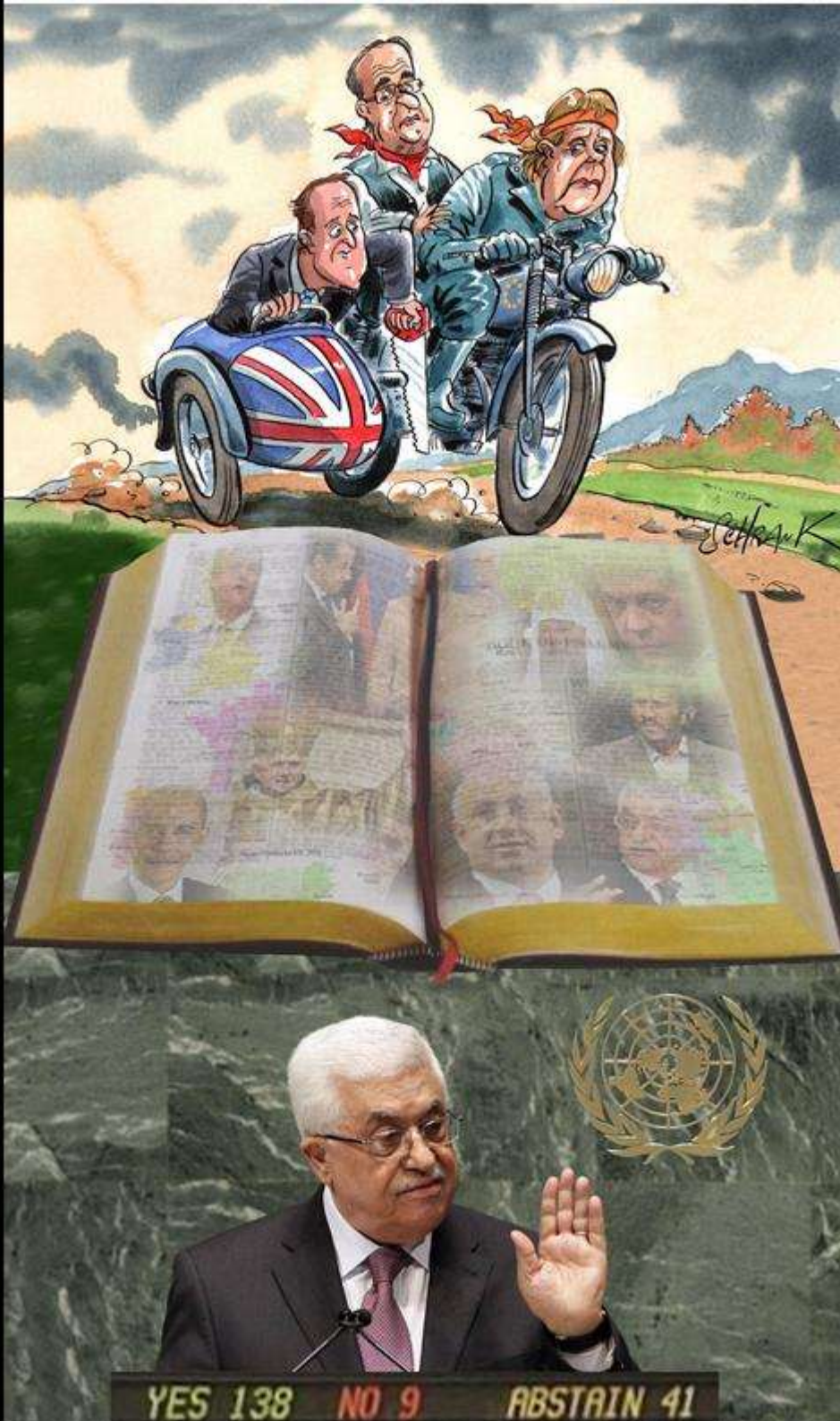


MILESTONES 2012

Don
Pearce



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MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of the
World Events of
2012 in the Light
of Bible Prophecy***

Don Pearce

[To contents page](#)

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JANUARY 2013

Preface

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I have just completed the reading of the manuscript for **Milestones 2012!** What a pleasure it has been and how much sharper is the picture of the Divine Hand in our world's affairs. The year finished dramatically with a week of rocket warfare between Israel and Hamas, the belligerent, ruling party in the Gaza Strip. For many months there had been sporadic firing of rockets from Gaza towards towns and villages in Israel's South. No other country in the world would put up with this behaviour for a day, but Israel is supposed by most countries to just accept this as their rightful lot. In seven days Israeli planes and drones and retaliatory rockets bombarded the sites from which the Hamas rockets were dispatched and greatly reduced their supplies, which had been supplied by Iranian ships passing through the Suez and to Sudan, then to Egypt, to the Sinai and then to Gaza. In truth the many thousands of Hamas rockets have had little impact upon the Israelis, some of them actually landed in Gaza itself! The greater interest is the unique "Iron Dome" shelter that Israel's scientists have developed in the last few years. This war gave them opportunity for an extended test run. The system is so sophisticated that it reads where the enemy rockets have been sent from and where they will land. If little damage is likely then no answering rocket is dispatched, but if there is risk of life and property then a further rocket is sent to destroy the Hamas missile. The success rate is 90% which means the whole offensive had little material impact upon Israel. No such system of aeronautical defence had ever been employed in war before. The communications bounced off satellites and stations on earth to give brilliantly accurate data.

Yet for all its wonder there is a tragedy about it all. Is this really Israel's security? Do the people of the promises believe that this technical genius can save them, when surrounded by 150 million Arabs? It is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that has saved them, not with rockets of fire-power from heaven but by the angels of His presence—lest they be consumed. Almost at the same time the United Nations voted 145 to 9 for the Palestinians to have non-member observer status which in fact brings them into the same position as the Vatican and sitting alongside the representative of the Pope! How apt is all this when one considers the cold disinterest the Vatican has taken in Israel and yet so encouraging and warm to the Palestinians, despite their espousal and practice of brutal terrorism against Israel.

The reader will be intrigued to learn of the further development of Israel's gas and oil deposits, both in the Mediterranean and on land, close to Jerusalem and near the north of the Dead Sea—where Abraham used to camp! A recent report stated that Israel's reserves of oil and gas may be second only to Saudi Arabia's! And when the tricky Putin heard of the dimension of Israel's new energy resources he couldn't get down there quick enough to tie up a deal with Israel as a senior partner in its development. Amazingly Israel almost took the bait till Woodside Petroleum of Australia secured a major share. Russia's real concern was that Israel may sell her oil and gas to Europe and thus diminish the EU's dependence on Russian gas! What an amazing new game is all this! Netanyahu must be shaking his head in unbelief! The largest country in the world, with perhaps the greatest wealth of

minerals, contending desperately for the only mineral deposits tiny, tiny Israel has ever had in her 60 years of Statehood! What a nerve Russia has! She will play her dramatic role when God is ready and stifle the life out of Israel with no remorse.

Behold the incredible significance of Israel in the big issues of the world! And in the midst of war and fortune, Israel's economy booms on, generating new and remarkable discoveries in the very front of world technology, every developed nation seeks new offices in Israel so as to be close to the cutting-edge of science!

We have seen a miracle in the birth of Israel and the wonder yet grows year by year. "*Ye are my witnesses*" said God and the truth of that will go right through to Armageddon and beyond!

Israel is a great highlight of this edition of Milestones. Yes the coverage of German's headship of Europe, her dominion over the national economics of the other 16 (or 26) members is breath-taking. Not only have the Southern states had to swallow the medicine of Magog but the German Government then passes an impassioned bill that no European laws will be adopted in Germany before they have first been passed in the Reichstag! Where is the first dominion of Europe? Remarkably she has Europe in her eagle clutches—again, for the 5th time, not by warfare this time but by the power of finance and production.

And Russia's Putin is deeply in league with this leader of Europe. Putin, infatuated with the restoral of glory to Russia, has a best friend in Mrs Merkel, Chancellor of Germany. Europe lives on Russian gas, Germany has 1,600 large companies established in Russia, 44% of Russia's imports come from Europe, 56% of her exports go to Europe. The two "legs" of Daniel's image are strengthening as we watch and their respective religious heads, the Pope and the Orthodox Patriarch are cheering the emancipation and the re-union.

And all this above, on top of, little Israel. Nevertheless Britain and her allies are still sworn to the existence of Israel and the more so as Britain feels the freedom of a return to the friends of the Commonwealth, spread all over the world and many with booming economies. All this we have known to be.

We have every reason to thank our God for the revelation of His will as in the prophets. May that fact bind us together more strongly in the Truth, in the Hope of Israel, in the Son of God who is the centre and core of our faith. Hold on!

"Even so, come Lord Jesus".

Brian Luke

Secretary.

January 2013

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 MP3, Kindle and iPad versions of *Milestones 2012*

Abbreviations used

EU European Union. Was the Common Market, EEC, then EC, now EU

m = million; bn = billion; GDP = Gross Domestic Product

\$1= £0.62; €0.77; A\$0.96; CA\$0.99; NZ\$1.22 at 1-1-13 rates.

\$1 million = £624,000, \$1 billion = £624,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

Author's important notes

I would like to especially thank my family, Bre. Kevin Allison and Alan Clarke and the CSSS for their helpful comments on the draft. It is all put together in the last three 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 proof-readers!**

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, Palestinians, Pope. Dates are always day-month-year. Any items in **bold** are my emphasis, i.e. not emboldened in the original. I am very grateful for items sent in; please ensure date and source indicated.

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Helpful aids

Booklets obtainable from: [Bible Magazine agents](#), [CSSS agents](#) or [Milestones](#).

The True Gospel. Defended and Explained

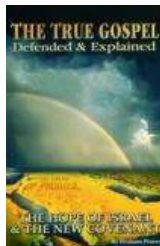
This 72 page booklet by Bro Graham Pearce looks at the Hope of Israel and the meaning of the New Covenant and gives an excellent overview of these very important subjects and fills out what has been written in *Milestones* 2012.

World Events & the Coming of Zion's King

This is a helpful book which looks at most of the scriptural passages concerning the time of the end events and puts them in a logical order. At the same time Bro Graham Pearce looks at some of the newer ideas and show where they fall down when examined by scripture. A reading of this 100 page booklet will give us a much clearer idea of what we should be looking for. For brethren and sisters looking for the return of their Master, it is essential reading.

Milestones Snippets

See [inside back cover](#) for this free valuable news service.



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BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 194, 24-Dec-12

Int 3 page PDF <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/docs/perspectives194.pdf>

UK-EU:121224:(27-DEC-12):Germany wants Britain in the EU, says Wolfgang Schäuble

Daily Telegraph 24-Dec-12

Germany does not want to push Britain out of the European Union, but will not be "blackmailed" with the threat of an exit either, the country's finance minister has warned.

Amid fears that a tide of Euroscepticism could sweep London towards the exit, Mr Schäuble said that he wanted "more British involvement in Europe, not less".

"I would wish for more British involvement in Europe, not less," he said in an interview with German newspaper

Mr Schäuble renewed his call for an EU president that was "directly elected by the people, like in France and America".

Herman Van Rompuy, the current president of the European Council, was elected by the 27 leaders of the EU, even though he was the only candidate to run for the post, while the president of the European Commission, currently Jose Manuel Barroso, was chosen by the European Parliament.

Chapter 1:

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A SYNOPSIS

2012—What a year!

As a correspondent put it, “I see the themes of 2011 continuing but with a louder sound. The language being used is now much plainer.” This neatly sums the year.

2012 saw the first of the new gas fields off Israel’s coast coming on stream to supplement the rapidly depleting Mari B field which first came on stream in 2004. The first trickle of what promises to be a torrent!

2012 saw Israel and Hamas battling it out with most—hopefully—of Hamas’ rocketry and offices destroyed and many Hamas operatives killed after a year of constant provocation with thousands of rockets falling on Israel.

2012 also reached new height—or depths—of anti-Semitism! The world press taking every opportunity to put Israel in a bad light.

2012 saw a growing groundswell of opposition to the EU in Britain, with David Cameron and his ministers acknowledging the depth of anti-EU feelings here. It saw Cameron in Thatcher-like mode standing up to the other EU leaders.

2012 saw stronger calls for the political integration of Europe.

2012 saw Germany profiting from her position as undoubted leader of Europe. Angela Merkel moved up to the No. 2 slot in Forbes annual survey of whom they think are the world’s most influential people.

The same poll saw the Pope move to the No. 5 slot as he consolidated his troops and began the battle to retake the hearts of the people of Europe.

2012 saw rioting and conflict in the southern euro countries as the extreme measures to cut their deficits brought misery to millions.

2012 saw the spectacle of the EU being awarded the Nobel Peace prize! And where will the trophy be displayed? In the yet-to-be-completed Museum of European History—an £82 million building in Brussels due to be completed in 2014.

2012 saw the so-called Arab “Spring” reach new heights of suffering in Syria as President Assad struggled to retain power. Tens of thousands of Syrians have died or disappeared this year.

2012 saw the historic vote in the UN giving recognition to the Palestinian State—it now has the same status as the Vatican—a non-member observer state. The Palestinians continue to sit next to the Vatican at the UN!

2012 saw the West’s efforts to curb Iran’s nuclear ambitions have dramatic economic effects as Iran’s oil income plummeted and prices rose with the Iranian rial slumping in value.

2012 saw great extremes of weather conditions. Records being broken for heat and drought, while in other parts of the world it was rainfall records being broken!

2012 saw increasing involvement of America, Britain and the Commonwealth countries in the Middle East—largely as a result of the threatening gestures of Iran. Wiping Israel off the face of the earth is but the first step in Iran’s desire to dominate the Middle East. The southern Arab countries are increasingly turning to the West as they seek to strengthen their defences against Iran.

2012 saw Britain’s Defence Chief reiterate Britain’s new policy to become more involved with Jordan and the Gulf States, with more troops “east of Suez”.

2012 also saw the US declaring that soon she would be almost energy independent, due to the vast reserves of shale gas being tapped there. This was a further blow to OPEC’s once powerful position of having the world dependant on her.

2012 was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth. The pageantry was world class—as with the Olympics, the British are good at organising! It showed that Britain was not down and out; steps are being taken to revive the British spirit.

2012 also saw Britain reviving her North Sea assets as well as re-starting to exploit her huge shale gas resources, ready for Britain’s role on the world scene, once her ties with Europe are thrown off.

2012 also saw Russia rebuilding her empire, with trading agreements with former members of her empire. Compared with the EU, it still has some way to go, but the scheme is gathering momentum.

2012 also saw Putin’s return to power, with Medvedev rapidly fading into the background. A series of harsh measures have been passed this year to stifle opposition and thwart democracy. The Russian Orthodox Church welcomed Putin’s return to power, happy to work hand-in-hand as both gain power.

2012 saw another increase in Russia’s military budget and plans to complete a super-league aircraft carrier along with other steps to modernise her armed forces.

These and many other signs point to the nearness of our Master’s return. We didn’t imagine we would reach 2013 without our Master’s return to his household. There are still many steps before the nations come down against Israel, but one of the first events will be the coming of the Lord Jesus. Not with mighty power to save Israel from the hand of their enemies—that will happen, but first he must assemble his mighty ones who will help him in the execution of this work. So the call of the dead from the grave and the gathering of the living to join them at the judgment seat must surely be so close. We will not know the hour or the day when our lives will change for ever; when the daily routine will go, never to return again. When the most incredible part of our journey to the Kingdom will take an irreversible leap forward, and we shall go to be in the company of Abraham, David, Job, Paul and Peter and an innumerable host of people from all ages, who have shared our hope of seeing the Messiah. We shall then be in the presence of our angels who have overseen our lives, in order to give an account of our stewardship. Then, in his mercy we can begin that great work to which we have been called, to work with our Master to bring that time of peace and blessing that will eventually dawn.

In the hope of rousing our awareness, we set out in this 36th issue of *Milestones* to rebuild and strengthen our faith to prepare us to meet the Master.

Chapter 2

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35 YEARS OF MILESTONES

Issue 1: *Milestones* 1977

It was quite eye-opening to look back and see the world of 35 years ago! How quickly we adjust to the present and forget the past. 35 years is quite a time-span, a tad over half my life! It was sobering to work out that my father must have been virtually my age when he started *Milestones*; which he continued until his last issue, *Milestones* 1993 which came out in early 1994, the year of his falling asleep.



The first issue had 7 chapters and filled 68 pages, with a fairly plain cover. It wasn't until 1981 that there was an illustrated cover bearing a montage of pictures including a very young Charles and Diana—it was their wedding year!

In those days *Milestones* was typed on a mechanical typewriter with clippings from newspapers pasted into position and then posted to Australia to be typeset and printed and flown to Britain for distribution around the UK. Later, fax machines enabled quicker transmission, though the first machines were painfully slow. How much easier today when print-ready PDF's can zip round the world in seconds, thanks to computers and the internet!

The world of 1977

We were living in the Soviet era; Iran was ruled by the Shah and was a friend of the West; Israel's economy was dire, with strong unions cramping enterprise, and a crushing 40% of the budget being spent on defence. There was little sign of prosperity, let alone peace. Yet this was the year that the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, made his historic visit to Israel. Although it took place on 20th Nov 1977, it was in as a footnote, such was the time lag in getting *Milestones* prepared and printed; it seems that my father had finished writing by the middle of November.

The longest chapter looked at **Events concerning Russia**. The Soviet Union was in full swing with the Cold War and was projecting her naval power around the world. A map showed the locations of her naval bases around the Indian Ocean, Africa and the Middle East. A *Conflict Study* issued in June 1977 spoke of “this meteoric growth of Soviet sea power” with 1,600 merchant navy ships and 4,000 fishing vessels under the control of the Soviet Navy. “A unique and unprecedented development in the whole history of sea power.” Another map contrasted the size of Russia in 1600 to that of the 1977 USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). At that time the Soviet Union was perceived as a great menace to Europe, threatening to over-run the West. Soviet missiles pointed westward, capable of

reaching Britain from East Germany! America was the defender of Europe's freedom with troops in many European countries, with their missiles facing eastward. The Berlin Wall had been erected in 1961, partitioning Berlin and wouldn't fall until 1989/1990. In Europe, left-wing groups were making progress with the westward march of communism.

Germany was asserting herself. "Germany has again risen to be the dominant power in Western Europe. This is certainly so in the economic and commercial spheres, and it is also true militarily", my father observed. Her tanks and armoured combat vehicles were regarded as the best in the world, which was an incredible feat for a country that had been defeated twice in 30 years. She was regarded as the "most disciplined and well equipped fighting force in Western Europe."

What was also interesting was the rapprochement between Germany and Russia. Russia had the raw materials that Germany's industrialists wanted. Chancellor Brant's leftish party was seeking to change Russian communism to a democratic outlook. Germany and France were driving to push America out of Europe.

There was an interesting chapter on the **King of the South**. Syria, Iraq, Libya, Ethiopia and Yemen were under Soviet influence; Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Oman were increasingly coming under American and to a lesser degree, British influence. Saudi Arabia was becoming the dominant power.

The 2nd longest chapter was on the Vatican, entitled **I sit a Queen**. Because this was the 1st issue, my father took broad sweeps to paint a picture of how from the '60's there had been a movement towards reconciliation between the Churches. The Greek Orthodox churches were well on that pathway, and Rome was reaching out to them. The Russian Orthodox was under the Soviet heel and little was happening there. In Britain there had been several steps to realign the Church of England towards the Roman Catholic Church—images of Mary were being introduced, various ceremonial vestments had been brought in and masses held in Protestant Churches. In 1975, Archbishop Coggan became Archbishop of Canterbury and had declared "Our divisions will have to go". In 1977 he visited the Pope; Rome was making steady progress in reclaiming her daughters.

1977 was the closing year of Pope Paul VI; he was succeeded in 1978 by John Paul I and a month later by John Paul II. The groundwork had been laid for the great transformation in the church's power that followed John Paul II's appointment.

There is a short chapter on Israel; this was the era of peace talks, and an interesting section about several proposals for Israel and Jordan to co-operate in transport links and trade. The Peace Agreement with Jordan wouldn't be signed until 1997.

The last chapter is a sad one on Britain, with a subheading **A Nation without faith!** What would my father think today as Britain drifts even further from the Bible? Britain had joined the EEC (today's EU), in 1973. He comments "Many are already disillusioned with the attraction of a European system, with its economic and political bondage. There will be no easy release," he concluded.

Chapter 3:

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THE BIBLE TELLS OF ISRAEL'S FINAL SCATTERING

The main themes of this year's *Milestones*

There are six main areas that we want to examine in this year's *Milestones*.

1. To revisit some of the scriptural prophecies which guide as to what is happening and what to look out for.
2. To see the quiet revolution that has taken place in the world of energy and how it is setting the scene for the coming clash in the land of Israel.
3. To examine Israel's position in the Middle East, and that of her Arab neighbours and Iran.
4. To see how Britain is being pushed along a new pathway – her role is not in Europe, because God has a purpose with the Protestant, English speaking countries.
5. To see the path Europe is taking leading to a German-powered Beast, with a Vatican-controlling rider.
6. To look at Russia and the Euroasia alliance and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In dealing with these, *Milestones* has been grouped in to five unequal parts.

- 1) A look at scriptural prophecies about Israel's coming time of trouble and to look at the New Covenant and its relevance to Israel.
- 2) Matters relating to the Middle and the Far East—Israel and her neighbours; Saudi Arabia; Iran; the “Arab Spring” nations.
- 3) Britain, America and the Commonwealth countries.
- 4) Europe and the Vatican.
- 5) Russia and the Orthodox Church.

As always, we look at these themes with a mixture of scriptural exposition and happenings during the year.

*Last year we devoted this chapter to looking at the possible sequence of events. A good understanding of the sequence is vitally important in one particular aspect. Should we be looking for Gog's invasion of Israel's **before** our call to the judgement seat or **after**? This is very important because it affects how we look at world events particularly in the Middle East. Are we trying to see in what is happening to Israel the prelude of Russia and her armies coming down against her and destroying Israel as a nation? Or do we understand that before that happens, some years **beforehand**, the Lord Jesus will be back on the earth. Not with a blaze*

of glory—that will come later. His first task being that of preparing his bride so that they might go with him in his work of saving Israel.

*These two scenarios lead to different expectations. If we are not to be called until after Israel is invaded, then time is on our side. If on the other hand, our historical understanding of the sequence of events is correct, then that return must be very close. We have seen such speedy progress in events in Europe and the Middle East and Israel in particular in the past few years which show the truth of our historical understanding. It alone has stood the test of time and that should deliver a wake-up call to each one of us. Time is running out and we have seen so much being fulfilled. Yet the last tantalising step still hasn't happened, in fact seems far from happening, that of Israel at the time of her invasion living safely and securely and at peace. If we are looking for the invasion of Israel to take place first, then our Master's coming seems some way off. If, on the other hand we accept the return is first, then we can see that it is unlikely that we shall see this final piece in Ezekiel's jigsaw of conditions to be fulfilled, on this side of the Judgment Seat. A lot can happen **after** Christ has returned to his household, **but before** he delivers Israel following their destruction, when, for one last time, Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles and needs divine intervention. We will look at what Scripture says about the final scattering of Israel.*

I will overturn, overturn, overturn it

We recognise this heading is taken from Ezekiel ch 21.

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

*I will **overturn, overturn, overturn, it**: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. Eze 21:25-27*

We know this is speaking of King Zedekiah, the last of the descendants of David to rule over Judah. Soon after these words were spoken, Zedekiah was taken captive after he had fled from Jerusalem and was taken to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. After seeing his sons slain, his eyes were gouged out and he was led to Babylon a prisoner, there to die. His city of Jerusalem was certainly overturned. We fast forward some 500 years to the time of the Lord Jesus and recall the words he spoke concerning that city.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Mat 23:37-39

This second overturning took place in AD 70, when the city was thoroughly destroyed by the Roman armies. We fast forward again nearly 2,000 years. We see the city under the control of the Israelis since 1967 when they wrested it from Jordanian hands in the Six Day War. Will Israel be in control of the city when Christ returns to save them from the hand of Gog? No. One more time Jerusalem has to be overthrown, before she is ready to receive her King!

