“All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” Rev. 18:3.
“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 merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Revelation 18:3,4.

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17
Visit www.Bibleinthenews.com for a weekly analysis of a current news topic from a Bible perspective. Keep alert to the Signs of our times!

HIGHLIGHTS EARLIER THIS YEAR

Jonathan Bowen on January 15th presented an edition under the title UNITED NATIONS AGAINST “MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.” Quote: “We can see the ground work being laid that will eventually justify the invasion by “all nations” of Israel—on “humanitarian grounds.”

Paul Billington on January 30th presented an edition from Jerusalem in Israel under the title AT THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, The Future City of truth. this edition included an extra audio clip of an interview recorded with Arutz Sheva at their studios in Beit El.

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NORTHERN PROPHECY DAY
Saturday October 31st 2009 Speaker: Jonathan Bowen (Canada), Venue: Folk Hall, Haxby Road, New Earswick, Nr. York. More info’ from Phillip Jones: Pipsafedriving@aol.com

NEW ZEALAND

Plan to attend a Bible Prophecy Day on your next New Zealand holiday. God willing four days will be held this year as follows:
Auckland Saturday October 31st.
Wellington Saturday November 7th.
Invercargill Saturday November 14th.
Christchurch Saturday November 21st.
Theme: Prophecy Comes Alive
Speakers: Don Pearce (author of Milestones), Mark O’Grady and Roger Lewis. For further info’ contact David Archer: david.archer3@three.com.au

Well over three hundred attended the Brantford Prophecy Day last October — in fact every seat was taken, and even the organist had to give up her seat! There continues to be a lively interest in Bible prophecy as related to current events.

BRANTFORD PROPHECY DAY OCTOBER 2008

Another successful Prophecy Day in Brantford, Ontario, Canada.

ARCHIVES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

To provide brethren and sisters with sound reasons as to why we can still have confidence in our Christadelphian heritage in the area of Bible prophecy. Also to re-introduce these concepts in a non-controversial, yet fresh and stimulating way. To encourage renewed interest and study of the prophetic vision provided by Scripture.

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ARCHIVES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE
A kingdom requires a monarch, a territory, subjects, laws, religion, and a government for its orderly function as a national entity. The Bible reveals this outline of God's kingdom. By John Thomas

**AN OUTLINE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

And David said, Blessed be thou, the Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. And David said to all the congregation, Now blessthe Lord your God. And they did so and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king and all Israel obeyed him. And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel."—1 Chron. 29:10-25. Hence the kingdom of Israel is God's kingdom.

**Territory of the Kingdom**

"The land from the river of Egypt (the Nile) unto the great river, the river Euphrates."—Gen. 15:18. The contents of the land between these two rivers promised to Abraham and Christ (Gal. 3:16) for the kingdom, are indicated by the names of the tribes inhabiting it at the time the promise was made. Its frontiers are given in Ezek. 47:13-21; Deut. 1:7-8; 11:24. "The land is mine," saith the Lord.—Lev. 25:23.

**The Nation, or Subjects of the Kingdom**

"And God called Jacob's name Israel; and said unto him, nations even a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the Land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee (zara, seed, in the singular) will I give the land."—Gen. 35:11-12. This "company of nations" is the nation of the Twelve Tribes, to whom God said at Horeb, "ye shall be unto me a holy nation;" therefore he styles them in the scriptures his nation, saying "hearken and give ear to me, O my nation."—Isa. 51:4. "Remember me, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,"—106:5.

**Constitution of the Kingdom**

A nation requires religion, laws, and government for its well-being. Israel being God's nation, He only could of right confer them sovereignty upon it. He gave the Tribes their religion, their civil institutions, and their governors, which he constituted by a Covenant, styled the Old Covenant, because he intended to supersede it by an amended Covenant, called the New. The New Covenant grows out of the promises made to Abraham concerning the everlasting possession of the land by the nation under Christ. The things of this covenant are matters of faith and hope to Israel, and "the called," from Abraham, till Christ shall reign over the Twelve Tribes in the land for ever, when they will become matters of fact. The things of the Abrahamic Covenant were peculiarly, and in a few years after him, exclusively the Hope of the descendants of Jacob, among whom, when in Egypt, transgressions began to prevail. They served the gods of Egypt, and did evil—Josh. 24:14. Because of these transgressions, the Mosaic Law was added (Gal. 3:19) to "the Hope of the Covenant," and sacrifice; which Covenant was of no practical force in national affairs, because the Mediatorial Testator had not come and had not died.—Heb. 9:16-17. The Mosaic Law or Covenant, was designed for the instruction of the nation in the things pertaining to its hope, as well as for the organization and regulation of its affairs as the kingdom of God. The law was their schoolmaster until Christ, the promised Seed of the Covenant, came.—Gal. 3:24; and contained "within it the form or representation of the knowledge and of the truth."—Rom. 2:20. When the time comes to place the nation of Israel under the New Covenant of the Kingdom, the representative things will have been removed, and "the knowledge and the truth" will alone remain.

**"Covenant" Defined**

A Covenant is a system of government indicative of God's chosen, selected, and determined plan or purpose, fixed by his absolute and sovereign will, and imposed on the people without the slightest consultation between them as to its expediency, fitness, or propriety. Jehovah is the testator; the people or Tribes of Israel, are the legatees. Hence, his covenants, testaments, or wills to the nation, require the death of the testator, because they are of no force while he lives. But Jehovah is a deathless being. He never died, nor can he die.—1 Tim. 6:15. His covenants, therefore, are "ordained in the hands of mediators subject to death."—Gal. 3:19. A Mediator is Jehovah's substitute, who represents Him in all his dealings with his nation. Moses was the mediator of the Old Will, which was dedicated by sacrifice consumed by fire from heaven, and...
only partially carried out for forty years in the wilderness; but came into full force after his death, when Joshua gave the nation a rest, representative of a future sabbatism for it in the same land under the Christ for 1000 years. Jesus is the mediator of the New Will; which was confirmed in the future sabbatism for it in the same land under the Christ for 1000 years.

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Jesus is the mediator of the New Will; which was confirmed in the future sabbatism for it in the same land under the Christ for 1000 years.

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And at that time, there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Dan.12:1).

“Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25-26).

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.” And his breath, as an overflowing fire: and the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, SHALL BE STUBBLE: and the day that cometh shall BURN THEM UP, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”

Having seen that “the name of the Lord coming from far, burning with his anger,” answers to the approaching advent of Christ to take vengeance, it will be profitable to cite other testimonies to show that this doctrine of coming judgment is the uniform teaching of the Spirit in the word, and not a mere inference from some isolated expressions. We read in Isa. 66:15-16:

“Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and THE SLAIN OF THE LORD SHALL BE MANY.”

Again, Psalm 50:3-6:

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.”

Further, in Malachi 4:1-2:

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, SHALL BE STUBBLE: and the day that cometh shall BURN THEM UP, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”

To a similar purport, Jeremiah 30:23-24:

“Behold, the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword.”

Here is a direct pleading with “all flesh,” on the part of the Almighty, and the extirpation of the wicked from among men. History supplies no record of such an awful transaction. The time of its accomplishment will appear from the next testimony:

“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: And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity” (Isa. 30:27-28).

Who is “the name of the Lord” personified in this quotation from Isaiah? We hear the answer when we listen to him who said, “I am come in my Father’s name” (John 5:43), and of whom it is written, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved: namely, Jesus the Christ, the anointed of God, a King to Zion—God with-us—the Word made flesh—a name of God provided for the investure of the naked sons of men. The prophecy represents him as “coming from afar.” What is the meaning of this? We find it explained in Christ’s parable to his disciples, which is recorded in Luke 19:12-27: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” Hence Jesus (the nobleman), returning from heaven (the far country), is “The name of the Lord coming from far.”

Now in what character is he revealed, according to the prophecy? “His lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.” Or take Paul’s representation: “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;” which is in agreement with the statement in Isa. 11:4: “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth: with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” Finally we contemplate the picture symbolically elaborated in Rev. 19:11-16:

“...And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his NAME is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his robe and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,”

Twelve Lectures published in 1862 by Robert Roberts later appeared under the title Christendom Astray. On this page we produce an extract from Lecture No.15.
the intents of his heart: IN THE LATTER DAYS YE SHALL CONSIDER IT.”

Again, Psalm 21:9:

“Thou shalt make them (his enemies) as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.”

“Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup” (Psa. 11:6).

“And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 39:6).

“And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground” (Jer. 25:33).

Surveying these testimonies as a whole, we find that they reveal two separate stages in the “coming troubles.” first, there is “distress of nations;”—“evil going forth from nation to nation;”—and “men’s hearts failing for fear,” etc.—which may be designated as the natural stage; and second, a divine manifestation in the person of the Son of Man (who is “the name of the Lord”) accompanied by sweeping judgments of fire and sword which will destroy large masses of mankind; which may be considered as the supernatural. The former precedes the latter. Hence, as the first indication of the approach of the end, we must look for times of trouble and commotion on the earth.

When natural trouble has advanced to a certain point, the Lord Jesus will be revealed, no longer as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;”—“the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief;” but as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, treading the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.”—taking vengeance on this unbelieving generation. The vengeance in relation to mankind as a whole will be destruction to the majority, and discipline to the remnant. Multitudes will perish by war and pestilence; multitudes more will fall victims to the fire which will descend, after the manner of the judgments upon Sodom and Gomorrah; and the flames that consumed the military companies that went to bring Elijah from the top of the mount. “The slain of the Lord shall be many from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth.”

The earth’s population will be greatly thinned; its reprobate elements expurgated, leaving a residue composed of the meek and submissive, and well-disposed of mankind, who will constitute the willing subjects of Messiah’s kingdom, referred to in Isaiah 2:3; Jeremiah 3:17; Micah 4:2; and Zechariah 14:16, as the nations which shall go up “to the house of the God of Jacob,” at Jerusalem, to learn of His ways, and walk in His paths walking no more after the imagination of their evil hearts.

But this result will not be at once developed. The subjugation of the world is a matter of time.

Food For Thought

“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.” - Song of Solomon 2:16 & 6:3

“The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”

Proverbs 22:7

“As for my people... women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”

Isaiah 3:12

“For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.”

Isaiah 9:16

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”

Proverbs 29:2
Exclusive interview with Sir Martin Gilbert

The Story of ISRAEL: Past, Present & Future

Sir Martin Gilbert, well known Jewish historian and official biographer of Winston Churchill, work as an author as well as his views on a range of topics including Bible prophecy, as Thomas in the book *Elpis Israel*, and the Israeli-Palestinian situation today.

**Paul Billington**: Sir Martin, your recently published book “The Story of Israel” is a tremendous achievement in our view. But the full story of Israel is given to us in the Bible, isn’t it? That tells us the end of the story, which we look at in terms of a vision at the moment. In putting together a work like that, how many hours work would be involved?

**Sir Martin Gilbert**: I suppose I have honed my method over the years. It is essentially this: I was encouraged to do this by a school master when I was at school in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He said, “If you are going to be a writer—you are going to be writing on different themes. Try and work out in your mind as you go along, what the themes are that you want to write about. Do not worry about how many themes there are, but in the next ten years,” he said, “try and work out what they will be and then start collecting material for all ten themes.” This method worked.

Take one of the subjects in which I became very involved personally, the struggle of Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union. The other day I counted 172 box files, crammed full of material. That is a lot of box files! It includes my own notes, telephone calls, correspondence and so on; and my own lectures and assembled material. One day I will wake up—as I did exactly thirty days ago, when I said: “I now have enough boxes to write a book on the history of the Jews in Muslim Lands. Start writing.”

I set aside thirty days and started writing at 8:00 in the morning, and went to bed about an hour after midnight. I have an hour or two off in between to eat and stretch my legs. So having filled those boxes over a twenty, or thirty-year period, I write about it. The Soviet Jewry boxes I started filling in 1970. If I start writing that book in two years time it will be forty years of collecting and thirty days of writing, assuming that I can really maintain that pace. It may be sixty days or ninety days of writing, even more, but essentially it is the point at which I feel I have enough material that matters. So I just hope I have chosen the right themes to stuff my boxes with. No doubt when I die there will be stuffed boxes which no one will want to see and which will never become anything – except, hopefully, grist for some other writer’s mill.

I am sometimes asked whether you employ any researchers?

