Rejoicing in Gaza at the news of 9/11 attacks
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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”— John 17:17.
“THE REGENERATION” NOT FULFILLED IN THE CHURCH

“Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” — Matthew 19:28.

Abstractly μισθώσασθε από τον θεατήν, rendered “regeneration,” signifies a production again—a meaning which implies that the thing or things so produced existed in some state previously to reproduction. In Matt. 19 the word is used in reference to thrones, tribes, glory, ruling and rulers; which are the elements of a kingdom. It is therefore used there in a political sense, and implied when so used by “the King of the Jews,” that those things did not then organically exist, but that they should be thereafter reproduced.

The kingdom of the twelve tribes had existed in the Holy Land, the only country where it can exist, but when Jesus spoke the words, the Holy Land was a province of the Little Horn of the Goat—the power that afterwards destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. From the days of John the Baptist and Jehovah and his king’s land has continued to be a province of the Little Horn. “We have no king but Caesar.” was the public avowal of a fact attested by all history to this day. Caesar has been de facto; though not de jure, king of the Jews ever since.

A kingdom or republic is something more than an abstraction, or unorganized elements. Two hostile kingdoms cannot coexist in the same capital; much less possible is it for Caesar and Messiah to reign together over Jerusalem; and to prate about the Apostles reigning in or over that city, where, at the will of Caesar’s vassals they were cast into prison, and finally expelled, is too absurd for serious connotation.

The throne of David, and the thrones of David’s house, the Glory of Jehovah, the twelve tribes, and their twelve ruling princes, all existed in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the days of David and Solomon; seeing then, that they did not exist when the greater than Solomon was there, nor since, it follows that reproduction in relation to what Jesus and his apostles were interested in, imports the restoration of those things to their appropriate place. This is what the apostles themselves understood was to be accomplished “in the regeneration;” for after Jesus had been discoursing to them about the kingdom some forty days subsequent to his resurrection, they inquired of him, “Will thou in this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” This question shows that they did not consider that Israel possessed a, or the, kingdom; therefore, they wished to know if he would not then re-produce it.

In the re-production of the kingdom of the twelve tribes, the territory, the nation, and the capital, will all be the same—the Holy Land, the Twelve Tribes, and Jerusalem. The government will be monarchical “as in the days of old.” This will not be changed. The persons by whom the government will be administered will be different. Instead of David, succeeded by Solomon, succeeded by Rehoboam; it will be “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” succeeded by no one; and instead of the princes of David succeeded by the princes of Solomon, etc.; It will be the apostles and brethren of Jesus, the immortal princes of the house of Bethlehem, succeeded by none; for “The kingdom shall not be left to other people,” as in former years—Daniel 2:44. None, who have not previously been the subject of “a change of heart”—“renewed by knowledge after the image of God”—can have any part in that kingdom.

Without knowledge there is no righteousness—“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” Ignorance of this truth is a barrier against sanctification by it. The truth must be known to be believed; and without faith, or belief of the gospel of the kingdom, it is impossible to please God and to possess the glory and honour of it forever; the former, the nation which is to obey their statutes and ordinances. Christians are not the subjects of the kingdom. They rank higher than this. They are to rule. They are joint heirs of all the things promised to their Elder Brother—the Joseph of the family. If evangelists understood this, they would not prate about a kingdom being set up in Jerusalem on Pentecost. The apostles and their brethren were all joint heirs, and rulers of the kingdom elect. This is irrefutable: where then, were their subjects?

The subjects of the kingdom are the generations of the ages—those generations of the Twelve Tribes contemporary with the reign of Jesus on his father David’s throne in Jerusalem; the descendants of the old clothes men of Chatham Street, New York, and of Rag Fair in London, and of the down trodden and despised outcasts of Israel in all the Ghettos of Rome, Constantinople, and other sinks of Gentile abomination and iniquity. These outcasts, however degraded, are not lower in the social scale than the Egyptian bondsmen from whom sprang the generations that conquered Canaan, and were the terror and admiration of the Orient under David and Solomon. The first generation that shall be resettled in the Holy Land by Jesus will be brought into the righteousness prepared of God for its justification. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” says Jehovah, and “they shall be all righteous”—a righteous nation, whose shepherds shall be after Jehovah’s heart, and shall feed them with knowledge and understanding—Jer. 3:15.

There was no change of government effected in Jerusalem on Pentecost. All the Jews that resided or sojourned in that city, whether Nazarenes or not, continued to obey the laws. The Roman government was not changed; and the municipal and the ecclesiastical customs were observed as usual, and for nearly forty years after. All that the Christian Hebrews did was to cease from seeking righteousness by works of law. A Christian in Britain abstains from seeking salvation through state-church, or dissenting institutions; nevertheless, he pays tithes, and taxes, and is careful not to violate the law. It was so with the Pentecostian Christians—they continued to render unto Caesar what belonged to him, and to God the things that were his.

The great event of the Day of Pentecost was, the proclamation for the first time of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus as the Messiah, to all those who believed the gospel of the kingdom, and recognized his claims to its throne. All such were baptized, and became a society in Jerusalem; not a kingdom, but suffering tribulation in hope of receiving one.

John Thomas. Extracted from Herald of the Kingdom 1856.
The terrorist attacks on London raise many hard questions, one of which concerns Bible prophecy.

By Paul Billington. BRANTFORD, ON.

Many journalists rushed to comment and give us the benefit of their wisdom before the dust had hardly settled—and the bodies recovered—following the bombing of London’s transport system. It was a dreadful terrorist strike at Britain—yet not on the same scale as that which killed thousands of people on the 9/11 New York attack. For those who view such events from the perspective of Bible prophecy however, the events in Britain are good reason to look once again at those prophecies which link that nation with countries of the Middle East.

Tarshish Britain

The Biblical “Tarshish” has been identified with Britain over many years, and though some have struggled hard to prove otherwise, the main lines of connection remain firm with no credible alternative in sight. As had been anticipated in books such as Elpis Israel (1849), the “isles” and “ships of Tarshish” were first in promoting the colonization of the Holy Land with the Jews. That is now history, and though it may have been regretted later, Britain did “view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” as the Balfour Declaration put it. There can be little doubt now that this was an anticipatory fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 60:9, and that a more complete fulfilment of it will be seen in the future just as the context of the chapter demands.

What does not seem to have been given sufficient attention however, is the fact that prophecy indicates a strong connection (probably a trading alliance of some kind) between Tarshish, her “young lions” and “Sheba and Dedan” (Ezekiel 38:13). Sheba and Dedan point us to Saudi Arabia and the area of the Gulf states. It indicates a link between English-speaking peoples and these Islamic states in the Middle East. Those who like to think of Britain as being Israel’s protector and ever-friendly ally seem to ignore this requirement of prophecy. If we are to gain a balanced view of things however, we cannot leave this connection out of the picture. Tarshish-Britain has given support to Israel at times, that is true, but it is also seen to be allied with Sheba and Dedan in Ezekiel 38—and it is still grouped with them after Christ’s return in Psalm 72:10.

In consideration of Britain’s connections with the Middle East in the latter days, earlier expositions (such as we find in Elpis Israel) expected that she would be forced to have a military presence there—not only in the areas of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf (Sheba and Dedan), but also in the area of modern Jordan (ancient Moab). In light of this the British power has been termed “the Moab of the latter days.” If that is so, then it is another tie between
Britain and the Islamic countries of the Middle East. In fact the close relationship between King Abdullah’s Jordan and Britain today would give credence to this.

**Islamic Influence in Britain**

In view of the above it should not surprise us to find considerable Islamic influence in Britain today (or in other “young lion” countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand—and indeed, in the United States also). This influence is inevitably going to effect the political environment and policies followed in Britain and its former colonies.

It must be remembered that Islam was the majority religion in the British Empire, and when Britain brought these colonies into its cities and began to pursue a multicultural path, then the social character of the country was bound to change. This was compounded by the simple fact that immigrants did not integrate with the indigenous population, adopting its values, cultural traditions or religious background—they kept their own customs and in many cases lived under a self-imposed form of apartheid. In other words they remained socially segregated and formed their own communities.

About half of Britain’s Islamic population today originated from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The rest is made up largely of Indians and Arabs. The first to settle in Britain were from Yemen—as long ago as the turn of the century, and it was at about that time that Britain’s mainly Protestant Christians began to lose faith in their own religious belief. Darwinism and Biblical criticism undermined the very basis of religious belief. This weakened religion of an apathetic people was no match for the Islamic invasion of England. Today, practicing Moslems are far more active than practicing Anglicans—and may well outnumber them. The English landscape once dominated by churches and cathedrals has been replaced by one that is strewed by mosques. Islam may still be a minority in the big and largely secular picture—but it is a significant minority often driven with devotion and zeal.

**Islamic Terror**

What drives some followers of Islam to engage in acts of terror like that of 9/11 and the London bombings, and can it be equated in any way with the terrorist attacks in Israel and Iraq? The war on America and Britain is frankly covered in this book which pulls no punches in its realistic approach.

We must recognize the fact that not all Islamic people are disposed towards the use of violence, but experience is a great teacher, and problems are rarely solved by ignoring them. It is not so much that Islamic extremists do commit acts of terror, but that their co-religionists usually say little and do even less to prevent them, or bring them to justice. When extreme statements are made by Muslim leaders, it would have been reassuring to hear a roar of protest from the general Islamic community. The statement coming from the Sunni Council held in Birmingham ten days after the London bombing, and its “fatwa” is typical Moslem diplomacy. Actions speak louder than words.

Forthright coverage of this subject is given in the book *Preachers of Hate*, the front cover of which is shown here. The author, Kenneth R. Timmerman, not only discusses the terrorism itself, but also the mind-set that lies behind it. He claims that part of the problem is the refusal of western governments and the media to face up to the reality and depth of an unreasonable and ferocious hatred—a hatred rooted in anti-Semitism.

Timmerman quotes the words of the Islamic scholar al-Mawdudi (1903-1979): “The Islamic party does not hesitate to utilize the means of war to implement its goal... Islam seeks the world. It is not satisfied by a piece of land but demands the whole universe.”

Timmerman writes: “In London, at an anniversary “celebration” of the 9/11 attacks, I watched his followers at the radical Finsbury Park mosque hang banners proclaiming “Islam will dominate the world,” while vowing to transform Britain into an ‘Islamic Republic.’”

Later in the book he quotes the words of London’s Omar Bakri Mohammad: “There are twenty-six million Muslims in Europe. In the U.K. alone we have 385 fundamentalist organizations. We form a fifth column, and we will create chaos...Muslims in Britain want to change society, to make the Islamic flag fly over Downing Street.”

The ritual “condemnation” of terrorist acts by Muslim leaders and organizations—the diplomatic condolences and belated statements put out by Arab governments (including the P.L.O.) appear to be little more than diversionary tactics staged for the benefit of a gullible world.

Following 9/11 U.S. President George Bush appeared to wake up to reality for a moment. He declared war on terrorism, refused to deal any longer with the then P.L.O. leader Yasser Arafat, and even demonstrated some support for Israel. He formed an alliance with Britain and overran Afghanistan, failed to apprehend Osama Bin Laden but went on to remove Saddam Hussein from power, bringing virtual civil war to Iraq.

Now the terrorists (if the BBC will excuse the use of that term) have struck London. A super-man-hunt swung into action intended to find and bring the terrorists to justice—a justice it now seems that they had already received in blowing themselves to bits.

