Religious Zionists of all ages march around the temple gates in Jerusalem to sing, pray and make supplication for the coming of Messiah & the re-building of the temple.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem..."
“Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

Jeremiah 31:10.

WRITTEN OVER 100 YEARS AGO
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Religious Zionists sing “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem...” and pray for the coming of Messiah and the building of the temple. What is the origin of this movement? Where is it leading?

MILESTONES UPDATE

An interview with Yishai Fleisher of Arutz Sheva radio

The Jewish synagogue depicted as blind by a church that cannot see!

The relics of Father Christmas in a tug-of-war between east & west Churches.
**The Feast of Tabernacles** is described in Lev. 23. It is there commanded to the Sons of Israel, saying, “And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations. Ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in tents seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in tents: that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in tents when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah, your God.”

Such is the Institution of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was appointed to be commenced upon the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the very next day that followed the conclusion of the Feast of Trumpets. There can be little doubt that the Feast of Trumpets was intended as a prophetic type of the day of the Lord. The Trumpet is a military instrument, and is significative of war. The trumpet was to sound for fourteen days, expressing the duration and the tumult of the Day of the Lord. The Feast of Trumpets was to be immediately succeeded by the Feast of Tabernacles. And this may be considered beyond question, as a prophetic type, representing to us the progress of those great events which are now fast approaching. Suddenly, as a thief in the night, the Day of the Lord shall break out upon the world, and shall run its disastrous course to the fall of Antichrist; every year more calamitous than before, and one judgment crowding upon another. But when Antichrist has fallen, and the Lord has begun his reign, then the Feast of Trumpets shall conclude; the instruments of war shall be succeeded by those of peace. The Feast of Tabernacles shall then begin, to continue year after year through the Millennial Age. The feast, in itself, is designed for the people of Israel especially, if not solely. “All that are Israelites born shall dwell in tents.” Yet this beautiful display of the mercies of God to Israel is not to be hidden from the Gentiles. All nations are invited, and even commanded to attend; and severe judgments are denounced against those who refuse the invitation (Zechariah 14:16-19).

After the close of the dreadful scenes of the Day of the Lord—after the restoration of Israel, the pacification of the world, and the reappearing of Jerusalem—the Millennial Reign of the Son of Man shall begin over all the earth, having its centre on Mount Zion. The Temple shall be rebuilt according to the magnificent designs of Ezekiel; the land of Israel divided again among the tribes by a new arrangement, quite different from the first. Universal prosperity shall spread over the whole land, until it has become the glory of all lands. Jerusalem shall be chosen as the capital of the King of Kings.—“This shall be my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.” It shall also be the centre of universal empire, and send forth its omnipotent decrees to all the nations of the globe. There the New Jerusalem Municipality shall be centred as a perpetual guard over the Holy City. In the midst of this community the Lord shall dwell, and shall make it the court of the great innumerable strangers; men of every climate and complexion; of every rank of life; of every variety of temperament and manners, are gathered into one, by a common impulse which creates an unaffected brotherhood. There shall neither be slave nor master, conqueror nor conquered. The prince of peace is the King of Freedom; the city of Peace is the centre of eternal brotherhood.

It appears from Ezekiel 43, that the Lord will visit, at stated times, the Temple of Jerusalem, and that the house shall be filled with his glory. We may therefore suppose that so great an occasion as that of the Feast of Tabernacles will not be overlooked. When all nations are assembled at Jerusalem, this manifestation of Divine glory will undoubtedly take place and complete the grandeur and brightness of the scene. It appears also from Isaiah, that some remarkable display of Divine Power will be made in providing for the wants of so vast a multitude. It occurs at first sight at least, to a political economist, that it would be impossible for the land of Israel to sustain so immense an assemblage. Such a concourse of nations, and still more from year to year, would be sufficient to exhaust the most fertile country, and to drain it of all its resources. But, independently of the increased productiveness of the land, there is a remarkable indication of some supernatural provision to be found in Isaiah 25. There it is written, “And

**THE TEMPLE SHALL BE REBUILT ACCORDING TO THE MAGNIFICENT DESIGNS OF EZEKIEL**
in this mountain shall Jehovah of armies make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” This chapter of Isaiah is immediately preceded by that terrible description of judgment which occupies the whole of chapter 24. There can be no doubt that these two chapters are as consecutive, in time as they are in arrangement, and that the 24th foretells the tremendous judgments of the Day of the Lord—the great tribulation—while the 25th describes the period of prosperity and blessing which is immediately to follow. This being the case, the Feast described in verse 6, may be taken literally as an exercise of Divine Hospitality on a scale worthy of God. The Lord himself has invited all nations to meet him at Jerusalem. They all assemble as his guests; and the preparations for their reception will no doubt be worthy of the Host. A feast, on a scale that the world has never witnessed or conceived, will be provided for the guests of the Lord. It is said that Caesar entertained the whole multitude of the Roman people at a single feast; and he defrayed the expenses out of the spoils of the world. But the Lord Jesus, will entertain all the nations of the earth in annual succession, and without the spoil or oppression of the humblest of his subjects. At this stupendous feast, “wines on the lees” form a prominent item of the entertainment. Wine, which the Scripture extols as one of the most precious gifts of God, and which the Lord has commanded to be received as the symbol of his covenant blood. This significant and appropriate symbol has long been discredited by intemperate pietism. Hypocrisy hates the symbol of the blood of Christ as it hates the blood itself; and it has therefore raised up certain zealots to decry the use of wine, and to pronounce it to be sinful. Now that the time is drawing near when the Lord himself shall drink wine with his disciples, in the Kingdom of God, fanaticism is more especially aroused; and it has persuaded even a few of the Lord’s own people to condemn what the Lord has so expressly commanded. But in that great festival of the nations, the false morality of a fleshly pietism will be swept away for ever, and men shall drink wine, as well as “eat bread in the Kingdom of Heaven;” and thus the divine hospitality of the King of Kings shall provide for the wants of all the nations of the earth, when they assemble at Jerusalem, without the danger of exhausting or impoverishing the land.

The aspect of Jerusalem, under the reign of the Age to Come, presents to us the most perfect picture of felicity and beauty that the earth can offer, and one in every way adapted to its end. The magnificent city, fifty miles in circumference, and perfect in all its building; the Temple raised above, on the precipice of Mount Moriah; the Feast of Tabernacles prepared in the streets and courts of Jerusalem: the boughs of goodly trees, fresh from the forests (newly created—Editor); the assembled crowds, composed of every variety of the human race, from the western sons of Gomer to the dark-haired race of Ham. The soft air breathing through the leaves of a thousand bowers; the blue tranquility of the sky. All this is peaceful and beautiful: but it is far from being the whole; the Lord himself will appear in the midst of his subjects, attended by the thousands of his saints. He is to assume his place as Son of David and King of Israel, and to fill the Temple with his glory. The wonder of his presence will be revealed to all the multitude; and all the natural pleasures of the feast will be sanctified by his approbation. In that great day the Lord of lords shall be the Host, and all mankind his guests.

Every man, as he returns to his native city, shall proclaim the marvels he has witnessed; and thus, from mouth to mouth the glories of the Feast of Tabernacles shall be published throughout the earth! All nations shall be awakened by the same holy desire to witness the presence of the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem. “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” “therefore thy gates shall be open continually:” “they shall not be shut night nor day; that men may bring into them the wealth of the nations, and that their kings may be brought.” “Thy sun shall go down no more; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light; and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” A bond of perpetual union shall be woven at Jerusalem, and diffused through every heart. All men shall be bound together by a common interest and a common pride; for all that glory shall glory in the Lord. And Jerusalem shall be made the Capital of the World, and become the centre of empire by becoming first the centre of attraction.

How beautiful, yet how irresistible is the mechanism of God. Men, for three thousand years, have laboured to drive each other into union by penalty and laws. Philosophers have waved their wands and have brought forth frogs; yea, even in the king’s chambers. Spiritualizers have mangled and distorted Scripture in order to heal and rectify mankind; but all in vain!! But the Lord comes in at last, and sets before the mind his divine conceptions. A nation of saints, a city of palaces; a festival of unrivalled grandeur! the King of Kings descending to his subjects; the light of Jerusalem, then a Heavenly City, radiating glory into the skies; the presence of the Prince of Peace pacifying the wilderness of creation; and thus without violence he takes possession of the avenues of the heart, and shuts out every tumultuous passion. “For in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah.”

TORQUAY, ENGLAND, Nov., 1851.
n the beginning, when the earth was without form, and void—when darkness was upon the face of the deep, the very first command was: “Let there be light.” And God called the light Day. Thus began the creation of all things, and a new heaven and a new earth came into being by the word of the LORD.

This is the pattern of how God works. As we read it in the prophecy of Isaiah (55:11-12): “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace…”

When a particular purpose of God is to be accomplished, it begins by His word going forth. And so it is in the natural world—the dawning of a new day begins as light increases and gradually reveals the awakening world of life and activity. This is the pattern or type to look for in the approaching Day of redemption and restoration of Israel. The light of God’s word must enter into the minds of His people. As it is written in the 9th chapter of Isaiah:

“The people that walked in darkness
Have seen a brilliant light;
On those who dwelt in a land of gloom
Light has dawned.”
(JPS Hebrew-English version of the Tanakh).

The people spoken of here are the nation (verse 3), and the chapter continues to speak of victory over the oppressors and the establishment of the Kingdom with the King “upon the throne of David.”

**A Light of the People**

Proverbs 6:23 says that “the commandment is a lamp, and the law (Torah) is light.” The Psalmist also (119:105) declared, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Again, God says through the Prophet: “Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgement to rest for a light of the people” (Isaiah 51:4).

In view of these Scripture principles the often neglected words of Malachi 4:4 seem to carry an importance and significance for our time:

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”

A development of this kind—of some religious Jews in the Land beginning to take the Law of Moses more seriously—is hardly likely to make headlines in the world’s media. Newsmen would not be interested in it, and if they noticed it at all, would probably be antagonistic just as they are to any other form of Bible-based ideology. Yet this development is exactly what we can report following recent visits to the so-called West Bank, the “mountains of Israel.” Here is the beginning of a Bible-based culture which may be likened to the early signs of dawn while as yet the sun is still below the horizon.

**Talmud Torah**

**THE GATE OF HEAVEN BEIT EL**

This school in Beit El (Bethel) teaches the Law to young children. The sign outside the school (above) is translated in the box (right.)
Teaching the Torah

The average tourist is unlikely to go into the territories of Judea and Samaria (the area generally known as the West Bank), yet this is really the Biblical heartland. He is even more unlikely to gain access to a Jewish school such as the one that we visited in Beit El last November. What we saw happening here can only be described as phenomenal.

Here in portable classrooms we found small children of seven and eight years old who could recite off by heart the entire book of Leviticus. In a classroom of nine and ten year old boys we found them able to recite the complete Pentateuch: the first five books of the Bible, word for word, from memory! We were invited to choose any page—from Genesis chapter one to Deuteronomy chapter 34—and the children could recite it. We video-taped this and will probably show the clip as part of our presentations in the coming year (Lord willing).

The school principal, Israel, explained: “The kids learn here all day, all year, every day—in the holy days, in the winter, in the summer, when everybody is on vacation—we sit and learn here. And we learn the Bible; we study the Bible. Then we learn the Mishna (that is the beginning of the Talmud) and the kids are going to learn it until they know it by heart... the kids learn and they are happy about this learning...

“It is the responsibility of every parent to teach his son the Torah (quotes Deut. 6:6,7)... we call the kids; You are the Book of the Bible—if you know everything by heart you are the Book of the Bible... The first five books they are going to know by heart—the other books they are going to know, but they are going to have to repeat it again and again to get it by heart because it is a lot of stuff, but the idea is that whatever place, they are going to know what it is talking about—and even part of them by heart; everything. It depends how smart you are!”

A Bible-Based Culture

When the light of God’s word enters into a society or a community, such as we see described above, it will produce certain results. Some may think that this concentration upon the Torah and Tanakh (i.e. old Testament or covenant) is over the top; that it is taking things too far—and many Christians would see no point in it at all, forgetting what the apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament, especially 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

But let us go back to the time when William Tyndale produced the first English translation of the Bible—that is over 450 years ago. His famous statement was: “I defy the Pope and all his laws... If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest” (Demaus, quoting from Foxe edition of 1563). And so it is that we find in Tyndale’s Prologue to the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (1534) his words concerning that epistle: “I think it mete, that every Christian man not only know it by rote and without the book, but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread...”

Those who followed Tyndale’s advice—and we do not doubt that many did so—would carry the words of Paul in their minds, so that even if the authorities burned their books (which often happened), the message continued to influence those who held it, and those to whom it was verbally communicated. Within a century of Tyndale a Bible-based culture was formed in England and men like Joseph Mede (1586-1638) were writing about the restoration of the Jews to their ancient Land, and about the promised Kingdom of Israel. As the Israeli writer Michael Pragai expressed it in his book Faith and Fulfilment (1985): “...without the cultural and spiritual omnipresence of the English Bible, it is highly unlikely that Lord Balfour would have given his famous Declaration, or that Britain would have striven to undertake the administration of post-World War I Palestine under the League of Nations...

“Generation after generation of Englishmen studied the Book. As it was often the only book in the house, it was read over and over again. Its sayings became household words. Its stories, heroes, kings and prophets were as familiar as neighbors. Many chapters were known by heart; whole verses and passages were cited in everyday speech.”

