Cover Story PAGES 16.

CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

ISRAEL’S AGENDA FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

A Conference recently held in Jerusalem brought together leading figures in Israeli politics, economy, security establishment, journalists, culture and academic as well as Torah scholars. It was an opportunity for the Bible Magazine team to learn of the concerns, values and hopes of the Jewish nation at a critical time of its history. The Conference also provided an unexpected opening for a witness to the Truth of Scripture.

PAGE 3. John Thomas writes about Mediatorship, a subject of current interest.


PAGE 26. Paul Billington continues the series on “The Origin & Remedy of Evil”.

PAGE 22. David Billington looks at spiritual lessons in the Hebrew poetry of the Psalms.

PAGE 12. Another Milestones update by Don Pearce focuses upon events in Israel.

PAGE 6. Related to our back page feature, the speculations & theories of men are contrasted with the plain and simple testimony of the Bible.

PAGE 25. New light on the Pool of Siloam & the King’s Garden in Jerusalem.


PAGE 5. Dates, events and items of interest to Bible Magazine readers

LOCAL INFORMATION

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”— John 17:17.
The Law is a term applied in the Scriptures to that system of things enjoined by Jehovah upon the Twelve Tribes of Israel through Moses. “The Law was given through Moses” (John 1:17), and hence it is styled “the Law of Moses” not because it originated from him; but because it was transmitted through him as the medium of communication between the Lord of the Universe and the descendants of Abraham in the chosen line of Isaac and Jacob, whom He surnamed Israel, of whom He condescended to become the King. “He gave them a fiery law” (Deut. 33:2), which he caused to be delivered to Moses for promulgation. He did not leave his throne in the light to commune with Moses in his own proper person; for no man shall see Him and live” (Ex. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16); but He imparted his will to the angels of his presence, “who do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word;” and these, as faithful ministers of his pleasure (Psa. 103:20-21), handed to Moses his high, and holy, and just decrees, with all the sanctions of Sinai recorded in “the Book.”

“In the Hands of a Mediator”

Thus “the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator” (Gal. 3:19), who was Moses, occupying middle ground between Israel and the Deity, and bridging the gap between Jehovah and His creature, in which the Decalogue was delivered, which made even Moses quake with fear, they besought Jehovah to speak to them only through the medium of their brother. In making this request they proposed a Mediatorship, and suggested the appointment of Moses to the office. They had acknowledged themselves as Jehovah’s nation, and now they wished that the communication between them should be through an intermediate person with whom they could confer without terror. The proposal pleased Jehovah, who said “they had well spoken what they had spoken,” and their request was consequently complied with. From this time the Mediatorship became an ordinance in Israel. Moses was the first that held the office, in which he officiated as a priest, prophet, legislator and king. After the nation was planted in Canaan, the high priests acted in the character of mediators, being Jehovah’s supreme magistrates over the people, and as the pontificate was always above the kingly office, though many of the kings treated the high priests with indignity. Moses was the only complete representative of a mediator that has yet appeared in Israel. He was Jehovah’s representative in all his relations to the nation. David and Solomon shared the mediationship with Zadoc the high priest, but it was only as kingly, not priestly and legislative representatives of Jehovah. They were mediatorial administrators of Moses’ law; and representative men in the offices they sustained—Jehovah’s representatives, individually representative in their historical outlines of the mediator like unto Moses, who shall hereafter appear as king in Jeshurun.

Through Israel

No other nation besides Israel has received a law “ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator.” The constitutions and laws of the nations have been given to them by evil men who have subdued them; or by men no holier, whom they may have chosen to rule over them. Hence their organizations are evil, and the spirit which actuates them, satanic. The organizations are evil, and the spirit which actuates them, satanic. They are “without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod, and without teraphim” (Hos. 3:4), and the king, prince, sacrifice, image of the invisible God, sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod, and without teraphim” (Hos. 3:4), and the king, prince, sacrifice, image of the invisible God, they will not receive! But, if Israel’s case is forlorn, that of the nations is worse; for while Israel refuses Him who speaks from the right hand of God, the Gentiles, who profess to acknowledge him, pay no regard to what he says. Redemption awaits Israel (Dan. 12:1); but anger and wrath, and sore distress, to all the world besides. How shall this trouble be eschewed?

Salvation in Christ

Escape there is none save for those who obey the truth. The door is not yet shut. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved;” but if you believe not “the gospel,” you cannot be saved. That gospel announces to every man, both Jew and Gentile who believes it, access to Jehovah and his restored kingdom through his son Jesus, on his accession to the mediationship in Israel. The law of Moses was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. But that law as originally ordained has been impaired by the manifestation of some of its antitypes; and being therefore no longer an exact representation of the knowledge of the truth, and incompatible with the nature of things modified by the appearance of the prophet like unto Moses,—it would be as terror-stricken as Israel of old, and cry out, “Let not God speak with us, lest we die!” Never did a people before hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire and live; nor besides Israel has any nation heard him speak at all. Jehovah speaks only to Israel, in Israel, and through them; and if the nations are addressed, it is through the mediation of the tribes; for what Moses was to them, so are they to the world at large.

Mediation being an Israelitish institution, and there being no other between Jehovah and the population of the earth, and it being admitted that no man can come to God save through a mediator approved of Him; it follows, that both individuals and nations can obtain access to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens only through the mediation which pertains to Israel. Now this mediation is in no way practicable on the old basis, that is, through the Mosaic law. Obviously so; because according to that law there is no acceptance except through sacrifice offered in Jerusalem by the priesthood of Levi. So long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, this is impossible; Israel therefore, like the rest of the nations, although they trust in Moses, is as destitute of mediation as though the mediationship pertained to the Chinese and not to them. If blindness had not happened to them, they would certainly see this; for it is written in Moses, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” But what one thing, not to mention all things, do they observe in the letter or spirit of that is written therein? They practice circumcission. But that is not of the law; yet by its practice they become Debtors to the whole law. By offending in the least they are guilty of the whole; for Moses curses every Israelite who continueth not in all. Cursed, then, are they of Moses in whom they trust; yet were they ever so willing to obey him, they are circumstantially prevented.

Alas for Israel! They are “without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod, and without teraphim” (Hos. 3:4), and the king, prince, sacrifice, image of the invisible God, they will not receive! But, if Israel’s case is forlorn, that of the nations is worse; for while Israel refuses Him who speaks from the right hand of God, the Gentiles, who profess to acknowledge him, pay no regard to what he says. Redemption awaits Israel (Dan. 12:1); but anger and wrath, and sore distress, to all the world besides. How shall this trouble be eschewed?

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needs to be amended. This emendation is ordained by Jehovah in the hand of a mediator, as well as the original promulgation of the law.

Moses received it from the angels as the ministers of God; but Jesus, who is greater than Moses, “being a son over his own house,” in which Moses was only a servant (Heb. 3:5-6), receives the amended law direct from Jehovah; for says God, “I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them (Israel) all that I shall command him; and whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” Angels brought the words of God to Sinai, and there delivered them to Moses for him to speak to Israel; but the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended from before the throne, and abode on Jesus. He needed no angels to tell him what to speak, for before the throne, and abode on Jesus. He needed no angels to tell him what to speak, for the Father dwelt in Him by his spirit, and moved his tongue to utterance. “The Father is in me. I speak not of myself; the Father dwelling in me doth the works.” Though that Spirit forsook him when he yielded up his life upon the cross (Matt. 27:46,50; Luke 23:46), it was only till he rose again by its life-imparting energy (Rom. 8:11). The fullness of the Godhead now dwelleth bodily in him; and of that “fullness have we all,” says an apostle, “received, even gift for the sake of gift—χαριν αντ χαριτος—charin anti charitos” (Col. 2:9; John 1:16).

**Coming in Power and Glory**

When he shall depart from “holy ground” to revisit the arena of suffering and reproach, angels will escort him to his kingdom, full of Jehovah’s words of truth and mercy to his people; for “he shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and earth shall be moved. His words shall be the surveyor’s hook that shall delineate the whole earth, and the path shall be cut for the armies of Jehovah to tread. They have to be delivered from those that hate them; and to be impressed with a spirit of prompt obedience and submission to the Moses-like prophet, who is to be the mediatorial representative of Jehovah in their midst for a thousand years to come.

Nothing short of a Sinaitic demonstration will accomplish this; for Israel is as stiff-necked a people to-day as thirty-four centuries ago. The battle of Armageddon and the war which it inducts, with all the attendant manifestations of power and great glory, will inaugurate, with all-subduing majesty, Jehovah’s king in Zion, the hill of His holiness.

The mediatorialship will then have reappeared in Israel under the new covenant, dedicated upwards of eighteen centuries before by the blood of the mediator, who speaks the words commanded of the Father in sending forth the amended law from Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3); not to Israel only, but to the residue of men who then seek after the Lord, and to all the nations called by his name (Acts 15:17). Great, glorious, and free, will Israel then be in the midst of enlightened, obedient, and happy nations. The Kingdom of God, for which Jesus taught his apostles to pray, will have come to Zion, and his Father’s will performed on earth as it is in heaven. As the woman’s seed he will have bruised the serpent’s head, and have delivered his brethren from evil, because the kingdom is his, the power and the glory for ever, amen.

Thus then will the amended law be ordained by Jehovah in the hand of Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant,—even the law initiated by Moses for a single nation; but perfected and adapted to a consociation of all nations, by the prophet like unto him, the future king and lord of all the earth (Zech. 14:9). When that which is perfect hath come, the ordering of things terrestrial will have obtained the permanency of a thousand years, as exhibited in the following descending series.—

**JEHOVAH,**
Lord of the boundless universe; dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man hath seen, or can see and live:

**JESUS**
Jehovah’s High Priest and King over all the Earth on David’s Throne in Zion:

**THE SAINTS**
Associates with Jesus in the enlightenment and government of the world:

**LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD,**
Priests to Israel and the Gentiles who come up to worship Jehovah at the Temple in Jerusalem:

**TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL**
The Kingdom of God, or Jehovah’s First Born of the many nations constituted His sons in Abraham, their federal paternal chief:

**TEN NATIONS**
The Inheritance of Jehovah’s king to the ends of the earth.

Herald of the kingdom and Age to Come, 1853, page 5.
Northern Prophecy Day October 28th. to be held in York. For information contact Philip Jones. Phone 01226-286026.

South Wales Prophecy Day. June 10th. For information contact Brian Woodall 01269 596 973

HOUSTON TX. PROPHECY DAY. SATURDAY October 14th. For information contact Shannon Strickland (281) 794-9932.

BRANTFORD PROPHECY DAY Saturday November 4th. For information contact Gary Smith (519) 758-0362.

PROGRAMME THEME: “The Evidence of Things not Seen”

In the following locations:
Saturday April 22 Invercargill
Tuesday April 25 Christchurch/ Dunedin
Saturday April 29 Wellington
Saturday May 6 Auckland
For information contact David Archer
Phone: 04-232-6192
david.archer@xtra.co.nz

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THE BIBLE MAGAZINE VOL. 19 ISSUE No. 2 Page 5
EDITORIAL:

For some time now, The Bible Magazine has devoted its back page to the subject of Creation and has been a testimony against the theory of evolution. This has sometimes taken a light-hearted approach even though we recognize that the issue is a serious one. The approach has been simple and direct, placing before our readers various avenues of evidence which, in our view, lead very obviously to the conclusion that the Bible is true and the evolutionary theories of men are—to put it bluntly—untrue. As the apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:20, “...the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made... so that they are without excuse.”

A Matter of Revelation

Our approach in this back page feature has not been technical or even “scientific,” and that is because these things are not proved by a string of scientific arguments produced by the wisdom of men; they are matters of revelation. As God says in Job 38:4 “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou has understanding!” To hear some men talk of their evolution, you would think that they were there on the spot to witness it all happen at the very beginning—but they were not. All their words are mere speculation—they tell their dreams and create shadows of what might have been. There is only one authority in the matter—and He was there, and He has told us all that we need to know.

When we open God’s Book, the very first thing that we are asked to believe is this: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...” As to how long He took to do it, or by what means, and why—are all questions to which God Himself has provided straightforward answers through his word. The Bible is His revelation to mankind and we can either believe it or not. The revelation is a fact, and we can read it, we can understand what the words mean—but whether we are humble enough to accept the truths that are imparted to us is an individual matter.

CREATED these things...” Let us then hear Him!

“In Six Days”

Moses wrote in Exodus 20:11, “...in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” Moses tells us that “God spake all these words” (verse 1). It is God who tells us through Moses, that He made these things in six days. And again “the Lord spake unto Moses” in Exodus 31:17, saying: “...for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.” So that is twice!

Modern man in his imagined wisdom cannot accept this statement—and so Jesus says: “But if ye believe not his (Moses’) writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:47). The word of God is so constructed that we must either believe it or not.