The counter-terrorist measures taken by both the United States and Britain have done very little to remove the threat in either country. Most English-speaking countries have experienced their vulnerability to this form of violence—9/11, the Bali-bombings, the London attacks—yet none of them have yet been able to face the real problem, let alone solve it.

*Nations that Forget God*  

We have said earlier that in apathetic and faithless Britain (made so through the rejection of the Bible) there was no match for the imported Islamic influence. There was no power to convert the immigrants, demonstrating that the Bible—not the Koran—comprises the word of the Living God. The faith of Britain (such as it was), was not destroyed by Islam—but by the theories of evolution and Biblical criticism. Added to that there was the advance of humanist philosophy which recognized no God at all, other than Man himself. All this brought the so-called “permissive” society as a step toward the totally immoral one of today. This rejection of Bible-based values has brought violence, greed, abuse, the tragedy of broken families, unhappiness and tears.

Some have pondered over the prophecy of Ezekiel 28:14-19, and have wondered whether there might be an application to the latter-day Tyre (Britain—a trading centre of...
the modern world). Britain was in the Holy Land, having the Mandate until after the Second World War—and she was, in effect, cast out of it as profane after her shameful treatment of the Jews during the period. But note, the words of verse 16, “they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned.” Also verse 18, “therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee.” Surely this is due to her attitude towards God and His word, and it reflects the principle stated in Psalm 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

Scripture informs us that nations will be judged upon the basis of their treatment of God’s people—Genesis 12:3; Joel 3:2-3 etc. This principle is fairly well known even today, so that those nations that show an uneven hand towards Israel must bear responsibility for it. The support currently being shown to the terrorist-controlled P.L.O. organization by the United States and Britain cannot bring them peace and tranquility at home.

The following recently appeared on an Israeli web-site:

“We (Israel) are the canary in the coal mine. We are dying now. We are slaughtered on a daily basis. But you’re next buddies, because I understand that you have a lot of Muslim minorities and that’s OK. Everybody should live wherever he wants. But, you are appeasing terrorism! And you hope that if you tolerate it, and try to understand its motives, and you give it reasons, whatever they are... the more fear you show, the faster it’s going to be on your doorstep—and then, G-d help you, because you gave it legitimacy.”

History has shown time and time again that rich nations cannot buy off the Barbarians of any age. Appeasement simply doesn’t work. For the G8 nations to award the P.L.O. (The Palestine Liberation Organization), some $3 billion one day after the London terror attack is foolishness in the extreme. In less than a week a suicide bomber struck a shopping mall in the Israeli seaside town of Natanya killing three people and wounding seventy. Tony Blair has used the phrase “ideology of evil” in reference to Islamic extremism. He needs to see that application to the Israeli-Palestinian context as well as to that in Britain.

Islam’s Grievance

In all the speculation and theorizing about the cause of this terrorism, it is worth listening to the elusive mastermind of terror, Osama Bin Laden himself. At the time of this writing, all the signs are that the same organization was behind the London attack as was behind that of 9/11. Bali and Madrid—namely, al-Qaida. The bombing was not carried out because of the U.S. and British presence in Iraq, specifically—for as Bin Laden pointed out in a video-taped message following the 9/11 attack on the New York World Trade Centre, it goes much further back than that. He clearly stated:

“We cannot accept that Palestine will become Jewish. Our Islamic nation has been tasting the same for more than 80 years...”

Osama Bin Laden, 2001

“We form a fifth column, and we will create chaos...”

Omar Bakri, London UK.

“...For more than 80 years...” Bin Laden was reminding the world of the Balfour Declaration; of the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine over 80 years ago. That is the grievance. There is a stubborn refusal on the part of authorities to recognize that the U.S., Britain and Israel are facing a common enemy. This must be ultimately faced, but how many more bombings will it take? The book mentioned earlier by Kenneth R. Timmerman leads to the same conclusion.

The fact is that Britain—and now the United States—have been trying to solve the Palestine problem (what we call the “Arab-Israeli conflict”) for almost a century. It will not be solved—and as anyone who is enlightened by Bible prophecy knows, it will eventually draw the nations of the world to an “Armageddon.” Ezekiel tells us however (and
There is a division within the Islamic world today of course which can become violent at times (as it did in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980’s), and that is the sectarian division between Sunni Moslems and Shiites. The conditions of virtual civil war that currently exist in Iraq are the result of the Sunni-Shiite rivalry. King Abdullah of Jordan has warned of the emergence of a Shiite empire, upsetting the current balance of power. If there was conflict between the two sects—how would it be seen in the mosques of London, Birmingham, Leeds—or Vancouver, Sydney and elsewhere?

However the Middle East and its Islamic nations become divided along the lines required by prophecy—whether by a “push” from the King of the South similar to the Iraq invasion, or whether by a Russo-European consolidation of power to the north—such a division must occur. When it does, the present scene will change radically.

**Britain Humbled**

Prophecy also requires that the Tarshish-Tyre of the latter days must be humbled. This can be seen from the prophecies already cited, but also from Isaiah chapter 2, where we are told that the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man bowed down... For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up...and he shall be brought low. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures (of desire—mg.)” (Isa. 2:11-17). In Psalm 48:7 we read: “Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.” This is what the word of God teaches, so this is what must yet happen. Just how it will all come about is something that we must wait to see.

What we can be reasonably sure of is that Britain’s involvement in the Middle East will have repercussions at home and upon her own soil. News analysts and commentators are telling us that many Muslims in Britain today “are angered by British foreign policy toward their fellow Muslims in the Palestinian territories, Kashmir, Chechnya and Iraq.” This cannot get any better. The Middle East situation is bound to be reflected within Britain itself and will no doubt be a factor in humbling her.

**A Repentant Britain**

“When thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” says Isaiah 26:9. The influence of the Bible upon British history will have left an indelible mark, and as she passes through a time of trouble and suffering, many will be stirred to seek the Lord.

The picture given to us by prophecy describes many nations who will accept the King of the Jews when he comes to be enthroned in Zion. Psalm 72:10 was mentioned earlier—it describes Tarshish, the Isles, Sheba and Seba coming with tribute before the great King. Other Scriptures also show us that many nations which today embrace Islam will be converted as well as the “Isles” (see Isaiah 42:10-12). Isaiah 60:5-9 is very clear:

> “Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for the Lord, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.”

A time of trouble there must be, but it will not last for ever—for as God promised Abrahah “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18).
EDITORIAL:

DARKNESS COVERING THE EARTH

“O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth?” So wrote Jeremiah the prophet in the days leading up to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 5:3). “They are not valiant for the Truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil... they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the Truth... shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” (chapter 9:3-9).

It was disregard for Truth; the indifference towards it that God found to be so abhorrent—so much so, that it would have to be answered by judgment. It took the Babylonian sword, the removal of the nation and a lengthy captivity to turn things around.

Some early Christians would adopt the same attitude to the Truth says the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians. It just wouldn’t matter to them; and so they would be subjected to a deception “because they received not the love of the Truth” and had not honestly believed it—chapter 2:10-12.

Denial of Truth

There is a philosophy that is being successfully put across in the western world today that denies the very existence of Truth. It is especially prevalent in left-wing academic circles, universities, political establishments and among public opinion formers in the media. It has been injected into society over many decades and has radically altered the belief structures of many religious bodies—and especially naive protestant denominations that have allowed the Bible to fall into disuse.

The philosophy is known by the name postmodernism, and traces of it (in varying degrees) can be identified in EVERY CHRISTIAN SECT. The book shown at the head of this editorial gives a useful treatment of the matter (ISBN 1-55661-724-0. BETHANY HOUSE PUBLISHERS - MIN 55438). While The Bible Magazine does not endorse everything in this book, it is nonetheless packed with much that is relevant to the times in which we live.

For those who are not familiar with it, this humanist-based philosophy is so illogical that it is difficult to accept that it is a serious influence—let alone a threat—in society. The following is taken from the back cover:

“America is in the midst of a revolution in thinking that impacts every conceivable aspect of life. Postmodernism, the guiding spirit of our times, teaches that things like reason and rationality are cultural biases, and that truth—especially God’s truth—doesn’t exist. A society that forsakes truth believes that:

• All lifestyles, religious, and world views are equally valid.
• The only real sin is criticizing someone else’s views or moral choices.
• Opinions matter as much as evidence.

• Reality is in the mind of the beholder.”

This philosophy has produced statements such as: “Truth is whatever you believe.” “There is no absolute truth.” “If there were such a thing as absolute truth, how could we know what it is?” “People who believe in absolute truth are dangerous.”

Perhaps we should add the words of Pontius Pilate spoken many centuries ago—“What is Truth?” (John 18:38). Perhaps the philosophy is not all that modern after all!

The whole concept of course is foolishness—as this world’s philosophy always is (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Yet this foolishness—this philosophy and thinking—has gained a stranglehold on society. It has resulted in ‘political correctness,’ ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘revisionist history,’ ‘discovery learning.’ It is manifest in the breaking of family life, immoral laws and behaviour—as well as in a phenomenal crime rate (to which there is no deterrent) and violence.

There is a darkness that covers the earth!

Orwell's Prediction

Postmodernism is a philosophy that is designed to control and manipulate the oblivious masses. It is made to appear open-minded and tolerant of all views and persuasions, but beneath that outer appearance it is a form of mind control.

George Orwell wrote of this in his classic work Nineteen Eighty-Four (published in 1949). He wrote of “the denial of reality.” He described the revision of history (destruction of the past), of the “thought police” (political correctness), of a population absorbed with trivial and ignorant of world events, of minds saturated with shallow pop-music and pornography. He wrote:

“The heresy of heresies was common sense... After all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable—what then?”

That, in essence, is postmodernist philosophy. It is a mindset that has been planted into the minds of men and women who outwardly appear sensible and intelligent, but whose minds have lost touch with the real world. There are, say they, no such things as facts. Facts only exist in our minds!

So, What is Truth?

Believers sometimes stray down this road of foolishness. It has happened. Everything becomes a matter of opinion—and as your opinion is as good as mine—we must recognise that they are of equal value and “respect each others’ opinion.” Anything else is labeled as bigotry. Be it creation in Genesis or the mark of the beast in Revelation—it’s all up for grabs. Who can possibly know what any of it means—and that goes for most of the Scripture between these two bookends—and who cares anyway?

There is an attitude of mind today that has descended upon many believers that is reflective of the world’s philosophy—it is in essence a denial of the existence of Truth. It is that same attitude of indifference that was found in the days of Jeremiah, and to which we referred at the beginning of this editorial. We read of the same conditions in the time of Isaiah:

“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies...” (Isaiah 59:4)

The “truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth;...” (Isaiah 59:15-16)

We cannot substitute opinion for the Truth. As one writer once put it (Elpis Israel, John Thomas):

“Opinion implies doubt; for if a matter be beyond doubt, it is no longer opinion, but faith or knowledge.”

This is what is needed today: FAITH IN THE TRUTH. In the prevailing darkness that covers the earth we need Light! Truth cannot have different versions as postmodernist philosophy would have us believe—a thing is either true or it is not. And that is the one thing that Darkness cannot tolerate—Light! All points of views are equally valid, except that one which claims to hold the Truth.”
**Truth and Reality**

According to the *Oxford Dictionary* Truth is defined as: “In accordance with fact or reality.” The New Testament Greek word, aletheia, says Vine’s *Expository Dictionary*, means: “Actual, true to fact, real, the reality lying at the basis of appearance.”