That Bible-based culture which survived into the early 20th Century has now been destroyed by a secular-humanist philosophy that sprang out of Europe, and which is fiercely opposed to Bible influence of any kind.

The light of God’s word is, however, now finding its way into the minds of a rising generation of young Israelis who live in the Biblical heartlands. It is a light that will not be extinguished by man-made philosophy. It will produce certain results.

Dividing Light from Darkness

Modern Israel was established as a democratic state and has had—and still has for the most part—a secular government which is driven by those same European ideological forces which brought about the collapse of the Biblical culture that was the secret of England’s greatness. These ideological forces are often associated with the French philosophy of the 18th century, and politically with the French Revolution and its Napoleonic aftermath which spread across Europe. It is summarized in the famous slogan: ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.’ For the Jews of Europe it brought emancipation, human rights and a freedom unknown since Justinian imposed his codes in the sixth century AD. European Jews were thus zealous socialists and humanists. The 1948 Declaration of Independence paid lip-service to “freedom, justice and peace as envisioned by the prophets of Israel!” and claimed to be “placing our trust in the Almighty,” but in reality it was a return in unbelief. The principles outlined in European humanism were far more influential upon Israeli society than were those of the Torah. Spiritually, darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people (Isaiah 60:2). Darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2), and so the people walked in darkness.

Now when the light of God’s Law (Proverbs 6:23) enters into this society as it is doing, there must inevitably follow friction and division, for God has separated light from darkness. As young people sing their songs...
such as *Or Chadash* (New Light) and “Jump into the sea of the Torah” (Chaim David) and begin to manifest the moral teachings of—say—Leviticus 18 and 19, it will not sit well with anti-Bible Humanists. They will oppose it, and view such developments as being antagonistic to world opinion and an embarrassment for the nation. Hence the present government’s opposition to serious Biblical connections is to be expected and, of course, is being experienced. Indeed, some forms of religious persecution and discrimination have already been in evidence. This will continue, but as in the case of the Protestant Reformation in England several centuries ago, the developing Biblical culture will only be strengthened by it. Light will penetrate through the darkness, until the new day dawns and until “the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams…” (Malachi 4:2).

*At First Light*

What we are seeing today in Israel is only a very small beginning of something—the faintest chink of light you could say. It is still dusk, to use that illustration—Darkness still pervades with its superstitions and traditions—the ideas and thinking of men—but these shadows will fade as the pure light of the word enlightens the minds of those who absorb it. Such is the power of the word; of what Daniel the prophet termed “the Scripture of truth” (Daniel 10:21). At the appropriate time God will raise up teachers who will be able to work with the material which even now is beginning to form. They will come upon the scene as the early morning dew, for such was the promise given through Moses:

“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God” (Deut. 32:1-3).

The prophet Isaiah has a most interesting comment in chapter 26:19. It is a passage that translators have struggled with, but the meaning is:

“Thy dead shall live (revive),
My dead body shall they (plural) arise.
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is the dew of LIGHT,
And the earth shall cast out the dead (those in the grave).”

Daniel puts it this way:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:2-3).

Those who thus come forth will turn many in Israel to righteousness—c/p Malachi 4.

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**PROPHECY DAYS**

**MILESTONES PROPHECY DAY:** Saturday, February 24, 2007 at the Benn Hall, Rugby (God willing). Commences at 11:30am. Theme: “THE NEARNESS OF CHRIST’S RETURN.”

**KENT PROPHECY DAY:** Saturday, March 31st, 2007, at the East Malling Village Hall, just off Exit 4, M20, West of Maidstone. Commences at 2:30pm. “WHERE DOCTRINE & PROPHECY CONVERGE: A Time to Remember the Covenant with Israel.” Paul Billington & Stephen Whitehouse
Paul Since we last met, the Lebanon war has taken place. Was it a success or was it a set back for Israel?

Yishai Before I answer that question Paul, I want to welcome you. It’s great to see you, and one of the reasons you came to interview me is because you and your people are one of the only groups who see things the right way. And you know why that is? it is because you see things in Biblical terms, and because you see things in Biblical terms it gives you a completely different perspective on the here and now which people are guessing at—taking a stab at an understanding—but for you it’s not such an un-understandable phenomena. In fact it’s very understandable, so therefore all that you see and I see, goes through that prism of the Bible stories, and we know that it was written so that it would give us some guidance. It wasn’t written to be a best seller for God—He has all the money in the world! The book is there to give us lessons in the realities of today, so therefore that is why I think you are here, and I want to applaud you—and it’s good to see you.

With regard to the Lebanon war. Your question is whether it was a success or a failure. What is a success? A success is when you rout your enemies, when they flee before you, and when peace returns to this region, when Israel’s security is assured; when the nation is excited and on the road to something great. Now this war was clearly not a victory—clearly it was a loss, and it was a loss on many fronts. It was a simple military loss. There was 2,000 Hizbollah fighters that had tunneled and had created re-enforced bunkers for the last five or six years—we know that this was happening. They brought in rockets which they knew how to bring in and bring out whenever they wanted. They had a chain of command that was never broken, buried telephone lines, and they kept that chain of command unbroken throughout the relentless Israeli air bombing.

Paul And hiding behind the civilian population?
Very important! Very important—they used the civilian population and pulled the fangs of the Israeli airforce. We were bombed incessantly, we had some 150 of our Jewish people killed—partially civilians and partially the military. And Nasrallah, the head of Hizbollah, is not dead—in fact he is alive and very well. Our two soldiers that were kidnapped in the north were not returned—and also billions of dollars in terms of damage. Also we got a cease-fire in which the U.N. is once again monitoring Hizbollah, which is exactly what they did beforehand, and they let all this armament take place. Iran has stated—and I know this from intelligence—that they are continuing to re-build bigger and better than before, and probably with anti-air armament—you know, surface to air missiles that will deal with airplanes next time around, in the next war. So just to sum it up, if we look at it on this plane, on a simple military plane, it was a bad loss. On the other hand we did not lose completely, in the sense that none of our land was taken, or that really the geopolitical strength was greatly changed. But what was changed, maybe the most important part of this war was that Iran, Syria, Hamas, all the people in that kind of axis, felt that they were strengthened—very excited; they have got the spirit, and in war armament and training is very important, but the number one thing in war is spirit. And there is no question that our side was somewhat dispirited, while their side gained a lot of spirit.

Yishai, just looking at it in human terms now, who do you think is responsible for the war going in the way that it did?

Yishai You know, I would love it if I could just say that it was Olmert, or the current government, but that is not correct. It is now years of drumming into our minds that we are in a peace process, that we have got to sue for peace, that the army is less important than it was before—that we have to downgrade the army because we are in a new era, that monies have to be put in other places, and that the Jewish peoples’ right to the Land has been in question. Since 1967 that machinery has been in place to question Israel’s right to such clearly Jewish places as Hebron, Shechem (known as Nablus by the Arabs), Jerusalem—so therefore I wouldn’t only say that it is the current Israeli government which failed. I think it is about forty years—an interesting number—forty years of failure. Forty years of trying to drill into your minds that this is not our Land, and that moreover the Arabs have some kind of peace intentions, that we can form some kind of alliance with them, that they will come to understand... this, that and the other. This whole milieu of thinking is what is responsible for the current situation. It has just been escalating and growing; they have more (chutsbah) more daring, more confidence, building themselves up. What is going on with the Arabs—nothing but a build up, a build up of armaments, strength and also of spirit, togetherness—anger, anger against the Jewish people—we must get the Jewish people out. We are a very sore point in their cosmology, in their religion and their life. Israel is a chicken bone right in their throat. They have an Islamic Caliphate here; you know—that is by the way—nobody is talking about this, Lebanon was a Christian country. Bethlehem was a Christian town. No longer! The Jihad juggernaut is moving steadily along, and now this new Hitler, Haman-type character, and his name is Ahmedjinabad—and he is now a force here, and the heart-beat of the Middle East is racing, and it is racing towards war.

Paul Are you convinced of that?

Yishai I don’t think there is any other way to see it. I think it is those people who have weakened us and who would like us to believe that there is another way to see it, but there isn’t.

Paul Israel, the government, seems to be following this policy—the push for peace that you are talking about—but I read in Scripture that Israel was commanded by God to remain a separate people.

Yishai Yes.

Paul They were not to seek the peace of their enemies—so is this really following God’s will to push for peace in this way? Should not Israel make up its mind that you are not a nation like any other nation; you are a separate people—and for this reason your boys cannot marry non-Jews. Now we as Christadelphians follow the same principles. Within our own community—Now could this be upsetting to God if these principles are not being adhered to?

Yishai This, Paul, is the heart of your question. You are really wondering if Israel’s weakness at this juncture is coming from the Jewish peoples’ lack of a good relationship with God. In simple terms, following His ways—what He asks us to do. He has asked us to keep the Sabbath—we have a lot of laws that God wants us to follow here in the Land of Israel. He wants us not to loan money with interest. He wants us to keep the seventh year fallow. He wants us to observe the holy days and come to Jerusalem three times in a year—there is a lot that is being asked of us, and we are in a sense very far away from that. The bad news is that we are far away. The bad news is as you say, that the Jewish people are not yet on track to follow God’s ways, and He tends to get very angry—and not only does He get angry, but the Land itself has an allergic reaction to people who do not keep the purity of the Land—sexual purity, and Sabbath and these things. The Land wants to spit it out.

Paul God is grieved by what He sees.

Yishai Yes.

Paul The parades going on and so forth, as in recent days.

Yishai Let’s remember to get to the parade issue because that is very important and I would like to talk about that for a minute.

Paul Let us just bring out this Scripture. Just to confirm whether you see a connection. I am referring to Deuteronomy chapter 28, where it says that certain blessings will come in the
That happened historically, but is there a sense in which those principles are applying now? Why not? People don't believe it. I make that point to people they turn red, do not obey His commandments the LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before your enemies. Thou shalt go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. Yishai Absolutely. Paul That happened historically, but is there a sense in which those principles are applying now? Yishai So this is the process that we are going through here. You know Paul, we just got to this country after a hiatus of 2,000 years. We just got here basically 100 years ago; sixty years ago the State was founded. We are children here in the Land of Israel. Now there is a difference between when an adult drives over a red light, and when a child crosses the street without looking. The child is not yet fully developed mentally or spiritually. It doesn’t know, it doesn’t know how to choose between good and bad. Our peoples have been through Communism, Fascism, the Enlightenment; we have been through many years of dispersion. We have different cultures. The Sephardi culture, Ashkenazi culture; completely secular culture like my grandparents who went through the washing machine of Communism and the Gulag, and my Polish grandparents and my great grandparents who were completely wiped out. So we have lost so much of our Jewish heritage—our continuity was broken in the last 200 years. Our peoples have been completely dispersed. We have about 14 million people, only about 5 1/2 million of which are here in the Land of Israel, maybe 5 1/2 in America and the rest dispersed around Europe and other places. We still haven’t returned to our strength yet—not our spiritual strength nor our population strength. We are just in a process right now. It is to be understood that right now we are not there, where you are—the page that you are on; this page of Deuteronomy. Many people in Israel do not yet even know it. But there is a process happening here. And that process Paul, you know, is that in 1970 there were 3 million Jews in this country—now there are 5 1/2 million Jews. We are growing continuously. Look around Jerusalem—everywhere you go there are cranes, they are building the country. The kids are learning. Now along the way we are hitting some very serious speed-bumps, but it’s not that we are on the road to another eviction, another exile. We are being taught lessons here—lessons on the cheap; but we are not going to be wiped out here. There is going to be an awakening. There is a process going on here; the process of the Jewish peoples’ return to God. And that is part of the job that I do, to try to turn people on. Paul Yishai, keep on doing it. Keep on doing that job... Get going! Yishai You are right Paul, and I appreciate the fact that you as an outsider in a sense—an inside outsider—can say that. “Get going.” We believe that as well. It’s time to get going. I think that your great strength, and what you have to do—and you are doing it continuously—you have to preach to the world the opposite of what the media would like to tell. The media would like to sell Israel as a very—The word “Israel” is not even a nice word in the media. It doesn’t sound good, it is not... Paul To me it’s a lovely word! Yishai It’s the name God gave to Jacob, Yes. That we should view Israel through a Biblical prism, is very important. For example, no one would like to make the connection between the Palestinians and the Philistines. Paul Why not? Yishai People don’t believe it. I make that point often, and I think it is obvious. We have returned and they have returned—they are called Palestinians, we are called the State of Israel—what does it matter. Essentially the war is the same between the Jews and the Philistines in the Land of Israel. Now, when you make that point to people they turn red, they get very angry, they start to sweat. By the way, Jews as well, they get very concerned about this. They say, doesn’t that give legitimacy, Of course not—it means that we have a war. We have a conflict. One of our Rabbis from Vilna (about 200 years ago) said that the whole role of the Philistines is to be a crowbar, to push the Jews out of the Land. Their whole essence is to always sting the Jews, to make them uncomfortable in their Land. We have Arab Knesset members who, anytime someone will get up and give a moment of positivity for Israel, they will come in and slam it. Their whole thing is this darkness, this hate, they want to push us out of here. Interestingly enough, the Gay Parade, they also—they are not fighting for any particular rights, they want a happy pride parade—they want to show that love has no borders. And they want to bring the kind of acts to Israel which are abhorred by God. And they can bring it to Tel Aviv, which politically, they will not have as many people in opposition. But no; they want to bring it to Jerusalem. They want to bring it “in your face.” But you know Paul, we have had here just a few days of demonstrations (against it)—there were some rocks thrown, some pushing, some garbage cans set on fire—
nothing too serious, in the grand scheme of world demonstrations. You know what, we
made these demonstrations, then suddenly on the
sixth day, the Israeli army—by mistake—
when their artillery shells moved to the left and
hit these houses and killed all these Arabs, and
suddenly the police said that they could not
handle the terror threat and the protests at the
same time—and so said to the parade, we can’t
do it. Now what does that show you? It shows
to me something very clear. When the ground
swell does what it is supposed to do, when the
Jewish people act in the way that they are
supposed to do—God puts the frosting on the
cake. That is the way it was, and I want to tell
you that I think we had a great victory here in
Israel by pushing that back. I feel good about
that, but that was through the protesting way—
But we have to turn Jews on to Torah.