And so it is that some begin to re-define a day. Not satisfied with one day being equivalent to one rotation of the earth (as commonly understood) our wise friends tell us that the days of Genesis chapter one lasted for millions of years (or more). It is true that Peter says “that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8), but there is no way that the context here gives us license to make a thousand years into a million or a billion! We cannot stretch the word of God in order to fit some individual’s theory. The apostle Peter

TIME MAGAZINE AT WAR!

Look at the expanse above, look at the stars and at the marvel that our natural eyes can see—or as Isaiah 40:26 expresses it: “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath...
calls that kind of thing “wresting” Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

Genesis 1:5 states that “the evening and the morning were the first day,” and each of the creative “days” are similarly described, up to the seventh. This pattern is the basis for the sabbath law, for as Exodus 20:11 tells us: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

We must take the Scriptures in context. If we consider the work of the 4th day (Genesis 1:14-19), we see that the idea of night and day are involved with the lights that were set in the firmament of heaven. These two great lights were to rule over the day and the night—that is one rotation of the earth, after which we are told, “And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.” This, clearly, is a literal day—this was the Sabbath day. Hebrews chapter 4 does not consider Sunday as the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Is it possible?

Geologists frequently interpret what they see as being the product of long ages of time. The formation of cliffs on a sea-coast are seen as a result of the waves of the sea pounding upon the shore and gradually breaking up rocks, taking slices from a hill and so producing cliffs, boulders and—in time—grains of sand. But that is largely a theory. True, it is that this process does occur, and can be observed as happening now, but we cannot therefore assume this to be the way it has always been. Is it possible that these things could have been created in a short time as the Bible says? There are reasons for thinking that it was so—and one of those reasons is seen in the birth of the island of Surtsey in 1963. In the preface to the book Surtsey by Sturla Fridriksson, the following description is given: “...a whole island had been created, and an extensive area of land had been formed from the primary rock. From the depths of the ocean there had been built up a broad base, on the top of which was an island with mountains and craters, lava flows, cliffs, gentle slopes, flat sandy beaches and withered coastal strips with worn, rounded pebbles and boulder rims that gave the landscape an ancient appearance.”

This event alone does not prove that geological features appeared instantaneously—but it does demonstrate that it is possible. It is when we put such things alongside Scripture however that the truth shines out. For example, look at Psalm 33:6-9: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.”

As with Surtsey, a landscape may well have “an ancient appearance,” but that does not mean that it really is ancient. God has created it that way, establishing the important principle that our trust should be in the word of God—and not in appearances.

How was it Done?

The Psalm quoted above has answered that question—“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made... For he spake, and it was done...” This is in harmony with the Genesis account—“And God said... and it was so.”

This teaches us of the tremendous power in God’s word. The words of God are not lost in the air; they accomplish that which he pleases, and they prosper in the purpose for which they are sent (Isaiah 55:11).

So it is then, that to say, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made,” is the equivalent of saying “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by his understanding” (Jeremiah 51:15).

This power or energy is the basis of all material creation. Several years ago a writer for the U.K.’s Sunday Telegraph made that point as follows: “The building-block of matter and ultimately
of the universe is the atom. No one has ever been able to define the energy that binds the atoms, but it is this intangible something that holds the form of the universe. If, by some magic, the energy of the atom were to be switched off, the whole of material creation would vanish, for the atom has no material substance within itself. Only when it is built into molecular structures do we arrive at the stage of matter and solidity.

“This is the underlying reality of the universe we inhabit and of ourselves. Can we expect to probe deeper? We look for the edge of the universe; but the galaxies continue on as far as our finest instruments can penetrate.

“What is the energy that sustains the universe, and where does it originate?

That journalist should have read Jeremiah 51:15 (or Jeremiah 10:12). That “energy,” or “power” is the means whereby God created these things, and by which He sustains spirit 51:15 (or Jeremiah 10:12). That “energy,” means of all creation. So powerful is this that we expect to probe deeper? We look for the edge of the universe; but the galaxies continue on as far as our finest instruments can penetrate.

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“Creation through the Word

John chapter 1, verses 1-3, tells us yet again the basic facts underlying creation. The translation made by William Tyndale in 1534 carries the true sense:

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God: and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it, was made nothing, that was made.”

The word of God then, which carries creative power or energy, is the basis and the means of all creation. So powerful is this that Jeremiah says:

“Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee” (chapter 32:17).

“All God all things are possible” said Jesus (Matt. 19:26). Why should we doubt that carries the true sense: word. created these things, and by which He sustains spirit 51:15 (or Jeremiah 10:12). That “energy,” means of all creation. So powerful is this that we expect to probe deeper? We look for the edge of the universe; but the galaxies continue on as far as our finest instruments can penetrate.

“How can we believe in the literality of miracles, how can we believe in the Mosaic account of the creation, how can we believe in the literality of miracles, of the resurrection of the dead, or of the reality of salvation and the coming kingdom of God?

These things are interdependent — as it is written:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18).

“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth”

2 Chronicles 2:12.

God ‘Created’

The concept of a gradual evolution of things is not to be found in the Bible. The very word that is used, the Hebrew verb for create (bara) refers to an instantaneous act and not a process. Further, it requires an agent—“God created” (Genesis 1:1). Someone had to do the creating; there is no room for a self-generating process.

This teaching is consistent throughout Scripture. Take Genesis 2:4, “...the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that God created man,...” These Scriptures tell us quite plainly that God “created,” that is to say, created it as we say, “in a particular day.”

It is the consistency of this teaching that is so striking. The language always fits the same pattern. God is the Creator, the maker, as He says in Isaiah 45:12.

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.”

It is faith in this God, the Creator, that is the cornerstone of the Truth. This was recognized and acknowledged by Hezekiah in his hour of need. In 2 Kings 19:15 we read his words:

“And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.”

The King of Tyre recognized the true God in these words:

“Huram said moreover, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the Lord, and an house for his kingdom” (2 Chron. 2:12).

This same recognition is found in the New Testament also. For example, Acts 4:24, “...they lifted up their voice with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.” And in Acts 17:24 the apostle Paul speaks of “God that made the world and all things therein...”

“Helping those who Believe

There are times and situations in life when people need help. They need the loving care of another. And the one thing that we all need help with—whether we acknowledge it or not—is in overcoming the power that sin holds over us. We cannot save ourselves from sin—we need help. And so it is that we can cry out with the Psalmist (if we believe the same as he did): “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2).

This is Israel’s hope, for God has made very specific promises to them, and so the Psalmist lays before us the truth—“now may Israel say... Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth”—Psalm 124. So it is to the God of Israel that all must look for help and for salvation. As the Psalmist says again:

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: Which made heaven, and earth, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever” (Psalm 146:5-6).

Today, the time is fast approaching when all will be called upon to give glory to the Creator in acknowledging the truth of His word. “Scientific” knowledge and Gnosticism will be of no avail in the day of judgement, for the theories, guesses and imaginations of men will then be exposed for what they really are. As it is written of that time in Revelation 14:7, a loud voice will proclaim:

“Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Whoever loves and maketh a lie, says Revelation 22:15, will be on the outside of the holy city when it is established. They will not be in the kingdom of Christ. This includes those who teach the lie of evolution—in whatever guise it may be dressed up. Bible teaching simply leaves no room for it. Believe it or not, God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and on the seventh day he rested.
The Holy Spirit Gifts

Is it really the Holy Spirit?

By Ron Kidd  London, On. Canada

No serious Bible student would deny the activity of God’s spirit power. We are told that by His spirit God created the heavens (Job 26:13) and by the same spirit all creation is sustained (Acts 17:28). In fact, according to the Bible, if the Creator were to remove His spirit all flesh would perish (Job 34:14,15). This, however, is quite different to claiming that the miraculous gifts of the first century are very much alive and active today.

Most Christian religions maintain that the Holy Spirit is active in one way or another. The Pentecostal and other Charismatic groups for example, claim to be able to speak in tongues, or perform miracles of healing by the power of the Holy Spirit. Other denominations such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Church of the Latter Day Saints profess to be the recipients of divine revelation, and the Roman Catholic church has its Lourdes where miracles allegedly occur.

This raises a question of credibility. If all these denominations believe that God’s Holy Spirit power is active in their particular church then how can they justify being separate and distinct? On the other hand, if the separation is based upon differences of doctrine (which is clearly the case) then some one is making false claims. Christian groups cannot lay claim to Holy Spirit powers and at the same time preach a different gospel, because the Bible states that “no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).

This anomaly can only be resolved by examining the teaching of the Bible, and the prophet Isaiah who sets the tone for our study. Isaiah speaks of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ... (verse 24). Jesus’ words came true during the first century after his ascension into heaven, so that John, his beloved apostle, could write, “Many deceivers are entered into the world...” (2 John 7). Deception would be at the very heart of these false claims.

This influence from false teachers claiming to perform miracles, was not to be just a first century problem. The Bible teaches that the same false claims would be evident in the last days, prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice what the apostle Paul has to say: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition... And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 8-10).

We can summarize the main points from these verses as follows:

1. Jesus Christ is coming back.
2. Before Jesus returns there will be a falling away (this is the Greek word ‘apostasia’ from which our word apostasy is derived). 
3. When this occurs there will have been revealed a Wicked one, a man of sin, whom the Lord will destroy.
4. The message of this Wicked one would be accompanied by “power and signs and wonders.”

5. The effect of these alleged wonders would be to deceive the people.

Who this “wicked one” refers to is not our subject, we simply want to emphasize that prior to Jesus Christ’s return there will be people making false claims, and supporting them by “miraculous powers.” Just because someone claims to have performed a miracle from God does not mean that God is behind it. Jesus said, “Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out many devils? (Matthew 7:22). Clearly these were “false prophets,” as is indicated by Jesus’ reply. “And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (verse 23). These people laid claim to the miraculous gifts of prophecy and healing, but God was not behind it.

An example of this can be found in the Old Testament, in the book of Exodus. It was on the occasion that Moses stood before Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel; God gave Moses a number of signs that he could display before Pharaoh to demonstrate that God had sent him. One of the signs was for Moses to take his staff, cast it to the ground and it would become a snake (Exodus 7:8-10). Moses did so, but the Egyptian magicians did the same thing (verse 11,12). Was God also working through the Egyptians, or was it simply a clever trick?

The test of a true prophet

In Old Testament times God set down the criteria for discerning false claims. We read the following:

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

But how was Israel to determine whether the prophet was false or not, the evidence of his credentials lay in the miracles that the prophet had performed. The alleged miracles, in themselves, were not the credentials; it was whether the prophet was speaking according to God’s word: “Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice” (verse 4). The word of God was to be the only authority.
The issue before us is whether unusual happenings occur within religious groups, the issue is whether these are the work of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Here is the litmus test in determining truth from error; we are called upon to measure all that we encounter by God’s word (2 Peter 3:2,3).

The work of the Comforter is detailed in three chapters of John’s gospel (chapt.14,15,16). The following summary will emphasize why it was given.

1. The Comforter is described as “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17; 16:13). In other words the Holy Spirit would guarantee that God’s word would be accurately conveyed. This is what is meant when Peter wrote that the gospel was preached “unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:21); it would ensure that the word preached would not be by “private interpretation,” i.e. human origins, but “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

2. The Comforter would teach the disciples “all things, and bring things to (their) remembrance” (John 14:26). In other words they would be able to recall events and conversations from the ministry of Jesus.

3. The Comforter would “testify of me: and ye shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:26, 27). Thus the Holy Spirit would provide a witness that the apostles were speaking truth. This occurred during the ministry of the disciples, the Lord “gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands” (Acts 14:3).

4. The Comforter would “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). This was certainly true of the apostles. On the day of Pentecost the words of Peter pricked the conscience of his hearers to the point where they cried: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

5. The Comforter would “shew you things to come” (John 16:13). The disciples would be given the gift of prophecy, as is evident from the visions in the book of Revelation, when John heard a voice saying, “I will shew you things which must be hereafter” (Revelation 4:1).

All these details show that the promised Comforter was peculiar to the first century and applicable only to the twelve apostles. Of the disciples alone could it be said that they had been with Jesus “from the beginning.” The disciples alone had spoken with Jesus and it was the memories of their conversations that the Comforter would recall, and provide that important witness in the dissemination of the gospel.

The method of giving the gifts

On more than one occasion Jesus told his disciples that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 5:38,39). After his resurrection he told the disciples to wait at Jerusalem “for the promise of the Father,” i.e. the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5). When the day of Pentecost arrived the disciples were all gathered together in one place, “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:3,4). The promise that Jesus would send the Comforter to his disciples had been fulfilled.

Later the same miraculous power was poured out upon a small company of Gentiles in the presence of the apostle Peter (Acts 10:44). In both instances the Holy Spirit was bestowed directly from God and the reasons are obvious. In the first instance the gift of the Holy Spirit had resided only in the Lord Jesus Christ and it was he alone that could pass it on to his disciples. In the second instance it was necessary that God endorse in some unmistakable manner that He had opened the way to the Gentiles, Gentiles were considered unclean by the Jews, thus the outpouring of the spirit provided the confirmation that God had cleansed the Gentiles (Acts 10:11-16). Peter makes this clear when he says, “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17).