Various scriptures tell of this last trial for the Jews dwelling in the land.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

*For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and **the city shall be taken**, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

***Then** shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. Zec 14:1-3*

This is amplifying what is spoken of in ch 12, where all nations come against Jerusalem. Chapter 14 makes it clear that they are successful. The city **is** taken and half are taken into captivity. Is this pointing to the city being co-occupied by Jew and Arab and the Arab remaining and the Jews taken? Maybe, but it is clear from verse 14 *Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem* and also chapter 12, that not all the Jews are removed—for in the day when they are saved there will be Jews there who mourn when their eyes are opened to recognise who is their Saviour. In the previous chapter, Zechariah makes the statement:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

*And I will bring **the third part** through the fire, and will **refine** them as silver is refined, and will **try them** as gold is tried: **they shall call on my name**, and I will hear them: I will say, **It is my people**: and they shall say, **The LORD is my God.** Zech 13:8, 9*

With Israel's population now standing at 8 million of whom 6 million are Jews, 2/3rds being cut off is a very sobering figure. If we didn't understand the purpose of God, we would conclude that this is a terrible situation. We are however assured that God is working for the good of His people. Many times in the past—as say in the days of the Judges—in His love for Israel, God brought other nations against them, to turn them back to Him. When in their distress they cried to God for help, He had a judge prepared who could be sent to bring them peace. Like a constant refrain we read such words as:

And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, ... Jud 3:9

God's care of His People

When we come to their overthrow in the time of King Zedekiah, we see the work of God in causing the *good figs* of Judah to be taken into exile, to spare them from

the coming destruction. (Jer 24:5) Time and time again, God makes it clear that He is the one who brought the power of Babylon against Judah. (e.g. 2 Chron 36:17) We see the *goodness* and the *severity* of God. (Rom 11:22) Goodness to those in Israel who had faith and severity to those who walked in their own strength. Multitudes were slain in Jerusalem at this time, but the earlier captives, or at least their children and grandchildren, were the ones who returned when God raised up Cyrus to proclaim freedom to His people. (2 Chron 36:22, 23)

Things were very similar in AD 70. The teaching of the apostles, based upon Jesus' words spoken on the Mount of Olives, enabled those of faith to flee to the mountains when they saw *Jerusalem compassed with armies*.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Mat 24:15, 16

The *abomination of desolation* takes us back to Daniel 8:11-13 and 11:31. It would be the Roman *little horn power* that would destroy the Temple and God's people. If we have any doubts about this, Luke provides the interpretation:

*And when ye shall see Jerusalem **compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*

Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Luke 21:20-22

Those in the city of Jerusalem and in Judea recognised that destruction was at hand and made their escape eastward to the territory of what today we term Jordan and Lebanon¹. Some 4 years before the final destruction of Jerusalem, the Roman XII legion, under Cestius Flavius, besieged Jerusalem and captured part of the city. Unexpectedly and as Josephus put it, "without any reason in the world", he withdrew, leaving it to Vespasian and Titus to continue the work in AD 68. For the faithful however, they had taken note of the sign and took themselves far off from the coming scene of utter devastation. We can see a parallel with the *good figs* in Jeremiah's day, though they had been taken as captives, whereas these were free to flee, but God was ensuring a remnant was spared the brutality of Rome's soldiers.

Israel's coming destruction

So we fast forward to our day—will God give opportunity to flee at the time of the Gogian invasion? Yes! It would appear that a proportion of the Jews then living in the land—many of whom must be living in the land today—will flee.

¹ Eusebius (H.E. iii, 5, 3) says that the Christians actually fled to Pella at the foot of the mountains about seventeen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. (Robertson) They also fled to Mount Libanus – the Lebanese Mountains. (Wesley)

*Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; **hide the outcasts**; bewray not him that wandereth.*

***Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab**; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.*

And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness. Isa 16:3-5

Clearly this has a latter-day application from the last verse. Immediately prior to this time is a situation where Jews have fled once again into Moab, modern day Jordan. Are these part of those Jews who have responded to the words of Elijah, who will be sent to Israel to prepare the heart of the remnant who survive the destruction of the nation under the hand of Gog? Many among the religious settlers know that the words of Ezekiel 38 seem to have a meaning for the situation today. Perhaps when they see the Gogian forces, sweeping down initially into Egypt before returning to take Jerusalem, they will see this as a sign to flee from the coming destruction.

And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

***He shall enter also into the glorious land**, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.*

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

*But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he **shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many**.*

*And he shall **plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain**; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. Dan 11:40-45*

Daniel's words will be crystal clear to the Jews in the land, this invasion is *to destroy, and utterly to make away many*! This last phrase is an interesting one which we will look at a little later. The wise will understand and flee while they have opportunity. Why should Jordan allow Jews to come and seek refuge in their land? Let us remember that in the time between Jesus' return to his household and the invasion of Israel, the Lord Jesus, as well as sending Elijah to Israel, may have work for other saints to begin the work of instructing the Arab nations. There are

hints that the Arab neighbours to the south and east of Israel are early converts to the acceptance of Israel's soon to be revealed King. (Isa 42:10-13)

God brings the nations down

For those that remain in Israel and Jerusalem, trusting in the superiority of their man-made weapons and alliances, there will be great destruction ahead. We have seen Zechariah's references to the retaking of Jerusalem, but there is another aspect—that of prisoners of war. Joel deals with this aspect in his 3rd chapter, but first note the picture of great destruction at the conclusion of his 2nd chapter.

*And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, **blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke**. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. Joel 2:30, 31*

Clearly this portends God's judgements upon a grand scale. It will affect Israel's political and religious powers—they are to be plunged into darkness ahead of what Joel describes as *the great and the terrible day of the LORD*. There have been other *days of the LORD*, as when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians and the Romans, but this is the final one, the climax of God's purpose with Israel.

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

*I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, **whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land**. Joel 3:1, 2*

So is this referring to a past scattering of God's people? Hardly, because that was done by nations long ago, and these verses speak of God's judgments because of some more recent action of scattering. If we link this with the other prophecies of Israel's destruction at the hands of the Gogian invader, it then all fits together. So part of the overthrowing of many nations (Dan 11: 41), involves the destruction of Israel as a nation. It involves scattering Israel among the nations, and her enemies dividing up the land among themselves. This is a picture of the King of the North being in control of Israel for some time. It is not a case of Israel invaded and very swiftly after that comes their salvation. Gog—as the King of the North—*plants the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain*. (Dan 11:45) Jerusalem becomes the temporary headquarters of the triumphal conquerors. The vast majority of the nations listed in first few verses of Ezekiel 38 are "Christian" countries. If we think in terms of Nebuchadnezzar's Image of Daniel ch 2, which is painting a picture of the same invasion of Israel, we see the image representing the nations covering the territories of the four metals, standing up for its first and only time, on its iron-clay feet, only to be broken by the little stone power. Where does it stand? It must be in Israel, for this is where Christ and the saints as the little stone power, make the first strike in the process of crushing it to powder. The head of gold will be Babylonian; as we shall see, the spirit of Babylon lives on—militarily in Russia and religiously in the Vatican.

So it will be Christianity's challenge to Israel's right to occupy the land. That's why Joel uses the imagery of a religious crusade!

*Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; **Prepare [sanctify] war**, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Joel 3:9*

Make Holy War! This is God's challenge to the nations, to come against His people—and to reap the consequences. Is this unfair? It would be if the nations loved Israel and believed that their return was to fulfil scripture! We know that this is far from the case. As we shall see in chapter 7, anti-Semitism is rife, not just by Muslims but very much by the Christians. Just as Nebuchadnezzar was unaware that his coming against Israel was under the pull of God (Hab 1:6, 11), so it was with the Romans. God had declared 1,600 years before AD 70:

*Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which **the LORD shall send against thee**, **The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far**, ... Deut 28:48, 49*

The Romans had no idea that they were doing God's will! So Gog comes to take a spoil and a prey, yet God declares:

*Thus saith the Lord GOD; **Behold, I am against thee**, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:*

*And **I will turn thee back**, and put hooks into thy jaws, and **I will bring thee forth**, and all thine army, Eze 38:3, 4*

This assembly of nations come, each with their own agenda, Gog for his spoil and the European nations on a crusade. We remarked at the interesting phrase in Daniel 11:44:

*But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with **great fury** to **destroy**, and **utterly to make away many**.*

The Hebrew word for *to make away* has the idea of being devoted to a religious being, and involves their destruction as an offering. (Strong's = to devote to religious uses (especially destruction)). The religious leaders of Christendom will think that they are doing God service by ridding His land of this Jewish nation!

The Vatican has always wanted to have control of Jerusalem; it opposed the return of the Jews to their homeland, and even today calls for Jerusalem to be taken out of Israeli hands and made an "International City". It is clear from the prophets they will—for a while—succeed, when Jerusalem is *overturned* for one last time.

Taken into captivity—again

As well as many Jews being killed and others having fled, there will be those taken prisoners of war—captives in OT terms—and in doing this they will suffer physical abuse.

And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Joel 3:3

Things don't change in warfare; many armies today still pillage and rape. Joel indicates the nations around Israel will gleefully join in to lend a hand with the destruction of the State of Israel.

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Joel 3:4-6

Why should they sell Jews to the Grecians? There are two interesting links. The first is that in World War II, Hitler set up mobile gassing squads for the sole purpose of going into Palestine after they had conquered it, to gas the Jews there. Hitler wasn't given the opportunity, his army in the Middle East was defeated by the Allies and he never obtained control of the region. Interestingly he had a back-up plan and made arrangements for Jews to be sent to Greece (which Germany had conquered) to be held in prisoner of war camps there. Again, this was not put into operation because the British retained control of Palestine. The other fascinating link is that today the Greeks and the Israelis work well together. It is not difficult to see that in this future day, Greece will seek to repay kindnesses to the Jews by offering to pay for them to be sent there. God's anger is not directed against Greece, but those who were happy to receive money to get rid of the Jews.

Tyre and Sidon and the coast of Palestine, speak to us of Lebanon and Gaza, home of Hezbollah and Hamas, implacable foes of Israel, sworn to her demise. So God's wrath is not only against the invading armies, but Israel's neighbours too, for the destruction they are going to inflict on the Jews in Israel.

So we have a grim picture. Jews dead, Jews hiding to the east of the land, Jews exiled to Greece, others held in Israel. The victorious nations of the northern confederacy will celebrate their amazing victory over the once powerful Israeli nation. Doubtless the Christians will offer up prayers to their triune god for giving them the victory! However they know not the mind of Israel's God. Just as in the days of the Judges, there will be Jews who recognise that they have been punished for trusting in their man-made alliances and their skilfully devised weapons, rather than trusting in the protecting arm of Yahweh of Armies. Reduced to extreme straitness, they plead with the Almighty to save them.

We continue in our next chapter to see that their cry will be heard and they will be delivered.

Chapter 4

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REPENTANCE AND DELIVERANCE AT LAST!

Look at these wonderful words written 3,500 years ago in Deuteronomy ch 30. Moses, under inspiration, had sketched out the history of his people before ever they had crossed into the Promised Land, as detailed in Deuteronomy ch 28. That chapter ends with many verses describing their years of trouble. Is that to be their lot? No! Chapter 30 describes their deliverance; but why didn't this immediately follow on from ch 28? It is obviously linked from its opening verse. Why slot in ch 29? Because of its significance; we will look at this matter in more detail in the next chapter, suffice it to say now, that ch 29 has to do with the making of a Covenant with Israel. The things of the New Covenant, spoken of many centuries later by Jeremiah, have a vital connection to the saving of Israel!

God hears Israel's cry

*And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and **thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,***

*And **shalt return** unto the LORD thy God, and **shalt obey** his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with **all thine heart, and with all thy soul;***

That then** the LORD thy God will **turn thy captivity**, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and **gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

*If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, **from thence** will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:*

*And the LORD thy God will **bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed**, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.*

*And the LORD thy God will **circumcise thine heart**, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

*And the LORD thy God will put all these **curses upon thine enemies**, and on them that **hate thee, which persecuted thee.***

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

*And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: **for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good**, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:*

***If** thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if*

thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.
Deut 30:1-10

It is difficult to know where to end the quotation—they are all such incredible verses. Here was God's promise that the day would come when Israel would repent in their hour of need, and from Greece and Jordan and Israel and Jerusalem, prayers would be poured out. And God will send a Saviour and a judge—and a King! Clearly these words have not been fulfilled in their return in our lifetime. It refers to their final scattering out of the land and their re-gathering under their Messiah. This is dependent on their repentance. **IF** ... Yet God knows that this will happen, such is His foreknowledge; 6000 years of earth's history has been working towards this time! In fact in an earlier reference about the same matters, most modern versions are positive.

*When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days, you will return** to the LORD your God and obey his voice.* Deut 4:30 ESV

We need have no doubts about the matter.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. Mic 7:18-20

And so the scene will be set for Israel to be saved from the hands of their enemies. The Lord Jesus with his multitudes of *changed ones* (Ps 68:17 angels—Heb. *changed ones*) are ready to go forth to save his people in their hour of need.

The Gentiles' doom deserved

The details of God's judgements feature in many prophecies. We refer readers to last year's *Milestones* ch 3 for some of these. One of the dramatic happenings is the splitting of the Mount of Olives on the east of Jerusalem. In the forward planning of God, there is a tectonic fault line that runs through the hill from east to west in preparation for this day. Zechariah 14 describes this almighty earthquake which causes the hill to move northwards and southwards, so no longer is there a physical barrier between Jerusalem and the Jordan, but a newly formed valley. Through this valley will flow the new river which the earthquake has caused to rise in Jerusalem and flow down to the Dead Sea. At this time it will no longer be dead and highly saline; it will be healed and the place for fish to prosper! (Eze 47:8, 9) The great earthquake achieves so many objectives. Firstly it brings terror and destruction to Israel's enemies. Such panic



that, as in the days of Jehoshaphat and of Gideon, they will turn upon their companion nations and slay each other.

*And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that **my fury** shall come up in my face.*

*For in **my jealousy** and in the fire of **my wrath** have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall **be a great shaking in the land of Israel**;*

*So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, **shall shake at my presence**, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.*

*And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: **every man's sword shall be against his brother**.*

*And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an **overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone**.*

Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD. Eze 38:18-23

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult [panic] from the LORD shall be among them; **and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour**. Zech 14:13*

The coming blessings

The earthquake has far reaching effects, as it releases pent-up energy in other tectonic hot spots.

*And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, **when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth**.*

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

*To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, **when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth**. Isa 2:19-21*

It will truly be a terrifying time, but fitting for the start of God's judgments upon the Gentile nations and in particular Catholic Europe, which has distorted His Word, deceived the nations and slain His saints and His people.

There will be beneficial effects too. Just as water flows out from Jerusalem, so will water spring up to beautify the deserts. There are several beautiful pictures through the pens of the prophets about this transformation. One of the beneficiaries will be the Jews hiding in the dens and caves across the Jordan.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.
Isa 41:17-20

What care for those fugitives, and what a sign to the world. After a devastating earthquake, the likes of which the world has never known and which one imagines will bring commerce and industry to a stop, there will be all over the Middle East new rivers. As if by magic, trees of all sorts start to grow! What a dramatic sign, following the complete destruction of Gog and his companions on the mountains of Israel, that there is a God of Israel after all! Following the conversion of the Jews who have been spared in Israel as described in Zech 12:10- 13:1; the Arab nations will soon turn to acknowledge Israel's God. They will have to acknowledge Israel's right to the Promised Land. Their own possessions in the Kingdom will be in relation to how they have treated Israel. For those of Gaza and Lebanon who acted violently against Israel, they will be far removed eastward.

*Behold, I will raise them [Jewish prisoners sold to Greece] out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: And **I will sell your sons and your daughters** into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the **Sabeans**, to a people **far off**: for the LORD hath spoken it. Joel 3:7, 8*

The Sabeans were the inhabitants of Sheba at the far corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

While the Arabs are converted—Abraham himself will be there to explain matters to his sons—the Christians will not heed. As Jesus does all the things that scripture has indicated: destroys the enemies of Israel who have invaded the land; brings the Jews in the land into the New Covenant; starts the work of building the Temple; calls upon the Jews still scattered to return; and calls upon the rulers of the nations to submit to him; they will protest that Jesus is the Anti-Christ! For all these steps that we know Jesus is going to take, are the very steps that popular writers on the so-called “Coming Rapture” attribute to the Anti-Christ! The Jews 2,000 years ago rejected the Messiah because he did not fit their preconceptions, and the rulers recognized that they either had to lose their power and authority, or they would have to try to remove this threat to their position; so it will happen again. This time it will be the Christians who reject God's Messiah, because he doesn't fit their preconceptions, again it is a matter of losing power or opposing this King in Zion.

We will now look at the importance of the New Covenant and the restoration of the nation of Israel.

Chapter 5:

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THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT

We correctly understand the importance of the New Covenant, but do we appreciate its relevance to the nation of Israel? Perhaps we belong to an ecclesia where our traditional understanding of the New Covenant has been lost. Where there seems little connection between our weekly remembrance in the Breaking of Bread and God's work in redeeming the nation of Israel. Where little is spoken or prayed about that links our faith to that of Israel. Yet this is the key to our understanding. The Hope of Israel is not some academic matter, it lies at the heart of what is about to unfold.

The New Covenant, a covenant for the nation of Israel

It is Jeremiah who reveals the details of God's New Covenant in ch 31:31. Let's briefly look at this and the previous chapter. It would be a very profitable exercise to read these two chapters at this point. This verse sets the scene:

For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. Jer 30:3

Is this referring to their re-gathering under Zerubbabel, Jehochin's grandson? It can't be, because it describes how that God will give them a King—which didn't happen then.

But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Jer 30:9

Neither can it refer to their return in our day. This still lies in the future, when David will be alive again, though it will be his greater son who is the actual King. David in the Hebrew is *beloved*—and *the beloved their king*. So no problems associating that with the Lord Jesus, God's beloved Son, who having returned and saved Israel, will be ruling over them as their King. (If we have any doubts then see verse 24—in the **latter days** ye shall consider it.) In the light of our previous chapter, the preceding verses are full of meaning.

For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

*For it shall come to pass **in that day**, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: Jer 30:5-8*

The time of Jacob's trouble is what we have seen in the events of their conquest under Gog; but God is going to save them. He makes that crystal clear!

*Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, **I will save thee from afar**, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.*

*For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, **yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.***

Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. Jer 30:10, 11, 16

God, through Jeremiah, explains in the next few verses how the cities will be rebuilt; the voice of praise will be on their lips; and they shall be established. God then declares:

*And their nobles [RV prince] shall be **of themselves**, and their governor [RV ruler] shall proceed from the **midst of them**; and I will cause **him** to draw near, and **he** shall approach unto me: for who is this **that engaged his heart to approach unto me?** saith the LORD.*

***And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.** Jer 30:21, 22*

A clear reference to the Lord Jesus, born of Abraham's seed, he will be their righteous King. This is what he was born to:

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:32, 33

Scripture is consistent. The Nation of Israel is **his nation**. So when the angel Gabriel explained to Joseph about what had happened to his espoused wife-to-be Mary he also explained how the child was to be named and why he was to be so named.

*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for **he shall save his people from their sins.** Mat 1:21*

Yes the Jews are and will be his people; his sacrifice will cover their sins, as it has done ours, if we have been immersed into the Name of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah ch 31 is another truly wonderful chapter. It shows God's compassion to His people. The first nine verses are full of God's actions.

I [will] be the God of all the families of Israel ... I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. ... I will build thee ... I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, ... I [will] lead them ... I am a father to Israel.

There can be no mistaking these words:

*Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.***

For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Jer 31:10-11

The nations thought that **they** had scattered Israel! But no, it was God's work. Although terrible and painful, look at it now from the end result. A holy and a righteous nation bringing forth praise to their God! He declares:

*And it shall come to pass, that **like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant,*** saith the LORD. Jer 31:28

So God has been patiently working for 3,500 years to bring about this great change in Israel's heart. The time scale is difficult to comprehend; but in that day it will be seen that God was right to choose Abraham and his people, the nation of Israel.

So this chapter reaches its climax. Many other prophets had spoken of the change in God's people in the latter days, but Jeremiah records this wonderful promise.

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:***

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

*But **this shall be the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: **for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*** Jer 31:31-34

Oh why do we hear so little of these glorious things from our platforms? This is the heart of the Hope of Israel! Here we are being shown what the types and shadows of the Law pointed to—the work of Israel's Messiah. The one born of Mary yet Son of God; with a mind filled with the word of God. A reflection on earth of his Father in heaven. Whose sacrifice was once for all time. Whose efficacy not only reached forward to generations then unborn, but backwards to generations who had walked in hope of a coming Messiah who could restore what Adam had broken—fellowship with God.

*And for this reason He is the Mediator of the **new covenant**, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the **first covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Heb 9:15 NKJV*

Paul is here concerned with those under the Mosaic Law; he has been showing the efficacy of the things of the New Covenant over the things of the Old Covenant. For the many that lived before the Law, people like Abraham and Sarah, Noah and Shem, Abel and Seth, Jesus' offering encompassed them too.

What we have to comprehend is that the New Covenant in Christ is in fact older than the Mosaic Old Covenant. The New Covenant is based upon the promises God made to Abraham, many years before the Law was given at Sinai. The Abrahamic Covenant awaited the better covenant sacrifice than the blood of bulls with which the Old Covenant was confirmed. (Exo 24:3-8).

- The New Covenant holds out life everlasting (Jer 31:36); the Old but long life in the land (Exo 20:12).
- The New Covenant holds out possession in the Land of Promise for ever, the Old only possession as tenants (Lev 25:23).
- The New Covenant is written on the hearts of men and women; the Old was written of tables of stone (Deut 9:10).
- The New Covenant is a covenant based on faith and deeds; the Old was a walk of deeds.

Several of the other prophecies show the link to the Abrahamic Promises. The words of John's father Zechariah are beautiful.

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

*To perform **the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant**;*

The oath which he sware to our father Abraham. Luke 1:70-73

Or these words of Moses, spoken while still at Sinai, but clearly from the context speaking of a long distant future, for this chapter is closely parallel to the words of Deuteronomy ch 28, spoken at the end of the wilderness journey:

... if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. Lev 26:41, 42

So this is in the era of the New Covenant times, when the promises to Abraham and David will reach their climax. Jesus the Messiah will be King, all the earth will be blessed in Abram and his great descendant.

What the New Covenant holds out, which the Law couldn't, is life everlasting; made possible through the blood of Christ. Under the Law there was an annual Day of Atonement, when there was a solemn enactment that pardoned the sins of Israel since the last Day of Atonement. It was highly symbolic of the work of the Lord Jesus, the true scapegoat that should bear away sins.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
Heb 10:1-4

Under the New Covenant this remembrance again of sins will not be needed.

... And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Heb 10:17

Israel brought into the New Covenant

The nation of Israel will be brought into this New Covenant, they will be in the same position as we can be today, if we are *in Christ* through immersion into his Name. There will be a difference though. The immortalised apostles will be their rulers. The Lord Jesus will be there as their King. So they will walk in faith. God will gather all the Jews from around the world to their land.

*For **I** will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and **will bring you into your own land.***

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

***A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:** and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. Eze 36:24-25

Other passages make it clear that, as in New Testament times, they will have to accept that Jesus is their Messiah, before being immersed to wash away their sins. Zechariah shows how that those in the land at the time of Gog's destruction, convinced by the marks of crucifixion still visible as powerful, irrefutable evidence of his claims; having repented, they will be immersed into Christ.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. Zec 13:1

Water will be the medium, as now, for this new birth into Christ. For the scattered Jews, they will be brought into the *bonds of the covenant*.

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Eze 20:34-38

We have to ask where are they brought to? It is an action of being led on a journey to Israel via this *wilderness of the people*, rather than a reference to the location where they are living at this time. It is a picture of faithful and unfaithful Jews being taken to a location for judgement, which is on the way to Israel. Sinai seems to be the most fitting place—for this is where they originally came to, in order to become God's people. The phrase *to pass under the rod* is the phrase used of separating sheep from goats in a mixed herd. The shepherd uses his rod to turn them to the left or right. It is also a phrase which is used to show a shepherd not only counting his sheep as he taps each one as it enters the small aperture of the sheep pen, but inspecting, as he could use his rod to check through their fleece. Those that *pass under the rod* are brought into the Covenant. If this indeed takes place at Sinai, we know that there was abundant water there in the days of Moses, and that can be brought forth again.

The *rebels* will not be allowed to be immersed; they will *purged out*. Under Moses a whole generation perished in the wilderness, so will those who do not accept that Jesus is their Messiah. It will demand faith. Christ will be in the Land, so they won't have seen him, but will have heard of what has happened there. There will also be the evidence of the immortal ones whose task is to educate the returning Jews, but it will still need faith to accept the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. Accepted Jews, having entered the New Covenant, will then be allowed to enter the land and to receive their inheritance in their tribal canton. (Eze ch 48)

So now we can go back to the reason why the things described in Deuteronomy ch 30 don't immediately flow on from chapter 28. What is the importance of chapter 29? It tells of God renewing His covenant which He had made with His People nearly 40 years earlier at Sinai. Israel were just about to go into the Promised Land; the wilderness journey was almost at an end and God renews the covenant with this new generation. It is by this covenant that they are able to enter the Land. We can see that this was God's type of the New Covenant that would, under the greater than Joshua (but his namesake), bring them into the Land of Promise!

We begin this year's survey of significant events by looking at Iran.

Chapter 6

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IRAN'S ARC OF INFLUENCE

Iran features in Biblical prophecies under the name of Persia. This was the home of Haman the Agagite who sought to exterminate the Jews. His latter-day equivalent, President Ahmadinejad, shares this world-view. Persia was represented by the silver of Nebuchadnezzar's image, or the bear of Daniel ch. 7. And as such is part of the image that is to be destroyed when it stands upon its feet in the latter-days. (Dan 2:28) Or, in the language of Daniel ch. 7, will have its dominion taken away. (Dan 7:12) and made to submit under the rule of Christ, when the judgements are poured out by the ancient of days, the Lord Jesus and his saints.

Iran today

At the moment, Iran is playing a role in the Middle East which is not the one destined in scripture. Iran seeks to take over the Middle East and to be the dominant power, hence her drive to have nuclear weapons so that she can support her influence and threats with fearful weapons. This is not however the picture painted in scripture for Iran. Her role is to be a companion to Gog. She is listed as such in Ezekiel 38.