Paul Keep it up!

Yishai I was, by the way, in this Lebanon war—
and I had a chance to be with a lot of Israelis
who are very distant—very distant from the
Torah, and from the Truth. And I had a chance
to talk to them, and I would also laugh with
them. I wouldn’t do it in a way to preach at
them, but I would talk with them as Jews. They
have great hearts, golden hearts.

Paul I would just like to say this: The strength
that you have to get through to your people is
the strength of the Word, because hear what He
says through the prophet Isaiah, and you will
know the passage, but just as the rain is coming
down—and it is coming down right now—
“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow
from heaven, and returneth not thither, but
watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth
and bud, that it may give seed to the sower,
and bread to the eater: So shall my word be
that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not
return unto me void, but it shall accomplish
that which I please, and it shall prosper in the
thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).
And it goes on to say how you will go out with
joy and be led forth with peace.

Now get that word into the people, they
have to be taught. People are shy of the Book.
You know, you are on a bus and people will
read all kind of things, but you don’t very often
see them reading a Bible. They are embarrassed
by it.

Yishai That’s right.

Paul But this is the word of God. It is when that
starts to work in the hearts and the minds of
people you are going to see a vast change take
place—and I think it is going to change. I am
sure that the future of your movement—you
know what I mean—it is going to go places,
and you have a great opportunity here with the
station.

Yishai Three times is a charm. You know, we
have been here and we have had two big
temples in Jerusalem, and we are (nearly) in the
period of the third one.

Paul You will have a third one, and we have an
architects drawing of it.

Yishai That’s right. Don’t say you will have it,
say ‘we’ will have it.

Paul Yes, a House of prayer for all nations. And
Zechariah (6:12,13) tells us that “he” shall
build the temple of the LORD.

Yishai That’s right. It is very exciting times that
we live in.

...no man has a right to worship
God as he pleases. This is a
Protestant fallacy. Man has a right to
worship God only in the way God
has Himself appointed.

JOHN THOMAS,
Elpis Israel, written in 1849

All sin proceeds from the desires
of the flesh... the tendency of
mere animal instincts to act on their
own account.

Robert Roberts,
Christendom Astray. 1884

The division of the Old Testament
by Josephus into twenty-two
books, makes the number correspond
with the number of letters in the
Hebrew alphabet... The list of
Josephus corresponds to our present
Old Testament.

John Carter,
“The Oracles of God” 1944

It is testified that the Gentiles
shall come unto Yahweh from the
ends of the earth, and shall say,
Surely our fathers have inherited lies,
vanities, and things wherein there is
no profit’ (Jer. 16:19). This is what
they will say of Presbyterianism,
Lutherism, Methodism... all false,
vain and unprofitable.

H.P. Mansfield,
Commentary on Zechariah

Europe will become a christian
socialist empire with power of the
Vatican dominant in the religious and
moral sphere, and the power of
Russia in the civil and military
sphere.

Graham Pearce,
Babylon and Jerusalem, 1977
T
tings never stand still! How busy the angels must be as they play their behind-the-scenes role, ensuring that events move according to God’s Plan. God uses the characteristics of individuals and nations to further His purpose. God says of Gog “I will bring you down against my land,” yet Gog thinks his evil thought, believing he comes in order to lay hold of the spoil and prey. He is unaware of the hooks God has placed in his jaws (Ez 38:16,10,4).

So we watch with interest many items. Certainly we live in exciting times, frightening times. Events can change so rapidly. At this time of growing fear from increasing acts of terrorism, we know our Lord is at hand.

We start our review by looking first at the Middle East.

Iran

In many ways Iran has emerged the winner from the Middle East troubles. UN attempts to call a halt to her nuclear plans have so far come to nothing. America is unable to bring sanctions without the support of other nations. Russia and Europe have no incentive to back America, and so Iran is making steady progress toward her goal of having her own nuclear weapons. The Iraq study group report must have brought joy to Iran, as they see the apparent weaknesses in America’s position there. It also brought joy to Iran, as they see the apparent weaknesses in America’s position there. Unfortunately Mr Bush does not seem very inclined to adopt these proposals.

The report once again reinforced the popular view—Israel is responsible for so much of the Middle East trouble, if only she would go away everything would be fine! Is not this what scripture foretold so long ago; all nations coming against Jerusalem seeking to destroy her? (Zech 12)

“Review of the Holocaust: global vision”

Last year, the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad organised a conference entitled “A world without Zionism.” This year the conference was entitled “Review of the Holocaust: global vision” a seemingly innocuous title but the aim was to give a platform to those who would deny the historical fact of the holocaust. There was worldwide condemnation for this conference and a group of American Jews is calling for the president of Iran to be charged with inciting genocide because of his speeches advocating the destruction of the state of Israel.

“The call for legal action came as Mr Ahmadinejad repeated his onslaught against Israel at an international gathering of holocaust deniers in Tehran. The president, who has dismissed the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis as a myth told up to 70 visiting speakers that the Israeli state would soon be wiped out.”

“Thanks to people’s wishes and God’s will, the trend for the existence of the Zionist regime is downwards and this is what God has promised and what all nations want,” he said to warm applause from the assembled Holocaust doubters. ‘Just as the Soviet Union was wiped out and today does not exist, so will the Zionist regime soon be wiped out.’

“He was praised by several participants for his ‘bravery and democratic actions’ a source who was present told the Guardian” The Guardian and De Spiegel (13-12-06).

The Role of Holocaust Denial

The denial of the Holocaust is an important element in Iran’s three-pronged attack on Israel. The Holocaust gives legitimacy to Israel needing a homeland. Remove the Holocaust and it cuts away the point of Israel’s existence as a nation. This is an important step to removing sympathy for Israel. The second strand of attack is to demonise Israel, just as Hitler did the Jews. The Iranian and Middle East press, radio and TV carry constant messages of hate, accusing Jews of all sorts of things such as murdering children in order to procure blood for Passover matzos and blaming them for many things such as bird flu! The final step is the military one, physical elimination when the world is sufficiently turned against them.

Netanyahu: “Iran like 1938 Germany”

Binyamin Netanyahu, a former Prime Minister of Israel and currently opposition Likud party leader, spoke in Los Angeles in November. This moving speech compared Iran’s anti-Semitic utterances with the speeches of Hitler in the 1930’s. Then few took much notice; likewise today few are prepared to take action against Iran for these threats. The Lebanon War, where Iran’s proxy army fought tenaciously against Israel shows that these words are not empty, he said, the world must act before it was too late. We know that even if there is a world reaction in the short term, it will not last long—the nations are to be drawn down into God’s land, against His people (Zech 12:3).

In another speech he called upon the Israelis to act against the growing tide of weapons being smuggled into the Gaza Strip, criticising Olmert’s agreement to a shaky cease-fire with the Gaza Palestinians.

An Interview With Al-Jazeera Editor-in-Chief

Al-Jazeera, the TV station that is based in Qatar and gives an Arab perspective to the news, has recently started broadcasting in English. It is a highly regarded news-source for those living in Arab countries especially as their own TV stations are all under the control of their governments and are widely recognised as being heavily biased. The chief editor was interviewed by Pierre Heumann of the Swiss weekly Die Weltwoche; what the editor had to say at the end of his interview about Israel was interesting. He had outlined many of the difficulties that Arabs faced due to political interference, and said this: -

“The day when Israel was founded created the basis for our problems. The West should finally come to understand this. Everything would be much calmer if the Palestinians were given their rights.

Do you mean to say that if Israel did not exist, there would suddenly be democracy in Egypt, that
...buried in the Russian fuel supply contract is a clause that requires all spent nuclear fuel from Iran’s nuclear agenda is not limited to civilian energy purposes. Should Iran divert such material to a weapons program, Russia intended to see matters through which in the short term could involve troop increases. The situation is fluid and volatile.

Balaam and Iraq

Eventually the region will come under the control of the King of the North; it may be that as Gog moves southward, Turkey and Iraq become part of the “many countries” that are overthrown (Dan 11:41). There is an interesting prophecy of Balaam, spoken some 3,500 years ago that seems to fit this time frame.

In Balaam’s last prophecy, he saw a time when “His (Israel’s) king is higher than Agag and his kingdom shall be exalted” (Num 24:7).

The Septuagint translates Agag as Gog! We are awaiting this day when Jesus defeats the power of Gog and establishes God’s Kingdom. Agag seems to have been the general name of the king of the Amalekites, for in Saul’s day their king was called Agag. His prophecy closes with a picture concerning Amalek.

“And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the Amalekites to fulfil these words. The Amalekite king was called Agag. His prophecy closes with a picture concerning Amalek.

“...and said, ‘I am the head of all the Amalekites’” (Num 24:20).

We look for a later-day Agag king of the Amalekites to fulfil these words. The Amalekites have long disappeared, but the Amalekite desire to rid the world of Israel lives on, and will be spearheaded by Gog. We note that what is spoken of here is applied to Gog. He is to be for a while first of the nations, but is to perish on the mountains of Israel (Ez 38). As the King of the North he is associated with many ships (Dan 11:40). In those ships coming down against Egypt it makes strategic sense to attack the naval bases of America on Crete and the British on Cyprus—both islands are referred to as Chittim. Assyria is Assyria, so a strike against Turkey to capture Constantinople could be followed by a strike against Iraq to take control of the region of what was Babylon. Eber was an ancestor of Abraham; indeed the word Hebrew means “a descendant of Eber.” So here is foretold the affliction of Israel by a latter-day Agag or Gog. This is the word used in Gen 15:13 where Abram was told his seed would be afflicted for 400 years.

How amazingly informative obscure passages can be!

Israel—a Period of Uncertainty

There have been several military spills taken in the fallout from the Lebanon War. The opinion polls put Olmert at very low ratings. His recent perceived gaffes about the missing soldiers captured by Hezbollah and the fact that Israel appeared to have nuclear weapons has increased the criticism levelled at him. The most favoured person to lead the country at the moment is Netanyah, who is advocating a much tougher stance against the continuing barrage of rockets from Gaza. These continue to be fired in spite of the agreement in early December between Israel and the PA for them to stop in return for agreement in early December between Israel and the PA to dissolve and new elections called at a time when Gaza seems to be spiralling into civil war with tit-for-tat killings between Hamas and Fatah. Iran is extending her financial and military support of Hamas as she has done to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

U.S. Military storage facilities in Israel

Few think that the troubles with Lebanon are ended. Syria is building up troop and missile levels near the Golan, so a reigniting of a Syrian/Lebanese war is perceived to be fairly imminent, especially if Israel does choose to strike Iran’s nuclear installations. The situation in Gaza is worsening. Mahmoud Abbas has called for the Palestinian parliament to be dissolved and new elections called at a time when Gaza seems to be spiralling into civil war with tit-for-tat killings between Hamas and Fatah. Iran is extending her financial and military support of Hamas as she has done to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

US will Double Equipment Stored in Israel

“Ynet News reported Tuesday that the US Congress has approved a doubling of the stockpiles of American military equipment stored in Israel in case of an emergency in the Middle East. Israel is also permitted to use the stockpiles in case of emergency, and in fact, much of the American equipment was used in this summer’s cross-border war with Hizb’Allah in Lebanon. Ynet reports that the value of the equipment currently in storage in Israel is valued at $100 million and the American government approved doubling its value to $200 million in 2007” (A7 News 12-12-06).
It is thought that these are being stored in huge buildings that have been built in recent years at Rosh HaAyin, east of Tel Aviv.

**Israel Economy Sees Record-Breaking Positive News**

In spite of the great disruption caused by the Lebanese War, investor confidence in Israel seems unshaken. The strong financial measures initiated in 2003/4 when Netanyahu was Finance Minister seem to have paid off, in spite of their unpopularity at the time.

“A report issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday showed that foreign direct investment in Israel tripled in the first nine months of 2006, reaching a record high of $9.6 billion, with financial investment doubling to $6.7 billion over previous periods.”

Israel has become a favoured country for American outsourcing for more complex items (Boston Globe 24-11-06).

It is interesting to see the continuing growth of relations between Israel and the “young lion” India.

“Israel has commissioned a study to look into a possible free trade agreement (FTA) with India, Press Trust of India reported Dec. 1, citing Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Elyahu Yishai. Israel believes the FTA would help the two countries’ bilateral trade reach $5 billion” (Stratfor 1-12-06).