I do not employ researchers. I have people to help me photocopy and file, but I like to do my own research. I like to do my own reading. I like to do my own archival work. But I do have a lot of people who, if I have queries, answer them: friends, colleagues, even strangers. When I was collecting material for the Jews in Muslim Lands—in fact about three weeks before I started the actual writing—I read in the paper the astonishing fact that Bahrain’s new ambassador to Washington is a Jewish lady. I managed to

WHAT JOHN THOMAS WROTE IN 1849

There is, then, a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-adventual colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth.

I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt... The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them.
In Churchill discusses hisécies, the foresight of John

As an historian I find it very inspiring that someone from a religious perspective should really be so aware of the historical currents of that time. Not just aware of them but foreseeing them very clearly. In 1849 he is talking about events that began to come to pass in 1882. That is, as he puts it so rightly, the political return of individual Jews to the Biblical Land of Israel to set up farming colonies. And then the prediction that there would have to be a power—the Great Power as it was called—which would essentially liberate the Land so that the Jews could form their commonwealth. He uses the phrase commonwealth. It was to be some years before this happened.

There was a precedent, Lord Palmerston’s interest in the area and his giving protection to the Jews of Jerusalem—British diplomatic protection. But what Dr. Thomas is proposing is something much more comprehensive than that. He foreshadows, first of all Theodor Herzl’s political Zionism—the First Zionist Congress of 1897, and the Balfour Declaration of 1917. He talks about British statesmen. He is fairly caustic about their abilities at the time that he is writing, but he envisages a (then future) different calibre of statesmen, of whom A.J. Balfour and then Winston Churchill, when he was in charge of the Palestine Mandate in 1921, certainly fit the bill.

In your Jewish History Atlas you have a dramatic map of the return 1948 to 1964. And you quote Ezekiel chapter 11:17 on your map.

On another page you quote Isaiah chapter 10:21, “The remnant shall return.” That raises the question for us Sir Martin, Do you believe the prophets?

I think that a Jewish person, unless they have completely drifted away from the faith, has to put the Hebrew Prophets at the very centre of their understanding of the faith. Without the Prophets there is no evolving Judaism. And most of them are prophesying at a time when clearly the Jews had fallen on hard times, to a large extent because of their own failings, their own weaknesses. Without the Prophets Judaism becomes essentially an historic curiosity. Obviously the faith, the ethics, the Ten Commandments, would
all have a relevance today in terms of how the Jewish people are going to evolve, but the prophecies are tremendously important. Partly because they do prophesy a different state of being for the Jews, and partly because they enshrine in the strongest form the ethical precepts without which the Jews are essentially told they will not achieve this position of future security, well-being and grace.

Could you comment on another section of Ezekiel’s prophecy, and I’m now referring to chapter 34 of Ezekiel, and especially verses 13 and 14, which has rather fascinated us. It concerns the mountains of Israel. God says through the prophet “I will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries and will bring them to their own Land,” which he couldn’t have done before 1948 because they didn’t have their own land before that. He is to “feed them upon the mountains of Israel—upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be. There shall they lie in a good fold and in a fat pasture and they shall feed upon the mountains of Israel.” There is an emphasis there on how this is going to happen on the mountains of Israel. That could not have happened prior to 1967, because they weren’t in occupation of the mountains of Israel until 1967. Now how would you see that, Sir Martin?

We are now in a particular historic time when the mountains of Judea and Samaria are in dispute. Though one should not forget that the mountains of Galilee, and Mount Carmel, are firmly within the pre-1967 borders of the State of Israel. Ironically Galilee now has no Jewish majority. It has as many Arabs as Jews living in it.

I think the great tragedy for this area is that it is a very small area. As Churchill pointed out in a speech which he made in Parliament in May 1939, the British established the Mandate in 1922 with its promise that the Jews were in Palestine of right and not of sufferance. That was his phrase, which is enshrined in the Mandate of the League of Nations. But between 1922 and 1939 more Arabs came to Mandate Palestine than Jews. They were drawn from all over the Arab world, from as far west as Morocco and as far east as Afghanistan. So that the intention of the Mandate to have fulfilled the prophecy was undermined by the very prosperity and success of its early days. By the time that the Mandate came to an end in 1947 the number of Jews in Palestine exceeded the number of Arabs who had been there in 1917. The Arab majority of 1947 was created by post-1922 Arab immigration. So now it is a great problem. I mean there always were Jewish communities, small Jewish communities in the mountain region, particularly the Jewish community of Hebron in the Judean Hills, who were driven out in 1929. There is a small community in Hebron now who are under great political pressure even by their own Israeli government.

Kiryat Arba, on the outskirts of Hebron, is a flourishing Jewish town. This present moment is very much a temporary phase in the span of the prophetic vision. Some Palestinian negotiators have accepted that there will be a Jewish presence in part of the mountains, that is to say what is called the Etzion (settlement) Block, south of Jerusalem and in Kiryat Arba in the Hebron area.

Whether you can have a prophecy fulfilled in part when the mountains can be divided is the question. To that I have no answer.

So that leads me to the next question. The talk of a two state solution. Is it going to fly? I know you’re not a prophet, but your best judgment.

Unless some terrible Armageddon takes place, a two-State solution—one Jewish the other Arab—will be the next stage. No solution is the last solution. But given the tremendous numerical weight of the Palestinian Arabs in the area, and the fact that they are already autonomous in their main cities—and these are large flourishing cities: Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Jenin—I do not think that you can put the clock back in the short term.

There is no way I or anyone can know what the longer term will be, whether it comes by negotiation or catastrophe. Certainly in fifty years time there may be a completely different situation. The one thing about all prophecies and all millenarian thinking is, it does not have to be tomorrow.

I am off in a few days to India to see my Aunt who has just past her hundredth birthday. There is a Jewish tradition, when you meet anybody, when I meet you, we wish that you may live “to a hundred and twenty” (Moses’ age when he died). The Rabbis tell us you cannot really say to a person who has reached a hundred, May you live until one hundred and twenty. That is like telling the person—like my aunt—that you should only live for another twenty years. It is rather too finite a wish. So you say, May you live until the Messiah comes. That is good. That could be tomorrow or it could be in 150 years time. So one should not be impatient in terms of the fulfillment of prophecy. In that sense I suspect the two-State solution is what we shall be living with for some time to come.

It seems that the problem we face today is Islamic fanaticism, fundamentalism, call it what you will, this on-going violence. Is there any idea how to overcome that?

This is really the problem that confronts the Palestinian Authority now. A few weeks ago we
had a large gathering here in London. The Prime Minister spoke, Tony Blair spoke, and the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad spoke. There were about sixty Palestinians present, including several from Gaza, all highly educated, all entirely what you or I would call moderate, sophisticated, decent people, and my impression was that they, the Palestinians, were far more terrified of Islamic Fundamentalism as represented in their midst by Hamas, than you or I would ever be, because they live with it and they know what it means. The first thing that Hamas did when the Israeli bombardment began was to execute thirty-four Fatah prisoners. Thirty-four of the people who are moderate and decent. We do not know what the result of the struggle between Fatah and Hamas will be. Salam Fayyad, incidentally, belongs to no political party. The power of Islamic fundamentalism is related to deep currents that are hard to understand, and are capable of doing great harm.

I have just finished a three hundred page book on the whole story of the Jews living in Muslim and Arab lands, from Mohammed to Ahmadinejad. I am astounded at the tremendous extremes of hatred and of support towards the Jews. One sees this fundamentalist streak running right through history. At the same time there is a very positive streak running right through history. And I always have as my Middle Eastern Bible the letter which the Emir Faisal wrote to Felix Frankfurter, the American-Jewish judge, in 1919, saying that “we Arabs—particularly the educated among us”—welcome the Jews in our midst.” Faisal then goes on in the letter to explain the Jewish return to their homeland as something which he, Faisal, sees as one of the essential truths of history, one of the natural progressions of history. If Emir Faisal was capable of seeing it, Palestinians may come to see it too.

Now is a very difficult time. Islamic Fundamentalism finds itself so underestimated in the West that it makes progress where no rational man would think progress possible. How is it possible that it can make that progress? We live in this terrible period now where we are meant to be ashamed of our history, ashamed of having won the war against Germany, ashamed of colonialism—of having in many cases brought law and order and prosperity and decency to countries which were then in a bad shape. And the incredible anti-Israel feeling that seems so strong today irrespective of who rules Israel—is part of this misunderstanding of what the real currents of world history are.

SIR Martin, may I thank you for your time and for bringing your insight to bear upon these interesting questions. I am sure that your work—and especially “The Story of Israel”—will be a valuable aid in understanding the issues we have discussed, and once again confirming the truths of holy writ.

The Balfour Declaration initiated the process of the restoration of the Jews to their ancestral homeland

One of the many inserts in Sir Martin’s book includes a facsimile of Balfour’s Declaration and as shown here a rough draft written on notepaper dated 1917

On June 5, 1849, John Thomas wrote the following to Lord Palmerston:

“When Cyrus, King of Persia, saw what was written about him and his mission in Isaiah, he published a decree, saying, “the Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a temple in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” Isaiah 44:28; 2 Chron. 36:23. This pagan prince, you perceive, acknowledged that what was written in the prophet was a mandate of the Lord God to him, and he acted accordingly. He had faith in what was recorded there. He formed his policy according to its dictates; acted like a wise prince, and became the Protector of the Jewish Nation. A hint to the wise is enough.”

Dr. Thomas sent a copy of his book Elpis Israel (The Hope of Israel) to Lord Palmerston February 8, 1850, and he received the following acknowledgement:

FOREIGN OFFICE,
February 15th, 1850.
SIR:

Viscount Palmerston desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, and to express to you his thanks for the very interesting work which you have been so good as to send him.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
SPENCER PONSONBY.
The growing battle for Jerusalem is operating on several simultaneous fronts!

We briefly looked at the Vatican’s reluctance to accept the existence of a Jewish State in the last update. Since then the Pope has visited Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. There are various issues that the Roman Catholic Church had hoped would be settled ahead of that visit, but this did not happen. One of the issues is the Israeli demand that she pay property taxes on her extensive properties in Israel. These had been waived in the past, but in 2002 the Israeli parliament established that all should pay amona—Israeli property tax.

“Tax exemptions for all places came to an end with the 2002 Budget Law, which stripped away many but not all exemptions previously enjoyed by religious institutions. Today, such institutions pay one-third to one-half of the property taxes non-exempt owners would need to pay for the same property” (New York Jewish Week 13-5-09).

The growing battle for Jerusalem is operating on several simultaneous fronts!

• The pushing for the beatification of Pope Pius XII who was Pope during WWII. The Israelis claim that he kept silent over the fate of the Jews perishing in the German gas chambers. Significantly the Pope avoided visiting the display at Yad Vashem which has a critical poster dealing with this period.
• The Pope’s open support of the Palestinians and their seeking a state.
• The Vatican attended the recent UN conference dubbed Durban II which several countries boycotted for its anti-Israel stand, and where representatives of 23 countries walked out in protest of Ahmadinejad’s anti-Israel rant.

The Vatican delegation didn’t even walk out. They just sat there. They listened to Ahmadinejad’s hate speech, and stayed in place as the remaining delegates erupted in applause (The Trumpet 5-5-09).

• Benedict’s lifting of the excommunication on the bishops of the ultra-conservative Society of St. Pius X included Richard Williamson, an outspoken sceptic of the Holocaust who says that only a tiny fraction of 6 million Jews died, and there were no gas chambers or efforts to target Jews. Williamson has also stated that “Jews are adversaries of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and that they aim at world domination (ibid).

We know that the Vatican’s opposition to Israel will lead to her playing an active role in the coming invasion of Israel. It is not surprising therefore if Israel’s relations with her are somewhat rocky.

The EU and Israel

EU states last June formally launched an upgrade process, asking the European Commission to create an Action Plan for increased diplomatic co-operation, Israeli integration with the single market and joint transport and education projects. Israel had been making good progress towards a special trade relationship with the EU, but Operation “Cast Lead” appears to have torpedoed further progress in the immediate future. Coupled with that is the EU’s concern over the makeup of Netanyahu’s government. The EU’s external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner is very critical of Israel and has blocked moving talks forward. She is friendly to the Arab States.

The Battle for Jerusalem

The growing battle for Jerusalem is operating on several simultaneous fronts!

• There are the Vatican claims on various properties in Jerusalem and elsewhere, together with the Vatican’s wish that Jerusalem come under international, i.e. UN control.
• The Palestinian’s are seeking control of Jerusalem as their capital of their hoped for state.
• Obama is pressuring Israel to agree to a “two state” solution.
• Iran hurries onwards to weapons of mass destruction, to enable Israel to be “wiped off the map.”
Again this slowdown in Israel’s relations with Europe is welcomed by Bible students, who know that Europe will be no friend of Israel—they will join with Russian military might to destroy Israel!

