“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.”

Micah 4:11,12

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“A witness of Bible truth for our times”

Above: Entering the controversial suburb of Ramat Shlomo, East Jerusalem, where plans to build Jewish homes have caused a serious rift between Israel and the United States. See article on BUILDING UP ZION

Ron Kidd considers the mystery of the dinosaurs in the light of the Bible. What can we learn about these creatures?

In his Milestones Update, Don Pearce draws our attention to the growing power of Germany in Europe. One of the many “milestones” of prophetic fulfillment today.

An address by Gavriel Barkai given at The Jerusalem Conference this year is reported and transcribed for the information of our readers. He dealt with matters related to his work as an archaeologist.

“...remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.” Jeremiah 51:50
he luminaries of the heaven are the dignities, or glories, incarnated in the officials who figure as the civil and spiritual rulers of “the earth and habitable.” Although the saints are promised “power over the nations to rule them” (Rev. 2:26-27), “the heaven,” in which national government is located, is shut and fast closed against them. Their principles incapacitate them for sharing power with the world-rulers in Church and State. A saint, who is one in deed as well as name, cannot condescend to subject himself to the conditions necessary to obtain the favor of the political mob, whether that mob be a mob of aristocrats, or a mob of what these call “the swinish multitude.” He cannot, I say, condescend, as a son of the Deity, a brother of Jesus Christ, and a king and priest elect for God, to seek the favor of “the dead in trespasses and sins,” whose votes and patronage are indispensable to his exaltation to the heaven; in which he may figure by the eloquence of his speech, or the gaudy decorations of a court, as a star of the first or an inferior magnitude. No saints could by any other possibility than that based upon apostacy, consent to occupy the Papal Chair, or to fill an archiepiscopal, or other ecclesiastical or secular throne. The heaven, in which these seats of glory, honor, wealth, and power exist, is infected with such malarious and poisonous exhalations of sin’s flesh, that he who would enjoy such seats must be a son of the Devil, and a child of the spirit of the world, and must satisfy its wants and requirements. The heaven, like the earth, is infected with sin, and could not breathe them, and live and move, and have continued healthful spiritual existence in the Deity. Fortunately for the saints this heaven is shut against them, and its door bolted, locked, and barred to keep out all who will not fall down and worship the Satan, who is prince of the Aerial, and bestows its glories upon whomsoever he approves.

But this heaven is not always to be shut up and barred against the saints—against the Lord Jesus and his Brethren. The Satan that now fills it, and monopolizes its heavenly things, is to be hurled from it with a mighty overthrow. This Satan, which is Sin in official manifestation, holds the power and glory of the world’s dominions. They are delivered unto him, and to whomsoever he will, he gives them.—Luke 4:5-6. But the Satan in the heavens are doomed; for Jesus in vision of the future, said: “I beheld the Satan as it were lightning fall out of the heaven.”—Luke 10:18. He falls thence by virtue of a stronger than the Satan breaking into the heaven and casting him out. The Satan’s house or kingdom is strongly fortified against all burglars and besiegers, at present upon the earth. Under existing circumstances, there is no chance of the saints being able to make a breach, or to open a door in the heaven, to effect an entrance into it, expel the Satan, and eject him with all his instruments of mischief and abomination. But though this present inability exists, the expulsion is to be accomplished. The oracle before us (Revelation 4:1) proclaims “a door opened in the heaven,” which is equivalent to saying, that a power had been apocalypsed on earth, stronger than the Satan; that this power had made a breach in the enemy’s works; and that this breach had become practicable, so that the breaching power could march through it as through a door, and take possession of the heaven, or “kingdom under the whole heaven.”—Daniel 7:27.

The oracle does not say that doors were opened. Our attention is restricted to a door, that is, one door. A door is that opening in a wall through which you pass into the area or room beyond. This is the scriptural use of the word. Understanding this, and that the apocalyptic heaven is that constitution of things expanded over all peoples, and nations, and languages, as the government by which they are regulated and controlled; the reader will perceive, that the coup-d’état by which the smiting power succeeds in placing itself in power and authority over any part of those nations or peoples, is a door of entrance to that new power into the heaven. This is easily comprehended, and makes the oracle before us easy of comprehension, as we shall endeavor to show.

The Deity proposes to enact a great and mighty coup-d’état, or stroke of policy, upon the world’s government. He intends so to shape and overrule its ambitions and schemes, as to cause them to make the territory of His kingdom the seat of war between hostile confederacies. “I will gather,” saith he, “all the nations against Jerusalem to war; and I will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat.” “They shall pitch the tents of their entrenched camp between the seas to the mountain of the glory of holiness”: a region which in Apoc. 16:16, is indicated by the Hebrew word “Armageddon.” This concentration of the hosts of the nations in the Holy Land, is its invasion by Gog, the Prince of Rosh, in hostility to the Merchant Power of Tarshish and its allies, then in possession of Jerusalem. But “this city shall be taken”; “and the land of Egypt shall not escape.” Advanced to this sovereignty, the Gog-dominion stands forth as “the Dragon, the old Serpent, surnamed the Diabolos and the Satan”—Apoc. 20:2; and as the Image of the kingdom of men in its latter day manifestation, as represented to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. In the development of these events a crisis is formed, such as the world, for magnitude and importance, has never seen before. The Satan will then have attained to the loftiest pinnacle of the temple, with the presumption that universal sovereignty is within the grasp of his omnipotence. The heaven will be filled with his glory; and no son of sin’s flesh will find admission there, whose zeal runs not in the way of a ready and devout allegiance to the God-defying principles of “the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.”

But things having arrived at this crisis, under the leadership of the Lawless One, the time will have also arrived for opening a door into Satan’s heaven, through which the saints may enter in. This will be done by a divine coup-d’état such as the Satan little expects. This political stroke consists in the power represented by a Stone falling upon the enemy, and crushing them with a terrible overthrow. This Stone-Power is the power of the Eternal Spirit in Jesus and the saints; who with sword, pestilence, rain, hail, fire, and brimstone, plead with the adversary, and destroy him from the Promised Land. In this way Yahweh makes Jerusalem “a cup of trembling, unto all the people round about when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem: also a burdensome stone for all people, all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. Their multitudes and power will not appal him. He will go in, and fight against them, and stand victorious upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. In this way, He, whom the prophet styles, Yahweh my Elohim comes in, all the saints with him.” In proof of all this, the reader is referred to Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariiah.

Thus Yahweh Elohim, the saints, “come in.” By the crashing power of the Stone a door is opened, and they march in. Their Prince, who came as a thief, obtains possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and becomes a potentate among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers of the heaven, in which, until He breaks in upon them, “the Devil and his Angels” only can be found.
The prophecy of Gog’s invasion of Israel in Ezekiel chapter 38, predicts a future conflagration upon the mountains of Israel. A coalition of nations led by “Gog of the land of Magog,” from the uttermost parts of the north, moves down upon God’s people the Jews, who have been gathered out of the nations. At that moment, the God of Israel intervenes and destroys the gathered confederacy upon the mountains of Israel.

While visiting Israel last month, we met with a very nice Jewish lady who lives on the “mountains of Israel” in Efrat. This Jewish community is one of the ones referred to in the media as a settlement. It is named after and is close to the Biblical Jewish community of Efratah, adjacent to Bethlehem. Sharon is the type of person everybody would be happy to have in their neighbourhood; she is very active in her community and is involved in all kinds of charity work. As we looked out from her living room window at the nearby hills, vineyards and olive groves, she explained to us how the “charity” Oxfam is heavily involved in grabbing land for the Arabs. It is a very simple procedure.

Sharon Katz, a resident of the Efrat settlement came from the United States.

The local Arab farmers have for years farmed small plots of land without heavy machinery or even tractors. Oxfam provides the Arabs with tractors and so forth, and enables them to farm much larger plots of vacant land, which...
subsequently becomes “theirs” after they have farmed it for a few years. Meanwhile Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria have to endure a construction freeze and are unable to build. Recently, in the Jewish community of Efrat, the foundations of a synagogue were destroyed early one morning by the government; in order to try and show Joe Biden, who was visiting Israel at the time, that Israel is interested in peace. By the afternoon Joe Biden was in a better mood.

Meanwhile the Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria are very active in trying to establish Jewish communities on as many hill tops as possible; an exercise the international community takes a very dim view of. The European funded organization in Israel called “Peace Now,” has documented over 100 of these Jewish settlements in addition to the over 100 communities officially recognized by the Israeli government. Wikipedia states that as of November 2009, approximately 400,000 Israelis live in the 168 officially-recognized settlements in the West Bank, and 280,000 Israelis live in East Jerusalem. It is quite plain to see that the Jewish population in Judea and Samaria, may have passed the point of no return, as relocating 300,000 people may be virtually impossible—especially when they don’t want to move. Further, a Palestinian state on a small landlocked piece of mountainous land may also be unsustainable.

Now in the disputed areas of Judea and Samaria, Jewish residents are working hard to try and start new communities and expand existing ones. Meanwhile, the Arabs are trying to get the Jews out and the international community is helping them through charities, non-governmental organizations and other means. The Vice President of the United States (Joe Biden is the first Catholic to hold this position), condemned Israel for building new homes on the mountains of Israel. Netanyahu got a call from Hillary Clinton with another condemnation; the Quartet of Israel. Netanyahu got a call from Hillary Clinton condemned Israel for granting the approval for building homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Vice President of the United States (Joe Biden is the first Catholic to hold this position), condemned Israel for building new homes on the mountains of Israel. Netanyahu got a call from Hillary Clinton with another condemnation; the Quartet of Israel. Netanyahu got a call from Hillary Clinton condemned Israel for granting the approval for building homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

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Hillary Clinton condemned Israel for building homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank
Where did the dinosaurs come from? Where do they fit in to the Biblical account of creation and the early history of the world?

Dinosaur sites exist all over the world; indeed there is an unquenchable thirst for knowledge about these extinct creatures and a great deal of hype has been created. Box office hits such as *Jurassic Park* have done a great deal to heighten the imagination but they have also coloured the mind with regards to their origins, the age when they existed and their disappearance from the earth.

The most impressionable minds are children’s. Have you ever noticed when looking at pictures of dinosaurs how children can readily recollect the various names of these animals? The reason for this is that education, whether it is children’s programs on television or reading material in schools, are all geared to indoctrinate our children that dinosaurs existed millions of years ago, long before the human race came into existence.

Even the adult population is fascinated with dinosaurs and has been eager to consume the much published “scientific” evidence that appears in popular magazines and on the Internet. A typical statement available on an educational website is the following:

“Dinosaur is the name of a prehistoric reptile group that first appeared on the earth about 230 million years ago. They lived in nearly all natural settings, from open plains to forests to the edges of swamps, lakes, and oceans. Then about 65 million years ago, the dinosaurs died out. They were not ‘rediscovered’ by man until the early nineteenth century, when their fossil remains were first recognized.”

What seems to have been overlooked is that there is an alternative source of information. The Bible claims that life appeared approximately 6000 years ago, and that all the animals were created on the sixth day of creation:

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good”, (Genesis 1:24-25).