The initial outpouring of the spirit on both Jew and Gentile was direct from heaven. This however, was not to be the normal method of transmitting the gifts. Once this initial confirmation had been achieved the responsibility for passing the gifts on to others fell to the Apostles. A prerequisite in any relationship with God is understanding. Without it we will perish (Psalm 49:20). Only “he that believeth and is baptized” shall be saved (Mark 16:16). Once again truth is the foundation of the believer’s relationship with God, a sound knowledge of the things believed is essential. In this regard we have an example in Acts 8. Philip was one of the seven people chosen to assist the apostles in taking over some of the routine activities of the Jerusalem church. As a result of the persecution that arose against the believers, Philip travelled to Samaria and preached the gospel of the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12). His message was accompanied by “miracles and signs” (verse 13), with the result that many believed (verse 12); these were baptized, both
men and women (verse 12).

There is one detail that is particularly significant. Philip could perform miracles but he was unable to pass the spirit gifts on to the newly baptized. We read, “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: ‘Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they might receive the Holy Spirit: (For as yet the Holy Spirit was given.”

The Holy Spirit gifts is explained in verse 18, “through laying on of the apostle’s hands the Holy Spirit was given.”

Thus the process is clearly outlined:
1. Philip preached the gospel and those that heard were required to understand the message and believe it before they were baptized.
2. Though these new converts were baptized they did not possess the Holy Spirit gifts.
3. Philip, who had taught them from the word of God and demonstrated his authority by “miracles and signs” was unable to pass on to these gifts to the Samaritans.
4. It was necessary for the apostles to travel to Samaria in order to pass on these powers.
5. The transmission of the gifts was accompanied by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

This method is referred to on other occasions in the New Testament, where we read, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” Acts 19:6 (see also 2 Timothy 1:6).

This method leads us to conclude that when the apostles passed off the scene the gifts of the Holy Spirit gradually ceased; there was nobody left to transmit the gifts.

Withdrawal of the gifts predicted

It was never God’s intention that the Holy Spirit gifts should continue indefinitely and just after their introduction the apostles taught that the gifts would cease. Consider the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit had just been poured out upon the apostles and they began to speak in foreign languages (Acts 2:8). Some of those that heard accused the apostles of being drunk (verse 13), who in response quoted from the prophet Joel to demonstrate that this new phenomena was in effect the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Here is what the prophet had to say:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out during the time that I will pour out of My Spirit on My handmaiden; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17,18).

God had prophesied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but had clearly indicated the limited time for its manifestation—two generations; “your sons and daughters” and “your old men.” Neither would this outpouring be limited to Jews only, but “all flesh” would benefit, Jew and Gentile. Peter confirms this understanding when he comments later in the chapter, saying (verse 39),

• “for the promise is unto you…”—the generation he was speaking to.
• “and to your children…”—the generation that would follow.
• “and all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call”—those that would hear beyond the land of Israel, including the Gentiles.

Two generations would receive the Holy Spirit gifts at a time described by Joel as “the last days.” This does not refer to the times in which we live but rather the closing days of the nation of Israel, before the judgments of God in AD 70. Paul describes the ministry of Jesus as occurring in the last days (Hebrews 1:2). It was the Holy Spirit, but it had clearly indicated the limited time for its manifestation—two generations; “your sons and daughters” and “your old men.” Neither would this outpouring be limited to Jews only, but “all flesh” would benefit, Jew and Gentile. Peter confirms this understanding when he comments later in the chapter, saying (verse 39),

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this generation that was witnessing “that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (verse 16).

The apostle Paul conveyed the same message when he wrote to the Corinthians. In chapter 12 he speaks about the diversity of spirit gifts amongst the believers, reminding them that the gifts were given for the believers’ benefit (verse 6,7). God had distributed the gifts amongst the believers for the well being of the whole ecclesia (verse 18, 25). Notwithstanding Paul instructs believers at Corinth, and ourselves, that there is something far more important than spirit gifts—“yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (verse 31). He then proceeds to develop that beautiful chapter about love (chapter 13).

Notice what Paul says in verse 8: “Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

The point that Paul is making is that the love of God will always be there, it will never fail. However, the gifts of prophecy and tongues and knowledge will one day vanish. These gifts were only “in part” (verse 9), that is to say they were manifested by particular members (the Greek word “part” is also translated “partly” in 12:27 in reference to individual members). This being the case when would the gifts be removed? Paul says, “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (verse 10).

This has been interpreted by the Charismatic groups to mean that the kingdom of God is the perfect state, and when it comes then the gifts will “vanish away.” Thus the gifts are still available today. But this simply isn’t true.

The word ‘perfect’ does not refer to the time of God’s kingdom. Paul addresses the Corinthians indicating that some were already “perfect” (1 Corinthians 2:6, see also Philippians 3:15); the word is translated “men” in chapter 14:20 and “full age” in Hebrews 5:14. It is the Greek word “teleios” and signifies, mature, complete or grown up. Paul is stressing that when the first century ecclesia reached maturity, or full age, the spirit gifts would no longer be necessary. This occurred when the writings of the New Testament were completed, towards the end of the first century.

Those who claim that the “perfect state” refers to the kingdom period should consider Paul’s comment in Hebrews 6:5, where he informs us that the Holy Spirit powers are “the powers of the world to come.” In other words when God’s kingdom is established there will be a further outpouring of miraculous powers of a far greater magnitude than the first century (Ephesians 1:14).

God’s spirit at work today

It would be altogether wrong to suggest that God’s spirit power is no longer needed on the behalf of those who desire God’s truth. There is, and always has been, the invisible work of the angels. These immortal beings “excel in strength” and “do (God’s) commandments” (Psalm 103:20). They were at work in the life of Jacob (Genesis 48:16); of Moses (Exodus 3:2); of David (2 Samuel 24:17); of Daniel (Daniel 6:22); of Jesus (Matthew 4:11; Luke 24:23), and they are at work today on behalf of believers as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14).

But in addition to the angels, God has given to us His word. We must never underestimate the power of God’s word (Romans 1:16). It is called “the sword of the spirit” (Ephesians 6:17); Jesus said, “the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Men and women are made holy by God’s word (John 17:17) and by the same word they are born again, for we read that we are “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1Peter 1:23). And the apostle Paul says that by God’s word “the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” and capable of becoming “wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Let us not be deceived by the claims of false teachers but let us follow the injunction of the Lord Jesus Christ who said, “search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).
Israel is at the centre of events influencing policy of many nations, including that of the Vatican

By Don Pearce

Normal it is the events of the 31st of December that cause a rewrite of the last draft of Milestones—but this time it was a quiet news day! It was a few days later when there was a dramatic twist to the situation in Israel. On Jan 4th Mr Sharon went into a deep coma from which he still has not recovered at the time of writing.

Now Israel have held their elections and the new Kadima party set up by Sharon is the recovered at the time of writing. Kadima’s aim is to reduce Jewish settlements on the West Bank retaining only certain ones that can be more easily defended or are of strategic importance.

The Palestinian elections a few weeks earlier brought Hamas unexpectedly to power—and the day after the Israeli elections, the Palestinians formed their government with the avowed aim of driving Israel from the land! In the few months since Israel has withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, the militants and Al Qaeda have moved in, and the rocket attacks on the Israeli towns have intensified. The range of their home produced rockets is now being supplemented by sophisticated weaponry in Gaza only seven miles from Tel Aviv than ever before. And the presence of much more efficient, elusive, and sophisticated weaponry in Gaza only seven miles from Tel Aviv than ever before. And the presence of much more efficient, elusive, and sophisticated weaponry in Gaza only seven miles from Tel Aviv than ever before.

Disengagement did: this time, it would evict Tel Aviv than ever before. And the presence of much more efficient, elusive, and sophisticated weaponry in Gaza only seven miles from Tel Aviv than ever before.

So we commence our review by looking at this situation in Israel.

Why was Sharon so dramatically removed?

It would seem clear that it was in God’s Purpose that there should be a withdrawal from Gaza to permit there to be a Palestinian presence there, west of Israel and hostile to her. (Isa 11:14). In Bible times there seemed always to have been a Philistine presence in this region. The situation regarding the so-called West Bank is different. This is the heartland of the 10 tribes, and constitutes the “mountains of Israel” which scripture indicates will be under Jewish control at the time of the end (Ezekiel 38:8). Sharon’s dramatic removal from the scene will probably be seen to have had a significant effect on Israel’s political scene. The newly formed Kadima party had been racing away in the polls, but steadily slipped after Jan 4th. Sharon was the centre of the party and much of the reason for his party’s existence has disappeared, as he had not made public the full extent of his plans. His deputy Olmert, tried to follow what he perceived to be Sharon’s goals, but lacked Sharon’s military experience. With a steadily increasing number of rocket attacks from the Gaza, Israelis had doubts about the wisdom of withdrawing from more territory. Then came the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections. Although they received less than 50% of the votes, due to the electoral system they received the majority of the seats in the Palestinian Assembly. This was a disturbing escalation of Israel’s struggle against terrorist attacks. Her military experience. With a steadily increasing number of rocket attacks from the Gaza, Israelis had doubts about the wisdom of withdrawing from more territory. Then came the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections. Although they received less than 50% of the votes, due to the electoral system they received the majority of the seats in the Palestinian Assembly. This was a disturbing escalation of Israel’s struggle against terrorist attacks. Her
frail and fragile the Kadima vision was, how unreliable the international community who should be monitoring the borders is, and how ineffectual (not to say worse) are the Egyptians in Sinai when it comes to weapons smugging into Gaza. And that withdrawal does not a peace make. Emanuele Ottolenghi 29-3-06 (He teaches Israel studies at Oxford University.)

What is not yet clear is whether in Olmert’s plans civilian withdrawal from West Bank settlements also includes a military withdrawal. Would Israel continue to have military control over the Palestinians in the West Bank area?

In a way, the Israel today reflects the state of their former leader: the majority are in a deep coma to spiritual things. They lack a military control over the Palestinians in the West Bank, but the eyes of the nation are—for the present—veiled from recognising them.

We do look for an element of religious revival in order that there may be a remnant that will be saved from the coming destruction to form the nucleus of the Kingdom. How exciting that the Bible Magazine editor was able to raise his voice of witness in Jerusalem in those days as reported elsewhere in this issue. To what extent that reformation lies in the period after the Lord’s return to his household, we cannot be sure. Last year’s Gaza evacuation has drawn the attention of Israel to a small proportion of their countrymen who do seek to serve God and have a love of the Torah and are prepared to stand up for their beliefs. It is certainly an interesting, yet difficult, period for Israel.

Vatican seeks pieces of Jerusalem

For over seven years the Vatican has been attempting to obtain control over what it considers to be an historic site in Jerusalem. The Cenacle is the alleged site of the Last Supper, but in reality it is a building erected by the crusaders in the 15th century! The Israeli government have owned the site since 1948, and the building houses a Jewish Torah school. The Vatican’s deal was to take over the site in exchange for giving back to the Jews a Spanish church that originally was a synagogue. Israel has been unwilling to accept the terms of the swap. The Cenacle has historic links for the Jews, for David’s tomb is alleged to have been on this site.

The Jewish press brought to the world’s attention a speech by the Vatican’s legal advisor in Israel, David Jaeger, who “harshly criticized Israel’s policy regarding safeguarding Christian holy sites.”

“Speaking during an international conference at a Haifa University conference Tuesday, Jaeger said Jerusalem is an important city the fate of which should not be left in the hands of Israel and the Palestinians.

“Any solution to the status of Jerusalem needs the approval of the international community, said Jaeger, adding that the Palestinian Authority has also failed in keeping with international conventions on preserving holy sites.” (Ynet news 4-1-06)

When most of the city was under Jordanian control, the Jews were excluded from any sites that they did not hold. Since their control of Jerusalem in 1967, they have allowed others the freedom of worship that had been denied to them. In Milestones 2005 we looked at the unsuccessful efforts that the Vatican has made since 1947 to avoid Israel having control of the city. “The nerve point of the world scene … is the Holy Land” — Benedict XVI

Addressing the crowd assembled to hear his first regular public audience of 2006, Ratzinger declared that the “moral imperative” of the Roman Catholic Church was to unite mankind in Christ. This is church shorthand for setting a goal for the bringing of all under their control! A few days later he was speaking to the 174 ambassadors accredited to the Holy See.

“…He joined the church’s mission to that of all world leaders, stating that the Vatican is “united as in a common mission” with the world’s diplomats. (Considering that Rome’s mission is to catholize the world, that was some statement!) In carefully worded diplomatic script designed as a hit at extremist Islam, the pope underpinned his reference to a “clash of civilizations” by pointing to the prime cause being terrorism, which he declared was rooted in “political ideology combined with aberrant religious ideas.” Only a fool would fail to catch this as a glaring reference to Islamic fundamentalism. This is a religious war of words, couched in the language of diplomacy.