**Israel and the US**

Netanyahu knew that his visit to the new American president would not be easy. Barack Obama’s background means that he is not overtly friendly to Israel. Israel is still an important partner, but Obama has his eyes on solving the tensions in the Middle East—that necessitates appeasing the Arabs and being “harder” on Israel.

Prior to Netanyahu’s visit, Obama set out clearly his viewpoint—that Israel must acknowledge the “two state” solution and freeze West Bank settlements and remove “illegal” ones.

The press highlighted the differences between the two leaders. Netanyahu has understandably refused to see that the Palestinian’s want to live peacefully side-by-side with Israel. Hamas openly seeks the destruction of the State of Israel. With Hamas and Fatah deeply divided there is no unity leader that Israel could negotiate with.

*The Washington Times* (20-5-09) announced that in spite of the differences between the two men they had signed an agreement to liaise closely over Iran.

**U.S., Israel forming Working Group on Iran**

“The United States and Israel are quietly forming a high-level working group to assess the progress of President Obama’s outreach to Iran and to share intelligence about the Islamic Republic’s nuclear weapons program, officials familiar with the two countries’ deliberations said Tuesday.

“The agreement, reached during Monday’s meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr. Obama, gives the U.S. a clear channel for communicating with the new Israeli government and a vehicle for keeping tabs on any military contingency plans Israel might make if diplomacy fails and Iran develops nuclear weapons capability.

“Israel and the U.S. have long consulted closely on strategic issues, but the new working group will focus exclusively on Iran. Israel sees Iranian nuclear weapons capability as an existential threat, and Mr. Netanyahu campaigned on a pledge to counter that threat.

“One Israeli official told the *Washington Times* that the working group intends to meet at least once a month. ‘Contingencies would have imagined what the *Daily Telegraph* unleashed when some 28 days ago it began a daily exposure of the scandal of the expense claims of British Members of Parliament? We will consider some of these potentially changing events in a later section.

**India, the Most Pro-Israel Country**

“A study undertaken on behalf of Israel’s foreign ministry by an international market research company found that India is the most pro-Israel country in the world, beating out the United States by two percentage points.

“The study, undertaken as part of the ‘Branding Israel’ project, looked at what it calls the world’s 13 most important countries and included 5,215 interviewees. Asked a series of questions, participants graded their sympathy for Israel on a 1-to-10 scale. Some results, given in terms of percentage expressing sympathy to the Jewish State: 58% India; 56% United States; 52% Russia; 52% Mexico; 50% China; 34% Great Britain; 27% France; 23% Spain” (Daniel Pipes 3-4-09).

Another headline in the *Int Christian Embassy Jerusalem* (12-5-09) ran: *Israele ties with India expanding*. It spoke of the increasing trade in military equipment and how Israel was on the way to surpass Russia at the top of the list. Israel is busy supplying three air defence radar systems to India, and cooperation in joint space projects is deepening.

**Israel preparing for War—Turning Point 3**

“At the end of May and early June, Israel undertook her annual exercise in war preparedness.

“On June the 1st at 11am sirens sounded all over Israel, signalling to all to go to the nearest shelter. Normal life came to a standstill as children, teachers, workers and householders, stopped and obeyed the call. A poignant article in the *Jerusalem Post* under the headline *Welcome to our reality*, commented, what other major city still has usable bomb shelters, and what other nation carries out such a country wide exercise. Only Israel where they live in constant threat of annihilation by their neighbours.”

“No one is threatening to wipe Sweden, Germany or Scotland off the map. There are no Sajil II ballistic missiles aimed your way. Your country didn’t absorb 5,000 rocket hits in the course of a single summer. It doesn’t share a border with a country that deploys Scud D missiles. And the notion that missiles laden with WMDs could explode over your head is simply beyond imagination.

“Though Muslim extremists struck in Spain, Britain and the United States, the sense that any further danger looms is not widespread. That’s why no one undergoes a security check to enter a supermarket, department store or cinema. And why armed guards are not posted outside schools.

“WE ISRAELIS live in a very different reality.

“That truth was brought home in remarks Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu made at Sunday’s cabinet meeting regarding Turning Point 3—the week-long nationwide emergency drill.

“The exercise is ‘routine,’ something the country does annually, he said, adding that it ‘reflects the special way in which we lead our lives—which, upon reflection, is not all that routine.’”

**Some far-reaching Possibilities**

A week in politics is a long time, as Harold Wilson, a former British Prime Minister, once quipped. The *Daily Telegraph*’s decision to slowly release information on British MP’s expense claims has had an extraordinary affect. For the past 28 days—and with no sign of it stopping—the front page and the next four or five pages have been filled with all manner of items claimed for as expenses incurred in their parliamentary duties. They range from cleaning out moats, duck houses, plasma TV’s, expensive repairs and furnishings. It has brought a new definition of the word flipping—to switch the address of one’s 2nd home to milk the allowance system. The *Telegraph* claims at first brought surprise and ridicule, then as day by day it was seen that so many were “milking” the system, outrage—for it was public money that was being used to support the greed of these politicians. Then heads began to roll as Ministers resigned from their cabinet posts and many MP’s have said they would stand down at the next election. This has caused still more outrage from the public, because if they hang on until the next
“At least half of the House of Commons’ 646 MPs will be swept away at the general election, as voters take revenge on the political classes for the expenses scandal. As many as 30 will be forced to resign directly because of the expenses scandal, while whips expect more than 200 to quit because they are unable to cope with continued public anger. Up to 90 MPs will be voted out in the election.”

The Speaker of the House of Commons has been forced to resign over his handling of the affair—the first time this has happened in 300 years of Parliamentary history!

It has come at a particularly embarrassing time for the Labour government. Labour is expected to be beaten into 4th place in the local elections, and the EU voting to be at its lowest level ever. There have been many calls for the present Labour government to step down and call a general election, rather than hold on until next year when an election would normally be held. It would seem that the curtain is falling on Labour’s disastrous term of office, with the Conservatives clear favourites to take control. Gordon Brown is under pressure to step down as leader! As far as the European elections are concerned it is expected that Britain’s new representatives will be much more Euro-sceptic, again potentially affecting the bankers and the city whizz kids but hits home. With ever longer dole queues, job prospects look grim. With the biggest bankruptcy in US history with the collapse of General Motors, car jobs and their numerous allied supply businesses around the world, look set to face severe job cuts. Unemployment figures for the EU for April have just been released. UK 7.1%; the Euro zone 9.2%—ranging from the Netherlands with 3%, Germany 7.4%, France 9.3% with Spain top at 18.1%. US figures are equally bleak and rising, standing at 8.9% at the end of April. The pain of unemployment stands in great contrast with the financial irregularities of their political leaders. Social unrest is expected to boil over in the coming months.

“EUro group chief Jean Claude Juncker warned about the potential social fallout from the economic crisis during discussions on Europe’s toxic assets and rising unemployment. ‘We are in the heart of an economic and financial crisis and we are headed towards a social crisis,’ said Mr Juncker after a meeting with eurozone finance ministers, describing the fallout as potentially explosive” (EUObserver.com 5-5).

It is interesting to see how Germany is suffering, as this chart from a Stratfor article (2-6-09) shows. Her dependence on heavy machinery exports has made her vulnerable. However, Germany is fundamentally a strong country and she is using the situation to her advantage, as this Open Europe (28-5-09) indicates.

**Former German Foreign Minister: Germany now sees the EU as a Means to an End**

“In a comment piece in Süddeutsche, former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer argues that, since the beginning of the global financial crisis, Germany has almost exclusively invested into national crisis management and rejected European solutions. He concludes that Germany sees the EU not as end anymore but solely as the means to accomplish its own interests.”

Germany’s action in the General Motors collapse is a case in point—instead of supporting a Fiat bid for GM’s European business arm—Opel—she scuppered this by backing a Canadian-Russian bid. Bloomberg (1-6-09)
July 10—a Date for Watching Tehran

“Israeli experts said Iran had overtaken the North Koreans in the weaponization of a nuclear device. Tehran, they reported, was already into the experimental manufacture of warheads of the right size and format for mounting on missiles. The North Koreans had not yet reached that stage. This was proved by the payload Iran’s Omid satellite carried when launched into space on January 3. The Israelis told the CIA chief that if the Iranians can place satellites into space, they can also mount warheads on missiles capable of striking any point on earth.

“When Pyongyang test-launched its long-range Taepodon-2 over the Pacific Ocean on April 5, Saudi, Egyptian and Israeli intelligence experts were of one mind that a similar Iranian test was imminent. “And indeed, six weeks later, on May 20, Iran fired its 2,000-km range Sejil 2 missile, which demonstrated pinpoint accuracy attesting to the Iranian product’s technological superiority to its North Korean counterpart—even though its guidance system incorporates North Korean as well as Chinese components.

“Their arrival is fully coordinated between its North Korean counterpart—eventhough its guidance system incorporates North Korean as well as Chinese components.

“Now Riyadh, Cairo and Jerusalem are again counting off weeks in an effort to estimate the date of Iran’s first nuclear test.”

This would have far reaching implications for Israel and the Middle East Arab states. They would be driven to put aside differences and cooperate together on stemming the Iranian threat— the Palestinian-Israel conflict would pale into insignificance. In the last Update we considered the growing drive for the moderate Arab nations to cooperate with Israel. This drive continues as we shall see shortly.

Iran sets up Naval Base in the Comoros Islands

This former Al Qaeda base at Moroni the capital of the Comoros Islands has now been taken over by Iran, in exchange for financial help to these very poor islands. Situated between Tanzania and Madagascar, they could prove a boon in Iran’s policy of encircling the moderate Arab states. Debka (29-5-09) revealed the details of how the Comoros leader had asked several Arab countries for financial help in exchange for use of the base, but were turned down. He even asked Israel in February, but they were busy with elections, so when finally he asked Iran, Ahmadinejad jumped at the chance. Under cover of sending ships to fight the Somali pirates, he was able to get supplies and ships installed without anyone realising!

First Russian Warships enter Persian Gulf Ports

For the first time too, Russian ships have made use of Persian Gulf facilities. Debka (28-5-09) revealed.

“Russian warships are due to call Wednesday, May 27, at the Bahrain port of Manama, seat of the US Fifth Fleet in the Persian Gulf. They will be following in the wake of the Russian vessels docked at the Omani port of Salalah, the first to avail themselves of facilities at Gulf ports.

“Their arrival is fully coordinated between the Russian and Iranian naval commands. “According to our sources, this is the first time a Russian flotilla will have taken on provisions and fuel at the same Gulf ports which services the US Navy. Moscow has thus gained its first maritime foothold in the Persian Gulf.”

The possibility of closer Israeli Ties with Moderate Arab States

Finally we look at the developments in the coming together of a King of the South power. We anticipate countries in the region represented by Ezekiel 38:13 Sheba and Dedan, together with Egypt, would be working with Israel at the time of the end. Iran’s gallop towards becoming a nuclear power is speeding this alliance of nations concerned by the Iranian threat. Prior to Netanyahu’s visit to America in May he met with the Egyptian leader President Mubarak. Egypt has increasingly been cooperating with Israel against its North Korean counterpart—even though its guidance system incorporates North Korean as well as Chinese components.

“Israel’s redemption “for Yahweh hath spoken it.”

The previous verse, which we quoted at the start of this article, talks of the covering and the vail. The word for vail is used of a mourning vail, to cover the face of one mourning the dead. How appropriately that Isaiah speaks of the victory over the one that was slain, but is alive for evermore. Isaiah also tells of the certainty of this and of Israel’s redemption “for Yahweh hath spoken it.” We have the Great Creator’s assurance that there will be this better day when all the earth will be obedient and men and women throughout the world will be blessed in Abraham and his seed. Come quickly Lord Jesus!
The phrase “As it was in the days of Noah…” is recorded in two specific scriptures: Matthew 24:37 and Luke 17:26.

Luke’s comment is in the context of a very important statement by the Lord Jesus Christ, recorded in Luke 17:22—“The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall see it not.”

Jesus indicated that the Jews would look for him after his crucifixion but would not be able to find him (John 7:33-34); later he spoke similar words to his disciples (John 16:16), but neither of these verses would appear to satisfy what Jesus was really saying because the context makes reference to certain judgments that would result from the appearing of the Son of man. In fact Jesus indicated that there would be no mistaking “the days of the Son of man,” for it would be like the lightning from heaven (Luke 17:24).