Now there can be only one solution to resolving this difference; one of the explanations must be wrong!

Is there any reason to doubt that the dinosaurs were part of the Genesis creation? In order to answer this question we must examine the evidence that is available. What do we really know about dinosaurs? Before we address this it will be helpful to comment briefly on the fossil record itself. Is the fossil dating all that accurate?

The Old Fossil

This article is not the place for considering in detail the methods for dating fossils, but there are some facts that your average science books rarely disclose. For instance the stratigraphic column or geological column as it is commonly known by, is the description given to the various vertical rock successions allowing an interpretation of the general time scale of the earth. It claims that there is a development in the column from the oldest...
layers at the bottom and the youngest layers at the top. It is also claimed that the fossil record contained in the column shows that complex life emerged in the last 600,000 million years. The column is divided into eras and periods and the dinosaur fossils are identified with the Mesozoic Era—between 250 and 62 million years ago.

What is not said too loudly is that there is no satisfactory evidence of gradual progression from simple to complex life in the rocks, neither is there a consistent progression, beginning from the bottom, from old to young rock; the geological column is upside down; there are areas where young rock is below the older rock strata. Moreover throughout the various layers evidence of human presence is clearly visible. For example in the Mesozoic Era footprints have been identified in Nevada and West Virginia, human skeletons in Utah, a metal hammer in Texas and metal artifacts in France. Earlier still in the Cambrian Era (over 500 million years ago) iron bands have been found in Scotland and a sandal and footprints in Utah. This is very embarrassing to the scientific world; this would suggest that human beings have either been around much longer than believed or, and more likely, the time periods given for the geological column are inaccurate. Certainly in the Mesozoic Era the evidence supports the view that dinosaurs were at one time contemporary with humans. But this is not the only evidence as we shall see.

There is the evidence of the fossils themselves. It is advocated that a fossil is formed following the death of the creature by the buildup of sedimentation which insulates the creature, thus adding to its preservation. Then follows permineralization created by the pressure caused by the sedimentary layers compacting, which over time turns into rock with the skeleton encased in it. Whilst all this sounds very scientific the facts are that delicate creatures like dragon flies have been found whole, fossilized in rock; fragile plants such as ferns and leaves have been preserved complete in rock. Fish have become fossilized while feeding and an Ichysaurus has been preserved giving birth to its young. Wouldn’t such delicate samples have decomposed before they could be preserved? Unless of course there is another explanation! Wouldn’t the preservation of the fish and Ichysaurus suggest a more dramatic death causing fossilization rather than a gradual process of decay over thousands and millions of years?

Puzzling Picture

How accurate is the available information? Are we being presented with all the facts? Did they really look the way they are depicted in books? To begin with there are lots of images in books depicting what they looked like and where they lived. We do know that the fossil remains of dinosaurs have been found all around the world. We are told that they came in all shapes and sizes, and while there were a number of dinosaurs that were huge, the average size was similar to that of a modern sheep. According to the text books researchers have named around 860 different types of dinosaurs and all the information has been culled from the fossil record.

The comment has been made that the assembling of dinosaur skeletons is not a simple procedure; in the majority of cases the skeletons are normally incomplete. One writer stated that it was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle with many of the pieces missing and others damaged. Also the parts of different creatures are often found mixed together in the same graveyard as shown in the photograph (below). Now imagine finding a number of skeletons all mixed up, how easy would it be to determine which one went where and what the identification of each skeleton might be? For example how would you identify the skeletons in the illustration if they were all jumbled together? Which one would you identify as the wolf, and what would be the identification of the others? The images found in books, while bearing a reasonable resemblance, are all artistic, produced from jumbled bones.

Dinosaurs in the Bible

The question is often asked, why don’t we find dinosaurs in the Bible? That is a reasonable question; it must be remembered however that the King James Bible was translated in 1611 and the word dinosaur was not coined until 1842 by a man named Sir Richard Owen. The word dinosaur means “fearfully great lizard.” In Greek, “deinos” means “fearfully great” and “sauros” means “lizard.” Having said that it does not follow that the Bible is silent about these extinct animals; the Bible uses a different term, Dragons.

There are thirty-five references in the Bible to dragons, in fact we are introduced to the term in Genesis One: “And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:21). The phrase “great whales” is translated from the Hebrew word ‘tannin’ which according to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance means “a marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal.” It is the word translated “dragons” in the Bible. We read of a “dragon well” located near the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:13). It is reasonable to conclude that the Jews would not build a well for something that no longer existed. The prophet Jeremiah prophesied of Jerusalem becoming “a den of dragons” (9:11) and he also spoke of a famine in the land when the wild asses would “snuff up the wind like dragons” (14:6). There would be little point mentioning such creatures if Israel was not familiar with them. The land of Edom (Esau) is described as becoming a waste land “for the dragons of the wilderness” (Malachi 1:3). None of these verses would make much sense if dragons did not exist. It may be argued that these verses refer to the jackal, but it must also be remembered that when later versions used the word jackal they did so because dragons were unknown to them.

The book of Job introduces two animals which have exercised the minds of Bible students for many years. God spoke to Job about Behemoth (40:15-20) and Leviathan (chapter 41). Various suggestions have been made as to what these animals are including the suggestion that they are simply metaphorical creatures with a spiritual meaning. But this latter suggestion isn’t realistic because God also refers to the wild goats, the ostrich and the eagle (chapter 39). Behemoth is described as being made by God
and contemporary with man (40:15); he is “the chief of the ways of God” (verse 19). It has been suggested that behemoth refers to either the hippopotamus or the elephant, but there is one detail which just doesn’t fit. We read, “He moveth his tail like a cedar” (verse 17). We all know what the cedar looks like, it is large in stature and grows tall. Does this describe the tail of a hippopotamus or elephant? But it could very well be describing the Brachiosaurus or the Apatosaurus.

Leviathan, in many alternative translations, is believed to be the crocodile. Again he is contemporary with man (Job 41:5-6); he is fearless (verse 10) with terrible teeth (verse 14); he appears invincible (verses 26-29) and there is none like him on the earth (verse 33). There is however one unique detail, “his breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth” (verse 21) and this certainly does not fit the crocodile. Here is an animal that breathes fire which does not fit the description of any animal today. Of course it is impossible to identify accurately from bones a dinosaur that this may refer to, but there are two possibilities. In Psalm 104 the leviathan is described as associated with the sea (verses 25-26), as it is also in Isaiah 27:1; this description could correspond to the kronosaurus, a creature over 10 meters in length with large teeth. But a more likely suggestion is that leviathan refers to the Parasaurolophus, a dinosaur with a unique snout bone extending beyond its head. A variety of suggestions have been made regarding the unusual crest ranging from an underwater breathing snorkel to a communication horn. However there is one suggestion that aligns with the description in the book of Job; there is no air hole in the apex of the crest for snorkelling and this indicates that it could have been an elaborate combustion chamber which housed chemical glands for producing jets of fire. This is not as farfetched as it may appear; there is a similar arrangement in the body of the modern-day bombardier beetle.

**Historical evidence for Dinosaurs**

Throughout history there have been numerous accounts of strange creatures encountering humans and around the world there are many ancient pictures and carvings depicting animals no longer alive. Many sceptics have dismissed these stories and images, not because they can be discredited, but because they support a view that provides credibility to a young earth.

For example the tomb of the Bishop of Carlisle located in Carlisle Cathedral, England contains a brass inlay with the images of animals familiar to us today. Included in the images is one which clearly bears a resemblance to a dinosaur. The tomb dates back to the 15th century providing evidence that man and dinosaurs co-existed.

In northwest Cambodia there is a temple named Ta Prohm dating back to the 12th century. The structure is covered with ornate carvings of familiar animals such as monkeys, parrots and lizards. One of the columns shows an intricate carving bearing a remarkable resemblance of a stegosaur-like creature. How did they know what a dinosaur looked like 800 years ago, unless they...
were familiar with them during that period? Similar images of the stegosaur-like creature and other dinosaurs were also found in Acambaro, Mexico in 1945; over 33,000 ceramic figurines, dating from 800 BC to 200 AD were recovered. A great deal of effort has gone into authenticating these figurines by the Mexican government and they have survived numerous tests over a period of 40 years. As one writer notes, “The Acambaro figurine exhibits knowledge we have gained only in the last few years. No hoaxter could have made this model in the 1940’s.”

A Mesopotamia cylinder seal in Uruk dating back to 1520 BC to the Biblical period of the book of Job shows creatures with an uncanny resemblance to today’s depictions of dinosaurs such as Barosaurus or Pleurocoelus. The emphasis on the muscular detail of the image would indicate that the artist had a good model to draw so accurately from, suggesting that such sauropods were contemporary with humans around the time of Job.

Dragon legends and stories
Legends depicting conflicts between men and dragons can be found all around the world. We merely submit these legends to show that such tales like the images described earlier demonstrate that the stories must have had some basis to begin with. Dragons feature in numerous ancient literature and while the stories themselves have no doubt been embellished over time in order to make the human victor more heroic, we cannot discount the fact that records have been documented which must have had some foundation for the information.

Herodotus is considered one of the most celebrated of ancient historians; he lived during the 5th century BC and travelled widely. He wrote of a place in Arabia which he had visited and described small flying reptiles which had a remarkable similarity to what is called today Pterosaurs (winged lizard). The 1st century Jewish historian Josephus also wrote of similar creatures. Also Marco Polo who travelled throughout China in the 13th century AD wrote about “huge serpents, ten paces in length, and ten spans in the girt of the body. At the forepart, near the head, they have two short legs, having three claws like those of a tiger, with eyes larger than a fourpenny loaf and very glaring. The jaws are wide enough to swallow a man, the teeth are large and sharp, and their whole appearance is so formidable, that neither man, nor any kind of animal, can approach them without terror” (The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian, translated by W. Marsden). These individuals, as eye witnesses, wrote down what they saw adding credibility to the fact that the ancient legends have their origins in actual events.

The Epic of Beowulf is a poem set in the 5th century AD. It concerns the hero Beowulf who comes to the aid of the king of the Danes who is plagued by a monster Grendel. It describes his ascension to the throne over his people and his death while slaying a fire-breathing dragon. While the poem is fictional our interest lies in the details which describe the dragon. It is a bipedal creature with two small forelimbs; its skin is impervious to the sword and it has strong jaws. The death of the dragon is brought about by Beowulf tearing off one of its forelimbs. All these details describing the bipedal dragon and the method of slaying it corresponds to an ancient image found on an early Babylonian cylinder seal. Is this purely fictional or a story with factual details familiar to the writer.

The Chinese calendar can be dated as far back as the second millennia BC and consists of twelve animals each representing one year. Eleven of the animals are all familiar to us today;
they are real animals. The twelfth is a dragon. We have already noted the sightings of Marco Polo but we need to ask why would a fictitious creature be incorporated into a calendar along with other recognizable animals, unless of course the dragon was familiar to the Chinese during that period?

Hundreds of stories have been preserved from British antiquity related to dragons. Images are available worldwide depicting dragons bearing strong resemblances to the images developed of dinosaurs. In addition the Bible speaks about the same kind of creatures, on land, in the sea and in the air and in all cases they are described as being contemporary with man.

