IRAN: PLAYING WITH FIRE!
“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”— John 17:17.
WRITTEN OVER 100 YEARS AGO:

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Testimony of Moses and The Prophets

1. Psalm 2:8; 72:8-11; Jeremiah 23:5, 8; Ezekiel 37:20-28; Daniel 2:35-44; 7:14, 27; Joel 3:16, 17, 21; Micah 4:7, 8; Zechariah 14:9, 16-19; Obadiah 21
2. Psalm 89:29; Isaiah 4:6-7; Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7
3. Psalm 2:1-9; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 53:10-12; Jeremiah 23:5-7; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Daniel 7:13-14
4. Daniel 7:18, 27
5. Jeremiah 23:5-9; Chapter 31; Ezekiel 37:20-28; Micah 4:8
6. Isaiah 11:2-5; Psalm 2:9; 72:2-4; Daniel 7:14, 27
7. Genesis 13:15; 17:5; Isaiah 2:3; 24:23; Micah 4:4; 7, 8; Joel 3:17, 20, 21
9. Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Psalm 76; 60:9, 10; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-10; Micah 4:1-5; Zechariah 10:11
10. Genesis 3:15
11. Genesis 12:3; 22:18
12. 2 Samuel 7:9-16

The Testimony of Jesus and The Apostles

2. Luke 1:33; Hebrews 1:8; 12:28; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15
4. Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4
5. Luke 1:33, 68-75
6. Matthew 28:18; John 17:2; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Revelation 22:4; Hebrews 2:8; Ephesians 1:22
7. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Revelation 17:10, 14; Rev. 18; Rev. 19:17, 21; 20:1-3.
8. Luke 2:14; Galatians 3:8
9. Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 11:10
10. Acts 2:30
11. Hebrews 4:2; Heb. 11; Jude 14
16. Acts 8:12
17. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:38, 39; 8:12; Galatians 3:25-27

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12.

Search, and see if this be not so.

Reproduced from The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come 1855 page 192.
The devoted student of the Bible is sometimes rather suspicious of those who complain that the book of Revelation is too obscure for anyone to understand it. He cannot resist the conviction that the real difficulty is not that the last message of the Bible is painfully obscure, but that in its main features it is painfully plain. He does not marvel at the efforts at one time made to expurgate it from the canon of Scripture. He regards the preservation of the book as one of the greatest miracles of history, indicating that Providence has sometimes overruled in the councils of men.

We have heard it said that there are three schools of thought in the interpretation of this prophecy. First, that it is progressive, forecasting the development of history from the time the Revelation was given to the end of the kingdom of men. Second, that it all relates to the past in connection either with the destruction of Jerusalem or the overthrow of paganism. Third, that it is still all future.

In the same way it might be affirmed that there are three schools of thought in astronomical science. First, the idea that the earth is a sphere, revolving around the sun. Second, that it is a plane with sun, moon and stars revolving around it; and third, that it is a mountain of uncertain shape mounted on the back of a gigantic elephant. There are many earnest students of Scripture who would regard this as a fair analogy. The man who quotes the alternative theories of exposition as an excuse for not attempting to understand the Apocalypse, seems to them as unreasonable and puerile as the repudiator of astronomical postulates seems to the scientist.

In all such matters there will always be men who scorn to follow the beaten track made by the patient labours of those who have preceded them. They desire to elaborate a theory entirely their own.

We remember that a few years ago a self-appointed scientist put forth the theory that instead of living on the outside of a sphere we were living on the inside. That instead of the horizon curving down it curved up and finally encircled us, while all the heavenly bodies were situated somewhere inside the ball. Everyone with a head for geometry will realize how profoundly this theory would affect the calculation of distances. The sponsor of the theory invented an instrument to test the curvature of the earth, and this achieved the object for which it was designed, loyally supporting the views of its creator. Since then we have heard no more of the matter, and we do not suppose that real scientists ever give it a passing thought.

The only genuine plan, either in science or in the exposition of prophecy, is for the student to learn all he can from those who have preceded him, to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” He must test the conclusions of his mentors and only reject them after a humble and careful examination. Finally, he must be satisfied with his legitimately won honours if, as the result of a life’s work, he only succeeds in adding a single ray of new light to the subject of his study. To the genuine student of prophecy it seems as certain that there has been a legitimate succession of thinkers and workers in the interpretation of the deep things of Scripture, just as to the exposition of Nature’s secrets. In each case the genuineness of the study is unaffected by the fact that there have been charlatans and egotists who, by their folly, have provided some excuse for the indolent and the uninterested to scoff at the whole subject.

It is interesting to note in this connection that one man at least secured a place in both these lines of study. Sir Isaac Newton is recognized as one of the greatest of scientists. He is also admitted to a place in the long line of genuine Bible students, although most modern believers would probably place him on a lower level than such a man as Joseph Mede. Is it not possible, however, that if Sir Isaac Newton had devoted his entire energy to the study of prophecy he would have been the greatest exponent of all? In such a case he would doubtless have remained unhonoured by the world, the flesh and the devil. He would not even have found a place in the biographical pages of encyclopaedias, and friends of the world would not have admitted that he was a man of exceptional mentality if they had ever been induced to cast a scornful eye at his work.

As it was, Sir Isaac Newton only devoted a small part of his energies to the study of prophecy, and he only saw far enough to...
suggest the great work he might have accomplished if he had devoted his life to the subject.

There has been quite as much agreement among the genuine students of the book of Revelation as among the genuine students of Nature. Among them certain propositions are recognized as first postulates, certain lines of exposition have been so well established that they are no longer matters of dispute. They constitute a foundation on which successive expositors can build.

It is agreed by all such students that in the book of Revelation the future was revealed to the Apostle John by means of signs and symbols. It is agreed that the seals, the trumpets and the vials span the entire period from the time of the vision to the end of the kingdoms of men.

It is agreed that the millennium or thousand years’ reign of Christ on earth, instead of being a doctrine peculiar to the book of Revelation, as some theologians have represented, is simply a more detailed explanation of the kingdom of God foretold by Daniel and all the prophets, and preached by Christ and His disciples as the very basis of their glad tidings.

This last point is perhaps the most important of all. Wherever there has been an understanding of the reality of the kingdom of God promised by the prophets of Old and New Testament, there has been a growing appreciation of the book of Revelation and an understanding of its message. To the simple follower of the early disciples of Christ it seems certain that the general indifference to the book of Revelation in the religious world today is almost wholly due to the fact that the doctrine of the personal reign of Christ has been so largely discarded. And conversely the original repudiation of this doctrine was due to a failure to understand the book of Revelation, a failure which may have been excusable in those early days, but which is absolutely unpardonable now.

Every student knows that a belief in the reality of the Kingdom of God to be established on earth was universal among the early disciples of Christ. Gradually it came to be discarded. The “spiritualizing” method of interpreting prophecy grew in favour. Some of the most talented of theologians put forth the theory that the Church was the Kingdom, and that through the Church Christ had begun his reign on earth.

What was the real reason of this change? It seems to us that there is a tremendously strong argument in support of the view that it was the natural outcome of a great triumph and a crushing disappointment. During the first three centuries of the Christian era there was already a marked falling away from the “simplicity that was in Christ.” Some of the ecclesiastical leaders put forth claims and manifested qualities far removed from the days when even the great Apostle to the Gentiles was only “our beloved brother Paul.” In the third century came the terrible persecution under Diocletian. For a time proud prelates and humble disciples of Christ alike suffered tribulation. Then, not long after, what a mighty change, with the greatest political earthquake history has yet recorded! Constantine embraced Christianity, and convinced all but the most thorough of Christ’s followers that the time had come for them to take the sword. He led them with rare military genius, and the dragon of paganism was overthrown. It was natural that such a triumph, following a period of subjection and persecution, should produce the belief that the kingdom of God had come at last. In the first blush of success the deliverance from ignominy and constant danger would seem like the restoration of Paradise, with Christ very near if not actually visible. Doubtless the Christians had many ignoble associates, faithless and grasping. Possibly there were some at the opposite extreme, who, through constant study of the Scriptures, knew that the rejoicing of their fellows was only “our mistaken triumph predicted in Rev. 12, and that the worse judgments were yet to come. It is certain, however, that there were very many who honestly believed that the promised kingdom had been established and that before long all its blessings would be manifest.

The crushing disappointment soon followed. There were quarrels between the immediate successors of Constantine. There was an attempt to restore paganism. Before many years had passed away, barbarians swept down from the north, putting an end to the Christian hope of peaceful dominion. Goths, Vandals, and Huns successively invaded the western third of the Roman empire. Christians were slain, women were violated; churches were broken down. There was such wanton destruction of all that the civilized world venerated that two of these barbarous races have furnished us with words of reproach that are in common use today. A savage destruction of works of art we describe as vandalism. We have applied the name Hun to stigmatize a barbarism too bad for any ordinary word.

It was after this disappointment, this dashed of Christian hopes, that the doctrine of a merely spiritual kingdom gained ground. Is it not reasonable to conclude that this was merely an illustration of cause and effect?

To the student who follows the great exponents of the book of Revelation, the error of those who followed Constantine is glaringly apparent. The great change from paganism to a nominal form of Christianity was the great earthquake of the sixth seal. The jubilation of Christians exalted to the political heavens was predicted. After this were to follow the terrible woes of the seven trumpets, and the seven last vials of the wrath of God.

When the student accepts this starting point, he can trace the book of Revelation in history stage by stage. It has not only thrown a wonderful light on past events. It has enabled some of the great exponents to foretell the future in such a manner and with such consecutive order as to forbid the thought that it is mere coincidence.

We emphasize this last point very strongly. When we fit the symbols of the prophecy to the events of the past, critics may accuse us of moulding a doubtful form of language to suit the accomplished fact. When we are able to show that the same interpretation was made by former students centuries before the events, even those who are least inclined to believe are bound to recognize that they are presented with a direct and arresting challenge.

If any reader desires to acquire a further understanding of our burning faith in the Bible, we urge that special attention should be given to our next chapter.

We will endeavour to present in condensed and simple form the main features of the apocalyptic forecast as it has been expounded by the genuine students of all ages, and we will test the expositions of two centuries ago in the light of recent history. The subject is most distasteful, even to the majority of religious people. So are the dreadful facts of modern history and everyday experience. We are bound to face the facts of life, however. Will you try to be impartial and with judicial eyes look at the fact of Revelation?

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Milestones Prophecy Day at the Benn Hall Rugby. February 26th. For information contact Don Pearce. 01788823 811

Kent Prophecy Day at East Malling Village Hall. April 8th. For information contact Peter Moore 01474 703037

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To be Issued in DVD Format:

EVIDENCE FOR BIBLE TRUTH

This series of video presentations was originally produced in 1994 with the equipment available to us at that time. The new DVD format available today considerably enhances the visual quality of these productions which places on record a varied collection of evidence demonstrating the amazing truth of the Scriptures. Evidence from the Bible, from history, archaeology and from amazing prophecies show us that the Bible really is a message from heaven! For many people Seeing is Believing, and these video productions certainly provide that opportunity. (The old VHS videos are also still available for those who may want that format).

These DVD’s are particularly suitable for viewing on computers which have DVD players.
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PRE-ORDER DVD’S NOW FROM THE BIBLE MAGAZINE
THE “Romanisation” of Europe continues unabated as Don Pearce regularly demonstrates in his Milestones feature. Several readers however have also added to the information given last time about how the ‘European Quarter’ of Brussels as it is known locally, is fast becoming the sort of ‘Latin Kingdom’ we described.

The Berlaymont Building

This consists of a cross shaped tower of 13 floors, compromising a quarter of a million square meters of office space for the 3000 Euro-civil servants working at the Administrative headquarters of the European Commission. It was built on the site of the Catholic Convent of the Ladies of Berlaymont, so named after the leading Catholic nobleman Charles de Berlaymont, who together with the Cardinal Archbishop of Mechelen, was left in charge of what is now known as Belgium after the withdrawal of troops by Philip of Spain in 1567.

The Justus Lipsius Building

This enormous polished pink granite pile lies right across the street from the Berlaymont building and provides the headquarters of the European Council of Ministers. It is here that the visiting political heads of E.U. member states convene their meetings. It was named after Justus Lipsius, the 16th Century Belgian Humanist and Professor of Latin History at the nearby Louvain University. He was trained by the German Jesuits at Cologne, and he is noted for his Renaissance revival of ancient Roman and Greek philosophical ideas. Appropriately enough, it is outside this building that stands the enormous stylistic metalwork statue of the woman riding the beast!