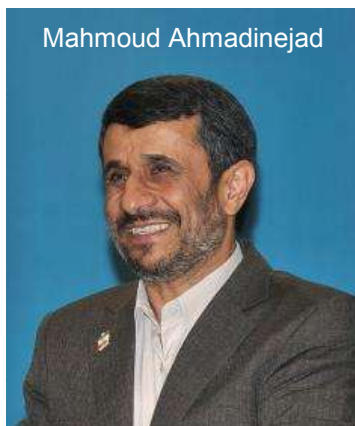
Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Eze 38:5

It is clear that the head is Babylonian and Russia is heir to that position. Iran is a companion, not the leader, though she is the first of the companion nations to be listed.

Iran is potentially a wealthy country—she sits on the world's second biggest reserves of both oil and gas. Iran however is being crippled by her leader's drive to nuclear weapons and is being severely curtailed by the West's sanctions which forbid other nations dealing with her in several important economic fields.

In 2013, Ahmadinejad will have completed his 2nd term in office; there are elections scheduled on 14th June but he is not allowed to stand for a 3rd term. Many will not be sad to see him go; his re-election results were widely seen as rigged. His drive for nuclear weapons is bankrupting the country; food and energy prices are rocketing and the Iranian currency, the rial, is plummeting as Western sanctions bite. Before the 1979 revolution a US dollar would get you about 71 rials, today you would get over 12,000! A 500gm white loaf would set you back over 6,000 rials. The government is considering slashing 4 zeros off its currency to make it manageable.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad



Shi'ia domination and the 12th Imam

Iran is however playing an important role, because it is setting the scene of the final showdown, when Gog, as the King of the North, comes against Egypt and Israel as foretold in Daniel 11:40-45. Iran—the Biblical Persia—is fanatically Shi'ia and is very much opposed to the Sunni Muslims who are far more numerous. Shi'ism is concentrated in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Bahrain and claims 10-20% of Muslim worshippers. They are far more militant than the Sunnis. The fiery President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is the 6th president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was founded on the fall of the Shah of Persia in 1979. He belongs to the Twelver branch of the several divisions within Shi'ism, believing that there have been 12 Imams since Muhammad, who are regarded as his spiritual and political successors.

The twelfth and final Imam is Muhammad al-Mahdi, who is believed by the Twelvers to be currently alive, and hidden until he returns to bring justice to the world. Gleave, Robert. "Imamate". *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim world*

Muhammad al-Mahdi, was born in AD 869, so he has been hidden for a long time! It is Ahmadinejad's hope that the actions that he is taking to eliminate Israel will be the prelude to this re-appearance of the 12th Imam.

Shi'as believe that Imam al-Mahdi will reappear when the world has fallen into chaos and civil war emerges between the human race for no reason. At this time, it is believed, half of the true believers will ride from Yemen carrying white flags to Makkah, while the other half will ride from Karbala, in Iraq, carrying black flags to Makkah. At this time, Imam al-Mahdi will come wielding Allah's Sword, the Blade of Evil's Bane, Zulfiqar, the Double-Bladed Sword. *Wikipedia*

This is a matter which seems to strongly influence Ahmadinejad's actions. Every year he has been Iran's President, he has addressed the United Nations on the occasion of their General Assembly of world leaders and made reference to this "2nd coming". This is why the elimination of Israel is so important.

Islamic theologians say Muslim political leaders today are supposed to set into motion the annihilation of Judeo-Christian civilization as we know it and create the conditions of chaos and carnage to hasten the arrival of the Twelfth Imam. Then the Mahdi is supposed to turn all these wars and killings to his advantage and establish justice and peace. ... it is this Shi'a end times theology that is driving Iranian foreign policy today. This is why the mullahs in Tehran are working so hard to pursue nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them, to prepare the way for the rise of this Islamic kingdom or caliphate. *Joel C. Rosenberg* 26-Sep-12

Iran, under Ahmadinejad has accelerated the drive to achieve the twin aims of the more extremist Shi'as, that of driving out Israel and America from the Middle East and taking over the Sunni kingdoms and turning them over to Shia control. Iran has chosen to work openly with many states, but also works through sponsoring terrorist organisations; our map shows the main areas of Iranian influence, which are gradually surrounding Israel. Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in

Lebanon are well known terrorist organisations, trained, armed and sponsored by Iran as proxy forward armies. Her sponsorship of Syria has kept Assad in power. With the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, Iran has been able to increase her influence there considerably and uses Iraq as a transit country for supplies to Syria. To the east she has strong ties to Pakistan and Afghanistan, making life difficult for western troops there. To the south, Shi'a influence in Yemen has been a source of trouble to the US and Saudi Arabia who have been trying to bring stability to this volatile region. With her expanding navy she has been able to establish bases in Africa.



Iranian naval forces are key to maintaining and expanding Tehran's weapons smuggling routes. In 2007, Tehran restructured the Iranian navy and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps navy, putting the corps' naval focus on the Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. This allowed the more traditional Iranian navy to focus on blue-water efforts that would expand Tehran's naval influence, specifically in the triangle connecting the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca and the Bab el Mandeb strait. Bab el Mandeb is of great importance to Iran, as it is a natural choke point between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Iran's focus on expansion in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea serves several purposes. First, it establishes an Iranian presence along a key transportation route where Iran can protect its vessels from Somali pirates. Second, it is a military tactic, giving the Iranian navy influence outside the Persian Gulf, something Tehran believes is necessary for its success as a regional power. As Iran attempts to move its navy toward a blue-water capability, the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea will be where developments occur first. Finally, it supports Iran's goals in eastern Africa. Iran's navy is not advanced enough to challenge other navies in the region, but the maritime presence in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea allows the Iranians to provide cover for their weapons smuggling routes to the north. *Stratfor* 29-Oct-12

From these countries along the African coastline, Iran is able to organise the onward transit of its weapons.

Djibouti. This strategically situated African country has been cultivating ties with Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi pointed to the strong political relationship between Iran and Djibouti and highlighted the importance of increasing bilateral economic cooperation.

Djibouti's president also described the relationship between the two countries as special and said that the ground is prepared for enhancing bilateral economic relations. *MehrNews.com* 17-Nov-12

Eritrea. There is an interesting tussle going on in this rather lawless country. It gained independence from Ethiopia in 1991, and has fought several wars with its neighbours since. Both Iran and Israel have established bases, Israel in the north and Iran in the south!

Iran's operations in Eritrea are relevant to Tehran's larger goal of controlling the Bab el Mandeb strait and the water route to the Suez Canal. Moreover, naval ships from a dozen Western and other countries are stationed just miles from Assab to fight piracy in the Indian Ocean and conduct other security operations in the region. The United States and France have large bases in Djibouti, near Assab. Thus, Iran's presence in Eritrea could be more significant in terms of intelligence gathering than tactical defense.

Israel also operates inside Eritrea. According to *Stratfor* diplomatic and media sources, Israel has small naval teams in the Dahlak archipelago and Massawa and a listening post in Amba Soira. Israel's presence in Eritrea is very focused and precise, involving intelligence gathering in the Red Sea and monitoring Iran's activities. Various *Stratfor* diplomatic sources have said that Israel's presence in Eritrea is small but significant.

In 2008, Tehran struck a deal with Asmara to maintain a military presence in Assab—officially to protect the state-owned renovated Soviet-era oil refinery there. In return, Asmara received cash and other military support from Tehran through official and unofficial channels. In 2009, the same year in which Eritrea openly supported Iran's nuclear program, the Export Development Bank of Iran transferred \$35 million to support the Eritrean economy.

Eritrea's decision to accommodate Israel and Iran is not an ideological choice. It is a way for a small and insecure nation to meet its economic and security needs. *Stratfor* 11-Dec-12

Sudan. Again we have another interesting situation. Sudan's president Omar Bashir has links to Iran.

For its part, Sudan has long courted deeper ties with Iran, with whom it signed a military cooperation agreement in March 2008.

Bashir has made several visits to Iran, the last in August when Tehran hosted the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Bashir has held onto power for 23 years following a bloodless coup in 1999, but is increasingly under threat, as Sudan struggles to overcome a \$38 billion debt, particularly after the secession

of oil-rich South Sudan last year and the renewal of US economic sanctions last month. *Jerusalem Post* 11-Dec-12

In December, two big Iranian ships docked in Port Sudan, allegedly on a goodwill visit. Israel's concern was that these ships were loaded with arms shipments destined for Hamas, to be conveyed along the many coastal roads used to smuggle goods to Egypt and then across Sinai to Gaza. It was in October that Israel is thought to have been responsible to the bombing of a factory outside Khartoum, Sudan's capital, which is said to have been set-up by Iran to manufacture rockets for Hamas and other terrorist organisations under Iran's control. There were a number of containers stacked up outside the factory, which were thought to be full of rockets ready for onward transit. The destruction of the factory seems to have resulted in a spectacular inferno.

The complex was the main source of Iranian Grad and long-range Fajr rocket supplies to Hamas and Jihad Islami. Fifty long-range Fajr 5 rockets were already packed ready for shipment to Gaza via Egypt, the largest consignment Iran had ever smuggled through to the Gaza Strip. It had been prepared for the next stage of the Palestinian Gaza war on Israel. *Debka* 23-Nov-12

Reports indicate that Iran is actively pursuing a naval base in Sudan.

Sudan's President Omar Bashir has reached a "very advanced" arrangement with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to establish a naval base either in Port Sudan or elsewhere on the Red Sea,

By extending its naval presence as far as Sudan and the Red Sea, Iran would gain several advantages, including in regards to combating Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden but also in gaining control over the Red Sea shipping route, part of the channel through which Iran ships arms to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. An Iranian naval presence in Port Sudan would also upset Iran's Sunni rival Saudi Arabia, located just across the Red Sea. *Jerusalem Post* 11-Dec-12

Hamas. Is very dependent upon Iran for its weaponry and money to support their ambitious building plans which has seen weapons concealed in the basements of public buildings such as hospitals and schools and offices integrated into parts of hotels. Hamas has learnt from Hezbollah, that Israel will be very reluctant to cause civilian casualties, and takes greater measures to avoid them than any other army. So the extensive rebuilding in Gaza has seen the embedding of military offices and weapon stores within the civilian population of Gaza

Israel's Operation Pillar of Defense, during which hundreds of rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza, clearly revealed Iran's key role in providing weapons and the means for their production to Palestinian organizations in Gaza. It was also the first time that senior Iranian spokesmen have openly and proudly acknowledged that Iran is channelling military aid, including advanced Fajr-3 (Dawn) and Fajr-5 rockets, to these groups. The deputy secretary-general of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Ziad Nakhle, told Hizbullah's *Al-Manar* TV that "the weapons in the hands of the Palestinian resistance are Iranian from the

individual bullet to the missiles and their production plants.” *www.almanar* quoted *JCPA* 12-Dec-12

Iran is busy rebuilding Hamas' stocks as *Debka* 14-Dec-12 reported.

On Dec. 6, the high profile Hamas leader, Imad al-Alami, wound up three days of secret, brass-tacks discussions in Tehran. He left with the consent of top Iranian Revolutionary Guards and intelligence officials, including al Qods commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani, to assist in repair operations for the Iranian and Hizballah arms smuggling tunnels into the Gaza Strip, in order to resupply the Palestinian missile and ammunition stores depleted by the Israeli operation of Nov. 11-21.

Hezbollah had pulled back from supporting Hamas, but they were given instructions to renew their support to Hamas. *Debka* 14-Dec-12 added:

According to our military sources, Iran thereupon notified Hizballah that the ties with the Gaza rulers were back on track and Iran would be picking up the momentum for building up a stake in the Palestinian enclave which had been slowed down by the Israeli offensive against terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah. This organisation was set up 30 years ago to fight Iran's battles around the world.

Since its establishment in Lebanon 30 years ago, Hezbollah has, without interruption, carried out or planned a variety of terrorist attacks around the globe, using different methods. Those terrorist attacks are part of Iranian policy, which uses Hezbollah as its main proxy through the Islamic Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force and other governmental institutions. The targets and emphases change from time to time according to Iranian and Hezbollah considerations and interests. The targets include Israel and the Jewish people, the United States and other Western countries, Hezbollah and Syria's opponents in Lebanon, and Arab regimes hostile to Iran and the "resistance camp" it leads.

In recent years Hezbollah has been involved in terrorist (and occasionally guerilla) activities in different arenas using various methods against its targets. At the same time, with Iranian and Syrian support, it has been upgrading its military-terrorist infrastructure in Lebanon, which far surpasses those of other terrorist organizations in the Middle East and beyond.

The Iranian leadership regards Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah as a "soldier [in the ranks] of supreme leader Khamenei", while Hezbollah regards Khamenei as an ideological and strategic source of authority. For Iran, establishing Hezbollah and bringing the Shi'ites in Lebanon under its influence was the most successful achievement of exporting the Iranian revolution. Hezbollah's terrorism is a strategic tool of the Iranian regime both in Lebanon and beyond. It is perceived by Iran as an effective weapon to promote Iranian interests in the Middle East and for the needs of its struggle against Israel, the United States and the West. *Meir Amit Intelligence Information* "Hezbollah" 18-Dec-12

Syria. Together with Russia, Iran has backed Bashir Assad's grip on power in Syria. Assad belongs to a minority sect which has links to the Shi'as, whereas the

great proportion of Syrians are Sunni. With the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Syria which started in January 2011, Syria has been very dependent upon a steady supply of weapons as the civil war drags on. Russia seems to have been slowing down her support, making the Iranians the main source, flying them in across Iraq daily. *Reuters* quoted from a Western Intelligence document that claimed:

Planes are flying from Iran to Syria via Iraq on an almost daily basis, carrying Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel and tens of tonnes of weapons to arm the Syrian security forces and militias fighting against the rebels.

This is part of a revised Iranian modus operandi. ... [Iran was also] continuing to assist the regime in Damascus by sending trucks overland via Iraq. *Reuters* 20-Sep-12

Figures of 40 to 60,000 killed since the uprising began are being quoted, with many more injured and many thousands (28,000 was one figure) who have simply disappeared. The refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan are overflowing, with estimates of over half a million who have fled and estimated to climb to a million by the middle of 2013 unless the fighting ceases. If Assad falls then Iran is likely to lose its hold here.

Turkey. She is a valuable trading partner, and with sanctions biting and many markets closed to Iranian goods, trade has boomed between the two countries.

Trade between Iran and Turkey has risen nearly 50 percent this year, according to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). The monetary value of Iran-Turkey trade reached \$20 billion in a 10-month period ending in November, the news agency reported. *Arutz Sheva* 09-Dec-12

Because of the difficulties of transferring money to Iran caused by sanctions, Turkey has been paying for Iranian oil with gold!

Iran is extending a gas pipe line to Turkey to connect up to existing lines so that Iran can export gas via Turkey. Meanwhile Turkey is buying gas for her own use.

Iran and Turkey have signed a 25 years contract under which Iran delivers 10 bn M³ of gas per year to the neighboring country. *Fars News* [Iranian] 16-Sep-12

It is an interesting interplay between these two countries as both seek to be the Middle East power that influences the whole region! There are many Arab countries who would prefer not to come under the influence of either of them!

Iran to be curbed

It seems clear that the Iranian threat against Israel has to be eliminated for a time, in order for Israel to dwell securely and safely as described in Ezekiel 38:11. It may be that the people of Iran will rebel against their religious leaders who are leading the country down a ruinous pathway, or Israel, with America, will act to destroy her nuclear capability, or angelic hands may be involved in a completely unexpected solution to the present tensions that will leave Israel secure. We will return to this when we come to consider Israel.

We now look at Israel, and the “Pillar of Cloud” operation against Gaza.

Chapter 7

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ISRAEL DEFENDS HERSELF AGAIN

Many times Israel has had to defend herself against those who seek to destroy her. Scripture uses the very telling phrase to describe her enemies of these last days as grievous thorns and pricking briars. (Eze 28:24). This is so apt, unless completely rooted out they regrow. Israel has never succeeded in rooting out the terrorists in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, and so they come back and Israel has to take action in self-defence. 2012 saw Operation Pillar of Cloud or Pillar of Defence as many called it. Before looking at this, let's take a wider sweep by looking at why the nations hate Israel and desire to see her disappear from the Middle East.

Why is Israel so hated?

God did say that they would be, and so this is what we see.

*And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that **despise them round about them**; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God. Eze 28:26*

This is written from the viewpoint of the Kingdom Age; no more will her neighbours *despise* her. Even earlier, Moses had recorded these words, again from the viewpoint of their future salvation:

*And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on **them that hate thee**, which **persecuted thee**. Deut 30:7*

So it is not surprising to learn that there has been a long history of despising and persecuting the Jew. While they were scattered among the nations it took the form of pogroms and discrimination, not being allowed certain types of occupations. Under a Church dominated Europe and Russia there were frequent persecutions. What happened in World War II was no new experience for the Jew, though it probably was the most ruthless attempt to annihilate them.

When Israel became a nation in 1948, then the focus came upon the State of Israel. This was set up as a religious State, where the Jews could worship freely and the laws of the land revolved around Shabbat and the feast days which are still remembered. The Jewish State has allowed freedom of worship; Muslims are able to keep Friday as their special day and Christians Sunday. But it is a Jewish State, to give a homeland primarily for Jews. It is run on democratic lines, any citizen, whether Jew or Arab, can stand in the Israeli government elections. There are a number of Arab seats in the Knesset.

Israel is thus different from her neighbours. There, one doesn't find freedom for other religions, the Jews have been expelled and the Christians suffer discrimination. In fact the only country in the region where Christian numbers are growing is in Israel! There is a steady exodus of Christians from Israel's neighbours—mainly to Europe to escape the harassment at the hands of the Muslims.

The Muslim hatred of Israel

The majority religion of the Arab nations is Muslim; but not all Muslims are Arabs—Iran is a prime example. Many nations of North Africa were conquered by the Mohammedans and had this religion imposed upon them. If we think of the nations that we would regard as true Arabs, these would be descendants of Abraham, but not through Isaac. So we have descendants of Ishmael and the sons of Abraham's concubine Keturah. Their conflict has biblical origins.

We read of the conflict between Ishmael and the yet unborn Isaac when the angel spoke to Hagar these words:

Of Ishmael: *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* Gen 16:12

The phrase *wild man* has the idea of a *wild ass man*; wild asses roam around, living near to habitation (*in the presence of*), but wandering from place to place, just as the Arab Bedouin do to this day.

Abraham sent his sons that he had with Keturah eastward to separate them from Isaac.

Abraham's other children: *But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.* Gen 25:6

We then read of the conflict in the family between Esau and Jacob in the blessing chapter.

To Jacob: *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.* Gen 27:29

To Esau: *And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.* Gen 27:40

Esau's reaction: *And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.* Gen 27:41

Millennia later these peoples would espouse Mohammedism, which correctly rejects the Trinity, and recognises the promises to Abraham. The Qur'an (Koran) speaks of accepting the Jews as children of Abraham.

The Qur'an declares that the Jews are the chosen people, exalted among the nations of the world.^[14] It clearly declares the Jews (Bani Israil) as the only owners of the Land of Israel, which is al-Ard al-Muqaddasah; al-Ard al-Mubarakah; Ard Bani Israil (the sacred land; the blessed land; the land of the People of Israel), and they are not allowed to leave it, for otherwise they will be punished.^[15] "It is the promise of God, and God does not go back on his

promise."^[16] The Qur'an goes on to acknowledge that the Jewish first and second kingdoms existed but states that they were punished by God.^[17] ¹

However, recent generations deny that the Jews ever had any connections with the Land. They claim that the Arabs have always lived here.

Palestinian scholars and media have touted the claim that the Palestinian Arab nation has been rooted in its land for thousands of years since the human settlement of the "Arab-Palestinian-Canaanite" city of Jericho—the oldest city in the history of human civilization. In their claim, the history and heritage of Jericho confirm the Arab-Palestinian-Canaanite narrative concerning the entire Palestinian land, from the sea to the river, and negate the false Zionist narrative. Jericho allegedly proves that the Palestinian nation is the most ancient and earliest of all, whose roots are the most deeply dug into history.^[10]

Throughout Palestinian media and education, all Israeli cities and areas are featured as Palestinian in origin, including Haifa, Acre, Ashkelon, Jaffa, Safed, Tiberias, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Kiryat Shmonah, and the Negev. These are the "Palestinian homeland" or "occupied Palestine."^[30] Instilling these assertions and psychological worldview as facts among youth and in the political arena requires a multilevel process of socialization and indoctrination, beginning with the education system. Reinforcement is constant and all-pervasive: Palestine is continually represented as an area of 27,000 sq km, and an overwhelming Palestinian majority believes this is the truth.^[31]

The Palestinians also portray Israelis of today as having no genetic, religious, cultural, or historical connections to the Jews of the past, who are supposed to have disappeared long ago.²

Interestingly this has not always been the case as this little piece shows:

I bought a tourist guide book written in 1962 by Abed Er-Rahman Rissas and entitled: "*El Haram Esh Sharif*" (The Noble Sanctuary), the Arabic name for the Temple Mount. On page 1, the book says: "On Mount Moriah, Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac [Genesis 22:2], and here, Ornan the Jebusite had his threshing floor, which David bought and upon which he erected an altar, later to be superseded by Solomon's Temple. *Israel Today* 20-Dec-12

Jesus the Palestinian

The Arabs also have taken over Christianity. Yasser Arafat was constantly making the claim that Jesus was the first Palestinian martyr and that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were Palestinians not Jews.

¹ Founding National Myths: Fabricating Palestinian History by David Bukay, *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2012, pp. 23-30 ^[14] Qur: al-Baqarah, 2:47; ad-Dukhan, 44:32. ^[15] Qur: al-Maidah, 5:21; al-A'araf, 7:137; Bani Israil, 17:104. ^[16] Qur: ar-Rum, 30:6. ^[17] Qur: Bani Israil, 17:104-7.

² Ibid. ^[10] *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Oct. 21, 2010. ^[30] Palestinian al-Fath TV, Apr. 11, June 14, 24, Sept. 2, Nov. 1, 2011; *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Jan. 31, June 17, 20, 2011. ^[31] Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 16, June 11, 25, July 5, Aug. 12, 13, 19, 2010.

Another Palestinian tactic is aimed at co-opting Christianity. For the PA leaders, Jesus is defined as a Palestinian who preached Islam, thus denying not only Jewish history and Christian legitimacy but also strengthening ancient Palestinian history. According to this narrative, Jesus was a Muslim prophet,^[21] like all other Jewish-born figures,^[22] who was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, and moved to Jerusalem.^[23] Therefore, Jesus the messiah is a Palestinian par excellence, the son of Mary the Palestinian.^[24] The Virgin Mary, the woman of love and peace, is of the nation of Palestine, whose roots are grounded in the depths of history.^[25] Jesus is a shahid, a holy martyr of Islam, the only Palestinian prophet, and the first Palestinian shahid who was tortured in this land.^[26] ¹

This perhaps goes to explain the depth of hatred the Arabs have of the Jews. The archaeological evidence for the Jewish occupation of the Land is however, overwhelming. One can see the problem that Israel faces dealing with people brought up from childhood to see the Jews as having no connection with the land and that their claims are all fabrications.

The Christian hatred of the Jews

It is little different with the nations further away, the so-called Christian nations. Their children are, or at least a generation ago were, brought up to hate the Jews. They were God-killers! If one believes in a Trinity, then crucifying Jesus was crucifying God! The Jewish leaders did say, *His blood be on us and on our children*; (Mat 27:25) and that has been the case. Jews were regarded during many periods of history as the lowest level of humanity.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in their answers to “36 Questions about the Holocaust” has this question and answer.

Question 16. Why were the Jews singled out for extermination?

Answer: The explanation of the Nazis' implacable hatred of the Jew rests on their distorted world view which saw history as a racial struggle. They considered the Jews a race whose goal was world domination and who, therefore, were an obstruction to Aryan dominance. They believed that all of history was a fight between races which should culminate in the triumph of the superior Aryan race. Therefore, they considered it their duty to eliminate the Jews, whom they regarded as a threat. Moreover, in their eyes, the Jews' racial origin made them habitual criminals who could never be rehabilitated and were, therefore, hopelessly corrupt and inferior.

There is no doubt that other factors contributed toward Nazi hatred of the Jews and their distorted image of the Jewish people. **These included the centuries-**

¹ Ibid. [21] Qur: al-Imran, 3:51-2; an-Nisa, 4:171; al-Maidah, 5:111. [22] Qur: al-Baqarah, 2:127-8, 133; al-Imran, 3:84; Yunus, 10:71-2, 84. [23] Palestinian al-Fath TV, Apr. 21, 2006; al-Hayat al-Jadida, Mar. 9, Oct. 28, 2006. [24] Al-Hayat al-Jadida, Nov. 18, 2005; Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 12, 2009. [25] com.Palvoice Mar. 17, 2010. [26] Al-Hayat al-Jadida, June 24, Dec. 11, 2000, June 17, 2005, Oct. 28, 2006, Apr. 30, Nov. 18, 2008; Palestinian al-Fath TV, June 9, Dec. 24, 2009.

old tradition of Christian anti-Semitism which propagated a negative stereotype of the Jew as a Christ-killer, agent of the devil, and practitioner of witchcraft. Also significant was the political anti-Semitism of the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, which singled out the Jew as a threat to the established order of society. These combined to point to the Jew as a target for persecution and ultimate destruction by the Nazis.