An earlier report spoke of the India-Israel arms trade becoming lucrative business, reportedly worth over $900 million annually (International Christian Embassy Jerusalem 6-10-06).

**Saudi Arabia Strengthens her Defences**

Saudi feels very threatened by the situation in Iraq. She is investing heavily in her defences.

“A Saudi consultant to the royal family has reported a Defense Ministry plan to invest between $50 billion and $60 billion to bolster the kingdom’s military and security forces. The consultant said this would include the procurement of advanced air and ground platforms as well as a 20 percent increase in Saudi ground forces” (Middle East Newsline 28-11-06).

Israel is not the only country to erect barriers to keep out terrorists!

“Saudi Arabia will press ahead with plans to build a massive security fence along its borders with Iraq to prevent infiltration of ‘terrorists,’ the interior minister said in an interview” published Tuesday.

**The Saudi-Israeli Axis**

This was the eye-catching headline to a Globalist article (Nov. 10, 06). Earlier, news of secret talks between Olmert and a high-ranking Saudi prince had emerged. This article pointed a possible direction that could potentially lead to a time of Middle East peace. Here are a few extracts.

“The dramatic increase of violence in the Middle East in the past six months has given rise to the hope for a new sort of peace—between Saudi Arabia and Israel. [The author] suggests how Saudi Arabia can use the nuclear threat posed by the Iranian Shiite axis to forge an Arab-Israeli peace with the help of major powers.”

“Whereas the Iraq war has not achieved any of its stated objectives, it has dramatically and irreversibly changed the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East—ushering in new conflicts that may rage for decades.

“The war has handed Iran a historic windfall, and it has given rise to its long-historic ambitions to dominate the region and establish Persian hegemony, all while pursuing nuclear weapons to assert these ambitions.

“As a result, new (and until recently perhaps unthinkable) alliances may now be forged—especially between Israel and the leading Sunni Gulf states to confront the emerging threat that looms ominously high over the entire region.

“For the majority of the Arab Sunni states, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the Iranian-Iraqi Shiite axis is a threat to their political survival.

“Although they believe the United States will come to their aid in case of an imminent Iranian threat, these states do not believe that the current U.S. policy to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons will succeed.

“...the Arab Sunni states still view Israel as a nuclear power—the ultimate balance to Iran in the region, and probably the only country that can effectively blunt or deter Iran’s adventurism.

“Israel, which has been threatened by Iran explicitly and repeatedly, is also looking to buttress its regional position. However, it can do so only if it dedicates itself to Arab-Israeli peace—thus embracing, at least in general terms, the Saudi initiative.

“The emergence of a common enemy to Israel and the Arab Sunni states—in the form of Iranian-led Shiite axis—has dramatically changed the dynamic of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

“Of all the Arab states, Saudi Arabia has the greatest stake in how the conflict between this axis and the Sunni Arab states is managed over the next few years.

“Direct and indirect U.S. involvement—inside and outside the Saudi initiatives—remain pivotal to any progress. Moreover, none of the above policy initiatives would have been conceivable just six months ago.”

A more recent article in the Sunday Times (3-12-06) under the headline Saudis lead Israel peace bid, reported similarly.

**America moves ships to the Gulf**

America is building up her military fleet in the Persian Gulf. The situation is fluid as some ships come and go, but based in Bahrain is now the largest concentration of American landing ships for 10 years. Is America planning a military strike against Iran?

“The Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group (BOXESG) has entered the US Fifth Fleet area headquartered in Bahrain.

“It has just come from joint maneuvers with the Indian navy in the Arabian Sea opposite the coast of Goa, including large-scale landing practices. The group’s commander, Capt. David Angood said that if “anything important happens in the real-world environment, the task force will deal with it in the most efficient manner” (Debka 10-11-06).

“The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier, flagship of the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKE CSG), entered the Araban Gulf Dec. 11, accompanied by the guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio (CG 68)” (www.cusc.navy).

We now turn to events in Europe

**Don’t mess with Russia**

This was the curt headline on the cover of The Economist (14-12-06). Putin has been able to win back—more by foul means than fair, control of Russia’s energy assets. The final pieces are now dropping into his lap.

“For over a decade Royal Dutch Shell, along with its Japanese partners, Mitsui and Mitsubishi, has been struggling to coax oil and gas out of the frozen seas off Sakhalin Island, in Russia’s far east. Over the years the scheme has run into environmental protests, its projected cost has doubled to $20 billion and its completion date has receded. But it is now nearly finished. With oil and gas prices high and a flood of revenue imminent, it is an odd time for the three owners to reduce their shareholding. Yet that is exactly what they offered to do this week, by selling a majority stake in the project to Gazprom, Russia’s state-owned gas giant. The shareholders, perhaps mindful of the fate of Yukos, a big Russian oil firm bankrupted by over-zealous tax inspectors, presumably concluded that Gazprom was making them an offer they could not refuse.

“...No longer need Russia go to the West cap-in-hand for money, as it did in Boris Yeltsin’s day. Now it can stand tall once more, not least in the neighbouring ex-Soviet countries that
many in Moscow have never reconciled themselves to losing.

“With the parliament largely emasculated, television under state control, the press muzzled and once-autonomous regions shackled, the presidency has acquired enormous clout. It is increasingly the Kremlin that decides who runs Russian business and finance. Although an election is due in March 2008, Mr Putin will in practice choose his own successor.”

What is more scaring to Europe is the prospect of Russia doing deals with other energy suppliers to create an energy cartel.

**A Specter Is Haunting Europe**

“According to the Financial Times, NATO experts have warned of the need to take defensive measures against any attempts by Russia to create a natural gas version of OPEC, since this would increase Moscow’s leverage for putting pressure on Europe. The confidential report from NATO experts has been distributed to the ambassadors of NATO’s 26 member states. It warns that Russia may be trying to establish a gas cartel involving Algeria, Qatar, Libya, Central Asian states, and probably Iran.

“It seems likely that what set off the alarm bells among NATO’s ‘energy correspondents’ were Russia’s contacts with other countries that have large gas reserves—primarily Algeria and Iran. In early August, with President Vladimir Putin’s assistance, Gazprom signed a cooperation agreement with Sonatrach (Algeria). Putin and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have discussed establishing a joint venture for gas production, and potential price coordination.

“If such plans were destined to be realized, a Russian-Algerian cartel would have grave consequences for the European Union,” (Vremya Novostei November 15, 2006).

**Britain & Europe**

“Now Britain is a global star, with a currency run by an independent and admired central bank. The economy has been re-rated upward, delayed fruit of Margaret Thatcher’s ‘courage’”(*Sunday Telegraph* 1-12-06).

Is this the time for Britain to assert her independence of Europe? Tony Blair has promised to step down next May and few doubt that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will succeed him. He is not favourably disposed to Europe; he battled to keep Britain from joining the euro. The prospect of Germany pushing for the constitution will not find favour in Britain. Warnings have been issued that if Britain doesn’t want further political integration she knows what to do! Elections are due to be held in France next spring, and the new socialist candidate, Ms Royal spoke of her vision for France next spring, and the new socialist integration, her adviser on Europe has revealed.

“Gilles Savary, a French MEP and her spokesman and foreign affairs adviser...set out a vision of an ambitious new EU treaty, replacing the EU constitution which has been in limbo since French and Dutch voters voted against it last summer.

“Britain would be asked to sign up to the new treaty, but if it rejected calls for increased protectionism, an EU foreign minister, convergence on tax rates and moves to create a European army, then France and her allies would agree a treaty among themselves.

“Great Britain is absolutely indispensable to the European Union. It is a great nation, a global power. But the question the English have to answer is, do the English consider the “jump-jet.”

“The JSF, the biggest military programme in history, is being developed jointly by America and eight other countries. Britain, the leading partner, has insisted on retaining “operational sovereignty”—the ability to maintain and upgrade the plane on its own in future. In practical terms this means having access to the secret computer codes required to operate the plane and fire its weapons.

“After months of intense lobbying, the British government said it finally got what it wanted. “Now that Britain has got its way, more of its weapons are likely to be bought from American firms, and more of its research and development funding will go to joint projects with America” (*Economist* 14-12-06).

This is bound to upset her European partners!

At the Mansion House, just prior to the new parliamentary session, Tony Blair outlined his commitment to looking after Israel’s interests during his remaining time in office.

“Blair: ME strategy starts with Israel

“The war on ‘global terrorism’ will be won by the West only when there is peace between Israel and the Palestinians, British prime minister Tony Blair told the Lord Mayor’s banquet at the Guildhall in London on Monday night.

“...the prime minister placed Israel as the axis of his government’s foreign policy, stating that for a lasting peace to come to the Middle East, the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel must be addressed first” (*Jerusalem Post* 14-11-06).

**The approaching new dawn**

Clearly things are moving forward rapidly. Russia is growing in power, Europe is pressing forward with its political integration, leaving Britain sidelined. Tensions are growing in the Middle East in anticipation of further fighting. New alliances are being pursued, unthinkable until very recently, that may result in the short-lived time of peace and prosperity for Israel. Short-lived because the anti-Israel feeling won’t go away, it will in fact increase, uniting Europe, Russia and Iran to come into the land to destroy Israel. We know God’s purpose will stand firm, eventually Israel will walk in faith and be blessed and the nations will be punished for their desire to destroy God’s people. All is in the hand of God.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, and eight other countries. Britain, the leading partner, has insisted on retaining “operational sovereignty”—the ability to maintain and upgrade the plane on its own in future. In practical terms this means having access to the secret computer codes required to operate the plane and fire its weapons.

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“...the prime minister placed Israel as the axis of his government’s foreign policy, stating that for a lasting peace to come to the Middle East, the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel must be addressed first” (*Jerusalem Post* 14-11-06).

**The approaching new dawn**

Clearly things are moving forward rapidly. Russia is growing in power, Europe is pressing forward with its political integration, leaving Britain sidelined. Tensions are growing in the Middle East in anticipation of further fighting. New alliances are being pursued, unthinkable until very recently, that may result in the short-lived time of peace and prosperity for Israel. Short-lived because the anti-Israel feeling won’t go away, it will in fact increase, uniting Europe, Russia and Iran to come into the land to destroy Israel. We know God’s purpose will stand firm, eventually Israel will walk in faith and be blessed and the nations will be punished for their desire to destroy God’s people. All is in the hand of God.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” Mic 7:18-20.

**Milestones Prophecy Day is on February 24 at the Benn Hall, Rugby, UK.**

www.MilestonesUK.org
The clear Jerusalem air fills my lungs as I hurry down the stairs toward the Western Wall on Erev Rosh Chodesh Kislev—the evening of the first of the Jewish month Kislev. Others are hurrying down the steps as well; a young man with a guitar slung over his shoulder, wearing an oversize Jewish kippa or yarmulke with long bushy side curls; a young girl in a long skirt, carrying a worn backpack with a piece of orange ribbon hanging from it—a reminder of the orange protest against Sharon’s disastrous disengagement plan. While definitely religious, these young people are not what one would imagine a young religious Jew to look like. There is an air of rebelliousness, a strong energy and a sense of mission.

As I go through the security check and enter the Western Wall Plaza, a large crowd is gathering at the far end. A police jeep honks its way through the crowd. There is much commotion, laughing, greeting friends, and music. As I arrive at the far side of the Plaza a group of young Yeshiva students dance, (a Yeshiva is a religious study center) weaving in and out in a dizzying circle, singing: “Yibaneh Ha’Mikdash, ir Tzion temalei, vesham nashir shir chadash uvirnana naaleh.” (May the Temple be built, the City of Zion filled, and there we will sing a new song, and with joyous singing ascend!) Large flags are being waved bearing the message: “Meherah Yevneh Ha’Mikdash” (Let the Temple be built speedily!). A portable curtain is being erected to separate the boys from the girls and an announcement is made over a loudspeaker informing us all that the march will commence in 5 minutes.

The march, for which we have all assembled, is known as “Sovev Sharim” meaning “to encircle the gates.” Every month on the new moon this march around the gates of the Temple Mount takes place. It began six years ago with a handful of people and now draws thousands of people. While mostly young people, there are also parents with small toddlers perched on their shoulders, as well as older people, the middle aged and children.

Suddenly the march starts forward. We move through a covered walkway. As we go we sing Psalm 121: “Shir La’Mahalot, Esa eyeni el He’harim...” (“A song of Ascents, I lift mine eyes to the hills...””). As we exit the walkway and enter the Arab section of Jerusalem, policemen and soldiers guard the dark and deserted connecting streets. Many would view this walk as controversial and even provocative; the words of the prophet Isaiah come to mind in chapter 34 verse 8: “For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.”

When we arrive at the first gate to the Temple Mount the first two Psalms of Ascent (120 and 121) are recited over a loudspeaker—by the time the walk is finished all the Psalms of Ascent will have been recited. Between every gate there is joyous dancing, singing and clapping to songs such as: “Build it soon in our days, even the building of the Olam, and the throne of David your servant, may it be speedily in the midst, and Jerusalem your city, with mercy return and dwell in the midst, according as you...”
have spoken!”; “O Israel, trust thou in the Lord; he is their help and their shield;” and “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.”