The European Parliament Building

And talking about representations of the woman riding the beast it is notable that such a sculpture is to be found in the private office of the President of the European Parliament on the 12th floor of the Parliament building which was also illustrated in the last issue. Not inappropriately it is a composition of Italian ceramic tiles! Similar representations of that figure of Catholic Apostasy riding the Beast of Europe (so graphically described in Revelation chapter 17) can also be found in a nearby shopping centre and at Brussels airport.

Footnote

1. In the course of the editing and production process of the last edition, the title of this building was accidentally applied to the interior pictures of the Parliament building on page 14. Apologies.
Frank Abel (F.A.) interviews Dr. Robert Bozett (R.B.)

Frank Abel—With all the education that Yad Vashem provides, are there still serious Holocaust deniers out there today?

Dr. Robert Bozett—Yes there are. Holocaust denial is a phenomenon that many trace back to the Nazis themselves. The Nazis tried to get rid of the evidence of the murder of the Jews, and we know that there was a special unit set up, and that in the last year or so of the war they went around burning bodies and trying to get rid of the evidence of what was happening. The denial that we talk about now is really rooted in that, but it took off much more in the late 1960’s and into the ’70’s, and is unfortunately found today in many parts of the world. The Holocaust is so hard to believe—that there were people on the face of the earth in the mid-20th century who sought to wipe out another entire people, simply because they deemed those other people to be dangerous to the world, but not based on anything more than a false ideology. It’s very hard for people to come to terms with that. It makes more sense sometimes to believe it didn’t happen than to believe it did happen, because we are humanists, and we believe that human beings don’t do things like that—but of course they do do things like that. So Holocaust denial is out there and it’s in many places and in many forms. We see it a great deal today in the media, and especially on the internet. There are so many sites that push Holocaust denial along with various aspects of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, other Jew-hatreds and xenophobia—all kinds of things that all get mixed together. So there is a lot of Holocaust denial out there.

F.A.—Now there is one term that you used there Rob, that I would like us to get a better handle on—that’s anti-Semitism. What would you say anti-Semitism is?

R.B.—Antisemitism in its colloquial usage is hatred of Jews. It’s a word that is really a misnomer. It’s a 19th century word that came into being as people were talking about linguistic groups, and the connection between language groups and race—with the idea that there was some sort of Semitic race—though you cannot really use the term. Hebrew is a Semitic language like Arabic is a Semitic language. So anti-Semitism came into being as ‘against Semitism’—as though the Jews were pushing something called Semitism, but it doesn’t exist; there is no such thing. Which is why (by the way) we at Yad Vashem spell it with a small
Canada—but it’s a little worrying as to where it might go. Have you any idea why that might be, beyond what you just said?

R.B.—Well, I think that much of what is going on in the world (what we call the new antisemitism—not that it’s all that new) has got long roots. After the Holocaust, that anti-Jewish attitude went into abeyance, people were less willing to express it, but in the last few years it has come back up to the surface with a vengeance we could say. There is an accelerator out there today, and that is the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians—the political situation here—the very difficult political situation we find ourselves in, which leads to many grey areas of behaviour on both sides. There are tremendous problems—I mean it is a very difficult conflict here. It has generated a Jew-hatred that is coming from a different direction I would say. That direction has a lot to do with the way the Muslim world—the radical Muslim world of course, not the entire Muslim world, but the radical Muslim world—sees Jews, and sees the west and the conflict here. It has taken a stand against western values, and sees the Jews as the main proponents of western values, and sees them as the oppressors of the Palestinians by only focussing upon one aspect of what is going on here. This view has been adopted in may places in the world, and that has filtered into many places. So we see in many countries—including Canada—antisemitism coming either from immigrants from Islamic countries, or those who identify with them and the Palestinian cause. We see that. And this has joined forces with other antisemitism that’s out there—the Neo-Nazis, the Holocaust deniers, the radical right and the xenophobic, racist radical right. So you have the strangest of bed-fellows in all of this antisemitism that’s going on. You have people that on the one hand think that Arabs are inferior, and on the other hand they are joining protests against Israel, because they have a common cause.

F.A.—One other thing that I would like to get your reaction to. This film, The Passion of Christ by Mel Gibson. The fear was that it would cause anti-Semitism, that it would be a problem for society. What is your reaction to that?

R.B.—Well, again, one of the oldest clubs that was wielded against the Jews—if we can use that terminology—was that the Jews were accused of deicide. Steps by the Catholic Church taken in the 1960’s say that this was no longer a tenet of the Catholic faith, that this was no longer true—to accuse the Jews of deicide, but it was a very strong libel that was used against the Jews, and not only among the Catholics, but many Christians throughout the world have held the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus over the generations. And so this is a very, very powerful claim.

Gibson’s movie—I have not seen it—I’ve only read about it and heard about it, but apparently it shows Jews acting in such a way as to further the death of Jesus. He portrays Jews in a very stereotypical way from
decide that another group B’s existence is dangerous and decides they want to wipe them out.

The fact that, still today, Jews are at the centre of something that is fermenting around the world—this anti-Semitism we are talking about, and that’s still there—makes it possible that somebody could arise who would want to organize and carry out acts against the Jews. I think that—especially in the radical Islamic world—we see people who are talking real violence against Jews. And we know that they are capable of massive violence. We know what happened in New York (9-11), in Spain and in other places. It seems that this same group, an ideological kindred, are behind these things.

Also, we need to remember that the Jewish situation today is very different from what it was in the 1930’s and 1940’s. One of the great problems was that as the Holocaust was brewing, the Jews really had no place to go, openly. The fact that there is a State of Israel is a tremendous difference here. It also means that someone could target the State of Israel for destruction—it’s a dual-edged sword of course, but there are differences. I think we have to be very careful about moving from desecration of graves to another Holocaust, because it doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s going to go from that step to this tremendous step on the one hand. On the other hand we shouldn’t turn a blind eye to desecration of graves. It doesn’t have to lead to another Holocaust for us to have a big blinking red light here—and say, This is wrong, and you shouldn’t be doing these things.

I think though that we have to recognize that many different people see this movie and they come to it with very different baggage. Not everybody in every country sees it the same way, and within a given country not everybody will see it the same way. So it doesn’t mean—and I don’t think it’s true that every person who sees this movie is going to come out and want to perpetrate some horrors against Jews. I think that it would be wrong to say such a thing. But that it might bring some people, somewhere, to that, is a terrible possibility. But more than that it might strengthen some anti-Jewish beliefs that people have and especially in this era when we see a growth in antisemitism. It is very problematic. It is a very problematic thing to come out with a Hollywood movie that millions of people around the world will see—and this could be an accelerator or add to, or bring something terrible to happen. We know that movies have a great influence on people.

F.A.—: One last question Rob. The worrisome thing is, where does all this lead? As to whether there could be another Holocaust, when you see these things starting to take root in a society. What’s your take on what all this may lead to?

R.B.—: Well, I’m very reluctant to talk in terms of another Holocaust. Although I’ve spoken about this for many years now. I’ve been teaching and studying and lecturing about the Holocaust for just about a quarter of a century. So I think I’ve said this many times, that once there was a Holocaust there can be another Holocaust, because it is a blueprint. It might be different—and it doesn’t necessarily have to include Jews. Another group A could decide that another group B’s existence is dangerous and decides they want to wipe them out.

The fact that, still today, Jews are at the centre of something that is fermenting around the world—this anti-Semitism we are talking about, and that’s still there—makes it possible that somebody could arise who would want to organize and carry out acts against the Jews. I think that—especially in the radical Islamic world—we see people who are talking real violence against Jews. And we know that they are capable of massive violence. We know what happened in New York (9-11), in Spain and in other places. It seems that this same group, an ideological kindred, are behind these things.

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Men are often known for the work that they have done and are famed for. Men like William Tyndale (who translated the Bible into English, and who lost his life for his belief), are an example and an exhortation to us all. Yet to enter into the mind and feeling of such people who lived over 450 years ago is an experience in itself, and one that we can obtain through a reading of their words written against the dangerous and hostile background of those times.

Much of this material has been preserved in the published works of John Foxe. His well-known Foxe’s Book of Martyrs is a severely abridged rendering of his Acts and Monuments and gives but a smattering of the detailed information presented in his much larger work. Those who criticise the Book of Martyrs are often unaware of the massive amount of documentation given in the full work.

From the many items recorded by Foxe, the one reproduced opposite will interest Bible Magazine readers because of some of the beliefs expressed in this “Last Will and Testament of William Tracey of Toddington in Gloucestershire.” He clearly did not understand the whole Truth, but was among those who were exposed to a widening Bible knowledge at this time.

In the name of God, Amen. I, William Tracy of Toddington in the county of Gloucester, esquire, make my testament and last will as hereafter followeth: First and before all other things, I commit myself to God and to his mercy, believing, without any doubt or mistrust, that by his grace, and the merits of Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of his passion and of his resurrection, I have and shall have remission of all my sins, and resurrection of body and soul, according as it is written, I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh shall see my Saviour: this my hope is laid up in my bosom (Job 19).

And touching the wealth of my soul, the faith that I have taken and rehearsed is sufficient (as I suppose) without any other man’s works or merits. My ground and belief is, that there is but one God and one mediator between God and man, which is Jesus Christ; so that I accept none in heaven or in earth to be mediator between me and God, but only Jesus Christ: all others to be but as petitioners in receiving of grace, but none able to give influence of grace; and therefore will I bestow no part of my goods for that intent that any man should say or do to help my soul; for therein I trust only to the promises of Christ; ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned’ (Mark 16).

As touching the burying of my body, it availeth me not whatsoever be done thereto; for St. Augustine saith, ‘De cura agenda pro mortuis,’ that the funeral pompes are rather the solace of them that live, than the wealth and comfort of them that are dead: and therefore I remit it only to the discretion of mine executors.

And touching the distribution of my temporal goods, my purpose is, by the grace of God, to bestow them to be accepted as the fruits of faith; so that I do not suppose that my merit shall be by the good bestowing of them, but my merit is the faith of Jesus Christ only, by whom such works are good, according to the words of our Lord, ‘I was hungry, and thou gavest me to eat,’ &c. And it followeth, ‘That ye have done to the least of my brethren, ye have done it to me,’ &c. And ever we should consider that true saying, that a good work maketh not a good man, but a good man maketh a good work; for faith maketh a man both good and righteous: for a righteous man liveth by faith, and whatsoever springeth not of faith is sin, &c (Rom. 14).

And all my temporal goods that I have not given or delivered, or not given by writing of mine own hand, bearing the date of this present writing, I do leave and give to Margaret my wife, and Richard my son, whom I make mine executors. Witness hereof mine own hand the tenth of October, in the twenty-second year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.
There is a timeless message in the writing of William Tyndale, and certainly the power of his words, based as they are upon the Scriptures, have deep relevance to us today. Perhaps especially to England itself, which has turned away from the Bible which Tyndale was instrumental in delivering to that nation.

**Tyndale’s letter to the King, Nobles, and Subjects of England**

I beseech the king’s most noble grace, well to consider all the ways by which the cardinal, and our holy bishops, have led him since he was first king; and to see whereunto all the pride, pomp, and vain boast of the cardinal is come, and how God hath resisted him and our prelates in all their wiles. We, having nothing to do at all, have meddled yet with all matters, and have spent for our prelates causes more than all Christendom, even unto the utter beggaring of ourselves; and have gotten nothing but rebuke and hate among all nations, and a mock and a scorn of them whom we have most holpen. For the Frenchmen (as the saying is) of late days made a play, or a disguising, at Paris, in which the emperor danced with the pope and the French king, and wearied them; the king of England sitting on a high bench, and looking on. And when it was asked why he danced not, it was answered, that he sat there but to pay the minstrels their wages; as one who should say, we paid for all men’s dancing. We monied the emperor openly, and gave the French king double and treble secretly; and to the pope also. Yea, and though Ferdinand had money sent openly to blind the world withal, yet the saying is, through all Dutch-land, that we sent money to the king of Poland, &c.

Furthermore, I beseech his grace also to have mercy on his own soul, and not to suffer Christ and his Holy Testament to be persecuted under his name any longer, that the sword of the wrath of God may be put up again, which, for that cause, no doubt, is most chiefly drawn.

Thirdly, my petition is to his grace, to have compassion on his poor subjects, that the realm utterly perish not with the wicked counsel of our pestilent prelates. For if his grace, who is but a man, should die, the lords and commons not knowing who hath most right to enjoy the crown, the realm could not but stand in great danger.