Hitler's rise to power was swift and his grip on power was ruthless, nothing was allowed to stand in his way. Within a few months his attack on the Jews had begun.

To Hitler, as he had publicly declared 1000 times, the Jews were not Germans, and though he did not exterminate them at once (only a relative few—a few thousand, that is—were robbed, beaten or murdered during the first months), he issued laws excluding them from public service, the universities and the professions. And on April 1, 1933 he proclaimed a national boycott of Jewish shops. *Shirer*. The rise and fall of the Third Reich.

We know where this ended—with the mass extermination of the Jews of Europe.

Christianity in Europe and Russia developed this despising and persecuting attitude toward the Jews. Many Jews were slain by crusaders on their way to and from the "Holy Land". That spirit lives on today. Even the Protestant Churches show deep levels of intolerance of Israel's right to a homeland and support "divestment and boycott movements" which encourage their members to stop buying Israeli goods and not to invest in companies with Israeli connections.

... this hatred for Israel, which harks back to millennia of hatred for the Jews, is rooted **"deep in the heart of the Protestant Church,"** and is unlikely to be uprooted. *Israel Today* 09-Nov-12

There was an interesting article in the Canadian newspaper the *National Post* 17-Mar-12, written on the occasion of the annual "Israel Apartheid Week", which is organised by the Canadian University Campus'.

Liberal leader Bob Rae stated: "It is ... difficult to understand why this year the focus continues to be on Israel, rather than on the appalling massacres and human-rights violations that have reached intolerable heights in countries such as Syria and Iran."

The short answer to Rae's haunting question is that anti-Israelism has never been about human rights. **Anti-Israelism has always been about the destruction of one nation and one people.**

For many Israelis and many Jews, the continuing intensity of that ancient hatred understandably feels a crushing, intolerable and ultimately baffling burden.

The Folly of Fulfilment Theology

In recent years a new form of Replacement Theology has arrived on the Christian scene called **Fulfilment Theology**. Like Replacement Theology it ends up contending that, since the time of Jesus, the Jews no longer enjoy a god-given national destiny in the land of Canaan. This time around it is not the Church that replaces Israel and takes over all her promises in scripture but in

fact Jesus. He fulfils in His life and redemptive work all the promises that God ever made to the Jews; even the promise that Canaan would be the everlasting possession of the Jewish people! Jesus is the Promised Land. This allows the proponents of this theory to distance themselves from the awful evil (as in the Apartheid State) and anti-Semitic consequences (as in the Christian pogroms of history) of Replacement Theology. However, they end up believing the same thing!

Much of the above is backed up by scripture but falsely so! For these people it always comes down to the same thing and that is to find a way to disinvest the Jews of any divine action or biblical significance in Israel's modern day restoration. Once this position has been taken Israel can be viewed as any other nation state entangled in an internal conflict. This usually means that any people can lay claim to the Holy Land and they do. Israel is an occupying bully robbing other peoples of their land and refusing to hand over to them the old biblical city of Jerusalem as their Capital.

“What we’re finding now is a propaganda campaign being waged by the Palestinian Authority, the Islamic world and by the Protestant church, including the Evangelical church.” *Israel Christian Embassy Jeru.* 11-Apr-12

“Christian Palestinianism”

A variation of Replacement Theology is termed **“Christian Palestinianism”**; here the Palestinians take the place of the Jews in God's purpose and Jews in the land are seen to be the persecutors of the Palestinians. It takes some grasping, but is growing in popularity.

Christian Palestinianism is an inverted mirror image of Christian Zionism. All the basic elements of a Christian Zionist eschatology are reversed, so that the Bible is seen to be Christian, not Jewish, the land of the Bible is Palestine not Israel, the Son of God is a Palestinian not a Jew, the Holocaust is resented not remembered, 1948 is a catastrophe not a miracle, the Jewish people are illegal occupiers not rightful owners, and Biblical prophecy is a moral manifesto and not a signpost to the Second Coming. Despite enlisting support from the theological community and seeking validation through academia, the overriding thrust of Christian Palestinianism is political not Biblical. As we have seen, this reactionary movement, spearheaded by Sabeel, is a one-issue coalition of strange bedfellows whose diverse, ideological perspectives are held in tension as they unite against a common enemy. *Paul Wilkinson* Christian Palestinianism and the anti-Israel Crusade

United Nations—united against Israel

One of the greatest champions of anti-Israel sentiments is the United Nations. This organisation was set up in 1945 to champion peace and dialogue between the nations. It has in recent years spent an inordinate time in passing resolutions condemning Israel.

By the end of this week, the current 2012 UNGA [United Nations General Assembly] session will have adopted 22 country-specific resolutions on Israel—

and only four on the rest of the world combined, one each for Syria, Iran, North Korea and Burma, noted *UN Watch*.

“The U.N.’s disproportionate assault against the Jewish state undermines the credibility of what is supposed to be an impartial and respected international body, and exposes the sores of politicisation and selectivity that eat away at its founding mission, eroding the U.N. Charter promise of equal treatment to all nations large and small,” the executive director of *UN Watch*, Hillel Neuer, added.

“With more than 40,000 killed in Syria, and millions of Syrian refugees suffering now in the cold of winter, it ought to shock the conscience of mankind that the U.N. will devote more than 80% of this session’s resolutions to Israel, and just one, on Thursday, to Syria.” *UN Watch* 19-Dec-12

The UN gives the Palestinians a state

The PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) first gained a seat at the UN as a *non-state observer* back in 1974. In 1998 a resolution was passed and they were given the right to participate in “general debate and additional rights”. With this change in 1998, came a change in seating position, she now sat next to the Vatican! The seating order is the full members, followed by the Vatican, the PLO, and then the many non-state observers. Mahmoud Abbas had tried in 2011 to get UN recognition, but this did not receive sufficient support, and he had to be satisfied with membership of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). Abbas’s second attempt succeeded and the vote on Nov 29th 2012 was overwhelmingly in favour, as our front cover picture shows. In spite of Israeli lobbying and American opposition, the UN agreed to regard the Palestinians as having a state and so changing their status from a non-state to that of a *non-member observer state* which is the status the Vatican (or strictly the “Holy See”) enjoys. Its new official title is The Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations! They continue to sit by the Vatican! Britain and Australia ducked out and abstained. The 9 nations that voted against the resolution were Canada, Czech Republic, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama and the United States of America.

Abbas lost no time in visiting the Pope and other European leaders to thank them for their support. He had met the Pope during his visit to Israel in 2009 and had visited at the Vatican in 2011. His gift to the Pope—a picture of the “Church of the Holy Sepulchre” painted on tiles, had an inscription — in English and Arabic — that said, “Presented by President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) President of the State of Palestine.” It appears that this was the first time he had used such a title.

The truth is it is an empty gesture, there is no State of Palestine and no Palestinian State has been created

The UN “upgrade resolution1” has neither created a Palestinian state, nor did it grant any kind of statehood to the Palestinians. The UN does not have the legal and political power to establish states. It merely upgraded the observer status of the PLO’s UN representation to that of a non-member-state-observer for internal purposes within the UN and its constituent organs and agencies.

The internationally accepted requirements for statehood include, among other things, a unified territorial unit and responsible governance of its people, and capability of fulfilling international commitments and responsibilities. Furthermore, the UN Charter requires that a state seeking membership in the UN be “a peace-loving state” that accepts and is willing and capable of carrying out the obligations of the UN Charter. *Jeru. Center for Public Affairs. The Palestinian UN Upgrade Setting Things Straight.* 05-Dec-12

According to *The Times of Israel* 25-Dec-12, immediately after the vote the Palestinian representative removed the sign saying “Palestine” and replaced it with one saying “State of Palestine”. He was told to put the old sign back! However the head of the Palestinian UN mission, Riyad Mansour, formally requested the name change on December 12, and a few days later the UN’s head of protocol, Yeocheol Yoon, confirmed that “the designation of ‘State of Palestine’ shall be used by the Secretariat in all official United Nations documents”.

The UN vote came on a significant date, which Abbas had carefully chosen; it was the 65th anniversary of the historic UN resolution that gave the go-ahead for the Jews and the Arabs to have their States, side by side. Israel accepted, but the Arabs rejected the UN resolution. Israel had a State the following year, the Arabs have obtained nothing. To perpetuate this 1947 UN vote, the Palestinians have held an annual *International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People*, a UN organised event with displays at the New York UN headquarters.

This year’s displays showed many exhibits that showed all of Israel as belonging to the Palestinians

The UN is now hosting in the public entrance hall of its New York headquarters a Palestinian exhibit which includes pieces that artfully depict all of Israel as Palestine. The display goes hand-in-hand with the logo featured at the top of the cover page of the speech that Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas’ delivered to the General Assembly on November 29, 2012. That emblem continues to promote a one state solution, Palestine without Israel. *breitbart.com* 10-Dec-12



Abbas's cover page logo

Fatah too have chosen a snappy logo to celebrate their 48th anniversary. It too shows all of Israel as being Palestine

Palestinian Media Watch describes the logo in-depth: “Other symbols central to Fatah ideology also appear in the logo, including a rifle and a key symbolizing the Palestinian claim of ownership to houses within Israel (see letters in yellow). The pattern in the map is reminiscent of the Palestinian keffiyeh-scarf. The dove breaking the chain symbolizes the freeing of all Palestinian



Hamas logo

prisoners. The golden dome represents both Islam and the Palestinian claim to Jerusalem.” *The Algemeiner* 12-Dec-12

The UN upgrade tears up the Oslo Agreements, as they committed both sides to find a negotiated settlement between them. But as Israel has constantly stated, “How can we negotiate with somebody who doesn’t want peace and seeks instead to destroy us?”

Fatah and Hamas reconciling—again?

Fatah who control the West Bank have made several attempts to reconcile with Hamas who control Gaza. After all, what kind of a state is Palestine supposed to be if it is bitterly divided? There have been several attempts in the past to put their differences behind them, but clashing ideologies bring it to naught. Following the UN declaration another attempt is being made and Hamas were allowed to hold a demonstration on the West Bank, Fatah’s reciprocal rally in Gaza, however has been put on hold as, in the words of *BICOM* 28-Dec-12, rapprochement cools. Fatah has a problem as there is no one to succeed Abbas.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas is 77, a heavy smoker, and an incessant traveler. In 2010 he was admitted six times to a Jordanian hospital for unspecified health reasons. This raises the inconvenient question: Who will follow in his footsteps? Right now, the answer is Hamas. According to Palestinian Basic Law, Article 37, if the presidency of the PA becomes vacant, “the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council shall temporarily assume the powers and duties of the Presidency.” The current speaker is Hamas’ Aziz Dweik. Of course, succession does not always proceed according to law, and the PLO could still appoint someone from its own ranks. However, a power struggle is a recipe for another ugly clash between the PLO and Hamas. Abbas refuses to name a successor. He has no vice president and no heir apparent. *ForeignPolicy.com* 13-Dec-12

Although Gaza has been quiet since Israel’s Operation Pillar of Cloud, incidents are rising on the West Bank. *BICOM* 20-Dec-12 quoted from *Associated Press* sources which claim the Palestinians are waiting until after the Israeli elections scheduled for Jan 22nd to unroll a series of actions.

“2013 will see a new Palestinian political track. There will be new rules in our relationship with Israel and the world.”

Among the measures reportedly being considered are mass protests against Israel and a suspension of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces in the West Bank, which has been key to maintaining the relative quiet in the area over the past few years. PA cabinet member Mohammed Ishtayeh is quoted saying, “There will be no security cooperation as long as there is no political horizon.”

Meanwhile, the report also claims that there are Palestinian plans to use its recent UN recognition to join the International Criminal Court and pursue war crimes charges against Israeli officials over settlement construction. Palestine Liberation Organisation official Qais Abdulkareem told AP, “We are going to

pursue this policy to reach a point of having the international community impose sanctions on Israel.”

It threatens to be a difficult time ahead for Israel.

Operation Pillar of Cloud

This was the codename for Israel’s latest attack on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which ran from Nov 14th to 21st. The Western press translated the Hebrew phrase as Pillar of Defence. The Israelis had chosen the name in memory of the time when they left Egypt and God caused the pillar of cloud to move between them and the pursuing Egyptians, thus hiding their activity of crossing the Red Sea, until they were all safely across. According to the Israeli Intelligence site, *Debka* there was smoke and mirrors in Israel’s actions.

Israel’s eight-day offensive against Hamas in Gaza was dubbed "Pillar of Cloud" by Israel and "Bricks from the Sky" by Hamas. Unbeknownst to anyone outside a tight circle, it was in fact a pillar of smoke and one of the most successful intelligence feats of deception in recent years. *Debka* 23-Nov-12

They never intended to invade Gaza, apparently; their aim was to destroy the Iranian reach into Gaza, and remove as much of Hamas’ leadership so as to weaken it. How successful they were remains to be seen.

Israel had endured 680 rocket attacks in 2011 and 797 up to the start of Israel’s operation. With 2 million Israelis under reach of the rockets it was a burden that could not be tolerated for ever. With only 15 seconds to get to safety for those near the Gaza border, life was very stressful and school and work activities were constantly being disrupted. Some weeks children were not able to go to school, because of the intermittent barrage. As an Israeli Defence Force “poster” posted on the image sharing network *Flickr*, put it, what other nation would endure these attacks for so long?



Operation Pillar of Cloud began with the taking out of the leading military commander of Hamas, Ahmed Jabari, who was responsible for the rocket and many other attacks on Israel, including being behind the 2006 kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. He had strong links to Iran. Over the next 8 days Hamas and other militant operators fired 1,400 rockets at Israel. For the first time they fired more advanced Iranian rockets with a longer range, so that even Jerusalem became a target. Although these were fired at random, Israel responded with a similar number of strikes, but painstakingly targeted. If there appeared to be danger to civilians, operations were aborted. As we remarked earlier, Hamas’ embedding itself among civilians made it impossible to avoid civilian casualties. Many of Hamas’ Qassam rockets exploded prematurely or fell on Gaza, inflicting casualties.

Hamas, of course, has not simply imitated Hezbollah, but has taken its cynical strategy to a new level, with schools, hospitals and mosques—and even fake

television vans—recruited as part of its attempt to shield itself, not only behind its own population, but behind international outrage at civilian casualties.

Not only Israel, but every country facing a terrorist threat has an interest in ensuring that the brutal tactics in play in Gaza are not seen to have succeeded. This means having the courage to stand firm and to engage in the unbearably difficult exercise of responding, proportionately but effectively, to terrorists wherever they may be.

To do otherwise would be to broadcast an open invitation to terrorist groups to set up shop inside hospitals and kindergartens, not only in Gaza but throughout the world. Daniel Taub, Israel's Ambassador to Britain. *Sunday Telegraph* 25-Nov-12

Israel believes that she has destroyed the vast majority of Hamas' Iranian supplied missiles, but short of a ground invasion, they can't be sure. At the end of 8 days Egypt "brokered" a cease fire, and the rocket fire has stopped—for now.

Persia, Ethiopia and Libya

Although we recognise that this was not a fulfilment of Ezekiel 38, it was interesting to learn where Hamas' arms had come from. The majority were from Iran (Persia) and smuggled in. Others were made in Sudan (the Biblical Ethiopia) and still others were purchased from Libyan terrorists who had obtained the weapons from Gaddafi's vast stock piles that fell into rebel hands.

Israel's Iron Dome

Israel is the only country in the world to have such a sophisticated defence weapon against rocket attacks. Several nations are now interested in purchasing this Israeli system. It is so sophisticated that in tracking a rocket it works out where it is likely to land. If that is open ground it allows the rocket to continue; if it threatens property and lives then it fires a missile that intercepts the incoming rocket so that it is blown up over open ground. Such sophistication is amazing. The cost of each Iron Dome rocket is in the region of \$35-50,000, hence the need to be selective! Israel launched over 400 interceptors against Hamas' 1,500 missiles at a cost of around \$27m. Introduced in Spring 2011, it has successfully defended against attacks since. This was its first battle testing dealing with multiple firings of incoming rockets, and it dealt with 90% of the threatening rockets. The Israeli Mint has struck a State medal in commemoration of its success. It shows 3 Iron Dome interceptor missiles defending Jerusalem with a quote from *Isaiah 37:35* *I will shield this city to save it*. The reverse shows an Iron Dome battery. Without this system the number of Israeli casualties and properties damaged would have been far greater.



Iron dome medal

We now turn to the very different but important game-changer topic of shale.

Chapter 8

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SHALE—CHANGING POLITICAL INFLUENCES

This probably seems rather a strange chapter heading, especially for Milestones! Yet the effect of the large finds of shale oil and gas has had a profound effect on the balance of power in the energy world. Again how does this impinge on Bible prophecy? The Middle East Arab nations have dominated the world's supply of oil for decades, then Russia became an important player as oil and gas discoveries were found, especially in the frozen, inhospitable regions of northern Russia. This gave her a valuable leverage in her dealings with Europe—one doesn't argue with the hand that controls the gas flows to keep you warm and your industry running! Then, just a few years ago, a new word entered the energy dictionary—shale. Although this source has long been known, it is very complicated and expensive to extract the gas or oil. While energy prices were comparatively low there was little incentive to explore ways of exploiting this resource. With much higher prices and with more advanced techniques—impossible a few years ago—it is now a valuable source of energy. Shale is found in many parts of the world but our interest lies in the vast sources in America and Israel. From a prophetic point of view we can see two elements of the well-known chapter in Ezekiel 38 shaping up before our eyes—Israel being a desirable prize and Russia, Gog wanting to lay hands on this spoil.

Shale—a new source of energy

Milestones 2011 was the first time we mentioned this energy source; it has rapidly developed to make quite amazing headlines in the last year. But what is shale and where do we find it? Shale is:

A fine-grained, clastic¹ sedimentary rock composed of mud that is a mix of flakes of clay minerals and tiny fragments (silt-sized particles) of other minerals, especially quartz and calcite *Wikipedia*

Well many of us are probably none the wiser! Sedimentary rocks point to those layers that were formed at the time of the Flood, where much organic material, plants, leaves etc. would be mixed with the clay. With heat and pressure various energy sources, coal, oil, gas, and shale were formed. It is interesting that when one dates oil it gives a young age, consistent with originating in the Flood. Also conventional oil wells have oil under a high pressure, which should have dissipated under conventional, evolutionary, dating. Unlike conventional oil and gas wells which are tapped by drilling into them, shale needs additional work to extract the gas or oil. This is either by open-cast mining and heating the rocks or by heating in situ underground. Shale oil is more accurately termed “tight oil” because unlike conventional oil sources, it won't flow without assistance. It is tightly held in the shale.

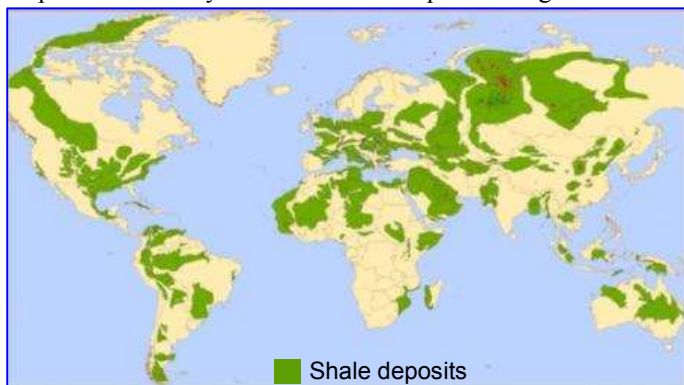
¹ Clastic rocks are composed of fragments, or clasts, of pre-existing minerals and rock fragments. *Wikipedia*

There is a further process, fracking, which is used to make the gas or oil available. This involves fracturing the rocks by injecting water and sand under high pressure to break up the rock. There are environmental concerns over this process; contamination of underground aquifers being the main one and the need for high volumes of water—a scarce resource in some areas. The water is recycled and needs storage facilities for the used water. Fracking can also cause low-level earthquakes.

Israel is one of the countries to possess vast deposits of shale oil and is pioneering new techniques which are claimed to overcome these concerns. The ground is heated to liquefy the oil at source so that what emerges from the well head can be used without further treatment, reducing pollution of the area. It also generates water rather than using vast quantities.

Shale supplies

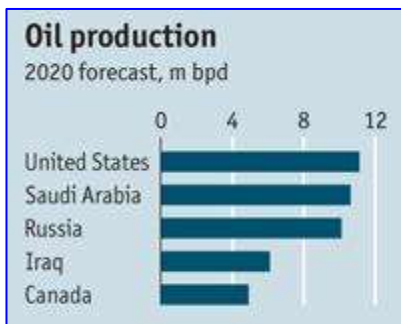
Definition of shale deposits does vary and so do the maps showing world-wide reserves. This map is from oddly named No Hot Air site in the UK, which is concerned with promoting shale energy. North America, China, Israel and Jordan, and the UK have substantial deposits.



The US. The transformation of the US energy market has been incredible. From shale gas supplying 1% of her energy in 2000, it had leapt to 20% by 2010 and promises to make the US energy independent within the next 10-20 years.

The shale-gas revolution in America has been as sudden and startling as a supertanker performing a handbrake turn. A country that once fretted about its dependence on Middle Eastern fossil fuels is now on the verge of self-sufficiency in natural gas. And the news keeps getting better. This week the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicted that the United States would become the world's largest oil producer by 2020, outstripping Saudi Arabia and Russia. *The Economist* 17-Nov-12

Gas prices have plummeted from a high of around \$13 a unit in 2008 to just \$3. This



has helped the US economy and encouraged high energy users to restart their US plants. Canada too is developing her shale gas reserves.

China. This is another area of the world with high energy needs, and she has been exploiting her shale oil reserves for many years. Some experts estimate that China's shale gas reserves may be larger than those of the US.

China's huge expansion has helped drive oil prices ever higher. Her thirst for energy is shown in the figures. In 2000 she consumed some 4.7 million barrels a day; in 2012 she will consume about 9.7 million barrels a day! 2/3rd of this has to be imported, so China is at last waking up to her vast supplies of shale gas.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that China contains the world's largest reserves of shale gas, with 36,000 billion M³ of "technically recoverable" shale gas. About 10 million tons of oil can be produced from these reserves annually. The U.S. has 24,000 billion M³ of estimated shale gas reserves.

Developing this domestically available shale potential can assure that China has the secure energy resources to sustain its economic growth and better yet more widely distribute the benefits of the growth into the rural areas of the country.
Forex Pros 02-Sep-12

Australia. Substantial amounts of shale have been discovered here.

Australia also has large new natural gas deposits that, with liquefaction facilities, could turn it into a principal energy exporter to East Asia, assuming Australia significantly lowers its cost of production (which may prove very hard to do). *Stratfor* 19-Dec-12

Israel and Jordan. Isn't it fascinating that these two countries that have been surrounded by oil rich neighbours, but have been heavily dependent upon importing their energy needs, should suddenly be in the forefront of an energy revolution! Vast quantities of shale oil have been discovered in Israel, one of the biggest areas is the Shfela area to the SW of Jerusalem. Israel's deposits have been estimated to be virtually as large as Saudi's oil reserves! For a little country there would be ample oil and to spare, turning Israel into an oil and gas exporting market. The initial test drilling proved that the new Israeli techniques work on a small scale, the consortium is awaiting government approval to proceed to larger scale testing. The oil produced is particularly "sweet" and would attract a premium because of its quality. It will be a number of years before Israel sees full scale production.

Jordan has similar reserves which are being actively exploited.



The Shale Gas Boom: How Scared is the Kremlin?

It is easy to see how the old oil and gas powers are being undermined by these new energy supplies. OPEC in the past have played the oil-price weapon against the West, hiking prices in retaliation for Israel's actions in the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Israel's operation Pillar of Cloud made little difference to world oil prices, as OPEC's power has declined. The biggest potential casualty is Russia. Her expansion plans for her military are dependent upon high prices to fund the massive expenditures planned. The prospect of US exports undermining her markets is substantial.

Gazprom should be scared. The US has overtaken Russia as the largest producer of natural gas courtesy of the fracking revolution, the EU suddenly feels bold enough to rebel, and Moscow could very soon lose its grip on its European gas markets. The EU has rather belatedly decided that things aren't adding up and that Europeans are paying too high a price for Russian gas and not benefitting at all from the natural gas boom in the US, which has boosted supplies and caused prices to drop significantly. While Russia is selling its gas for about \$10 a unit, the US is selling the same for about \$3. *OilPrice.com* 04-Oct-12

Israel's gas and oil exploration

We can now add to this Israel's off-shore discoveries. Again these are a very new phenomenon; it was only as far back as *Milestones 2008* when a brief two lines spoke of Nobel Energy drilling some 90 km off the coast of Haifa. The following year was my first map showing the Tamar and Dalit fields. The following year the map had grown to include Sara, Myra and Leviathan. Last year in *Milestones 2011* the map had extended to include Noa, Or, Yitzhak, Yam Hadera and Dolphin! So we now continue to add more fields in 2012. Two sites however disappear, as in September Myra proved not to be viable and in October Sara was also found to be dry, a not infrequent occurrence with well drilling.