What happened to the Dinosaurs?
The evolutionist suggests that some great catastrophe overcame the world millions of years ago causing the extinction of the dinosaur. But the evidence in the geological column is not conclusive for an old earth theory; on the contrary as we have seen it is the very opposite. On the other hand the Bible offers a far more satisfying and reasonable explanation. A catastrophe did occur and the world did perish including the dinosaur. In the days of Noah conditions in the world had deteriorated so much that God saw no alternative but to destroy the world’s population. God said, “The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Genesis 6:11-13). Noah was commanded to build an ark to house himself and his family along with representatives of every kind of living creature; birds of the air and the animal creation.

And when the flood waters poured over the surface of the earth, “all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died” (Genesis 7:22); only two of every kind (and in some cases seven of every kind) survived in the ark.

Like the dinosaur, there is evidence all round the world of a flood; stories corresponding in many details to the Biblical record are available in many nations. Like the lion, the elephant, the kangaroo and the horse the dinosaur was preserved through the flood and those who have encountered them since that time have preserved their images and recorded the stories for us to review. The skeptic objects to this explanation claiming the ark couldn’t house such large creatures; but remember young dinosaurs are much smaller than the fully grown.

What happened to the dinosaur? It is another statistic that can be added to the list of extinct species. In the past 350 years alone approximately 400 species of either animal or plant life have disappeared from the earth. According to the environmentalists the last two centuries have seen acceleration in the rate of animal extinction due largely to industrial progress and growth in human population.

In the book of Genesis after the flood God said to Noah and his family, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things” (Genesis 9:1-3). God encouraged Noah to expand and develop the earth again; in addition to the vegetation which appears to have been the diet prior to the flood, the animals could be killed for food. But as is typical with the human race that privilege has been abused; animals have been slaughtered not only for food but for body parts; for sport or because they were in the way of development. And the larger the animal the more vulnerable it would be.

The world following the flood changed. The evidence of lush forests gave way to desert and ice capped terrain; extreme climate changes would undoubtedly affect some of the animals causing them to die out. How is it that people cannot accept the Biblical account? The apostle Peter tells us it was, and still is, because people are willingly ignorant (2 Peter 3:5). People choose complex and unproven theories in preference to the simple teaching of God’s word. Many of the mysteries surrounding dinosaurs will not all be unraveled this side of God’s kingdom, however some of the mysteries are not mysteries at all, but the desire to hold on to theories that eliminate God from people’s lives.

We can have confidence in the Bible. Archaeology, the textual accuracy of scripture and Bible prophecy all contribute to shoring up that confidence. Because the scientific community has much learning in its field the lay person finds themselves intimidated by that knowledge. But as one scientist wrote, “Don’t let the experts pull the wool over your eyes. In many respects your opinion may be worth as much as theirs...” This is certainly true when it comes to the Bible and we must remember the warning of the prophet Isaiah when he wrote,

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

Almost 2,000 years ago when the Jewish people were expelled from their land by the Romans, a call was issued to Gentiles—an invitation in fact—to embrace the covenants of promise, and to become “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:12 and verse 19). Such Gentile believers were told by the apostle Paul: “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED” (Acts 20:32).

Just as character could be formed within the Jewish nation, so also character would be formed in Gentiles who embraced that hope which was based upon the promises made unto the fathers. This was the Hope outlined by Paul as he stood before the judgement court of King Agrippa (Acts 26:6-7):

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.”

Paul’s Hope was the same as that held by the twelve tribes of Israel. This was the original Christian Hope, from which faith the assemblies soon departed as predicted in such New Testament passages as Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 2:3, 4 etc.

Those who remain faithful to the “one hope,” will “through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). In God’s mercy they will be BUILT UP so as to form citizens of “the commonwealth of Israel” and constituents of the holy city.

Jerusalem today is inhabited by Moslems, Catholics, secular, and people of all persuasions. It will not always be so. The time will come when the City shall be “holy;” it will be called “the City of the Truth” (Zechariah 8:3), because its inhabitants will all believe, know and live the Truth.

This is the destiny of Jerusalem—a destiny with which Jews and Gentiles hope to be associated. The building up of Zion is the work of God, and today that work is nearing completion. Today, the enemies of Israel may sometimes triumph—they may boast as they possess even the Temple Mount saying to the world “Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession” (Ezekiel 36:2). But the triumph of the wicked is to be short-lived. The LORD will soon intervene and expel all those who have no right to possession—and what a transformation will then take place!

“And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Zech. 6:12-13, 15).

1983 Israeli stamp celebrates Jewish settlement in Judah and Samaria (the West Bank)

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WHEN DEPRESSION & DESPAIR OVERTAKE...

It is time to Focus upon the Reality of “A Sure Hope.”

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? — Psalm 56:8

Deep depression is something that has been known and experienced by several Bible characters. We must not be surprised to find that believers today sometimes share such moments of distress and despair also. The circumstances of life can be so difficult that a man may wish to die rather than live with them, but our life is a gift from God, for “he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25).

Thus, even when life is a severe challenge it must be valued and seen as an opportunity—and most will recognize this. However, there can be trials that are so heavy that they lead people to wish for an end. It was so with Job:

“Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?”

Most of us find it difficult to relate to that frame of mind. The natural instinct of self-preservation does not permit such thoughts—we cannot truly comprehend it. But Elijah “requested for himself that he might die; and said, it is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life...” (1 Kings 19:4). His life seemed futile and it appeared to him that all Israel had rejected God’s way. Samson who is numbered among the faithful in Hebrews 11:32 died saying: “Let me die with the Philistines ...” (Judges 16:30). In all these cases, even though there was despair and even defeat, there was faith in God.

Hope in God

When the Psalmist passed through the valley of despair he exclaimed:

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee...” (Psalm 42:5-6).

There was no hope in himself or in the flesh; the natural man offered no comfort and no promise of relief. Here is the truth that all must face—There is no hope for anyone apart from God and His covenants of promise.

The Hope set Before us

There is “one hope” says Ephesians 4:4, and it is vital that our faith is in that, and not in a false hope, such as heaven-going. Believers all down the centuries have shared the same hope—a hope that is clearly defined in both old and new testaments. If we carefully read Hebrews 6:13-18, we see how the one true hope is based upon the promise made by God to Abraham:

“ For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Hebrews 6:13-19).

Here is the “sure hope” set before us, called by Paul “the Hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20). This hope is one that belongs to the real world and involves the nation and commonwealth of Israel; their Land and its future. Believers have had their hope set upon this for centuries—and today we can see it materializing: A restoration of the people and nation to their long-promised Land. We can see the preliminary steps by which the kingdom will be restored again to Israel (Acts 1:6). The hope set before us is real, it is “an anchor of the soul”—an anchor in life—both sure and steadfast.

No one who understands this true hope can deny the facts related to it. Whatever personal failings there may be, whatever trials may oppress us and depress us, the absolute certainty of the true Hope just cannot be dislodged from the mind. There may be those who are moved away from the hope of their calling (Colossians 1:23), and they may be persuaded to accept “another gospel”(2 Corinthians 11:4), but as long as they retain the understanding of the truth, then the certainty of resurrection is set before them:

“... as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...”
“One Faith”

“Faith” says Hebrews 11:1, is the substance, or a confidence in things hoped for (c/p Rotherham’s Emphasized). The passage has been rendered as that “faith which is the assured expectation of things hoped for, and the conviction of things unseen” (Elpis Israel, pg. 115).

So faith is related to the one Hope. Belief is one thing of course—acknowledging the facts about the true Gospel is a good start, but it must become manifest in the things we do:

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:19-20)

We must be moved to take certain actions because of what we believe—otherwise our belief is meaningless. Believe and be baptized is the well-known command, but that is not all. When believers were baptized they committed themselves to pray. In Acts 2:41-42 we are told what happened:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Prayer is all too frequently squeezed out of a believer’s life, and yet it is a vital expression of our faith and trust in God. As the Psalmist expressed it when he was in the trough of despair: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God...”

Is any among you afflicted?” asks James. Then “let him pray” (chapter 5:13).

There is only One to whom we can turn when we are cast down and in the depths of depression. The Psalmist calls Him “the God of my life” (42:8). Do we suffer from depression and despair? Listen to the words of the Psalm: “O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee...” (42:6). To remember our God is to let Him into our minds, and the way to do that is by bringing to mind His word. That word which is able to make us wise unto salvation can also build us up, and give us an inheritance among all those who are sanctified (2 Timothy 3:15, Acts 20:32).

Faith in the One Hope enables us to see beyond the present distress—and that is what it did for Job who, even though he suffered, could say:

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27).

The Lord knows our present trials; he knows our innermost fears, our weaknesses—and, yes, if there are some abnormalities that afflict us—the Lord knows, and the judge of all the earth will do right. Our hope is in Him—in His word. Psalm 119 emphasizes this as the basis of our sure hope:

• “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope” (Psalm 119:49).
• “My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word” (Psalm 119:11).
• “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word” (Psalm 119:114).
• “I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope” (Psalm 130:5).

What a precious thing we have in the word of God; in the word of His promises. It is our wisdom to saturate our minds with it that it may fortify us in the day of trial, that we may overcome.

Some Things Hard to be Understood

It is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22); so there is purpose in the troubles that come upon us—and that purpose is to create characters fit for the kingdom of God. We must not forget the exhortation of Hebrews 12:5-13.

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

If we pray and wait patiently for the Lord, a day of deliverance will come and we shall be released from our heavy burdens—whatever those may be. For some, that deliverance may not come until the day of Christ when we are all assembled with that great multitude who come out of great tribulation (Rev. 7:13-17). We shall then understand things which are at present hid from our eyes. For the present, we must sometimes be content not to understand—but the day will come when we shall know why God has shown His people hard things (Psalm 60:3), and “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

It is through the Scriptures that we can see beyond our present pains and tribulation.

The Day of Christ

It is through the Scriptures that we can see beyond our present pains and tribulation, for “whatssoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we (and here is the point) through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

The Scriptures can—as it were—transport us into the day of Christ. We must have patience, but it is the word of God that can give us a taste of that day of consolation and comfort even now. For example, Psalm 103, which can only be fulfilled in its full sense on that day of blessing. The Psalmist recounts the blessings received—many of which cannot be fully experienced until that day when these things are granted to us. For example:

• Forgiveness of iniquities
• Healing of all our illnesses (mental and physical)
• Our life redeemed from destruction
• Crowned...
• Renewed youth

Forget not all His benefits; the word means treatments, the way in which God treats us, serves us, rewards us. Verse 10 of the Psalm says:

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

Now although we certainly do receive many “benefits” in our present state, and we give thanks for all of them—yet think of these words being on our lips in the day of Christ, when iniquity is finally forgiven, when life has been redeemed and our youth renewed!

Here are things to patiently hope for and to believe in. They are things whereby we can strengthen and comfort one another:

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

There is only One to whom we can turn when we are cast down and in the depths of depression.
The amazing grasp that Germany is achieving in Europe harmonises with the prophetic picture

By Don Pearce  RUGBY, U.K.