My fourth suit and exhortation is to all the lords temporal of the realm, that they come and fall before the king’s grace, and humbly desire his majesty to suffer it to be tried, who of right ought to succeed: and if he or she fail, who next, and who third. And let it be proclaimed openly; and let all the lords temporal be sworn thereto, and all the knights, and squires, and gentlemen, and the commons among eighteen years old, that there be no strife for the succession. If they try it by the sword, I promise them, I see no other likelihood, but it will cost the realm of England, &c.

Further, of all the subjects of England this I crave—that they repent; for the cause of evil rulers is the sin of the subjects, as testifieth the Scripture. And the cause of false preachers is, that the people have no love unto the truth, saith Paul, in 1 Thess. 2:1. We be all sinners a hundred times greater than all that we suffer. Let us, therefore, each forgive others, remembering the greater sinners the more welcome, if we repent; according to the similitude of the riotous son (Luke 15). For Christ died for sinners, and is their Saviour, and his blood is their treasure, to pay for their sins. He is that fatted calf which is slain to make them good cheer withal, if they will repent and come to their Father again; and his merits are the goodly raiment to cover the naked deformities of their sins.

Finally, if the persecution of the king’s grace, and other temporal persons, conspiring with the spirituality, be of ignorance, I doubt not but that their eyes shall be opened shortly, and they shall see and repent, and God shall show them mercy. But if it be of a set malice against the truth, and of a grounded hate against the law of God, by the reason of a full consent they have to sin, and to walk in their old ways of ignorance, whereunto, being now past all repentance, they have utterly yielded themselves, to follow with full lust, without bridle or snaffle (which is the sin against the Holy Ghost), then ye shall see, even shortly, that God shall turn the point of the sword wherewith they now shed Christ’s blood, homework, to shed their own again, after all the examples of the Bible.

William Tyndale 1536

**Tyndale to John Frith**

Two have suffered in Antwerp. In die sanctae crucis, unto the great glory of the gospel; four at Ryselles in Flanders, and at Luke hath there one at the least suffered; and all the same day. At Rouen in France they persecute, and at Paris are five doctors taken for the gospel. See, you are not alone; be cheerful, and remember that among the hard-hearted in England, there is a number reserved by grace; for whose sakes, if need be, you must be ready to suffer. Sir, if you may write, how short soever it be, forget it not, that we may know how it goeth with you, for our heart’s ease. The Lord be yet again with you with all his plenteousness, and fill you that you flow over, Amen.

If, when you have read this, you may send it to Adrian, do, I pray you, that he may know how that our heart is with you.

George Joy at Candlemas, being at Barrowe, printed two leaves of Genesis in a great form, and sent one copy to the king, and another to the new queen, with a letter to N., to deliver them; and to purchase license, that he might so go through all the Bible. Out of this is sprung the noise of the new Bible; and out of that is the great seeking for English books at all printers and book-binders in Antwerp, and for an English priest, that should print.

This chanced the ninth day of May.

Sir, your wife is well content with the will of God, and would not, for her sake, have the glory of God hindered.

William Tyndale
TRANSLATION OF TYNDALE’S LETTER WRITTEN FROM VilVORDE PRISON, BELGIUM

I believe, right worshipful, that you are not ignorant of what has been determined concerning me (by the Council of Brabant); therefore I entreat your lordship and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here (in Vilvorde) during the winter, you will request the procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study. And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen.

W. Tyndale

A Letter from William Tyndale unto Master Frith, being in the Tower

The grace and peace of God our Father, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, be with you, Amen. Dearly beloved brother John! I have heard say, how the hypocrites, now that they have overcome that great business which letted them, or at the least way have brought it at a stay, they return to their old nature again. The will of God be fulfilled, and that which he hath ordained to be, ere the world was made, that come, and his glory reign over all!

Dearly beloved! however the matter be, commit yourself wholly and only unto your most loving Father, and most kind Lord; and fear not men that threat, nor trust men that speak fair; but trust him that is true of promise, and able to make his word good. Your cause is Christ’s gospel, a light that must be fed with the blood of faith. The lamp must be dressed and snuffed daily, and that oil poured in every evening and morning, that the light go not out. Though we be sinners, yet is the cause right. If when we be buffeted for well doing, we suffer patiently and endure, that is acceptable to God (Matt. 5); for to that end we are called. For Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps, who did no sin. Hereby have we perceived love, that he had laid down his life for us; therefore we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 4).

Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven (Matt. 5). For we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body; according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto him (Rom. 8; Phil. 3).

Dearly beloved! be of good courage, and comfort you soul with the hope of this high reward, and bear the image of Christ in your mortal body, that it may, at his coming, be made like to his, immortal; and follow the example of all your other dear brethren, who choose to suffer in hope of a better resurrection. Keep your conscience pure and undefiled, and say against that, nothing. Stick at necessary things, and remember the blasphemies of the enemies of Christ, saying, they find none but that will abjure, rather than suffer the extremity... Let not your body faint. He that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matt. 22). If the pain be above your strength, remember, whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you. And pray to your Father in that name, and he shall ease your pain, or shorten it. The Lord of peace, of hope, and of faith, be with you, Amen.

William Tyndale

Above is Tyndale’s letter Written in Latin from his prison cell in Vilvorde Castle.

Tyndale ended his days at Vilvorde Castle in Belgium (right). The letter (below right) was written in the winter of 1535. The influence of his work would be felt throughout the English speaking world for the next 400 years.
The recent statement by the President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that “Israel must be wiped off the map” has reverberated around the world. That the same fanatical regime should be pursuing nuclear technology—and has been reported to be close to having a bomb (operational by 2008), cannot be taken lightly by either Israel or the west. Whilst there is always the temptation to over-dramatize a situation like this (and the media tend to do so), nonetheless in this case we can recognize the very sentiment that the Bible says will precipitate Armageddon. This Iranian crisis has served as an early warning to us of that apocalyptic event.

The statement was made at a conference held in Tehran last October under the title A World Without Zionism. “Western civilization,” said the Iranian President, had “turned the Zionist regime occupying Jerusalem into a staging-ground to decimate the Islamic world... it has no other purpose than this.” But he concluded that the Islamic world could realize the goal of a world without either the United States or Zionism.

Towards Confrontation

How long can the United States continue to keep Iran on the back burner? Leaving aside the political quagmire in which Messrs Bush and Blair find themselves, the War on Terror has not been without its successes. Of those states which were said to be supporting terror just after 9/11, several have been cut down to size. Afghanistan can no longer behave as it did. Saddam has been de-throned and it will be a long time before Iraq can launch scud missiles again at Israel. Libya seems to have had a change of heart—at least for now—and Saudi Arabia is having to mind its ‘p’s’ and ‘q’s’. But Iran is something else.

While the United States talks of sanctions and diplomatic measures, Iran is said to be forging ahead with its development of a nuclear capability. According to a report by the National...
The Israeli newspaper Maariv above carries the headline “The Iranian reactor is Dominating the 2006 Campaign,” it has photographs of the leading contenders for power. The election is due in March 2006.

Council of Resistance of Iran, a covert strategic plan to build missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads is already underway and well advanced. The report (Nov. 23, 05) says that North Korean experts have cooperated with the Iranian regime in the design and building of an underground complex where Shahab and Ghador missiles are currently being produced.

All the work is being carried out in tunnels under the mountains. The report says that Karimi Industries is the most secretive part of the programme and deals with the nuclear warhead.

According to this NCRI report European Union negotiations with Iran have backfired and have shifted Iran’s status from a defensive to an offensive position. “The policy of indecisiveness pursued by the EU 3 has further emboldened the Iranian regime.”

Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said that Israel could not accept the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran: “Israel, and not only Israel, cannot accept a situation in which Iran has nuclear weapons” he said, “We are also taking all the necessary preparations to be ready for this kind of situation.”

According to the Jerusalem Post (Dec. 2, 05), “As time runs out, the potential for a military strike is therefore getting more attention.” “The diplomatic approach has been tried for years, without results, and the deadline is now here” says the paper. It goes on to say: “Ahmadinejad’s genocidal rhetoric has demonstrated the futility of hopes for a stable deterrence relationship with a nuclear-armed Iran. In this framework, a limited military option based on air strikes against major targets, possibly via a combined NATO-type force to demonstrate the international support, is slowly gaining currency. A unilateral Israeli operation would only be launched as a last resort, when every other avenue has failed. But in raising the sceptre of military action, Sharon and Farkash are also telling the major powers that they will have to act firmly and quickly to avoid such a confrontation.”

We can expect that Iran will prevaricate and take steps to avoid a show-down — but who really knows what she is up to?

The Military Option

As Israeli politicians manoeuvre for votes in the forthcoming elections, the military option is bound to be the subject of some debate. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while campaigning for leadership of the Likud Party told the Maariv daily paper: “I will continue the traditions established by Menachem Begin, who did not allow Iraq to develop such a nuclear threat against Israel, and by a daring and courageous act gave us two decades of tranquility.” He told Maariv: “I believe that this is what Israel has to do.” Saying that he would support Sharon if he carried out a preemptive strike, Netanyahu said: “If it is not done by the present government, I intend to lead the next government and to stop this threat. I will take every step required to avoid a situation in which Iran can threaten us with nuclear weapons.” We await Israel’s election results!

But experts are reported as saying that a unilateral military strike against Iran would be extremely difficult because Iran’s nuclear installations are heavily fortified and spread throughout the country. The hope would be that the United States would either lead—or else cooperate—in such a move. As all are aware however, that could open a Pandora’s Box, initiating a full-scale confrontation in the Middle East with (as one British leader put it) consequences that are “too terrible to contemplate.” The United States already has two wars going on—Afghanistan and Iraq—and both Bush and Blair would bring down a political whirlwind upon themselves if they dared to suggest getting involved with Iran militarily. Anything is possible of course. The leaders of the nations are sometimes compelled to do things that they would rather not do—for the real outcome of these things will not be determined by men, but by the God of Heaven.

Iran and the Bible

“Iran,” which is said to mean “Land of the Aryans” is not the Biblical name for this country which is traditionally known by the name of Persia. It was one of the great historical empires, and as Daniel chapter 8 describes, it was defeated by Alexander the Great of Greece and incorporated into his empire around B.C. 330.

When Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was shown in a dream “what shall be in the latter days,” the empires of the world (including that of Persia) was shown as a great colossus of human power. This image, representing the kingdoms of men, would be “broken to pieces together” by a Stone-power representing a kingdom that would be set up by the God of Heaven (Daniel 2, verses 28, 35, and 44). Persia—that is modern Iran—is therefore to be part of a multi-national organization that will
come into conflict with a power from heaven. That is the teaching of the Bible.

That concept is repeated in Ezekiel chapter 38. In this prophecy—which also concerns “the latter days” (see verses 8 and 16)—a massive force involving many countries targets “the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste...” In verse 5 we read:

“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet.”

These three nations are recognizable today as Islamic countries—even if historically their territory was much larger than it is today. But they are seen here to be cooperating with those who come out of the north parts—or as some versions correctly translate it, “out of the uttermost parts of the north” (verse 15, compare the Revised Version). As we have shown in this magazine on several previous occasions, this northern force is to be led by Russia and will include the whole of Europe (both east and west). This replicates the vision of Daniel chapter 2.

Over 150 years ago this prophetic picture was described as follows: This confedercy of Gog in Ezekiel 38 “will include so much of the territory as to entitle his dominion to be represented by Nebuchadnezzar’s image. Assyria proper, Persia, Asia Minor, Armenia, and Mesopotamia; Egypt, Italy, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Naples, Lombardy, Bavaria, Hungary, and Greece—countries all included in the catalogue given by Ezekiel in his prophecy of Gog—and symbolized by the head, breast, body, thighs, legs and toes of the Image. These are at the crisis united together in one dominion, which is broken to pieces as the result of the battle of Armageddon” (Elpis Israel, by John Thomas).

Russia and Iran

According to the prophetic scene described above, Russia will yet dominate a united Europe. The European Union as it exists today will develop into a revived Roman Empire under the autocratic rule of a Russo-Germanic leadership. We expect that this Russian domination will be cruel and ruthless, while claiming to be a protectorship, for Ezekiel 38:7 says: “... be thou a guard unto them.” Persia (Iran) will be “with” them—and so this would lead us to expect cooperation of some kind.

This cooperation is already beginning. It was Moscow in fact, that built Iran’s Bushehr nuclear reactor and provided critical assistance to Iran’s ballistic missile programme. Then, in November 05 Moscow agreed to sell $1 billion worth of weapons to Iran, including up to 30 Tor-M1 missiles and other defence systems their sources as saying that as well as selling the Tor-M1 missiles and other defence systems “the two countries had reached a deal on modernizing Iran’s air force inventory as well.”