“Even more striking was the pope’s declaration to the diplomats gathered before his throne that ‘the nerve point of the world scene… is the Holy Land’” (The Trumpet 27-3-06).

Both the Vatican and the Moslems have a common—but incompatible—aim. Both are seeking world domination, both seeking to bring the world to their way of thinking; both see Jerusalem as a touch point of their striving. Yet it is the Jews who have practical control of this city, and will continue to do so until Gog defeats them, prior to the battle of Armageddon. It is clear from Ezekiel 38 that the driving force behind the Gogian invasion is so-called Christian Europe rather than Islamic fundamentalists. In the final picture the Moslem countries — Persia Ethiopia and Libya (Ez 38:5) work with, but don’t lead, Europe. Their common goal is to remove Israel from their land.

However the world sees the threat in terms of Christian versus Moslem. At the moment that is what appears to be the great challenge of this age. It is interesting therefore that the new pope has chosen to recall the previous contests between these two powers — the time of the Crusades.

“Vatican change of heart over ‘barbaric’ Crusades”

“The Vatican has begun moves to rehabilitate the Crusaders by sponsoring a conference at the weekend that portrays the Crusades as wars fought with the “noble aim” of regaining the Holy Land for Christianity.

“The Crusades are seen by many Muslims as acts of violence that have underpinned Western aggression towards the Arab world ever since. Followers of Osama bin Laden claim to be taking part in a latter-day “jihad against the Jews and Crusaders.”

“At the conference, held at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University, Roberto De Mattei, an Italian historian, recalled that the Crusades were ‘a response to the Muslim invasion of Christian lands and the Muslim devastation of the Holy Places.’

“‘The debate has been reopened,’ La Stampa said. Professor De Mattei noted that the desecration of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem by Muslim forces in 1009 had helped to provoke the First Crusade at the end of the 11th century, called by Pope Urban II.

“He said that the Crusaders were ‘martyrs’ who had ‘sacrificed their lives for the faith.’ He was backed by Jonathan Riley-Smith, Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge University, who said that those
who sought forgiveness for the Crusades “do not know their history.”

“Until the early 19th century, Christians, Jews and Muslims coexisted under Muslim rule in the Holy Land. After growing friction, the first Crusade was sparked by ambushes of Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius appealed to Pope Urban II, who in 1095 called on Christendom to take up arms to free the Holy Land from the “Muslim infidel” (The Times 20-3-06).

How aptly the Lord God saw that Jerusalem would be the burdensome stone to all nations. For in their striving to wrest from the Jews the control of that city, they themselves will be cut in pieces (Zec 12:1-3). It is God’s city; He has promised it to His son (Lk 1:32). The strivings by Jew, Moslem and Christian will fail, for it is not for them to decide the outcome. God has sworn that the future blessings upon the world will be channeled through a transformed and repentant Israel as the citizens of the Great King.

European Parliament invites Pope to speak

The Catholic World News (3-4-06) reported that Pope Benedict XVI has been invited to address the European Parliament at Strasbourg. The Roman news agency I Media reports that the president of the parliamentary assembly, René van der Linden, delivered the invitation when he met with the him in a private audience on April 3.

A similar invitation was delivered to John Paul II in 2004, but he was not able to go due to ill health. It now looks as if his successor will make this historic trip. It was back in 1988 that John Paul did visit and address parliament, using Jesus’ words concerning rendering to Caesar, to state that earthly things were their responsibility and heavenly things his. Since then the EU has become increasingly secular. Has this time now come for that to be reversed and the pendulum swing back to the situation of past centuries when Europe was ruled by Emperor and Pope working together?

Germany reviving

In time past the Holy Roman Empire had a German emperor. It is interesting to see that Germany after a long period of submission following her defeat in WWII is beginning her climb to power. The future Gogian leader is “of the land of Magog” (Ez 38:38 RV) which we associate with Germany. It is exciting to see Germany’s power reviving.

Germany regaining its stride

“After four years of stagnation, Germany is showing signs of reclaiming its role as the economic engine of Europe. A variety of recent statistics suggest that Germany, the world’s third-largest economy after the United States and Japan, is on the mend, with quickening growth, surging investor confidence, signs of a rebirth in consumer spending, and even a modest decline in unemployment.”

“A reinvigorated Germany would have far-reaching implications for Europe and even the global economy. It accounts for a fifth of the economic activity of the entire European Union, and is the world’s largest exporter, a title it managed to retain even during these lean years.

“Back in fighting trim, German industry has begun flexing its muscles overseas” (New York Times 17-1-06).

Stratfor, the American strategic forecasting service, in their Review of 2006 issued 14-1-06, had some fascinating comments to make about Germany’s role as they saw it.

“During 2006, Germany will re-enter the European system as the dominant power and begin the process of reshaping the Continent.

“Germany has been in a geopolitical deep-freeze since 1945. Divided and occupied until 1993, the country has had two main foreign-policy themes: saying “I’m sorry,” and meekly lending its financial support to the German project. German policy did become less timid under Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, but even then, nearly everything Schroeder did was couched in terms of the European interest (which meant mostly

French interest). Europeanism was the only approved outlet for German nationalism.

“But now there has been a clean break. Angela Merkel is now in charge of Germany, and despite presiding over an unwieldy and uncomfortable coalition government, in her first few weeks on the job she already has emerged as the center-point of European affairs. It was Merkel who seized on the opportunity of across-the-aisle sentiment triggered by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s denial of the Holocaust to make an assertive break with her predecessor’s policy. She then used that strength at the December EU heads-of-government summit to forge a position independent of (even if, for now, complimentary to) Paris to become the force that brokered an agreement and prevented yet another EU summit failure. This characteristic will repeat and intensify throughout 2006.

“Germany is returning to its traditional role as the core European power. For more than a millennium, the single feature of the European system that has determined events has been Germany’s strength, or lack thereof. When Germany is weak—as it has been for the past 60 years—other powers are able to rise and assert their interests. But when Germany is strong, it dominates the heart of the Continent and dictates its neighbors to powerlessness—until such time as they ally to crush it.

“Today’s pattern already has cycled three times. Charlemagne’s Holy Roman Empire (the first iteration of what is now “Germany”) dominated Europe until it fell in Europe’s religious wars. Its death is what allowed Britain, France and Russia to rise as major powers. Imperial Germany played a similar dominating role from its rise in 1870 until its fall in World War I, when Weimar Germany’s weakness allowed a French and Russian renaissance. And of course Nazi Germany’s rise again put all eyes on Berlin, and its destruction led to the superpower standoff—and, eventually, to the rise of a “united” Europe.

“The year 2006 will mark a new turning point as Germany begins to ascend for a fourth time—which raises the question: What will it do with its rising influence?... Merkel undoubtedly will follow her predecessors’ efforts to unite and federalize Europe—but bearing in mind what is good for Germany, as opposed to what is good for Europe.

“After a generation at the helm of France, President Jacques Chirac is a spent political force.

“In the United Kingdom, 2006 likely will see a transfer of power from Prime Minister Tony Blair to Gordon Brown (currently chancellor of the exchequer).

“Italy will hold elections. “Which leaves Merkel’s Germany—regardless of its position as the Continent’s geographic center and the union’s largest economy—as the only horse in the race.”

Merkel and Putin cement ‘strategic partnership’

Merkel visited the leaders of France, Britain and Russia. Although at the moment it is not such a cozy relationship as between Schröder and Putin, nevertheless both countries saw the need to continue to work together. Under the above headline EUPolitics.com (20-1-06) reported on Merkel’s Russian visit—

“Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin have agreed to strengthen political and economic ties, but failed to agree on human rights, after meeting in Moscow on Monday.

“The German and Russian leaders confirmed that the Baltic Sea gas pipeline project would continue and coordinated their positions on Iran.

So, you thought the European constitution was dead, did you?”

This was the headline to a slightly tongue-in-cheek Daily Telegraph (20-3-06) article.
There is no doubt that the European drive to integrate has hardly stalled. Britain will find herself increasingly isolated as she wakes up to the prospect of the constitution by stealth.

“These years from now, the European constitution will be in force—certainly de facto and probably de jure, too. Never mind that 15 million Frenchmen and five million Hollanders voted against it. “The Eurocrats have worked out a devious way of getting around them. Here’s how they’ll do it.

First, they will shove through as many of the constitution’s contents as they can under the existing legal framework—a process they had already begun even before the referendums.

“Around 85 per cent of the text can, with some creative interpretation, be implemented this way. “True, there are one or two clauses that will require a formal treaty amendment: a European president to replace the system whereby the member nations take it in turns to chair EU meetings; a new voting system...

“Here is Wolfgang Schüssel, Chancellor of Austria and the EU’s current president: “The constitution is not dead.” “Here is Angela Merkel, leader of Europe’s most powerful and populous state: “Europe needs the constitution... We are willing to make whatever contribution is necessary to bring the constitution into force.” “Here is Dominique de Villepin, who, in true European style, has risen to the prime ministership of France without ever having run for elected office: “France did not say no to Europe.”

“For the purest statement of the Eurocrats’ contempt for the voters, however, we must turn to the constitution’s author, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. Here is a man who, with his exquisite suits and de haut en bas manner, might be said to personify the EU. “Let’s be clear about this,” pronounced Giscard a couple of weeks ago. “The rejection of the constitution was a mistake that will have to be corrected.”

“To complain that the EU is undemocratic is like attacking a cow for being bovine, or a butterfly for being flighty. In disregarding public opinion, the EU is doing what it has been programmed to do. It is fulfilling its prime directive.

“Sadly, we British are also exhibiting one of our worst national characteristics, namely our tendency to ignore what is happening on the Continent until too late.”

The Middle East and Russia’s New Game

This was the headline in Stratfor 15-2-06 following the invitation by Russia to the newly elected Hamas leaders to visit Moscow. It outlined the steady growth of Russia’s influence in the Middle East after a long absence.

...the Hamas affair is of substantial significance, for several reasons. First, the Russians are clearly signaling that they intend to get back into the Middle East game. Second, they are aware that this will make the United States extremely uncomfortable. Third, that is exactly what they intend to achieve. Creating problems for the United States in strategic areas is what the Russians think is in their national interest right now... Moscow’s invitation to Hamas is intended to be a warning that Russia can make life increasingly difficult for the United States—and that Russia plans to do just that.”

We close with two further items concerning Israel.

Bush Pledges to Defend Israel From Iran

President Bush has made clear that he stands by Israel.

“United States President George W. Bush has declared that the U.S. will defend Israel militarily should Iran launch an attack on the Jewish State.

“I see a threat in Iran,” Bush said Monday, answering a question after a speaking engagement in Cleveland, Ohio. “The threat from Iran is, of course, their stated objective to destroy our strong ally Israel. That’s a threat, a serious threat. It’s a threat to world peace; it’s a threat, in essence, to a strong alliance. I made it clear, I’ll make it clear again, that we will use military might to protect our ally, Israel” (A7 News 21-3-06).

UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw also declared “It is sad that a country whose founder, Cyrus the Great, celebrated for rebuilding the temple of the Jews should now have as its President a man who makes sickening calls for Israel to be wiped from the face of the map. Instead of using its geopolitical position and undoubted influence in the region to promote stability, as we and its neighbours would like it to, Iran does the opposite” (Foreign & Commonwealth Office website 13-3-06).

Israel’s Jewish population surpasses United States

For the first time, Israel has more Jews than the US, according to Hebrew University Prof. Sergio Della Pergola. Tel Aviv has also overtaken New York as the city with the largest Jewish population.

“Dr. Della Pergola, who released the statistics at a conference in Jerusalem this week, said that the new figures are partly the result of the increase in Israel’s Jews, but greatly due to the shrinking Diaspora. The percentage of Jews, within the global populations, has decreased by one third since 1970 due to intermarriage and assimilation.

“According to Della Pergola, the Jewish people now comprise .21% of the world’s population—whereas they comprised .35% in 1970. “In 1970, there were about 10 million Jews living outside Israel. Only 7.75 million remain. The slight increase in the number of Jews in the world — from 12.65 million in 1970 to nearly 13 million now, is only due to the growth of Jews living in the Jewish state, Della Pergola said. A7 News 17-1-06.

Her population has now risen to 7 million according to recent figures.

“Israel’s population is projected to cross the 7 million mark this month, reaching 7,006,000.

In a fast moving world it is difficult to keep an eye on all the important players of the world stage! However it is reassuring to see our traditional picture of a north-south split continues to be clearly seen. Tarshish and her young lions continue to be active in their dealings in the Middle East, with a policy that draws the resentment of Russia and Europe, who largely oppose the dominance of America in this region. The visit of Condoleezza Rice to Britain last week emphasised Britain’s difficult position as she strives vainly to be a “good” European, yet is drawn towards America. The cartoon (centre) from the European Foundation (March/April 06) neatly encapsulates Britain’s dilemma. We look for the day when, probably under a new leader, Britain will tire of the enmeshment of Europe and exert herself more forcefully as a friend of America and Israel.

