All around us our brethren and sisters face many difficulties – personal problems, family problems, ecclesial problems, work problems.

In last year's *Milestones* we spent some time looking at the financial crisis that was engulfing the world. Our final exhortation was entitled "Living with less." Although we have only briefly touched upon this crisis, the dark financial clouds are there, unemployment is constantly rising. It is bound to affect all our lives. How strong the "green shoots" of economic growth are, remains to be seen, they can quickly be blasted in the chill winds of reality.

This is but one pressure upon us; we are under attack from the insidious influences of the world around us, and sadder still when the troubles come from within the ecclesia. The Lord said to his brethren and sisters at Sardis

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Rev 3:2,3

The word watchful, Gk *gregoreuo*, means "to keep awake, or watch". So this is the remedy that our Master has given to his servants. Keeping awake has to have a purpose; hence Bro Thomas puts it, "become watchful". Watch our selves, watch our families, watch our ecclesias, and above all watch for the Lord Jesus! Watch and take action to *strengthen*!

So what practical steps can we take? How is our attendance to the daily reading of the Word – often one of the first things to suffer in our busy lives? Could we support the ecclesia better, not only strengthening our faith but encouraging those who regularly attend? How is our ecclesial care of our children and our young brethren and sisters? They need our succour in their formative years. How many opportunities do we miss to pick up a book expounding the scriptures, or to meditate upon the Word, or to pray?

The Psalmist endured many troubles in his life, in his family and in the ecclesia of Israel. In spite of extreme deprivations, David never lost his trust in his God to care for him. He was not let down. Psalm 18 quoted above was a Psalm of thanksgiving and praise to God for delivering him from his enemies and bringing him to the throne.

May the signs of the times encourage us to hold on, for soon the righteous judge, who knows all things, *will light our lamps and lighten our darkness*.