In the diplomatic area too, Russia—acting as a key Iranian ally—has resisted efforts to bring Tehran before the U.N. Security Council. Here is the very alliance spoken of over 2,500 years ago by the prophet Ezekiel who recorded the word of the LORD, saying that Persia would be “with them.”

The Persian Bear

As many readers will know, the kingdoms of men which are represented by metals in Daniel chapter 2, are seen again in his 7th chapter—but as beasts. Thus, the kingdom of Persia that appeared as the silver element in the Image is symbolized as a bear in Daniel 7:5, for that is the second beast-empire.

Now as the Image prophecy not only had a continuous and historic application, but also focussed upon the latter days—so also the beast kingdoms can be readily identified in the historic development of the empires. But let it be noted that when the thrones are cast down and the Ancient of days sits in judgement (verses 9 and 10), “the rest of the beasts” (verse 12) still have an existence. The fourth beast and its blaspheming horn is destroyed and given to context.” Even as he spoke the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad group sent one of its suicide bombers into the Israeli town of Netanya where he killed five people and wounded more than 30 others.

This on the same day that the International Atomic Energy Association chairman told the world “that Iran is only a few months away from creating an atomic bomb.”

But according to the Russian Foreign Ministry “all Russian weaponry supplied to Iran is purely for defensive purposes.” The Interfax and ITAR-Tass news agencies quoted their sources as saying that as well as selling the Tor-M1 missiles and other defence systems “the two countries had reached a deal on modernizing Iran’s air force inventory as well.”

Mohammed El Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) believes that Iran is only months away from developing a nuclear weapon. But he has warned against any military strike by Israel. They are also concerned about nuclear fuel and technology falling into the hands of terrorists.
the rest of the beasts have their lives prolonged for a season and time. So they are still alive and well in the latter days. We have seen that Daniel chapter 2 and Ezekiel 38 tell us the same thing.

But during their history these beasts experienced defeat and occupation by others—just as the Persian bear was succeeded by the Greek leopard. If we look at a map of Alexander’s Greek empire it becomes clear that Persia was devoured by the Greeks so that Persian territory was swallowed up by the Greeks.

In Daniel chapter 8, the Persians are symbolized by a ram (an emblem that they used to depict themselves), and the Greeks by a he-goat—see Daniel 8:20-21. In this prophecy however the ram disappears, so that the focus of the prophecy becomes fixed upon a little horn of the Greek goat. Thus we learn that whereas historical Persia is represented by either a bear or a ram, the latter day symbol of Persia is a bear only.

**The Latter Day “Bear”**

Now when the apostle John notes the features of the ten horned Roman beast in Revelation chapter 13, he tells us that it was “like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear” (verse 2). This tells us that the beast has a Greek or Byzantine element (and therefore involves the eastern Roman world, as well as the western division). It also tells us that there is a connection with the Persian bear in some way. If we consider these features that are described by John, we shall soon come to realize that his information corresponds to that of Ezekiel 38, Daniel 2, and Daniel 7. As Ezekiel shows us, it is the mission of Russia (the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal) to prepare and gather the great company of nations that are to be involved in the latter days (Ezekiel 38:7, 13). One of these nations is Persia—that is the Iranian bear.

Now Russia adopted to itself the emblem, the regalia and the titles of the Byzantine power following the fall of Constantinople to Islam in 1453, and so became the dragon of Revelation 16:13. In doing this, Russia becomes the custodian (so to speak) of Byzantium—of the eastern Roman empire. In the same way, by embracing Iran and becoming her guardian, Russia will act on behalf of the Persian bear, and so in effect becomes the latter day bear. Thus, the ten-horned beast of Revelation in its latter day phase, will have the feet of a bear.

This was the conclusion arrived at 130 years ago by John Thomas in his Eureka:

“When John’s Beast of the Sea comes, in fact, to stand upon its four brazen-clawed Bear-feet, its dominion will consist of the Russian Empire, Continental and Mediterranean Europe, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Togarmah, Egypt and Syria. When the throne of the Russian Autocrat is transferred to Constantinople, the Apocalyptic Bear-feet, armed with Brazen or Greek Claws, will also be enthroned there, and be prepared for the work that remains of “stamping the residue” (Vol. 3.p. 192).

It is this fulfillment of prophecy that we now see taking shape in the modern world.

**Iran will be Burnt**

If you play with fire—chances are that you could get burnt, and one way or another that seems to be where Iran is heading. In the first place there will be pressures brought to bear upon her in an attempt to dissuade her from developing a nuclear weapon. If this fails, as it probably will, there is the risk of sanctions being imposed, though here again—and as the Russian newspaper Pravda has already pointed out—“Russia and China are unlikely to support the demand for sanctions.”

Iran must then consider the possibility of a military strike against her—whether by a United States led force, or by Israel herself. It is true that such a mission would be a difficult one, and that the political climate for it in Western countries is not favourable, but as the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said, military capabilities “of course exist.” If Iran considers that the threat of a strike is serious—Russia is standing in the wings with a handy escape route on offer. As Pravda reports it: “The so-called Russian plan being circulated is that all uranium enrichment activities should be transferred to Russia so that Iran could never complete the building of a full nuclear fuel cycle on its own territory. If accepted, the plan will ensure that no weapons-grade uranium is produced by Iran. In conjunction with the IAEA inspections, the plan will be a guarantee of peaceful purposes of Iran’s nuclear activities.”

The plan—so far rejected by Iran—is to Russia’s advantage in that it not only resolves the issue, but maintains close trade and economic cooperation between Russia and Iran. It also averts confrontation with the United States, Israel and the West in general—and most importantly it puts Russia in a commanding position, and able to control this important energy supply to Iran. No doubt there would also be military guarantees so that Russia would in effect become “a guard unto them.”

Either a military strike, or a severe international crisis over the issue (or both), could force Iran into accepting Russia’s deal—and there are signs that Iran is already feeling the squeeze, hence her offer to America of some involvement in her nuclear work. We must expect all kinds of tactical maneuvers as Iran finds herself in a cul-de-sac. But however it turns out, the probability is that Iran will get burnt—and as prophecy makes clear, Iran will not act successfully against Israel unilaterally, but only as part of that massive alliance described in the Scriptures.

**“Be thou Prepared”**

Russia’s “kind” offer to take over responsibility for Iran’s atomic energy is in line with her present policy of seeking control over her neighbours through energy supply. There is no doubt that Russia is currently reaching out to regain her influence in the former Soviet sphere, including Central Asia, Eastern Europe and even Western Europe. The road back to power and influence is via energy.

All natural gas produced in Russia and central Asia comes through Gazprom (the Russian Gas supply organisation). The sources are Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and others who must all transit through Kazakhstan and Russia in order to reach a market. A recent deal between Gazprom and KazMunaiGas means that in effect Gazprom (and therefore the Kremlin) now owns ALL the gas. Energy independence from Russia now becomes virtually impossible for the Ukraine and the Baltic States. Even as we write, the Ukraine has failed to reach an agreement with Russia over the price she must pay for gas!

If Russia can add to her monopoly over gas, oil, atomic energy and military dominance, she will have her clients in a vice-grip from which there would be no escape. It is more than probable therefore that Iran (Persia) will be forced into accepting Russian terms, and in this way be brought into that alliance of nations that will invade the mountains of Israel.

Even if the present crisis comes to nothing, it has sounded a clear warning in the ears of believers. This is the road that will ultimately lead to Armageddon.

The Scriptures have shown us that all human power will be broken upon the mountains of Israel, and the power of Persia will be among them when the prophecy is fulfilled. The God of Israel has declared: “I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek. 38:22-23).
As we scan the daily news headlines and note the drift of current events, it might appear that the most serious threat to all of us comes from Islamic extremism and fanaticism. Certainly that appears to be the main worry for Israel. That this is a threat to the world, we have no doubt—but should this be the real concern?

**Mecca or Rome?**

All roads lead to... Well, when it comes to the great latter day enemy of the Jews and their nation, what does the Bible have to tell us? Judging from present appearances rather than from a sound grasp of Bible prophecy, some will tell us that the Arabs are the ones who will overrun Israel. Others, who have fertile imaginations and follow the popular theories of the day will tell us that the great enemy to be feared is a future “Antichrist” (as per popular Evangelical writers like Hal Lindsey, John Walvoord, Charles Capps or Tim LaHaye). The idea that Rome, or a false Christendom, is the great deceiver to beware of, dropped out of circulation half a century ago.

Leaving aside the futurist view with its coming Dictator-Antichrist (about which we must comment on another occasion), we would remind our readers of the view once held by many—that the latter day enemy of the Jews would turn out to be the pope and his worshippers. In other words, *papal Europe* as it is called. There are solid reasons for believing that this is still the case—but in the minds of many it has been eclipsed by the “Arab” view of prophecy. How realistic, and how *Scriptural* is this “Arab” view?

**Updated and Outdated**

Many have tried to interpret Bible prophecy by focussing upon the contemporary Arab threat to Israel’s existence. During the late 1960’s and 1970’s—and against the background of the Arab-Israeli wars of those days, the prophecies were raked over in the search for an explanation of the immediate situation. Certain lines of interpretation were adopted which—at the time—proved to be very saleable to those who did not know what the Bible really taught. In 1973 when Egypt attacked Israel during the October *Yom Kippur* (day of Atonement) holy day, there were those who expected to see a dazzling appearance of the returning Christ in the sky accompanied by the sound of trumpets!

Despite that “disappointment” (Israel was not overrun and Christ did not return), the idea gained currency with many and was up-dated, while enthusiasts waited for the next round. One hopeful expositor wrote in 1990: “Today the situation is vastly more threatening. Arab enemies of Israel equipped with chemical weapons and nerve gases, now allow Israel no more than three or four minutes notice.”

So hopes became pinned on Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, who announced that “the mother of all battles” was about to begin. Well it did begin—the first Gulf war was launched under the slogan *Desert Storm*, and Saddam was roundly defeated in 1991.

For a while those who advanced the “Arab” view of prophecy didn’t have too much to say. There were a few who still clung to the idea of Israel being overrun by Arabs, but support for the idea began to wane—until Saddam began making threatening noises again.

So the story was up-dated yet again, promising that with the help of *weapons of mass destruction* the Arab world would at last triumph... but it didn’t. In 2003 the Saddam Hussein regime was removed, and an arch enemy of Israel was taken out of the picture. However artfully expositors strung together their Bible verses, they just didn’t translate into reality. One would think that by now the whole scheme would have become suspect, and therefore subjected to a rigorous re-examination.

But no; now we have Iran—written about elsewhere in this issue of *The Bible Magazine*.

**Arab Feet & Toes**

In considering the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image (Daniel chapter 2) our “Arab” expositors find that the feet and toes of this Image are iron and clay “mixed.” Ah! This word translated “mixed,” we are informed, is the word *arab* in the original Chaldee—therefore these are Arab feet and toes!

But we cannot separate the feet and toes from the rest of the Image in this way. The entire structure represents “what shall be in the latter days” (verse 28), and it is to be “broken to pieces together” (verse 35). So this Image must stand in a complete form. The Roman iron cannot be removed out of the picture, for Nebuchadnezzar did not see a legless image broken by the Stone-power.

To take the word “mixed” as evidence for Islamic feet and Arab toes is just not good enough. In fact it brings into question our whole method of Bible study—which ought to be a *reasoning* out of the Scriptures (c/f Acts 17:2). So-called “word-studies” and “echoes”...
Palestinian Arabs are no military match for Israel, yet many still expect Israel to be overrun by Arabs.

38 to Islamic countries, but this is a constraint which any open investigation will not bear. It is the historian Josephus who in speaking of Gomer (verse 6) leads us to the nations of western Europe—especially France and Spain where Roman Catholicism dominates.

The picture in Ezekiel 38 is substantially the same as that seen in Daniel 2, but has more detail. It is a multi-national confederacy or coalition led by “Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh (or Russia), Meshech and Tubal” (Tobolsk). As we consider this vast alliance of nations—stretching from Afghanistan to the Atlantic, from northern Africa to the Arctic ocean and across Asia to the Bering Sea, we note that it is composed of Roman Catholic, Greek and Russian Orthodox Christians, as well as Islamic peoples.

As diverse as all these nations are they have one thing in common. They have all manifested anti-Semitism; they have all helped in scattering God’s people, the Jews.

All Nations Gathered

It is the prophecy of Joel chapter 3 which pin-points the issue to be settled:

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land” (verse 1-2).