At the Lion’s gate there is a time for personal prayer, which the participants take part in fervently—even some firecrackers thrown by Arabs don’t seem to make anyone bat an eyelid. From where I am sitting on a low wall I can’t see what happens, but learn on the news later that 8 Arabs were arrested. As we exit the old city and make our way down the hill from the Lion’s gate into the Kidron valley I am invited to join a dance circle. I think of the time when the natural Jew, and those who have been called to join themselves with them, will come with singing to Zion, something prefigured in the joyous occasion when David brought the Ark to Jerusalem.

After two Psalms of accent have been recited over the loudspeaker at the bricked up Eastern Gate, thousands of voices join together in singing: “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” The walk encircles the south side of the Temple Mount and as we near the Dung Gate leading back into the Jewish Quarter the walk is over. Buses wait to return many of the young people back to the settlements in Judea and Samaria from which they have come.

Seeing the Biblical enthusiasm of the young people, the sincere prayer and earnest desire for the temple to be built once again, and hearing the reciting and singing of the Psalms was a very moving and exhilarating experience—as it would be to anyone who believes in the “Hope of Israel”!

A first hand experience of the Religious Zionist movement like this one, also leaves us with some important questions: Where did this movement come from? Where is it going? and; Does this have anything to do with Bible Prophecy?

How did Religion and Zionism come together?

Before considering Religious Zionism it would be helpful to define ‘Zionism.’ In an article entitled ‘Zionism,’ Theodor Herzl wrote: “What is Zionism? The attempt to create a legally assured Homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.” Herzl promoted Zionism as a solution to the Jewish question; a solution to anti-Semitism. In the same article he wrote: “For the Jews there is no other help and salvation than the return to their own nation and their establishment on their own ground and soil.” Herzl committed his vision to paper in a book entitled ‘The Jewish State.’ He wrote that this state was to be a state where: “Every man will be as free and unrestricted in his belief or his unbelief as he is in his cultural ties.” Herzl’s Jewish State was to be a state much like the other nations of the world, with a free society and a secular government. The original secular Zionism of Herzl has finished its course and achieved many of its goals, however, Herzl’s most important goal of solving anti-Semitism has not been achieved. The neutral Jewish state that Herzl laid out, of great benefit to its neighbours, is a far cry from reality today—it’s hard to be neutral when everyone wants to wipe you off the map. Herzl didn’t take the “controversy of Zion” into account when writing his book.

In the early days of Zionism the vast majority of Rabbis rejected it completely and even worked to hinder its progress. To the Orthodox Jew it seemed impossible that God would fulfill the ancient hope of redemption through secular activism, so they decided to do what they had always done—study Torah and

“May the Temple be built, the City of Zion filled, and there we will sing a new song, and with joyous singing ascend!”

“And let them make a Sanctuary” Ex. 25:8.
already mentioned, “Eim Ha’Banim Semeichah”—which we will discuss later—we read: “Reform leaders renounced almost all ties to their ancient Homeland. They rejected the idea of reestablishing Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael, for they saw it as a major threat to their dreams of integrating into gentile society. Thus, they removed from the liturgy most references to Zion, Jerusalem, and Eretz Yisrael. Instead, they developed a new motto: “Berlin (or Paris or London or Vienna) is our Jerusalem.”

An exception to this antizionism was the Mizrakh movement founded in 1905 that saw the creation of a Jewish society as a way of enhancing the observance of Torah. It participated in the Zionist Congresses and even created its own settlements in the Beit She’an Valley. Another exception was Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook (1865–1935), the founder of Religious Zionist thought. He emigrated to Palestine in 1904, and was appointed Chief Rabbi of Jaffa. Stranded in Europe in World War I, Rabbi Kook made his way to Britain where he was active in the campaign for Jewish national self-determination, which resulted in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Most Rabbis were unhappy with his support for the Zionist movement. He returned to Palestine in 1921, was appointed the first Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael and founded the Mercaz Ha-Rav Yeshiva, which became the center for Religious Zionism. For Rabbi Kook, the return of the Jews to Zion was a step on the path to redemption, he wrote: “The hope for the Redemption is the force that sustains Judaism in the Diaspora; the Judaism of Eretz Yisrael is the very Redemption.”

Effect of the Holocaust

The Holocaust had a profound effect on many religious Jews who had been against the return to the land and specifically secular Zionism. One of these was Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal. Rabbi Teichtal was born in 1885 and became a very influential Torah scholar. He founded a Yeshiva in Czechoslovakia named Moriah. Life changed in a terrible way in 1938 when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia; in 1942 the Nazis began their deportations. Rabbi Teichtal and his family hid in the attic of the local beet midrash (house of study) along with ten other families. Through the cracks in the wall they could see the Germans beating and herding their fellow Jews away. Rabbi Teichtal escaped and became a refugee in Hungary where he wrote the book already mentioned, “Eim Ha’Banim Semeichah,” meaning: “A joyous mother of children”—the mother being the land of Israel. Witnessing the complete destruction of European Jewry, he asked some very hard questions regarding where they had gone wrong; his answer was: “The purpose of our to speak or get enthused about it, they consider him repulsive and abominable. They all rebuke him, saying, “You are a Zionist, an abhorrence, and an abomination.” Thus, they have truly caused the desirable Land to be despised and detested...

“Some of the true Torah scholars harbor a positive attitude towards this sacred endeavor. They admit to themselves the truth that our only objective must be to revive and establish the “House of Our Lives,” to favor our Land, and to desire its stones and soil. Nonetheless, these positive thoughts remain solely in the heart. They would not dare express their thoughts in words, for they fear that they will be rebuked and considered repulsive, abominable Zionists.

“In this way, these zealots spread hatred and enmity throughout the Orthodox world against the group which devoted itself to building up our Land to its former glory. As a consequence of this, they also caused the desirable Land to be despised. They became entrapped in the sin of the spies, about whom it says, They murmured in their tents... They despised the desirable Land (Tehillim 106:24,25). What was the result of the spies? They caused everlasting sorrow. Today’s “spies,” as well, have added sorrow onto sorrow, bringing us to our present situation in which we see horror after horror and weeping after weeping in the House of Israel. All of this has occurred because we despised the desirable Land...”

Recognising the Redemption

It is a great tragedy that a whole generation of Torah scholars were wrong or silent on this issue concerning the coming of Messiah and the redemption. Above all, this is a sober warning to all of us, not to despise the desirable land. “A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even
unto the end of the year” (Deuteronomy 11:12). To despise the desirable land is to despise God’s promises. We cannot afford to think the land is like other lands—it is the utmost privilege to be able to step onto its soil, to walk though the length and breadth of it in the steps of Abraham, to walk about Zion and go round about her! This issue raised in Rabbi Teichtal’s book is at the heart of what makes religious Zionism different than other streams of Judaism—a love for the desirable land, a vision of the redemption, the rebuilding of the temple and a stronger longing for Messiah. This faith is demonstrated in action: the march around the temple mount gates, living in dangerous areas because of what they represent and building the land of Israel—in particular the Biblical heartland.

Rabbi Kook’s son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook (1891–1981) further developed and clarified the teaching of his father concerning the land of Israel and the redemption. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda saw in its birth the beginnings of the fulfillment of the vision of the Prophets and the inception of the redemption. These teachings of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda concerning the State of Israel and the redemption, were spread to a whole generation of students at the Mercaz Ha-Rav Yeshiva while he was head of the Yeshiva for 30 years. In an article written by Prof. Dan Michman from Bar-Ilan University in Israel entitled “A Historical Look at Religious Zionism,” he describes the Religious Zionist community as it was right before the 6-day war:

“The energy stored up inside both educators and students was formidable. On the surface stood out, initially, their desire to enter into all aspects of Israeli society thereby contributing to the national renaissance in contrast to the relatively marginal status of the Religious Zionist community at the time in Israeli society. On an unseen level, however, their special approach to the question of the Land of Israel awaited an opportunity for expression.”

Impact of the Six Days War of 1967

In an article written by Rabbi Avraham Levi Melamed entitled “Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook—A Biographical Overview,” from the Beit-El Yeshiva Center website, he describes how the energy stored up inside the Religious Zionist community was put into practical action:

“On Independence Day, 5727 (1967), the State of Israel was at tension with neighboring countries. The danger of war was imminent. Independence Day had already become an occasion for great celebration at Merkaz HaRav. This year, R’Tzvi Yehuda gave his traditional speech, yet in its course he erupted with vibrating cries: “Have we forgotten those territories of Israel which are not in our hands? Where is our Jericho? And where is our Hebron? And where is our Shekhem (Nablus)? Could we possibly forget them?”

“About three weeks later, the Six Day War erupted, and, with God’s help, without anyone’s planning it, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the Golan, and Sinai were all liberated. His students considered the words of R’Tzvi Yehuda a kind of prophetic betokening.

“The Six Day War widened the borders of Israel after years of existing as a small and restricted state, prone to numerous dangers. Many considered this an additional step on the road to the redemption. “R’Tzvi Yehuda quickly announced that all territories of Israel liberated by the IDF in the war belonged to Israel eternally. We have returned to our land, he explained, and we are obligated to settle these areas. It is absolutely forbidden to relinquish them. Neither is there a single entity in the world which possesses the authority to relinquish them, for this soil was given to us by the Creator of the world in order that we settle and inherit it.

“In response to the question of how Israel will attain peace with her neighbors, R’Tzvi Yehuda answered that by achieving peace amongst ourselves and possessing power and strength, we will arrive at peace with our neighbors. It is precisely the Jewish people’s firm establishment in its land that allows them to be a light unto the nations.

Gush Emunim

“In 1974, after the Yom Kippur War—the so-called great crisis of Israeli society—the Gush Emunim movement was established. This movement set as its goal the establishment of Jewish settlements in the empty territories of Judea and Samaria. Gush Emunim was led by R’Tzvi Yehuda’s students and was accompanied by its inception and throughout its existence by the blessing and guidance of the Rabbi, now leader of the pioneering settlers. Thus, the ideology of Rabbi Kook was being practically implemented.”

This background may help us realize the terrible pain the Religious Zionist community went through—and is still going through—when the settlements they had put so much energy into building in the Gaza region of Israel were ruthlessly destroyed by the Israeli Government of Ariel Sharon.

The Controversy of Zion

“For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.”—Isaiah 34:8

The controversy of Zion in Biblical terms is a religious controversy. Joel 3:1–2 sets the timing of the prophecy; it is after the returning of the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. The returning again of the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem happened in 1967. God then informs us that he will gather all nations to plead with them for his heritage Israel. God’s heritage is a holy thing—a nation set apart. In Joel 3:9 the Gentiles are told to “prepare war.” The verb “prepare” is the Piel imperative of the Hebrew verb “Kadash.” According to Gesenius, in this form it means “to declare holy, to consecrate.” The idea conveyed by the Hebrew text is clearly a “holy war.” Micah 4 is clearly a prophecy of the age to come. Verse 11, like Joel 3:9 speaks of many nations gathered against thee, they say; “Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.” To defile has religious connotations—the Hebrew word means “to be profaned, polluted, defiled.” The same word is used in Isaiah 24:5: “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” In

The 1967 “Six Days War” brought Israel into possession of the Biblical heartlands
order to defile something holiness must be removed. Again this is a religious controversy. The closer we come to the gathering of the nations against Zion and their subsequent destruction the greater the controversy will rage. This was pointed out by John Thomas in 1868 in the *Exposition of Daniel* (page 54): “Judah has been broken, but their “breakers” have not been “ground to powder” by the Stone. The time, however, fast approaches; and the nearer it arrives, the more important do all questions become bearing upon Judah’s land, and Zion, the city of their king.”

For the controversy to become more acute, those involved must become stronger in their convictions and actions. This is one reason Religious Zionism will gain strength. Events like the march around the Temple Mount will gain momentum.

It must be mentioned that the Vatican will also take a very dim view of Religious Zionism—it is a challenge to them. In 1948 when the state of Israel was proclaimed the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* stated: “Modern Zionism is not the true heir of Biblical Israel, but a secular state ... Therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, the True Israel.” There is an inherent problem with this reasoning however. What if it becomes a Biblical state? Post-modern Zionism is becoming more and more religious. This year in Israel over 50% of children in kindergarten will come from religious homes. Israel is not the secular state it was in 1948. Compare the Vatican’s statement with the words of the famous Religious Zionist Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, who we already discussed: “When the flag of the State of Israel was raised, all of the Vatican’s doctrines of the outcast, miserable Jews collapsed. We returned to our land, and it became clear that the Eternal One of Israel will not lie.”

The destruction of the communities in Gush Katif (or the Jewish area of Gaza), strongly brought to the surface a controversy within Israel. One may think that this controversy is just a matter of whether to hand land over to the Arabs or not. However, as one examines the case it becomes apparent that it is a controversy that is religious in nature. As shown, the settlement of the West Bank or Judea and Samaria and Gaza, was spearheaded by Religious Zionists from the 6-day war and on. The evacuation and destruction of Gaza was directed against them; their ideologies, families, communities, schools and synagogues. Before the destruction, a resident called Sarah from the Gush Katif community of Atzmona, explained in an interview with IsraelReport.com that those who planned the disengagement did not just want to withdraw because it was a bad place to be, but to break the ideology of the communities. She said she knew this because they would not move the communities intact and build them a new community elsewhere, but they wanted to break them up and send them all over the country. Still today many of the Jews from Gush Katif/Gaza do not have proper homes.