However this year has been added Tanin (crocodile); Shimshon (Sampson) Pelagic (oceanic) and Karish (shark). In addition the Leviathan estimates have been upped by 116bn M³ and Tamar by 18bn M³. So after losing Myra and Sara, estimated reserves have **increased** by 245bn M³. To put that in context the UK's **total** known gas reserves are 256bn M³ plus a similar figure for probable reserves. Many more sites are waiting to be drilled off Israel's coast.



A *Globes* 11-Oct-12 item indicated that following a 3D survey of the Leviathan field, Noble Energy Inc. had announced that there appears to be significant

reserves of oil beneath the layers of gas. A new drilling rig is under construction which will hopefully start to drill to the extra depth to reach these reserves. They are hoping that by 2018 Leviathan will be generating a net cash flow of \$1.5bn a year!

The Mari-B field which has been supplying gas since 2005 is virtually exhausted, but already some of the small new fields are supplying gas to Israel. The Tamar field is expected to come on stream in April 2013. Israel has been severely hit with the cessation of the gas supplied by Egypt, following the Arab “Spring” and the deposing of President Mubarak. The pipe line was bombed some 15 times, and Israel has long resigned to receiving no further supplies. Great pressure has been put upon the licensees of the new blocks to speed up bringing new supplies ashore. It has been estimated that it is costing Israel one billion shekels (\$258 million) a month in substituting alternative energy supplies.

Israel Natural Gas Lines, that owns the network of gas pipe lines in Israel, has just completed building a natural gas marine absorption buoy, together with equipment to turn liquid gas back into a gas. This is anchored about 10km off the shore of Israel, to which tankers containing LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) will be able to connect to and pipe their cargoes ashore through the connecting pipework running on the seabed. Israel is expected to receive 2-3bn M³ of natural gas a year through this line. Starting in December, BP was due to be supplying 2 tankers a month of LNG to Israel.

Field of dreams: Israel's natural gas

This headline in the *Financial Times Magazine* 31-Aug-12 sums up the immensity of these finds.

The recent discoveries are so large, and have come so swiftly, that some Israelis are having difficulty adjusting to the new reality. Even hardened energy executives speak of a “miracle” when discussing Israel's natural gas story. ... **With reserves of almost 280bn M³ of natural gas, the Tamar field is a hugely valuable asset for the Israeli economy.**

Leviathan some 20 miles farther east is the largest deepwater gas reservoir found anywhere in the world over the past decade. The two fields, together with a string of smaller discoveries, **will cover Israel's domestic demand for gas for at least the next 25 years**, and still leave billions of cubic metres for sale abroad. **The government take from the gasfields alone is forecast to reach at least \$140bn over the next three decades—a staggering sum for a relatively small economy such as Israel's.**

Russia loses round 1

The Leviathan field is potentially so vast that it needs expert help and a deep pocket to realise its full potential. The three companies who bought the rights to this block have been seeking outside help. One potential helper has been Gazprom, Russia's biggest firm. In June, following his re-election, Mr Putin paid a state visit to Israel. One of the matters discussed between him and Mr Netanyahu was the advantage to Israel of allowing Gazprom help develop Israel's gas resources.

The benefits were encapsulated in an article in a Canadian newspaper, the *Financial Post* 09-Sep-12. Canada is one of Israel's good friends.

For over 30 years, Israel tried swapping land for peace with its Arab neighbours. Those wishful political plays didn't work out so well, but Israel's latest foray—a hard-headed deal with Russia for cash and future considerations—holds more promise. In this unfolding new deal, Israel parts with a share of its lucrative offshore gas field in the Mediterranean, while Russia parts company with Israel's enemies in Syria and Iran. Russia secures quite separate gains. Win-win for Israel and Russia. Lose-lose for Israel's and Russia's various rivals.

This unfolding deal promises to be a diplomatic and business masterstroke for both parties.

Today Russia faces two new threats to its hegemony over the European market: exports of gas to Europe from Israel's vast offshore finds in the Mediterranean Sea and continental Europe's own finds, in the form of enormous shale gas reserves.

Enter Gazprom Israel, a proposed subsidiary of Russian government-owned Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas company.

According to reports in the Israeli and Eurasian media, the Israeli government has agreed to give the Russians a stake in the Mediterranean find, and also to increase the amount of gas allowed to be exported. With this deal, Russia would be cutting itself into any sales of Mediterranean gas to Europe or, possibly better from Russia's point of view, it could persuade Israel to instead sell Mediterranean gas to Asian markets. Either way, Russia would retain the dominant role in Europe that underpins its national pride.

As for Israel, the benefit of aligning itself with Russia's economic interests would be immense. Over the last half-century, Russia and Russian arms have been a mainstay of Arab nations and Muslim terrorists that sought Israel's destruction.

In recent years, Russia's attitude toward Israel has become more nuanced, partly because Russia wants Israeli intelligence on Islamic terrorists targeting Russia, and partly because Russia wants Israel's state-of-the-art arms, such as its UAVs.

Two years ago, the two countries signed a military co-operation agreement, followed by a sale of Israeli UAVs to Russia. It was also followed by Russian willingness to withhold arms sales to Syria and Iran that would undermine Israel's military supremacy.

With Israel becoming a major energy exporter, able to upset Russia's dominant role as a gas supplier in Europe, **Russia is tilting further in Israel's direction—and further from Israel's enemies.** And with Russia and Israel jointly developing resources off Israel's shores, Israel's gas fields will benefit in part from a Russian shield—belligerents who have been menacing Israel's drilling rigs and other energy infrastructure—they include Turkey as well as Islamist terrorists in Israel's neighbouring countries—**will now think twice before an attack that could draw Russia's ire.**

In jointly exploiting Mediterranean gas, Russia stands to gain diplomatically, Israel stands to gain militarily, and both stand to gain financially.

According to *Debka* 07-Dec-12 Putin was his characteristically blunt self.

Indeed, he laid out what sounded like a veiled threat by asserting that only his personal guarantee, a Russian stake in the drilling platforms and the pipelines he was offering to build would preserve Israel's gas and oil fields in the eastern Mediterranean from Syrian attack, which would be carried out with Russian-supplied Yakhont radar-guided cruise missiles.

If Moscow were involved, Leviathan would also be safe from the Lebanese Hizballah who were capable of striking the field on the pretext that Israel was robbing Lebanon of its natural treasure. The Shiite terrorists still possess thousands of C-80 anti-ship missiles supplied by Iran.

The Russian president made the point that neither Syria nor Hizballah would dare strike any energy facility embodying a Russian interest.

Gazprom was reported as having put in the highest bid. The situation seemed set for a fundamental change in the Middle East—with Russia working with Israel, could not the moderate Arab States do likewise? Could we not have a situation of peace and security? But it was not to be—at least not for the immediate future. The Leviathan consortium chose for their partner an Australian firm.

Woodside Petroleum, Australia's largest oil and gas firm, has bought a 30% stake in Israel's Leviathan natural gas field, beating Russian gas major Gazprom's bid for a stake in the project.

The deal could be worth \$2.5 billion and is expected to bring the Australian company to the LNG markets in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Under the deal, US-based Noble Energy will have a 30% stake in the field. Delek Drilling and Avner Oil Exploration will each have 15%. Ratio Oil Exploration will own 10%.

The production for Israel's domestic gas market will start by 2016, Woodside said in a statement.

Experts say, Leviathan's upstream operator Noble Energy preferred a deal with Australian gas producer because of its expertise in upstream and LNG marketing, and will enable the export of Israeli gas to Asia. *Russia Today* 04-Dec-12

At least it was a *young lion* country, and Gazprom will be glad that its focus will be on Asian markets rather than European ones. With all the new wells of Israel and Cyprus, there will be other opportunities for Gazprom to work in the region, and bring the benefits of protection.

19 new wells are expected to be drilled in the next two years in Israeli waters at a cost of about \$2 billion, and many of these will go on to seek oil in the layers beneath the gas deposits. *Reuters* 19-Nov-12

According to *Debka* the US has promised to give the Israeli wells protection.

Israel is already deep into a huge, one-billion dollar, investment in a defense system for guarding its oil and gas fields against attack. This entails setting up a special naval force equipped with new warships and manned by hundreds of servicemen. Israel Air Force “Shoval” drones will also patrol the area, and intelligence-gathering and radar equipment will be installed on the platforms.

All that would take care of the gas fields’ first layer of defense.

For the second layer, the Obama administration has agreed to place the US-Australian-Israeli gas and oil fields **behind the American defensive shield which covers the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East** against missile attack. *Debka 07-Dec-12*

Russia involved in Israel’s peace?

There are 2 passages which would indicate that Russia plays a role in the time of peace that Israel will enjoy. The first is a passage from Isaiah ch 10 which clearly has end-time connections:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. Isa 10:20

This clearly points that Israel is to trust in the latter-day Assyrian (v12), but that it will be futile; Israel will be brought instead to trust in God. The Hebrew word for stay is used in 2 Chron 16:7 of Asa giving money to Benhadad King of Syria.

Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

The same Hebrew word is also used in the passage concerning Pharaoh, whom many in Israel had trusted in to save them.

And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand. Eze 29:6, 7

The earlier verses speak of God putting hooks in thy [Egypt] jaws, and giving its body for meat to the beasts of the earth and to the fowls of heaven. We find these same phrases applied to Gog in Ezekiel ch 38 and 39! (38:4; 39:4, 5; 17-20). So if Egypt proved to be a broken reed, will not Gog be likewise?

Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; Eze 38:10-12

If Israel in the future relies on Russia’s protecting hand, will it not be an evil thought when she turns and becomes her destroyer? My Brown, Driver, Briggs

lexicon puts it, *devise an evil (hurtful) device* or plan. Let us not forget that Russia has strong links to Israel; the biggest Russian diaspora in the world is to be found in Israel, with around a million of the 6 million Jews living in Israel being of Russian descent.

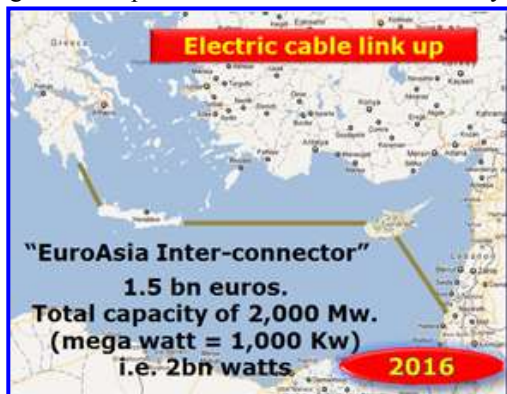
Opening up routes to the east

Israel has been interested in building up her links with the East, India especially and more recently with China. With Woodside being chosen to help develop Leviathan, it is clear that Israel sees liquidising gas as one of the ways of exporting gas to Asia. The South Korean firm of Daewoo is building LNG (Liquid Natural Gas) carrier ships for this purpose. Normally the plant needed would be placed on shore and gas piped ashore, cleaned and liquefied by dropping the temperature down to -162°C . The resultant liquid is stored and transported at a low pressure of 3.6 psi/25 kPa. One can transport 6,000 times more gas in a liquid form, than its normal gaseous state. In Israel's case they are pioneering this at the well head, so that it can be shipped straightaway. This frees up valuable space on shore and gives flexibility—the plant can be moved to another well head. The specially designed tankers consist of a series of large tanks. For the Eastern market this involves travelling through the Suez Canal—with its attendant costs and potential for trouble in time of conflict. Israel is exploring the feasibility of using an existing land pipeline to ship gas across the Negev to Eilat and to liquefy it there. This would mean Asian tankers would avoid transiting the Suez Canal.

“Possibly the most important energy bridge in the world”

Israel and Cyprus are actively pursuing a very ambitious scheme to export electricity generated from the excess gas to Europe. Underwater cables would carry the electricity from the coast of Israel to Cyprus. Onshore lines would carry it across the island and connect to a cable between Cyprus and Crete and link up with an existing cable to Greece!

The working groups assigned to study the project's feasibility were working “feverishly” and are ahead of schedule. The committee said the market analysis so far showed that this was a viable project.

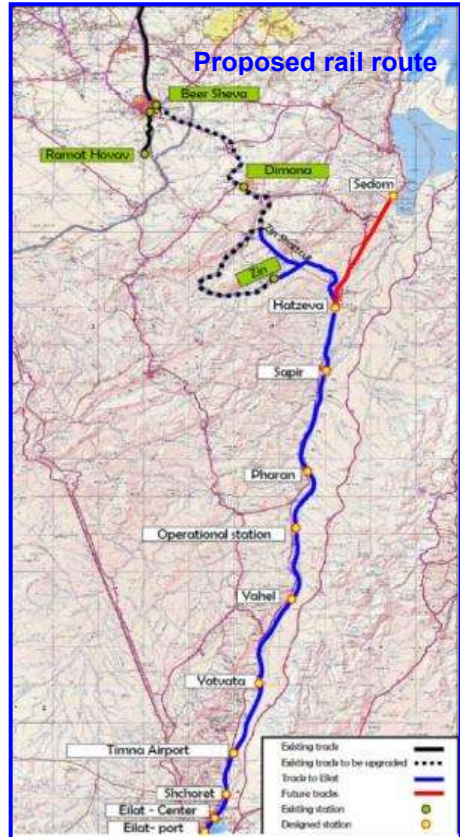


The aim is to complete feasibility studies by the end of the year with a view to complete the project in 2016. It will take three years to build and cost an estimated €1.5 billion. *Cyprus Mail* 05-Jul-12

High-speed rail route across Israel

Another scheme is to make Israel a transit hub between Asia and Europe; this scheme would be for a wide range of goods and involves a trans-Israel rail link.

Earlier in the year, Israel and China signed an agreement for the Chinese to construct a railway link between Red Sea port of Eilat and the Mediterranean ports of Ashdod and Haifa. This is a potential revenue spinner for Israel as ships would unload their cargoes at the one coast, tranship them across Israel and load onto another ship on the other coast. This apparently makes economic sense as the sea distance is shorter than through the Suez Canal and the transit fees through the canal are high. It is a project that China is backing as Europe is a large export market and this rail link would reduce her dependence on the unstable situation in Egypt. For Israel, it makes Eilat so much more accessible. The railway will carry passengers as well as freight with a potential journey time, using high speed trains, of only 2 hours to cross Israel. It will boost Israel's drive to develop the Negev region, which represents a large part of Israel's land area, but has a very small population. Much of the line exists across to Beersheba, and is being upgraded to run trains up to 160 kph. The new work involves upgrading the last section from Beersheba to Zin and then extending down to Eilat and also linking the Dead Sea town of Sedom to the new line. Sedom is the centre of the Dead Sea chemical works and the rail link will facilitate the rapid movement of chemicals to Eilat for export to Asia. The new link is designed for passenger train speeds up to 300kph. It is hoped the work will be completed by 2018.



The new upgraded service from Tel Aviv to Beersheba became available in November. The Israeli Prime Minister sampled the trip.

"Hello to you. I chose to go the south today, to Be'er Sheva, on the upgraded railway line in order to personally experience the fast link between the center of the country and the south, and between the south and the center. This line makes it possible to go down to Be'er Sheva in less than an hour; eventually it will be within 45 minutes. This is a national socio-economic revolution of the highest order. *Prime Minister's Media Adviser* 13-Nov-12

We turn now to the Middle East and the continuing Arab “Spring”.

Chapter 9

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ARAB SPRING OR WINTER?

The so-called Arab Spring is still rumbling round the Middle East two years after a fruit seller in Tunisia set himself alight in protest at how he had been treated by the authorities. Little would he have imagined the fires which that act would generate. Few Middle East countries have not been burnt by it. Many in the West thought that this would be the start of democracy in the region; with people-power changing living conditions for the masses and removing the heavy-hand of authority. This might have been the situation in Europe and Russia, though in truth few countries experience true democracy. We are witnessing the tightening grasp of Putin on Russian affairs, removing freedoms that clash with the government's wishes. We see the crushing hand of the EU squeezing the Greeks until they are wrung dry; or eviscerating the powers of national parliaments until they are a shadow of their former selves. So what hope is there in the Middle East which has lived with a non-western ethos? Little indeed. It seems to be opening the doors to religiously driven leaders who are less tolerant than the military dictators they have replaced. So let's take a brief view of the happenings in the Middle East, fitting them into the Biblical context of the King of the North and King of the South. We looked at Iran in chapter 6, as she, of course, is not an Arab country.

Libya

Our interest in Libya lies in the fact that she is named in Ezekiel ch 38:5 as one of the companions of Gog; and so we would expect her to be in Russia's orbit, rather than in the West's. Interestingly, it was Britain, France and Italy who were to the fore in assisting the Libyans in getting rid of Col. Gaddafi, Libya's eccentric ruler; Russia kept out of it. The country is still trying to pull together the many warring factions who sought Gaddafi's downfall.

In July, Libyans voted for their first parliament, and an interim 200-member national assembly was formed. It took until October to get a new Prime Minister, who has formed an interim government, with the task of writing a new constitution, leading to fresh elections next year.

The Russians were soon potentially back in business—much of Gaddafi's arms were Soviet supplied. He had turned to the West, but then turned back to Russia.

Moscow will resume cooperation with Tripoli on training military specialists for the Libyan army, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told reporters on Thursday. Such a cooperation, which was in place in the former Soviet Union, was scrapped in the wake of a civil war in Libya and the subsequent ouster of Muammar Gaddafi.

It is important for Russia to restore its positions in Libya, military analyst Konstantin Makienko says.

"The revival of contacts is of course beneficial. After the coup in Libya or even earlier when the US liquidated Saddam Hussein in Iraq it was believed that Iraq

and Libya ceased to be clients of Russia's Defense industry for a long time. Now it has turned out that **those estimates were too pessimistic**. Iraq has shown a real interest in buying Russian weapons and now we see **Libya resuming contacts with Russia too**". *Voice of Russia* 18-Dec-12

Egypt

The situation here is not easy to follow; there is a struggle between the military, who were in power in Mubarak's days, the Muslim Brotherhood and the ordinary people. With tourism badly affected and investment at rock bottom because of the uncertainty of the direction that Egypt is going to take, the currency reserves are ebbing away rather quickly. The IMF had prepared a loan, but held back after the power struggle in December, until things were clearer. The US has continued to support Egypt and a few of the Arab countries have made loans

Following the successful parliamentary elections at the end of 2011, Egypt held Presidential elections in May-June 2012. After a run-off, Mohamed Morsi, who had been chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, was declared the winner by a narrow margin.

With US and Israeli backing, President Morsi brokered the November ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, but then abrogated to himself unlimited powers in order to "protect" the nation. This sparked widespread protests, forcing him to annul his decree. Morsi produced a draft constitution in early December and the promised referenda on accepting it were held on the 15th and the 22nd December. Because of the size of Egypt it had been decided to split the country into two for voting. The new constitution was narrowly accepted, though for many, its lack of safeguards for the Coptic Christians made it unacceptable. There was also no provision for a deputy Prime Minister and so, on the 22nd Dec, the existing deputy PM resigned.

With its future uncertain, Egypt will need to get sorted fairly rapidly otherwise her reserves will all be gone. What is of interest is how she will align herself—with America or Iran. Iran would love to have influence here; it would complete her encirclement of Israel. Neither America, Britain nor Israel would tolerate such a situation. Pragmatism may well prevail and the need for American aid will ensure that the Peace Accord with Israel continues in the letter if not in the spirit.

Egypt and the King of the South

From Scripture we know that Egypt falls into the hands of the King of the North—his first push southwards secures the southern flank by taking Egypt with Libyan and Ethiopian (Sudanese) help. (Dan 11:42, 43) Let's relook at Dan 11:40.

*And at the time of the end shall the **king of the south** push at him: and the **king of the north** shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.*

So who is the *him*? This 11th chapter of Daniel can be divided into 3 sections. The *first* occupies the first 35 verses which mainly details the history of the Grecian Goat of chapter 8 with its *notable horn* which was broken, with 4 horns springing

up in its place. Israel suffered under the horn powers, but the section ends with the time of the Maccabees which brought a period of independence for Israel.

The *second* section runs from verses 36 to 39. It introduces us to the power of Rome as the **King** *who would exalt himself and magnify himself above all* and is spoken of in chapter 8:9-12 as a little horn, growing out of the Northern, Seleucid, horn. Pagan Rome became “Christian” Rome under Constantine, who moved the seat of his government from Rome to Constantinople. The Emperor in Constantinople gave his support to the Bishop of Rome, which developed into the Papal system. Meanwhile, in Constantinople, the Greek Orthodox Church developed, following splits with the Papacy and when in 1453 the Turkish-Ottoman power took Constantinople, the things of the Emperor and the Orthodox religion moved to Moscow, which became known as the 3rd Rome. The *third* section runs from v40-45, and tells how that in these latter days there is to be a recreation of the Northern and Southern Greek Goat horn powers

So who is the *him* of v40? It refers back to the Constantinople-occupying King of v36-39. Taking our established view, Britain, in the role of the King of the South, occupied Egypt and Ethiopia/Sudan and from there *pushed at* the Turkish Power in World War I. This enabled the resettlement of Palestine by the Jews and led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The King of the North, (Russia together with her allies of Ezekiel 38 such as Persia/Iran) will *push at him* from the north and occupy Turkey and Constantinople. He will sweep onwards to occupy the rest of former territory of the King of the North and push southward to occupy Egypt, the King of the South territory. Are we to see Britain in Egypt again? Quite likely, but she will be unable to withstand the furious onslaught of the King of the North. The Suez Canal is still an important trade route to Britain, and it is not unreasonable to see her presence there to safeguard the route to shipping. We shall see in the next chapter that Britain’s new military doctrine involves more troops in the Middle East. If Iranian terrorists succeeded in closing the canal then the loss of this vital money spinner would bring Egypt to her knees. The picture in Dan 11:43 is of her having *treasures of gold and silver* and *precious things* which is hardly a picture of a country in abject poverty. It would appear that Egypt prospers during the yet future time of peace and prosperity for Israel.

Jews in Egypt again?

This seems an appropriate place to mention very briefly a few passages which seem to indicate that at the time of Gog’s conquest of Egypt there will be Jews there—indicating a change from the present. Again let me stress that doesn’t mean that we will see such changes before the Lord returns. Far from it, it shows us that we are so close to our Master’s coming and what we are perhaps not so close to, is the Gogian invasion. This takes place **some years after** the Master has called his followers to Judgment as we looked at last year. Isaiah 51:9-11 seems to paint a picture of the Jews being saved from Egypt and returning to their land under the call of Christ. This would involve Jews being in Egypt again. Ps 68:22 speaks of a yet future time when God’s people are brought up from Bashan (today’s Jordan) and *from the depths of the sea* which could be a future bringing out of Egypt as happened in the past through the Red Sea. Psalm 66:1-7 refers to a similar time

when the sea will be dried up so His people can travel safely back home. Zechariah 10:9-12 specifically mentions that God would *bring them again out of the land of Egypt* as well as from *Assyria*.

Having looked at the King of the South territory, we now turn to the Arab Spring and its effect in Syria, part of the King of the North territory.

Syria—the depths of Arab Winter!

Syria is being torn to pieces and its two ancient cities Damascus and Aleppo are being badly pounded. As the year ends, President Assad's position is increasingly untenable as, with Western and Southern Arab help, the "rebels" are being given increasingly sophisticated arms. Not that it is expected to be over quickly. Even Russia seems to be facing the prospects of Assad going, in spite of the support that Russia has provided. It was interesting however, that shortly after Gazprom lost its bid to work with Israel, Russia, after several months of holding back on too obvious support of Syria, proceeded to supply Assad with one of the most feared weapons in the Russian artillery. It also coincided with the West putting Patriot anti-missile batteries into Turkey.

Hours after the first American, Dutch and German Patriot batteries were installed on the Turkish-Syrian border, two Russian landing ships, the Novocherkassk and Saratov escorted by the MB-304 supply vessel, sailed into the Syrian port of Tartus.

DEBKA-Net-Weekly's military sources reveal here for the first time that they had come to deliver for Bashar Assad's armed forces a supply of 24 Iskander-9K720 mobile tactical cruise missile batteries (NATO codenamed SS-26) for use in "theater level conflicts."

By the time the Patriots were in place, 5 mobile batteries, each holding a pair of Iskander missiles, were parked on the Syrian border and aimed directly at US and Turkish military targets. Another 5 were installed on Syria's borders with Israel and Jordan opposite US military targets in both countries.

Syrian crews are able to take the controls of the Iskanders without delay having undergone special training courses the Russians conducted for them in the last three years.

Our military sources describe the Iskander 9K720's exceptional capabilities for accuracy, range and reliability in penetrating defenses as presenting an alternative approach to precision-bombing. This is useful when air forces are prevented by superior fighters and air defenses from conducting dependable bombing or cruise missile missions. *Debka* 14-Dec-12

These fly at such speed that it is not known if even Israel and the US have anything to counter them.

The death toll in this civil war has been estimated at over 60,000, with 28,000 having disappeared, feared murdered. The numbers of injured is unknown and 1.2 million Syrians have been displaced, many fleeing across into Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. It is a humanitarian disaster.

If Assad does go, who will take control? There are many rival factions who are battling for control—at the year-end over 60% of the country was claimed to be in anti-government hands. For the Christian minority, the future looks bleak; at least Assad didn't persecute them, those fighting against Assad have little sympathy for Christians, wanting to impose Muslim rule with varying shades of strictness.