From these word definitions the connection to reality is clear enough. As George Orwell expressed it: Physical facts cannot be ignored. In philosophy however, or religion, or ethics, or politics, two and two might make five, but when designing a gun or an aeroplane they must make four.

When dealing with religious realities, facts just have to be recognized for what they are—and they are no different to physical facts in that regard.

The reality of death, for example, is a physical reality that we cannot escape. There is no response from a dead corpse—from a cadaver. The brain is no longer a functioning organ. You cannot give it information and it cannot receive your news. You cannot hold a conversation with it, or debate with it—and it can no longer appreciate the love that you may still feel for the person that it once was. The physical facts are—and the truth is—that death is the cessation of life. The Bible itself confirms the evidence of our eyes and our senses—Ecclesiastes 9:4-6, Psalm 49:20; 146:4 etc.

Yet these facts have been denied. It has been said that men and women (and children) live on in some way after death—that an inner something does not surely die—and some people even imagine that they have spoken with the deceased; yet some people even imagine that they have spoken with the deceased; yet some way after death—that an inner reality—the love that you love, might be guided (taught or inspired) by the spirit of Truth. The statement by Jesus in John 17:17 is “It is True.”

The challenge of Bible prophecy rings out through the centuries to our own time: “Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things?” Let them bring forth their testimonies, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is Truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isaiah 43:9-12).

A Light in a Dark Place

The real evidence for the Truth of the Bible lies in the phenomena of prophecy. There are many other avenues which provide evidence in support of it, but with prophecy we find ourselves in the presence of the supernatural. It is a miracle; it is a mystery that cannot be explained away. People who do not know what they are talking about may make general and vague statements in an effort to discount it—but when brought eyeball to eyeball with the facts in detail, it is impossible to deny its power. That is why this magazine places so much emphasis on prophecy—it is the building-block of faith; it is evidence of the Truth. The apostle Peter wrote: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-21).

A light allows us to see in the darkness—it enlightens and dispels the dark theories and philosophies of a world that is heading for destruction. The opposite of Truth and reality is imagination, fiction and myth. The opposite of the spirit of Truth is the spirit of error or delusion. Let us see to it that common sense prevails, and that we avail ourselves of the light of God’s word, so that we do not have to grope around in the darkness and ignorance that belongs to the natural mind and its vain imaginings.

“The law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).
his is not fiction. Follow me through this study of scripture and see the evidence for the future construction of a mammoth sized temple to which citizens from every country, nationality and cultural background will visit. They will be excited to do so.

To follow the reasoning and for the sake of clarity, whenever reference is made to a literal temple in this article, it is to be understood as one built out of normal building materials, wood and stone. Whenever reference is being made to a figurative temple, it is built out of something else.

Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body” (John 2:19-21). Even the Jews who first heard these words of Jesus had difficulty understanding whether they were referring to the literal temple standing nearby, or to the man who uttered them.

Different kinds of Temple

The conversation that Jesus had with the Jews is an indication to the reader of the Bible not to be too quick in jumping to conclusions about the meaning of a text referring to the temple. One should always check out the situation and the reasons for the remarks first. The context behind statements made in the Bible is always relevant, and usually decisive in determining the correct meaning. However, that is not always the case and sometimes reference to other scriptures and to the overall plan of God is necessary to gain an accurate understanding of which temple is being referred to.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12). This promise that Jesus made to the ecclesia at Philadelphia as expressed in Rev.3:12 is an interesting case, and one which allows the reader to apply some discernment in determining whether the passage is referring to a literal temple, or a figurative one. If this is meant to be taken literally, then one is led to the ridiculous conclusion that the multitude of the righteous will be made into something like permanent pillars of concrete in order to support the roof of a temple structure!

If it is to be taken figuratively, then he must have been alluding to the sanctuary and fellowship of those who overcome and who, like the strong and multitudinous pillars in the literal temples all around them, work together to support a common cause. The Apostle Paul had said in another place that the ecclesia (religious congregation) was the pillar and ground of the truth (1Timothy 3:15). Surely then, we can all agree that in the case of the letter to the ecclesia at Philadelphia, the figurative interpretation wins.

Some Bible students may be inclined to think that the case is simply decided on the word that is used, and although that is important and in some cases decisive, it is not so with the Greek word (naos). This word (naos) translated ‘temple’ in English is used in both literal and figurative cases. For instance, it is not only used figuratively in Revelation 3:12, but it is also used literally in Luke 23:45, where it is stated that the veil of the literal temple was rent in the midst.

LITERAL TEMPLES

In the long history of the children of Israel as recorded in the Bible, a number of literal temples are referred to. The first reference to a ‘temple’ in the scriptures is speaking about the tabernacle that Moses constructed in the wilderness. It was just a tent, but God spoke to Moses from between the cherubim located over the mercy seat in the most holy part of the sanctuary. Later in the history of Israel it was still considered God’s dwelling place as illustrated by the following two references.

“...Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD” (1 Sam 1:9).

“...So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God” (1 Sam 4:4).

Later on King Solomon was commissioned to make a glorious temple for the name of YHWH of Hosts, and which temple glorified Israel for a number of centuries. It is important to note however, that in his dedication of that temple, Solomon readily acknowledged that YHWH could not be bound to dwelling in a temple made with human hands. Consider the following quotation from Solomon’s speech of dedication.

A TEMPLE DESIGNED 2600 & NOT YET BUILT

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“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kings 8:27).

The New Testament character Stephen reiterated that fact when he stated,

“Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?” (Acts 7:48-49).

After the destruction of Solomon’s temple, the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity to participate in building the temple described primarily in the book of Ezra.

Later on the Gentile King Herod the Great built the temple in Jerusalem that Jesus frequented during the days of his mortality. That it was a beautiful place to look upon was attested to by the comments of his disciples. (Luke 21:5,6).

However limited a literal temple might be, through the wisdom of God men were commissioned to build them. In fact, there is another great literal temple described in the scriptures that has never yet been built. However, before describing the time and purpose of that future temple let’s do a little more research into figurative temples.

**Figurative Temples**

When the scriptures refer to a figurative temple, the text requires our knowledge and understanding of the components of a literal temple, plus the use of our imagination, to see how they could be applied in the figurative sense. In today’s world many religious people fail to see the implications of having the natural first and the spiritual second.

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual” (1 Cor 15:46).

One very important lesson we must learn from the literal temples commissioned by God is that God is the architect. He does not want our innovations or decorations; neither does he want our renovations, if we are not happy with what he has designed. Consider the following passages and note that in the case of the literal temples God instructed men to build, He emphasized the point that humans were not to alter His design. (Ex 39:42-43; 1 Chron 28:11-12; Ezek 43:11) In order to please God in the building of our spiritual temples, we likewise must not innovate, but be obedient and do what He says. His Word will mould us as He sees fit.

The following scripture is referring to a spiritual temple.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

In this quotation from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the ecclesia at Corinth, the need is expressed for individuals to consider their bodies as a temple. Like a literal temple of intricate design and great beauty, we (our bodies) are fearfully and wonderfully made, as saith the Psalmist (Psa.139:14). These natural bodies of ours show the design and skill of our maker. If we acknowledge that fact in what we say and in the way we live, then we are a fit place for our God to dwell. As in a literal temple, life inside should be sanctified, separate from the defilement of the world and dedicated to the glory of God, so we are expected to glorify our maker in our bodies and practice the discipline needed to live as He intended.

Used in a figurative sense, a temple need not be limited to a single person. The following quotation shows how many people working together can also be considered a temple in a figurative sense.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

When the Apostle Paul was writing to the believers at Ephesus this analogy of a figurative temple illustrated that believers must also consider the need to work together in order to establish a temple for God. Our communal life therefore, should likewise reflect unity of purpose, separateness from defilement and dedication to our God. On that basis God considers our communities a temple which He will inhabit.

**A Final Literal Temple**

There are a number of Bible passages that speak of a great temple that has never been built, and which cannot be relegated to the figurative. This temple is referred to in many parts of the Bible, and it will certainly be built to serve as a place of worship for all the nations of the world. Consider the evidence, for it starts with the promises made to Abraham in the book of Genesis.

“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Genesis 13:14-15).

The passage is plain enough for the reader to see that the promises God made to Abraham involved the whole land which he could see. It was also a promise made to him personally and one that he must receive forever. But Abraham died and it is plain to all of us that Abraham does not now possess that land. During the time of the New Testament writers they...
The Prophecy of Isaiah

"Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him” (Isa 66:23).

These prophecies not only indicate God’s purpose that a house of prayer should be constructed for all nations, but they also serve to indicate that the timing of its construction corresponds with the time of His gathering of the Jews back to the land.

The testimony of the prophets is united in the call for the construction of this temple to serve as a place of worship for all nations. The prophet Zechariah was informed of its universal use in the following words,

The Prophet Zechariah

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord” (Zech 8:20-22).

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech 14:16).

If we search the pages of history for a time in the past that matches the description of Zechariah’s prophecy, we will be disappointed—for there is no parallel. These words are speaking of a time to come when, after a great transformation of the land and government, Jerusalem will be the focus of the world’s spiritual interest. Similarly, the prophet Micah received a vision from God.

The Prophet Micah

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2).

There has never been such a government based in Jerusalem, such that the nations of the world have been subject to it—this is a vision of a literal temple yet to be built. The house of the Lord and the house of the God of Jacob are titles of a magnificent structure from which a righteous government will rule. Imagine a government so popular that people will want to travel to its seat of influence to be taught concerning its policies and practices.

As men and women, with their families, went past, so they will gather again in the feast of the silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Mal 3:3-4).

The Prophet Haggai

When the remnant of Israel had returned to the land in the days of Haggai they struggled to build a temple which was much smaller than the one destroyed by the Babylonians. This fact was the source of much anguish in the minds of the older men who could remember the glory of the former temple (Ezra 3:12). It
was further revealed to Haggai that their present work would be superseded by another temple which would have greater glory than the one of Solomon’s era.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts” (Hag 2:6-9).

The Prophet Ezekiel

The prophecy received by Ezekiel describes this future literal temple in great detail. In chapters 37 to 39 we have a number of very significant events which lead up to the building of this temple. These events relate to the return of the Jews to Israel and a time of trouble that awaits them prior to their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Messiah and as the one they pierced.

Then in chapters 40 to 48 a great amount of detail is provided to describe the architecture of this building. It will certainly be beautiful and attractive to all who worship, but it will also be enormous in size and equal to the task of housing people from all over the world.

“He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place” (Ezekiel 42:20). Yes, for a thousand years, the nations will be required to make an annual pilgrimage to the great literal temple at Jerusalem to be taught the knowledge of the Holy One and to gain an understanding into God’s purpose in creation. The nations being required to act in accordance with this teaching will result in the fulfillment of the Sabbath of rest that God had in mind in the creation of the world (Heb.4:9). During the time of this kingdom era, there will be a multitude of people who will choose to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. However, at the end of the thousand years the men and women still living will be allowed to prove themselves and show whether they worship God in faith. Human nature being what it is many will rebel and God will bring His purpose with mankind to a just and final conclusion. The only people living beyond this time will have their names written in the ‘Lamb’s book of life.’

A Final Figurative Temple

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev 21:2-3).

The holy city that the Apostle John saw descending from heaven is later described as the Lamb’s wife, thus making the figurative aspect of this vision obvious. As the record goes on we find the following verse: “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Revelation 21:22).