Our last update was written shortly after two key events had taken place—the Lisbon Treaty had come into effect on Dec. 1st 2009 and three days later President Medvedev had visited the Pope and agreed to upgrade relations between Russia and the Vatican. Not that these two events are necessarily linked; I’m sure Medvedev’s visit was planned long before it was known that the Treaty would, after nine years in the making, finally be a reality. Yet we do know that the affairs of Europe, the Vatican and Russia are destined to be linked! When Nebuchadnezzar’s Image (Daniel chapter 2) stands for its first—and only—time, it will be when the two legs of Europe and Russia support the coming together of many nations to deal with the “Israel Problem”! Its golden head represented Babylon in the past, and is a fitting symbol of the latter-day power of Babylon the Great, for it will be under the Vatican’s direction that Israel will be invaded.

There are several matters which we can update, but to begin we want to look at an important development—Germany’s exploitation of the euro-crisis. This is a matter of great interest to Bible students as Germany is to be the strong power of the Western leg of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, just as Russia is to be the power behind the Eastern leg.

The Euro Designed to Bind Germany in Europe

A single currency was seen as a way to bind Germany into Europe, to avoid the possibility of her once again seeking to dominate Europe militarily. However, when the euro zone was set up some eleven years ago with eleven member countries, there were deep misgivings by those outside the euro as to the viability of the project. The American intelligence website Stratfor is world renowned for its insight into political matters—from the world’s point of view! It ran a fascinating article on 16-3-10.

“Stratfor has always doubted the euro would last. Having the same currency and monetary policy for rich, technocratic, capital-intensive economies like Germany as for poor, agrarian/manufacturing economies like Spain always seemed like asking for problems. Countries like Germany tend to favor high interest rates to attract investment capital. They don’t mind a strong currency, since what they produce is so high up on the value-added scale that they can compete regardless. Countries like Spain, however, need a cheap currency, since there isn’t anything particularly value-added about most of their exports. These states must find a way to be price competitive. Their ability to grow largely depends upon getting access to cheap credit they can direct to places the market might not appreciate.

“Stratfor figured that creating a single currency system would trigger high inflation in the poorer states as they gained access to capital they couldn’t qualify for on their own merits. We figured such access would generate massive debts in those states. And we figured such debts would contribute to discontent across the currency zone as the European Central Bank (ECB) catered to the needs of some economies at the expense of others.”

This is of course exactly what happened! But Stratfor is beginning to have second thoughts! This article continued (my emphasis):

“What if, instead of the euro being designed to further contain the Germans, the Germans crafted the euro to rewire the European Union for their own purposes?”

Germany rewiring Europe

Stratfor continued its fascinating analysis: “Part of being within the same currency zone means being locked into the same market. One must compete with everyone else in that market for pretty much everything. This allows Slovaks to qualify for mortgage loans at the same interest rates the Dutch enjoy, but it also means that efficient Irish workers are actively competing with inefficient Spanish workers—or more to the issue of the day, that ultra efficient German workers are competing directly with ultra inefficient Greek workers.”

The extent that Germany has maneuvered herself in a position to control the rest of the eurozone was dramatically illustrated in this Stratfor chart (see below).

“Since the euro was introduced, all of Germany’s euro partners have found themselves becoming less and less efficient relative to Germany. Germans are at the bottom of the graph, indicating that their labor costs have barely budged. Club Med dominates the top rankings, as access to cheaper credit has made them even less, not more, efficient than they already were. Back-of-the-envelope math indicates that in the past decade, Germany has gained roughly a 25 percent cost advantage over Club Med.

“The implications of this are difficult to overstate. If the euro is essentially gutting the European—and again to a greater extent the Club Med—economic base, then Germany is achieving by stealth what it failed to achieve in the past thousand years of intra-European struggles. In essence, European states are borrowing money (mostly from Germany) in order to purchase imported goods (mostly from Germany) because their own workers cannot compete on price (mostly because of...
Germany). “It is not so much that Stratfor now sees the euro as workable in the long run—we still don’t—it’s more that our assessment of the euro is shifting from the belief that it was a straightjacket for Germany to the belief that it is Germany’s springboard.

“The paradigm that created the European Union—that Germany would be harnessed and contained—is shifting. Germany now has not only found its voice, it is beginning to express, and hold to, its own national interest. A political consensus has emerged in Germany against bailing out Greece. Moreover, a political consensus has emerged in Germany that the rules of the eurozone are Germany’s to refashion. As the European Union’s anchor member, Germany has a very good point. But this was not the “union” the rest of Europe signed up for—it is the Mitteleuropa1 that the rest of Europe will remember well.”

The situation in Greece is critical; her debts are threatening to bankrupt the country. But she is not alone. The acronym PIGS or sometimes PIIGS which stands for Portugal, Italy (Ireland) Greece Spain, is used to cover those nations which are all suffering from debt problems. For a Eurozone country to go bankrupt would shatter global confidence in the euro, which is necessary to keep a currency strong. Germany and France have been foremost in hammering out a deal to rescue Greece which will give Germany deep control over Greece’s economy.

Additionally they want the EU to have increasing control over the finances of all the EU countries—much to Britain’s horror! Changing the Political Rules of the game in Europe

“The biggest member state, which has for so long silently been the guarantee of the EU, has now openly expressed that it is no longer prepared to pay any price for European unification. The present Euro crisis is more than a monetary matter. It changes the political rules of the game in Europe” (Leader article, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 24-3-10).

Germany laid down her terms for financial help in rescuing the Greeks from their financial difficulties.

1. They would only consider helping out if Greece could not raise money on the international markets.
2. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) be involved substantially in any financial rescue package, so Germany didn’t have to carry all the risk.
3. This was the most staggering. If one euro of German money was involved then all the eurozone countries would have to agree to renegotiate the mechanism for reinforcing the fiscal compliance on budget deficits and government borrowing, originally built into the Maastricht Treaty. As Stratfor commented, this “would give Germany much more direct control of the eurozone, moving it from implied control—due to Germany’s economic strength and because the European Central Bank (ECB) was created to Berlin’s exact demands—to explicit control.” “If Berlin is to contribute any funding, the strings attached would bind the rest of the eurozone, and Germany’s Mitteleuropa sphere of influence would be resurrected” (Stratfor 23-3-10).

“An astonishing Power Grab”

A few days later more details emerged. At the end of an EU meeting to thrash out the details of a Greek rescue package, in what was described by an Open Europe director as “an astonishing power grab.” France and Germany proposed that EU leaders “consider that the European Council should become the economic government of the EU and we propose to increase its role in economic surveillance and the definition of the EU’s growth strategy!” Gordon Brown got the English translation altered to “economic governance” but the French version remained as “gouvernement économique,” or ‘economic government.’ This is clearly what the founding fathers of Europe wanted, one currency and political union. This proposal is calling for nothing less than EU control of the finances of its members. As Open Europe (26-3-10) put it, “It is a ground-breaking development which paves the way for full scale economic federalism, with the European Council controlling the economic policy of member states, particularly those that are not well managed and have large budget deficits like the UK. It is obviously a very significant move and it is hard to see how it could be forced through without a referendum in the UK.”

They entrusted the new EU President, Herman Van Rompuy, who is an enthusiastic supporter of “la gouvernement économique,” with the task of setting up a special task force to examine “all options possible” to prevent another crisis like the one caused by the Greek meltdown.

“His mission will be to draw up a master-plan for the best way to oversee and enforce economic targets set in Brussels as a key part of a bail-out package for Greece.

“The options he will consider include the creation of an “economic government” by the end of the year” (Daily Telegraph 25-3-10).

Germany also wanted to further amend the Lisbon Treaty to make it possible for countries in the euro-zone to be booted out if they, like Greece, were causing deep problems to the euro. We can look forward to battles ahead! Although it was agreed when the Lisbon Treaty was finally thrashed out that there would be no more major revisions until at least 2020, it seems that this timescale may turn out to be wildly optimistic. It is anticipated that Serbia will be invited to join the EU as early as next January. It was planned that each new accession would need a minor amendment of the Lisbon Treaty as the Qualified Majority Voting levels change according to the population size of the new entrant. Germany is indicating that this “easy opportunity to lever the proposals into the Treaties” should be seized to insert these radical changes. It is hard to see many countries willingly submitting their financial control to Brussels; however increasing financial pressures may dictate otherwise. At the end of March, Portugal’s important credit rating was downgraded by one of the three major credit rating companies, making borrowing more expensive. It was accompanied by warnings that it may be downgraded further. Portugal is not alone in this precarious position.

Germany Now World’s Third Largest Arms Exporter

This was the headline to an article in Spiegel (15-3-10). That the US was top arms exporter followed by Russia was unsurprising news contained in the 2009 annual report put together by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). What was interesting was that following exports that had more than doubled in the past 5 years, Germany now occupied the No. 3 slot. That would have been shocking news to those who crafted the strict limitations imposed on Germany at the conclusion of WWII! It also raised many eyebrows within Germany!

It was Germany’s charismatic new Defence Minister who revealed in a scarcely reported breakfast meeting at the January World Economic Forum at Davos, that Germany is commencing an aggressive development of its defence industry! Guttenberg highlighted the necessity to mesh together Germany’s economic and defence policies” (Dow Jones 31-1-10—My emphasis. DFP).

Franco-German Policy should Lead Drive towards Common EU defence

Germany and France are pressing for Europe to develop its own military force as allowed by the Lisbon Treaty. Britain is opposed to any dilution of NATO and of her alliance with America. More battles to come!

Open Europe (17-2-10) quoted the French Foreign Minister when interviewed recently:- “When asked in an interview with German
France and Russia:

We now turn to an interesting development in the cooperation between France and Russia. We have looked many times at German-Russian cooperation, but not so much at Russia’s links to France. Why are these of interest? France is listed among Gog’s companions under the name of Gomer. Herodotus tells us that Gomer’s descendants (see Gen. 10:2) were known to the Greeks as Cimmeri, who were located to the north west of the Black Sea. Driven from the area by the Scythians around 700 BC, they moved westward into France and northern Spain, where they were known as the Gauls; others moved south into Asia Minor, but were driven out by the King of Lydia. They left their presence however in the name Galatia.

We would expect that at the time of the end there would be close cooperation between Gog — Russia—and her companions.

France and Russia Revive Old Geopolitical Links

This Stratfor (2-3-10) headline indicated that many things don’t change!

Geopolitics explains why history repeats itself. It uncovers the logic—rooted in geography—of why the same follies befall countries over centuries, why generals invade along the same routes their ancient counterparts took before them and why alliances repeat themselves.