Why would they not see “the days” of the Son of man if the day was to be unmistakable? Because those days would be like the days of Noah (verse 26) and Lot (verse 28).

We need to examine the days of Noah in order to see the relevance of Jesus’ words to our own particular times.

Bible prophecy makes up a good portion of the material contained in the Bible. We are introduced to Bible prophecy as far back as Genesis 3:15, where God made a promise that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. The promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3,7) formed part of the prophetic word because they foretold of the same coming seed, similarly with the promises to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16).

In the New Testament we are constantly reminded of God’s promise that Jesus will return to the earth—all this is Bible prophecy.

If we search God’s word diligently then God has promised to bless us. Prophecy also offers warnings which we are encouraged to listen to.

Finally we know the purpose of God there is an urgency to do something about it.

Life before the Flood

As we have already noted the Bible speaks about the return of Jesus to the earth. There are over 300 references to this in the Bible, and particularly the New Testament.

The return of Jesus Christ is God’s solution for this troubled world: the psalmist in Psalm 72 invites God to “give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son” (verse 1); the purpose being so that “the whole earth (might) be filled with his glory” (verse 19) — a clear Bible echo of Numbers 14:21. Whilst we can accept that the Bible speaks about Jesus’ return, how do we know how near this is; and what signs are available so that we can be found of the details surrounding that period. By doing this we will gain a better appreciation for Jesus’ comparison of those days and the day of his coming.

There are only six chapters separating the creation of Adam from the days of Noah, however the time frame resulting from the longevity of each generation gives us a span of 1,656 years. This is equivalent, approximately, to the period from the birth of Jesus Christ to the King James Bible being written in 1611.

The population of the earth in the 1600’s was approximately 650 million people and this compares with the population on the earth at the time of the flood. This is based upon each family having 18 children (not impossible when it is recognized that men lived about 900 years). Based on these figures the world population would be about 770,000,000 people.

And so in the days of Noah the earth was well populated and over 1,656 years there had been ample time for “the deceitfulness of sin” to influence and corrupt.

Noah grew up in a world not unlike today. Violence had declared itself early when Cain slew his brother Abel (Genesis 4:8), and after Eve had born her third recorded son, Seth (Genesis 4:25), a division appears to have developed between the children of Cain and those of Seth.

Of Seth’s family it is recorded “then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,” indicating that his family recognized a dependence upon God for salvation. By contrast the line of Cain began to develop a variety of skills, all of which leaned in the direction of self-reliance. Both family lines are given distinct descriptions which identify the particular path they chose; one is described as “the sons of God” and the other “the daughters of men” (Genesis 6:2).

The line of Cain is particularly prominent in the development of skills. In the seventh generation from Adam a man called Lamech...
was born, who introduced polygamy (Genesis 4:19). To him were born four children, Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain and Naamah (verse 20-22). From these developed “the wisdom of the world.”

Jabal was a herder; he developed the livestock market. Jubal introduced the world to the arts, being “the father of all such as handle the harp and organ” (Genesis 4:21). Tubal-Cain turned his accomplishments towards industry, being “an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron” (verse 22). Naamah, the sister of Tubal-Cain, whilst not being identified with any particular skills, is revealed by the meaning of her name, that being “pleasantness,” from a Hebrew word meaning “pleasure.”

It is significant that all of the descendants of Cain were destroyed in the flood indicating that they had sought a way of life which excluded God.

**The World that Perished**

Genesis 6 provides us with a well detailed account of the conditions that prevailed in the world leading up to the time of the flood.

Verse 3 records, “My spirit shall not always strive with man” indicating that there was a constant conflict between the creation and the Creator. The reason for this is found in verse 4 where the mighty men of old are described as “men of renown.” The Hebrew word ‘renown’ is ‘shem’ meaning ‘name;’ this highlights their priority in life; they sought to make a name for themselves. Men have always attempted to memorialize themselves in various monuments named after themselves (compare Psalm 49:11; Genesis 4:17). This is in contrast to the children of Seth who called upon God’s name (Genesis 4:26).

The world was guilty of watering down God’s standards; this is evident from the intermingling of the two lines (verse 4). Also godly thoughts had been cast off in deference for the ways of sin; “every imagination of the thoughts of his (man’s) heart was only evil continually” (verse 5). Everywhere the violent ways of Cain were evident “the earth was filled with violence” (verse 13), and God’s way was in danger of becoming extinct, for “all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth,” (verse 12). The apostle Paul records, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21), with the result that God said, “the end of all flesh is come before me” (Genesis 6:13).

It may be thought uncharacteristic of the God of love that we read in the Bible of His determination to destroy an entire world, however though He is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth...he will by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:6-7). And yet whilst God was determined to judge the world, He showed His longsuffering by appointing a day in which He would destroy it—God said, “his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3). In this way God provided 120 years for mankind to repent.

During this 120 years Noah built the ark and preached about the impending judgment, yet only eight souls survived, and “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Peter 3:6).

**Jesus’ Warning**

When Jesus comments upon the days of Noah, it will be noticed that he doesn’t recount the violence or the wickedness described in Genesis, he simply says, “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:27). Everything that Jesus describes is normal to daily life; we all have to eat and drink and people get married. What is it that Jesus is telling us?

Jesus is describing the root cause of the problem—the underlying problem that led to violence and wickedness. People simply left God out of their lives. Now this doesn’t mean that they didn’t worship God at all, it means they did so on their own terms.

As an example consider Cain in the New Testament, his name is synonymous with works of evil (1 John 3:12). Nevertheless he worshipped God; the letter to the Hebrews records that “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain” (Heb. 11:4). Both came before God’s altar, both worshipped before God, yet Cain did so on his own terms. Because of this the Apostle Jude describes false worshippers as having “gone in the way of Cain...” (Jude 11).

The nation of Israel was no different and the prophets constantly affirmed a double standard in Israel’s worship. The prophet Ezekiel gives us the root cause of the problem, “pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness...” (Ezekiel 16:49). Pride has its roots in the Garden of Eden when Eve saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6). This is called in the New Testament “the pride of life” (1 John 3:16), and stems from worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 1:21).

Fullness of bread suggests a high living standard and this in turn provided more leisure time to spend on themselves. Wealth is not condemned in the Bible, rather “the love of money” (1 Timothy 6:10) and when materialism causes greater attention to be focused upon self rather than God, then we are in great danger. Remember what Jesus said “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

In Matthew 24:39 Jesus adds another sobering comment about the days of Noah, and why the world was overtaken by the flood. Jesus said “And they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Why is it that they were ignorant of God’s purpose? we have already seen that Noah preached to the people during the 120 years (2 Peter 2:5). The prophet Hosea helps us to understand Jesus’ comment when he says of Israel “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). However, the lack of knowledge wasn’t due to them being neglected, rather because they had chosen to reject God’s word—“because thou hast rejected knowledge...” (v.6).

This display of voluntary ignorance was particularly evident in one of the first century light stands. The believers at Laodicea displayed the same attitude. Their worship was “lukewarm” (Rev. 3:16), they enjoyed “fullness of bread” (Rev. 3:17) but they didn’t know what they really looked like before God; they knew not that they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v.17).

**Saved by Water**

Whilst the flood was brought upon the world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:5), it also was a means of salvation to Noah and his family. The important difference between Noah and his contemporaries was that he took notice of God’s warning. Noah recognized that we must live different lives if we want to please God and so “Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9).

Another necessary act on Noah’s part was to make sure he was in the Ark, because on the outside was only death and destruction.

Today the same principle applies, it is only those who are “in Christ” that shall be saved (1 Cor. 15:22) and just as Noah “was saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20), baptism into Christ has become the appointed way for our salvation—“the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...” (1 Peter 3:21).

One hundred and twenty years was provided by God in order for the world to reflect upon its ways. But God had appointed a day and when it came “in the sixth hundredth year of Noah’s life—in the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Gen. 7:11). The record says of Noah that “the Lord shut him in” (Gen. 7:16), and he remained inside the ark until it was safe to go out into a brand new world.

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man” (Luke 17:26).
he recent visit to Israel by Joseph Ratzinger (otherwise known as Benedict XVI) was far more significant than might appear, and should not be considered in isolation from the emerging wrangle over Israel’s West Bank settlement construction. Immediately after arriving in Israel, Benedict called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian homeland. Referring to Israelis and Palestinians his words were:

“I plead with all those responsible to explore every possible avenue in the search for a just resolution of the outstanding difficulties, so that both peoples may live in peace in a homeland of their own within secure and internationally recognized borders.”

It was a message that was heard loud and clear. Certainly in Catholic Europe, but as became obvious, also by the U.S. Administration of Barack Hussein Obama.

Few people will appreciate the powerful influence of the pope and his Vatican over world leaders. The suggestion that the Church could wield an almost irresistible pressure upon leading political figures and their governments will be dismissed as preposterous and far-fetched by many—but as the wise Proverb says:

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Prov. 18:13).

In the matter before us we need to understand a great deal of background evidence in order that we might come to grips with the nature and character of Rome’s Vatican system. This evidence is first of all Biblical, then historical, and lastly it is seen in current political and economic realities.

What follows may help the reader to perceive the background and ramifications to the pope’s call for a Palestinian homeland.

**Rome in Prophecy**

The remarkable prophecy of Daniel, written some 2,500 years ago, clearly identifies the terrible enemy of Israel as it has arisen from among Gentile nations over many centuries. As the vision of Daniel chapter two revealed to the monarch of Babylon—who had shortly before brought the kingdom of Judah to an end—there was to follow three further world powers (Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome) that would ensure that the kingdom remained in exile. This dominance of Gentile power over the Jewish people and nation would continue until “the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). At this time, says verse 44,

“The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

**Galut Edom**

A Jewish commentary on this prophecy can be found on an internet website (www.betemunah.org/edom.html), where the following explanation appears:

“Thus we see that the Mashiach will come at the end of the galut Edom.

“The present exile is seen as an extension of the Roman exile (Edom is Rome), since culturally and legally, Western civilization shares the values and worldview of ancient Rome. A subset of this exile is that of Ishmael, the Arabs, who are seen as an antithesis of Roman civilization and values, and who will rule over the Jewish people for a time concurrently with the exile of Rome.

“The exile of Ishmael and the exile of Edom are represented by the legs in the vision interpreted by Daniel:
“According to Jewish tradition we are presently in the Diaspora of Edom, the last of the four Diasporas, the one immediately preceding the arrival of the Mashiach. The Torah tells us that Esau is synonymous with Edom. And these are the descendants of Esau, he is Edom. (Bereshit 38:1) This Diaspora is also known as the Roman Diaspora. It began with the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans, and the cultural/spiritual basis of the Western world, the broader venue of this entire Diaspora was the Holy Roman Empire. The destruction of the second Temple is also coincident with the birth and rise of Christianity, the cornerstone of Western morality and ethics.

“Jewish tradition gives us the following formula:

Esau=Edom=Rome=Christianity.”

As stated in the above quotation, the Roman exile or captivity does have a secondary part (subset) which came into existence with the rise of Islam, and then with the emerging of the Ottoman power which superceded the eastern Roman Empire of Byzantium. The two legs (eastern Rome and western Rome) developed separately, but both kept the Jewish people in subjection until Zionism (especially following the First World War) brought about those events which have led to the existence of modern Israel. Both eastern and western legs have manifested the characteristics of “Edom” as outlined in Ezekiel chapter 35:

“Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end” (verse 5).

“Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there” (verse 10).

“And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against hills of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them. Thus saith the Lord GOD: When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate” (verses 12-13).

Edom, of course, ceased to exist as an independent nation many centuries ago, but its spirit and essential characteristic is seen wherever anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism manifests itself today. Certainly it has been a feature of both Christendom and Islam, and it is an element found in both European and Arab civilisations today.

A King of Fierce Countenance

What had been revealed through the imagevision of chapter 2, Daniel expands in chapter 7 where four beasts represent the Gentile powers that devoured the Holy Land. Again, the emphasis is focussed upon the fourth beast-power, and we are told “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth” (verse 23). This was the empire of Rome.

The Roman power is also the subject of the vision recounted by Daniel in chapter 8. It was by the Roman power that “the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary” cast down and trodden under foot (verses 11-13). This “king of fierce countenance” (verse 23) is said to “destroy the mighty and the holy people” (verse 24). We are then told that he causes “craft” (that is, mirmah—fraud, deceit, Strong; See also Gesenius). He causes falsehood to prosper! Not only that, he magnifies himself—a feature that links him with “the king” of chapter 11:36.