At this stage the work of God to extract a people for His name over the 6000 years of human existence will be complete. The rule of Christ and his sanctified ones for a thousand years will be complete and the need for literal temples a thing of the past. With regard to those who occupy the earth at this future time we are told: “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revel 21:27).

This prophecy reminds us that God’s ultimate purpose with mankind is that everyone left alive (given immortality) should be a part of this figurative temple. We must let the Word of God sanctify our minds and transform us to strongly desire to dwell with God, so God in turn will be pleased to dwell with us. Thus those who inhabit the temple of the Lord God Almighty and of the Lamb are those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27).
queen Helena was the mother of Constantine the Great—he who brought Christianity into repute within the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century. She was a Christian—unlike her son, who refrained from being baptized until he lay on his death-bed. In 325, the Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicea together to settle the doctrinal dispute between the Arians and the Orthodox on the person of Christ. It was here that Helena met the bishop of Jerusalem—Macarius—and the year following she traveled throughout what had been the Land of Israel, accompanied by great numbers of church officials, seeking to identify the physical location of the events of the Gospels. Looking for the locations where significant events had taken place, she proceeded, with her son’s blessing, to order the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, as the place where Christ had both been crucified and buried, and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, as the location of his birth. These shrines, and many others that were constructed shortly after, were a magnet for pilgrims from throughout the empire. The Arab conquest considerably slowed the traffic.

Aside from a few brave individuals who traveled from Europe, and the hordes of Crusaders spurred on by a variety of Popes for a variety of reasons, the ruins of Jerusalem remained undisturbed for centuries. The Arab armies that swept out of the Arabian peninsula after the death of Mohammed took the city in 638 AD, and the Dome of the Rock was built about the year 700. The Crusaders captured the city in 1099, but Saladin recaptured it in 1187. Other than a 15 year period of Crusader control in the 1200’s, Jerusalem was ruled by the Mamelukes and the Ottomans until General Allenby and the British, with their allies, took the city in 1917. The Ottoman emperor Suleiman the Magnificent built the walls of the Old City which still survive today, as well as the upper levels of the walls surrounding the Temple Mount. The evidence of past Muslim domination is still in evidence in the golden-domed Noble Sanctuary.

When Christian travelers and explorers had opportunity to visit Jerusalem in greater numbers in the early 1800’s, they were driven—like Helena—by a desire to identify the physical background to the events they read about from the scriptures. Most were skeptical of the authenticity of the Holy Places visited by the pilgrims. One of the first to apply a methodical and “scientific” approach to the exploration of the land of the Bible was an American, Edward Robinson. Combining an intimate knowledge of the scriptures with a study of languages—particularly Arabic—and of the topography of the land, he traveled slowly through it, identifying towns and villages and landmarks with biblical sites as he went. When he came to Jerusalem, he was the first of the European visitors to have his name connected with the Western Wall. Just above ground-level, near the south-west corner, he identified stones projecting from the wall as the remains of an arch, which he suggested had been built to support a walkway connecting the city on the western hill with the Temple courts. It wasn’t until 1968 that excavations confirmed that Robinson’s Arch and a set of uncovered footings were all that remained of a colossal stairway which actually gave access from the lower city.

Three other men lent their names to portions of the Western Wall which remain in use today—James Barclay, Charles Wilson and Charles Warren. All are connected to early exploration and excavation efforts at the wall.

Dr. James Barclay was an American physician brought to Jerusalem in 1852 as a guest of the Turkish authorities to make suggestions for the repair of Muslim religious buildings in the city. He made several discoveries while carrying out this work, but the most important was the identification of a huge lintel stone in the Western Wall which had once been a gate leading to the Temple courtyard. Today it is known as Barclay’s Gate.

Captain Charles Wilson was the first of those dispatched to Jerusalem by the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865 to explore and map
the whole of Palestine. He was successful with his mapping work, but he made no spectacular finds to help the flow of public donations needed to support the work of the Fund. His discovery of fallen arches next to the Western Wall and north of the place of access for prayer was also connected to what had been a bridge across to the city on the Western Hill. Wilson’s Arch has now been reconstructed and is in use next to the plaza.

Lieutenant Charles Warren was a Royal Engineer who led the second expedition of the Palestine Exploration Fund to Jerusalem in 1867. The priority of the Fund was now excavation in Jerusalem. If public interest was to be maintained, some questions had to be answered. Was the Temple Mount in fact the site of Solomon’s Temple? If so, where had the Temple stood? Where were the city walls located in the time of Jesus? Where was the City of David? Many of the questions we now believe we have answers to were of great interest to a Bible-believing British public.

Then as now, Warren had to deal with the Muslims who controlled the Temple Mount. In addition, they also controlled the city. No excavation was permitted on the Temple Mount, but Warren was given permission to explore the structure of the Dome of the Rock, as well as the system of cisterns under the Temple platform. No one since has been given the same opportunity, and his drawings are still in use. Warren’s excavation work was done on the west and south sides of the platform. To the south, he found a cave and a shaft which gave access to the City of David, and may have been the ‘gutter’ used in the conquest of the Jebusite city by David and his men.

Seven shafts were sunk to bedrock parallel to the Western Wall of the Temple platform. These showed that there was at least 75 feet of rubble and dirt to be dealt with. At the bottom of the shafts, Warren found the remains of pillars, streets and tunnels. One of the shafts remains today beneath Wilson’s Arch. Warren’s Gate is not visible from the surface today. To see it, we must descend to the Western Wall Tunnels. In the time of Herod’s expansion work, the gate gave access to the Temple Mount from the street Herod built along the Wall by way of a set of stairs. Abandoned after the destruction of the Temple, Jews were allowed to build a synagogue here following the Muslim conquest (638). The Jews believed that this synagogue was the closest point to the Holy of Holies. In 1999, the Crusaders wiped out the Jewish community in Jerusalem, destroyed the synagogue, and turned the space into a cistern. So it remained until Warren’s excavations.

Between the time of Warren’s efforts and the retaking of the city in 1967, there was one other incident which helped to further restrict work on the Western Wall. Captain Montague Parker, son of an English Duke, was persuaded by a Finnish spiritualist and an Irish clairvoyant that the Temple platform concealed a treasure worth £200 million. Parker raised $125,000 for an expedition in 1909, and proceeded to dig, after a series of bribes and promises to the Turkish officials. He had no success, and in April, 1911 was discovered digging on the Temple Mount. He packed his belongings and fled from Jerusalem, but was caught in Jaffa. He was arrested and accused of stealing King Solomon’s crown and ring, the Holy Ark and Mohammed’s sword. Again Parker managed to escape and flee on his yacht (see inset, top of opposite page).

In 1967, the barriers to excavation were finally removed, but not by diplomacy and negotiation. On the third day of the Six Day War, the Old City of Jerusalem was taken by the Israelis. Work was undertaken immediately to open access to the Western Wall. The slum area adjoining the Wall was bulldozed, and work on an open plaza was begun. Just as, 2000 years before, Herod had begun work on his project to expand the area for worship around the Temple by building a larger platform, so the Israelis rushed to make room for Jewish worshippers who had been denied access for so many years.

It was 1968 when Israeli archaeologists were able to begin their excavations. Professor Benjamin Mazar went to work south and southwest of the Temple mount, finally able to do much of the work that Charles Warren had attempted, but in the open. Large portions of the Western and Southern Walls were exposed, and the paved streets leading to Robinson’s Arch were uncovered.

The tunnels running along the Western Wall now allow tourists and visitors to appreciate the work that was needed to build the Western Wall in the time of Herod. Resting on bedrock, the stones of the ‘Master Course’ can be seen along the tunnels which run almost 500 feet north of the plaza. The largest of the stones is roughly 45 feet long, 11 feet high, and weighs approximately 570 tons.

Since the destruction of the Temple by Titus and the Romans, Jews throughout the world have focused on Jerusalem in general, and the Western Wall in particular. It is a symbol to the Jews of their past and their hopes for the future. When the Lord returns, and his feet touch the Mount of Olives, the earthquake will split the Mount and Jerusalem will be raised up. A new Temple will be built, as we read in the later chapters of Ezekiel, and it will be the focus of not only the Jews, but the population of the entire world, as the place of the throne of the Lord.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2,3).
ne of the great signs of the nearness of Christ’s coming is the return of the Jewish people to the land of Palestine. The Bible specifically indicated that the Jewish people would be present again in the land at the time of the appearance of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. (Zechariah 12:3-11). Yet Israel, although reconstituted as a nation is far from secure. The Palestinian controversy appears to be an enormous difficulty that cannot be resolved. A recent magazine news poll indicated that the majority of respondents did not believe that Israel would exist as a nation in 50 years, but that a Palestinian state would.

The Palestinian Conundrum

The Palestinians that exist in the land of Palestine today are not a separate people. They are simply Arabs. There has never been a Palestinian nation. There have never been a Palestinian people. There is no Palestinian language, nor is there a Palestinian culture. In fact, until the year 1948 the word Palestinian only ever meant a Jew living in Palestine, not an Arab. It is a notable puzzle that from 1948 to 1967 a significant part of Palestine (including the West Bank) was occupied by Jordan. Never once during these years of occupation did a Palestinian people ever step forward to claim their homeland or declare their separate identity. Only after Israel took control of this region, did the Palestinians suddenly discover themselves. The United Nations World Relief Association (UNWRA) defined a Palestinian refugee (after Jewish independence in 1948) as an Arab who had lived in mandate Palestine for a period of no less than two years. Many of these Arabs had come from surrounding Arab nations, attracted by economic prosperity in Palestine which had been created by Jewish enterprise and endeavour. There is no doubt that some Arabs living in Palestine had a long history there over many generations. It is also true that many Arabs living in Palestine at the time had no particular links to that territory at all. Yet the world has been led to believe that all Palestinian refugees have been torn from their ancient homeland by the establishment of the Jewish state. The reality is that the Jewish claim to connection with this land extends back several thousand years.

Palestinian Hostility in Biblical Times

This modern controversy has a Biblical basis, since the word Palestine is found there. The scripture refers to Palestina which is the Hebrew word pelesheth. The word means rolling or migratory, and when used of a region signifies the land of the wanderers. The Hebrew word pelesheth is variously translated—Palestina, Palestine, Philistia, Philistine. This word described the land occupied by the Philistines in Old Testament times. The modern Palestinian has no ethnic connection with the Philistines of old. They do however manifest the same spirit, and are to be found upon the same territory.

When Israel returned from their time of bondage in Egypt, they marched toward the land of Palestine which God had promised should be theirs (Genesis 15:18-21). On hearing this news, Palestina trembled, since they occupied part of the very land promised to the Jewish people (Exodus 15:13-17). The land of Palestina lay on the coastal strip to the west of the mountains of the central plateau, and bordering the Mediterranean Sea. There were five famous cities in the region

PELESHETH

The word thus translated (in Psalm 60:8;87:4;108:9) is in the original identical with that elsewhere rendered PALESTINE. “Palestine” originally meant nothing but the district inhabited by the “Philistines,” who are called by Josephus “Palestines.” In fact the two words are the same, and the difference in their present form is but the result of gradual corruption. The form Philistia does not occur anywhere in LXX, or Vulgate. The nearest approach to it is Luther’s Philistiaa.