On Monday, we saw history repeating itself in Paris. Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy came together to conclude several key military and business deals, and at least rhetorically seemed to be closer to the 1892 Franco-Russian Alliance than at any point since the First World War. To summarize a long list, Medvedev and Sarkozy agreed on the following points:

• That negotiations would begin on the sale of four 20,000-ton French Mistral-class fourth generation command and control helicopter carriers (which include significant command and control capabilities) worth $2.2 billion, drawing parallels to the 1891 French Fleet visit to St. Petersburg that broke the ice between the then-ideological enemies;
• To form a joint venture in train manufacturing —harkening back to the 19th century French investments in Russian railway construction;
• To sell a share of Russian Nord Stream pipeline to French GDF Suez;
• To talk frankly about a “new security infrastructure between Europe and Russia,” apparently one that Russia has insisted take infrastructure between Europe and Russia,” apparently one that Russia has insisted take

The above article tells of France putting money into the Nord stream gas pipeline—a matter which Germany has been closely involved with since its inception. Germany will become the distribution hub for this gas. The final obstacles to the construction were cleared at the end of 2009 and teams of divers are clearing the route of dumped and unexploded bombs from WWII, prior to the laying of the 1.220 km pipeline, scheduled to commence in April. As I write the pipe-laying is being taken up position at the start of this mammoth operation. The 12m pipes will be taken to her by a supply ship, where they will be loaded on board and welded to form a continuous pipe which slides down to the sea bed. Eventually two lines will be laid, the first scheduled to carry gas to Germany by the end of 2011 and the 2nd to be completed the following year. It has the potential to boost Germany’s dominant position in Europe still further.

Russian Representative Office in Vatican becomes full-fledged Embassy

It is just 20 years since the Soviet and the Vatican established their first diplomatic links. Now, two decades later, the Russian government website announced (20-3-10) that the Russian diplomatic representation at the Vatican will be upgraded to embassy level following the visit of President Medvedev to the Pope in December.

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican continue to make encouraging moves to reconciliation. The Inside the Vatican website, Chiesa, announced (25-1-10) that “for the first time in history, the Orthodox have agreed to discuss the primacy of the bishop of Rome, according to the model of the first millennium, when the Church was undivided.”

“Relations with the Orthodox Churches have never been so promising as they have since Joseph Ratzinger has been pope.”

“First in Belgrade in 2006, and then in Ravenna in 2007, the international mixed commission for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches started meeting again.”

“Yet what rose to the top of the discussion was precisely the question that most divides East and West: the primacy of the successor of Peter in the universal Church.”

“From the session in Ravenna emerged the document that marked the shift, dedicated to
conciliarity and authority’ in the ecclesiastical communion. The document of Ravenna, approved unanimously by both sides, affirms that ‘primacy and conciliarity are mutually interdependent.’ And in paragraph 41, it highlights the points of agreement and disagreement.

“Both sides agree that... Rome, as the Church that ‘presides in loco’ according to the phrase of St Ignatius of Antioch, occupied the first place in the taksis (rankings), and that the bishop of Rome was therefore the protos (first) among the patriarchs. They disagree, however, on the interpretation of the historical evidence from this era regarding the prerogatives of the bishop of Rome as protos, a matter that was already understood in different ways in the first millennium.”

Again these are matters to excite the Bible student. When the image of Daniel ch. 2 stands on its feet—an event which we still await, it has a golden, Babylonish Head. Daniel clearly informed King Nebuchadnezzar that what he dreamed was something that would be in the latter-days (Dan. 2:28). The head represents the power that controls the rest of the image. We believe that this will be a two-fold control. One being the Vatican as the “spiritual” head and the other being Russia, the civil and military head. Working together they will bring the nations of Europe and their allies upon the mountains of Israel. In Daniel’s day the king was head of “church” and state. He was regarded and worshiped as god. His autocratic ways are apparent as we read the scriptures dealing with this period. So we have long looked for a time when Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches must unite together and work in cooperation with an autocratic Russia. This is not the place to trace the development of Rome, firstly to Constantinople and then to Moscow, known as the 2nd Rome and the 3rd Rome, (as we saw in Milestones 2009 ch. 8 Will the Third Rome reunite with the First Rome? This was taken from a headline in the Zenit (21-9-09)—an account of the upbeat talks between the two churches). Earlier this month The Voice of Russia, (15-3-10), announced a special project: “This year the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican are launching a joint project. The project, ‘Three Rome,’ marks a cultural unification of Christians and features a series of concerts by the Moscow Synodal Choir, which was re-created recently and blessed by Patriarch Kirill. The Choir is playing its first concert in the Papal Palace in Vatican City on May 20th. On the program are classical pieces and religious music.”

The scandal over sexual molestation by Roman Catholic priests has grown week by week as more and more cases come to light. The potential cost in damages is immense. It threatens at the very least to tarnish Benedict’s position, with many calls for the Pope’s resignation. The Roman Church has great experience in weathering these storms. Although one has absolutely no sympathy with the church’s organisation and procedures to changing circumstances.’

“It should draw upon this experience and continue to evolve in the full assurance that it has an important role to play in the twenty-first century. It should also have complete confidence that it will have the unwavering support of a future Conservative government for it will be an important instrument in our foreign policy tool box. We will adopt a more assertive, energetic and enthusiastic attitude towards the Commonwealth since there is vast potential to be unlocked and Britain must, alongside with our friends and allies, be at the forefront of these efforts.”

(Conservativehome.blog Feb 2009)

Washington vs. Jerusalem: Netanyahu Can’t Afford to Surrender on Jerusalem or Iran

With the Peace talks going nowhere, the Palestinians are content to stay on the sidelines and watch America’s attempts to squeeze concessions out of Israel. They are happy to deflect the blame for lack of progress onto Israel, whilst upping their own demands—they have quietly doubled to 2,000 the number of Palestinian prisoners they want freed by Israel before entering talks! Israel is determined not to bow to pressure regarding their claim to Jerusalem. They know that if they buckle, then they will lose their bargaining power.

America has reneged on her promises of sanctions on Iran for pursuing nuclear weapons, leaving Israel the difficult decision as to whether to go it alone in seeking to stop Iranian progress. Obama has vetoed Israel’s request for advance weaponry that could be used to destroy the underground bunkers. Israel feels confident that she has the ability to take on Iran alone, relying on support from moderate Arab nations.

She recently unveiled her latest piece of technology—a fleet of huge drones, capable of remaining airborne for over 24 hours, thus able to transmit detailed pictures of Iran or to carry weapons. The Iranians are reported to be greatly upset by this latest piece of Israel’s arsenal. Although their weapons are stored in underground bunkers, they have to be brought out into the open for firing. As it takes a minimum of several hours to get them prepared for firing, Israel’s new spies in the sky would have ample time to take them out.

There are several interesting matters we have been unable to cover, and several matters which could become significant over the next few weeks. Truly we live in stirring times, which should make us reflect on our walk in Christ. Our Master is about to knock on the door. Are we asleep or are we awake?

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15).

Footnotes
1 Mitteleuropa (Central/Middle Europe) is the German term equal to Central Europe. It describes a German political program that was put into motion during the First World War. Wikipedia
2 A rotary card index system
Building homes for the Jewish people in the Biblical lands of Judea and Samaria (the so-called West Bank), and in the city of Jerusalem, has become a red rag to the European bull—as well as to the United States and much of the rest of the world. This is because there is a determination on the part of the nations to establish a Palestinian State in the Biblical heartland, and to award much of Jerusalem to it as the capital. While there is much talk of restarting “negotiations,” the fact is that the outcome to be forced through is a “two-state solution” in which Israel gives, and the Palestinian Arabs take. That is the so-called ‘Peace Process.’

This is what the world sees as justice. The Arabs who sought to destroy the Jewish State in 1967 are to be rewarded with financial aid and a new Arab country—whereas Israel must pay the price for winning that 1967 war, and surviving. The Government of Benjamin Netanyahu has been forced (by the Obama Administration) to freeze building new Jewish homes in all of the so-called West Bank whereas Arabs can—and do—build as they choose.

The Hand of God

There can be no understanding of the Arab-Israeli dispute if we leave aside God—and His word, the Bible. It is not a matter of politics. Human reasoning alone, and its view of justice, cannot possibly comprehend the grand purpose that is unfolding through the events of the Middle East during the past century. The fact is that the Jewish people who were scattered among the nations of the world for some 2,000 years are returning to their ancient homeland. This has happened in the face of enormous opposition from the world—and what is more, it has come to pass in fulfillment of the writings of the prophets. The world does not wish to recognize this fact, but the history of the past century demonstrates the Truth of it. Consider the vast movement of Jews from Europe before, during and after the Second World War—together with the conditions of that exodus—and see it alongside passages from the Bible, such as:

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. 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. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he” (Jeremiah 31:8-11).

We must see that a partial fulfillment of those words were exhibited in the waves of immigration to Mandatory Palestine—and after to Israel. The Return has continued to the present day—they have come from all parts of the world. Surely the LORD is building up Zion, and the building of Jewish homes in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem today is part of the picture. The nations of the world may be opposed to it—but this is the Hand of God! The prophet Isaiah wrote:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:11-12).

Israel’s Challenge Today

In view of the clear evidence of God’s Hand being at work in these things—why would Benjamin Netanyahu freeze building operations in Judea and Samaria today? The present writer had the opportunity to put that question to a member of the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) a few weeks ago. Visiting MK Yaakov Katz at his home in Beit El, we asked about Netanyahu’s
decision to freeze settlement building. He replied as follows:

“That was a very bad decision, not for Am-
Israel (the people of Israel). Israel will
overcome, because we see as in a graph that
since we came here we are always growing—
we are growing and growing; and when we are
suffering we are growing even more.

“For instance, in this case, when Netanyahu
decided about the freeze, we knew of the idea
and started to build many, many houses before
the freeze. If you go around you will see that
construction. So as to the question of how
many people will live here (Beit El is in the
West Bank), we will have millions of Jews
who will come back to Israel. Judea and
Samaria will very soon be full of Jews, just as
in the other parts of Israel. Nobody can stop it
because it was spoken by God through the
prophets—and the words of the prophets will
become a reality.

“I do not think that it is good for him (i.e.
Netanyahu) when Jewish history—world
history—will be written that he as Prime
Minister gave orders to the Jewish people not
to build, just because they are Jews. For
ten months they are not allowed to build,
but Gentiles are allowed to build.

“We suffered from such discrimination in
Europe, in Germany, in Russia and in
many other countries during the time that
we were in the diaspora. No one can
believe that the Prime Minister, who
considers himself to be a nationalistic man
and obtained votes from the people who
he now represents—and even me a
member of the Israeli parliament and head
of my committee—I recommended him,
and I am supposed to be one of the
ministers in his cabinet!

“He did something that no Prime Minister
ever did before by limiting the time (for
building). This again shows you how that
the human being is weak, and how much
help we need from God to overcome.

“Netanyahu was under heavy pressure
from Obama and from others. But there
are a few things that you have to say, I’m
not doing—and he didn’t have the
strength to stand up.”

MK Katz said that every time the United
States forces Israel to surrender land for “peace,”
it is followed by rocket attacks and civilian
casualties. His message was clear: the Jewish
people must trust in God and not in weak human
leadership.

Bible Connections

The reference made by Yaakov Katz to the
word of God spoken by the prophets, shows us
the connection that many Jews in the Land today
make with the Bible. For many this ancient Book
is their title deed, and their presence in the Land
today is the Return that was prophesied.