Damascus, Syria's capital, features in an interesting prophecy in Isaiah ch 17. This chapter has elements which are certainly applicable to the latter days. Its last 3 verses are linked with chapter 18, where we see interesting links to the work of Britain in the last days. Chapter 17 opens with a picture of doom for Damascus.

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. Isa 17:1

Damascus has very ancient roots back to Shem's grandson Uz, according to Josephus. It has been a city of great beauty and due to the River Abana the whole area was well watered. It was the home of Eliezer, Abraham's steward. It is spoken of as the longest continually inhabited city, however this should not be construed to say it has never been conquered. Similar language is used of Jerusalem. There are several scriptural accounts of Damascus being taken by her enemies. David conquered it, slaying 22,000 and putting in his own garrison. (2 Sam 8:6) They regained their freedom under Solomon. Various Kings of Israel made leagues with the Syrians, and Jeroboam II re-took control of the city (2 Kgs 14:28) but then lost control. In the days of Jotham's son Ahaz, Rezin the Syrian King joined forces with Pekah, King of Israel and besieged Jerusalem, slaying 120,000 in one day and took 200,000 of Judah captive with a great spoil. (2 Chron 28:5-8) *The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Judah.* (2 Chron 28:19)

Ahaz therefore hired Tiglath-pilneser king of Assyria to fight against Damascus, which he did, capturing the city, killing Rezin their king and taking the people into captivity. (2 Kgs 16:7-10) Isaiah speaks of these troublous times for Israel and Syria in ch 7, addressing Ahaz who was the king at this time; he refers again to these matters in ch 17, and speaks of Damascus being reduced to heaps at a time when Judah's own *glory shall be made thin and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.* (Isa 17:1, 4). As we have seen these two events were fulfilled in Isaiah's day; he witnessed the destruction of Damascus and Jerusalem's humbling.

Does this first part have a second fulfilment in our days? Certainly it would appear that Damascus is being severely pounded by both sides and newspaper articles speak of total destruction!

Syrian rebels are preparing to mount their "Zero Hour" campaign to take Damascus, **with fears the capital is facing total destruction** in the coming months. *Daily Telegraph* 05-Dec-12

However we know Israel's destiny is not to be brought low yet, that happens **after** Christ has called away his saints and **after** Israel has enjoying a period of peace and prosperity; which is not the picture in these early verses of Isaiah 17.

One of the trump cards that Assad holds is chemical weapons. Towards the year end there were several reports that these had been used. In order to prepare them,

two chemicals need to be mixed together to make them toxic. The *Washington Post* 19-Dec-12, quoting from a debriefing by a Syrian defector who said that Assad has lorries which have been converted as mobile mixing units. Although Assad has promised not to use these against his own people, even if he could be trusted, he hasn't said that he wouldn't use them against Israel or Turkey. Many fear he might take a last stand and seek to involve Israel in his battles. Again there is an interesting report in the *United Press Information* (UPI) with the headline:

Israel's air force gets ready for a blitz against missile foes

Israel's air force was reported to be planning massive, pulverizing strikes against foes who bombard the country with missiles. That means switching from the recent focus on passive defense with anti-missile systems developed at great cost and hefty U.S. funding, to Israel's long-held military doctrine of large-scale offensive operations, taking the fight to the enemy. *UPI* 20-Dec-12

Although this report was centred on a Hezbollah's missile threat, the answer would be the same if Syria launched an attack on Israel. Damascus could well be reduced to rubble, but not in the context of Isaiah 17, for Israel is to be strong and successful prior to the Gogian invasion.

Syria was part of the old Seleucid "King of the North" Empire and as such will come under the control of Gog as he marches southward. Damascus may well be destroyed and then it certainly will be a time when *Judah's glory will wax lean*.

The world's problem with Israel building in Jerusalem

We have heard much about Israel's plans to build more houses in Jerusalem. Like most capital cities, houses are at a premium, and Israel needs to expand her housing stock for her growing population. Not all the houses Israel is planning are for Israelis, they include houses for Arabs too.

The frequently heard complaint is that the expansion that Israel announced immediately after the UN upgraded the



Palestinian status, will cut the West Bank in two and prevent the Palestinians from having a state. If one looks at the hatched area on the map it is clear that this claim is ridiculous—there is a greater distance to the Jordan River than the narrowest part of Israel! It always has been an area that would be retained by Israel if a Palestinian State was setup, as it strategically protects access to the Jordan River. The Israelis' feeling is that they held back expansion, without getting anywhere with peace talks, so they might as well carry on, as there is little chance of a Palestinian State.

We now move to matters involving Britain with her loss of love for the EU and the rekindling of her interest in Israel and the Commonwealth.

Chapter 10

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BRITAIN: A NEW JOURNEY FOR TARSHISH

Few think of Britain being Great Britain anymore; as part of the EU it is just the UK. When one looks back in history and sees how much of the globe was coloured in pink to denote Britain's Empire, it is pretty impressive that this little country had rule over so much. That has long gone and burdened with the cost of fighting two World Wars, the British spirit was so broken that it thought the only future for it was part of a bigger block—Europe—her traditional rival if not enemy! We will explore this aspect further in our next chapter. Our pioneer brethren thought that Britain's glorious power would continue until the return of Christ. As a community we did not expect that Israel would be so long in the land without the return of their King. Few could have imagined that nearly half of the world's Jewish population would be living in the land as our chart illustrates. Should we write Britain off—has her role finished? By no means. Britain has a future role to play, and so we should be able to discern signs that her power is not lost. So what is her role?



Britain's future role

Space precludes us to examine again the evidence that Britain is referred to under the phrase *Merchants of Tarshish* and her commonwealth allies and the US are spoken of as *her young lions*. We refer readers to *Milestones 2010 ch 9*. Suffice it to say that there is no other power which fits all the criteria, other than Britain. So what is Britain's scriptural role? It was to facilitate the Jews return to their land. This Britain did as the outcome of World War I. But scripture indicates that this doesn't mark the end of her work. First we find her in Ezekiel 38 opposed to Gog's invasion, along with Sheba and Dedan—Arab countries, indicating that she still has an active role to play in the Middle East. We are then told that when Christ has established the nucleus of his Kingdom in Israel that Britain will be working with Christ, at a time when Europe is opposed to Christ.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Psalms 72:10

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. Isaiah 60:9

It appears that before this time, Britain suffers defeat at the hand of her enemies.

Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. Psalms 48:7

Is this a literal storm or is it a picture of the power of the King of the North who comes with great fury (Dan 11:44) on those, like Britain, who oppose him?

Isaiah chapter 18 has a few verses about the work which the shadowing power of Britain has yet to play in helping bring back the scattered Jewish people.

Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion. Isa 18:1, 2, 7

Can Britain be great again?

So we can't write Britain off, she has a work to do that involves her being separate from Europe. Are there signs of her greatness returning? Yes!

- Slowly her manufacturing bases are returning from abroad. With the stranglehold of the unions now broken, Britain's manufacturing skills are the envy of the world; her car industry is 1st class. Land Rover–Jaguar, under Indian control, is booming. Britain competes with the world.
- Many wrote off Britain's North Sea oil as rapidly running down. That is far from the case, many firms are investing billions of dollars in opening up new fields which newer technology has made possible. Just in December alone were announced 3 investments; \$7bn; \$1.6bn and \$2.5bn!
- The tapping of Britain's shale gas has just recommenced—with the potential of massive supplies.
- London still remains the financial capital of the world, with its advantage of trading hours which overlap those of America and very importantly today, Asia, one of the biggest growth areas.
- London still retains the crown as the trading capital of the world; more goods are bought and sold, insured and shipped by firms based in London.
- With the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games where Britain competed as Team GB, Britain showed the world how it can be done.
- Britain is the centre of a unique networking organisation—the Commonwealth, home to nearly 1/3rd of the world's population, ¼ of its land mass, with a collective GDP of \$10 trillion!
- The Prime Minister is personally involved in boosting trade with Israel.

Britain's growing links to Israel

Under David Cameron, the UK has refocused the government's traditional drive to European markets under the Labour government, to the emphasis being on the wider world, especially the Commonwealth and including Israel as a special target.

A 2011 White Paper on Trade and Investment for Growth issued by the government of the United Kingdom pointed to **Israel as a pivotal strategic partner for Britain's future**. Figures released early in 2012 showed that Israel was the United Kingdom's largest trade partner in the Middle East, with bilateral trade between the two nations amounting to £3.75 billion (\$6 billion) in 2011—up 34% from the preceding year. *Wikipedia*

The present government is a coalition between the Conservative Party—which has a Euro sceptical and pro-Commonwealth bias—and the Liberal Democrats—which has an opposite bias! So it has not been an easy pathway for David Cameron. However, the growing swell against Europe as we shall see in chapter 11, is persuading the political parties as to the wisdom of Britain seeking wider markets which are not in such dire straits as Europe. One big problem is that the Lib-Dems are traditionally anti-Israel. So it would appear that it is driven by David Cameron, who again repeated his interest in Israel while addressing the Conservative Friends of Israel.

Cameron affirms he is ‘passionate friend of Israel’

He told the gathering, “I’m not an acquaintance of Israel, I’m not a colleague of Israel. **I am a passionate friend of Israel**—and that is how it will always stay.”

Cameron expressed his personal understanding of Israel security concerns, saying, “It’s only when you visit the Lebanese border as I have done, when you look through binoculars and see the Hezbollah flags just hundreds of yards away that you can really understand the fear that so many Israelis live with day-in, day-out.”

The Prime Minister also reaffirmed the UK government’s commitment to the flourishing trade relationship between Britain and Israel, saying, “**we are going to keep on working with Israel, doing business with Israel, trading with Israel.**” Cameron praised the success of the Israeli hi-tech economy, which he ascribed to the “the aspiration and drive of its people.” BICOM. 12-Dec-12

In December he appointed a special technical envoy to boost trade with Israel.

In the day to day, both countries collaborate on a wide variety of projects in the defense, political, and social welfare areas—as well as in technology. In fact, as far as London is concerned, the latter category is important enough that the government announced Tuesday that it was appointing a special technology ambassador to Israel.

Britain was the first—and still the only—country to establish a special government-sponsored mission in Israel, called the UK-Israel Tech Hub, to deal specifically with programs that will facilitate cooperation between Israeli and UK companies, universities, and institutions to develop leading-edge technology in computers, networks, medical devices and technology, and other high-tech areas. That program has been so successful and important to London that Prime Minister Cameron himself announced the appointment of British businessman Saul Klein to the post of tech envoy to Israel, an appointment Cameron said he hoped would further enhance tech relations between the two countries.

That the prime minister himself **would personally announce** such an appointment **is impressive** — but just as impressive is the fact that Cameron is apparently keeping track of the breadth and depth of those relations.

Lest one think that Cameron was “going through the motions” and reading a prepared statement for some political purpose, Matthew Gould, the UK’s ambassador to Israel, said that **the government in London sees developing tech relations between Israel and Britain as a top priority**. *The Times of Israel* 12-Dec-12

The UK-Israel Tech Hub is also running a scheme called TexChange:

The project, called TexChange, will bring Israeli entrepreneurs to London (and other UK locations) to meet with entrepreneurs, investors, and other tech people.

The first group of 15 companies is set to be selected in the coming days, said Naomi Krieger, director of the UK Israel Tech Hub, and the first event will take place in November. Later on, she said, the program will bring British business and tech people to Israel to meet with entrepreneurs and start-ups, she added, with exchanges taking place three to four times a year.

“The idea is to create an on-going flow of Israeli entrepreneurs to the UK and vice versa,” said Krieger. “It will create a platform for collaboration of entrepreneurs and companies, giving British corporations a route to benefit from Israeli technological innovation, and tying Israeli companies to the UK’s leading companies, markets and service providers.” *The Times of Israel* 02-Sep-12

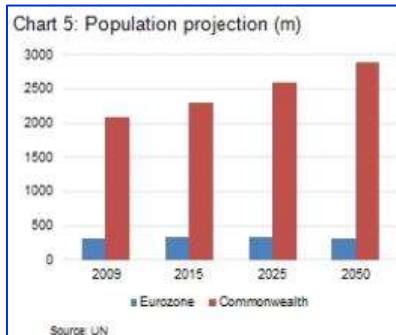
As the UK Trade and Industry website puts it:

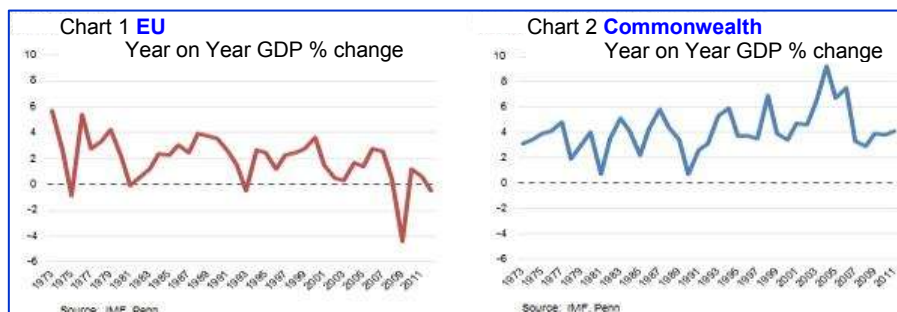
Israel is a remarkable success story for British exporters. Although the country is about the size of Wales, UK exports to this market have grown steadily. Bilateral trade has consistently been in excess of £2 billion over the last 10 years and should reach £3 billion by 2015.

Britain and the Commonwealth

Britain joined the EEC, now the EU in 1973; at that time Europe was thriving and the Commonwealth in the doldrums. How short-sighted that has turned out to be as these two charts from the *Economic and Financial Publishing Group* 01-Jun-12 show.

This chart shows expected population figures. The EU has falling birth rates in contrast to the Commonwealth. The chart on the next page shows the year on year % change in the GDP figures of the EU and Commonwealth from 1973 to 2011. The EU growth has declined substantially, while the Commonwealth has grown.





Forget Europe, it's time for the Commonwealth

Sir Alan Collins is the new director general of the Commonwealth Business Council, a federation of business and government leaders that promotes trade between the members of the Commonwealth. He is a career diplomat who has spent periods as ambassador to Singapore, Taiwan and the Philippines as well as spending a period on secondment to Shell's international operations. He is also a Brit.

This country's greatest challenge for 2012 and beyond **is carving out Britain's role as a global player in a new world order**. This is a world where trade flows are developing most rapidly along a golden corridor stretching from Latin America, through Africa to China and the rest of the Far East. As HSBC has described it, this 21st century Silk Road will define world economic and business relationships for our children and grand-children.

In twenty years' time it will be Britain's ability to be a part of that trade flow, acting often as financial mediator to facilitate transactions, which will determine our position in the economic league tables. Get this right and the trials and tribulations of reorganising the Greek retirement age will be of rather less import.

Britain's access will be determined in part by how we use our historic ties to Commonwealth partners. Serious questions should be asked about why trading groups where the UK has an in-built advantage and is culturally comfortable—the Commonwealth—are not promoted over those relationships which will be forever associated with rather more scratchy characteristics—Europe.

There are **huge positives to be gained from the Commonwealth**. It is estimated that shared language, legal and accounting systems can **reduce trading costs by up to 20pc for British businesses**. Exports to India from the UK are increasing by 9pc a year, to Canada 18pc and to Australia 31pc. *Daily Telegraph* 12-Feb-12

The Queen: "I will serve the country for years to come"

This year was the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne, and was celebrated by a series of tours by the Queen and members of her family to places in the UK and the Commonwealth. The pageantry of the ships on the River Thames was an incredible sight, echoing the days of Britain's naval power. The

Commonwealth links were also highlighted. Now 85, the Queen is an amazing woman who has dedicated herself to serving her people. In a speech to Parliament to mark this remarkable anniversary, given in the historic, 900 year-old, Westminster Hall, she spoke of her determination to carry on doing her duty.

“I have been privileged to witness some of that history and, with the support of my family, rededicate myself to the service of our great country and its people now and in the years to come.” Her words were widely interpreted as a signal of the 85 year-old’s determination to remain on the throne for the rest of her life.

As the Queen pointed out, she is only the second monarch to celebrate a Diamond Jubilee. Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years, the longest-serving monarch.

Smiling, she added: “Since my accession, I have been a regular visitor to the Palace of Westminster and, at the last count, have had the pleasurable duty of treating with 12 prime ministers.”

Laughter spread through the hall as her audience realised that her choice of the word “pleasurable” may not have been altogether serious. *Daily Telegraph* 21-Mar-12

Britain makes waves

Although Britain’s navy has shrunk considerably, we have to remember that we are in the era of much leaner forces. No longer are vast battalions of soldiers and sailors required. Sophisticated weaponry means much smaller manpower. Britain is building some of the most advanced ships in the world. The first of a new fleet of nuclear submarines was launched in 2012, believed to be the most sophisticated in the world; they are capable of detecting vessels 3,000 miles away and of running for 25 years before refuelling. Travelling over 500 miles in a day, they can reach the furthest destination within two weeks. Their Tomahawk missiles can strike targets 1,200 miles away. Britain’s new aircraft carriers under construction although not as big as some of America’s will be more sophisticated.

Defence chief signals major UK military presence in Gulf

Bible student’s hearts must surely quicken to read this headline! Britain’s Chief of Staff, General Sir David Richards, gave a very important speech outlining Britain’s goal of putting more troops into the Middle East including Jordan.

His speech was highly significant. It follows from what the Obama administration has been telling **the Europeans—they have got to take more responsibility looking after the security interests** not only of their own continent but **those in the Middle East and Gulf**.

And it reflects David Cameron’s view that British interests—not least commercial ones, and arms sales in particular—lie among the emirates, sultanates, and kingdoms, of the Gulf.

“Though more conceptual work is needed, given the importance of the region and clear prime ministerial intent, I envisage two or more adaptable brigades forming close tactical level relationships with particular countries in the Gulf

and Jordan, for example, allowing for better cooperation with their forces".
Guardian 18-Dec-12

So Obama has been signaling that the US may not be as closely involved as in the past with the Middle East and so Britain seems to be taking on that role.

David Cameron has made several trips to the Gulf States, overseeing the signing of substantial deals.

The visit to the UAE and Saudi Arabia is aimed at strengthening economic and defence ties with them and "**signals the PM's commitment to cementing long-term partnerships with two of Britain's most important strategic allies**," Cameron's office said before the trip. *AFP* 06-Nov-12

His trip to Oman in December secured a £2.5bn deal to supply the Eurofighter jet.

A new golden age? London's plan to revive shipping glory days

Here was another headline to grab a Bible student's eyes! The article in *LondonLovesBusiness* 09-Dec-12 was about the London Gateway, on the north bank of the Thames in Thurrock, Essex, just 25 miles (40km) from the heart of London. DP World (Dubai Ports took over P&O in 2006) is constructing the most advanced container port in the world and the biggest logistics park in Europe at a

cost of £1.5bn. It is being built on land reclaimed by the spoil from dredging the Thames estuary and into the North Sea for 60 miles (100km)! The new deep channel will enable huge vessels to anchor on the outskirts of London, dramatically cutting the cost of



container transportation not only to London and the south, but to the Midlands too. Rail and road links will move the containers around the country.

"Shipping lines need deep waters, companies are changing the size of the ships they use on the main deep sea trades from 8,000 to 14,000 containers. By allowing these ships into the Thames **we are plugging London-based businesses into the M1** [our 1st major motorway] **of international trade**."

Space precludes looking in this issue at the growing trade that the US, Canada, India and Australia are doing in the Gulf Region.

We now turn to Britain's battles with the EU.

Chapter 11

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BRITAIN AND “GOODBYE EUROPE”!

Our cover cartoon shows David Cameron sawing through the metal attaching his sidecar to the EU motorbike, ridden by Angela Merkel and François Hollande! There has been a strong shift in British politics to contemplate life outside the EU or at least with a treaty change that goes back to making her membership merely a trading link. The situation that we have been anticipating for many years is surely fast approaching when Britain breaks free from its Roman yoke.

This is the December 8th front cover of The Economist, which looked at what would happen if Britain left Europe. What would have been unthinkable to contemplate only a few years for such mainstream publications is now common place. What has caused this change of heart?

Goodbye Europe

That there has been a major falling out with Europe is clear, but why? It is a combination of items; but probably the greatest boils down to money. Britain, like the rest of Europe, has been struggling with substantial cuts in earnings and services, and it hurts to see Brussels oblivious to austerity measures, pushing up salaries, pensions and spending, in spite of pleas for greater awareness of the sufferings of many in Europe. It is heart-breaking to read of the effects of the austerity measures in Greece. Many unable to pay for doctors' visits or to go into hospital, pensions slashed in half and youth unemployment over 40%. The EU hierarchy runs in a “parallel universe” to quote an angry Mr Cameron. Britain has enough troubles to cope with after the Labour government left the cupboard bare, but at least Britain is out of the eurozone.

The cost to Britain of membership of the EU “club” is high and growing higher. A government investigation as to the real cost is underway. It is much more than the annual contributions that the UK makes to the EU budget; there are the substantial costs of the EU regulations which affect so many aspects of British life. All 27 members have to pay into the EU coffers, but many get back through various schemes more than they pay in—they are beneficiaries of EU membership. Germany followed by the UK are the two biggest contributors, yes we get money back, but far less than we put in. This enables the EU to disperse largess to the more impoverished members. In 2008 *The Bruges group* carried out an exercise to see what the EU costs Britain a year; the figure they came up with was £65,000,000,000! That is about £1,000 **per year**, for every man, woman and child in Britain! Since then costs have risen; our straight forward contributions has been



substantially increased and her indirect costs will have too. At the moment Britain enjoys a rebate in recognition that British farmers are too efficient to see much from the CAP fund. The rebate has already been cut in exchange for reforms in the CAP funding, which France has shelved, and it came under threat again this year.

Political union—a step too far

It is not just the cost of membership that irks the British; it is the open avowal of greater political union in order to bring some stability to the euro-crisis. Angela Merkel has made it clear that she is steering the EU ship towards this port, as we shall examine in more detail in the next chapter.

This is a step too far; Britain joined for trade not for political union. Britain is trying to throw off the all enmeshing hand of the EU in its affairs. She is tired of the interference by the EU, which over-rides the decisions taken by the British Courts, so that she can't get rid of terrorists who have come to this country and outstayed their welcome. When this government came to power they were shocked at how little influence Parliament really had, the majority of issues were merely being rubber-stamped by the MP's; the steady stream of regulations had its origins in the corridors of the European Parliament in Brussels.

Dissatisfaction with Europe is shown in the polls that indicate that if a referendum were held with the simple question *do we stay in or leave the EU*; there would be a strong majority who would vote to leave. So a new word enters our vocabulary—BRXIT—BRItain's eXIT from the EU!

As William Hague the Foreign Secretary put it in a speech he gave in Germany:

"Public disillusionment with the EU in Britain **is the deepest it has ever been**. People feel that in too many ways the EU is something that is done to them, not something over which they have a say." *BBC* 23-Oct-12

The continent or the open sea? Does Britain have a European future?

This title to a 44 page paper by *The Centre for European Reform* 30-May-12 poses the vital question, do we have a future in Europe? The author is obviously cautious about the consequences of Britain leaving, but his conclusion is interesting.

To a striking and novel degree, when senior officials hold policy seminars or forward-looking strategy debates, it is no longer seen as outlandish or naïve to suggest that, if eurozone integration leads to grave clashes with British domestic priorities, Britain might end up better off out. **As an idea, the possibility of British withdrawal is becoming normalised.**

The author can list any number of soothing, cautious reasons why Britain will not leave. But taking a few paces back, two bigger points stand out: **the relationship already looks much less stable** than it has for a long time, and it is hard to see **any way** in which British public and political opinion will become more favourable over the coming years.

The same organisation published another article (by a different author) 26-Nov-12 entitled:

How Britain could leave the EU

Britain’s departure from the EU grows ever more likely. David Cameron, the prime minister, wants Britain to stay in. But he seems set on a path that could lead to an exit. British withdrawal requires two conditions to be satisfied. First, the government of the day must call a referendum on whether to leave the EU. Second, a majority of voters must want to quit. The first condition seems likely to be met, and the second is, for now, fulfilled.



David Cameron has said he will give a major speech on the EU in the New Year, where it is thought he will promise a referendum at the time of the next election (2015 at the latest). His problem is that he would like to negotiate a better deal for Britain with the EU. That may not be possible. The EU will not hand back the powers it has gained over the years. As this article pointed out:

However, though the other EU governments want Britain in the Union they will not grant it treaty opt-outs. They worry that if Britain escaped labour market rules, which they view as intrinsic to the single market, it would gain an unfair competitive advantage. And if Britain could opt out of EU policies it disliked, others would demand the same privilege: the French might exempt their car industry from state aid rules, or the Poles spurn directives that force their coal centred economy to cut carbon emissions.