Smith’s Bible Dictionary
which were ruled by the five lords of the Philistines, namely—Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod which lay on the sea coast, and Gath and Ekron which were located a little further inland (Joshua 13:2-3). Although this territory was promised to Israel, they never managed to totally conquer it. And so the Palestinians of the day (the Philistines) remained as a pricking brier or a piercing thorn in Israel’s side (Ezekiel 28:24-26). The Philistines were always at enmity with Israel, and Israel only enjoyed times of peace when the Palestinians (Philistines) were subdued. This earliest spirit of hostility never changed. Many generations later, the most famous king of Israel, David, spoke of his confidence that God would grant him victory against this area. “Over Palestina will I triumph” were David’s words of prophecy (Psalm 108:7-9). His Psalm of entreaty to God was answered, for he did subdue this very area (1 Chron. 18:1). Many generations later again, another illustrious king of Israel, Hezekiah, enjoyed a similar victory, in a similar situation of continued hostility. “Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina... for out of the serpent’s root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent” was the promise of the prophet, at the time Hezekiah ascended the throne (Isaiah 14:29-32). It was a prediction that he would subdue the territory of Palestina, and so it came to pass (11 Kings 18:6-8).

Divine Judgment on the Ancient Palestinians

The spirit of Palestina of old therefore was one of relentless, perpetual hatred against Israel. Many generations of Bible history gave evidence of this unchanging enmity. Finally therefore God decreed judgment upon Palestina because of this spirit against His people. They were judged on the basis of a famous Old Testament passage in which God promised His people the protection of His care (Genesis 12:1-4). The curse of God’s judgment came upon Palestina in a series of prophecies, which, when completed in the providence of God, resulted in the complete destruction of the Palestinians. Five oracles of doom were pronounced against them.

• Amos 1:1-8
  Fulfilled by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt
• Jeremiah 47:1-7
  Fulfilled by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt
• Ezekiel 25:15-17
  Fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon
• Zechariah 9:4-8
  Fulfilled by Alexander of Greece
• Zephaniah 2:4-7
  Fulfilled by Maccabeus of Israel

A Latter Day Jewish Palestinian Conflict?

Given that the Palestinians of Biblical times were completely removed, do we expect to see a revival not only of Israel, but also of the Palestinians, and a resumption of their ancient hostility at the time of the end? The Bible would certainly seem to indicate that this is the case. Several Bible passages with clear applications to the time of the end make reference to the Palestinians.

Psalm 83:4-8

This Psalm records a confederacy of people who came against Israel in battle. The historical basis for the Psalm was to be found in...
the days of King Jehoshaphat. Faced with the impossible odds of the great multitude ranged against him, he cried to God in prayer. Israel won a marvellous victory that day, and the enemies of Israel were smitten (2 Chron. 20:11-30). There may be a latter day application to the Psalm, indicating a possible revival of this ancient hostility. It is interesting to note therefore that one of the protagonists against Israel was Palestina (verse 7).

**Obadiah 17-21**

The prophecy of Obadiah deals with the conflict between “the house of Jacob” and the “house of Esau.” The prophecy reaches forward to the time of the end (verses 17, 21). In this final triumph the record indicates that “they of the south shall possess the Mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines” (verse 19). Here, not just a territory, but a people called the Philistines are mentioned. Any latter day application therefore will presumably include a group who inhabit this coastal plain.

**Joel 3:1-8**

The controversy of Joel 3, whilst based historically upon the Babylonian invasion of Israel, also reaches forward to the time of the end. The confederacy of nations which come against Israel will manifest the same hostile spirit of ancient times. The record indicates that God takes issue with Palestina (verse 4). He promises to recompense them in judgment for their dealings against the Jewish people. Here again is an indication of a Palestina in the latter days, located, as in ancient times, on the coastal plain bordering the Mediterranean.

**Isaiah 11:10-14**

When Christ is established in the land (verses 10, 12), consequent upon his return, there will be a further return of Jewish people to the land of Israel. Those returning will be united in their determination to remove the threat of the Palestinians. “They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west” (verse 14). Presumably, this can only occur if there are Palestinians established in the west, that is, on the coastal plain.

**A Palestinian State in Gaza?**

These scriptures imply that there may well be the revival of a Palestinian power and presence in the same location as they existed in Biblical times. We should not be surprised therefore to expect continued activity in this region. The Gaza Strip today is named after one of the five cities of Palestina in Old Testament times. The population is dense (over 8,000 per square mile), and youthful (over 50% are under age 14). They are fed on a diet of hatred against Israel, being taught from earliest childhood that the Jewish people are thieves, robbers and murderers. The region is a seething bubbling cauldron of unemployment, youthful passion, and bloodthirsty religious broadcasts. The spirit of Palestina in Old Testament times is certainly to be seen in the area today.

How significant therefore that the Israeli government have decided to withdraw all Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip. This withdrawal of both the Jewish population, and Jewish security, allows the Palestinians to chart their own destiny in this place. If a Palestinian State were to be declared in the Gaza Strip, it would be in accordance with Scriptural expectations.

**Peaceful Coexistence?**

Does this mean therefore, that we may see a peaceful resolution to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict? The Bible would clearly indicate to the contrary. The poems of Palestina are all against Israel at all. The Palestinians of the present will be true to their spirit of the past.

**Palestina—Russia’s Future Ally in Anti-Semitism**

The Bible predicts that a Russian led confederacy will invade Israel at the time of the end (Ezekiel 38:1-12). The city of Jerusalem will be captured, and significant numbers of Jewish people will be deported (Zechariah 14:1-2). Jews have been deported by ship from off the coast in past times, in direct fulfilment of prophecy (Deuteronomy 28:68). Such exiles by shipment occurred under Ptolemy Lagus in BC 329, under Titus in AD 70, and again under Hadrian in AD 135. The deportations of this future invasion may well occur from the coast again. But since the coast will be controlled by Palestina, they will become active collaborators with Russia in ridding the land of Jews (Joel 3:4-8). Indeed, the Palestinians have recently begun to build a new port facility off the coast of Gaza!

**The Bible’s Answer**

Only the coming of Christ can resolve this intractable problem. The very prophecies which indicate a Palestinian presence in the region at the time of the end, also predict the coming of Christ (Obadiah 21, Joel 3:16, Isaiah 11:10). The authority that Christ will possess will command the submission of the Palestinians to him. The presence of Abraham with him will convince the Palestinians to do so. Both Jew and Palestinian trace a common descent from Abraham the patriarch, and his presence with Christ will be helpful in resolving this conflict between his warring offspring. The rapid movement of events in this region is leading quickly to the time when Christ will be sent by God to establish peace, not only in the land of Palestine, but also throughout the whole world (Psalm 72:7-12).

**THE ARTICLE ABOVE IS THE SUBSTANCE OF A PRESENTATION GIVEN AT LOMPPOC CALIFORNIA IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR AND IS AVAILABLE ON VIDEO (VHS NTSC) FROM THE BIBLE MAGAZINE**
JEWISH SETTLEMENTS PLANNED FOR REMOVAL BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 2005.

THE GAZA STRIP TODAY

EGYPT

GUSH KATIF

Editor’s Note:
Whether or not the Gaza Strip actually becomes an independent Palestinian State, as world leaders all seem to desire, the fact is that even now, the presence of a “Palestinian” people in this location is in harmony with the study presented in this article by Roger Lewis. Despite a declared war on terrorism, the United States and Britain are putting their full weight behind the idea of a P.L.O. State in Gaza. President George Bush has declared his objective in these words: “My vision is two states, living side by side, in peace and security” (June 2002).

The two states might be one thing, peace and security quite another!

Israel’s internal strife, created by the Gaza pull-out plan, is a serious confrontation between the Israeli settlers and their Government. At press-time it is not easy to say where it will lead, but one thing seems clear—if this is the result of a Gaza pull-out, where would an evacuation of the West Bank lead? Practically speaking, the removal of Jews from Judea and Samaria (apart from a few isolated settlements) is impossible for Israel to inflict upon itself. It would require the forces of Gog, who comes from the land of Magog, to remove them (Ezekiel 38).

Dates & Locations of Coming Prophecy Days
All subject to God’s will

United Kingdom


February 25th 2006 Rugby Milestones Prophecy Day: Speakers: Stephen Whitehouse (Watford); Ken Styles (Detroit); Don Pearce (Rugby). Details from Don Pearce 01788823 811

April 8th 2006 Kent Prophecy Day: East Malling Village Hall: details from Peter Moore 001474 703 037

North America

Three locations in the United States this Fall. Speakers: Frank Abel and Paul Billington.


New Zealand

Four Prophecy Days to be held throughout New Zealand in 2006. Saturday 22 April, Tuesday 25 April, Saturday 29 April and Saturday 6 May. Speakers Paul Billington (Brantford Canada) Brian Luke (Brighton Australia). Contact David Archer: 0064-4 232-6192

Australia: Currently Planning

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A weekly audio programme giving brief comment on the news as it relates to the Bible and Bible prophecy. Listen in and maintain a consciousness of the Hand of God at work in Israel and the nations.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEED-BACK!
We cannot reply to all correspondence due to time constraints, but we do like to know what you think—good or bad!
Interest in Bible truth has always been aroused through Bible prophecy. Old-style lectures demonstrating current events to be fulfilling prophecy have attracted many in the past and can still do so when presented in a convincing up-to-date format, and as part of a well-planned programme.

A series of three lectures were recently given in a neutral location (a community hall) on prophetic subjects and attracted between 16 and 20 new faces (in addition to regular attendees). This attendance was
Our objective in this seminar is to provide you with the keys—the tools—with which to unlock the secrets of Bible prophecy for yourself. The Fundamentals of Bible prophecy are relatively simple and easy to understand, yet are appreciated by very few—even many who claim to expound these prophecies fail to do so correctly because they have not equipped themselves with the necessary tools. Now you can learn these basic principles and apply them so as to gain a privileged understanding of the prophecies, and consequently of the events that are to happen in our time.

It is natural that we would wish to dive right in to the “exciting” parts relevant to our own time—this is what many do, seeking to expound “end time” prophecies without first gaining a solid foundation. We ask you to be patient as we do our “homework” during the first half of this seminar. This will ensure that we arrive at Truth, and not just exciting speculations that often disappoint. We need to know that our understanding of events has a good basis, solidly founded upon Scripture. We must use the right keys!

The lectures were then followed by an eight week seminar (revised and updated from an earlier one which was compiled several years ago) on the fundamentals of Bible prophecy. It has been thought that others may wish to make use of the seminar and so it is now offered through The Bible Magazine.

This eight week seminar package is available from The Bible Magazine. Overseas orders will take time to reach those afar off unless air shipment is requested.

From The Introduction

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MILESTONES

UPDATE

Events in Britain, in Europe and the Middle East are changing the political scenery of today’s world.

By Don Pearce RUGBY, UK.

Today, as I write this, terrorists have struck at the heart of London. As the day unfolded it was clear that many innocent visitors and workers had been caught up in these latest terrorist atrocities. With its typical indomitable spirit, the City of London swung into action to calmly cope with this tragedy. The euphoria of the previous day, when it had been announced by the Olympic Committee that Britain, not France had been selected to host the 2012 Olympics, gave way to the grim reality of life in this terror threatened world.

In the short term this attack on Britain may turn out to be of advantage to Israel and also prove to be another nail in the coffin of Britain’s membership of the EU, as we currently know it! There have been a number of events both in Europe and the Middle East, which of themselves may not have great significance, but the cumulative effect may indeed be significant. So let’s just list some of the recent events and then we can see how they fit our expectations and consider some possible outcomes.