This connection is strengthened by the
archaeological discoveries that link them to the
Biblical history of ancient times. For example, a
news story in February focussed attention on a
wall that was said by archaeologist Eilat Mazar,
to date to the time of King Solomon and which is
mentioned in 1 Kings 3:1, (and in chapter 9:11-
15). The report (Jerusalem Post, Feb. 23, 2010)
said:

“Ancient stone fortifications that were
recently uncovered outside the walls of
Jerusalem’s Old City date back some 3,000
years to the time of King Solomon and support
the biblical narrative about the era, according
to archeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar, who spoke to
a group of reporters at the site on Monday.

“If the age of the wall is correct, the finding
would be an indication that Jerusalem was
home to a strong central government that had
the resources and manpower needed to build
massive fortifications in the 10th century
BCE.”

This news item is published at a time when
the Jewish people are engaged in an effort
to unite Jerusalem and identify it with its Biblical
past history. The wall (and gateway) was actually
uncovered some years ago and reported in the

Today, it is important politically, for Jews to
establish the Biblical connections, because there
are those that deny that link, claiming that “the
existence of a powerful monarchy in Jerusalem is
largely mythical.” This is seized upon by Arabs
who seek to deny the Jewish connection with the
Land.

Uniting Jerusalem

When we attended the Seventh Annual
Jerusalem Conference this year we heard Nir
Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem deliver the opening
address under the heading “Uniting the City of
Jerusalem.” He outlined plans for building in the
city, saying that it was to benefit all—
Arabs and Jews. He said:

“This plan clarifies to all why there is no
alternative, but to leave Jerusalem united. Any
other solution, practical or ideological, will
not hold water. Out objective is to unite
Jerusalem as described before” (in his speech
User's response is not a valid JSON object, it appears to be a text document.
RAMAT SHLOMO: A CONTROVERSIAL BUILDING SITE IN EAST JERUSALEM

A LINK WITH FIRST TEMPLE TIMES: SOLOMON GATEWAY FOUND IN 1986

MAYOR OF JERUSALEM NIR BARKAT: UNITING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM
touching on education, transport, tourism etc. etc.

The next speaker, Natan Sharansky (a former government minister and now head of the Jewish Agency) was very direct. He said:

“When I left the Government I said Jerusalem must not be divided again. I did not want negotiations over Jerusalem... There is no way that dividing Jerusalem can bring peace, it can only bring war. The world blames us for everything. I can’t understand it... the world is against us.”

The fall-out that has since been reported in the media over Israel’s plans to build in Jerusalem demonstrates that uniting Jerusalem is going to be a formidable challenge. When Sharansky said that “the world is against us”—he could well have paraphrased Zechariah 14:2, “all nations against Jerusalem...” That is the direction in which events seem to be heading.

For many Jews in the Land today the Bible is their title-deed to the Land. It is also the basis of their claim to the city of Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of David and Solomon. That is why the archaeologist’s reference to King Solomon’s wall (mentioned earlier) is important. If the Bible is true then there is a clear link to the Jewish people and their vision of the restoration. That connection is confirmed when evidence of Solomon’s temple is produced—and that was the subject of another speech at the Jerusalem Conference given by Dr. Gavriel Barkai—archaeologist and Director of the City of David Temple Mount project. His talk is reproduced in this issue of the Bible Magazine, page 24.

Discrediting Evidence

On one occasion we submitted ourselves to a guided tour of the Temple Mount led by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari. There was no evidence that he knew of, to suggest that a Jewish temple had ever been built on the site, yet Abraham had built a mosque there, he said. And that is the Arab line —flying in the face of archaeology, history (e.g. Josephus) and the Bible.

How on earth do the Jewish people deal with such a denial of the facts? We heard the story from an interesting man in the settlement of Shave Shomeron in the northern part of Samaria. David Ha’Ivri (his name means David the Hebrew) told us that the Bible states that the Temple Mount was purchased by King David (see 2 Samuel 24:21-24), and that is where King Solomon built “the house of the LORD” (2 Chronicles 3:1-2). He went on to say:

“The Moslems who de facto control the Temple Mount are, unfortunately, allowed by the Israeli Government to do what they please on the site. “They have carried out criminal acts, destroying the most important archaeological site in the world—using bulldozers to dig out areas under the Temple Mount in order to construct the largest indoor mosque in the region. They have taken earth and rubble, trucking it out and dumping it in the Kidron valley.

“The State of Israel has very strict laws regarding the preservation of archaeological material, and it is forbidden by law to dig, and to take away anything that you find. Archaeological finds belong to the State of Israel—to the Government—and it is a criminal offense to steal the archaeological riches of the Land. Unfortunately, these laws have not been imposed on the Temple Mount. “Archaeologists and their helpers, who sifted through the earth that was dumped in the Kidron Valley were arrested by the police for sifting the debris. I have dealt with all this in my book, Reclaiming the Temple Mount.” (Note: a license was granted later, in 2004).

So Temple denial is a growing phenomenon. Whenever a discovery is made that supports the Biblical account, there always seems to be someone on hand to cast doubt upon it. It was so with the Tel Dan ‘House of David’ inscription, with the list of Temple repairs ordered in the reign of King Jehoash (2 Kings 12:11-12) and currently with the Royal palace of King David, as well as Solomon’s wall and gatehouse mentioned earlier. When it comes to denying the existence of the First and Second Temples, the whole game becomes fanatical and bizarre. It is a denial of reality, of Truth itself. Yet this is what
Israel today is having to deal with.

There is then, a determination on the part of some to oppose Bible Truth in the interests of retaining reputations, power and control—whether political, religious, ideological or professional. This must, ultimately, lead to a crisis. As was said many years ago—Facts are stubborn things, you cannot just wish them away!

Building Jerusalem

The Psalmist wrote:

“The L ORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel”

(Psalm 147:2).

Building a city is a work of time—and so it has been with the building up of Zion. Anyone who takes the trouble to study the history behind the return of the Jewish people to their ancient (and Biblical) homeland, must conclude that it is a miracle of supernatural proportions. This is no mere accident of history—it is not a long string of coincidences as we look back on the events of the past century, and the gathering together of the outcasts of Israel. Step by step we have witnessed the building of the nation, and it has been according to the Divine pattern as expressed in Exodus 23:30 and Deuteronomy 7:22. This last passage reads:

“And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.”

First, God used the British to drive out the Turk. Then the British were removed from the Land. The massive movement of Jews to the Land continued and the amazing War of Independence gave Israel their sovereign foothold. The attempts made to destroy Israel through terrorist activity and outright war only strengthened their presence in the Land, until in 1967 they occupied the Biblical heartland itself; Judea, Samaria (called the West Bank by Jordan) and the city of Jerusalem were occupied by Israel. This was followed by Jewish settlement in the area—and as Yaacov Katz pointed out “Since we came here we are always growing—we are growing and growing...” Now, another crisis seems to be unfolding as Israel is determined to build Jewish homes in parts of Jerusalem claimed by Palestinian Arabs. Thus, against the background of confrontation and controversy we see the physical building up of Zion “by little and little.”

As we observe this process today and the mounting opposition to it by the nations, we should understand that another kind of building is going on at the same time. The character of the nation is being built. As MK Yaacov Katz said: “When we are suffering we are growing even more.” There might be more to that statement than he realized. Suffering (tribulation) shapes character—and it can do so in a nation just as it does in individuals. For one thing it makes us realize “how much help we need from God...”

This is another dimension to the history and experiences of the Jewish people. Their dispersion and suffering has had a profound effect upon many of them. The ghettos, the
So the truth is that “the LORD shall build up remnant shall be saved.”

This is all God’s work and through it He will perfect the nation, and they will praise Him for it.

In Psalm 102 we find it written: “When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created hereafter will praise the LORD” (verses 16-18).

The Unseen Builder

“Every house is builded by some man” says Hebrews 3:4, “but he that built all things is God.” So the truth is that “the LORD shall build up Zion” and when he does so, says Psalm 102:16, “he shall appear in his glory.”

But this glorious appearance cannot mean that the Almighty Creator of the universe will appear in person, for as He told Moses (Exodus 33:20), “there shall no man see me and live.” Further, the Psalm is not referring only to the LORD’s glory, for it says “he shall appear.”

This has to be referring to a manifestation of the Lord (Yahweh), as when “the angel of the Lord appeared” to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush (Exodus 3:2), and said (verse 6), “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

The angel could speak as the representative of God, for as Moses was told in Exodus 23:21, “Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.”

In a similar way, Jesus of Nazareth said that he represented his Father: he said “I am come in my father’s name” (John 5:43), and again: “the works that I do in my Father’s Name” (10:25).

Now the disciples of Jesus understood that he would “restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6), or in other words build up Zion. This is a work to be done in his Father’s Name, in fulfillment of what was spoken through the Prophets. Jesus told his followers: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18), so that we understand that he is now the one who is controlling events according to the plan given to him by the Father—and that plan includes the restoration of Israel. As the prophet wrote (Isaiah 49:5-6),

“And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

The work of bringing Jacob again, and of raising up the tribes so as to restore the preserved (i.e. desolations, ruins) of Israel is the work of the “servant,” the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One.

Here then is the unseen builder of Zion, the now immortal King of Israel who has been gathering his nation, even though as yet they cannot recognize him. As Israel faces her enemies she is being taught to trust in God—not in man. As the LORD says through the Prophet: “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me” (Isaiah 49:12-16).

When the enemy comes into the Land, he will be expelled by tremendous power that shall then be unleashed. The LORD will appear in his glory. The scene was described many years ago by John Thomas in his exposition of the Apocalypse:

“All the men that are upon the face of the land shall shake at his presence.” “And his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which shall cleave in twain.” “And he will plead against Gog with pestilence and with blood; and rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”

Thus shall Jerusalem and the Holy Land be delivered from “the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable” confederate with Gog. They will fall upon the mountains of Israel, and upon open field, and a sixth part of them only will escape. Thus all the catholic and protestant, and Mohammedan, heathen will see the judgment executed upon them; and “the house of Israel will know that Yahweh is their Elohim from that day forward.”

Therefore “sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Yahweh hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, Yahweh, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more”—Zeph. 3:14, “then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more”—Joel 3:17.”
adies and gentlemen: on the topic of what is happening here in Jerusalem and in Israel, the international media, the general public and we ourselves too have somehow missed the point. We have missed something that is happening and it is a serious point. What I am referring to is that alongside the armed intifada, there is also a cultural intifada. The cultural intifada finds expression in tangible ways as much as the armed intifada does.

The tomb of Joseph was one of the first (cultural) sites attacked, and afterwards other sites were attacked like the synagogue in Jericho, the synagogue in Eshtemoa. The synagogue in Aza (Gaza)—with the archaeological remains. This cultural intifada—its main purpose, is to undermine the right of the Jews to the land of Israel by denying the temple. It is known as temple denial.

I go to universities all over the world. I go to these places and people ask me, “What proof do you have that there ever was a temple, a Jewish temple in Jerusalem?”

And I answer: “What proof do you want to prove that water is wet?” What is wet? Everybody knows it. The same is true for the temple. It should be known to everyone.