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that is determined shall be done.”

So according to Daniel’s prophecy, the Roman power was to take away the daily sacrifice, cast down the sanctuary (mikdash) and the Truth. We all know that this was done. But Rome would also practice falsehood and magnify or exalt itself—and as Daniel 11:36 (quoted above) makes clear, this would be in a religious sense—this “king” would speak incredible things against God.

Pagan Rome became the ecclesiastical Rome of Catholic Christendom in the reign of Constantine the Great (312 AD onwards). He is known in history as “the first Christian Emperor.” As one historian has expressed it:

“The conversion of Constantine is generally hailed as the final victory of the new faith. It may equaly be regarded as the triumph of totalitarianism.

“The Church no doubt won not only tolerance and relief from persecution, but also wealth and the right to persecute. The price was clerical endorsement of the existing order on earth. The Emperor is indeed no longer ‘Master and God’, but he has become the ‘Orthodox and Apostolic Emperor’. His rule was an earthly counterpart and representative of the Sovereignty of the Divine Word. In the ‘Sacred Palace’ at Istanbul the ‘Divine Household’ abode and issued ‘Celestial Commands’; even the annual tax assessment was known as the ‘Divine Delegation’.

“It seems as if humanity has reverted from the Greek Iron Age back to the Oriental Bronze Age. The atmosphere of Byzantium is more like that of Babylon...” (Prof. Gordon Childe).

Daniel’s prophecy was, as we may say, right on the mark!

Rome and the Jews

The treatment of the Jews by the Roman power throughout history has been cruel and merciless. During the pagan phase Josephus has told us of the events of A.D.70 etc., this slaughter was intensified as a result of the Bar Kokhba revolt during the time of Emperor Trajan. Thousands of Jews were killed and Jerusalem was declared to be a pagan city, renamed Aelia Capitolina.

The story of the Jewish people under Christian Rome is horrific. The work by Max Wurmbrand and Cecil Roth, The Jewish People 4000 Years of Survival (1966) sketches a broad picture of it:

“When the Roman Empire became Christian in the fourth century, and there were outbreaks of violence against Jews, many of them were doubtless converted and absorbed in the general population. But part of them survived to carry on the traditions of their people.”

The Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527-564) in his Code prohibited the building of synagogues, the reading of the Bible in Hebrew, gatherings of Jews in public places, the celebration of Passover etc.

In 1095 Pope Urban II exorted Christendom to liberate Jerusalem from Islamic rule. This initiated the Crusades. But although
aimed at the Moslem infidel, Wurmbrand says:

“The Crusades were a landmark in Jewish history. There had previously been persecutions of Jews in western Europe, but they had been sporadic. Henceforth, they were to become a perpetual feature of Jewish life there... (The Crusaders) began their Holy War by attacking Jews, wherever they encountered them on their route. In place after place, the Jews were compelled to choose between baptism and death. Most of them preferred death. They either took their own lives or were brutally slain by the Crusaders. Whole communities, such as Trier, Worms, Mainz, Speyer, and Cologne, were practically wiped out. Many Jews were forcibly baptized at Metz and Regensburg... When the Crusaders finally reached Palestine, in 1099, they annihilated the Jewish community in Jerusalem, re-established since the Moslem conquest. The synagogue in which the Jews had taken refuge was set on fire and the whole community perished in the flames.”

He continues:

“The policy of the Church became much grimmer after the accession of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), a great papal figure, but a ferocious hater of Jews. The Fourth Lateran Council, which met in Rome in 1215 under his aegis, enacted a series of drastic regulations intended to minimize the influence of Jews over Christians and to emphasize their inferiority... “The most cruel and humiliating of the Fourth Lateran Council’s decisions was, of course, the introduction of the distinctive badge. This was the origin of the Badge of Shame (see panel above), which was to have a pathetic history in Europe, with intervals, for over seven hundred years... in due course, it became the rule in every part of Europe which owed obedience to the Catholic Church.”

The continuing history of the persecution of the Jews in Catholic Europe—and after the Reformation by Protestants such as Luther, fills many books. The Spanish Inquisition is a famous milestone. The ‘Blood Libel’ at Trent in 1475 and those that followed is another. Jews were accused of spreading the ‘Black Death’ in 1349—another instance of false charges leading to the slaughter of Jews.

The prophet Daniel had written that “the king” (the Roman power) would continue to prosper “till the indignation be accomplished” (chapter 11:36). This “indignation” came because “all Israel” had transgressed the Law (Daniel 9:11). If the Catholic Church and its pope failed to condemn the Nazi holocaust before and during the Second World War, it merely reveals a policy that would be in keeping with some sixteen centuries of anti-Semitism practiced by the Roman Church. *Mea Culpa* and other conciliatory speeches and gestures notwithstanding. Rome’s courtship of the Palestinians and the policies of the Vatican towards the State of Israel today tell us what her true thinking is. The Latin phrase and motto of the Church says it: *Semper idem*—‘Always the same.’

**Influence in World Politics**

There is an inexplicable reluctance on the part of many to recognize the hand of the Vatican in world affairs. But let those who are doubtful read the article published in *Time* magazine, February 24, 1992, and they will be confronted with a classic case of the Vatican’s involvement in an alliance with the U.S. Administration. The article revealed that “Reagan and the Pope agreed to undertake a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the Communist empire... This was one of the great secret alliances of all time” (see *Time* cover on page 25).

The Roman Catholic Church has had alliances and has worked with national governments over many centuries of course. Few could or would deny the Church’s cooperation...
with Constantine, or with Charlemagne who was crowned by the pope in AD 800. Neither can it be denied that—however reluctantly—Pius VII signed a concordat with Napoleon Bonaparte in 1801 and cooperated in the coronation of the Emperor in 1804. Whenever it has come to principles versus power and politics the Vatican has always shown where its heart is!

So whatever later commentators may choose to say and write about it, the fact is that the Vatican found it useful to cooperate with—and to sign concordats with both the Fascist dictator Mussolini and the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. There was also the disgraceful support given by the Vatican for the wartime Ustashi government of Croatia under the leadership of Ante Pavelich while the most terrible slaughter of Jews and Orthodox Serbs was being carried out.

In the light of these well-documented historical facts, why does the world turn a blind eye? Why is it that the world of today continues to heap glory and honour upon this counterfeit and fraudulent system? And why does Israel send its President and prime Minister to bow and scrape before this “infallible” False Prophet, while he insults the nation and openly supports its would-be-conquerors? Are they also deceived?

It was well written in the prophecy of the New Testament:

“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 merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Rev. 18:3).

Could it ever have been said better?

Fabulous Finance & Fraud

It is the Bible that tells us the truth, and in order that we might be able to believe what it tells us, evidence is available so that we can dot some i’s and cross the t’s.

What the Bible tells us of Rome is this:

“... a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things” (Dan. 11:38).

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (Rev. 17:4).

Here is a system that has fabulous wealth, and as the context shows us, she is high in favour with the rulers of the world.

Now several books point us in the direction of this unique and evil system. We list six of them:

• The Vatican Empire Nino Lo Bello, 1968
• The Vatican Billions Avro Manhattan, 1972
• The Vatican Papers Nino Lo Bello, 1982
• In God’s Name David Yallop, 1984
• Rulers of Evil F. Tupper Saussy, 1999
• The Vatican Exposed Paul Williams, 2003

The most well known of these books is probably Yallop’s In God’s Name. This book can only be described as sensational. On the cover we read this:

“This extraordinary book, product of more than three years’ intensive investigation, unfolds a story so powerful in its revelations, so shocking in its inescapable conclusions, that it has made a stunned world take note. The facts are here in meticulous detail, documenting widespread corruption within the Vatican and presenting a compelling case that six powerful men, to protect their vast financial and political operations, decided on a shocking course of action—Pope John Paul I must die.”

The book considers in some detail the corrupt financial activities of Sindona, Gelli, Calvi and Marcinkus and the various financial institutions within the Vatican. The weight of evidence presented is impossible to ignore—and it is confirmed by newspaper reports collected by this present writer. For example, The Independent newspaper (U.K.) which is reproduced from a direct scan below.
A more recent book, *The Vatican Exposed* by Paul L. Williams points out how the Vatican became involved in the financial world. The chapter heading is *The Donation of Mussolini*, and it describes the “Lateran Treaty” between Italy and the Vatican:

“The first section of the treaty—labeled ‘the Concordat’—provided the Vatican with complete jurisdiction over all Catholic organizations in Italy.”

“The second section—entitled ‘the Lateran Pact’—established Vatican City (*Stato della Citta del Vaticano*) as a sovereign state.”

“The final section of the agreement—called “the Financial Convention”—provided a payment of $90 million in cash and government bonds and an undisclosed sum for the pope’s ‘privy purse’ as restitution for the former papal principalities. The Italian government also agreed to pay the salaries of all parish priests in the country.

“With one stroke of the pen, the Vatican went from rags to riches and gained a privileged position at the tables of international money markets where the future direction of the twentieth century would be charted. Ten years later, in 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland, the Roman Catholic Church would become, once again, the richest and, in many ways, the most powerful institution on earth.”

It is impossible within the scope of this article to convey a complete picture of Vatican wealth and power—all that we can do is point the reader in the direction of the books referred to earlier.

Basing his remarks on articles in *The Economist* (1965) and *The New York Times*, Avro Manhattan wrote:

“... the Vatican at a most conservative estimate is ‘the world’s largest shareholder, with a portfolio of quoted securities totalling the equivalent of 5,600 million dollars’ and 6,000 million dollars by 1970-71. The volume of the Vatican’s world-wide stocks and shares in the seventies was put at ‘5 billion to 10 billion dollars’. The Vatican’s enormous holdings are dealt with by banks and financial concerns of world repute, since her fortunes are distributed all over the globe.”

After discussing the Church’s additional solid properties, real estate, lands, stocks and shares, industrial and commercial concerns, Manhattan concludes:

“... the Catholic Church is the most redoubtable financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust, government or state of the whole globe. The Pope, as the visible ruler of this immense amassment of wealth, is consequently the richest individual of the twentieth century. No one can realistically assess how much he is worth in terms of billions of dollars.”

And that was written in the 1970’s!

Paul Williams, whose *The Vatican Exposed* was published in 2005 wrote:

“The worth of the Vatican Bank today remains... Decked with gold...? “a billion dollar franchise” says Canada’s *Financial Post Magazine* (1991) above. The “Bank of the Holy Spirit” above left, does quite well! But banking scandals have rocked the Catholic Church, as have mysterious deaths (like John Paul I left) and the financier Roberto Calvi (right). Add also Mino Pecorelli (who published names) and Graziella Corrocher (Calvi’s secretary). Below is a cutting from *Newsweek* March 9, 1987.
anyone’s guess. Several financial experts have figured that the value of the Vatican’s holdings must have tripled or quadrupled during the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s. But this remains mere conjecture. When one attempts to combine the assets of the Vatican Bank with the other accounts and assets of the Roman Catholic Church, one enters a financial stratosphere where calculations become surreal.”

Unholy Orders

Israel’s foe is both wealthy and immoral, as well as influential and powerful. Williams writes: “The union of God and Mammon in the creation of Vatican, Inc. served to give rise to moral decay and spiritual corruption. At the start of the new millennium Holy Mother Church witnessed the most sordid scandal of a different kind: a plague of pedophilia among its prelates that gave rise to hundreds of sex abuse cases.”

The New Testament foretold of the rise of a corrupt Christianity that would ignore the advice of 1 Corinthians 7:2 & 9; that “it is better to marry than to burn,” and would be found “forbidding to marry” (1 Timothy 4:3). It would become known for its “fornication” and its filthiness—both literally and symbolically (e.g. Revelation 17:1-2; Colossians 3:5-6).

There is no need to go into the sordid news-stories that have been published during recent years—everyone has been made aware of them. The scandals of abuse have rocked and shocked many Catholic communities throughout the world. It is not just that these things happened, but that Church leaders engaged in a massive cover-up so that these cases would be kept from public knowledge. There was the Mount Cashel scandal in Newfoundland (see panel, left).

Even after that story exploded, the Church engaged in a huge “damage control” operation—demolishing the Mount Cashel Orphanage building, erasing it from local memory and constructing a supermarket on the site.