Many Jews realize the world does not like them—in particular the Catholic world of Europe—because the state of Israel has the West Bank and Jerusalem, and due to the rising voice of Religious Zionism—the “Jewish messianists” as they call them. One such writer is the late Arthur Hertzberg, who in his book *The Fate of Zionism* had this to say in regard to the critics: “Much of their distemper with Zionism is leveled at the doctrines and actions of the new Jewish messianists.” Also in words reflecting the voice of the papacy quoted above he states: “It is of the most profound importance that modern Zionism not be identified as the lineal heir to the religion of the Bible.” Again: “It is even more important within the Jewish community that modern Zionism not be identified as the heir and continuation of the messianic element in classic Jewish religion. If the Zionist endeavor is ever dominated by the notion that Jews have come back to Palestine as a giant step toward the coming of the messiah, there can be no peace within the Jewish camp.” He goes on to say that: “Today, messianic madness has seized one element of the Jewish people.” To me this sounds like a growing belief and understanding in that part of the gospel defined as “the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12). Though imperfect as yet, this is an unstoppable force.

### Preparing a People for the Lord

Revelation 16:15 is a clear reference to the return of Jesus the Messiah to the earth: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments...” The most obvious signs to watch are those in the preceding three verses—the signs within the sixth vial—those signs that immediately precede the thief like coming, the drying up of the river Euphrates and the going out of teachings or philosophies that bring the nations against Israel.

The drying up of the Euphrates sign was correctly identified by Bible students for many years. One such student was Christadelphian writer Robert Roberts who in “Letters to the elect of God in a time of trouble” wrote on the 10th of February, 1885: “We see the way preparing for the coming new order of kings whose land has been desolated by the Euphratean Ottoman... A new turning point has, in fact, been reached, at which there is scarcely anything we may not shortly see in the way of the completion of the political programme on which our eyes have been fixed with earnest solicitude for over thirty years past. If the Turkish empire disappear, which is now almost the daily expectation of politicians, the Holy Land will be liberated from the only obstacle that restrains the full development of impending Jewish restoration under English protection; and there is nothing then between us and the precious parenthesis in verse 15, “Behold I come as a thief.”

Indeed the way is being prepared for a “new order of kings,” or as Young’s Literal translation reads in Revelation 16:12: “…that the way of the kings who are from the rising of the sun may be made ready.” The heavens are a
prophetic symbol for the ruling powers (compare Isaiah 1:2 and 10). God created the sun to “rule the day”—Genesis 1:16 and of the Messiah, David by the spirit writes: “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just (Zzkk—righteous), ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” King David is saying that the King of Righteousness would be like the sun rising on a clear day which would cause others to spring forth out of the ground—a reference to the resurrection. Malachi says in chapter 4:2: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings...” When the sun of righteousness arises his beams will cause others to spring forth out of the ground—the faithful men of old—these are the kings from the sun’s rising. The way must be prepared for them.

Although related to it, the drying up of the Euphratean power is not the preparing of the way. There are two separate parts to the sign. The first is the drying up of the Euphrates and the second is preparing the way for the kings of the east—the water is dried up so that, “the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” It is also apparent that “the way of the kings of the east” must be prepared before they are introduced on the scene. The restoration of Israel has been preparing the way for these kings, for as John Thomas wrote in Elpis Israel: “…without them there is no kingdom of God.” But there is more to preparing the way than the introduction of the Jewish people into the land Israel, for in Psalm 110, addressing the King of Righteousness, after the order of Melchizedek, who will rule in Zion he says that: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...” So his people must not only be there—but willing. Making them willing is preparing the way.

Isaiah 40 speaks of the time when Jerusalem will be comforted, when her iniquity is pardoned and when the “…LORD God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him.” In verse 3 we read: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” We know from the earnest fulfillment of these words in John the Baptist that “preparing the way” means preparing the people. This is clearly stated by the angel in Luke 1:16–17 speaking to Zacharias concerning John: “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” John did this work in the past. Jesus said that: “Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matthew 17:11). This work will be making a willing people prepared for the King. Revelation says however that this work of preparing the way—which we have seen means preparing the people—begins before the thief like coming.

A Time of Trial & Weeping

The situation in Israel today is nothing new. There have always been those who trusted in the LORD and those that trusted in man. In the time of king Hezekiah there were those that were strengthened by Yah— as Hezekiah’s name means, and those who strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh” (Isaiah 30:2). This was the time when Sennacherib invaded the land, yet Isaiah 30 has a definite application to a future time when the latter day Assyrian will invade the land. Notice verse 19: “For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more...” This certainly was not true after the time of Hezekiah, for not many years later Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. Even today, though many exiles have been gathered back to the land of Israel, there is still much weeping in the land. This verse is speaking of the same time as Isaiah 51:11: “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

In Isaiah 30:8 it tells us that this chapter is a prophecy for the latter day. It says: “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.” The “time to come” in Young’s Literal Translation and Rotherham’s is translated as “a latter day.” The “time to come” is the time when “the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem”—that time is now. Before the time of happiness, there is a time of grief, a time when the people dwelling in Jerusalem will cry to God, for we read in verse 19–21: “For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

There is a clear sequence in this passage. First, in a time to come which the prophecy has been written for, there will be people dwelling in Jerusalem. Secondly, there will be a time of grief, adversity and affliction. As a result of this, God will hear the cry of His people. As a result of the “cry” guidance will be given; there will be teachers sent to the people who will instruct them in the way of truth. God’s answer to the “cry” is not an immediate removal of Israel’s enemies but rather instruction. A time of instruction for Israel will not be a matter of days, it will be a period of years. To instruct someone is not an instantaneous exercise. Elijah and Elisha worked for a period of years. John the Baptist also instructed for a period of years. We can be sure then, that the affliction is not the affliction that happens because of the invasion of Gog (Ezekiel 38), referred to as the Assyrian in this chapter, as God’s reply to this cry is to provide teachers—not military assistance, this comes later. It is then after this instruction that: “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.”

Those Who Wait for Him

Is the bread of adversity and the water of affliction spoken of in this chapter referring to the events of the past 7 years? The numerous suicide bombings and roadside shootings? The destruction of the Jewish communities of Gush Katif? There have been many cries to God from the Jewish people as a result of these events—and not just from them, we too have poured out our hearts to God on behalf of Israel and wept at these events. On August 10th, 2005 the Jerusalem Post reported that “...tens of thousands of Israelis flocked to Jerusalem’s Western Wall Wednesday evening to take part in a massive prayer vigil against next week’s scheduled Gaza pullout plan.” It may seem that these cries were not heard, yet Isaiah tells us that the answer to the cry will be to send teachers. God in His wisdom knows that this is the only real way to save His people and His land. This is the deliverance that the Jewish people should be looking for today. God may well be preparing to send those teachers now, or sometimes we may have to wait for Him, but Isaiah 30:18 says: “...blessed are all they that wait for him.”

The result is verse 29: “Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.” When I was privileged to participate in the march, we went around the temple mount with gladness of heart, but we never came “into the mountain of the LORD.” The final Psalm of Ascent (Psalm134) brings the one ascending into the house of the LORD: “Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.” Today there is no house of the LORD on the mountain of the LORD. However, the day will soon be here, when by God’s grace we will ascend the mountain of the LORD and lift up our hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. May the LORD that made heaven and earth bless us and all Israel out of Zion.
not the sort of title one usually sees in the Bible Magazine so let’s explain what it is about. The core issue is, at the end of the day, the struggle for primacy between the Eastern and Western legs of the great Christian apostasy, the Roman Catholic and the Eastern (i.e. Greco-Russian) Orthodox Church.

But Why Involve Father Christmas?

... And in any case, who was he? Certainly not a Lapland reindeer herdsman of the northern hemisphere, nor indeed the patron saint of beach barbecues in the south. Instead, “Saint” Nicholas (alias “Santa Claus,” or Saint Nick in America) was a real character born on December 6th, A.D. 300 at Myra on the south coast of Turkey, not far from Antalya. Many Nordic and North European communities celebrate his birth on that date. It is claimed that he was a member of the Christian church originally founded by the Apostle Paul whilst he was on the journey to Rome as recorded in Acts 27:1-6. That there was a Christian church at Myra is beyond doubt and it was quite probably the springboard for much of Paul’s missionary work in Perga, Pamphylia, and latterly Galatia—all part of what today is called Turkey.

Apparently “Bishop” Nicholas, who represented the Myra church at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, became famous for his many good works, not least the giving of presents to young children on his own birthday, December 6th. For this he later became regarded as a “saint” and a basilica, the ruins of which are still standing today, was created in his honour at Myra. They are now suitably exploited by the tourist industry in the resorts near that town. So there his remains stayed until May 9th A.D. 1070.

The Crusaders Caused Confusion!

Following the Great Schism of 1054, in which the Rome-based church decided to excommunicate the whole of the Eastern wing of the church based in Constantinople, some marauding Italian sailors, exploiting the confusion caused by the ragtag band of Crusaders passing through the land, seized the remains of the “saint” and carted them off to Bari in the south of Italy—within the safe keeping of the Roman pope.

There, entombed in concrete in a large pilgrimage church, they have remained until today but for how much longer remains to be seen. Icons and relics are vitally important to both the Roman and Eastern Churches, and perhaps none more so than those of “Father Christmas,” the figurehead for facilitating the observance of the winter festival introduced by Rome.

In 2005 a forensic examination of the remains was carried out in England which confirmed the authenticity of these first century remains indicating that in accordance with popular traditions, Nicholas was indeed less than five feet tall!

Thus, on the one hand Nicholas has been the patron saint of Greece, and is today a much loved icon of the Russian church; on the other hand, Father Christmas is a vital part of the western church’s celebration of December 25th.

Bones of Contention

But herein lies the problem. How inappropriate, some say, for the remains of the patron saint of Greece and Russia to be incarcerated in the Basilica of Santa Nicola in the Catholic Italian port of Bari—a busy transit port for visitors to the Greek mainland. There they have been the object of veneration by enormous crowds of “pilgrims” from all over Europe, thus providing a very lucrative tourist business for its residents.

The truth behind a tug-of-war over some ancient relics in the coastal town of Bari, Italy

By John Ramsden LONDON, UK
However, according to an Associated Press report, early in 2003, the Eastern church demanded that the bones be returned to their native Turkey. Obviously returning them would also boost their tourist trade too, apart from anything else!

So on Sunday, May 29th, 2005, the new Pope Benedict XVI, anxious to engineer a successful rapprochement with the Eastern church, turned up in Bari—and conducted an open-air Mass attended by 200,000 people. True to his clever political style, Pope Benedict reminded his audience that it was from the very port of Bari that Henry VI, accepting the red cross insignia from Pope Urban II, set out in 1195 to recover Jerusalem from the Muslim infidels—an Islamic foe common to both churches as we are witnessing today. He went on to reaffirm that... “my desire is to work with all my might for the re-establishment of the full and visible unity of all Christ’s followers.”

A Merger or a Takeover?

Although this may seem a trivial, almost bizarre way of carrying on, what it indicates to the student of Bible prophecy is the struggle for supremacy in the move to create a worldwide apostate church ready to oppose Christ when he comes. As Bible Magazine readers will know from earlier articles and news items on this matter, we are looking for the formation of a great confederacy of Euro-Russian nations, uniting much of the east and west under the religious leadership of the Vatican, and which will oppose Christ when he comes.

Daniel portrays these nations as a great image with a head of gold—symbolising in the latter days the apostate religious power referred to in the book of Revelation as “Babylon the Great.” That original apostasy broke apart in 1054 A.D. in a dispute known as the Great Schism, resulting in the separate entities of Rome (Catholic) and Constantinople (Eastern or Orthodox). The estrangement between the two branches of the Church lasted until Pope Paul VI met with the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras II in—significantly enough—Jerusalem in 1964. The 900 year Bull of Anathema was then lifted by Rome in 1965. In 1979, the last pope, John Paul II, visited the former Orthodox Patriarch in Istanbul when the two of them pledged to continue the dialogue.

Their communique was issued on St. Andrew’s Day—a nice touch, considering that it was Saint Andrew who founded the Orthodox Church and was supposed to be the brother of Saint Peter—the legendary first Bishop of Rome. In 1991 the late Pope John Paul II convened a synod of Eastern Bishops and described the two churches as being “one soul breathing with two lungs.” Be that as it may, there can, however, be only one head to the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream! Clearly, something has got to give, though we know not how or when it will happen. Instead we watch what is going on with great interest.

Pope of the West, East, or Both?

So it was with considerable interest that, last Summer, we read an amazing four page statement put out by the Eastern Orthodox “Ecumenical Patriarch” based in Istanbul. The document noted how Pope Benedict XVI has decided... “to remove from his titles... that of “Patriarch of the West and to retain such titles as “Vicar of Christ” and “Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church.” This statement described how such a move would... “impede the re-opening of theological dialogue between the two churches... given that it will also deal with the issue of Primacy of the Church.”

It continued: “Out of all the titles that are used by the Pope the only one that goes back to the period of the undivided church (i.e. pre-1054) was “Patriarch of the West”... “It is of extreme importance to the Orthodox Church that it (i.e. the Pope’s dropping of the former title) will create “serious difficulties to the Orthodox given that they are implying a universal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome over the entire church which is something the Orthodox have never accepted.”

The statement ends by very pointedly reminding Pope Benedict that when he was formerly only Professor Joseph Ratzinger, he asserted that “Rome cannot make demands from the East regarding the primacy issue more than has been expressed and applied since the
first millennium”!