We pray for the day when at the command of God, the Saviour will return to save his people.

“I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord thy God, that made the earth and created it, which stretcheth out the heavens, and spreadeth out all the law thereof; Which maketh the end of the parts of the earth, and watereth every thing upon it. And I am the Lord thy God, which divideth the sea, and drieth up great waters: I make grass grow for the cattle, and herbs for the content of man’s soul; I give thee in the bread of thine ears, and multiplyest thee, and give thee into the hand of thine enemies, and they have dominion over thee; and in the thirst thereof thou shalt be filled with joy. Thou shalt multiply exceedingly, and be strong over all the land; for I will shew mercy unto thee, saith the Lord; and in thine ordinances will I delight, and make an heyday: and thy exaltation shall be for ever and ever. Wherefore stay not, ye unclean people, from going forth; go out from her, and depart, ye unclean folk: for the Lord highly exalted is in the city of David, in Jerusalem, our holy hill: then shalt thou know that it is I, saith the Lord, that dwell in the land; and in Jacob do I dwell.” (Isa 51:12-16).
recent conference held in Jerusalem, sponsored by the Israeli B'Sheva newspaper, discussed "key issues and values" of Israel's national agenda and that of the Jewish people for the next 25 years. The subject matter is of great interest to those who watch for the consolation of Israel and the fulfillment of prophecy in these last days.

As the programme indicated, the conference brought together leading figures in Israeli politics, economy, security establishment, culture and academic as well as Torah scholars. The theme of the Conference this year was "Thoughts and Challenges for the next 25 years." It provided an opportunity to learn of these things from a Jewish and Israeli perspective so that we could compare this with the teaching and prophecies of Scripture.

"Political Principles"

When John Thomas wrote in 1849 of the then future "partial and primary restoration of Jews" before the advent of their Messiah (or in Greek, Christ), he said that it was: "...to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-adventual colonizaion of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahsip of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth, but more immediately of getting rich in silver and gold by commerce with India..."

In view of this expectation—based as it was upon the understanding of both the true Gospel and of the prophetic word of God—events connected with the Jewish people have been closely followed by Bible believers for many years. The political development has been observed and commented upon ever since the First Zionist Congress of 1897, and was the subject of many articles and lectures in later years—especially in 1917, 1948 and 1967.

Commenting further in 1869 upon the political events that would bring about Israel's restoration, John Thomas wrote:

"I believe that the period for Israel's downtreading is at an end, and that we have entered upon a new series of events that will culminate in the cleansing of the Holy. We are not necessarily to look for some great event that will wind-up the purposes of God in a flash of lightning. One series of events having come to its close, another series has already begun and will continue to develop more and more largely until the Ancient of Days makes his appearance and takes things into his own hands. That this will be the order in which the events of these latter days will develop, we are justified in saying, because it is the order of all God's past relations with Israel. All His purposes and schemes with them have been gradual in development. God is never in a hurry. He has plenty of time at His disposal. He is not bound to do things according to your speculation or mine as to how long He ought to take. He has fixed the times and seasons. He has commenced the development of His events, and they will not be interrupted by the policy of men, but on the contrary, the activity of men to carry out their own purposes will only expedite His. He has the
controlling power, and what He has decreed will most assuredly come to pass. None can hinder or stay His hand.” The Book Unsealed.

So it was understood that God would work out His purpose with Israel through, apparently normal political events in the hands of men. Thus, the State of Israel today—though a secular political entity and in the hands of those Jews who have returned in unbelief—is nonetheless part of a development which when completed, will form a nucleus through which Christ will work in order to establish the Kingdom of God—which will be the Kingdom of Israel restored (Acts 1:6 and 3:20-21). So the Jerusalem Conference that we recently attended gave us insight into the current thinking of several leading Jewish personalities as they look forward to the next generation. As believers in the Hope of Israel, we also look forward as events indicate the nearness of Christ’s return and the redemption of Israel.

An Over-riding Concern

On the first day of the Conference several speakers expressed their concerns for the future, but the one topic that dominated was not the Arabs, or Hamas, or even Iran—it was inter-marriage and assimilation. One of the first speakers, a Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau (a former chief rabbi of Israel) recalled the Biblical account of Balaam who counselled Balak to send in the daughters of Moab to corrupt and destroy the Jewish people. He said that this was what inter-marriage was doing today. In order to preserve its unique character Israel must “dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9).

Dan Margalit, a journalist for the Maariv paper raised the same concern, saying that in 25 years time there would be no need for discussion on the Law of Return, because the Jewish people will have become negligible through assimilation. The one thing that could prevent this happening, he said, was a rise in anti-Semitism. This could separate the Jewish people from other peoples. There had to be separation walls in order to create a national ghetto in Israel—this was necessary for the preservation of the Jewish State and for the State of the Jews.

Professor Eliezer Schweid of the Hebrew University also pointed to the danger of assimilation. Jewish communities were absorbing post-modernism and it was being imported from western countries.

What was noticeable in all this discussion was the apparent lack of any acknowledgement of the hand of God in Jewish affairs. The concerns are real enough, but they are not really news. In 1754 (over 250 years ago), Thomas Newton in looking at the miracle of fulfilling prophecy commented: “You see the Jews ‘led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles,’ and likely to continue so ‘until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,’ as the Jews are by a constant miracle preserved a distinct people for the completion of other prophecies relating to them.”

After some 2,000 years of survival the Jews have been preserved as a distinct and separated people “by a constant miracle.” Why should that “miracle” fail now? Well, the Scriptures are quite clear:

“For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jer. 30:11).

Walls, Bars and Gates

Travelling into the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) today, gives a sense of Israel’s separation, especially as one passes through check-points and sees the gates and bars—and of course the controversial security wall (pictured below). The reality of this situation strikes home and poses the question—Why is all this here now, when Ezekiel specifically tells us that it will be a “land of unwalled villages...all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates” (Ezekiel 38:11)?

Clearly, things must change before Gog comes to take his spoil, and to turn his hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited. In the meantime however, Arab hostility towards Israel over the years—and now the walls, bars and gates, have served a definite purpose. The Jewish people in Israel are being kept separate, and the principle stated in Leviticus 20:24-26 is clearly in evidence:
We cannot foresee the twists and turns of events—just as we did not anticipate the rise of anti-Zionism and the way in which Israel today is demonized.

“What I see as an important trend, is that Jewish identity will become more connected with Israel,” he said. Conversely, in the Diaspora, the State of Israel is an embarrassment to some Jews. They believe that they could be more successful in business and the world if Israel did not exist. These Jews are on their way to assimilation. Thus, in thinking about the fate of the Jews, Sharansky believed that survival depended upon a strong Israel. The fact is that Jews who live in America, and who care about their Jewishness, bring their children to Israel for education. They base their family in Israel but work in New York, coming home for week-ends in Israel. He also made reference to the ‘Birthright Programme’—a programme that brings young Jewish people for a free tour of Israel so as to encourage the connection with the Land. He said that statistics demonstrated that this programme was drawing many towards their Jewishness.

A Continuing Process

All this is continuing the process of the “partial and primary restoration of Jews” foreseen from the Scriptures by John Thomas in his book Elpis Israel over 150 years ago. It has been going on for a long time, and much longer than nineteenth century writers thought. Yet it underlines what John Thomas wrote (quoted earlier), that all God’s purposes and schemes have been going on for a long time, and much longer than nineteenth century writers thought. Y...
principles” until “a nucleus, or basis” for future operations is developed. That this will become evident in time cannot be doubted. The “nucleus” will emerge so gradually that it will appear as a natural development which most will not even notice, or be aware of. This is how God works, so that only those who are truly informed by a careful study of the word will perceive what is taking place.

In writing of the hostility that is to develop between the European Beast and the future Jewish presence in the Land, Joseph Mede wrote the following in 1649, “...a passage may be prepared for new enemies of the Beast to come from the East; that is, for the Israelites to be wonderfully converted to the pure faith and worship of Christ, and now to have conferred upon them the kingdom promised so many ages since. Whom the worshippers of the Beast, haply, shall esteem for the army of their imaginary Antichrist to arise from among the Jews, God so revenging the obstinacy of their errors.”

Thus will a deluded and apostate Christendom be caught in the trap of Armageddon! This will come to completion in the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Ezekiel describes this pre-adventural restoration of Jews—the “partial and primary restoration”—as not only a gathering out of the nations, but specifically to dwell on “the mountains of Israel, which have always been waste” (verse 8), and to “dwell in the midst of the Land” (verse 12). This is quite definitely the area of the West Bank known as Judea and Samaria.

The Future of the West Bank

When Benjamin Netanyahu rose to address the Jerusalem Conference on its second day, it was one week away from the Israeli general election. As events turned out, his Likud party did not do well in the election, but that does not detract from the issue that he spoke about, especially the future of the West Bank—those “mountains of Israel.” Some saw the election as a referendum on withdrawal—and that is how The Jerusalem Post depicted it on election day with its front page headline: *Future borders at stake as Israel votes.*

Netanyahu saw the election in much the same way. With Hamas coming to power, he said, a withdrawal from the West Bank would be simply handing over territory to the terrorists. It is hard to disagree with that view—and certainly it would not get rid of the walls, bars and gates. In fact the controversial security wall is a key feature of the withdrawal plan, which involves pulling out and fencing off Palestinian areas.

But as we turn to Scripture and look at prophecy, it is quite clear that a Jewish presence in this area of the mountains of Israel, and of the midst of the Land, is a required part of the final picture. Ezekiel 38 especially, requires this. When Gog and his northern host invades the mountains of Israel, they are not coming against a Palestinian state—they are coming against “the people that are gathered out of the nations” (verse 12). If we believe what the Bible says, then we have to say that a Jewish presence upon the mountains of Israel at the time of Gog’s invasion is an absolute certainty. Not only will there be a Jewish presence in the area, Ezekiel tells us that the walls, bars and gates will not be required. This tells us that some fundamental changes are to be expected. It tells us that the two-state plan is doomed to failure.

Neither a wall, gates, bars or check-points can put an end to terrorist activity of course—and it is difficult to see that handing territory over to the Palestinians can accomplish anything. With rockets coming into Israel from Gaza since the disengagement from there, we can hardly expect peace and tranquility to follow a West Bank pull-out. In fact a *Jerusalem Post* interview with Shaul Mofaz, the Israeli defence minister makes this quite clear. While saying that there would be no withdrawal during 2006, he said that there certainly would be over the next two years. However “Israel, he said, would not rest in militarily following the formation of the Hamas government, and if the need arose the IDF would launch widespread operations in the West Bank similar to Operation Defensive Shield in 2002. “There is no reason not to take action against anyone who engages in anti-Israel terror activity,” he said. “Hamas are terrorists... and if there will be terror under their government then, for me, they will be held responsible.”

That doesn’t sound very much like a peaceful outcome! More likely, it could lead to drastic action and some fundamental changes to the situation.

Mr Netanyahu may not have won the election, but he may prove to be right.

A Witness to the Truth

As listeners to *The Bible in the News* will know, an opportunity to address Mr Netanyahu and the Jerusalem Conference was presented to us. It was a rare opportunity and extremely short. Having listened to the speakers at the Conference, and judging the mood after hearing many concerns expressed, we felt the need to offer some encouragement. After all, believing firmly in the Hope of Israel (Acts 28:20), and knowing what a glorious destiny awaits this people, it seemed appropriate to speak the Truth. As we read in Jeremiah 46:27-28, “But fear thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lorp: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not...
make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

It is true that today Israel knows not her Messiah and Lord, but that will not always be so. As we said earlier, a “nucleus or basis” for future operations will be developed—and there can be no doubt that the very early signs of this are becoming visible. It is not there yet, but the signs of its approach are there. This being so, it was our intention to encourage the Jewish people at the Conference to recognize the fact that God has said that He is with them to save them.

We were introduced by the Conference chairman as “a guest who has come from Canada.” “He is not Jewish. He is a Christian, a lover of Israel, and he has some very important words to say to us.”

We then addressed Mr. Netanyahu and the Conference as follows:

“Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, it is a great privilege for me to be able to speak to you. I am not Jewish and I love you people and I know that you are going through a very difficult time at the moment. Terrible decisions have to be made amongst you. We have been listening to the speakers during the Conference during the last few days and especially after the Gush Katif episode, Amona, now Hamas and I am sensing amongst you, some doubts. I am sensing that there are giants. There are Anakim that are perhaps too big for us. But they’re not too big for us, because you have on your side the God of Israel. There is no doubt in my mind about that whatsoever. Faith you see is not irrational, as was suggested yesterday. Faith is not superstition. Faith is something that is very logical and is in touch with reality. And do you know, you people have survived for 2,000 years—through many different holocausts. Why have you done that? Because the Almighty is with you. Because He has a purpose with you people. And those people who are put into power have a tremendous responsibility in this regard, to see that there is a great destiny for the people of Israel. A remarkable destiny for you people. You may not want to be the chosen people but you are. It wasn’t your choice. It was God’s choice.”