... **the trend of public opinion is increasingly anti-EU.** In recent years most opinion polls have shown a majority for leaving the Union. And what those leaders are doing—centralising economic policy-making and talking of ‘political union’—makes the EU less congenial to the British. The more the EU moves beyond the relatively limited economic club that the British joined, the more suspicious they become of it. *The Centre for European Reform* 26-Nov-12

There is only one way for Britain to get changes and that is by leaving and then trying to renegotiate her position. Christopher Booker writing in the *Sunday Telegraph* 25-Nov-12 succinctly put it:

The belief that we can repatriate powers we have given away to the EU is a sure sign that whoever voices it hasn’t really got a clue as to what the EU is about. The most sacred rule of the “European project”, ever since it was launched in 1950, is that **once a nation state has handed powers of governance to the centre they can never be given back.** The last thing our European colleagues would be prepared to do at present, when all their attention is focused on driving on to ever greater union in a bid to save the doomed euro, is to discuss Britain’s wish to defy that rule by allowing us to opt out of treaty commitments we legally entered into.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, as I have observed before, there is only one way in which one country can persuade the rest to agree to renegotiation of its relationship with the EU. That is by invoking Article 50 of the treaty. Only then

are they legally obliged to enter into such negotiations. But the catch is that Article 50 can only be called into play by a country which first says that it wishes to leave the EU.

Article 50 was introduced for the first time into the Lisbon Treaty and commences:

"Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements."

It would then start off at square one as if it were a new applicant.

There is much talk of Scotland declaring Independence from England and Wales and a referendum on this question has been promised by the Scottish leaders for 2014. What many in Scotland don't realise is that if Scotland became independent she would no longer be an EU member but would have to apply for membership and go through the procedures to join. If Britain were still a member, then there would need to be passport control at the Scottish border!

The pressure on Britain to leave is not all coming from within. There are many in Europe who would be very pleased for Britain to press the ejector button and depart from the EU plane, as depicted in the *Economist* cover on page 72.

Europe is 'for life', Hollande tells David Cameron in EU power spat

David Cameron has been told he cannot "repatriate" powers from Brussels to Britain because membership of the European Union is "for life".

The French President, Francois Hollande, declared that Europe is not "a la carte" like a menu from which member states can pick and choose their powers.

He issued his rebuke to the Prime Minister as Mr Cameron insisted he would fight for a "better deal for Britain" and seek to take back certain powers from Europe. *Daily Telegraph* 15-Dec-12

This followed Germany's exasperation with Britain, under the headline **Germany rounds on 'negative' Britain**, *The Independent* 26-Oct-12 had this to say.

Tensions between David Cameron and Angela Merkel over the future of the European Union have spilled into the open with Dr Rudolf Adam, deputy head at the German embassy in London claiming Britain lacks "vision" and faces being left behind by other countries because all it can say is, "No, no, no".

He told one of William Hague's ministerial aides that the Prime Minister's refusal to take a lead in Europe meant Britain would "**just see the red lights of the train that has already left the station**".

There are many in Britain today would be quite happy to watch from the station as the euro train hurtles towards destination Political Union!

We can be quietly confident that Britain will chart her independent course, utilising her strong links to the US, Canada, India, Australia, the Gulf and Israel. The Almighty has destined a pathway for Britain which will ultimately bring glory to Israel's King at a time when Europe will be feeling Christ's wrath.

Let's now see Europe's drive to political union, driven by Germany.

Chapter 12

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EU TRAIN: NEXT STOP “POLITICAL UNION”

*Picking up that thought from the end of the previous chapter where the German diplomat said Britain would “**just see the red lights of the train that has already left the station**”, let’s see the next stop for the euro train. Germany has been pushing hard for this ultimate step of political union. Over the past few years we have devoted many pages to the rise of Germany as the undisputed leader of the EU. Why are Bible students so interested in Germany? She was the centre of the Holy Roman Empire, springing out of Charlemagne’s Empire with its partnership with the Popes. She is at the heart of the Beast of the Earth of Revelation ch 13 and the Beasts of chapters 16 and 17. This is the successor to the Western iron leg of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, and as such needs to be present as a strong power at the time of the end in order to work with Russia at the heart of the Dragon, the successor of the eastern iron leg. It is upon these two legs, with their iron/clay feet that the image is yet to stand. We are seeing a very powerful sign—the Beast of Europe is fast developing so in its final stage it can be ridden by the harlot woman of Revelation ch 17. And this involves political union!*

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 17:12, 13

In John’s day the 10 horn territories didn’t exist as separate kingdoms, this lay in the future when they would exist in the 6th century Roman world. In ch 17 we have the nations on the territory of the ten horns giving their power to the central authority of the Beast system. Whether there will eventually through various amalgamations, be 10 nations or whether it will be those nations on the territory of the former 10 horns, we can’t be sure. Remembering too that this chapter is a picture of Europe at a time when they make war with Christ, i.e. after Armageddon, then it is truly amazing that we are already seeing so many nations willingly giving up their powers for the common cause.

Forbes: “The most powerful woman in the world”

Every December the American magazine issues its list of those it considers the most powerful people in the world. In 2011, Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor was ranked 4th in the world and the most powerful woman. This year she is ranked not only the most powerful woman but the 2nd most powerful person in the world ahead of Vladimir Putin, Bill Gates and Pope Benedict; Barack Obama once again took top spot. This is the highest ranking for a woman in the history of the Forbes list. Its brief biography of the chancellor said:

The world's most powerful woman is the backbone of



the 27-member European Union and carries the fate of the euro on her shoulders. Merkel's hard-line austerity prescription for easing the European debt crisis has been challenged by both hard-hit southern countries and the more affluent north, but it, and she, are still standing. Merkel has served as chancellor since 2005, but one of her biggest challenges still lies ahead: bolstering her government's sagging popularity before the 2013 German general election. *Forbes* 05-Dec-12

In last year's *Milestones ch 6* we traced the amazing story of Germany's ascent to power, from a defeated nation at the end of World War II to the strongest nation by far in Europe today. Since becoming Chancellor in November 2005, she has steered Germany to the position of leadership; one of the epithets used to describe her is "the decider".

She was brought up in East Germany when still under communist rule; her father was a Lutheran Protestant pastor and unusually they were allowed freedom to travel extensively at a time when people connected with Christianity were restricted. She spoke publically for the first time this year about her beliefs.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has for the first time publicly spoken about her Christian faith, which she has always held to be a personal, private matter, despite being leader of the Christian Democratic Union.

"I am a member of the evangelical church. I believe in God and religion is also my constant companion, and has been for the whole of my life," she said on a videoblog when answering questions from a theology student.

"We as Christians should above all not be afraid of standing up for our beliefs," she added.

The structure of the world relating to belief was a, "framework for my life that I consider very important," she said.

The *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper noted on Tuesday that until now Merkel had been very quiet on the subject, despite the much-cited fact that her father was a protestant pastor. *The Local* 07-Nov-12

Germany "Taking the lead"

German Foreign Policy is a private German site that keeps a critical eye on German affairs. Some of their articles are translated into English and available on their site. Sometimes the translation makes for stilted language, but most articles make interesting reading. This one was published on 05-May-12:

"Taking the Lead" is the title and focus of the current edition of *"Internationale Politik."* As the "European Union's most important shareholder," as its "biggest beneficiary" and particularly as an "economic powerhouse," **Germany has "a duty, to take the lead,"** alleges the journal's editor in chief in her editorial. **"Whoever leads, has to show the direction and convince the others of the chosen path,"** writes the editor in view of the Federal Republic of Germany's European hegemonic ambition. The journal is presenting a series of proposals for a "German leadership" role.

There have been several articles on Germany’s ultimate ambitions, not only to lead the EU but to extend her influence to embrace a much wider “empire”. She would like the EU to extend trade links to the US, a matter which America is loath to contemplate; her Imperial ambitions are far-reaching!

EU Think Tank Touts Grand Imperial Vision

This is another *German Foreign Policy* 01-Aug-12 document, however I am using *The Trumpet* 10-Aug-12 who have done their own translation and summary.

A European think tank with connections to Germany is asking for the construction of an EU-controlled “Grand Area” from the Polar Sea over Central Asia and Middle East to North Africa. The “Group on Grand Strategy” (GoGS) wants to create this “Großraum” (“Grand Area”) on which, according to their opinion, the European Federal State should be built. This would provide a power base to serve European raw material interests and protect against encroachment by powers external to Europe.

The concept, which in many ways conforms directly to German interests, also perceives the “Grand Area” with a network of military bases which would be solely “European,” devoid of any specific national control.

The advisory board of GoGS belongs to an affiliate of the Bertelsmann Foundation, one of the most influential German think tanks; the political scientific sector is working on the topic “Europe’s Future” for the Foundation.

Note that the Bertelsmann Foundation was the most significant producer of propaganda for Hitler’s Nazi war machine.

The Bertelsmann trail weaves its way through from its Nazi past to the postwar German elites who were quickly returned to influential positions within postwar Germany under Chancellor Adenauer. The fact of its current involvement, be it directly or indirectly, supporting the old Nazi idea of an empire extending from the Arctic to North Africa via Central Asia and the Middle East—the old German imperial vision—is deeply concerning indeed. Yet it is so consistent with the goals that its World War II predecessors promoted as to leave no doubt that they have a common source—the old Teutonic dream of a resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire!

Ultimately east and west will unite together for one brief moment in the world’s history, united in the common cause of dealing with the Jewish nation of Israel. It is interesting to see that the latent German desire to rule the world is never lost; it is part of Germany’s psyche.

An important step for Germany is to integrate into a political union the members of the eurozone and any non-eurozone members who wish to take this route. This was part of the master plan, and creating monetary union was done in the knowledge that it could only work with future integration of its members.

Germany's Chancellor Merkel urges EU political union

Talking about political union was once a taboo subject, but no longer. Merkel is quite specific:

Ms Merkel is under pressure to bind the **17-nation eurozone closer together**.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel says **the EU needs a political union even if it means some countries integrating faster than others**.

Speaking on German TV, she called for "more Europe", including a budgetary union, saying **"we need a political union first and foremost"**.

"Step by step we must from now on give up more competences to Europe, and allow Europe more powers of control." *BBC* 07-Jun-12

EU moves closer to eurozone integration

The speed at which the euro train is travelling to destination "Political Union" is breath-taking. What we have talked about for years is rapidly taking shape.

European leaders Friday unveiled plans for a deeper integration of the 17-member eurozone in the 27-nation European Union. The talks' outcome left unclear where such integration—likely to be **political, monetary and economic**—would leave the 10 EU members who aren't in the eurozone.

A mind-boggling bureaucracy required to regulate the banks—all operating in different languages and many beholden to ancient national traditions—isn't discussed at this stage. EU data suggest up to 200 functioning banks may be involved, while dozens more are judged to be too sick to cure.

ECB also plans to put to sleep banks that cannot be revived, at what cost to the European taxpayer remains unclear. *UPI* 14-Dec-12

EU foreign ministers discuss integration

Ten EU foreign ministers have spelt out radical suggestions to use the eurozone debt crisis as a springboard towards closer integration, including creation of a **European monetary fund, a European army and a European finance minister**.

The German-inspired initiative is intended to stimulate debate on radical new steps towards political union to be launched by EU leaders at their summit at the end of the month. It is also hoped that it will galvanise thinking in other member states about steps towards **"political union"**. *Financial Times* 19-Jun-12

We now have to create a political Union in Europe

Every year the Charlemagne prize is awarded in Aachen, the westernmost city in Germany and the favoured residence of Charlemagne, and later this was where the Kings of Germany were crowned. The 2012 prize was awarded to German Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, who is very pro-Europe. In his speech he spoke of the need for the EU to continue its path of integration. He also spoke with a "frog-like" mouth. (Rev 16:13)



Schäuble receiving Charlemagne prize

What unites us Europeans? What holds Europe together? Certainly its mix of freedom and social justice, democratic participation and the rule of law, which is unique in the world. It has something to do with Europe being shaped in the early stages by the **Judeo-Christian tradition**, and also with the legacy of Classical Greece. The triad of **Athens, Rome, Jerusalem**. But I would also like to call to mind the legacy of the **French Revolution: Liberty, equality, fraternity**. Freedom based on the dignity of each individual, as our Basic Law puts it, which of necessity presupposes equality. Because we are dependent on **coexisting with others that is not possible without solidarity, social equity and social justice**.

He then spoke of the need for political union.

We **now** have to create a **political Union** in Europe, boost Europe’s democratic legitimacy, improve Europe’s efficiency and reform European institutions.

That is where the proposal for a **European President who is directly elected by the entire European Union** originated. He or she would then be **the political head of a European executive** that the Commission should be developed into. Europe’s political unity must have a face and **that face must represent real authority**.

No 1 candidate for that position of the elected European President, let’s not be modest, is a certain Dr Schäuble!

The EU is a winner

There was another award ceremony in 2012; the Nobel Peace prize was awarded to the EU! The citation spoke of the fact that the EU had brought peace to Europe for 6 decades and brought reconciliation between enemies and promoted democracy. Many would argue that NATO ensured peace in Europe, and that at a time of great suffering for many of its members with riots and suicides, now was not an appropriate time to give the EU such an award.



Nobel medal and EU flag

The immediate question was who would pick up the prize on the EU’s behalf?

Almost a week after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, the European Union has finally decided who will collect the award: the three presidents.

Rather than one person making the trip to Oslo on 10th December, the EU has decided it will send three people: Commission President José Manuel Barroso, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy and Parliament President Martin Schulz. *EurActiv* 18-Oct-12

The costs far outweighed the value of the prize.

The bill for policing the ceremony alone will begin at £2million and the total cost of other measures is expected to run almost as high as the £15m spent on Barack Obama's 2009 visit to collect the prize.

The overall cost of the ceremony, security, travel prize and five-star hotels for leaders and their entourages will dwarf the £750,000 Nobel peace prize money which will be given to projects for children from war and conflict zones. *Daily Telegraph* 09 Dec 2012

And the medal? You will have to wait a bit if you want to see it.

The Nobel Peace Prize medal will then be bought back to Brussels where it will become the centrepiece of a controversial "House of European History" created by the European Parliament.

Billed as the only museum of European integration, the House is currently being built by MEPs at cost of £82 million, with a first £9.4m instalment due to be paid next year to get ready to open in 2014. *ibid*

The German parliament now the most powerful in Europe

While the EU has effectively drained away any powers that national governments possess—their role now is to rubber-stamp the legislation that continues to pour from Brussels—there is one government left with "teeth"; that is Germany's! It passed legislation in June to confirm that the German parliament will only allow measures it approves. By reason of the German constitution they must be consulted at an early stage in any matters relating to Treaty amendments and matters concerning deeper EU integration, so that they can debate and shape any new legislation! This will make Mrs Merkel's job harder, but it ensures that nothing is passed that would adversely affect Germany.

Germany balances budget

The euro crisis still rumbles on and many countries are suffering severely from the austerity measures forced upon them by a tough Germany. Meanwhile, as the rest of Europe suffers, Germany is doing fine and is confident that she will achieve a balanced budget by the end of 2012. This is far from the case in the rest of Europe; governments are having to borrow money to pay their bills. Why has Germany been so successful? In part it is on the backs of the rest of Europe. Her economy, although it has been hit this year with the recession, never-the-less is still comparatively strong. So much so that she has been able to borrow money at incredibly low interest rates, in fact in some cases at negative rates—i.e. banks are prepared to pay to lend, it is so safe!

Low or negative interest rates plus higher than expected tax revenues has resulted in this happy budgetary position two years earlier than had been predicted.

Greece is buckling under the austerity cuts

The government has been able to reduce its deficits, the medicine does seem to be working, but will there be a body left alive at the end of it? It is hard to imagine what life is like in a Western country that has enjoyed the good things of life, to be suddenly confronted with such savage cuts that people can't afford to go to the

doctor, let alone have hospital treatment. Families are having to provide food and bedding for hospital patients. Pensioners have had their pensions cut by half and many can't afford the costs of medication. Unemployment has risen from 17% a year ago to over 25% and projected to climb to 40% in 2015—an unimaginable situation. Already youth unemployment has risen to 57%. It is a situation which threatens to explode into violence and robbery.

The situation is little better in Spain, Italy too is facing deep austerity cuts.

Many economists think that Greece will eventually be forced out of the euro. The island of Cyprus is suffering equally because it is so closely linked to Greece. In terms of the size of the bailouts needed by other countries, Cyprus' need for €10-15bn is small change, but for Cyprus it represents a sum equal to her yearly earnings. The IMF is hesitating about lending, because Cyprus is a favourite source for grey money belonging to rich Russians (Cyprus is a popular holiday destination for Russians). Russia herself is quite interested in lending to the government; it might save embarrassing revelations about some of the deposits held here.

Greece and Cyprus attached to the wrong leg!

If we look at the original division of the Roman Empire into its two legs—the Eastern and the Western Roman Empires, we can see that at that time they were part of the Eastern Empire, ruled from Constantinople (today's Istanbul). Clearly Greece and Cyprus belonged to the Eastern leg of Nebuchadnezzar's image. So probably part of the euro crisis is to realign European countries into their appropriate legs. It is very interesting that today the Balkans are the fracturing point, just as they were in AD 400!



Germany and Italy—a reviving partnership

In 2011, Italy's Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, was forced to resign amid the spiralling debt that Italy faced. He was replaced by a non-elected government headed by Mario Monti, who has managed to stabilise matters and in December he managed to get the Italian parliament to accept his austerity budget. He has tendered his resignation declaring that his work has been completed with the new budget being passed. Elections have been set for 24-25 February with Berlusconi saying he will run. At the year-end Monti has said that he would run again.

Monti said he would lead a centrist alliance and wanted to go beyond the traditional left-right split to unite a coalition of factions around a reform agenda aimed at tackling Italy's deep recession and economic woes. *Reuters* 31-Dec-12

Our interest in Italy takes us back to the eve of World War II, Germany and Italy made a pact of *Friendship and Alliance between Germany and Italy*— known later as the *Pact of Steel*. They committed either side to come immediately to the aid of the other if the need arose. This Berlin-Rome axis played a pivotal role in the war.

The former manifestation of the Roman Empire, known as the Holy Roman Empire, was characterised by a two horned creature with lamb-like appearance but dragon mouth. These two horns represented the power of the Germanic Emperor and the Papacy in Rome. That beast came to an end under Napoleon and the ravages of the French Revolution. A new manifestation of the beast was to arise, we read in Revelation ch 16 that at the time of Christ’s return (v16) there would be a Dragon power, a Beast power and a False Prophet power. The Dragon was the original symbol for the Roman Empire, with its military might centred in Constantinople, today’s Istanbul. With the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, Russia became the successor of Rome’s military might, absorbing many of the Roman symbols such as the imperial eagle as shown here on the Coat of Arms of the Russian Federation.



When we come to Revelation ch 17 we have a harlot woman riding a scarlet coloured beast, an aspect we considered in more detail in *Milestones 2011*. Suffice it to say this is the final manifestation of the beast system which is destroyed at the hands of the returned Lord Jesus and the saints. It pictures a Europe which has as its rider a prostitute woman, a development from where we are today. We are witnessing the beginning of the process which ends with the Vatican riding the European Beast. It describes Europe at a time when the Battle of Armageddon has taken place. The Gogian armies will have been destroyed on the mountains of Israel, in the first blow in a sequence of events which will see Nebuchadnezzar’s image eventually ground to powder. (Dan 2:35, 45)

It is interesting to see the deep involvement and support of the Vatican in the construction of this new Europe. Not only were the founding fathers of what we see as the European Union, deeply committed to their cause, the majority of them were deeply committed to the Roman Catholic Church. Three of the founding fathers, are on the pathway to being made “saints” in the apostate church.

Three of these, the active Christians Alcide de Gasperi of Italy, Robert Schuman of France and Konrad Adenauer of Germany, are now so venerated in Catholic memory that in 1999 the Vatican set in train the first steps towards canonising them as saints. *Euro-know.org* Extracted 26-Dec-12

Many of the leaders of the EU today are committed Roman Catholics and many Jesuit educated. Among them are the European Council President, Herman van Rompuy; Mario Monti, Italy’s PM this year; José Manuel Barroso the President of the European Commission; as is Wolfgang Schäuble the German Finance Minister (and winner of the Charlemagne prize as we have seen). We shall see in the following chapter the growing links between the EU, Germany and Rome.

The Woman and the Beast

The picture that John was given would be one well known to many a Roman mural and is founding of Europe. Europa, a Phoenician princess, was ensnared by the god Zeus who carried her off to the island of Crete. She is first mentioned in the *Iliad*, an epic poem attributed to Homer and written in the 8th century BC.



of a woman riding a beast John, it was depicted upon the flag of the European Union based on the legend of the Phoenician princess disguised as a bull, become the founder of Europe. She is first mentioned in the *Iliad*, an epic poem attributed to Homer and written in the 8th century BC.

It is a symbol that has been adopted by the EU and can be found in many guises. It can be found in sculptures outside the EU Council of Ministers Office in Brussels, outside the European Parliament in Strasbourg, on stamps, coins and cartoons. Isn't it fascinating that the scriptures use this symbol depicting a period in Europe's history when its meaning would be clear to Bible students. A

woman in scripture speaks of a religious system. A pure chaste virgin speaks of the true believers, a harlot with a golden cup and filled with the blood of saints points to a religious system that has prostituted the truth. Beasts in scripture are symbols of nations. It is ironic that the emphasis today lies on the **woman** more than the beast; we know that this is in fact the truth, the Vatican woman has been the prime-mover, with Germany, of this drive to political union.

Now the EU is taking the symbol one stage further—based on a picture of Europa on an ancient vase in the Louvre it is using a picture of Europa's head as the watermark and a hologram on all denominations of euro notes. It is 10 years since they were introduced and counterfeiters are doing a thriving trade, the ECB had to withdraw over ½ million counterfeit notes from the system in the year to July. Hence the need to slightly redesign the euro to make it harder to copy. Europa's picture will soon be in the hands of millions of people!



Greek 2 euro coin



The original, the watermark, the hologram

We have mentioned the role of the Vatican in the affairs of Europe and we look at this in more detail in our next chapter.

Chapter 13

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THE VATICAN AND EUROPE

A striking feature of Europe today is the growing involvement of the Vatican in its affairs. Many had written off the power of the Papacy and looked to other solutions for the power represented by the Woman of Rev 17 and Babylon of chapter 18 and 19. However, our established understanding has stood the test of time. The Vatican's power is increasing in line with latter-day prophecies and it will increase still more. There are 2 prophecies in Daniel which indicate that the latter-day power represented by Babylon will re-flourish in these last days.

Daniel's prophecies of Babylon's re-flourishing

In *Milestones 2010* we briefly looked at Daniel chapter 4 and the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's downfall, when he lifted himself up with pride and boasted of his might before God. He was brought to be like the beasts of the earth for a period of 7 years, at the end of this period his kingdom was restored.

Did Daniel record this prophecy merely because of this incident in King Nebuchadnezzar's life? Surely there must be more. The fact that the stump of the cut down tree needed to be banded with iron and brass indicates that this is representing something lasting much longer than 7 years.



The sentence was that *seven times* would pass over Nebuchadnezzar which we equate with 7 years. On the Biblical basis of 360 days in a year, this gives us 2520 days of madness before being restored to the Kingdom. Applying a day-for-a-year this—in the longer-term fulfilment—would equate with 2520 years. Depending on whose chronology we take, we have various dates for the fall of Babylon. John Thomas has 542 BC, others 539 BC. 2520 years from the one date brings us to the start of John Paul II's reign as Pope, the other to Joseph Ratzinger (later Benedict XVI) being put in charge of the "Holy Office". This was set up in 1542 as the "Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition", its purpose was "to maintain and defend the integrity of the faith and to examine and proscribe errors and false doctrines". It has changed names several times and is now known as the "Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith". Ratzinger, was known as "God's Rottweiler", an ancient breed of dog described as "a multi-faceted herding and stock protection dog, it is capable of working all kinds of livestock under a variety of conditions". It is also a guard dog. This all seems a good job description! Both events were significant in the latter-day flourishing of the Vatican.

There is another prophecy concerning Babylon in the next chapter of Daniel, which concerns the fall of Babylon at the hands of Darius. Belshazzar the King was feasting using the gold and silver cups, which his grandfather had plundered from the Temple in Jerusalem, to praise the gods of Babylon.

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

PERES¹; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Dan 5:24-28

Daniel was summoned to tell the king the meaning of this writing, which he did, and that night the city fell as Cyrus “*dried up the River Euphrates*” that ran through the city as foretold in Isaiah 44:27; 45:1-4.

But like in the previous chapter is there more to this than the immediate facts? There may well be! The words used, mene, tekkel and upharsin are being used in the context of weighing and counting. The Aramaic word for tekkel is equivalent to the Hebrew word from which shekel is derived. (Strong’s 8625, 8254, 8255). The Babylonian mene was also a weight. However the Babylonians used a “heavy” mene which consisted of 60 shekels; whereas in Israel they used the “light” maneh which consisted of **50²** shekels, Maneh is the equivalent of the Aramaic mene (Strong’s Heb 4488, from 4487, equivalent to 4483 Aramaic). A shekel consisted of 20 gerah. (Exo 30:13)

	Babylon gerahs	Israel gerahs
Mene =	1200	1000
Shekel =	20	20
Mene	1200	1000
Mene	1200	1000
Tekel	20	20
Upharsin	600	500
Total gerahs	3020	2520

Upharsin (“and divided”) was a half mene. The table shows the number of gerahs in the Babylon and Israel mene and shekel weights and the total weight in gerahs of the writing on the wall *MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN*. We can see that if this is a measure of years, then to Daniel, a Hebrew, it would add up to 2520 gerah, or applying a year for a gerah it would make a time period of 2520 years, the same

¹ Peres is the singular of pharsin, the U in front is the equivalent of “and”, so although initially Upharsin and Peres seem totally different, they are not. Persia and divide are very closely related words (Strong’s 6539, 6537)

² Westminster Bible Dictionary and Jewish Virtual Library both confirm this.