Thus, the meeting on November 29th between the Pope and the Patriarch in Istanbul was of great interest. Referring to the main purpose of the Pope’s trip to Turkey, Patriarch Bartholomew stated, very significantly, that he and the Pontiff were “jointly successors to the thrones of Rome and New Rome”! No sign of a merger at this stage, then! However with only a few thousand followers among the tiny minority of Christians in Turkey, Patriarch Bartholomew has virtually no leverage in the global game of ecclesiastical politics. As the New York Times reported: “A millennium of bad blood, mistrust and violence has separated the two Christian churches and 40 years of talks have resulted in warmer relations but not in greater formal unity... A pope has yet to visit Russia, home to most of the world’s 220 million Orthodox Christians, and Benedict has made that unity one of his prime goals.”

Next Stop Moscow?

If, then, politics is about knowing where the power lies, it seems that it is the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Alexi II in Moscow who is calling the shots. Such was the hostility between Alexi II and John Paul II on account of the latter’s “proselytising activities” in the Ukraine that the Pope was never able to visit Moscow. But already as the Russian newspaper Pravda has reported, Metropolitan Kirril, the Moscow Patriarch’s head of External Church Relations, as saying “After the election of Pope Benedict XVI our dialogue has become more intensive”—diplomatic speak for indicating that a papal visit to Moscow could be in prospect fairly soon.

A Greco-Roman Confederacy?

For the last 160 years, Bible students have been anticipating what, using their short-hand terminology, they refer to as a latter-day “Greco-Roman, politico-religious confederacy.” By that is meant the gradual development of a great power bloc based on the successors to the former Roman and Greek empires as outlined in several places in the prophecies of Daniel, and very graphically foreseen by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 38. We are now seeing this coming about with the relentless eastern expansion of the European Union almost virtually knocking on the door of the Kremlin and provoking some very interesting responses from Vladimir Putin—a development which many felt was impossible some 30 years ago.

So could it be that, before long, we shall witness an end of the 1000-year rift between the once united Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches virtually coinciding with some kind of political detente—or even positive co-operation between East and West in preparation for their descent to, and their ultimate destruction on, the mountains of Israel? It now seems entirely possible!

Footnote

1. See for example Volume 9:2
Wile most Jews cringe at the suggestion that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah ("Christ" being the Greek word for the Hebrew "Moshiach"), the vast majority of Christians slap the "cult" label on anyone who claims that the Jesus of the New Testament is not "God the Son" or part of a trinity. In fact, when you consider what most Christians believe about Jesus, it is hardly surprising that sensible Jews turn away from the idea in disgust! The Catholic Church, for example in the Second Vatican Council Encyclical De Oecumenismo (The Decree on Ecumenism) makes the arrogant statement: “All Christians must make a proclamation before all nations of their belief in God, who is One and Three, in the Son of God incarnate, Jesus” died wholesale, but then go on to insist that this is one of the most prominent prophecies made in the New Testament—it actually predicts the rise of a movement which would grow out of the early assemblies, and which would be known as antichrist.

The Corruption of Christianity
Whatever Jews or Christians may think and say about the New Testament, one thing is very clear. It tells us that the original first century form of Christianity would become corrupted, and that Christians would turn to fables, or myths (see 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Jesus himself predicted that false Christs (or Messiahs) would arise (Matthew 24:24), and Paul said that “another Jesus” would be preached, and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). There would be “false apostles” he says (verse 13) masquerading as angels of light! “Let no man deceive you by any means” he told the Thessalonian believers (2nd letter, chapter 2:3), for the day of Christ would not come, “except there come a falling away (apostasy) first…”

These predictions of the coming corruption of Christianity are both unambiguous and numerous. In fact, it would be true to say that this is one of the most prominent prophecies who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ” (Westcott). The word is found only in John’s Epistles…”

John tells us that this movement was already extant at the time he wrote his letter (see 1 John 2:18-19). These “antichrists” had separated themselves from the apostles’ fellowship and company, and they denied the Messiahship of the real Jesus (verse 22) claiming that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh (see chapter 4:23).

Here then are two different Christs, or Messiahs. The apostles taught that he came in the flesh (like everyone else!); whereas the antichrist group denied this, claiming that he had not come in the flesh—which John says was “the spirit of error” (delusion or deceit). The apostle’s teaching was understandable and presented a Jesus that was human and real; one who “was in all points tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15)—subject to normal human experiences such as weariness, hunger and eventually death. On the other hand, we learn that “God cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13); that the Creator “fainteth not, neither is weary” (Isaiah 40:28) and that He is immortal—not subject to death. Jesus, certainly was not God! In Hebrews 2:16-17 we read that Jesus, “took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren…” This is a very different Jesus to the one worshipped by most Christians.

There may be other factors to take into consideration here, but two important points emerge. First, the New Testament writers correctly anticipated the distortion of their message, as well as the misrepresentation of the nature of the Messiah. That they were able to foresee this future development does give them credibility. Secondly, it becomes evident that the real historical Jesus of the New Testament is unknown by the so-called Christian world of today.

The Historical Jesus
It would be unreasonable, surely, to suggest...
that the whole story of Jesus could have been fabricated and written up by the apostles in less than a century after his interview with Pilate and the crucifixion, if the person of Jesus had never existed at all. Yet we know that it had been written up because a small scrap of John’s gospel record, dated with some considerable accuracy to the first few decades of the 2nd century, is now in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, U.K. The text has been identified as that of John 18:31-33, and on the back verses 37 and 38. This is a significant text confirming the record of Jesus’ interview with Pilate the Roman governor. Part of the name of Pontius Pilate was also found on an inscription in Caesarea.

The Roman historian Tacitus (A.D. 55-117) mentions the same event in his Annals. He says of the Christians: “Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the Roman governor. Part of the name of Pontius Pilatus...” Again this must have been written in less than 80 years after the event. Other early references to Jesus include the writings of Suetonius, Josephus and even the Talmud. Dr. R.T. Glover, a lecturer in ancient history at Cambridge university summed up the issue as follows:

“If the ordinary canons of history, used in every other case, hold good in this case, Jesus is undoubtedly an historical person. If he is not an historical person, the only alternative is that there is no such thing as history at all—it is delirium, nothing else; and a rational being would be better employed in the collection of snuff-boxes. And if history is impossible, so is all other knowledge.”

At the very least, it has to be recognized that the New Testament is based upon fact and that the personalities of which it speaks actually existed. Jesus of Nazareth was a real human being.

**Harmony of the Testaments**

Whatever interpretations and misrepresentations may have been put upon it by theologians and critics, the New Testament itself claims to confirm the teachings of the Old Testament and to fulfill some of its requirements. It was Jesus who said:

“For 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).

And again:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:17-18).

The words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy are just as relevant:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Furthermore the Hebrew Scriptures themselves place safeguards before us which cannot be ignored:

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

And yet again:

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprovet thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6).

At a stroke, this principle which is found in both Testaments, utterly demolishes the replacement theology of the Catholic and other churches. Paul makes this point in Romans 11:29. If the real Jesus of the New Testament is the Messiah of the Scriptures, then he is, “The King of the Jews” (John 19:19). *He is Jewish* and the promised son of David.

**Whose Son is he?** (Matt 22:42)

The Jewish rejection of the idea of God having a son is difficult to understand because in Exodus 4:22-23 we read that Moses was told:

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.”

And again, taking the JPS version of the Tanakh, we find these words in Hosea 11:1:

“I fell in love with Israel when he was still a child: and I have called (him) My son ever since Egypt.”

Whatever might be said about that particular translation, the idea that God could have a son in some sense, is clearly there. We do not have to jump to the ugly and ridiculous notion contained in pagan myths of gods co-habiting with human women! The reasonable approach, surely, is to enquire as to the sense in which the idea is meant.

But if the Jews have a problem with the question of Jesus’ parentage, the Christian churches have had no easier solution—in fact they have made nonsense of it. Their theory and superstition was enshrined in the so-called Athanasian Creed which is said to have originated with Council of Nicea in AD 325. This master-stroke in obfuscation tells us that the “Godhead” is “The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible... (that) there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.” It claims that Jesus Christ “is God and man.” He is “Perfect God and perfect man.”

The 39 Articles of the Church of England are not much help either:

“The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.”

What all this theological mumbo-jumbo tells us is that for the vast majority of Christians, the nature of Christ is “incomprehensible” and a blessed mystery—they neither understand or know the real Messiah. Yet John wrote (and Jesus himself said):

“... this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“...Made of a Woman”

Let it be recognized that it would be no more impossible for the Almighty to make, or create, a man from the womb of a woman, than it was for Elohim to create a woman from Adam in Eden. And really, that is what the New Testament tells us: “...When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law (i.e. Israel), that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). Again in Romans 1:3-4 which says “Concerning His son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power...”

Jesus did not “pre-exist” as Church doctrine insists—he “was made” or created; he was created for a special purpose, in a special way. That purpose is expressed by the prophet Isaiah
manifested. This word "manifested" called "the word of life," and a life that was the understanding of the truth concerning the dwelt among us" (John 1:14), and he expands also tells us that "the word was made flesh and Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2). But he teaching of early Christians was that "Jesus translated from the Greek name "Christian" today—they know of no such offering both meal and animal sacrifice throne of the house of Israel, says Jeremiah restores Israel is one who has been formed from a true branch of David's line. Further, he is to be a light unto the Gentiles also, bringing a true branch of David's line. Further, he is to be a light unto the Gentiles also, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.

When this man of David's line sits upon the throne of the house of Israel, says Jeremiah 33:17,18, the Levites will perform their work in offering both meal and animal sacrifice continually. Such a Messiah as this would never be recognised by most who bear the name “Christian” today—they know of no such Christ and would reject him even more forcefully than the Jews.

"Speaking in a Son"

The apostle John tells us that the true teaching of early Christians was that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2). But he also tells us that "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), and he expands upon this when he writes: (1 John 1:1-2)

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)"

This provides us with an important key to the understanding of the truth concerning the one sent as Messiah. It involves something called “the word of life,” and a life that was "manifested.” This word “manifested” is translated from the Greek phaneroo which means to make visible, to reveal, or to make known.

So John is telling us that this “word of life" was from the beginning—a statement that is clearly verified by Genesis chapter one, where God said... John is not saying that Jesus Christ was from the beginning, as many Christians wrest his words to mean. In writing about this “word” in the first chapter of his gospel record, John says “In it was life” (this is how Tyndale translated it). The meaning of this is clear enough: the word of God places before us a way of life—a quality of life—one that is far higher than mere animal physical existence. For example: “In the way of righteousness is life” (Proverbs 12:28).

Now this “life,” this perfect life of righteousness was manifested, or revealed, says John. He defines it as “that eternal life, which was with the Father.” He uses the expression “life of the age” which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “life of the Olam.” He is writing to us about the life of the Eternal One, of God Himself, and says that this Life was revealed, “and we have seen it, and bear witness” to it. He writes about that “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life.”

John is not saying that he had seen God Himself (for that would be impossible—Exodus 33:20), but he is saying that he has seen a manifestation of His Life—of the eternal life—“and this life is in his son” (1 John 5:11).

This is what the apostle Paul wrote about in 1 Timothy 3:16 when he says “God was manifest in the flesh.” Everyone should know the difference between a manifestation and an actual appearance. A manifest or declaration may be made concerning the contents of a parcel, while those actual contents remain hidden from view.

This subject of God manifestation, Phaneros or Theophany, is far more complex than we are able to expound here of course. It is also a subject that is clouded by faulty and inaccurate translations, because the translators do not comprehend the things they are trying to convey. Jews will translate so as to avoid possible connections with Jesus of Nazareth and Christians will translate so as to support their incomprehensible theology. Consequently the real Messiah remains unknown.

The revealing of Messiah

This is the subject of the last book in the New Testament. The key to the understanding of it lies in all the previous Scriptures—Old and New Testaments. The symbolic themes are based upon, and expand upon what had been written previously. For example, the “beasts” that are described in the Apocalypse (chapter 13 for example) have been picked up from the prophecy of Daniel, especially his seventh chapter which foresaw the rise of the Roman Empire (see Daniel 7:17 and 23). The Revelation expanded upon this and declared “things which must shortly come to pass,” most of which has now been fulfilled in the history of Europe and in the great system of falsehood centred in Rome (Revelation 17:5, 9, and 18).

When Jesus of Nazareth returns, as the New Testament insists that he will, he will not be recognized or accepted by the Christian world. He will return as the Jewish Messiah wielding immense and formidable power.

The New Testament teaches that the Jewish people will come to recognize their Messiah, and consequently many have looked for this to happen. One such was Joseph Mede (1586-1638) who wrote of some latter-day enemies of the European Beast to arise 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 (Roman) Beast, haply, shall esteem for the army of their imaginary Antichrist to arise from among the Jews, God so revenging the obstinacy of their error.”

It is ironic that European Christendom, which embodies the “Antichrist” doctrine of 1 John 4:1-6 will identify the real Messiah of the Jews with their future antichrist, and so bring upon themselves the terrible consequences that are outlined in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Today the Messiah is unknown by Jew and by Christian, but this will not always be so. In 2 Corinthians 3:15, 16 we read this of the children of Israel:

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.”