We had intended to say more, but with that short comment our time was gone. However, an interview on Israel National Radio that afternoon provided us with an opportunity to expand and enlarge upon our statement.

This we felt was an opportunity to make known the manifold wisdom of God according to His purpose—as we read in Ephesians 3:10-12, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the ecclesia the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

It was not a perfect testimony by any means, but we did what we could. May the day soon dawn when Zion’s Deliverer shall come! Oh! watch ye for Zion; the day-spring is breaking. Her night has been gloomy, but shortly will end; Her long-promised Shepherd His lost sheep is seeking, The heart of the obdurate nation will bend.

Rejoice ye for Zion! Jehovah has spoken: Jerusalem’s outcasts shall yet be restored; The bonds of the fetter-bound slave shall be broken, And Judah set free at the word of the Lord.
Following the “disengagement” from Gush Katif (Gaza), the Israeli Government followed through with evictions from other settlements in the northern West Bank (known in Israel as the Shomron). The settlers’ organisations have been opposed to this due to both political and religious reasons. Often the two reasons are connected and it is difficult to separate between them.

When the Government decided to evict Jews from a small district in Hebron there was considerable resistance from settlers. But this was mild in comparison to what happened in February at Amona. The incident was barely covered by the main western media, so many are unaware of what took place. Nine Jewish homes in Amona were destroyed by Israeli police, and the pictures opposite give a small glimpse of the violent scene. A short clip of video footage can be seen on the new DVD that is advertised below.

Our interest in this event is prompted by our interest in Israel’s affairs as they are predicted in the Bible, and as they form part of the purpose of God.

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, several prophecies speak of the children of Israel returning to their own land in the latter days—but more specifically to “the mountains of Israel.” This is the West Bank, and coincidentally (or else providentially) it is where many of the religious Zionists dwell. This group make some serious attempt to keep the principles of the Torah (Law of Moses). They cannot do so fully of course, especially in the absence of the temple and its sacrifices, but they do display a very high moral standard and a way of life that is rarely seen today.

We know of course that salvation is not possible through the works of the Law, yet we recognize that Israel must honour that Law, as stated in Malachi 4:4. This would seem to be a prelude to their instruction and to the coming of Elijah (verses 5 & 6).

It may be that more scenes like that of Amona are yet to be seen, with people being treated violently, evicted from their homes—and perhaps even worse. Such experiences form character and may be necessary in preparing minds to receive the Truth of God’s word. Yet as we witness such happenings our hearts go out to this people. We mourn for Zion for her beauty has faded. We see the suffering and the desolations even today as it is inflicted by Jews who do not believe their Scriptures. We know however that her gloomy night will shortly end.

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Psalms 111 and 112 are two beautifully written pieces of Hebrew poetry, with contrasting and complementary lines juxtaposed against each other carrying deep spiritual messages. They may not appear to be connected from a cursory reading in an English version of the Bible, however they are both acrostics with a line for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet in sequential order and with the additional opening word, “Hallelujah,” or as it is translated in the AV, “Praise ye the Lord.” The lines are arranged in couplets, each couplet making a verse in the AV; aside from verses 9 and 10 which include units of 3 lines each. If there is any doubt that these Psalms are a unit, line 5 or verse 6b in each of the Psalms is identical: “…and his righteousness endureth forever.” The purpose of the acrostic is to aid memorization — there are memorization techniques today that use the same concept. One knows the letter that the next line starts with, and this triggers the memory as to what the line is. It can be concluded then, that these Psalms were intended to be memorized and are therefore important. It is fitting that Psalm 111-4 should read: “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.”

Psalms 111 and 112 precede the traditional Passover “Hallel” Psalms — including Psalms 113 to 118 inclusive — which can all commence with “Hallelujah,” if one moves the “Hallelujah” from the end of some of the Psalms to the beginnings of the following Psalm where the phrase is lacking. For example Psalm 113 starts and finishes with “Hallelujah,” by moving the closing “Hallelujah” to Psalm 114 they both start with “Hallelujah.” It is also felt by many that Psalms 114 and 115 belong together. Psalms 111 and 112 are also both start with “Hallelujah.” In this way Psalms 111 to 118 are a set of Psalms that all commence with “Hallelujah” and Psalms 111 and 112 are a prelude to the traditional “Hallel” Passover Psalms.

The topic of the exodus is clearly apparent in Psalm 114:1: “When Israel went out of Egypt…” and when we consider the exodus we think of redemption: “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed… which thou hast purchased” (Exodus 15:13,16). The background to these “Hallel” Psalms then is the redemption of God’s first-born son Israel from Egypt. If Psalms 111 and 112 are a prelude to the “Hallel” we would expect to find the theme of redemption in them also.

The Theme of Psalm 111 — The works of Yahweh, the work of redemption

In Psalm 111 the word ‘works’ occurs five times and the Psalm speaks of what God has done and will do: “He hath made…”, “He hath given…”, “he will ever be mindful…”, “he hath shewed…”, “that he may give…”, “He sent…”, “he hath commanded…”. This Psalm is obviously about the work of God; the work of taking a planet that was in darkness, without form and void and filling it with the light of God’s glory (Numbers 14:21). The mechanism by which this can take place is the covenant made with Abraham—the covenant of the Holy Land. The Abrahamic covenant has to do with the salvation of Israel; the nation of Israel will be redeemed by the process of this covenant (2 Samuel 23:5, Jeremiah 31:33).

However, it may be said that this Psalm is speaking about the covenant made with the nation at Sinai—the Mosaic. Zacharias provides an answer in his prophecy in Luke 1, where he brings together thoughts from Psalm 111 and 112 and connects them with the Abrahamic covenant. In Luke 1:68 Zacharias said: “…he hath visited and redeemed his people.” and in Psalm 111:9 we read: “He sent redemption unto his people…”. In Luke 1:69 we read: “…he hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” and in Psalm 112:9 we read: “…his horn shall be exalted with honour.” Then Zacharias refers to the covenant made with Abraham: “To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham….” and in Psalm 111:5 we read: “…he will ever be mindful of his covenant” and verse 9: “…he hath commanded his covenant for ever.” So Zacharias equates the covenant with the oath made to Abraham, not with the covenant made at Sinai. It has already been demonstrated that the two Psalms go together, and this also proves that the covenant spoken of here is the covenant made with Abraham and David and not the covenant made with Israel at Sinai — the constitution of the nation of Israel.

The raising of the horn spoken of in Psalm 112 is the horn of David—the kingship of the royal line of David—when this happens the law of Moses must be done away with. This is apparent from the previous Psalm 110 where Messiah was to be “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”—not after the order of Aaron. Again in Zechariah 3:8; 6:12-13 it speaks of Joshua and his fellows as men “wondered at; or as the Hebrew is literally; “men of sign.” Joshua was a man of sign who was typical of the Messiah. He is named the “Branch,” which clearly is a reference to the words of Yahweh in Jeremiah where He says: “I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper…” (Jeremiah 23:5). The raising up of the Branch equates with the raising up of the Davidic horn of Salvation in the prophecy of Zacharias in Luke. In Zechariah 6 the man named the “Branch” is to sit and rule upon his throne and also to be a priest upon his throne—this is impossible under the law given to Moses. The house of
David was of Judah and priests could only come from the family of Aaron (Exodus 40:12–15). The constitution of the nation of Israel would not allow for a priest to be from the tribe of Judah and therefore had to change. Psalm 111:9 contains three lines of the acrostic poem: the first speaks of the redemptive work of Yahweh, the second his covenant, and the third His holy name—Yahweh Elohim, literally “He who will be mighty ones,” which was revealed to Moses at the bush in Exodus 3. This all ties in to the redemption of Yahweh’s firstborn son from Egypt, as we read in Exodus 6:7: “And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” Jeremiah brings out the future and ultimate application when writing of the rising up again of Zion: “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 30:22). This is the time when the horn of David will be exalted: “But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:9).

The theme of Psalm 111 is the redeeming work of Yahweh through the covenant made with Abraham. The promise of the seed and the promise of the land both come out in Psalm 111.

### Promise of a Seed

In Psalm 111:5 we read that: “He hath given meat to them that fear him.” When we read this we may think of the manna that God provided in the wilderness. The word here for meat is נַפְחָה (nafchāh), translated “sought.” The word itself means “an animal torn in pieces, the prey of a wild beast, food.” The incident of God asking Abraham to offer his son Isaac, helps in understanding what this line means. After the angel at the last moment stops Abraham from performing the sacrifice, Abraham lifts up his eyes and sees a ram caught by his horns and “Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son” (Genesis 22:13). Earlier when his son Isaac asked where the lamb was for the performance of the sacrifice, Abraham replied: “My son, God will provide himself a lamb.”

### Promise of the Land

Psalm 111:6 reads: “He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.” God did demonstrate the power of his works so that he could give his firstborn son Israel the Holy Land—taken from the heathen. Psalm 111:6b is juxtaposed with verse 5b that speaks of his name: Nehemiah brings these two thoughts together: “Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And f尊dest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hath performed thy words; for thou art righteous” (Nehemiah 9:7,6).

Psalm 112

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 112</th>
<th>Psalm 111</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1a) I will praise the Lord with all my heart,</td>
<td>Praise ye the Lord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1b) I will sing praises to my God with my voice</td>
<td>That I delight greatly in his commandments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) I will declare I will declare</td>
<td>His seed shall be mighty upon earth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3a) I will tell of all his glorious works</td>
<td>The generation of the upright shall be blessed.</td>
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<td>(3b) I will tell of all his righteousness</td>
<td>Wealth and riches shall be in his house.</td>
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<td>(4) I will praise</td>
<td>And his righteousness endureth for ever.</td>
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<td>(5) I will magnify his name</td>
<td>Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) The Lord is gracious and full of compassion</td>
<td>He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) He sheweth his power toward us</td>
<td>A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth:</td>
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<td>(8) He sheweth his power to them that fear him</td>
<td>He will guide his affairs with discretion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9) Who by his understanding</td>
<td>He shall not be moved for ever:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(10) He performeth that which he speaketh</td>
<td>The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.</td>
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<td>(11) He performeth</td>
<td>He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.</td>
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<td>(12) He sheweth his power</td>
<td>His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13) He sheweth his power unto his people</td>
<td>He shall be not afraid of evil tidings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14) He sheweth his power</td>
<td>His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.</td>
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<td>(15) He sheweth his power</td>
<td>He shall not be moved for ever:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) He sheweth his power</td>
<td>The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.</td>
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Psalm 112 begins with the phrase: “Blessed is the man...” This is the same as Psalm 1 which also begins with this phrase; the concluding two words are also identical between both Psalms in the Hebrew text. The book of Psalms commences with the phrase “Blessed is the man...” and concludes in Psalm 150 with: “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah.” This is God’s purpose—starting with one man that fears Yahweh, to fill the earth with his glory. “His seed shall be mighty upon the earth” (Psalm 112:2). But, “...who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living...” yet “...he shall see his seed” (Isaiah 53:8,10). “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” asked the Ethiopian eunuch. Verses 13–14 replies: “My righteous servant.” Notice Psalm 112:13–14:

We are his work, his work shall praise him in the future age—that he succeeded in making something out of us. His praise endureth forever.
112 is all about him, in fact the words “his” and “him” appear 15 times in this Psalm. In verse 3b or line vav of Psalm 112 we read: “And his Righteousness endureth forever” (This is stressed in this Psalm as it is also repeated exactly in line tsaddi/9b minus the Hebrew letter vav translated and. The idea of him being righteous is also stressed by comparing line chet/4b with line chet in Psalm 111. The characteristics of Yahweh being gracious and full of compassion are in both lines, however in Psalm 112 it adds “righteous!” There is parallelism between many of the lines in Psalm 111 and their counterparts in Psalm 112.) How can righteousness endure forever in a man? “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23); “…there is none that does good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:3); “…the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Righteousness can only endure forever in a man if he does not commit sin—in the seed of the woman who would bruise sinful human nature in the head (Genesis 3:15).

**Redemption**

In line tet/5a we read that a good man “lendeth.” What has this good man lent? In Luke 6:35 Jesus instructs us to “…do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.” Jesus Christ died for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:6–8), in this way he lent hoping for nothing again. The characteristics of Yahweh being gracious and full of compassion is this line with the corresponding line tet/5a in Psalm 111: “He hath given meat…”

In line pey/9a we read: “He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.” Indeed, a sower went forth to sow—Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 1:14). He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and read from the scroll of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor…” Note the comparison with Psalm 111:9a: “He sent redemption unto his people…”

The people that sat in darkness saw a great light (Isaiah 9:2); unto the upright there arose a light in the darkness (Psalm 112:4a). Verse 4b then goes on to speak of the character of God: “He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.” This is the character revealed to Moses in the Mount (Exodus 34:5–7) and the character manifested in the life of Jesus Christ.