Some Recent Events in Europe

EU expansion embraces “religious” countries: Just over a year ago the EU experienced its biggest expansion in its history. Ten new members joined, increasing the number of members from 15 to 25. The significance was that many of these countries are staunchly Roman Catholic—Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Malta. Cyprus is Greek Orthodox and Latvia and Estonia Lutheran.

A New Pope: The funeral of John Paul II in April brought the leaders of the world as one man to Rome. Eleven days later, after a very short conclave, a new Pope emerged—Joseph Ratzinger who adopted the title of Benedict XIV.

The British elections in early May: They brought Tony Blair back to power, but with a greatly reduced majority—however this is still greater than most governments enjoy.

Blair who said that he was suspending Britain’s preparations for a referendum next year. France and Germany had done what the rest of the EU had thought would be Britain’s fate—to be the one to rock the boat. Blair knew that there was little chance of winning a Yes vote on the constitution and it must have been a great relief when France succeeded in wrecking the procedures! Naturally the blame for France’s non was laid at Britain’s feet—the Anglo-Saxon input into the drafting of the constitution had made it unpalatable to the French public!

The No vote has left President Chirac in a still weaker political position. Until some way forward can be found France has little political clout in the EU. The significance of this weakness at this particular time we shall see later.

Chancellor Schröder’s position is also weak. He is unable to push through the tough legislation to bring the much-needed reforms to the German economy. This contrasts to Tony Blair’s successful re-election, and the relative strength of the British economy—though even this is showing signs of faltering, but is in much better shape compared with France and Germany who as members of the euro zone, are constrained by the rules of the European Bank. The Times (11-6-05) reported: “The weakened Franco-German couple have revived their nations’ faltering partnership over the past week. They are joining forces against a British Prime Minister who is seen on the Continent to have emerged from the referendum debacle as master of Europe.”

A front-page headline in Le Figaro declared: “Blair has Europe in his hands.” The Prime Minister was now savouring his revenge against M Chirac’s past manoeuvres, it added.

Event after event has heightened the conflict between Britain and France. The June Summit of EU leaders brought things to a fever pitch. Having disposed of the Constitution by agreeing that the deadline of Nov. 2006 no longer applied, which in effect leaves the document, in its current form, dead; they turned to budgetary matters and the need to approve the spending plans for 2007-2012. Their eye was on the rebate won by Mrs Thatcher in 1984, which sees some £3 billion-a-year being paid back to Britain. This is because Britain receives much less in money terms, than she pays in. France on the other hand with her many small farmers receives much more than she pays in. The CAP—Common Agricultural Policy—is a system of subsidizing farmers that absorbs 46 percent of the European Union’s total budget. France receives 25% of the CAP payments.

“The retiring EU president Jean-Paul Juncker of Luxembourg said, nearly fighting...
back tears, after the collapse of the EU summit June 17: “People will tell you next that Europe is not in a crisis. It is in a deep crisis. During this budgetary debate there were two conceptions of Europe that clashed and will always clash. There are those who, in fact without saying it, want the big market and nothing but the big market, a high-level free-trade zone, and those that want a politically integrated Europe. I have felt for a long time this debate would blow up one day.” (Stratfor 5-7-05)

Early July saw the 750th anniversary of the founding of Kaliningrad. To celebrate Mr Putin invited all 89 of the Russian regional leaders, together with President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder. During an informal meal Chirac made several disparaging remarks about NATO, and about British and Finnish food. Unfortunately a journalist overheard them and they appeared in the British and Finnish press the next day! This was a few days before the Olympic Committee met for the final choice of city to host the 2012 Olympics. Two of the judges were Finnish, though they did say that they hadn’t been influenced by his remarks, never-the-less France who had started as clear favourite lost vital votes to London. The next day at the banquet hosted by the Queen at Gleneagles for the G8 leaders, Mr Blair was able to demonstrate the wonders of British cuisine!

Where do things go from here? France and Germany are unlikely to yield to CAP reforms, nor will they want to see their efforts to bring in political union through the Constitution completely frustrated. It seems likely that there will be a steady drifting apart of Britain and France. Britain has spent all her time in the EU fighting against closer integration. A long article in Stratfor (5-7-05) entitled Victory Before Battle: The U.K. Presidency gave a good outline of Britain’s past independence and the great advantage of being separated from mainland Europe by the Channel.

“In its first efforts, London turned its attention to mainland Europe in an attempt to conquer the world it knew. As endless successes of English rulers discovered however, Britain simply lacked the resources and demographic bulk necessary to dominate the Continent. “That forced the Crown to look beyond Europe, following the lead of the Spaniards and Portuguese to the far seas and beyond. The technologies of the New World conquerors were studied and copied, and Britain eventually rose to become a major seafaring European power in its own right. “But as an island, it had major advantages that its mainland competitors would never have. “First, it could choose the time and place of its involvement in continental affairs. To date, the narrow stretch of water separating Dover from Calais has proven sufficient to make British defense less a necessity and more an afterthought. Geography was less kind to the continental powers. One excellent example is Hapsburg Spain of the 1600s, which—despite being by far the pre-eminent military power, in no small part due to its near-monopoly on the riches of the New World—it was bled dry by incessant wars in which Britain could simply design not to participate. That freedom of choice allowed London to focus on developing a navy and merchant marine that could get would always be increasingly isolated and thus more vulnerable. “The one thing that could threaten the British Isles was—and remains—a united Europe. So long as Europe is divided, two things safeguard London. The barrier of the English Channel is one, but far more critical to British sovereignty is the simple fact that, so long as numerous powers are struggling on the Continent, none can sacrifice the men and treasure necessary to attempt an invasion of the British Isles. “Because of this, the core of British identity does not revolve around its history of a far-flung, globe-spanning empire so much as Britain’s sporadic and often desperate efforts to maintain its independence. These struggles have had two sharp impacts on British thought. “First, British citizens do not look to their leadership for economic direction as much as their continental neighbors do. While conscription was—and in most places, remains—a core precept of continental militaries, military and imperial service in the United Kingdom more often than not has been optional, except in times of national crisis. The result has been a more entrepreneurial culture, since those times of crisis are few and far between. “Second, since military adventures against the British Isles are considered anomalies in Europe’s often-violent history, they stand out far more prominently in the British psyche. British culture remains much more aware and leery of outside powers than do its counterparts in most mainland entities. Therefore, despite the fact that imperial legacy continues to shape British power and culture, the critical chapters in the history of the empire are the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Trafalgar, Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain—and now, the struggle over the European Union. “From Westminster’s standpoint, it does not particularly matter if the face of Europe is that of Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin or Juncker. To be British is to fear the Continent—because every time continental Europe has united under a single power, that power has attempted to finish the job with an invasion of the British Isles.”

In recent years having lost her Empire Britain has felt unable to walk unabided. But through not joining with the euro she has shown that in fact she can plough an independent furrow, and prosper outside the euro zone. Are we to see an awakening of the British people to
seek for closer ties with America and to turn her back on Europe? An indication is the effort Mr Blair made to successfully secure support for aid to Africa at the G8 summit. He expended much energy on this matter, rather than on European matters. In a TV debate he spoke of how his “passion” for Africa had helped to bring him into politics more than 30 years ago. On old maps large parts of Africa were coloured red—parts of the far-flung British Empire—it is interesting that Britain is being drawn back to her old grounds—Africa and the Middle East. At the moment Mr Blair seems to be riding high in the popularity ratings. His handling of recent events including the London bombings has impressed the British people.

The future of the EU

As we have seen, at the moment France and Germany are in a weak position, Britain is in a strong position. The Times ran an interesting article (21-5-05) before the French referendum elections were held, speculating what would happen if the constitution was rejected by Britain.

“The French and Germans would move towards closer federation, with Italy and Spain in hesitant alliance. This core would have France at the centre, with the “Roman empire” states gathered round it. The Mediterranean, not the Atlantic, would be their pond. They would have no truck with global free markets or fair trade with Africa, with America or the English language. They could retain the habits and horrors of the present EU directorates and parliament.

“Members would take smug comfort in Chirac saying "I made it happen!" and de Gaulle: "When I have to choose between you and Roosevelt, you should know that I will always choose Roosevelt. And when I have to choose between Europe and the wide open seas... I will always choose the wide open seas."

Surely events are moving towards what would have been unthinkable by the general press a few years ago—but now being championed by The Times and the Daily Telegraph—that Britain should carve her own way in the world and leave the stifling influence of Europe.

“Three out of every four newspapers sold in the United Kingdom are extremely hostile to the EU and its constitution” (Foreign Affairs, May/June 2005).

The angels are busy altering the course of European life. An article by Cardinal George later told the Pope—"What the acceptance of her extends even to Evangelicals, most of whom have ceased to question her doctrine" (Papal Rome and the European Union by Richard Bennett and Michael de Semlyen).

The new Pope has been carefully chosen for the latest phase of Rome’s determination to make up the ground she lost in the past 150 years. Her dream is to be at the heart of Europe, the spiritual head of a re-created Holy Roman Empire. When her bid to work with Hitler failed, support was given for the European dream that followed, which was closely modeled on Hitler’s plans for a unified Europe.

We saw in the last issue the backing and the support that John Paul II gave to uniting Europe. We saw in the last issue the backing and the support that John Paul II gave to uniting Europe.

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The Name Benedict XVI Carefully Chosen.

“When Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the vice-dean of the College of Cardinals, asked Joseph Ratzinger the name by which he would be known, the new pope did not hesitate. Not only did he respond “Benedict,” but he was ready with an explanation. As Cardinal George later told the story to the press, the Pope said something like, “Benedict lived at a time when the Roman Empire was collapsing, and he saw the role of the Church as to preserve the best in human culture throughout the centuries. The whole world was crumbling, and Benedict helped ensure that human civilization survived.”

“In his first General Audience, on Wednesday, April 27, the Pope said of St. Benedict: ‘He constitutes a fundamental point of reference for the unity of Europe, and a powerful call to the irrefutable Christian roots of European culture and civilization.”’ The Rise of Benedict XVI.

Ratzinger himself has written a small book entitled Europe: Its Foundations Today and Tomorrow, published last year (in Italian!). Commenting on it, John Allen remarks—

“What emerges, in the first place, is the Pope’s clear conviction that “Europe” is a cultural and historical concept before a geographic one. In the era of Charlemagne, the Pope writes, the word “Europe” expressed both a political reality, meaning a group of states that formed a new Roman Empire, but also a mission-preserving the best of antique culture, and carrying it forward into history” (The Rise of Benedict XVI).

This is where the Pope’s hand is strengthened by the newly joined members of the EU. As Jonathan Luxmoore wrote in the Tablet (25-6-05) under the headline Europe at the Crossroads:

“The European Union faces its worst crisis for a generation over its proposed constitution. The Church, particularly in Eastern Europe, could play a vital role in ensuring that the European project gets back on course and Europe’s elite reconnects with the masses.”

It is Ratzinger’s contention that only Christianity can hold together the diverse cultures of Europe; the project is failing because of the lack of attention to this dimension of European life. An article by Raymond de Souza entitled Ignoring Europe’s foundations summed up the situation—

“Europe above all is a cultural idea. When the Roman Empire disintegrated it was not clear what, if anything, would replace it. Would there be a centre that could unite Sicilians with Hibernians? Indeed, as various kingdoms and principalities and duchies spun out of the empire, it was evident that neither economics nor politics could provide the centre of unity.