Now what nations have been guilty of the crimes here specified? Does this apply to only Islamic nations—as some have us think? It would be unjust and partial to say so. In historical terms the “Christian” nations of Europe have displayed a far greater degree of anti-Semitism than Islamic countries. In his Jewish History Atlas (Page 21) Martin Gilbert writes: “Under Muslim rule the Jews found greater toleration than under Christianity... There were nothing like the frequent massacres and expulsion which were the curse of Jews living in Christendom.”

Yet in interpreting this prophecy of Joel 3, there are those who limit this gathering of nations to Arabs. On the basis of verse 12 we are told that it is only the nations “round about” who are involved—i.e. Israel’s Arab neighbours. But it says that these nations have been gathered round about—they have been brought there (verses 2, 9 and 11).

Joel 3:12 states that this crisis will provide a judgement of the nations. In that day the Lord will “plead” (Heb. shaphat, judge) the nations there because of his people and heritage Israel (verse 2; compare Ezekiel 38:22). Both Babylon and Rome took part in this scattering—and their modern counterparts have followed the same path, expelling and murdering Jews in their millions. Who can doubt but that the Eurasian Magog (Germany) will be among these nations to receive the judgements written?

Again, the terms of this prophecy require that both Christendom and the Islamic world will be involved in this conflict in the Middle East, “For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion” (Isaiah 34:8).

Psalm 83

This Scripture is sometimes cited in order to suggest an ‘Arab’ destruction of Israel. Psalm 83 however has an historical basis, yet as a prophecy it cannot be fulfilled until the time comes for the final destruction of Israel’s enemies—for that is what is being described here—read verses 9-18. It refers to the time when Yahweh (the “He who will be”) is “the most high over all the earth.” This has not yet come to pass.

This Psalm may be seen as a prophecy in general terms, based upon an historical setting.
Manhattan in his 1982 book entitled "propaganda is the Vatican. The late author Avro renewed wave of anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli to Jerusalem. Behind the scenes and prompting a wave of anti-Semitism is being seen again and it is some very ugly periods of history. Today that led Europe the opposite side. Their allies supporting one side, and a Vatican-likely to remain that way, with the U.S. and Russia, and the European Union, lending their support to belligerent and extremist Islamic countries is being maintained.

On the other hand we see the Vatican, which opposes her own. Today she has defeated Protestantism. She has defeated atheistic Communism. It now remains for her to somehow overcome—or come to terms with—the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Islam. No doubt a working relationship (though not necessarily total unity) will be established.

A Divided Islamic World

The division of the Arab world today, with moderate Islam on one side and the aggressive fundamentalists on the other, precludes a united Arab front against Israel. We believe that Bible prophecy teaches us to expect this situation.

The moderate Islamic states are backed by the capitalist West—and even trade embargoes against Israel are being quietly dropped by many of them. While the United States is losing interest in Europe and some other parts of the world, the commitment to Israel and to moderate Islamic countries is being maintained.

So the Arab world is a divided one—and is likely to remain that way, with the U.S. and their allies supporting one side, and a Vatican-led Europe the opposite side.

A Coming Conflict

The hostility that arises from opposing religious claims has manifested itself in several different ways over the centuries. One has been the age-old anti-Semitism of Christendom which influenced Europe, particularly during some very ugly periods of history. Today that anti-Semitism is being seen again and it is driving many so-called Christian nations towards an unreasonable and sometimes fanatic opposition towards the modern nation of Israel. Behind the scenes and prompting a renewed wave of anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli propaganda is the Vatican. The late author Avro Manhattan in his 1982 book entitled "The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance" not only saw this coming—he gave reasons why it would happen. He wrote:

"...the Vatican could not and would not tolerate the establishment of an Israel which claimed messianic privileges, or rather, messianic uniqueness and which, therefore, would compete with the Roman Catholic Church as the centre of a future spiritual kingdom...

"The spectre of the creation of such a theocracy has haunted the inner chambers of the Catholic Church from her earliest inception, and is still a dominant fear. Hence her equivocal role in world affairs surrounding the birth and existence of the State of Israel...."

He continues

"In Vatican eyes, therefore, the millenarian yearning for a global Hebrew theocracy represents a deadly threat to the eschatological teachings of the Catholic Church. When translated into concrete political terms, such a view spells not only rivalry, but implacable enmity..."

"A Vatican fundamentally opposed by a powerful Jewish theocracy, therefore, would become not only hostile to Zionism and consequently to Israel, it would seek powerful allies to neutralise both..."

This is the reality behind the scenes today. The Arab nations are an enemy of Israel, and many of them would no doubt destroy the Jewish State if they could—but they have proved to be ineffectual in doing so. The fact is that the pope and his Vatican, while speaking of justice and peace, actually fan the flames of the Middle East conflict. The Bible has told us that it would be so. Rome is the ideological enemy of Israel today, and is the most dangerous. She will not be able to achieve her objective through the Arabs alone however, and will consequently turn to her traditional allies in European Christendom.

When the northern Gog and his “company” come like a storm to cover the land of Israel, many Arab nations will join in the action—but they will never be able to do it on their own. Any interpretation of Bible prophecy that suggests otherwise is clearly false.

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE ARABS?

Humanly speaking, the continuing conflict between the Jews and the Arabs is an intractable and insoluble problem. There are competing claims for Jerusalem to be both a Jewish and a Muslim city. So, alas, we can expect to see even more aggression from today’s Arabs against Israel, focused on Abraham’s Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. But recently things have taken a more sinister turn involving a third element in the struggle, that of the Christian Churches, led by the Pope and the Vatican, but eyed very suspiciously by the eastern Orthodox Church. It seems they could be joined by some other Islamic, but not strictly “Arab” or Semitic, powers such as Libya, Sudan and Iran whilst other Arabs such as Saudi, and the Gulf States, whom many identify with Sheba and Dedan, will be in alliance with a western confederacy described as "Tarshish" (Ezekiel 38:13). Thus we expect to see Arabs, and possibly even the two main divisions of Islam, once again in conflict with each other.

Then what? God will remember his eternal covenant with Abraham and send back Jesus to redeem his people the Jews from their troubles and bring back the rest of them to their land. But what about the “Arabs”? They, too, have blessings in store—indeed it seems that they will be among the first to turn to the glorified Christ at his return and then some seemingly impossible things will happen. The Lord will do what Ishmael’s name means—he will hear them and not forget them. Just as it is difficult to imagine how the Jews will ever come to accept Jesus as their Messiah so it is just as hard for the human mind to conceive of a time when the Arabs will forsake Islam and come to worship the one God Yahweh at the Altar of the Lord.

Isaiah chapter 60 tells us how the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth (both were sons of Ishmael!) shall “come with acceptance to my altar.” Arabs worshipping whom they had called “Allah” in a Jewish temple! Amazing!

But that is not all. “Rivers will run through the desert” (Isa 43:1): they will also bring water from the desert of Tema (Isa 21). “Fir, pine and box trees will grow in the desert and cedars and myrtle trees, too” (chapter 41). There will be joyful singing of praise to God in the “villages of Kedar.” And “The desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose” (Isa chapter 35). “And they that dwell in the desert” (the Arabs or latter-day sons of Ishmael) shall no longer mock the covenant with Abraham but “will bow before the redeemer,” the Lord Jesus (Psa.72). Thus, when God once again hears Ishmael, will the sons of Hagar become truly great.

What a joyful picture the Bible holds out for the future in the Middle East and what a contrast to the hopeless gloom that the news media bring us every day.

Extract from an article by John Ramsden in The Bible Magazine Vol.13 Issue No.4.
ISHMAEL, The Arabs & Bible Prophecy

By Graham Pearce 1981.

Today the term ‘Arabs’ is used loosely of nations that have adopted the Moslem religion. But it is the descendants from Abraham’s two wives, Hagar and Keturah, those who inhabit Arab-ia, who are true Arabs. The twelve princes of Ishmael and the six sons of Abraham by Keturah are listed in Genesis chapter 25. They were sent away into “the east country” by Abraham before he died. Some of the better known names are; Midian, Sheba, Dedan, Kedar, Nabaioth, Duma, Tema. These people occupied Arabia and came under the influence of Mahomet in the 7th century A.D.

The ‘Bible’ for the Arabs is the Koran which Mahomet produced. This is derived from the Bible, and both Jew and Arab look to Abraham as their father. They both accept the Old Testament and the promises in Genesis. There are two fundamental articles of faith in the Koran.

First, it holds the same position as the Jews that God is One and supreme; Arabs both hate and scorn the trinitarian God of Christendom. The second article of faith is best expressed by a quotation:

“The second article of this creed implies a doctrine of God’s relation to His creation, according to which God, having first instructed Adam in divine truth and explained to him his duties, in succeeding ages, as the knowledge of this truth became obscured and men lapsed into unbelief, sent a succession of prophets—Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc.—to proclaim anew the primitive revelation. This series of prophets comprises many familiar names of the Old Testament, and leads through St. John the Baptist and Jesus to Muhammad, ‘the seal of the prophets’ after whom no further inspired teacher is held to be needed. According to this theory of God’s revelation to man through prophets, Muhammad was not the founder of any new religion, and he constantly emphasised the fact that he was an apostle of no new doctrine, and described his own teaching as being the religion of Abraham” (Moslem Knowledge Library, vol XVII “The Islamic Faith”, Benn).

One realises from this brief description of the original Muslim faith, that Moslems and Jews are closer together than Christians and Jews.

Ishmael, the prime progenitor of the Arab people was blessed by God because he was a son of Abraham: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation” (Gen. 17:20). In contrast with Ishmael, Esau (Edom) had no blessing of God, and has disappeared as a nation. The area occupied by Edom is now part of Jordan.

In the future we anticipate the descendants of Ishmael will be subject to Israel. If the boundaries of Israel then extend to the East Sea (the Persian Gulf), all these people of Arabia—Midian, Kedar, Duma, etc.—will be subject to Israel. They will fulfil the words concerning Ishmael, “He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” (Gen. 16:12). A prophecy in Isaiah indicates that these people will be among the first to submit to Christ. In the first part of Isaiah chapter 42 the redemptive work of Christ in his first coming is clearly set out: “I Yahweh have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles.” His work was to “Open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” The last phase is expressive of resurrection—to bring out of the prison house of death. See also Zechariah 9:11. With Christ’s return and resurrection, the time has come for the next verse: “I am Yahweh: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” This will be Christ’s challenge to the world. Now we come to the part that interests us at the moment. God declares he is speaking of new things before they come to pass. And the first items mentioned are verses 10 and 11:

“Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down before him: all nations shall serve him.”

May events in the world so move that soon all nations will be blessed in their new king.

“The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war.”

This will be Christ manifesting his power at Armageddon in the land of Israel.

Psalm 72 confirms what we read in Isaiah. Verse 8 reads:

“They shall possess the wilderness, and the cities thereof shall be habitable; the wilderness shall rejoice, and flourish; they shall be exalted. The desert and the wilderness shall be glad, and the desert cities shall rejoice: they shall be like the grass of the field, and be like the flowers of the field; it is the hand of the Lord our God that reviveth the work of the Lord’s hand. So the first mentioned are those that dwell in the wilderness. Jordan today occupies the area of ancient Moab and the region of Arabia Petra. Isaiah chapter 16 refers to “the land from Sela (margin Petra) to the wilderness. Jordan today occupies the area of ancient Moab and the region of Arabia Petra. Isaiah chapter 16 refers to “the land from Sela (margin Petra) to the wilderness.”

This sketch of matters relevant to the Arabs, past and future, may help us not to consider it too surprising if some truce is agreed between Israel and Arabs. This agreement will be Christ manifesting his power at Armageddon, and calls on them to respond to the needs of Israel in their time of distress, just before the extortioner is at an end. So, from these Scriptures it is fairly clear that those in the Arabian peninsula will accept Christ, even before those in Israel are delivered.

This sketch of matters relevant to the Arabs, past and future, may help us not to consider it too surprising if some truce is agreed between Israel, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

May events in the world so move that soon all nations will be blessed in their new king.

“Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen, and Amen” (Psalm 72:18-19). From Milestones 1981.
In recent years the world has witnessed a disturbing revival of Satanism, witchcraft and the like. Belief in the supernatural power of evil is far more widespread than is generally supposed. The practice of Satanism is confined to small groups, but the belief itself runs through society today and brings a corruptive influence that ought to be contested. First because it is false, and secondly because it actually brings moral corruption.