They want tangible evidence. So what happens? The State of Israel ceded the Temple Mount to the Waqf in 1967; to the religious Moslem authority—the authority over the Temple Mount that has existed for a hundred years and more. The Waqf is bent on refusing to allow people to conduct archeological diggings on the Temple Mount, and this has totally obscured our knowledge of it. Now we don’t have the knowledge of that Jerusalem (to enable us) to draw maps of the changing boundaries of the city over the years and years of its existence.

The Moslem Waqf is trying to have it both ways. On the one hand, not allowing archaeological digs, on the other hand proclaiming that no relics have been found attesting to the existence of a Jewish temple. They say, Show us one single remain of Solomon’s Temple. Show us one single remain of the Second Temple on the site of the Temple Mount. I say of course I will show you something if you let me dig there, but no, they don’t let anybody dig there.

Temple Denial is bound up with what Minister Begin (previous speaker at the Conference) said before about the post modernist trend. The facts? don’t let the facts bother you! What is important is that we have two paleographical findings that deny the entrance of non-Jews to the Temple Mount.

From the Second Temple on, not only the Western Wall but all four walls of the temple (platform) are standing to this day. In the Givat HaMivtar area a sarcophagus was discovered from the First Century B.C. bearing an inscription. And the person buried there was proud of taking part in building the temple. It says, “Simon built the temple.” That is Jerusalem’s temple.

These findings contrast with the Arab story that we have heard before. There are two accounts: the Palestinian/Muslim story which is being adopted on a large scale by anti-Israel western forces and is becoming stronger and stronger among innocent people who do not know the actual facts. They don’t know that the historian Flavius Josephus described the Second Temple. They don’t know anything about Masseechet Middot. The fact that Middot,... the Mishnah described the temple—they don’t understand. They don’t know about Solomon’s Temple. The Bible describes it, but they say it is one big fiction. The Bible, that is a religious book. They say we made it all up. They dismiss everything as being the religious invention of mystics.

Temple Denial is becoming stronger and stronger so the officials of the Moslem Waqf along with many others speak about the “purported temple” that the Jews had. Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq, the Egyptian Minister in charge of the Waqf—the Moslem religious authority—said Jews have no connection whatsoever to the Western Wall. They never had any holy link to that site. The Jews have no claim to any purported temple any where at all in this city. He said that in April 2001.

In the Summer of 2000 there was a press conference. Yasser Arafat, not of blessed
memory, spoke at that press conference at Camp David. He was asked, “What about the Jewish bond to the Temple Mount at Jerusalem?” He said—he was typically nodding his chin emphatically—he said “Temple, temple. I don’t know anything about any temple! Nothing! No temple! Maybe in Nablus. Maybe Nablus,” he said.

In another interview Arafat claimed that the Jews never had a temple in the Land of Israel, ever. This is the “purported” temple approach of the Arabs. This term also serves Dr. Yusuf Natsheh, the chief historian of the Waqf. He speaks of the temple that never existed, and I am sorry to say that this is temple denial. This is an important point of principle because the Temple Mount is a microcosm of the entire Middle Eastern conflict. Just as Jerusalem is the heart and soul.

Unfortunately I have to say that Jews play right into the hands of temple deniers. The very fact that people are willing to be content with the Western Wall as the remains of those times and forget that the Western Wall derives its sanctity from the temple and the Temple Mount. It has no significance on its own. It is an external wall of the Temple Mount.

Some people say, “Well, let the Arabs have it. We don’t care about the Temple Mount. Let them have everything except the Kotel, except the Western Wall.” So along with some rabbis, they cling to the Western Wall and play into the hands of temple deniers because the rabbis say it is forbidden to ascend the Temple Mount.

There are Halachic rulings, and there is evidence of rabbis enabling ascent to the Temple Mount, but all the rabbis these days lean right towards... they’re scared. They’re scared, that’s all. And we are playing right into the hands of temple deniers on this point.

I want to say this with the utmost seriousness. This trend of temple denial, even though it appeared earlier, gathered force in the 90’s when a physical change was made resulting from the status quo on the Temple Mount. Instead of two major Moslem edifices the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Temple Mount Mosque, we now have four buildings there. Temple Mount, Al Aqsa Mosque, the Musalla Marwan, which is the huge one. The huge mosque in Solomon’s stables, and another one. There is room there for 10,000 people, more than three times the number of people that can fit into the Binyanei HaUmah Conference Centre. This is an extremely significant change to the physical status quo on the Temple Mount. And it has brought about our helplessness with regard to the denial of the sovereignty of the State of Israel over these places.

Let me be even more blunt. Denying the temple is even a worse crime than denying the Holocaust. I am fully aware of the severity of what I am saying. In Jerusalem everything is political. What you do, what you don’t do. It is all political here in Jerusalem. Everything is intensely political. If you sneeze it is political. If you sneeze on an Arab, on a right wing Jew, on a left wing Jew. Everything is political in Jerusalem, hence my comparison in drawing this analogy. I don’t like to speak about the Holocaust but I have to say something personal here. The year I came to Jerusalem is now 60 years ago. But I am 43, so that is a bit strange isn’t it? 43 years ago I ascended the Temple Mount for the first time and that is why I count my age from then. When I came to Jerusalem 65 years and two weeks ago. I was released from the Budapest ghetto by the Soviets. I was born in the ghetto. And as a baby I wore a star of David, a yellow star of David on my baby clothes. I can attest that there was a Holocaust. I was too young for personal memories but my mother wrote a diary in the ghetto—and I have it. I have photographs of the Soviet officer holding me. A Colonel—a Soviet Colonel—who held me on his lap. There are films. There are concentration camps, there is evidence. There is testimony.

Nothing like that exists for the temple. Nobody has seen the temple with his own eyes. In a few years the same will hold true for the Holocaust. The “purported” Holocaust. The very fact that the civilised world accepts temple denial, the very fact that I have to provide evidence to journalists that the temple existed, that it is not obvious in itself. These are very difficult things that are happening. And with this point I would like to move on to a more pleasant point.

For five years now I have been sifting the earth that the Waqf dumps from its excavations.
The devil was a human power on earth that could cast men into prison and rule over an empire, such as that of Rome.

By Arthur Bull  VANCOUVER.

Jesus told a parable:

“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hast it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the harvest, when the blade is rooted up, then shew ye tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24-30).

The disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable to them, and he did in verses 37-43 -

- The man who sowed good seed is Jesus.
- The field is the world.
- The good seed are “the children of the Kingdom.”
- The weeds are “the children of the wicked one.”
- “the enemy who sows them is the devil” — verse 39. By “the Devil” we understand, not an evil spirit, but the figure of selfish and sinful human nature, in opposition to God. The New Testament blames the apostasy on sinful men, not an evil spirit.
- The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are the angels.
- They will destroy the evil doers, but the righteous people will be in the Kingdom of God.

The work of sowing good seed was begun by Jesus, and the apostles carried on his work, going “into all the world to preach the good news” (Mark 16:15). We might have hoped that every man who ever called himself “Christian” was one “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it” (Luke 8:15).

But it did not happen, and Jesus and the apostles said it would not happen. They expected to be followed by other “sowers”, who would sow counterfeit wheat. Israel, God’s chosen people, rejected God’s way. The Gentiles have done no better. Jesus said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereof: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Jesus immediately gave the reason in verse 15: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” Wolves kill their prey —false teaching also kills those who accept it. Note that Jesus places the blame on sinful men, not on an evil spirit.

Paul warned Timothy that the time would come within the Christian community, when men would be “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:4-5). There were men at that very time who were laying the foundation for a counterfeit Christianity: “as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds” (verse 8). How did these Egyptian magicians (Jannes and Jambres) oppose Moses? It was by doing their best to imitate the true signs which Moses had shown.

Paul, then, expected the Christian church to be taken over in a similar way by men who were essentially pagan in thinking and behaviour. Again we note that the cause of apostasy is men, not evil spirits.

This was going to happen early, not late in the Christian church. Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:28-29). This was not some end-time prophecy, distant from Paul’s own day — it would begin with some of the very men he was warning! The apostasy of the Christian church was not caused by an evil spirit. It was caused by men who were motivated entirely by their selfish and sinful human nature.

Who tempted Eve?

Was it an evil spirit or was it a “wild animal”?

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? the woman took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:1-6).

The first verse is written to answer a question that will come to every reader: “how could the serpent have the power of speech?”

It clearly refers to the serpent as one of the wild animals.

The reason why this animal could speak was that God had made it to be more subtil than the others. The Hebrew word is aruwm meaning cunning (usually in a bad sense). The same word is used in a good sense in Proverbs 13:16 (NRS), “The clever do all things intelligently.”

The serpent could speak because God had made him to be the most intelligent of the
animals, although he had no sense of moral right and wrong as mankind has.

The apostle Paul, guided by the spirit of God, accepted that it was the animal, the serpent, who was doing the talking, and it was because of his intelligence: “Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning”—not “the fallen angel’s cunning” or “Satan’s cunning” or “the devil’s cunning.”

Paul blamed the animal, the serpent, for tempting Eve. But in a book widely accepted in the churches, A Survey of Bible Doctrine, it is stated, “Satan is a spirit being... The attack by Satan started with the lure of Genesis 3:1... Satan can appear as a wily serpent (Rev. 12:9) or a ferocious dragon (Rev. 12:3).” (Pages 92, 108).

They say that an evil spirit appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent. They quote the following passage: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7-9).

Many think that this happened before Adam was made. They believe it refers to a war in God’s own domain, in which an angel named Satan, with many other angels, rebelled against God. This cannot be, for more than one reason:

There is no place in Scripture where Satan is said to be a fallen angel. Revelation 12 calls him a “great dragon” (not a fallen angel).

Revelation was written down by the apostle John. Jesus told him that the Revelation was “to show his servants what must soon take place” (Rev. 1:1). Therefore it is a huge mistake to claim that chapter 12 is about something that happened before it was written.

Those who think that Satan is a fallen angel say that Revelation 12 describes a literal war in heaven. But John says that Jesus “made it known by sending his angel to his servant John”. The Greek word semaino here means “to give a vague indication what is to happen” (W. Bauer’s Lexicon). See how Jesus uses the same word when he predicted Peter’s death (John 21:18-19). Therefore the “war in heaven” is not literal, but figurative.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Revelation 12:3). “Wonder” is from the Greek, semeion, an indication—which leads the reader to understand that the dragon is a symbolic figure (of which there are numerous in this prophecy). There is more than one symbol for Jesus in this book—a lion (5:5) and also a lamb (5:6). Returning to chapter 12, we note first that the “great dragon” was a manifestation of “that old serpent” and was “called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world”. The serpent is made in Scripture as an emblem of human sinfulness (see Genesis 3:16), where the offspring of the woman (Jesus) was to crush the head of the serpent (overcoming sin and its effects). Human sin has various manifestations—personal, as in Adam; social, as in “the world”; and political, as in the “roaring lion” (see 1 Peter 5:8—“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,” where Peter is referring to the persecution of Christ’s brethren by the pagan Roman authorities, whose philosophy of life was in complete rebellion against the revealed will of God).