The same pattern has been seen elsewhere. In April 2002 both TIME magazine and U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT covered the scandals in the United States. The media, heavily influenced as it is by the Church of Rome, would not exaggerate this issue—yet details had to be reported of cases in Louisiana, Florida, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Texas, Connecticut, California and Washington D.C.

In the United States, as with the recent scandal in Ireland involving 800 priests, monks and nuns, the Church pleaded poverty when it came to paying compensation. So in addition to abuse and cover-ups, the Church is an unholy liar!

Under the headline “Catholic orders plead poverty in Irish abuse” (Yahoo, A.P. Report, May 27 2009) we read:

“The Catholic orders responsible for abusing Ireland’s poorest children say they’re struggling to come up with money to help their victims. Yet investigations into their net worth paint a very different picture—that of nuns and brothers with billions’ worth of carefully sheltered assets worldwide.

“Irish government leaders said Wednesday they expect the 18 religious orders involved in...
abusing children in workhouse-style schools to pay a much greater share of compensation to 14,000 state-recognized victims. They also demanded that the secretive orders reveal the true scope of their wealth for the first time in face-to-face negotiations with the government... The order still owns hundreds of boys’ schools in 20 countries worldwide. But U.S. and Canadian lawyers who have won multimillion-dollar sex-abuse cases against the Christian Brothers accuse the brotherhood of making itself appear as poor as possible by shifting school ownership to individual members, trusts, corporations or offshore bodies.

“...Their assets and how they hold assets is on Byzantine complexity,” said David Wingfield, a Toronto-based lawyer who has won abuse settlements from Christian Brothers schools in Canada, from Newfoundland to British Columbia. “They have unlimited financial resources to mount litigation, and they have absolutely no shame in doing so.”

“A 2001 investigation by Irish broadcasters RTE into Christian Brothers’ mounting legal fights worldwide estimated the order’s global assets, including its Rome headquarters, in excess of euro 1 billion ($1.4 billion).”

Israel’s Enemy

The historical background presented in this article cannot be lightly dismissed, even if some consider it to be an extreme view. The truth is extreme sometimes, whether we like it or not. The fact is, seen in the context of a centuries-long history, the Catholic Church is a formidable power to be reckoned with, and it has no scruples when it comes to achieving her objectives.

If the Vatican opposed the concept of a national home for the Jewish people in the days of Balfour & Co., as has been shown by Sergio I. Minerbi in his book The Vatican and Zionism (see Bible Magazine Vol. 21 Issue # 1). And if Rome opposed the creation of the State of Israel in 1947-1948— as her own pronouncements at the time demonstrate, she was even more alarmed about the outcome of the 1967 six-days war that brought all Jerusalem and the Biblical heartland under Israel’s control. Since then, every effort has been made by various governments to reverse the result of that amazing conflict—and time and again the Vatican has shown itself in favour of such a reversal. The Church has consistently fanned the flames of Palestinian resentment while quietly pursuing diplomatic avenues in order to pave the way for the creation of a Palestinian state.

Today, ‘operation Palestine’ is being vigorously promoted by the new U.S. President Barack Obama. An observation made by the National Catholic Reporter (June 5, 2009) draws attention to a “remarkable congruence” between Benedict’s message and Obama’s. The article says: “The coincidence of Benedict and Obama both visiting the Middle East at roughly the same time, and both delivering much the same pitch, hints at a beguiling geopolitical prospect: That just as John Paul II and Ronald Reagan joined forces a quarter-century ago to vanquish Communism, so a pope and president might stand shoulder-to-shoulder once again, this time to engineer a historic rapprochement between Islam and the West.”

Such a rapprochement would have to be at Israel’s expense of course. It must translate into a desperate attempt to move Israel from the territories, which were taken in an act of self-defence in 1967. The key item in a list of points that intersect the speech of Obama with that of the pope was of course “Backing the two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian problem.”

Whose Road-Map?

The pope and the Obama administration may be following roughly the same road-map, but as Bible Magazine readers will be aware, there is another road-map outlined for us by Bible prophecy. This is God’s road-map. In the end we know which road-map will prove to be the successful one. But what we do not know, is the route that God’s road-map will take—whether the straight highway to the final destination, or whether via some back-road diversions in order to strengthen the character of Israel in preparation for what lies ahead.

The sentiment expressed by world opinion today seems to be very like that expressed in Micah 4:11-12:

“Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.”

The idea of a two-state solution may be hinted at in Joel 3:2, where God charges the nations with having “parted my land,” and again in Daniel 11:39 where it speaks of one who “shall divide the land for gain (a price).” Such a partition of God’s Land has been already implemented in the original internationally mandated division of the Land (1947 vote at the United Nations). But is it to be divided into a further two states? Whether Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu chooses to talk about “two states” or not, there are practical difficulties in bringing it about—not least of which is the divisions among the Palestinians themselves. If they are not trying to slaughter Israel, they slaughter one another! Both the pope and Obama are promoting a very difficult map to follow!

Whatever diversions may or may not be on God’s road-map, what we do know is that when the world chooses to implement the Final Solution of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16; Ezekiel 38 etc.), that at that time Jewish settlers will be dwelling upon the mountains of Israel and in the midst of the Land. It is to forcibly remove these settlers that Gog invades the Land, and when he does so, the Almighty God of Israel saith, “my fury shall come up in my face...” (Ezek. 38:18).

Daniel’s prophecy concludes by saying that “when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7). Over a century of the Return must mean something therefore, and if Israel now prevaricates over settlements, it may provoke a serious crisis, and that would indicate that the God of Israel is about to judge her enemies.
No; it’s not dangerous to visit Israel!

We are frequently asked about safety concerns when it comes to visiting Israel. These questions and doubts arise because of the picture painted by the news media. The fact is that Israel is no more dangerous than anywhere else—certainly no more dangerous than Birmingham UK, or Chicago or Toronto.

Anyone visiting Israel is advised to take all common-sense precautions, just as with anywhere else. First-time visitors will find it well worth hiring a professional guide, like Avi and his Bible (below). We are happy to provide suggestions to anyone interested.

*Bible Magazine* editor, Paul Billington (foreground on couch), pictured in the West Bank town of Hebron discussing the prophecies of Ezekiel with Jewish settlers, David Wilder (seated on the left) and Avi Dobuler a well informed professional guide (also seated on the couch). This photograph was taken in the home of David Wilder who is the spokesman for the Jewish community in Hebron. What better place to discuss the promises made to Abraham, who was buried nearby! Avi lives in the West Bank town of Beit-El (Bethel) where Jacob received the promises—what a topic for discussion! Then in Jerusalem itself there is always an opportunity to discuss Scripture with Moshe and Dov in the Shorashim shop, located in the heart of the Old City. A visit to Israel is spiritually uplifting!
Further, of all the subjects of England this I crave—that they repent; for the cause of evil rulers is the sin of the subjects, as testifieth the Scripture. And the cause of false preachers is, that the people have no love unto the truth, saith Paul in 1 Thess 2.

WILLIAM TYNDALE, Supplication to the king etc. 1536

A witness is one who gives testimony to the truth at the hazard of liberty, estate, and life. The Spirit’s witnesses are witnesses of this kind. They testified to “the truth as it is in Jesus,” in opposition to “every high thing which exalteth itself against the Deity’s knowledge...

JOHN THOMAS, Eureka Vol.2, page 608 (old editn)

...we may understand that God stirred up Rebecca to deceive Isaac, that Isaac might be defeated in the wrong use of the divine gift of blessing which rested upon him.

ROBERT ROBERTS, The Ways of Providence 1881

hearers of the message, they had to say to others, Come (Rev. 22:17). Their testimony extended to those in high places, so that the manifold wisdom of God was made known to the rulers of the world.

JOHN CARTER, Letter to the Ephesians 1944

Israel holding on to Judea and Samaria, and giving up Sinai is in keeping with the description in Ezekiel chapter 38, that before the great northern invasion, they are a people dwelling “in the midst (Heb: navel) of the land” (v.12).

Today, we are living at the climax of history—At that point in time when God will intervene in the affairs of men in order to establish his long-promised kingdom. The proof of this is seen in the regathered Jewish nation in the Land promised to Abraham and to his seed. The steady and gradual growth of the Jewish population in their own country over the past century has now reached the point where about half of the world’s Jews reside in Israel.

The world at large is blind to the reality before it. Men cannot see that the Hand of God has accomplished this development in keeping with His word—that word which has been preserved along with Abraham’s race for some two thousand years. During those long ages some have read the Bible and have believed it. They have told the world that the scattered race would be regathered to their Land, and that the Jewish kingdom—the kingdom of David—would be restored as promised in the Bible. And this is why we see a Jewish nation upon the mountains of Israel today.

Witneses

During the long dark ages of Gentile supremacy many have testified to the truth of the Bible, often at the risk of their lives. A great Christian apostasy developed and sought to suppress the Scriptures and put to death those who translated and read them. The facts of history are plain: Donatists were persecuted by Constantine, Paulicians were exiled from Armenia and their books burnt (AD 170). The Bible was prohibited to laymen during the time of the Albignenses and Waldenses (1223 AD Council of Toulouse, France). In 1229 the Bible was placed on the famous Index of forbidden books. In 1525 Tyndale translated the Bible into English and his work was ordered to be burnt; he himself was strangled and burnt in 1543. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) condemned the proposition that “the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation.”

When banning and burning the Bible failed to suppress it, other methods were employed. Textual critics cast doubt upon its Divine authorship and a campaign to discredit the Scriptures was vigorously pursued. But during all this time there remained those who testified to its Truth, who believed and taught its promises and its prophecies. Many “were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God” (Revelation 20:4). They “loved not their lives unto the death” (chapter 12:11). They stood for the Truth and against error and falsehood.

There has been a continuing witness down the centuries—and it was a witness that looked forward to a future redemption of the Jewish nation. There were those books which were published since the advent of printing are still extant. Thomas Brightman for example published a work in 1615 in which he taught the restoration of Jews to Jerusalem, “There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it,” he wrote.

Joseph Mede (1649) made frequent reference to the restoration of the Jews, as did many other writers. One noteworthy writer was Peter Jurieu whose work in English was published in 1687. A note at the beginning of his book has the heading ‘To the Nation of the Jews’ under which he writes:

“I Desire of that People, that they would please to read this book attentively, and without prejudice; especially from the middle of the second part to the end; they will find nothing there that can irritate ‘em. I confess the hopes they conceive of a Kingdom of the Messiah, which shall be chiefly for them, is built upon express and unquestionable prophecies; that even their Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and that they shall be again gathered together in their own land.”

Another writer was Sir Isaac Newton (English edition 1733), Thomas Newton (1754), and of course John Thomas (1849 etc).

In 1880 H. Grattan Guinness wrote a book under the title “The Approaching End of the Age.” Today, almost 130 years later, his words are truly remarkable:

“However improbable it may appear that Palestine should ever again be the home of a mighty Jewish nation, Scripture leaves no room to doubt that such will be the case,—that the same Almighty arm, which to place Israel there of old, plagued Egypt, destroyed the host of Pharaoh, and extirpated almost entirely the seven nations of Canaan; which subsequently overthrew the mighty Babylonian monarchy, in order to restore Israel to it for a comparatively brief period, by means of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, will in due time overthrow the Turkish power which has so long trodden down Jerusalem, defiled the sanctuary, and desolated the land of Israel, and will, the second time, restore his ancient people, to their inalienable inheritance. Every barrier must fall, every obstacle be overthrown, that the purpose of God may be accomplished, and the promises to Abraham and to his seed be fulfilled.”

No Room to Doubt

Unbelief is an incredible thing—a very stubborn and obstinate feature of the human race. There must be many educated people in the world today who are aware of the teaching of the Bible with respect to the restoration of the Jews, and of the many witnesses (such as those above) who have described the developments that we see today. Not only that, but there is the undeniable testimony of events which (often against all odds) has brought the Jewish nation to where it is today.

First there was the reluctance of Jews themselves to the idea of developing the Land then known as Palestine. When the British issued the Balfour Declaration and first invited Jews to take advantage of the situation, few were enthusiastic. The cry of Chaim Weizmann was “Jews; Where are You?” Then came the circumstances that gave them the urge to go and live in the Land—the pogroms, the persecution and the massacres. And then, when it became difficult to make “Aliya” due to a reversal in British policy, there was the terrible holocaust and there was the desperate exodus from Europe. The birth of the State of Israel was itself a miracle due to both British opposition and Arab determination to crush the infant state. 1967 saw another impossibility come to pass as Israel found itself in control of the entire West Bank and the old city of Jerusalem. Yes, the world was awestruck for a moment, but soon settled back into unbelief afterwards. To view all these things and conclude that it is mere coincidence stretches credulity to the limit!