Giving apparent authority to the belief in Satan and demoniacal spirit beings, the orthodox church is seen to engage in the practice of exorcism. The exorcist presumably believes in the existence of these evil or "lost" spirit-beings as much as the people who are said to have been overcome by them—hence the popular conclusion that they do actually exist. But not only does the orthodox church support this belief, most minority sects do so too. With the exception of perhaps only one group, the whole denominational spectrum of Christendom gives various degrees of assent to the belief in one or more evil spirit-beings.

The result of this belief can only be described as alarming. One can read tragic reports of young people who experiment in the arts of Black Magic, wizardry, witchcraft and other forms of spiritualism. We must realise that without a belief in the supposed existence of evil powers, these tragedies would not occur. The belief is the basis for the experiment in the first place, it is like the child who writes to Father Christmas—he only does so because he believes in him.

As we shall demonstrate, such beliefs belong to the pagan past, and whilst these myths may be referred to in the Bible, they form absolutely no part of its teaching. Biblical Christianity is directly opposed to these ideas and cannot be harmonised with the concept of opposing supernatural forces—whether the opposition comes from a single Devil, or from a multitude of demons, elves, goblins, nymphs or whatever else. The only opposition to God which the Bible reveals is that which comes from mortal man—and this is only permitted because God has given man the free choice of service or rebellion. Whilst such opposition remains confined to mortal men—which it always will do—it presents no real challenge to the omnipotence of the Creator, in whom it is wise to place all our confidence and trust. It is therefore in support of this fundamental teaching of the Bible—God's omnipotence—that the article before you is written. To put the case in the briefest possible terms: The belief of Bible Truth is the remedy for evil.

Omnipotence Versus Dualism

The Bible reveals God as the supreme, Almighty, and Omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, and of all that is therein. The Apostle Paul describes Him as "the blessed and only Potentate" or only One that is Powerful (because He is the source of all power—Psalm 62:11); "the King of kings and Lord of lords who only hath immortality" (though He does bestow it upon others as a gift)—1 Timothy 6:15-16. This repeats what we find in the Old Testament where God declares: "Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any," (Isa. 44:8). This absolute Sovereign is presented in the Scriptures as being the incontestable Master of all things.

Take two sample passages:

"There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Prov. 21:30).

"...He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan 4:35).

It is with this clear declaration of God's omnipotence that the concept of dualism is totally incompatible. Is it possible, we may ask, that the Almighty would tolerate an evil rival to plague and seduce His creatures all down the centuries? The Christian should face the issue...
involved: Either God is Omnipotent as the Bible reveals Him to be, or He is engaged in a dual supremacy with some opposing power of evil—a devil—which to some extent succeeds in frustrating His purposes. It is all very well for some to point out that God will win victory over his opponent in the end—this does not alter the issue before us, nor does it harmonise the doctrines of Omnipotence and Dualism.

All power is of God says the Bible; hence, if there are any opponents to Him, such as devils, demons, or wicked spirits, they could only exist with His permission, for He is παράγοντας των πνευμάτων “Father of the spirits” (Hebrews 12:9 c/p Emphatic Diaglott). In this way then, the Bible refutes Dualism by its teaching of God’s Omnipotence. It renders the concept utterly incompatible with Scripture—for whatever spirits may exist, they can only do so as subjects of the Divine will—as it is written, “... of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire... Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:7, 14).

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” (Psa 103:19, 20).

These are all subjects, not opponents.

The History of Dualism

Since the time that Eve espoused the false theory enunciated in Genesis 3:4-5, mankind has had a deep belief in some form of spirit existence which continues after death. The lie recorded in Genesis was:

“Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

The origin of this lie is something that we must return to discuss presently, but let it be noticed here what the lie was. It promised Eve that she and her husband would not die in fact, but that they would become “as gods” knowing both good and evil.

Eve swallowed this venom, and in so doing poisoned the whole human race—that is the substance of the Genesis account.

From this beginning it is remarkable to notice the esteemed position occupied by the serpent in ancient civilisations. It was worshipped enthusiastically in Egypt where it was frequently worn as a head-dress by Pharaoh. It was also said to have had protective attributes. In fact the more one learns of the ancient myths the more remarkable the role of the serpent is seen to be in light of the Genesis record. Often it is associated with healing powers—and, as in the following extract from The Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology, it is even connected with restoring the dead!

“The medical career of Asclepius then began. With his miraculous cures he soon earned immense renown. He even succeeded in restoring the dead to life, thanks either to Gorgon’s blood which Athene had given him or to the properties of a plant which a serpent had told him about” (Page 186).

It is truly remarkable that the theme of Genesis chapter three should appear in this distorted fashion among the ancient myths. Even down to our own day the link between the serpent and medicine can be seen in the emblem of Medical Associations.

The point here is that there is abundant evidence that the Genesis theme was widespread among ancients, and that the result is that men responded to it just as Eve had: They believed the lie. Not only did they believe the lie and worship the serpent, but they thought that they would become “as gods” at death! Even the pseudo-Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul owes its origin to this lie—though it is not our subject to demonstrate that from the Bible here.

From a belief in the human immortal soul, the concept of inferior gods developed. They were first seen as becoming protective, or guardian spirits—very similar to the Roman Catholic “Guardian Saints” who are supposed to be the exalted souls of men and women. But if these souls of the dead brought protection and good fortune—who was responsible for the evil? So it was that the supposed spirits of evil men and women—or those who remained earth-bound—had a part to play in the pagan myths.

To demonstrate this process of development consider the following extract from the Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology (Pages 64-66). It is somewhat lengthy but makes the relevant points:

“The Genii. Inferior to the gods but nevertheless participating in their nature and sharing certain prerogatives with them were the genii, the utukku. They were divided into two groups, the good and the evil. Even more than the gods they played a major role in the daily life of men.

“...of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire... Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:7, 14).

Above: A Babylonian “Genii” (Genie) or demon. Such spirits were supposed to be the souls of the dead. There were thought to be good “guardian” spirits and evil spirits—the demons. This ancient superstition has persisted and variations of it are still found today.
the Old Testament Scriptures where they are termed “devils” in the A.V. For example, in Leviticus 17:7 we read:

“And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring.”

The Hebrew word for “devils” in this passage is interesting. It is the Hebrew “sair” meaning “Hairy one, kid, goat” (Young). The Revised Version translates it “the He-goats” and in the margin gives the alternative rendering “or satyrs.” Thus, the passage may be rendered: “...they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto satyrs.” But what is a satyr? The Oxford Dictionary states:

“Satyr,—One of the half-human half-bestial woodland beings attached to the train of Bacchus.”

This same word appears again in a passage about the apostate king of Israel, Jeroboam:

“And he ordained him priests for the high-places, and for the devils (satyrs), and for the calves which he had made” (2 Chronicles 11:15)

There is thus no doubt that the Biblical “devils” of the Old Testament referred to false gods—and in the two passages above, specifically to the satyrs or genii.

For additional evidence that the Old Testament “devils” were false gods, compare the definition given in Deuteronomy 32:16-17. Also Psalm 106:35-38 where they are defined specifically to the satyrs or genii.

But the historical development does not end there. The Babylonian genii, the satyrs, were the inferior gods. In the mythology of ancient Persia we meet them as the Daevas, or demons. It was here in Persia that the teacher Zoroaster really forged the concept of Dualism. The precise date of Zoroaster is not known, but he certainly appeared many centuries B.C., and some put him as far back as 1,000 B.C. His system of belief is briefly stated by Larousse Encyclopaedia (page 330):

“The creation of good principles by (the god) Ormazd and of bad principles by (the god) Ahriman, then the rivalry of these two powers, and finally the victory of Ormazd, is a cosmological myth which is strictly Zoroastrian and even more Sassanian.”

Gibbon also, in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (chap. VIII) comments:

“The great and fundamental article of the system was the celebrated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and injudicious attempt of Eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil with the attributes of a beneficient Creator and Governor of the world.”

Persian Zoroastrianism is thus the ancestor of Dualism. For him, the god of evil (Ahriman), was the prince of demons, and was engaged in a supernatural duel with the power of good. This philosophy soon became widespread, and other nations soon adopted it into their systems—and among them was the Jewish nation. The following is extracted from the section on “Demon” in Encyclopaedia Brittanica:

“...by considering one or two cases of supposed ‘possession.’ The following case, recorded in Acts 16:16-18, is of particular interest.

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”
The key is found in the phrase “a spirit of divination.” If we consult the marginal note in either A.V. or R.V. we will see the literal translation—“A spirit of Python.”

Python, in Greek mythology was the name of the Pythian serpent or dragon, dwelling in Pytho, at the foot of mount Parnassus, guarding the oracle of Delphi, and slain by Apollo. Later the name Python was transferred to Apollo himself. This name was then applied to diviners or soothsayers, regarded as inspired by the god Apollo.

Now did the Apostle Paul believe in either Apollo, Python, or their inspirational powers? We have seen already from 1 Cor. chap. 8 that he certainly did not believe in the existence of such deities. To Paul and other Christians, they were nothing in the world! In treating the case as he did, Paul not only cured the poor girl of her mental illness, but openly demonstrated that the power of Jesus Christ was superior to that of the heathen gods. This may seem somewhat strange to the modern mind, but to a pagan of those days it meant the defeat of the heathen gods. This may seem distorted reasoning—as would be expected from someone like that. Thirdly—and this is important—the sick man obviously believed himself to be possessed by many of the inferior evil gods, and called himself Legion, because of a confusion existing in his mind about a band of the Roman army—he thought that a Legion of demons were in possession of him!

Now from the three records it will be noticed that there was more than one sick man involved—Matthew says there were two of them—so that the expression “they” (Luke 8:31) refers to the men rather than the demons. Nonetheless, another point to remember is that when mentally sick folk said anything it was attributed to the supposed spirit.

“And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered” (Luke 11:14).

This passage shows the sense in which the spirit talked—it was really the afflicted person. So that it would be as usual in those days to say “the demons besought him” as, for example, we might say today that a man’s remarks are “lunacy.” We do not mean that he is literally effected by the moon! Similarly our use of the word pan-demon-i um does not imply a literal belief in the demon Pan. These are just common expressions in the ordinary vernacular. Such is the case in the Scriptures before us—it is quite an acceptable mode of speech.

What we have in the case of Legion, therefore, is two mad men being approached by Jesus in order to heal them. They were obviously frightened of the Lord and pleaded that he should do them no hurt (“Torment me not” Gk. basanizo; distress, harm, torture). Luke tells us of the reason for such alarm (verse 29), which was that on previous occasions, when severe attacks came over them, they had been bound with chains and fetters—and Luke’s context indicates that they were afraid of what Jesus might do. They were not now in one of their rages, hence their pleas, “art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29)

It was at this point in the conversation that the rambling confusion broke out. Fearing what Jesus would do, the poor creatures pleaded with him to send their sickness into the swine (otherwise the “demons” might return again), which he did. After this we find the healed man “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind” (Luke 8:35).

When all the evidence is considered, it is surely wrestling Scripture to insist that it teaches the literal existence of wicked Genii. To be Continued
As nations of the world are drawn into the Middle East, the Truth of the Bible cries out...

By Don Pearce

RUGBY, UK.

In the last Update we took a step back and looked at the reassuring way in which Bible prophecies concerning the nations associated with Gog (Ezekiel 38) were on course for fulfillment. We saw that nations listed some 2,500 years ago as Gog’s companions, are indeed today friendly to the latter-day Gog—Russia. Truly the God we have come to know is a great and a mighty God; His knowledge is not bounded. What He has revealed to His servants through the prophets is a most sure word. What God has promised He will fulfill. It is our pleasure—and to our profit—to search out these things.

Ezekiel also lists nations who, as friends of Israel, will be opposed to this invasion. It is just as exciting to see that in the present situation and we can again observe the remarkable fulfillment of our time-tested understanding of these matters.

One area that we have been closely watching is the position of Britain in relation to the European Union. As part of the merchants of Tarshish and all her young lions (RV) Britain is not part of the latter-day Beast system with its harlot woman rider described in Revelation ch 17. How much longer is she to remain associated with a Europe that is increasingly antagonistic to Israel?

The Frog-like spirits that John saw coming out of the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet, were to prepare the nations for battle.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev 16:13,14).

Where is that battle to take place? Verse 16 tells us! “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

This battle (or as the Greek better translates: “war”) will be on the mountains of Israel. The frog-like spirits are preparing the nations not only of Europe (the kings of the earth) but of the whole world and come to destroy Israel from being a nation. The Lord Jesus does not spell out the detail to John, because these have been revealed through the Old Testament prophets—Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Zechariah and others.