There is a passage in Ezekiel 45:12, speaking of the regulations in the Kingdom Age which indicates that the heavier maneh might be used.

And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

20 shekels + 25 shekels + 15 shekels = 60 shekels.

It does sound a strange way of expressing the number of shekels in the maneh. However the Westminster Bible Dictionary says “According to the Codex Alexandrinus “five shekels are five; ten shekels are ten, and **fi**fty shekels shall be your maneh”. In other words the current weights shall be neither more nor less than the standard value; a just weighing shall prevail.” The LXX, RSV and a few others have a similar translation.

duration as the *seven times* of the previous chapter. I can't fit any event in Babylon's history to make sense of a Babylonian interpretation of 3020 years, but in any case it was a Hebrew prophet that was speaking.

So 2520 years from the destruction of Babylon we should expect to see its reflowering in preparation for its final stand in history. We recall that the stump was to be banded with brass and iron bands, speaking to us of Greece and Rome. (Dan 2) We see the reflowering of Babylon in both its Greek-Russian Orthodox side and the Roman Catholic side. It was John Paul II, supported by Ratzinger, who, with US help, are credited with breaking the power of communism, which led to the re-establishment of the Russian Orthodox Church. We live in incredible times!

2012 the year of New Evangelisation

We have traced the regrowth of the Vatican from the 1920's to today in the previous *Milestones*, It would seem an uphill battle, yet see the progress that Rome has made in the past 80 years. We saw there the tremendous revival under Pope John Paul II and the current Pope. Now 2012 marked the start of an intensive campaign to restore Christianity—that is Rome's version—back into the heart of Europe. Furthermore we know that for the Harlot woman of Rome to ride the Beast of Europe, this must be so. So the bishops were summoned to this gathering, timed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Vatican II, itself a landmark on the road to modernising the church.

Pope launches drive to reclaim lapsed western Catholics

Pope Benedict launched a campaign to bring lapsed believers back to the Roman Catholic fold on Sunday, opening a major convention of bishops on what the Vatican has termed the "new evangelization" of the developed world.

The Church is battling losses to its practicing flock in former strongholds in Europe, North America and Latin America in the face of sex abuse scandals, increasing secularism, rival faiths and open dissent against Church teachings on homosexuality and its ban on a female priesthood.

The synod—a Church conference where hundreds of bishops meet to work out a common global strategy, iron out divisions and advise the pope—has the theme "the new evangelization", the Vatican's buzzword for its drive to woo back believers. *Reuters* 07-Oct-12

The **Year of Faith** as it is officially called commenced 11th Oct 2012 and is planned to conclude with a big gathering at St Peter's on 24th Nov 2013.

The Pope has allowed a new documentary to be made in which he features, entitled *The Bells of Europe, a Journey into the Faith of Europe*. In it he expresses his conviction that "there will also be a new springtime for Christianity" in Europe. The time could well be right for such a revival. The power of the Protestants has been effectively muted,



the drive to get the Anglicans back is well underway, and will increase if the Church of England embraces moves towards homosexuality and same sex marriages. There is a similar drive to get the Lutheran Church in Germany back into the fold. Similar arrangements are being considered as have been used in Britain, of setting up ordinariates, which allow them to keep many of their traditions such as married bishops while being absorbed into the Roman Catholic Church. 2017 will be the 500th anniversary of Luther's breakaway.

This was a report last year in the *National Catholic Register* 18-Mar-11.

One of the most under-reported religious stories of the past decade has been the movement of Lutherans across the Tiber.

What first began with prominent Lutherans, such as Richard John Neuhaus (1990) and Robert Wilken (1994), coming into the Catholic Church, has become more of a landslide that could culminate in a larger body of Lutherans coming into the [Church] collectively.

In 2000, former Canadian Lutheran Bishop Joseph Jacobson came into the Church. In 2003, Leonard Klein, a prominent Lutheran and the former editor of Lutheran Forum and Forum Letter came into the Church. Today, both Jacobson and Klein are Catholic priests.

Over the past several years, an increasing number of Lutheran theologians have joined the Church's ranks, some of whom now teach at Catholic colleges and universities.

@Pontifex

No, that's not a typo, this is the "handle" or "username" for the Pope's Twitter account! The Vatican is using modern communication methods to bring their message to a wider audience. Twitter uses short, up to 140 characters, messages. The username is significant. It is short for Pontifex Maximus, an ancient Roman title meaning "greatest pontiff" and was given to the high priest of the College of Pontiffs (Collegium Pontificum) and was the highest position in the ancient pagan Roman religion. It was the title used by the Roman Emperors. Pontifex is literally "Bridge builder" or priest smoothing the passageway between the gods and men.

Pope starts new Vatican department to promote Latin

Revelation 17 and other prophecies make it clear that there are strong links to Rome. Latin is the official language of the Roman Church, and although it was dropped as the language of the "Mass", Benedict has championed the revival of "the Old Mass". He is also encouraging the learning of Latin.

Pope Benedict on Saturday started a new Vatican department to promote the study and use of Latin in the Roman Catholic Church and beyond.

The old-style Latin Mass was phased out more than 40 years ago in favor of local languages, but the pope is giving it another try. Latin remains the official language of the universal church.

The Vatican said the pope had instituted the Pontifical Academy for Latin Studies, placing it under the auspices of the Vatican's ministry for culture. *Reuters* 10-Nov-12

Pope calls for world government, 'New World Order'

One of the most remarkable calls by Benedict was the call for a world government. It follows a call his predecessor had made in 2004:

Pope John Paul II launched one of the most important diplomatic initiatives of his long papacy yesterday when he called for **a new international order** to replace the one that emerged from the Second World War.

Though he did not offer a detailed plan, his words appeared to show he wanted the UN replaced in light of its failure to block the use of force by America in Iraq. *Guardian* 02-Jan-04

In 2009 Benedict made his own call for changes for the benefit of mankind:

Pope Urges Forming New World Economic Order to Work for the 'Common Good'

Pope Benedict XVI on Tuesday called for a radical rethinking of the global economy, criticizing a growing divide between rich and poor and urging the establishment of a **"true world political authority"** to oversee the economy and work for the "common good."

He criticized the current economic system, "where the pernicious effects of sin are evident," and urged financiers in particular to "rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity." *New York Times* 07-Jul-09

In 2011 there was a call for a solution to the Banking crisis:

... the establishment of a **"global public authority"** and a **"central world bank"** to rule over financial institutions that have become outdated and often ineffective in dealing fairly with crises. *Reuters* 24-Nov-11

This call was not strictly made by the Pope but by the Vatican's "Justice and Peace" department, although the Vatican was quite happy not to correct the newspaper headlines that this had come from the Pope. Now this year it was from the Pope himself asking for "world government" and a "new world order"!

In a speech made at the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on Monday December 3 2012, the Pope called for the **"construction of a world community, with a corresponding authority,"** to serve the "common good of the human family". As a means of defending global peace and justice, the pope's vision for the establishment of World Government and a New World Order is supposedly not to create a new superpower, but a new governing body that offers to those (politicians) who are responsible for making decisions, criteria for judgment and practical guidelines. The Pope was quoted as saying:

"The proposed body (World Government) would not be a superpower, concentrated in the hands of a few, which would dominate all peoples, exploiting the weakest."

The Pope also described his vision as a “moral force” or moral authority that has the “power to influence in accordance with reason, that is, a participatory authority, limited by law in its jurisdiction.” *Associated Press* 11-Dec-12

The matter is linked to the call for reformation and evangelisation as this report makes clear.

While addressing the council, Pope Benedict XVI made numerous references to this "new evangelization" as an integral part of the Roman Catholic Church's world mission. And when defining what this phrase actually means, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about how individualism must be transformed into a type of communalism marked by interconnectedness and "family formation" on a global scale.

Part of this entails the "**construction of a world community**," as translated from the original speech, which was given in Italian. And to guide this world community will be a "**corresponding authority**" whose purpose it is to serve and promote the "**common good of the human family**." In other words, a "New World Order," in no uncertain terms, is the ultimate goal of the Roman Catholic Church.

Pope Benedict XVI is not interested in just any New World Order, however. He made it clear that the Roman Catholic Church's responsibility is to guide those who are actually bringing about this world government in how to promote an "anthropological and ethical framework around the common good." Along with this, will be a comprehensive reform of the corrupt international monetary and financial systems, of course in line with Roman Catholic doctrines. *NaturalNews* 27-Dec-12

The Pope has no interest in promoting any power other than his own, the kind of power that the Papacy wielded in the past over Europe. Nor would Benedict look to promote something which is impossible to achieve. He has carefully assessed that the time is now ripe. He is sowing the seeds for the world to accept the authority of the Papacy as the only stabilising power which has endured for centuries. Unfortunately it has used that power to suppress the truth and to persecute those who would oppose its erroneous teachings. We know that the Papacy will lead the revolt against Israel's newly established King when, after the destruction of the Gogian hosts on the mountains of Israel, the call will go out to the world to submit to his control. It won't be a world new order that the Pope will command, but it will embrace Europe, and he will rally the troops to resist this call.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. Rev 17:14

The Vatican is far from a spent force—expect to see her growing in power as we approach the time of her demise, not through old age, but because her falsehood is to be exposed and rooted out. Zion will triumph over Rome!

In our last main chapter we look at Russia and Putin's aims for greatness.

Chapter 14

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RUSSIA—THE PUTIN DOCTRINE

We now turn to a consideration of the might of Russia. Like the Vatican, here is a power that was strong, but saw a steep decline in its power and influence, so much so that many thought that she was finished and some other power must be sought to fulfil the prophecies about Gog and the latter-day representative of the military might of Rome. That was premature; we have to learn patience and recognise that reverses in what is apparently happening can be tests of our faith. God knows His timetable and at the right time the nations will be in the right positions for God's purpose to move forward with the ending of Gentile rule and its replacement with His King on Zion's hill. God has to hold back the nations until the time is ripe. So it is wonderful to see Europe coming together, the papacy re-flourishing and now we shall see Russia determined to use her wealth from the high oil process to make herself a strong power on the world scene. This involves rebuilding her armed forces and regaining her influence in her former dominions.

Putin elected for the 3rd time

It was a foregone conclusion that Putin would win in his bid to stand for a third term. The law had prevented his standing in the previous election because he had already served the maximum allowable of 2 terms. His swap of positions with Medvedev ensured that he kept his hands on the strings of power. One of Medvedev's early actions when he became President in 2008 was to pass legalisation lengthening the term of office from 4 years to 6 years. So Putin, now 60, can serve until 2018 and could potentially, if re-elected, then serve until 2024! So if the Lord Jesus came back tomorrow and the invasion of Israel were a number of years after that, he has the potential to be part of that Gog headship that will *think an evil thought* (Eze 38:10) against the nation of Israel.

Out of the mouth of the Dragon come unclean, frog-like spirits, (Rev 16:13) in the same way as they do from the mouth of the Beast and the False Prophet; the spirit of the French revolution is *unclean* and *demonic* (v14). It appeared to give freedom to men, to think for themselves, but it brought little freedom; instead it brought enslavement to the central power. So, under Putin we find a hard autocratic streak; press freedom has shrunk from the heady days after the fall of communism and criticism of Putin is firmly stamped down on. For most Russians having lived under the communist rule, little has changed, except that living standards and life expectancy have risen.

Introducing the Putin Doctrine

Putin is seeking to re-establish the power that Soviet Russia once had and his plan to achieve it has been termed “the Putin doctrine”, as this article reveals.

Six months after returning to power in the face of mounting opposition, Russian President Vladimir Putin is exercising his political capital—and doing so in **imperial fashion**. The most recent example: earlier this month, Putin announced that Russia was creating the world's largest publicly traded oil

company. **The goal: to restore the glory of Russia the only way Putin seems to know how—the raw acquisition of power.** “He is trying to keep stability, as he sees it, with billions of dollars in oil,” said Evgeny Gontmakher, an analyst at the *Institute of World Economy and International Relations*.

The announcement seemed to crystallize what analysts are now calling “**The Putin Doctrine.**” Its essence is to **consolidate political control at home and expand his country’s influence in Central Asia** at the expense of the West. Earlier this year, as protesters crowded Moscow’s cold streets, demonstrating against the government in a way that hasn’t been seen in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin said his third term would give rise to **a stronger military**, improved social programs, and the creation of a Eurasian Union, a confederacy of states that resembles a watered-down version of the old USSR.

Apparently he wasn’t bluffing. Putin announced that he would boost the Russian Army’s budget from \$61 billion in 2012 to \$97 billion by 2015. Last month, he flew to Tajikistan and extended the lease on three Russian military bases for 30 years. Meanwhile, the Russian Air Force has begun joint exercises with its counterparts in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, and a special Kremlin committee is mulling the best ways for the country to further unite with its neighbors in Central Asia: “We take the Putin Doctrine as verbatim instructions for how to create revolutionary change,” said Yuri Krupnov, a Kremlin adviser trying to invest \$12 billion in state money into the economy of Tajikistan.

On the domestic front, Putin appears eager to destroy his opponents. Over the past year, he has relied on a loose coalition of nationalists, secret service agents, and the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church to crush dissenters, including opposition figures, human-rights groups, and even the Pussy Riot musicians.

By and large, Putin’s cult of personality has continued to grow in the 12 years he’s been in power. Patriarch Cyril [Kirill], the head of Russia’s Christian Orthodox Church took things a step further, calling the former KGB agent a “present from God.” *Newsweek* 26-Nov-12

As the above article indicates, the three main strands are a rebuilt empire, a strong military and power. The fourth strand is a strong Church. Let’s now look at these.

Rebuilding the Soviet Empire

Putin is impressed at the collective might of the EU and wishes to rebuild similar links to her former satellite countries. This is slowly taking place, but not all the countries are enamoured at coming back into the fold. At the moment there is a **Military Alliance** which consists of Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, which is responsible for security integration and cooperation. The **Customs Union** consists of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and deals with economic integration. A *Stratfor* 05-Dec-12 article gave this update:

Russia is expanding its efforts to solidify and institutionalize its influence in the former Soviet states that are most politically aligned with Moscow. On Dec. 4, Russian military chief Col. Gen. Valery Gerasimov said that the Collective Security Treaty Organization military alliance has plans to construct an

integrated air and missile defense system among security bloc members. His announcement came a day after Kyrgyz Economy Minister Temir Sariev said that Kyrgyzstan would join the Moscow-led Customs Union in 2014.

Increasing economic and security integration with these countries will be key to **Russia's goal of forming a Eurasian Union by 2015** and, more important, bolstering the country's presence in its periphery as its regional neighborhood evolves and becomes more unpredictable.

The anticipated expansion of the Customs Union to include countries such as Ukraine has not materialized, despite Russia's persistent attempts to convince Kiev to join. Kyrgyzstan had officially expressed interest in joining the Customs Union, but the time frame for its accession was until recently unclear.

When Putin attended the annual EU-Russia summit meeting at the end of December, he made it clear he was now attending as Head of the Eurasian Union.

He will make sure his hosts welcome him as the representative of the Eurasian Union—Putin's pet geopolitical project, which bears similarities to the EU. *EurActiv* 04-Dec-12

Rebuilding Russia's military forces

One of Putin's successes has been his streamlining and modernisation of the Russian arms industry that not only supplies Russia's needs but generates substantial income to help the costs of research and development.

Russia set a record in arms export. The volume of contracts has exceeded \$14bn against the planned \$13.2bn planned for this year, *Voice of Russia* 18-Dec-12

An intensive drive is on to build six submarines and one aircraft carrier a year over the next few years. They did build 5 submarines a year at the height of the Soviet days, but aircraft carriers take a long time to build. The one currently being built (described below) is not scheduled to be launched until 2020.

Moscow plans to increase annual defense spending by 59%, to nearly 3 trillion rubles (\$97 billion), by 2015, the head of the Duma's defense committee said Oct. 17, *RIA Novosti* reported. Defense spending will equal 3.2% of gross domestic product in 2013, 3.4% in 2014 and 3.7% in 2015, the official said. Russia is attempting to modernize its military. *Stratfor* 17-Oct-12

New ship will make Russia superpower on sea

The design of the latest aircraft carrier under construction is of a new type and is intended to greatly enhance Russia's military might.

The new aircraft carrier will combine the properties of a command and control vessel and that of a powerful defensive ship. It is also planned to fit up this cruiser with the most advanced equipment that has no analogues [comparisons] in the world. It will be able to take about 80 airplanes on its deck.

The main purpose of such a ship is to deliver strikes at targets in the air, on water, on land and even in space. The latter task will be achieved if the ship works in a tandem with a group of orbital facilities.

"For Russia, having such a cruiser would mean more than just having another military ship. She will be able to claim for the status of a superpower from the point of view of navy, although, of course, the cruiser will be not only a symbol of power, but be used for practical aims. It will defend Russian submarines and land-based marines from air attacks." *Voice of Russia* 05-Dec-12

The 3rd and 4th strands of the Putin Doctrine—power and strong links to the Russian Church—go hand in hand.

Putin “the Russian tsar of the third millennium”

This headline is taken from an article on Putin’s election campaign. The *Vatican Insider* 14-Feb-12 was looking through Roman Catholic eyes and showed just how entwined the Kremlin and the Church are. The actual headline to the piece was [Russia: Church and politics show proof of a grand alliance](#). Here are a few quotes.

In Russia, the words “throne” and “altar” go together like a horse and carriage—just as they did in the Rasputin era. “The Putin era is a miracle,” says Kirill, the leader of Russian Orthodox Christians as he gets personally involved in the political contest in Russia. The Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill, and other religious leaders have given their “blessing” to Putin as presidential candidate in the upcoming March 4 elections and his deeply nationalist and authoritarian programme.

“Over the past 12 years religious organisations have been given unexpected freedom and support. They are well aware of the fact that this “symphony” became possible in great measure thanks to Putin.” The comment went on to say that “Russia’s destiny depends a great deal on the fact that religious leaders recognise the historicity of the moment and understand what their mission is during this moment.”

The Russian tsar of the third millennium has therefore been given a sort of mandate by the religious powers. Putin has a huge amount of power in his hands since he liquidated the so-called new oligarchs that are the new millionaires who got rich by selling off Russian state companies (at Putin’s predecessor Boris Yeltsin’s request) and had been in a strong position to influence politics as well. Thus, Vladimir Putin is portrayed as the strong man of the Great Mother Russia.

What we are witnessing are two parallel movements; one in Europe and the other in Russia. As the EU is rushing towards political union, with the blessing and help of the Papacy, so we see Russia on a similar pathway, to bind the east together, supported by the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Church is ahead of the Vatican in its involvement with politics. On the other hand, the EU is ahead of Russia in the political union stakes. Both groups show what can happen in a comparatively short period of time. As the West is seeking to recreate the Holy Roman Empire, with Charlemagne as their role-model, so Russia is seeking to revive the glory days of the Tsars (from Latin for Caesar) of the Imperial Russian Empire. The two thighs and legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar’s image are developing before our eyes.

They have to become attached to one body. We shall briefly close *Milestones* with a look at moves to link Russia and Germany and links between the two churches.

Russia and Germany

The economic chaos has slowed matters to some extent. The time is not yet ripe for these two major powers to move substantially closer to each other. Doubtless when Europe has pushed through political union, then the rapprochement will become clearer. In God's mercy we may not be here to see it, but will be with the Lord Jesus. However, the links are being put into place. Russia has a pool of available labour at relatively low wage costs. Germany has the manufacturing skills but has a falling birth-rate. Immigration is one solution but not a popular one, the other is to tap Russia's human resources. Russia also has much of the raw materials that Germany needs for her manufacturing plants. It makes a natural partnership, which has been running for a number of years and Germany has now replaced China as Russia's biggest trading partner, with bilateral trade in 2012 expected to top €60bn.; with 6,300 German firms doing business in Russia. Trade, especially car exports by Germany, has been boosted by Russia's accession to the World Trade Organisation, becoming its 156th member in August. This autumn saw the coming on stream of the 2nd Nord (North) Stream gas pipeline, ensuring a steady supply of Russian gas direct to Germany. The two countries are now exploring the feasibility of building 2 more pipelines to link the two countries.

Russia is now very dependent on the EU markets—the EU takes 58% of Russia's exports, and supplies 44% of her imports.

Rome and Moscow

Since Kirill was elected leader of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009, relations between the two churches have improved dramatically

There is a growing recognition that there is **more that joins theologically faithful Catholics and theologically faithful Orthodox than that which separates us**. The urgency of the cultural decline compels our collaboration in Christ. It is also leading us to a growing mutual respect **which may pave the way toward some form of restored communion**.

Patriarch Kirill has faced opposition within the Orthodox Church for his dialogue with the Catholic Church. However, he has showed no sign of retreat, particularly in joint efforts aimed at stemming the growing spread of the sordid fruit of moral relativism. Before he was elevated to the Patriarchate, he was responsible for dialogue with the Holy See. He has continued that dialogue. Kirill has a genuine respect for the Catholic Church. He sees the Orthodox and Catholic Churches as "sister churches". *Catholic Online* 24-Apr-12

2012 marked an important step forward in Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox relations. In August, the Russian Patriarch Kirill made an historic trip to Poland, the scene of much bloodshed in WWII when Russia invaded Poland. He was warmly received by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic leaders as well as the politicians. It certainly brings closer the time when the Pope will visit Moscow.

As is our custom we close *Milestones* with words of exhortation.

Chapter 15

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Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die

These words of warning were delivered to our brothers and sisters at the Sardis ecclesia, by the Lord Jesus. (Rev 3:2 ESV) Spiritually, things were not very good there. The problem was that many had defiled their garments. (v4); but the even bigger problem was that they didn't realise this. They were held in good reputation (v1), by the other ecclesias, but not by the Lord Jesus. You are dead was Jesus' assessment. This should make us stop and think; the ecclesia would not be 50 years old and there had been spirit-guided elders, but they were living in a dangerous state, deluded and unaware of their problems. Their spiritual eye had become dim and their white robes soiled.

With the coming of the Lord Jesus so close we have an opportunity to examine our lives. It is not too late—though one day soon it will be—to do something about our spiritual health. Just this morning a brother phoned having read of the forthcoming Prophecy Day at Rugby, God Willing, eager for details as he and his friends realising how little they were hearing of Bible Prophecy were determined that this year they would try to listen to more prophecy talks.

At Sardis the spiritual garments they had been given at baptism were soiled. What of ours? We have to allow the word of God to wash them clean, yet recognising our frailty and need for forgiveness. The Lord Jesus gave the ecclesia at Sardis some actions they must take. Watch, strengthen, hold fast, repent and finally, as in all the 7 letters, they had to overcome. These are all active, positive things we must be doing. Sitting back and relaxing and not being active in the ecclesia is not an option. We have Jesus as our example: do we read of him relaxing and pleasing himself? What did his conversations revolve around? What do ours?

The world around us is so persuasive. Our 21st century world intrudes at the touch of a button, or a swipe of the finger. No longer do we have to go out of the home to be part of the world, we can bring it right in. Instead of being fed from the Word of God, we can relax and allow ourselves to be filled with the ways of the world. The world is evil, we see the evidence of it in the behaviour of those allowed unbridled access to the violence that the make-believe world glorifies and cannot discern the differences between make-believe and reality. It is a world that glories in the very things that God hates: murder, rape, infidelity, casual relationships. Sadly these things intrude into our ecclesias and blight lives.

Falling attendances at our Gospel meetings, Bible Classes and Studies, are also an evidence of a shift in allegiance from pleasing Christ to pleasing ourselves. Often the logo on clothing worn to the meeting displays the wearer's allegiances.

When did you last hear mention of the Hope of Israel, or even Israel in our meetings? Have we lost the reality of the coming of Christ and the restoration of Israel's Kingdom? Let's stand up for the Truth amidst the apathy of today, to encourage our brothers and sisters lest we lose the Truth.

Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die. Rev 3:2 ESV

Keep up-to-date!

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World events are fast moving and to supplement the yearly *Milestones* review, one can keep up-to-date on a quarterly or a weekly basis.

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Each issue of the quarterly *Bible Magazine* carries a *Milestones Update*, which looks at different topical areas of fulfilling prophecy. This lively full-colour magazine is of interest to brethren and sisters and is ideal to give to our young people and interested friends.

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For details contact me at: don@MilestonesUK.org

Prophecy Days

Both the *Bible Magazine* and the *Milestones* websites carry details of known Prophecy Days around the world that uphold our traditional understanding of the fulfilment of prophecy. For latest details of the Rugby Prophecy Day go to:

www.bibletalksrugby.org and click on links. Also you will find link to the Rugby Christadelphians YouTube channels where you can watch many Prophecy Day talks from the UK and around the world.

Don Pearce

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Milestones 2012

Our main themes for 2012:

- Israel defends herself again—why is she so hated?
- Iran's arc of influence and Syria's Arab "Winter"
- Shale oil and gas changing political influences
- Britain: the Tarshish power begins a new journey



We see so many signs that our Master is at the door.

Wake up and watch lest we fall asleep!

The chapters have their usual mix of exposition, prophecy and connections to the events of the year, in support of our established understanding of Bible prophecy.

Milestones 2012 is an antidote to apathy in these difficult times for Christ's brothers and sisters.