Every step of the way the hand of the Almighty has been evident—yet the world has set itself on a confrontation course with the God of Israel.

The words of Sir Isaac Newton must have been quoted and read by many—but it is useful to
keep them before us:

“We have Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles, and the words of Christ himself; and if we will not hear them, we shall be more inexcusable than the Jews. For the Prophets and Apostles have foretold, that as Israel often revolted and brake the covenant, and upon repentance renewed it; so there should be a falling away among the Christians, soon after the days of the Apostles; and that in the latter days God would destroy the impenitent revolters, and make a new covenant with his people. And the giving ear to the prophets is a fundamental character of the true Church. For God has so ordered the Prophecies, that in the latter days the wise may understand, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, Dan. 12:9-10.”

Revollters Destroyed

The nations of the world today are sunken in unbelief and they are consequently alienated from the things of God by the ignorance that is in them. The world is in rebellion just as it was in the days of Noah.

When Britain turned against the Jews and abandoned its promise to use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of a national home for the Jewish people—when it abandoned that promise and turned back the ship Exodus, packed with holocaust survivors and sent it back to Germany—Britain lost both its respect and its empire. It has never recovered either.

Today, under the leadership of Barack Obama, the United States appears to be heading down the same road. It is a road to disaster. If reports are correct, and (as Newsweek told it) we are seeing “The decline and fall of Christian America,” then she really is following in Britain’s path. Britain was once known as a land of Bibles, it was often the only book in the house—but today a generation has risen that is not only ignorant of it, but lives in open defiance of its principles. The words of the Psalmist are relevant:

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17).

Let the United States take note of it. Her great power can be brought to nought very quickly. The words of the prophet Jeremiah (chapter 31:10) lay a principle before us that should be heeded:

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.”

As God deals with individuals, so also He deals with nations. Revollters will be destroyed.

The Task before the Believer

If the reader of these lines knows the substance of our remarks and truly believes them, then he has a task before him, just as those witnesses of the past had a task before them. Are we today exempt from suffering for the Truth’s sake? Have we no message to deliver? Can we expect to float along in affluent comfort and receive blessings for doing so?

Look at Ezekiel the prophet (chapter 33:6) :

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.”

If judgment is about to descend should we not tell someone? And should we not tell them why?

The God of heaven is working out a plan in order to “restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6). Do our neighbours know this? Does Mr Obama or Mr Brown, Mr Kevin Rudd or Mr John Key, or Mr Harper know this? Does even Mr Benjamin Netanyahu know this? If not, they should be told—and in the words of Ephesians 3:9-10 it is the task of the true believer:

... to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through the church (assembly of believers) the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (R.S.V.).

These “principalities and powers in the heavenly places” are those in high places—the world’s leaders. Our task therefore, is not to build church buildings or put all our energy into an institution and its adjuncts for its own sake—it is to make the voice of Truth known to this generation. That is both an individual responsibility and a collective one. Knowing “that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (Daniel 4:17), the man of God will be keenly interested in the events taking place in the political world, and will—as a faithful servant—do his best to bring his testimony before those in power. He will not participate in politics, but he will where possible make known the mind of God as this is revealed through His word.

Identifying with Israel

The nation of Israel today has been regathered for a purpose, but that purpose is as yet not completed. We may make the analogy of the construction of a building. First the site is cleared and existing structures are removed. Next, materials for a new building are brought to the site along with those things necessary for construction purposes—cement, bricks, timber, scaffolding, tarpaulin—perhaps a temporary work-hut, duck-boards and so on. At this stage the final building cannot be discerned, except by those who can read the plans—and even for them the final construction can only be visualized in the mind.

So it is with Israel now. What we see is the raw materials gathered in preparation for a work that is yet future. The people must be instructed, cleansed and made “willing” (Psalm 110:3) before being constituted a kingdom. The State of Israel is not the kingdom of Israel, but it is out of these materials now gathered that the kingdom will be developed. The situation that we witness today was anticipated 150 years ago by John Thomas who foresaw the pre-adventual restoration of Jews “on purely political principles” and “in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and the truth as it is in him”—this he anticipated as a condition “which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations...”

Now those who hope to find an abiding place in this kingdom when it is finally established will be keenly interested in its construction. They will identify with it as their future home. Not only that, but they will not feel very warmly disposed towards those who wish to see the building stop and all the raw materials scattered to the four winds! That is why we who have embraced the Hope of Israel identify with the nation now, even in its imperfect state. We are not responsible for its present political or spiritual condition—and we do not vote for its leaders, yet we do identify with its future constitution when it shall be subject to the son of David as its anointed king.

Our task now is to make known to all the great purpose of God with Israel, also called the good news of the kingdom. And to that end all those who identify with this hope should make it known to their neighbours and to those principalities and powers who rule in the high places. We should instruct them to show favour to our nation and people so that their own position may be peaceful and prosperous. For of Zion it is written: “... he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”

Our message to our contemporaries is that of Jeremiah 31:10:

“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.”
The Persians controlled the Land for over two centuries, and they left their mark on the province of Yehud, and Jerusalem. But Darius III Kodomanus, who was to be the last of the Persian kings, was faced with pressure from the west. The Persian Wars with Greece, which took their huge multi-national forces across the Hellespont and over the Aegean, had resulted in their defeat, and retreat back into Asia.

Phillip of Macedon had succeeded in consolidating most of the Greek states, but he was assassinated when his young son, Alexander was not yet twenty-one. In spite of his youth, he lost no time in taking up his father’s mantle, and bringing those who rebelled back into the fold, under his control. Control of Greece allowed him to continue with his father’s plans for the invasion of Asia. Forces were left behind to contain the Spartans, quash any rebellions, and maintain his authority.

Crossing into Asia, Alexander encountered no Persian fleet, leading his 35,000 troops along the Aegean coast where the Greek cities lay. Alexander fought two major battles in Asia—at the Granicus, and the Issus. At the Granicus, Alexander defeated an army put together by the Persian satraps, but at the Issus, he came face to face with Darius himself and his strongest forces. The Persians were defeated decisively. Darius’ own mother, wife and children were taken captive by the Greeks. While Darius fled into Persia, Alexander took Damascus.

Alexander’s focus was still on the Mediterranean ports that threatened his supply lines and his route home. Since the eastern Mediterranean was controlled by the Persian-allied Phoenicians, it was necessary to cut them off from their home ports by taking those ports with his land-based army.

As part of this process, Alexander turned south from Cilicia along the Levantine coast, and began to reduce and capture the Phoenician ports enroute. Arvad and then Sidon submitted first, and then he turned his attention to the great city of Tyre. Tyre was a different situation for Alexander. Wherever he went he demanded the right to offer sacrifice personally to the local gods. Tyre restricted that right to their own king, and would not concede it to Alexander. The Phoenician fleet, hearing of Darius’ defeat at Issus, had come to realize that Alexander was now threatening their homes, and they abandoned their posts around the Aegean to return home to their cities. Ships and crews that had been fighting side by side against the Greeks were now on opposite sides. Only the Tyrian fleet opposed the Greeks, and the other Phoenician ships.

Ezekiel, while captive in Babylon almost 300 years earlier, had prophesied of two sieges of Tyre, that of Nebuchadnezzar, and that of Alexander. Of Alexander’s successful siege he wrote:

“And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and...
The causeway built by Alexander now forms the Tyre peninsular

make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 26:12-14).

Today we can still see evidence of the destructive work of Alexander’s armies. The mainland city of Paleo-Tyre was torn down and thrown into the sea to create a causeway to the island. With the taking of Tyre, Alexander gained control of Syria and Egypt, and the eastern Mediterranean. He could now devote all of his energy to his land operations away from the Mediterranean shore.

After the seven month siege of Tyre and another two month siege at Gaza, Josephus says that Alexander went up to Jerusalem. A procession of priests in white linen, and citizens of Jerusalem in white clothing, led by the High Priest himself dressed in purple and scarlet, met Alexander outside the city. He told Parmenion, his second in command, of his vision of the High Priest while still in Macedonia, and then went into the city, and the Temple precincts. Under the direction of the High Priest, he offered a sacrifice, and was then shown the Book of Daniel and told that it was about his invasion and victory over Persia.

“And as I was considering, behold, a he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with anger against him, and smote the ram, and broke his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:5-8).

Alexander was the notable horn of the Greek goat, while Darius was the Persian ram he smote. The empire he was to build would be divided into four parts after his death. The Jewish reception at Jerusalem, combined with this prophecy, inclined Alexander in their favour. The High Priest Jaddua asked that the Jews be left to be governed according to their own law, and that no taxes or tribute be payable each seventh year. Alexander agreed, asking only for volunteers to join his forces.

Leaving Jerusalem, Alexander set off for Egypt which he took without opposition. It was the spring of the following year before he made his way back to Tyre to organize the new disposition of the fleet, and his plans for the overthrow of Darius and his new army. Alexander led his army eastwards to Babylon, then on to Afghanistan and India, expanding his empire day by day. Darius was defeated once more and died while fleeing to the east. Alexander was now King of Kings.

In Alexander’s wake, the new lands of his Greek empire were being brought under Greek influence, or “Hellenized.” The Greeks, who had been settling around the Mediterranean for centuries, were given property in the Land. Israel passed from oriental control to Greek-European control in 332 BC. As recorded in Daniel’s prophecy, Alexander was to die, and his empire was to be divided by four successors. The two that had an influence on the Land were Ptolemy and Seleucus. Seleucus took most of the old Persian empire, based in Babylon, while Ptolemy took Egypt. Israel, part of the region of Syria and Phoenicia, lay in between, and it became a battleground for the two Greek powers. In 301 BC, the area was taken by Ptolemy, and held until 200 BC.

Greek military colonies were established in the Land, and the cities were organized along Greek lines. The Phoenicians in particular became prominent Hellenists. Judea under both the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, was ruled through the High Priest and the Gerousia, or Council of Elders. The High Priests were descendants of Zadok and the office passed from father to son.

Under the Seleucids the country was at peace until the influence of the Romans appeared. The Seleucids under Antiochus III were defeated by the Romans in 188 BC, and forced to pay a heavy indemnity. An obvious source of funds were the wealthy temples throughout the kingdom. Jerusalem was not spared, although these efforts weren’t directed only toward the Jews.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes reigned from 175 to 164, and a turning point came for the nation. He deposed the High Priest Onias III and replaced him with his brother Jason, a Hellenist who promised to raise more taxes. Daniel chapter 11 prophesied of the events that would take place involving the King of the North—the Seleucids—and the King of the South—the Ptolemies. The Seleucid kings turned Jerusalem into a Greek polis with a gymnasium, and banned the observance of the Jewish religion, forcing the people to perform idolatrous rites and eat prohibited food. The majority of the nation protested and were ready to suffer martyrdom. This period of religious persecution was accompanied by expectations of the Messiah.
too many, unfortunately, disgusted by the corruption and oppression of the Church, assumed that the Bible was somehow the foundation cause. This can be seen in the violent reaction against the Church in the French revolution. The waves from this social eruption are still being felt today. Large sections of modern society are Children of the Revolution in their attitudes, rejecting the authority of the Bible, and making mankind the highest form of intelligence in the universe. But the new freedom of thought and worship has permitted others to read and study the Scriptures for themselves, instead of letting “the experts” (the clergy) tell them what to believe. In his article on the Devil Sheppard refers to “modern liberal Protestantism” which “tends to deny the necessity of belief in a personal Devil, preferring to understand the Biblical... references to him as a personification of the principle of evil, or to recognize that the mutual actions of individual sinners on one another constitutes a kingdom of sin opposed to the kingdom of God.” “Liberal Protestantism” now includes those who reject the virgin birth of Jesus, and miracles in general, matters which nullify Peter’s declaration, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). But it would be quite inaccurate to ascribe rejection of the personal Devil only to modern liberal Protestantism. Others, though a smaller number, have used the current freedom to carefully read and diligently study what they receive as the inspired word of God, and conclude that the Devil is indeed a personification of human sin.

The Personal Devil & His Companions
Where Did They Come From?
What the Devil is he, where the Devil is he, and who the Devil is he?

Continued from the last issue

By Arthur Bull  
VANCOUVER, BC

it would be quite inaccurate to ascribe rejection of the personal Devil only to modern liberal Protestantism. Others, though a smaller number, have used the current freedom to carefully read and diligently study what they receive as the inspired word of God, and conclude that the Devil is indeed a personification of human sin.