The secret of his greatness is revealed in Psalm 112:7,8: “...his heart is fixed trusting in the LORD—not in himself or in the arm of flesh

The secret of his greatness is revealed in Psalm 112:7,8: “...his heart is fixed trusting in the LORD—not in himself or in the arm of flesh. The works of Yahweh are sought out by those that have touched the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrew 4:15,16).

The secret of his greatness is revealed in Psalm 112:7,8: “…his heart is fixed trusting in the LORD”—not in himself or in the arm of flesh. In line Samech (8a) where we read: “…his heart is established,” the verb translated “established” is the same verb translated “stand fast” in Samech (8a) in Psalm 111. By contrasting these two lines we see that the Righteous servant’s heart stands fast as it is grounded in the word of God. His righteousness endureth forever.

The Redeemer shall come to Zion

It has already been demonstrated that the horn in Psalm 112:9c—“His horn shall be exalted with honour”—is the kingdom of the royal line of David. The horn is to be raised up in Zion as spoken of in Psalm 132:13;17: “For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation... There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.” The raising up of the royal horn of David in Zion is the raising up of those born in Zion—the sons of Zion (Psalm 87:5–6) against those prophetically called the sons of Greece. When I have Yahweh and his Righteousness I will not fear; no man shall make me afraid. The Redeemed in Revelation 5:5–6 the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David—the redeemer—is portrayed as a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. These seven horns are the perfected and complete kingship of the age. And the seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. These seven eyes are the everlasting and innumerable eyes of God. We have a Great High Priest

The Redeemed

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The Redeemer shall come to Zion

Page 24
Recent excavations reveal an interesting scene allowing us to “see” the locations referred to in the Bible. For example, study the picture opposite with the words of Nehemiah 3:15, “…the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king’s garden, and unto the stairs…”

The pool is on the left, remains of the wall and the stairs are seen in the centre, and the garden on the right.

In Jeremiah 52:7 we are told of the attempted escape of “all the men of war... by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king’s garden.”

In Isaiah 8:6-8 we are told that the people refused “the waters of Shiloah” (a word meaning a sending forth), and a metaphor for the word of God that was sent. In refusing it, the waters of the Assyrian river overwhelmed them. Jesus is the one sent (the word made flesh), and by washing in the pool of the One Sent, the blind see—John 9:7.

The people chose Caesar and were overwhelmed by his forces.

The pool of Siloam was identified for many years with the exit to Hezekiah’s tunnel pictured left (see 2 Kings 20:20, 2 Chronicles 32:30, Isaiah 22:11). The recent excavations suggest that the pool of Siloam was larger and near to the palace and the king’s garden. The photographs seen here were taken in late March, 2006. There is always a degree of uncertainty with many ancient locations, but they become clearer as more discoveries are made.
The following extract from the Protestant Dictionary (under DEMONS) is interesting:

“In the Theology of the Greek Platonist philosophers, both the neuter noun and the masculine noun are employed in the sense of inferior deities between the gods and man. Joseph Mede in his Apostasy of the Latter Times (Mede’s works, Book III) has given copious proofs of this fact. Mede maintained that St. Paul used the terms in 1 Tim. 4:1...”

The passage referred to by Mede in 1 Tim. 4:1 reads:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (Gk. demons); Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (verses 1-3).

It was Mede’s contention that Paul was warning believers against an apostasy from the Christian faith—one which would introduce the worship of inferior deities, or demons.

Now let the reader recall the brief comparison that we made in our last issue between the Guardian spirits of Babylonian mythology, and the Guardian saints of contemporary Roman Catholicism. It is truly remarkable that such a doctrine should form part of this system which also forbids marriage to its priests, and commands abstinence from certain meats on Fridays! These three points of identification can hardly be a coincidence—Paul’s prophecy has come true.

Furthermore, Paul says that “the spirit speaketh expressly.” Where does it do so? The answer is, Daniel chapter 11:37,38. This prophecy concerning the development of Rome states:

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not...”

Rome, upon being converted from paganism, no longer regarded the mythical gods of its forebears. It did not recognise the natural use of women (see also Rom. 1:27) and forbade its priests the privilege of marriage. Rome magnified itself above all during its papal phase (see also 2 Thess. 2:3-4), and in his place honoured—what Daniel terms “the God of forces.”

The original word here, as pointed out in the KJV margin, is Moazzim, signifying “God’s protectors” or, “the god of guardians.” These guardian gods are the demons mentioned by Paul in his letter to Timothy. Daniel’s prophecy continues (v. 39):

“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory...”

“The most strong holds” is “miutzahrai mahazzim” in the original. We have already seen the meaning of the second word moazzim or ‘mahuzzim’—guardians or protectors. The noun ‘miutzahrai’ is derived from the root ‘bahr’—an enclosure. Parkhurst says of the word: “Derivative, Bazaar, a kind of covered market-place among the Eastern nations, somewhat like our Exeter ‘change in London, but frequently much more extensive.” Hence, the literal meaning is: “The Bazaars of the Guardians.”

Lengerke translates the word temples, and relates them to the heathen gods, or guardians. However, Daniel is speaking of post-heathen times, when the gods were no longer regarded, nor the desire of women—hence, we can only conclude that it refers to those spiritual market-places dedicated to the guardian saints (demons) of so-called Christendom.
(Important: please compare Rev. 18:2 and verse 11). Is it any surprise, in the light of these prophecies, if we find Christendom today riddled with the “doctrines of devils” both good and evil? The word demons is translated “superstition” in Acts 17:22 from the Greek deixisaimon, Lit. “to fear a demon,” (Vine).

As we said at the outset of this series, belief in devils and demons is a corruptive influence in modern times and should be contested, first because it is false, and secondly because of the moral destructiveness upon society.

The Curse

And so what is the origin of evil? In order to answer this question from a Biblical perspective we must first of all recognise the distinction that exists in the Bible between evil and wickedness. The Oxford Dictionary defines evil as “Bad, harmful” in any sense. The term evil therefore embraces anything which might interfere with well-being: from natural disaster and war, to disease, death, and moral depravity.

If it is clearly understood that evil is not necessarily wickedness or sin, we can begin to open our minds to the Bible teaching concerning the origins of evil. In this section therefore, we shall look at forms of evil other than those which may be termed wicked, and as will become readily apparent, it is God Himself who creates such evils—and not as is popularly supposed, an opposing god of evil, the Devil.

Isaiah 45:6 & 7 makes this point very boldly:

“That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the L ORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the L ORD do all these things.”

In illustration of this truth we may recall the ten plagues which God sent upon the land of Egypt. In obedience to His word His angels afflicted the Egyptians with most terrible works—This is expressed in Psalm 78:49-51 as follows:

“He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, sending evil among them. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt...”

These “evil angels” were not wicked spirits, they were “his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Psa. 103:20). Take another Scripture: In Amos 3:6 we read:

“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the L ORD hath not done it?”

It may be difficult for some to face this fact, but this is usually because of an inadequate appreciation of God’s character as revealed in all the Scriptures.

“Behold therefore,” says the apostle Paul, “the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22).

When the attributes of God’s character were first revealed to Moses (Ex. 34:6-7 and Duet. 5:8-10) it was seen that an essential element was justice. Whilst forgiving the iniquity of some, He would by no means clear the guilt of those who continued to reject Him. Judgment would be meted out, and in this sense God creates evil.

In addition to this there is the corrective evil of chastisement which God brings upon people for their own ultimate good. “Spare the rod and spoil the child” is a Scriptural principle taken from Proverbs (chapters 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14). The apostle applies it to God’s dealings with his children—Heb. 12:5-8. This may be likened to distasteful medicine, which in humility the true Christian will recognise is prescribed for his own benefit.

A third and very important form of “evil” is given to man by God. It is the hardship encountered during trials of faith. Peter told the first century believers in 1 Peter 4:12-13:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

God tempts no man says James (chap. 1:13), but He does try, or prove their hearts says Paul (1 Thess 2:4), and it is essential to the understanding of the truth that we appreciate this difference. God may place a man in circumstances that will prove his loyalty to the word (as for example His command that Abraham should offer his son Isaac). An enlightened man in such a position knows what God expects of him; the task or duty may be difficult but the test will prove the man’s faithfulness. This is a trial from God—such as in the case of Job in the Old Testament. Job was not tempted by a supernatural devil as taught by many. It is true that Job had an “adversary,” but it was God who tried him. Job’s response is an exhortation to all; his own words were:

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:10-12).

This then was the reason for “all the evil that the L ORD had brought upon him” (Job 42:11). It was a trial of faith, the result of which was to improve him, and bring him forth as gold, in the way Peter describes in 1 Peter 1:7 (which see). A trial of this type from God does not come so that God may learn what we are like—it is so that we may have opportunity to express our love and our loyalty to Him.

As we have said, it is essential that we distinguish between trial in this sense and temptation. James says that “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14).

The initiative that prompts man to sin comes from lust, or desire. It is only when a man or woman has rejected God’s call to faithfulness that alternatives present themselves. These, as we shall explain later, come from within the man himself.

Finally, we must in humility seek to understand the reasons why God has created certain forms of evil. So many people contemplate these things from an attitude which (sadly) challenges God’s justice. That is not the way to seek His truth. “God is love” says John (1 John 4:8), and because this is so he has created those evils which He calculates to be promotive of salvation.

Take for example his judgements: the Noahic flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the Canaanites, Nineveh, Babylon etc. We can perhaps understand and appreciate these when we realise that human wickedness is like a gangrene, which will spread through the body until it finally destroys it. A surgical amputation does not save the corrupt limb—but it does save the remainder of the body. The human race is in precisely this condition, and it is for this reason—when a people or nation’s iniquity has “come to the full” (Dan. 8:23; Gen. 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:16)—that God destroys them. In other words, when a society becomes fully saturated with wickedness (see Gen. 18:23-33 for an exact illustration) it becomes not only an obnoxious in itself, but a positive source of danger to others—hence it must be amputated or cut off.

Similarly with the principles of chastisement and trial: these are for our ultimate good, despite the fact that temporary evils are sent. Now if we can appreciate these Divine principles it will help us to understand why the natural world—the creation—is
marred with evil. Genesis tells us that God created everything “very good,” but it also tells us in chapter 3:16-21:

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

So the Bible does teach that God creates evil. There is no escaping the fact. Let the genuine student seek the reasons for it in humility.

The natural world—as it exists today—is red in tooth and claw. The lion hunts his prey and the eagle sinks her talons into the flesh of a defenceless lamb—why must the innocent and defenceless suffer like this? Why did God choose the skin of an innocent animal to cover Adam and Eve? Is not the story of Christ’s sacrifice locked within the world of nature, teaching the great principle that the innocent must suffer for the preservation of the guilty! Who created the lion and the eagle? Who provides them with food that they might survive? The answer is God! He who also provided “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Perhaps we see then that the sufferings imposed by the Genesis curse were for the purpose of preserving fallen man so that sin could be covered by the principle of sacrifice.

The Trial in Eden

God then is the Creator of evil, but not of sin. The origin of sin is the subject to which we must now address ourselves. The New Testament teaches from Romans 5:12 that it was “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”

This was a deliberate choice by the man Adam. Again the New Testament makes this clear from 1 Timothy 2:14:

“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

“Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife” is God’s verdict in Genesis 3:17. Eve had been deceived when she entered into the transgression of God’s command, but Adam knew perfectly well what he was doing.

But by what means was the wife, Eve, deceived? The New Testament says in 2 Corinthians 11:3,

“The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility.”

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made” says Genesis 3:1. If then Moses, Jesus, and Paul testify to a certain subtle wisdom in the serpent, what authority has the unbeliever to challenge the fact? The very word serpent in the Hebrew language (nachash in this place) signifies an observer, from the root “to perceive.”

We know of course that animals do have a certain degree of mental ability and that they are frequently trained to do quite spectacular things upon a given command. We know also that some—the fox for example—has certain degrees of cunning. It is precisely this animal cunning which is implied by the word subtil in the Genesis text (Hebrew: arum—crafty, cunning), and not the higher intellectual powers which are peculiar to the human race. As we shall see, this animal cunning or craft is all that is necessary to produce the suggestions which deceived Eve.

“But snakes don’t talk” says the persistent unbeliever of God’s word. Perfectly true, they don’t. Neither do asses or mules! Instead of requiring genuine historicity—for example, Romans 5:19,

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Christ’s obedience was historical fact, and if Adam’s transgression were not also historical fact Paul’s comparison could not have any relevance or validity. There must have been by necessity a literal fall, otherwise reconciliation through Christ becomes a neutralised doctrine. Paul says again (Rom. 5:14) “death reigned from Adam to Moses.” This too requires literal historicity.

There is thus no doubt about what the Scripture intends in a historical sense, and when Paul said “the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty,” that is just what he meant—no more, and no less.

Now consider the following account from Numbers 22:28.
“And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?”

It is conceivable then that God gave the serpent the ability of speech—but why would He do so?