The spirits like frogs—the spirit of the French Revolution, which was a spirit of “Liberty, Equality Fraternity,” brought about a democratic revolution that is still reverberating around the world. President Bush is striving to bring democracy to the Middle East. It is ironic that Israel, which is the most democratic country in the Middle East, with open elections, unfettered opposition parties and a free press, is the focus of so much dislike! Yet this is what we are being told in Revelation 16. The nations are being prepared to wipe Israel off the map. Why do they hate her? Why did an EU poll some 2 years ago put Israel at the top of the list of countries that are perceived as a threat to world peace?

Why Hate Israel?

The people of Europe—and indeed of the world—have their opinions shaped by the media. They reflect what is presented to them in the newspapers and on the TV news bulletins. These are areas that can be subtly influenced. There is one great power that finds Israel an anachronism, and this power has set out to encourage its members to become embedded in the media so that they can use their influences to further its aims. This power has had a chequered history. From a position of great influence, so that all living under it had to toe its line or face the consequences, it fell from power. Great was the fall and many wrote it off. But step-by-step it rebuilt its influence. With a claimed worldwide membership greater than the population of any country other than China and India, it had a good base to start from. It perceived that in order to rebuild its power it must work through its members, harnessing their influences to rebuild its own authority. Its aim has unchanged through the many centuries of its existence, wishing to be a worldwide power and to control the lives of all.

We are of course talking about the Roman Catholic Church. Stripped of its supremacy in the 1800’s under the first 6 vial judgments of Revelation 16:1-11, it has successfully reemerged as a strong power. Witness the assembly of the kings of the earth and the whole world at the funeral of John Paul II! This has largely been achieved through the influence of the ordinary members of that church—the lay apostolate. The first World Congress of the Laity was held in 1951, the second in 1957. This is what the then Pope, Pius XII, had to say about this movement. Under the general heading of Guiding Principles of the Lay Apostolate was this paragraph:

Consecration of the World Is Laymen’s Job

“Furthermore, aside from the small number of priests the relations between the Church and the world require the intervention of lay apostles. The consecratio mundi (consecration of the world) is essentially the work of the laymen themselves, of men who are intimately a part of economic and social life and who participate in the government and in legislative assemblies. In the same way, only the workers themselves can establish the Catholic cells which must be created among workers in every factory and bring back to the Church those who have strayed from her.”

The 4th World Congress of the Laity was held in 2000. Just last month the new Pope recalled the message of Vatican II: “...that lay people are responsible for ‘engaging in temporal affairs and... ordering them according to the plan of God.’ The Holy Father reminded the crowd that November 18 will be the 40th anniversary of the publication of Apostolican Actuositatem, the Vatican II decree on the lay apostolate. The success of that apostolate, he said—again quoting the Council document— ‘depends on a robust spirituality, nourished by active participation in the liturgy’” (Catholic World News 14-11-05).

By “plan of God” he was really referring to the Church’s political ambitions!

Under the headline Lay faithful must participate in political life, (L’Osservatore Romano 9-3-05) the author showed the Church’s desire for the laity to be involved in all aspects of political life.

“...a careful perusal of the Doctrinal Note on Catholic booklets on the lay movement...
Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life clearly shows... the obligation, as it were—to put the human person at the centre not only of political commitment and resulting action, but also of the juridical-legislative, institutional, cultural and, last but not least, internal and international religious debate that is going on in our society. This highlights one of the Doctrinal Note’s aims: to show that the political commitment of Catholics is a helpful factor in composing the dialectics between authority and the person, as well as between the international order and national interests.”

Time magazine (7-12-05) had an article headed The Cardinal’s Virtues with the subheading Camillo Cardinal Ruini is not shy about pushing Church doctrine onto the Italian political agenda. It details the ever-growing impact that this highly placed Cardinal has on Italian politics.

Even Mr Bush has well placed Roman Catholics who are able to quietly use their influences. A recent article with the very telling headline—Brains Trust—revealed that “with the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, all five members of the Court’s conservative majority would be Catholics.” It was, it said, an “unprecedented Catholic majority” (The New Republic Online 3-11-05).

Way back in 1949, Guy Emery Shipler the editor of the Churchman magazine from 1922 to 1968, said of the Vatican:

“No political event or circumstances can be evaluated without the knowledge of the Vatican’s part in it. And no significant world political situation exists in which the Vatican does not play an important, explicit or implicit part” (From preface of The Vatican In World Politics by Avro Manhattan).

So it is not surprising to see that the world’s press often reflects the views of Rome. The Vatican has traditionally been hostile to matters Jewish, so it is of no real surprise if this is what we find in the attitude of the media towards Israel. True we have seen visits of the present and previous Popes to synagogues and just last month the Israeli President paid a visit to the Vatican. But the churches have a problem with Israel’s very existence! For centuries they have taught that Israel is finished in God’s purpose, and the church has taken over the promises; the Kingdom of God is the Church they say. Rome is the eternal city, the “New Jerusalem.” Jerusalem is the mother of us all declared Paul (Gal 4:27). Rome claims that position of the mother church and Mary the mother of all the faithful!

For centuries Jews experienced the pogroms of Europe, and were despised and rejected as Christ-killers. With the breaking of the power of the Vatican in the 19th century, the Jews were able to talk about setting up a homeland in Israel. Herzl called the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and fifty years later the State of Israel was set up. The Old City of Jerusalem at this time came under Jordanian control and Israel had a part of the new city as its capital. Israel’s parliament building, the Knesset, was built upon land that is still leased from the Greek Orthodox Church! Then in 1967, the Israeli army retook the whole of Jerusalem and once again the Jews had control of their capital city!

For many years the Vatican ignored this development. Israel was not officially recognised by the Vatican until 11 years ago—and Israel is still struggling to bring the internationalisation of Jerusalem by lobbying their governments. Strong pressure was applied by the faithful in France, Italy, Spain and America. Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, spoke directly with President Truman, and was vehemently critical of America’s support for Israel’s admission to the United Nations. The Holy See campaigned for an acceptance of the Australian proposal that would place Jerusalem directly under United Nations administration, a proposal fiercely challenged by Israel, and opposed by the United Kingdom and America. The reaffirmation of the General Assembly of the United Nations’ desire on 9 December 1949 to internationalise the region of Jerusalem was attributed by Ferrari to the Holy See’s unceasing diplomatic efforts. The Palestine Post reported, ‘Papal Nuncios in almost every UN state visited heads of government with the result that almost identical cables were received by Latin American and other delegations ordering them to support the Australian resolution.’ It is said that New York’s Cardinal Spellman worked hard to keep Jerusalem out of Israeli control by contacting the Papal nuncios in South America, demanding that they urge their home governments to take an uncompromising stand at the UN for the internationalisation of Jerusalem” (From a dissertation entitled Holy See Diplomacy by N. Hercules. 30-9-98).

Although the resolution was passed it was never implemented. An interesting background article to this Australian resolution entitled The International Headache can be downloaded. In the October-December, 2003 edition of the Italian magazine ‘Diritto e Libertà,’ Vittorio Parsi outlined the relationship between the two States under the headline The Vatican and Israel: Policy Ordered More to Balance than Impartiality. As the headline says the Vatican does not claim to be impartial in its dealings with Israel, but was seeking to be more balanced in dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict! Two items were of particular interest.

JERUSALEM

“The strategy of international involvement is the same position sought by the Holy See for the city of Jerusalem, whose annexation to the Jewish state continues to be contested. In this regard, particularly significant were the words of then Vatican foreign minister, Jean-Louis Tauran, when he recalled: ‘The Holy See has always accepted what was set by Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947—which declared that Jerusalem must be the object of special regimes under the auspices of the international community.’ In this way, the Holy See has always taken care to distinguish the territorial aspect (the subject of a bilateral agreement between Israel and Palestine, on the basis of the international resolutions and conferences held in Madrid and Oslo) as well as the multilateral aspect deriving from ‘the city’s religious and cultural dimensions.’ For the protection of the latter, Vatican opinion is still that ‘a special

Avro Manhattan, author of The Vatican in World Politics

Agreement signed then to a completion. Like most nations the Vatican does not accept Israel’s claim to Jerusalem, hence her Embassy is in Tel Aviv. The Vatican stand right from 1947 when the UN was discussing a homeland for the Jews, was that Jerusalem should be an international city.

The Holy Places

“The Post-War Palestine Issue. In order to protect the Catholic Church’s interests in the Middle East, namely the Holy Places of Christianity, the Holy See declared that the best solution would be the internationalisation of Jerusalem. The Holy Places, an area of immense significance to all Christians, would thus be removed from Jewish or Arab control. While the major political powers discussed the issue there was no public comment by the Holy See throughout 1947, and L’Osservatore Romano conspicuously avoided any debate on the matter. Finally Pius XII spoke of the need for ‘an international character to Jerusalem and its vicinity’ in his encyclical In Multiplicibus Curis, promulgated on 24 October 1948.

“In his encyclical Redemptoris Nostri Cruciatius, promulgated on 15 April 1949, Pius XII implored the Catholic world to unite in order to protect the Holy Places, and work for
international guarantees statute acts as the only valid means for future avoidance that one of the parties take exclusive control over the holy city’s sanctuaries and the related heritage while under pressure of political happenings and changes.”

The Refugees

“The fear that the internationalization of the crisis may conceal more than one trap for Israel’s very survival is reinforced by the fact that the Vatican says a return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland is a veritable ‘right’ from all previous wars since 1948. It appears clear that, if accepted, such a statement would spell doom for the Jewish state, even more so when considering that no reciprocity for millions of Jewish refugees from the region could ever be seriously proposed.

“On this specific point, it remains perplexing that the Vatican does not take its own impracticability into consideration and appears much less careful than usual of history’s course of events. One must only bear in mind that if the very same principle were applied to all wars (even limitedly to the twentieth century and Europe), it would mean the repatriation of hundreds of millions of human beings to their homelands, with unimaginable consequences for countries not only of historical significance but whose borders have tended to move over time as in Poland, Germany, Italy and the former Republics of Yugoslavia.”

The United Nations

The UN periodically deals with Israeli-Palestinian matters—the matter of Jerusalem came up again in early December. The Palestinian website International Press Center reported:

“On Jerusalem, the assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 153 in favor to 7 ((Costa Rica, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with against and 12 abstentions that any actions taken by Israel to impose its laws; jurisdiction and administration in the holy city are illegal and therefore null and void.

“That text reaffirmed the international community’s interest in protecting the city’s unique spiritual, religious and cultural character, and stressed that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Jerusalem—which took into account the legitimate concerns of both sides—must include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure freedom of religion and of conscience, and permanent, free and unhindered access of all to holy places.”

During the years from 1948 to 1967, when Jewish synagogues were being destroyed and Jews excluded from the heart of Jerusalem, there was no call for the Moslem power to extend freedom of religion to the Jews! In fact under Israel’s control of Jerusalem there has been far greater religious freedom for all.

With extensive property holding by the Roman Catholic, Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches in Jerusalem, it is not too difficult to imagine the outcry that will be raised when Israel begins to turn back to her Mosaic roots under Elijah’s further work of reformation, as outlined in Malachi chapter 4. The city of Jerusalem is filled with the idols of Christianity, ripe for rejection and destruction!

Europe

So we find a growing anti-Israel attitude in much of Europe. Earlier in the year the Economist (27-1-05) carried an article headed "Always with us?" written on the occasion of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

“The ceremonies come at an awkward time. A report released this week by Natan Sharansky, an Israeli government minister, concluded that "anti-Semitic expression has grown over recent years" and that "the greatest number of events and the most severe attacks occur in Europe."

Another report, from America’s State Department, speaks of "the increasing frequency and severity of anti-Semitic incidents—particularly in Europe."

"...There are, however, signs that the post-war taboo against speaking ill of Israel, or of Jews in general, is eroding, in Germany and in other countries. Some observers fear that social acceptance of anti-Jewish speech is rising. Across Europe, anti-Israel (or, more specifically, anti-Ariel Sharon) feeling is strong: it is often hard to separate this from anti-Semitism, and the first can be used as an excuse for the second."

The Daily Telegraph illustrated how people’s perceptions can be swayed. It reports on a new film being produced by Mel Gibson, a devout Roman Catholic, on the Holocaust. His previous film, The Passion of the Christ, was attacked by Jewish leaders as anti-Semitic. They have similar fears over this new film, especially as Gibson’s father, Hutton Gibson, has repeatedly denied that the Holocaust happened. Holocaust scholars criticise Gibson for failing to disassociate himself clearly from these views.

Britain—a different role!