“It was instead a common faith that created

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Europe. Christianity united the diverse European nations, so much so that the divisions in Christianity produced political divisions, even wars, and vice versa. The old joke was that the Holy Roman Empire was not holy, not Roman and not an empire, but it was the product of the Christian ties that defined Europe.

"Christianity today has been pushed to the margins of European political life, so that now a great empty shrine sits in Brussels, contemporary heir to the Holy Roman Empire. It is not easy to fill an empty shrine, and a standardized pan-European working week just won’t do it. If Europe wishes to be united by more than trade and customs agreements, it will have to find something ennobling to which it can give its collective assent. It is doubtful that this could be Christianity again. But if not the common faith that created Europe, it is difficult to imagine what else it might be."

How the events in Europe may help Israel!

Just as we have seen that many events in Europe, isolated on their own, yet interact together to move things forward, so it is in the Middle East. Again let’s briefly summarise some of the recent events.

Britain and America in Iraq: The subsequent fall of Baghdad and the arrest of Saddam Hussein, has changed considerably the Middle East’s political landscape. Although things are far from normal in Iraq, progress is being made, and the people of neighbouring countries are taking note of the changes which have been denied to so many for so long.

The Death of Arafat: What a difference this event has made to the situation in Israel. Mahmoud Abbas has not however lived up to expectations in curbing the terrorists and Israel fears a return to hostilities.

Increasing Russian influence: Putin made an historic trip to Israel and the Middle East at the end of April—the first visit by a Russian leader to Israel.

“The Kremlin has embarked on a cautious drive to re-establish itself in the Arab world. Its anti-aircraft missile deal with Syria is believed by DEBKA file’s strategic experts to be only a foretaste of much larger transactions to come. Putin sees long term advantage in strengthening the Syrian ruler’s standing in the eyes of his military. And should a military coup unseat Assad, Russia will already have its foot firmly through the door of any future regime.

“While rapping Iranian nuclear weapons aspirations in public, the Russian leader has formed a developed nuclear relationship with Tehran. Semi-clandestine ties (on the Abu Mazen model) are maintained with pro-Baath Iraqis actively running the guerrilla war against US forces from outside the country. The Russians are also in close contact with such Palestinian radical and terrorist groups as the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine.

Putin’s historic visit to Israel — but what are his real intentions?

“France, the Driving Anti-Israel Force.

For many years, France has been the driving force behind anti-Israel political attitudes in the EU. Until the 1967 Six-Day War, France supported Israel. Then it made a sharp political turn against Israel. At around the same time, French President Charles De Gaulle reintroduced anti-Semitism at the highest levels of post-Holocaust mainstream European democratic society when he called the Jews ‘an elitist and domineering people.’

France was also the main promoter of the 1980 Venice Declaration in which the EU recognized the PLO, which still officially recognized the Jews ‘an elitist and domineering people.’

The French at the UN were the leaders of every anti-Israel initiative originating in Europe. Theirs was a totally unbalanced position. We counted them in the Arab camp” (Jerusalem Issue Brief (26-06-05).

With France weakened, Israel hopes that the EU will not be so against her as she prepares to make historic changes in Gaza.

Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza.

In August, Israel is due to start moving settlers from the Gaza Strip. There are many Jewish settlers here who hold strongly that this is part of the land promised to Abraham, and do not intend to go quietly. Ariel Sharon has decided that the military efforts to protect these settlements are not worth it. Instead he is determined that Israel will focus her efforts on retaining as much control of the so-called West Bank as they can. For the majority of Israel’s past history as a Kingdom, the Gaza Strip area was under Philistine control. We expect from Ezekiel’s reference to Israel dwelling in the “midst” or “navel” of the land and on the “mountains of Israel” that at the time of the Gogian invasion she will retain control of the West Bank.

Sharon’s efforts over the past few years have been to strengthen the Jewish presence on the West Bank. The security fence, and his determination to keep an Israeli presence in the Jordan Valley, is designed to create an Israeli ring around the Arab towns and villages. The level of violence—from Jew and Arab—is the unknown factor in the Gaza evacuation. Is this the significance of France and Germany—and Russia too—being politically weak at this time, with Britain and America strong? Sharon has indicated that if the Arabs attack as the Israelis withdraw he will retaliate. He could use this as the reason to go in and root out the growing terrorist cells. Europe would protest, but with Britain in the present chair, what she has herself just suffered from terrorists’ attacks, little would be done to stop her. We may see considerable changes over the next few months to Israel’s feeling of security while being determined to increase her presence amongst the Palestinians in Samaria. We know it will prove to be a day of grief when Israel’s man-made solutions prove to be of no value, and being brought to their knees they cry out to their Creator for help.

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength. Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness” (Isa 62:6-9).

Now the Master has told us that his return will be like a thief in the night. We don’t know when to get here, so the hour set surely by our Master expects us to be in a heightened state of anticipation. A thief can strip a house bare so that the owner loses everything. One day we are going to be visited; we will have to walk away from everything we have and leave it all behind. The only things we will take with us are our minds, our characters, our brains. Knowing the nearness of that call we must renew and strengthen our minds in godly ways.
Thus by way of illustration: through Isaiah chapters 40 to 45, and beyond. The control of the nation of Israel. These ideas run Holiness—and to His intimate interest in and character—His unity, His supremacy, and His witness of Israel. It is a witness to God's purpose amongst the nations of the earth. The work He is revealed to disbelieving man as a work of God concentrates on Israel, and in this work He is revealed to disbelieving man as a real God, not a God afar off, and having a real purpose amongst the nations of the earth.

God reveals through His prophet Isaiah this witness of Israel. It is a witness to God's character—His unity, His supremacy, and His Holiness—and to His intimate interest in and control of the nation of Israel. These ideas run through Isaiah chapters 40 to 45, and beyond. Thus by way of illustration:

41:8 “But thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend.”

41:14 “I will help thee, saith the LORD (Yahweh) thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

43:1 “Thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee; ...thou art mine.”

43:10 “Ye are my witnesses, said the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen.”

43:15 “I, the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.”

44:24 “Thus saith the LORD, Thy redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself.”

These and similar phrases in these chapters speak with tremendous emphasis of God's choice of Israel from amongst the nations and of His continuing work through His nation. Here is a challenge. The True God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has created one nation as His people, as His servant, as His witnesses. Men hate this selection of God, and turn their back on His good purpose and channel of grace. In this situation Israel has continued as an age-lasting witness, in their kingdom, in their dispersion, and in their regathering.

Wonderful indeed as their witness in the past has been, the most wonderful witness awaits the day of their redemption and exaltation to the First Dominion. Then the nation of Israel will fulfil their honourable destiny, declared by Moses at the beginning: “Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). Joined to their King and immortal rulers under the New Covenant, the Divinity and the heavens and the earth, has created one nation as His people, as His servant, as His witnesses. Men hate this selection of God, and turn their back on His good purpose and channel of grace. In this situation Israel has continued as an age-lasting witness, in their kingdom, in their dispersion, and in their regathering.

The True God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, has created one nation as His people, as His servant, as His witnesses...

Isaiah declares: “Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa. 60:21). Israel will then be the light of the world: “the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising;” “The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish” (Isa. 60:3,12). This will be the ultimate faithful witness of Israel. Then all people will see the Divine impress in their history as a proof of God's work in the earth in past ages; and in the teaching that goes forth from Israel there will be declared and witnessed the righteous judgements, the power, and the holiness of the One True God.

In our detail of the subject of witness, we may briefly consider various facets of Israel's witness, their witness in faithfulness and unfaithfulness. This consideration will provide a framework for the further unfolding of the story of Israel in further study.

We suggest seven features of Israel's witness to the Only True God:

1. Their miraculous birth as a nation.
2. Moses' prophecy as to their future unfaithfulness.
3. Their continued existence in dispersion.
4. The custodians of the oracles of God.
5. The Unity of God.
6. Their return to the Land.
7. Their Millennial glory.

1. The witness of their miraculous birth as a nation.

There have been two great Divine interventions in history, and a third lies still in the future. The first is the birth of God's nation, and the second is the birth of God's son. The outflowing of both these happenings continues to witness to the true God, as the centuries roll by.

Israel's national beginning is well-known: The Ten plagues culminating in the death of every firstborn in Egypt; the crossing of the Red Sea; the forty years wandering in the wilderness of two million people at least, sustained by food and drink from God; the destruction of the powerful nations occupying the Promised Land. Did it really happen? To admit it did, admits to the Divine purpose in Israel. The evidence that it really happened is the witness to God's power, purpose, and faithfulness to His promises. The birth of the nation, with its Mighty Acts of God, can be established as Truth to all who are open-minded and ready to believe.

In the legends of the beginning of other nations, one can remove the “miraculous” as a kind of ornamentation, and be left with the history. But for Israel the whole series of happenings is a series of miracles, and if the miracles are removed nothing is left. One has to accept the miracles or deny the story entirely. And if one disbelieves the miraculous beginning one must face the question: “How did Israel appear as a nation in the land of Israel in approximately the 15th century B.C.—as all history agrees?” One cannot create an alternative
3. The witness of their continued existence.

The witness of their continued existence through 4,000 years follows from our last consideration. It required the miracle of Divine providence to preserve them from extinction during their widespread scattering and persistent persecution. This control of Israel’s history is even more wonderful and precise than at first appears. Jeremiah writes: “I am with thee to save thee: though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure” (Jer. 30:11). So it is a measured correction. “She hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isa. 40:2). Here is not only the power of God in preserving Israel from extinction, but the more detailed control of events to provide a measured punishment. It has been a “correcting”—as of a son. “Say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, My firstborn” (Ex. 4:29). It has been a chastening, a discipline for future glory. The true marvel of this witness of their experience through the centuries will only be appreciated when looked back upon from the vantage point of the future, when they will have attained by their long experience and divine tuition, to faithfulness and honour. Meanwhile we look upon their history as a demonstration and guarantee of God’s certain purpose with Israel.

4. Their witness as custodians of God’s Word.

Israel has been the custodian of God’s Word. God’s Word is His greatest witness among men. It has been with Israel from the starting point, when Moses laid up the Ten Commandments in the Ark. Paul says: “Unto them were committed the Oracles of God” (Rom.3:2). So it was not the voice of history or the decision of priests that formed the Canon of Scripture, but rather under Divine instruction the prophet of Israel “committed” what he had written to the safe keeping of the priest. And so, although it is such a record of condemnation against themselves, the nation has jealously and most carefully kept the Law and the Prophets, as the witness of Divine Light to give instruction to man. It is from this source that the righteous statutes and judgements have moulded and improved the laws of other nations (Deut. 4:6-8). From this source we have the knowledge of the glorious character of the great Creator. From the writings of these prophets we know of the beauty, righteousness and peace of the Millennium Age.

5. Their witness to the Unity of God

The witness of their return to their own land is a glorious fact for which we are all profoundly thankful. It is like the breaking forth of the buds and leaves in the Springtime: surely, “the kingdom is nigh.” Not only has God preserved His nation through their dispersion and downtreading, but now angelic power is working to reverse the “scattering of the power of the holy people” (Dan. 12:7), and is gradually regathering and reforming their strength. This is a witness to God’s power and purpose, but more especially to His mercy, in which mercy we hope to share. The regathering of Israel, which has already proceeded at some length before the eyes of the world, challenges the scepticism of this Godless age. The Exodus from Europe, the progress in the land, the military prowess, all are strange facts that tell men that “He that scattered Israel will gather him.”