Suppose for the moment that this was the case. It is not difficult in the light of what has gone before, to realise that God provided the circumstances of a trial, or test, in Eden. Adam was created neither mortal (subject to death) nor immortal (incapable of death). He was in the position of attaining either of these two states, but as yet the choice between them had to be made. He could either attain immortality through faith—that is by demonstrating his faith in obedience (James 2:17-18), or he could attain corruption and death through sin (Rom. 6:23).

God created man with free-will, as a basis from which He might obtain voluntary—and therefore genuine—love. Adam could thus choose between faithfulness and loyalty to God, or satisfying his own wishes at the expense of his Creator’s will. In this way he was completely free to either please or offend.

God then, who trieth the hearts of men and women, gave his creatures the opportunity to demonstrate their love by providing the circumstances of the Genesis trial. Had they responded to this opportunity in faith they would probably have gained the gift of God, which is an endless life.

The important point to grasp is God’s goodness in this provision. Eternal life cannot be given indiscriminately by God if He is to maintain His own standards of righteousness. He required the voluntary affections of His people, and their recognition of His supreme wisdom (and therefore of His authority). In order that He might grant this supreme blessing to Adam and Eve, the circumstances had to be provided so that they could prove themselves worthy of it. This was done by giving them the command not to eat of a certain tree: This was His word entrusted to them for belief and obedience.

Although it is conceivable that God gave the serpent the ability of speech in order to try Eve (for it was her own desire that tempted her, not the serpent), there is an alternative.

Before the fall a much closer harmony existed between man and the animals. Before sin entered the world, and before the Genesis curse was imposed, complete harmony must have existed in creation thus manifesting the harmony between God and man. It is quite reasonable to suggest that some form of communication between creatures was possible in such a state—for example, the picture given to us in Genesis 2:19-20 of the animals being named by Adam, with the otherwise strange comment “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” The animals intelligence and capacity for appreciation was inferior, and therefore could not reciprocate Adam’s love and devotion, but though unsuitable as help-meets, a certain harmony is implied by the text. It is evident that the behaviour of animals altered after the curse; they became wild and reflected the discord brought about by sin—a discord that we are told will disappear when the curse is removed (see the beautiful picture given in Isa. 11:6-9). Language as we now know it was instituted at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), and it is not unlikely that as God confounded languages here—“that they may not understand one another’s speech” (v. 7)—so He interfered with communication at the time of the fall. Today experiments are being carried out by naturalists who believe that communication between creatures was possible and that some form of language existed between man and the animals before the fall.

This opposition neutralised Eve’s faith, and instead of looking for guidance she looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—this serpent therefore became a devil or satan. It was a false accuser that opposed the word of God entrusted to Eve.

This reasoning deceived Eve—but it did not tempt her. The animal could not reason accurately upon the word that had been entrusted to Eve, because it involved a mortal for which it had no faculty. This produced an unintentional lie which had the effect—equally unintentional—of falsely accusing God. The serpent thus became a false accuser and a liar. In Scriptural terminology it became a devil.

There are two senses in which the Bible uses the word devil. One is the sense of demon (as previously considered); the other, which is confined to the New Testament only, is the Greek word diabolos—meaning an accuser, slanderer. It is used for example in Titus 2:3.

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not diabolos (false accusers), not given to much wine...”

Also in 2 Timothy 3:3 and Luke 16:1 (diaballomai) similarly. It is translated slanderers in 1 Timothy 3:11.

In the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament made before the time of Christ, the Greek diabolos is used to translate the Hebrew word satan e.g. Job 1:7. It is clear therefore that when diabolos is used in the New Testament, it is used as the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word satan.

On the word Satan, Bagster’s Hebrew Lexicon gives the root meaning as: to be hostile, to oppose. In the masculine gender it signifies adversary, and in the feminine gender accusation. As a proper name it is Sitnah, the name of a well in Genesis 26:21. This word appears in the plural—satans—in Psalm 71:13 where it is translated adversaries. We might at this place also refer to another quotation from the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Under “Satan” the following appears:

“...In Hebrew, throughout the Old Testament, there is no suggestion of Dualism whether temporal, spatial, or ethical. God Himself forms light and creates darkness, makes weal and creates woe. Hostile heathen powers could be spoken of as fighting against God and His people Israel, but they are the rod of His anger.”

This opposition neutralised Eve’s faith, and instead of looking for guidance she looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and this commenced the process of temptation.

The trial in Eden then, was brought about by natural circumstances that were in evidence at the time. The animal mind being destitute of moral appreciation or reverence, calculated—as a very simple computer might do if the same information were fed into it—that Eve would not certainly die as a result of gaining the knowledge of good and evil. This invention the beast was able to communicate to Eve, and she, descending to the level of reasoning, was beguiled.
Napoleon Bonaparte apparently had no contact with Jews early in his life before going to war in Italy. In 1797, the Jews of Ancona were threatened with death as the French army approached—not by the French, but by their neighbours! The reactionary and anti-Jewish elements were stirred up as the revolutionary army came nearer. Napoleon, hearing of their plight, rushed to their aid. The first French soldiers to enter the ghetto were Jews who pulled off the yellow badges that the Italian Jews were forced to wear, and replaced them with revolutionary cockades. Afterwards, in Milan, he is credited with saying to them “You are free men, you are free men... I shall maintain your freedom. Be strong, don’t fear and don’t worry.” He abolished the laws of the Inquisition and the Jews were able to feel free at last. Napoleon was called Chelek Tov (in Hebrew, ‘a good part’) that is Bona Parte, by the Jews. That same year, on August 28, 1797, the French issued a decree abolishing the Ghetto in Padua—“Liberty! Equality! In the Name of the French Republic One and Indivisible. The Central Government of the Paduan Delta Districts of Rovigo and Adria... decrees: First, that the Hebrews are at liberty to live in any street they please; Second, that the barbarous and meaningless name of Ghetto, which designates the street which they have been inhabiting hitherto, shall be substituted by that of Via Libera.”

During the violent years of the French Revolution, the Jews of France were among those who were promised basic rights and freedoms in the 1789 “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.” Robespierre, one of the prominent leaders of the Revolution, defended the rights of Protestants, and the black slaves of the West Indian colonies, as well as the Jews. The Emancipation of the Jews was proclaimed on September 27, 1791, when full civil rights were given to the Jews as they had earlier been given to other French citizens. The architects of the Declaration were influenced by the men of the enlightenment, the majority of whom never intended that civil rights be extended towards Jews. Most arguments were focused on tolerance for Protestants. The question of Jewish emancipation arose with the argument that Jews could be made happier and more useful to the state. The Revolution ushered in a period of great hope and optimism, and the French Constitution of 1793 led to their emancipation. “The Constitution guarantees, as natural and civil rights... Liberty to every man to speak, write, print and publish his thoughts, without the writings being subjected to censure or inspection before the publication, and to exercise the religious worship to which he is attached.”

The Sephardim (Spanish Jews) received citizenship in September 1790 and the Ashkenazim (German Jews) about six months later. In 1791 France became the first European country to emancipate its Jewish population. Even so, during the Reign of Terror (1793-94), synagogues and communal organizations were closed down, along with other religious institutions. These were uncertain times, and Britain, and the Netherlands did not grant the Jews in their countries equal rights with Gentiles until after the French Revolution in 1796. Napoleon freed the Jews in other areas he conquered, just as he had done in Italy. Elsewhere in Europe, especially where Jews were most concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe, Jews were not granted equal rights. The first true Jewish political movement didn’t take place until the revolutionary atmosphere of the mid-19th century arose. Jews were given civic rights as individuals, but lost their group privileges. The rise of Napoleon Bonaparte proved an important event in the emancipation of the Jews of Europe from old laws restricting them to Jewish ghettos, as well as the many laws that limited Jews’ rights to property, worship, and careers. The French Revolution abolished the different treatment of people according to religion or origin that existed under the monarchy; the 1789 “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” guaranteed freedom of religion and free exercise of worship, provided that it did not contradict public order. At that time, most other European countries implemented measures restricting the rights of people from minority religions. The conquests of Napoleon Bonaparte had the effect of spreading the modernist ideas of revolutionary France with respect to the equality of citizens and the rule of law.
Whenever he pushed beyond the European states, he was constrained and defeated. The first of these episodes took place when he sought to destroy and limit the extent of the burgeoning British Empire. Ironically, he was responsible for a major expansion of the infant United States of America when he later sold the French holdings which became the Louisiana Purchase, in part to keep these lands out of the hands of the British. Much of the wealth of the Empire flowed to London from the east, from India in particular. For almost 200 years, the British East India Company had dominated this eastern trade. It was only in August of 1793 that the French were defeated in India by the English, and Pondicherry and the other French trading stations were taken away. It was through Egypt that the wealth of the empire passed.

On October 26, 1795, Napoleon was appointed general in charge of the Interior under the ruling Directory, and in the Spring of 1796 he was given command over the armies in Italy. He used this post to weld a young, starving and disgruntled army into a force which won victory after victory against stronger and more numerous Austrian forces. On Nov 17, 1796, he was victorious over the Austrians at Arcola. A treaty was negotiated with Pope Pius VI in February of 1797, but it was October before a treaty with Austria ended the war in Europe.

Napoleon returned to France in 1797 as the nation’s brightest star, with no further need of the patronage of Robespierre or Barras. He portrayed himself to the people as politically independent. On Feb 10, 1798, Napoleon’s armies entered Rome after the killing of the French general. They proclaimed the Roman Republic on the 20th, and imprisoned Pius VI, for his opposition. Napoleon was to use this act to his advantage later in dealing with the Muslims of the Middle East. Napoleon’s successful campaigns in Italy convinced the Directory that he should lead the invasion of France’s mortal enemy, England. However, in 1798, England’s naval strength was superior and Napoleon knew he could not invade. Therefore, he proposed a much safer, and less career threatening campaign—the invasion of Egypt. In his memoirs, he wrote: “The principal object of the French expedition to the East was to check the power of the English. The army which was to change the destiny of India, was to march from the Nile. Egypt was to supply the place of Saint-Domingo and the Antilles, and to reconcile the freedom of the blacks with the interests of our manufacturers. The conquest of this province would have produced the ruin of all the English settlements in America and the Peninsula of the Ganges.”

As the 18th century drew to a close, the Ottoman Empire was still a force to be reckoned with. Egypt was still a part of that empire, but now was controlled by the Mamelukes, the force of former slaves and Christian captives. Napoleon had conquered the kingdoms of Europe, overthrowing kings and governments, but the British Navy frustrated Napoleon and the French at every turn. The English Channel stood between Napoleon and victory, but it was controlled by the British. Seeking to inflict major damage on his opponents, Napoleon looked to the east and Egypt. In 1797 he wrote, “In order to destroy England utterly, we must get possession of Egypt.” He was prompted by a desire for fresh victories, and the Directory must have had some concerns that their now-famous general would attempt to seize power. An interruption in the flow of trade would damage Britain just as France had been damaged by the naval blockade.

On 19 May 1798, Napoleon, set sail from Toulon, with 400 ships and 35,000 troops, for Malta and Egypt. On the 9th of June the army landed, and two days later, the island was ceded to the French Republic. There he took control of the country from the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem that controlled it. Over six days he abolished slavery, abolished feudal privileges, gave the Jews equal rights with the Christians, allowed them to build a synagogue, freed the captive Turks and Moors, established fifteen primary schools, and sent off fifteen Maltese boys to be educated at French expense in Paris. Once again the Jews found themselves elevated to a state of equal rights with their neighbours. The fleet sailed for Egypt, and two days after that the English under Horatio Nelson passed through the Strait of Messina. The English and French fleets sailed around each other for more than a month as the British were sent to Gibraltar, and on August 19th, August 17th 7 British ships and 6 French prizes received the news of the destruction of his fleet until August 13th, almost two weeks later. On August 17th 7 British ships and 6 French prizes were sent to Gibraltar, and on August 19th, Nelson returned to Naples. Not only was Napoleon now isolated in Egypt, but, on hearing the news of the destruction of the French fleet, a Second Coalition of European nations against France began to come together. Turkey declared war on France on September 9th, and England, Russia, Austria, Naples, and Turkey began to work to join their forces. But Napoleon’s work was not yet done in Egypt or the Middle East, with either the Turks or the Jews.

To be Continued
Well, that is what the Bible says! Oh no! says the wise man of this world, it could not have possibly been created in six literal days, only a naive and ill-informed ignoramus would claim that! Well, there seems to be a lot of that type who employed their time in writing Scripture—Moses for example, whose words appear above. And he is not without his supporters. Jesus Christ says “had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46,47). In other words: Believe it or not... All of it!

The Psalmist seems to have had the same view of things. He wrote: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (see Psalm 33:6-9). But the wisdom of this world says “Not so!” And in proof thereof we are given speculative theories dressed up as science. The Bible’s answer to guess-mongers is this: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding” (Job 38:4). For ourselves we would rather hear the word of the One who says: “I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isaiah 45:12). Let us make our choice... and believe it or not!

“...in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” — Exodus 20:11

“...for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth” — Exodus 31:17.