In the Scriptures,
“...I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh...” (Deuteronomy 32:42).
Arrows do not get drunk, nor do they drink blood. Neither do swords eat the people who are killed by them. Literally, the soldiers of his armies will shed much blood of the enemy. This sort of figure is well known in the most elegant of human speech and writing. It is called 

Metonymy

God might have said through Isaiah, “You Israelites are placing your trust in the king of Egypt to save you from your enemies (Israel should have been trusting in God instead). But you cannot depend on Pharaoh, he will take his soldiers home, and leave you to face your enemies alone!”

That would be strictly literal language. But for His own reasons, God chose to say it this way instead:
“Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him” (Isaiah 36:6).

This is another use of figurative speech, in this case called metaphor, commonly used in Scripture. It must be admitted that this is a much more colourful way of saying the same thing. It happens that reeds were a common sight in Egypt. We might compare these two ways of saying the same thing, with two cooked eggs. The first one we eat with no salt, the second we put salt (and maybe black pepper too) on it before eating it. Both are eggs, and they have the same food value, but most of us will eat the second egg with more zest.

Synechdoche is another kind of figurative speech:
“And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn” (Genesis 41:57).
No one reading this thinks that all the people who lived in other countries came to Egypt. They understand that some people came from all the countries that bordered on Egypt, to buy grain.

Personification is another figure that is not uncommonly used in Scripture. There is a lovely example of the personification of wisdom in the book of Proverbs:
“Wisdom hath built her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth
Jesus said, for example, in the sermon on the impression and not meant to be taken literally. They expressed strong feeling or produce a strong exaggerated or extravagant statement, used to which is a figure of speech consisting in under the figure of personification. A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing—Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither! she says to him that wanteth understanding... But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell” (verses 13-18).

Clearly, wisdom and the foolish woman (folly) are abstractions. They are not persons, but each are seen in persons, so it is not difficult to understand the figure of personification.

Jesus uses figures in His speech as the Father does:
“And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, ‘The old is better’” (Luke 5:36-39).

This is an example of allegory used in the many parables given by Jesus. Now it is well understood that Jesus was not concerned here with patching garments or bottling and tasting wine. Matthew and the other disciples were the new wine-skins, which had not been already stretched by an education in Jewish tradition, and so they did not have a preferential taste for the Pharisees’ doctrine. To put it another way, the Pharisees heard Jesus with a closed mind, while Matthew and the others listened to Jesus with an open mind—unbiased by preconceived notions—and this is the true liberal-mindedness! Surely this applies to people now just as much as it did then. All the guidance we need is now on record for us to read in the 66 books of the Bible. Much of the Bible is written in straight forward language, and can be taken completely literally. But there is also the use of figurative language. We need to be careful in our reading of the Scriptures, and not make the mistake of taking figures, like “the Devil,” literally.

We find in Scripture the use of hyperbole, which is a figure of speech consisting in exaggerated or extravagant statement, used to express strong feeling or produce a strong impression and not meant to be taken literally. Jesus said, for example, in the sermon on the mount, “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell”—(Matthew 5:29-30).

A few centuries ago, the church would not permit the common people to have the Bible—to know what God really wants us to believe. They argued that the land would be full of people who had gorged out an eye, and cut off a hand! But time has proven that the ordinary man and woman are more perceptive than that. They understand that we can want something that we see with our eye, and then steal it with our hand. This is sin, and Paul says “the wages of sin is death.”

Jesus personified the general run of people who have no genuine interest in God and His purpose:
“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).

Jesus here shows that anyone who desires to be his disciple, will be separated from “the world” (the ordinary people) because he is different from them. He believes differently and he lives a holy (separate) life, in other words he does not participate in their ungodly activities.

The disciples sometimes did not understand what Jesus said: “‘Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.’ But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying” (Luke 9:44-45). The disciples had not yet learned that Jesus must die on the cross for our sins. They evidently thought Jesus was using a figure, when he was really speaking literally.

“Take heed,” Jesus said to them. “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matthew 16:6-7). They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we have taken no bread.” This time Jesus was using a figure, and they took it literally. Jesus had to explain what he meant (verse 12): “Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (immortality of the soul, heaven-going, eternal suffering in hell-fire, evil spirits, and other things not taught in the word of God).

Jesus made the disciples’ ears hot by his answer to their question. It was because they should have known that Jesus was not worried about literal bread—they had seen him feed thousands of people! His message was: “God gave you brains, use them!—Remember what you have already learned!—Think!” We, like those first disciples, need to think carefully (meditate) about what Jesus has said, and what are written in the Scriptures of Truth. The worst thing we can do is close our Bible, fold our hands, and let some “expert” tell us what to believe.

On another occasion Jesus was criticizing the religious leaders for their traditions which they had made as important as the commandments of God. They said that unwashed hands make a person “unholy,” “Jesus called the crowd to him and said, ‘Listen and understand. What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean’” (Matthew 15:10-11). Peter spoke up first, as he often did, and said what the other disciples were thinking too. “Peter said, ‘Explain the parable to us’” (Matthew 15:15). Peter and the others likely felt hot and prickly all over after Jesus scrubbed them rather vigorously with his words of admonishment and instruction. They would not soon forget that lesson!

“Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man” (Matt. 15:16-20).

This statement tells us a lot about what Jesus’ work was all about. Jesus was greatly concerned with the things that “come from the heart” of men and women. This is because their true worth is seen in their works, whether good or bad. They cannot blame their bad works on some interfering “evil spirit”—Jesus shows there is no such thing. All man’s works have their origin—they all begin—in the man’s heart. This is why Jesus taught, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

His further statements sharpen this focus on the human heart: “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, Thou shalt not kill... But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...” (Matthew 5:21-22).

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28).

We need to pay careful attention to the way in which Jesus and the apostles used figures:
“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die” (John 12:31-33).

The “lifting up” clearly refers to his crucifixion. But who is “the prince of this world” to be driven out? Is this a literal person? In some of his last words of comfort to the disciples

The worst thing we can do is close our Bible, fold our hands, and let some “expert” tell us what to believe.

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“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do” (John 14:30-31).

Jesus was the only man who could truly state that he always obeyed God. Literally, we know, the religious leaders were coming to arrest Jesus. Those rulers, together with king Herod and the Roman governor, Pilate, would soon be agreeing to kill him. While Jesus did allow all because of his love of God and believers, the religious rulers were motivated by their fleshly instincts (Galatians 5:19-21): Pilate “knew that for envy they had delivered him” (Matthew 27:18).

Later in his last words with the disciples before his arrest, Jesus promised to send them “the helper” or “the comforter” after he had gone to be with the Father:

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment... Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged (John 16:8-11).

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs (figures of speech): but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father” (John 16:2).

This clearly shows that “the prince (or, ruler) of this world” is figurative—it is not a literal person. But what is it a figure of?

Paul uses the same figure:

“In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

“A among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (verse 3).

In verse 2 he is saying that the Ephesians, before they accepted the gospel, walked according to the course of this world. We saw earlier that Jesus referred to those people as “the world” who make up most of the population, having little or no interest in the things of God. Their “course” or ways are love of self, and the effort to always satisfy their own desires, instead of love of God and love of neighbour.

The natural thinking and desires of the flesh go through all society, from the lowest servant to the men who sit in high places of the government. If one were to ask, “what is the governing principle of this age?” The answer from the Scriptures is, “the thinking of this world” (see Romans chapter 8). That is the “spirit” or “mental disposition” of the world in which we live. “The children of disobedience” is another name for “the world.” Some of them may be pleasant people to meet, but if they have no love for God and His Truth, then they are conducting their life in disobedience to God.

In verse 3 of Ephesians 2, Paul says of himself and the other apostles, that “we too” lived in the same way the Ephesians did. This shows that walking “according to the prince of the power of the air” is a figurative way of saying what is said literally in verse 3.

They also had formerly lived in the lusts of their flesh. They also had indulged the desires of the flesh and of the mind. They also had lived in the way that came most naturally to them, a way that made God angry.

Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:13).

In other words, what they said was inspired by God. “Comparing” here means “to put together spiritual ideas with spiritual words.” With every-day speech, the meaning of words is explained in a dictionary. But where did the definition of the word come from? The people who wrote the dictionary looked for that word in books and other writings to see how it was used. We need to do the same thing with the Bible—read it all, and read some of it every day, watching for how it uses those “spiritual words.” Comparing one part of the Scriptures with another can help us find the correct definition, or “spiritual things.”

As we have seen, much of the language in the Bible is literal, and is written in every-day style. But some is figurative. It is often easy to see which kind it is, but sometimes it is hard to know unless we compare it with other parts of the Bible. The apostle John said,

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

Who is “the devil”? This sounds like a person, but let’s compare this with what Paul says about the nature of Jesus:

“We are informed that Jesus had to be made like the people he came to save: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

This clearly means that Jesus had to have our nature so that he could destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. This fact should alert us that there is some connection between human nature and the Bible devil. What is this connection? We can find the answer by asking another question: what has the power of death? the answer given by the Bible is that sin has the power of death, because it was God’s command that sin should be punished with death:

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26).
Comparing these passages, we have in Hebrews 2:14, “through death ... destroy ... the devil,” while in Hebrews 9:26 we have “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Paul teaches, in Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...”—And so by looking at what the Scriptures say, it can be seen that “sin” and “the devil” are equivalent terms: Sin causes death, and the devil causes death. Hebrews 2:14 says that the devil was destroyed by the death of Jesus, and Hebrews 9:26 says that sin was put away by the death of Jesus. The inevitable conclusion is that “the devil” is a personification of the principle of sin that resides in all mankind. The letter to the Romans is a detailed explanation of salvation through Jesus—the conquest of that which has the power of death. If a personal evil spirit were the main culprit, then he ought to loom large in this passage. If a personal evil spirit were the main culprit, then he ought to loom large in this passage: If a personal evil spirit were the main culprit, then he ought to loom large in this passage.

Human Nature is fundamentally Sinful

Mankind, without the word of God to guide him, is little better morally than the beasts.

Jeremiah’s assessment of what mankind is really like on the inside, is dismal but true:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

Is the prophet talking only about criminals? No—this is what is inside all human beings. Those who do not have the powerful word of God in their minds to counteract it, will die in their sin.

All this provides the basis for what Jesus says about human nature. This was the perfect occasion for Jesus to warn believers if it was an evil spirit that tempted them to sin. But he placed the entire blame on man’s own heart:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

In summary then, we are a race that has a built in bias to rebel against all authority, including God’s. None of us, honestly looking into his own heart, can deny what Paul says, that “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). This is one of the two basic facts from which God’s plan of salvation comes.

Our need is delivery from the sin that is within us.

It is not from an imaginary evil spirit. The devil that Jesus died to destroy is sin.

To be Continued

160 YEARS OF ELPIS ISRAEL 1849-2009

A pre-publication announcement in The Herald of The Future Age read in part:

This is pre-eminently a Book for the People as well as a book for the times. It is not a book of technical or scholastic theology; but one constructed upon the grand principle, that the Bible contains a revelation from God of the reason of things and of his purposes in their creation, addressed, not to a privileged few for their especial profit, but to all the sons of men without respect of persons who may desire to know the truth. Hence, the Book for the Times aims to speak to the people in plain and intelligible language; and to “open the understanding” that they may by the further exercise of their own faculties discern the “wonderful things” contained in the Oracles of God. The “book for the times” will show what must be assuredly believed by all who would “inherit the Kingdom of God.”
We can learn a lot about human behaviour from the animal world, not because of any evolutionary connection, but because “Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” He is just like them! Take, for example, the creatures of the night—like raccoons for instance—those who love darkness rather than light. There are men that are “of the darkness;” such as evolutionists. Like the raccoon, they are exceptionally intelligent and have amazing abilities, but they are nocturnal, working in the darkness, and train them as you might, they remain cunning little wild beasts and make themselves pests.

The raccoon comes equipped with night vision and an audio system that can even detect worms slithering around underground! It has feet (or are they hands?) that can swivel for going both up and down trees, as well as a mechanism like cats whiskers (but on its feet) to detect what’s going on! But the cunning thing can undo locks and open doors. A friend of ours had one that used to grab chickens — it would throw food to attract the chicken, making sure the unsuspecting fowl gradually came nearer and nearer to the raccoon cage... and then GRAB! The feathers would fly! What a beast! Just like some men. Very clever but roaming in the darkness!