7. The witness of their Millennial Glory.

And so we come to the fulness of Israel’s witness in the future. Let us transport ourselves in imagination into the millennium and look on Israel through the eyes of the nations of the world. Now the hated and despised Jew is exalted and honourable. “Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying: we will go with thee for we have heard that God is with thee” (Zech. 8:23). All men now recognize Israel as the nation of God’s choice, Jesus Christ is accepted as a Jew, the Messiah of Israel, and the New Covenant for which he shed his blood is seen to belong to the nation of Israel. “Salvation is of the Jews” is a truth received by all. The redeemed in Jesus Christ are known as “Israelites,” the immortal princes of the nation. The nations of the world gratefully receive the blessing of Abraham and his seed through the ministration of Israel. Under the Saints, the Jews are “the ministers of our God” (Isa. 61:4-9). The high calling at Sinai is now fulfilled: they are a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”—a people teaching the statutes and judgements of God to all nations and administering the Law that goes forth from Zion.

When thus it shall be among men, they will read the words penned by Isaiah long ago (chapters 40 to 45), and will bow in humble belief and praise. This indeed will be the day of Israel’s greatest witness. “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will bring thee from the ends of the earth” (Isa. 43:5-7; 44:23).
Ariel Sharon’s policy of Disengagement from Gaza has created the most serious rift in Israeli society since the creation of the State in 1948. He would not see it that way—of course—from Sharon’s vantage point, the cause of the social disturbances in Israel are the product of religious Zionism and the ideological persuasion of the settlers who live in the West Bank and Gaza. Either way, the fact is that there is a serious confrontation in the country between the secular (frequently humanist left-wing) section, and those who believe in the Jewish Biblical right to Eretz Israel. Disengagement from Gaza is bringing this ideological gulf to the point of crisis—so much so that the term “civil war” has recently been applied to it.

Behind the Headlines

The Godless spirit of our age is daily reflected in the communications and print media all over the world. Most of us are accustomed to—and hardened against—media prejudice on subjects like creation. Where there is a Biblical position on a matter, the world’s media can usually be counted on to denigrate it. It is not surprising therefore to note that few of this world’s journalists or broadcasters have a kind word for the Jewish settlers and their brand of Zionism. As this is the case with the world’s media (the manipulators of public opinion) one might have expected something better in Israel itself. Think again! The voice of Religious Zionism, Arutz Sheva, was forced off the air and can now only be accessed via the internet. The Jerusalem Post tends to be reasonably fair most of the time but Israel’s main-stream media (Yediot Ahronot, Maariv, Haaretz) are rabid in their denunciation of the settlers who they label as “contemptuous of government authority.” The settlers’ youth is cast as being equivalent to Palestinian terrorists, a “teenage rebellion” and so forth. Yedioth Ahronot gave the opinion that “An entire generation of settler children was messed up by years of being educated to break the law, and is now being messed up by a wild, blind battle against state authority.”

A more even-handed approach was given in an article in The Jerusalem Post (July 3, 05):

“What has gone almost completely unreported by the Israeli press, in its rush to civil war, is the fact that the organized leadership of the opponents of the withdrawal plan—from the residents slated for expulsion, to the leadership of the Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, to the heads of the Chabad movement—has called for the avoidance of violence at all costs. In the wake of reports that protesters... blocked the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway by dousing oil on the road and lining it with nails, the leadership immediately condemned the action and Chabad leaders prohibited their followers from participating in blocking traffic. Rather than giving voice to these responsible leaders, the press is chasing after every known hothead and giving him an open microphone through which to convince the general public that he represents the voice of the majority of opponents of the withdrawal plan.”

So behind the headlines and the “news-stories” we need to be aware that a fierce
ideological battle is being waged. There is a right-left and religious-secular divide, and in most cases the media are heavily biased in favour of the left-secular camp. We need to be careful about accepting the tone and the slant given to news items therefore, especially when those who hold to the Bible are being defamed and slandered.

Crushing the Settlers

As the world focuses its attention on the removal of settlers from Gush Katif and other Gaza settlements, the outcome of that particular operation—and whether it is accomplished or not—is secondary to the development that is taking place behind the scenes. We have drawn attention to the Rise of Religious Zionism in this magazine before (see Vol. 17, No. 4), pointing out how a Christadelphian writer looked for this 35 years ago. It has now become a potent political force in Israel—so much so that the Israeli Government seems to be determined to crush it. It is possible to view the intended removal of settlers from Gaza as the first step in a war on the religious Zionists.

The Jerusalem Post (Jly 3/05) points out that “the Bush administration and the left wing in Israel have made clear, pressure on Israel to follow up the expulsion of Jews from their homes and communities in Gaza and northern Samaria with more and deeper expulsions in Judea and the rest of Samaria will begin in earnest the moment the operation is completed.”

When Government authorities wage war upon religious communities, success can be less than total. This of course is especially the case if the hand of God is working through such movements, as it was among the first Christians. Harsh measures taken by either the Jewish or Roman authorities only caused the movement to flourish. The same pattern was seen at the time of the Reformation—the more it was censured by either civil or religious authority, the more it blossomed. It may well be the same with religious Zionism in Israel—and in fact there are those who claim that this is happening.

A recent article (June 05) by Shmuel Sackett of Manhigut Yehudit (The Jewish Leadership Movement) says that Sharon and his Government “has united the “national” and “faithful” camp into a strong and unbreakable force.” Sharon “challenged us. He put us up against the wall and made us rethink exactly who we were... Are we connected to the promise G-d gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or is it all just lip service? Do we truly believe in the Torah—and all that it says—or do we bend the rules for convenience sake?

“Our youth, normally thinking about summer camp and swimming pools, gave of themselves like never before with complete mesirut nefesh (“self-sacrifice”). Summer “Visiting Day” took on a new meaning in
Israel as hundreds went to jail with smiles and love.

“We will no longer support the dream of becoming “a nation like all other nations.”

Yes—we are different...

“Thank you G-d for sending us the wake-up call named “Ariel Sharon.” Now that we are awake, please help us stay that way so that we can bring honor to Your great and holy Name. Am Yisrael Chai!!!”

These people may well have to face setbacks, hardship and injustice—but the indication is that their spirit will not be broken. If they do lose the struggle over Gaza, they will not lose it over the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) for Ezekiel foretold of “the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land” (Ezek. 38:12).

The “Transfer” Principle

In the eyes of many Israelis expelling some 9,000 Jews from Gaza legitimizes the concept of “population transfer”—the removal of communities for political reasons. According to a private survey published (June 29, 05) on World Net Daily (www.worldnetdaily.com), up to 90 percent of Israelis would support annexing all of Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Yesha), and expelling hostile local Arab populations to areas outside the borders of Israel! The reported figure (whether truly representative or not) is not important in the present political climate—what is significant is the fact that such a possibility could even be suggested.

Current political circumstances are not necessarily those of the future. This concept of “transfer” has some interesting possibilities. Arabs could be transferred from the West Bank with a handsome payment in compensation (reparation) as a solution to the problem, or as part of an anti-terrorism move. Also, when the “Gog” of Ezekiel 38 comes down “upon the people” who dwell in the midst of the land, the expulsion of Jews from that geographical area will undoubtedly be his policy. We are told that half of Jerusalem will be deported (Zechar. 14:2). This concept of population transfer could well be seen at work as several prophecies are fulfilled during the coming years.

Seeking the Lord?

The prophet Hosea had this to say:

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:4-5).

The children of Israel have been without a king and without a means of sacrifice for very many centuries. Now they have returned, and we are therefore justified in expecting what follows next: “...and seek the Lord their God...” etc. This suggests a religious awakening of some kind—and if what we are seeing in Israel today is not precisely that stirring, it may very well lead to it.

It is the Scriptures themselves that tell us what is required for this “seeking” to be acceptable. The principle outlined by Jeremiah with reference to the Babylonian captivity can be applied to the situation now:

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

There are two factors that will bring Jews today to seek the Lord their God. One is the realization that the era of the Redemption has arrived. At the end of the 70 years Babylonian captivity, there would have been that understanding, no doubt taught by Daniel (Dan. 9:2-3). So also today, religious Zionists that we have spoken with are aware that the times of restoration have commenced—since 1948 and 1967 particularly. The second factor, and even more important, is the development of a right frame of mind—a humble and teachable disposition; a humility before the word of God (Isaiah 66:2). The Lord knows how to create this frame of mind in the people—and suffering injustices, disappointments, persecution, hardship and even desperation, can play a part in it. Pride must be brought down, and no doubt it will be.

No flesh can glory in His presence says 1 Corinthians 1:29. This includes Jewish flesh—the natural seed of Abraham—so says Jesus in Matthew 3:9. “All flesh is as grass” says Isaiah 40:6, and “the people are grass” (verse 7). The word of our God shall stand for ever (verse 8). So the lesson is that it is only where the word of God is manifested in flesh, that it can be of any worth. This is the sense given in 1 Peter 1:23-25.

The spirit that must be developed can be seen from a reading of Psalm 80.

“Can These bones Live?”

This question is put to the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 37:3. It is a question that any of us could ask as we view the scene as it exists in Israel today; Can these bones live—live in the real and spiritual sense that is?

Ezekiel observes that these bones are “very dry” (verse 2). If we consult Strong’s concordance, we are told that this word yabesh (dry) carries the idea of “ashamed, confused, disappointed...withered (and)...dried away.” Gesenius tells us that the word is “used of a person whose hope has failed.” This connects with the thought expressed in verse 11, “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.”

However we may choose to understand and apply that verse, it is fairly obvious that this is
A PROCESS OF PREPARATION, LEADING TO EVENTUAL REDEMPTION, IS UNDER WAY, IF WE CAN DISCERN IT...

Hamas Militants - Pictured in July, 05

Jewish Settlers study the Old Testament

Natanya Bombing - July, 05.

Settlers’ Prayer Rally - July, 05.

Preparing the Ground

As we watch events taking place in Gaza (and also in the West Bank), let us appreciate what is being accomplished by the Unseen Hand. Hearts and minds must be prepared and brought to a suitable condition ready for instruction. How much more work has to be done before the sower can come and sow his “good seed” we cannot say, but that the fallow ground is being broken up seems evident. At the present time of writing it would seem that Israelis face a very rough time ahead—especially the young religious settlers who are part of the rising generation.

What we see today is no more than a preparation of the ground as it were—but we do see that it is preparation for something which will completely change the world, bringing in that future age of blessing for Israel, and also for all nations. Soon the “voice” of the turtle-dove will be heard in our Land—it will be time for those who sleep to “arise.” Indeed, the words of the Beloved will soon ring out to all who are watching the signs of a spiritual Springtime—“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away...” (Song of Solomon 2:8-13).
You may have been told that it took millions of years, through slow erosion, to form canyons and lay down massive rock layers. Well, how about reconsidering that? On May 18th 1980 all this was done in one afternoon. Less time than it took to think up the theory of Evolution!

It happened when Mount St. Helens in Washington State erupted. A steam blast equivalent to 20 million tons of TNT, created a slurry of volcanic ash travelling at 200 miles an hour. The resultant mud flow carved out the canyon of the Toutle river and laid down rock layers which demonstrate evolution to be a giant myth.