Britain is to be friendly to Israel, and will oppose those who seek her destruction. Although the BBC is very biased against Israel, and anti-Semitic incidents are growing here, longer term we expect to see a more positive attitude towards Israel as Britain loosens her attachment to continental Europe, which is in many ways an alien world. So what is Britain’s position? Tony Blair set his heart on being at the heart of Europe, but this is not where he should be going! Step by step angelic hands behind the scenes have rebuffed his efforts. As the Daily Telegraph stated, Spending row may end Blair’s EU dreams.

“Tony Blair’s plans for the EU budget were fiercely attacked by Brussels’s leading official last night... The EU Commission president, Jose Manuel Barroso, said he had told Mr Blair that his offer was not acceptable... It is simply not realistic. This proposal is a budget for a mini-Europe, not for the strong Europe that we
need’...His public attack marked a final nail in the coffin for Mr Blair’s dreams that he might become the natural leader of the new Europe, with Britain at its heart” (6-12-05).

His six monthly term as the President of the EU has nearly come to an end without much sign of progress. It would appear that nail after nail is being driven into his Europe-centred hopes.

Britain should quit EU, French sage says. An elderly French statesman offered his kindly advice to his friend Britain thus: —

“Mr Druon, 87, holder of an honorary knighthood for services to Anglo-French relations, said: ‘What Britain and Europe want of the EU is quite different. You want an open market, whereas the rest of us want Europe to evolve as a strong power, not just economically but diplomatically and strategically, too.’

“Mr Druon listed the aspects of Britishness he judged incompatible with EU membership: an ‘umbilical’ link with America; demands for special budgetary treatment; support for Turkish accession in defiance of Europe’s natural boundaries; and stubborn resistance to the Euro.

“Britain, he said, continued to focus its policies on ‘the open sea’. This was a reference to Churchill’s remark, often quoted out of context in France since it concerned wartime events before the Common Market was even thought of: ‘Each time we must choose between Europe and the open sea, we shall always choose the open sea.’

“Mr Druon said: ‘Shouldn’t we draw the consequences and ask whether it wouldn’t be to everyone’s advantage, Britain’s included, for them to leave the EU’s political institutions and take the status of privileged partner?... You cannot stay indefinitely both in and out. If a friend cannot raise this question, who else will dare to pose it?...He told The Daily Telegraph: ‘I am not suggesting that Britain should be chased out of the EU. It must be Britain that looks forward to a modified status.’”

Isolation fever. How Tony Blair may, yet again, follow in Margaret Thatcher’s footsteps

This was the headline in the Economist (1-12-05).

“Britain is becoming more isolated in the EU. This could have profound consequences for both Britain and Europe... For most of the 1980s and early 1990s, Britain’s splendid isolation was not so much a policy failure as a permanent condition of life in Europe. A handbag-toting Margaret Thatcher revelled in her summit clashes. John Major, under pressure from Eurosceptics, accepted isolation. But for Mr Blair, it would not be splendid: it would be a reversal. In his speech to the European Parliament in June, he declared that ‘I believe in Europe as a political project’—something his predecessors could not have said.”

Earlier in the year the International Herald Tribune (9-2-05) carried the headline: Europe’s constitution: The skeptics could push Britain out of the EU. This was before the French and Dutch had rejected the constitution, when the prospect was that Britain might be the only nation to reject it. The point was that it is an “acceptable” matter to think of Britain outside the heart of Europe. It surely is a matter now of how much longer Britain will put up with the shackles that Europe wishes to place upon her.

The Conservative party has elected yet another leader—David Cameron. He has only been in parliament for about 5 years and at 39 is a relatively young man in politics. On the 24th Nov, the Conservative Friends of Israel interviewed him about his attitude to Israel. He came across as very supportive. In answer to the question, “Why should Conservatives be friends of Israel” he replied: —

Cartoon shows Tony Blair personified as the British lion in isolation from Europe

India has purchased in a $1.5bn deal a 2nd hand Russian aircraft carrier that Russia is currently refurbishing. In 2003 she published a blueprint that would transform her in to a “blue waters” navy, (“Blue Waters” is a common maritime term implying deep seas, far away from one’s own shores.)

“The Indian Navy, the world’s fifth largest navy, is a well-balanced three-dimensional force consisting of sophisticated missile-capable warships, aircraft carriers, minesweepers, advanced submarines and the latest aircraft in its inventory. Many of the warships are of indigenous design and have been constructed in Indian shipyards. These ships compare well with the ships of similar capability constructed by advanced countries. The Naval forces are maintained and supported by modern dockyard facilities encompassing state-of-the-art technology. At present the Navy has two major Naval bases at Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.

“After several years of meticulous preparation, by 2003 the outlines of a new operational philosophy of the Indian Navy were becoming increasingly perceptible. This is an operational philosophy whose contours are well suited to the current perception of the Indian Navy—that of a competent, confident, operationally viable force consisting of sophisticated missile-capable warships, aircraft carriers, minesweepers, advanced submarines and the latest aircraft in its inventory. Many of the warships are of indigenous design and have been constructed in Indian shipyards. These ships compare well with the ships of similar capability constructed by advanced countries. The Naval forces are maintained and supported by modern dockyard facilities encompassing state-of-the-art technology. At present the Navy has two major Naval bases at Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.

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Friends of Israel

Britain, America, Australia and India have excellent links with Israel and the Middle East countries of the area. This is what we would
The recent Israeli withdrawal from Gaza reminds us once again of their struggle with the Palestinians for control of the land. Christians as well as Christadelphians have felt an attachment for the land of Israel since the very beginning. In 1849, Dr. John Thomas wrote that the land would be colonized or resettled by the Jews before the return of Christ, and in 1877, Robert Roberts, the first editor of *The Christadelphian*, wrote a booklet called *Prophecy and the Eastern Question* in which he said, “The Eastern Question is not a modern phrase, but it indicates that governments over a hundred years ago were just as concerned about the Middle East as are their modern counterparts.” This statement written 128 years ago is still true today. In its simplest form, the “Eastern Question”—a topic much debated in the 19th century, was this: With the decline of Turkey as a major power, who would fill the vacuum left in the areas where Turkey had formerly held sway? These were principally the Balkans, the Black Sea region, the Levant (or Middle East) and North Africa.

One of the more important areas was the area of Syria, which contained what today is the land of Israel. This was the land which held the ‘holy places’. The suppression of two Jewish revolts in AD 70 and AD 135 meant that many of the country’s major landmarks were either destroyed or dramatically changed by Roman rebuilding. As early as 326 AD, Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine—the first ‘Christian’ Roman Emperor—made her ‘progress’ through the Holy Land with her entourage of bishops and monks designating which were the ‘true’ holy places of Christendom. Once Christianity became the Roman state religion, the Land in which Jesus lived and preached was suddenly a significant place worth visiting. Guided by the local traditions which had grown up since the time of Jesus, Helena looked for the New Testament sites of Jesus’ ministry, but she was determined that they should be the actual locations to the best of her knowledge.

With what was claimed to be a combination of divine inspiration and extensive excavation, both New and Old Testament sites were established, most of which were soon crowned with sacred shrines. Throughout the Middle Ages, and in spite of the sweeping conquest of the land by the forces of Islam in 638, these were the sites which Christian pilgrims sought out after difficult and dangerous journeys from Europe.

Relics from the Holy Land were very popular all over Europe, and many churches were supported by the visits of those who came to see precious artifacts brought back by pilgrims. Charlemagne was apparently the first European monarch to conclude a treaty with an Abassid caliph to protect the ‘holy places’ in the Land. Christian pilgrimage continued until the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in 1009. This gave rise to the obsession of the popes and kings of Europe to recover the ‘holy places’ for Christendom. The Crusades had begun, and great bloodshed both in Europe and the Middle East spanned the next three centuries. During this period, the catholic west excommunicated the orthodox eastern church. When the Ottoman Turks came to power in the early 1500’s, Christian pilgrimage almost stopped. Only the Russians, the leaders of the orthodox east after the fall of Constantinople, were able to support Christians in the Holy Land, both financially and politically.

The division of the church and the right to protect the Christian population brought France and Russia into conflict. King Francis I of France was the first Christian monarch to conclude an actual treaty with the

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**Caliph al-Hakim orders the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009 A.D. It was later rebuilt by Christians following his death.**

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**WAR OVER THE HOLY SEALS AND THE EASTERN**

By Ken Loveridge  PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

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**Expect from the words of Ezekiel 38:13, and to be able to see that reality just at this time in history is a great boost to our faith and in the power of the Word of God, as well as in the angelic control of the nations. Humanly speaking why should say Australia, half a world away from Israel, be such friends. As the Jerusalem Post put it:—**

“Despite the distances involved and the apparent lack of overlapping interests, there seems to be a sort of affinity between Australia and Israel, almost an overlapping destiny. From Friends Down Under” (25-5-03).

For Australia and America there is a Protestant legacy, which, through the Bible, influenced perceptions and attitudes, in contrast to the anti-Semitism of Europe, developed by a “closed” Bible. Australian troops operated in the Middle East in the time of WWI, playing a crucial role in the taking of Palestine, opening the way for Jews to return to their land (See *Bible Magazine* 16:3). They were there in WWII, halting the German advance which threatened the lives of the Jewish settlers. They were at work again in 2003 in Iraq, taking out Saddam’s Scud missiles that posed a threat to Israel.

India is a mainly Hindu country, but has been heavily influenced by British rule in the past. Like Israel it is a democratic country, and she shares a common enemy. Both countries sit on either side the mass of Moslem countries that have spawned so much in the way of terrorism. Israel is a tiny country compared to India, yet she has the technical skills to provide the solutions to many of India’s problems.

**India, Israel Bolster Defense Relations**

India and Israel have been steadily improving defense and military relations in one of the most significant relationships in the Middle East, *Middle East Newsline* 22-1-05.

“India, Israel bilateral trade to touch $2.7 bn this year.”

“Both the countries are cooperating in military technology in a big way,” *Press Trust of India* (15-11-05).

During the Gulf War and since, her ships have patrolled the Gulf area. Why should India be so willing to work with Britain and America in this area? The angelic hands work behind the scenes; God has spoken—the merchants of Tarshish have the young lions along side—and so it will be!

We look forward in glorious anticipation when the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7) will be over. For as the book of Micah triumphantly ends:

> “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Mic 7:18-20).
military actions. Florence Nightingale is still known today for her work in field hospitals caring for the troops with cholera. A force of light cavalry which was almost completely destroyed when it charged the Russian guns became immortalized in Tennyson’s “Charge of the Light Brigade.”

Sebastopol, the most important Russian naval base on the Black Sea remained under siege until June 1855. Tsar Nicholas I died in March, and in December, the allies—with Austria—presented an ultimatum to Russia, and peace was made in Paris in April 1856. As a result, the Black Sea was neutralized, Russia was forced to acknowledge the independence of the Ottoman empire, and her claim to be the protector of the Greek Orthodox subjects of the Turks was denied. Barriers to Russian expansion were erected in many ways.

The ‘Eastern Question’ took a long time to answer, and only after a succession of wars, treaties, conferences and confrontations, culminating in World War I, was this vast region divided up among “the Powers.” Russia extended its influence in the Black Sea and Caucasus region; while Britain, France and Italy had areas “mandated’ to them in the Levant. The British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration were the impetus which brought about the re-colonisation of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State.

If the “drying Euphrates” means less to the present generation it is only because it has been so completely accomplished. We can see the beginnings of the present world order in our consideration of the “Eastern Question” and the outcome of the Crimean War: events which led to the rise of the Balkan States, the unification of Italy, and the unification of Germany. There was a new grouping of powers for war, leading directly to the 1st and 2nd World Wars. The old empires of the nineteenth century came to ruin in 1917-18.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire—which scripture describes as “the great river
When man landed on the moon in 1969 he discovered several things, one being that some of his theories were no more than moonshine! This included his cherished theory of evolution by which he had calculated the earth to be ever so many billions of years old. The footprints seen here show that idea to be wrong.

The theory was that the earth came into being many many moons ago, and all that time cosmic dust particles have been falling upon the surface of both the earth and the moon. One scientist, Hans Patterson, calculated that as this dust comes in at a measurable rate every year, this ought to have produced a layer of dust 20 to 30 meters thick if undisturbed. The same is true for the moon. Also, this dust has a high nickel content - which consequently ought to be in ocean water and in the earth’s sediments. Trouble is, it’s not there! Where is it?

Before the Apollo space missions it was calculated that as the moon was billions of years old, there should likewise be a layer of dust about 22 feet thick there. As the newspaper (top right) reported, Neil Armstrong said “The surface is almost like powder. I can pick it up loosely with my toe.” Footprints were “nearly an inch deep.” Evolution?? It’s a lunatic theory, and it is time it was admitted!