When the King of Israel is at last revealed, and when he has subdue the whole world under Israel as the Kingdom of God upon earth, then we read:

“...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 (Roman) Beast, haply, shall esteem for the army of their imaginary Antichrist to arise from among the Jews, God so revenging the obstinacy of their error.”

In the way of righteousness is life (Proverbs 12:28).
During a recent visit to Israel, we had the opportunity to walk on the Temple Mount. Although the majority of visitors to Jerusalem visit the Western Wall, only a few make arrangements to go up onto the huge platform that dominates the Old City. There are many reasons for this, and in this article I’d like to examine the controversy that surrounds the Temple Mount.

For anyone who is unfamiliar with the history of the Temple Mount, I strongly recommend a book published recently by Leen Ritmeyer entitled “The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.” The promotional material describes the book as “…the ideal textbook from which to understand the development of the man-made plateau that is the focus of the world’s interest.” Following the Six Day War of 1967, Leen worked as the architect of the Temple Mount excavations, and is well qualified to reconstruct for us the history of the platform and its buildings over the past three thousand years. If you have any questions about the archaeological finds, or the history of what remains today, concerning the Temple Mount, this book can help provide answers in a very logical way (The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Leen Ritmeyer, 2006 Published by Carta, Jerusalem ISBN: 965-220-628-8).

To gain access to the Western Wall area, within the Old City of Jerusalem, visitors must go through a security point where their person and belongings are scrutinized for anything that might be a threat to others. There are hundreds and sometimes thousands of visitors on any given day. Just to the south (right) of the Western Wall Plaza is a covered wooden ramp which provides access to the top of the platform. It is a very temporary looking structure, and has, in fact, been rebuilt several times. The fill on which it is built is not very stable. Most visitors, who are Muslims, make their way up through the Lion’s Gate, which is on the eastern—Kidron Valley—side of the platform. In July of 2006, “Police... restricted entry to Jerusalem’s Temple Mount to Palestinians under the age of 40 after it received information that a protest was scheduled to take place on its premises after Friday prayers.” At present there appears to be a ban on Muslims under the age of 45 going on to the Mount. Non-Muslims on the other hand, are only permitted to visit during certain hours, on certain days of the week, and visits are often not permitted. For those making the ascent, there is yet another check point, but this one is not concerned with security. Here, both men and women are asked to dress modestly. The legs should be covered down to the ankles and the arms down to the wrists, if possible. The head should be covered by a hat, or scarf. A proper shirt rather than a t-shirt should be worn. In addition, all are asked whether they have Bibles, or portions of Bibles with them. The Muslims do not want any holy books other than their own on the Temple Mount. Many incidents have occurred when visitors have opened their Bibles and begun to read near the Dome of the Rock or the el-Aksa Mosque. Some have been very demonstrative with their reading. Non-Muslims have not been permitted to enter either the Dome or the Mosque since the beginning of the Intifada in 2000.

In 1948, Israel lost control of the Old City
of Jerusalem to Jordan. It was not until 1967 that the entire city was reunified after the Six Day War. This was the first time since the year 70 AD that Jews controlled the city of Jerusalem. Jews were once again able to visit and worship at the Western Wall, but the capture of the Temple Mount caught everyone by surprise. What were the religious authorities to do? Suggestions ranged from rebuilding the Temple and reinstating the sacrificial service, to allowing Jews to ascend the Temple Mount to pray. There were three schools of thought among the rabbis concerning the Temple Mount question. The first was to immediately begin the building of the Third Temple. On the second day of the war when the Temple Mount fell to the Israeli army, the Army Chief Rabbi asked the commanding general to blow up the Dome of the Rock while they had the opportunity. Soon after the end of hostilities, the Army Engineering Corps were asked to measure out the precise location where the Temple had been located. In 1981 the Chief Rabbi attempted to tunnel underneath the Temple Mount towards the site of the Holy of Holies in order to locate the Ark of the Covenant.

A second group held that the Third Temple would be built not by man but by the Messiah, so there was nothing to do but pray and wait. Because Jews were ritually unclean in the absence of the Red Heifer, they were forbidden to enter the area where the Temple was located. This group felt that they had done all they could do, and when the Messiah came and removed the mosques, then they would build the Temple.

Another concern was that there was an abundance of knowledge about the precise location of the Temple site. They wanted a blanket ban on Jews going on to the Temple Mount.

A third group thought that Jews should be allowed to enter the parts of the Temple Mount where it was known the Temple was not located. They believed that the Messiah was to build the Temple, but felt that Jews should pray on the Mount while awaiting that day. The precise Temple location was in doubt, but there was a consensus belief in where it had not been, to the north and south of the Dome.

Within a few hours of the Temple Mount being taken by the army in 1967, while the Army Chief Rabbi was suggesting the demolition of the Dome of the Rock, Israel Radio broadcast a warning issued by the Chief Rabbinate not to enter the area of the Mount. Soon after they issued a public statement, “in view of the fact that the holiness of the area never ceases, it is forbidden to ascend the Temple Mount until the Temple is built.” There continues to be a wide range of opinions on what should be done to maintain Jewish jurisdiction over the Temple Mount.

In spite of this decree, a 1967 Israeli law guarantees the “right of access” for anyone to the Temple Mount. On June 27, 1967—a few weeks after the end of the Six Day War—the Prime Minister, Levi Eshcol, along with the Minister of Religious Affairs and the President of the State, put forward what came to be known as the “Protection of Holy Places” Law. The first article of the new law said “1. The Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places.” In other words, any person, regardless of their religious beliefs, was guaranteed the right of access to any of the Holy Places within Israel, by the Government of Israel. Since this law was proclaimed soon after the taking of the Old City and the Temple Mount, we can be sure that the right to go up on the Temple Mount was foremost in their minds. We should also note that anyone desecrating, violating or preventing freedom of access to the Holy Places, was liable to imprisonment. The State of Israel was prepared to enforce the law with regard to the Temple Mount which had newly come under their jurisdiction. The Minister of Religious Affairs was charged with implementing the Law, and was able to “after consultation with... representatives of the religions concerned... make regulations as to any matter relating to such implementation.” There appears to have been significant changes to the implementation of the Law, as very few Jews visit the Temple Mount to pray.

Although the Temple Mount falls under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs, the de facto management lies with the Muslims. The Israeli government has granted a Muslim Council, the Waqf, full administration of the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). Some feel that enabling Jews to pray on the Temple Mount will weaken Muslim claims to it. Since 1967, a number of events have in fact strengthened the hold that the Muslims have on the area. The 1993 Oslo accords generated a struggle between the Jordanians and the Palestinians for control of the Haram al-Sharif. The Palestinians won control. The 1994 peace agreement with Jordan was signed with the condition that Jordan was to have preferred status in future Israel-Arab talks about the Temple Mount. No longer is Israel the sole decision maker.

As part of establishing authority over the site, the Waqf has built a large new Mosque in the south-east corner of the platform to accommodate the large numbers of worshippers. As this involved digging into the Herodian platform, a large amount of excavated material came to be dumped into the Kidron Valley. Examination of this material by Israeli archaeologists revealed artifacts from the time of King Solomon. All of this work was done without the approval of the Israelis who consider themselves to have jurisdiction over the site. Similarly, the entire surface of the platform is in process of being paved over, further obscuring many of the signs that researchers such as Leen Ritmeyer took into account in locating the site of the pre-Herodian platform and the Holy of Holies.

Is there an answer to the present situation of the Temple Mount covered by Muslim structures in the midst of the Jewish controlled city of Jerusalem? The secular unbelieving rulers of Israel are not prepared to further antagonize their Muslim neighbours. The Palestinians believe that the Haram al-Sharif can be the centre of their capital city for a Palestinian state. But the Bible tells us of a new temple to be built on the site when Jesus the Messiah returns to re-establish the Kingdom of God centered on Jerusalem. There is a time of peace and a time of conflict still to be seen in the land of Israel. In order for that new Temple to be built, all that now is a source of conflict will be destroyed by the earthquake that accompanies his return (Zechariah 14:4; Ezekiel 38:19,20). We look forward to that coming day when God himself will deal with his enemies as we read in Isaiah 34:8—“For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.”
The mother church is said to be Rome (a position that she claims for herself as seen from the above photograph, taken in Vatican square). In that system we find every item of satan’s religion. Her daughter churches reflect various items also—and principally among them the super-human devil of Dualism

apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

The Scripture thus reveals an ecclesiastical satan. This satan or adversary of truth began to develop in the early Christian church, and was seen particularly in those who caused divisions and man-made rules which were contrary to the truth.

In writing to the Roman believers Paul is very forthright in his warning of the danger, but encourages the faithful with words “the God of peace shall bruise satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:17-20).

As the letter to the Romans is concerned with the issue of believers being justified by faith (and not by the works of the law in the absence of faith), the particular deceivers in this case were the Judaisers referred to by ecclesiastical historians. Their basic error was in turning back to a ritual keeping of the Mosaic law which overlooked “weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith” (Matthew 23:23). Their system was however “bruised” in the destruction of Judea and the burning of the temple in A.D. 70.

This was not the end of false teaching in the churches however. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul tells of a “falling away” or apostasy that would develop within the church (v. 3) ultimately revealing an ecclesiastical head which Christ would destroy at his coming. Paul writes (v. 9), “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”

In this ecclesiastical adversary would be seen the completed development of the serpent’s lie: From the promise “Thou shalt not surely die” and “Ye shall be as gods,” to the genii of Babylon, the Daevas of Persia, prince of demons, guardian saints, doctrines of devils and so forth. What a system of iniquity and utter filthiness it is! We see all this spiritual fornication finally summed up in the Apocalyptic whore, the system of ugly corruption detailed in Revelation 17:5, “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The mother church is said to be Rome, and in that system we find every item of satan’s religion. Her daughter churches reflect various items also—and principally among them the super-human devil of Dualism, and the inferior demons.

These abominations are destined to be bruised finally by the Lord Jesus Christ “with
the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). In that day a voice will be heard strong and clear:

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the (spiritual) merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Rev. 18:2-3).

Such is the picture which the Bible paints of the world’s corrupt religious systems. Babylon’s downfall will be a blessing to humanity, a release from the corrupt and hateful superstitions which hold men in chains of darkness, withholding from them the glorious light of God’s marvellous Truth.

The adversary however not only has an organised ecclesiastical head, but a political one too. The mind of the flesh, organised into political groups, wields civil power and authority: this also is to be finally bruised by Christ. Of this political devil, John writes to believers in Revelation 2:10,

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

In this case, it was the pagan authority of Rome who imprisoned many of the early Christians. Since that time many state authorities have acted likewise.

The prophecies of the Bible show in great detail the development of the adversaries’ political power right up to the present day. They frequently do so by using the imagery of beasts, and this is finally presented to us in the book of Revelation by the title: “THE DRAGON, that OLD SERPENT, which is the devil and satan (the accuser and adversary)”—Revelation 20:2.

It does not come within the compass of our present series to deal with the development itself, but for those who know something about this aspect of Bible teaching, they may find it interesting that the early form of the name Russia, as found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, is the Hebrew word Rosh. This word, translated literally, means head! It is when Russia leads the nations against Israel that Christ will seize all political control, and through Armageddon, bruise the political head of satan.

May Christ soon come as the ancient prophecies promise, and may he soon destroy the works of the devil in all their hateful manifestations. In that day, the Lord’s Kingdom of righteousness shall have replaced the institutions we see today.

We long for that day to come when “there shall be no more curse” (Rev. 22:3). The day when that triumphant song shall resound through all the earth “Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” (Revelation 19:6).

The End of Saddam Hussein

It was an inglorious end to the one who claimed to be the reincarnation of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon! Another one to boast against the God of Israel with his mouth (Ezekiel 35:10 & 13). Clutching his Koran this enemy of Israel swung into oblivion just before the New Year.

It was not very different for Adolf Hitler of course; he built up a destroying machine for the Jews of Europe but ended up being destroyed himself. We read somewhere that his skull ended up in a cardboard box somewhere in Moscow. Such is the fate of those who vaunt themselves against God’s chosen race, the children of Israel.

The lessons of history do not seem to be making their mark in Iran however. Iran (which is a name derived from Aryan, and is the name for the Biblical Persia) is the country where Queen Esther once had to confront “wicked Haman” (Esther 7:6), and he also was sent to the gallows and swung into oblivion! With these lessons before him, one would think that the celebrated Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran would choose his steps more carefully! The end of Saddam should be seen as a warning to the world—a world that is as hostile to Israel as ever. The end of the “image” of Babylon is that it will be broken in pieces (Dan 2:34,35).
THE WATER OF LIFE

Have you ever carried a pail of water? Quite heavy isn’t it! It has been estimated that the average thunder-cloud carries about 100,000 tons of water. No wonder then that Job exclaimed: “He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them” (26:8). Water is absolutely essential to life—a very heavy responsibility to provide that, wouldn’t you say? And most of us get free delivery of it by air, regularly! Who thought of getting it to us?

THOUSANDS OF TONS OF WATER DELIVERED WORLDWIDE BY AIR...

“All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.” — Ecclesiastes 1:7.

This system is found upon no other planet in the universe, what drip could ever imagine it all came into being by chance? It all has purpose, and evolutionary development is a contradiction of that. Isaiah 55:10,11 says: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” What a dry and arid desert earth would be without the water of life from heaven (Ephesians 5:26)! Why defile our minds with the blasphemous filth of evolution; wash it out with pure water!