This same Roman government is also symbolized as a ten-horned beast in the prophecy of Daniel. “Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another” (Daniel 7:2-3). He then describes them. Of the last one he says, “After this I saw in the night visions, and beheld a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (verse 7). A good reference Bible shows the connection between Revelation 12:7 and Daniel 7:7. The connection is true, each describing a beast with ten horns.

The identification of the four symbolic beasts was given to Daniel: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth” (Daniel 7:17). It will help to compare Daniel’s vision of the beast with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the image (see above).

After the Kingdom of God in Jerusalem was overturned, the people of God in Israel were ruled successively by the emperors of Babylon, Persia and Greece. Afterwards, Rome succeeded the Greeks, and became the ruler and persecutor of the people of God, both Jew and Gentile. But why is it called “the great dragon” in Revelation 12? The purple-red dragon was one of the military ensigns of imperial Rome. “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Revelation 12:3). The number of heads and horns are explained further along in the prophecy. Chapter 17:9 says “the seven heads are the seven mountains.” Rome is famous of God. The Fourth Beast is the last beast. It continues until “the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” by “the Ancient of days,” who is the Lord Jesus Christ, returned to the earth (Daniel 7:9-11).

Footnotes
1. The Greek word is zizania. It is a plant that looks like wheat, but is only a useless weed. It is sometimes called “counterfeit wheat,” because, like counterfeit money—it looks real, but it is worthless.
den was a territory which stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to beyond the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. Adam and Eve were placed eastward in Eden in a garden which the Lord had prepared for them. They enjoyed a simple, productive life until the consequences of sin brought about their expulsion from the garden.

Despite this setback, the purpose of God continued working through people living on the land and in towns. It is not until we come to Abraham in the land of Canaan that we have any indication that God had a particular place in mind for the purpose of formal worship. The first mention of kings occurs in Genesis 14 where an alliance of four kings against five led to armed conflict. In this same chapter another king is introduced who had nothing to do with the war between the northern and southern kings. The King in Jerusalem (then Salem) was Melchizedec, who is described as both a king and a priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1). He was well known to Abraham, and so much revered that Abraham brushed aside the offer of the King of Sodom in order to worship with Melchizedec. In Psalm 110, Melchizedec’s priesthood is an Order in its own right, the one to which the Son of God belongs. Its peculiar characteristic was that the Head of the Order combined the functions of both Priest and King.

\textit{The Pseudo King of Jerusalem or the Great Pretender}

Man has an insatiable desire to leave his mark. Psalm 49:11 says, “Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever... they call lands after their own names.” They desire to achieve a kind of immortality, but on their own terms. The first pretender was Cain, who would not comply with the protocol of worship when he offered only the work of his hands, which he produced from the ground. The work of our hands is not enough to offer to God. He requires also the shedding of blood, to acknowledge the need for a life to be offered to cover our sins.

As time went on, the descendants of Cain mixed the revealed truth of God with their own theories. They set up their own enterprises and exulted in their own successes. There was a peculiar mixture of truth and error. It was the same diabolical mixture of truth and error which beguiled Eve. A straight forward lie is easy to detect, but mixed with an ingredient of truth a falsehood is disguised. One can be caught with an admission, “Well, they are right in one thing.” Thereby lies the delusion.

It was some two and a half thousand years after Adam and Eve when Israel, welded together as a nation at Sinai, entered the Promised Land. Before them lay a fruitful country spread over hills and valleys, and settled by the descendants of Ham. Archaeologists have established that the religion of the Canaanites involved some of the most depraved religious practices. One small step away from the Way of the Tree of Life had led to groves for the promotion of fleshly lust.

The people who inhabited Canaan were organised in small groups under tribal chiefs or kings. The most powerful had built fortress-like towns atop prominent hills. Hazor in the north occupied a formidable position and was equipped with storehouses and a deep well to withstand any assault.

Israel entered the land taking Jericho and Ai. A peace treaty made with the Gibeonites galvanised one of the kings of the land into action and he called for other kings to join him. Rather than attack the new invading force, which had been so successful, they decided to attack the Gibeonites for forsaking allegiance to their own countrymen. It is not without significance that the king who led the call to arms was the king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek.

His name means “Lord of Righteousness.”

Claims to the title of Jerusalem’s king have been made for centuries. These claims were often made in the name of a false christianity. In God’s purpose the true king will put to shame the imposters.

By B. Edwards  Christchurch N.Z..
Jebusite dynastic title. This is a clear reference to that venerable King Melchizedek, who was Priest of the Most High God. By the use of this title, Adoni-Zedek was claiming that he ruled in the spirit of Salem's former illustrious king, "Righteousness" indicates a religious aspect to his kingly role, a king-priest. Many pagan kings exercised this right. The Roman Emperors bore the title 'Pontifex Maximus' (High Priest), and others such as Nebuchadnezzar led their nation in religious worship (Daniel 3). By calling other local kings to confer to punish the Gibeonites, Adoni-zedek was asserting headship over the nations of the land.

Adoni-Zedec headed a confederation of five kingdoms to march upon Gibeon which immediately appealed to Joshua for assistance. The battle of the kings of the south against the Israelite invaders was remarkable and decisive. The Lord God of Israel sent a great storm, the Israelite invaders was remarkable and decisive.

The battle of the kings of the south against the Israelite invaders was remarkable and decisive.

The Land of Israel was renamed Palestina and generally remained under the control of Rome and then Byzantium until the Arab Moslems swept throughout the Middle East and across North Africa in the early seventh century. They were formidable fighters and expert horsemen and they despised idolaters and relic seekers. Even so, it was still possible for the pious to make their pilgrimages to the holy sites. But in the late eleventh century other invaders came from the Far East and often intercepted the pilgrims' journeys, or imposed heavy taxes for the privilege of visiting the Holy Land. The Roman Emperor in Constantinople asked the Pope for support to mount a defensive force against the Turks.

The reputation of the Catholic Church had been suffering from corrupt, greedy priests, so the Pope, attending a church council, saw a timely opportunity to call for spiritual renewal. He called for a holy war, and the land of Israel was renamed Palestina and generally remained under the control of Rome and then Byzantium until the Arab Moslems swept throughout the Middle East and across North Africa in the early seventh century. They were formidable fighters and expert horsemen and they despised idolaters and relic seekers. Even so, it was still possible for the pious to make their pilgrimages to the holy sites. But in the late eleventh century other invaders came from the Far East and often intercepted the pilgrims' journeys, or imposed heavy taxes for the privilege of visiting the Holy Land. The Roman Emperor in Constantinople asked the Pope for support to mount a defensive force against the Turks.

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Empress Zita, wife of the last Austro-Hungarian Emperor... “Queen of Jerusalem.”

Godfrey refused the title of “king.” When he died a year later, his brother Baldwin was crowned King of Jerusalem at Bethlehem on Christmas Day.

Jerusalem was reconquered in 1187 by Saladin, an outstanding leader of the Turkish Muslims, and Crusader rule was confined mainly to the coastal plain and Galilee. The Mameluke Muslims, centred in Egypt, finally ousted the Crusaders. Their capture of the last Christian stronghold at Acre (1291) sounded the death knell for the Kingdom of Jerusalem and attempts during the fourteenth century to re-establish it were unsuccessful.

Over the years, there have been various claimants to the title of the King of Jerusalem. The title was held in turn by the French Dukes of Lorraine; the Kings of Cyprus belonging to the House of Lusignan (from which line it came to the Italian princes of Savoy); and by the two Houses of Anjou which claimed to hold their rights from Mary of Antioch. On occasions, it was given by one titleholder to another family member, or even sold! The title was also attached to the long list conferred upon the Napoleonic King of Spain, Joseph (1808). The maintenance of this title reveals the desire to re-instate the lost Kingdom.

When François, Duke of Lorraine, married the Empress Maria-Theresa in 1736, the claim to Jerusalem passed to the Habsburgs. The arms of Jerusalem could be seen in the grand arms of state of the Austrian Empire in the nineteenth century; and the title was used until 1918, the end of the Austrian Empire.

Current title holder

When Empress Zita, wife of the last Austro-Hungarian Emperor, was buried in 1989 in Vienna, her titles were read out and among them was the title “Queen of Jerusalem.” This is peculiarly appropriate. For one thousand years, Europe had been dominated by the two powers of Pope and Emperor, both claiming the right to rule. As protectors of the Church, (via the Order of the Golden Fleece), there is still a desire to not merely hold this title, but to exercise control over the holy city.

The Hapsburgs are still influential. Zita’s son, Dr (Count) Otto von Habsburg, is the longest serving member of the European Parliament; and several grandsons and a granddaughter are also involved in the EU. Zita’s husband, ex-Emperor Charles, was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

The churches are still interested in Jerusalem. In 2000, Pope John Paul II made an agreement with Yasser Arafat over the Holy Places, in anticipation of the formation of a Palestinian State. Israel claims Jerusalem as its capital and certainly, archaeologically speaking, can lay a pre-eminent claim to the ancient city. Many of the ancient Churches have interests in Israel. The Israeli Government continues protracted discussions with the Catholic Church, which refuses to pay taxes on its Israeli property. In the 19th century the Russian Orthodox Church built a hospice in Jerusalem, west of the ancient city. The hospice was funded by Russian royal ladies and built to house visiting Russian pilgrims. However, the Soviets had no interest in such assets and sold the Hospice and the 17 acres of land to Israel. They have recently bought it once more. This demonstrates that there is very much a religious aspect to the coming confrontation when “all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle.”

Today the underlying anti-Semitic feelings are once again coming to the surface. This will bring all nations against Jerusalem to battle (Zechariah 14:1-5). It is at this point the Lord will arise to redeem his people.

Return of the true King

It will take some years before “The Lord shall be king over all the earth” (Zechariah 14:9). When this is accomplished all will acknowledge the true King of Jerusalem. The King’s policy will be not merely to rule the nations, but to involve them in worship of the one true God. He will combine the function of both King and Priest (Psalm 110:1-4), being the head of the Order of Melchizedec. Psalm 110 describes the divine authority of the King; for this King has dealt sin and rebellion a death blow within himself. The “rule” (Psalm 110:2) he will assert is the “dominion” (Genesis 1:26) promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. (They are both the same Hebrew word). The kings who challenge the Lord of all the earth will be “struck through in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the nations, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.” (Psalm 110:6)

The Lord Jesus Christ has the personal integrity to rule justly—a far cry from corrupt rulers and politicians in the Kingdom of Men. “Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice... the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isaiah 32:1, 17, 18). This is the peace that people yearn for all over the world. It will only be achieved by the righteous one, the Prince of Peace.
“Seest thou these great buildings?

...there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” — Mark 13:2 (c/p Daniel 8:11)

“...and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” — Luke 21:24

“Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne:” — Zechariah 6:13
FORMING OUR OPINIONS:
THE BIBLE OR
THE MEDIA?

A recent visit to the city of Hebron in the territory of Judah (now in the so-called West Bank) happened to coincide with one of those Palestinian riots that we read about from time to time. At least, that is what we read in the newspaper the following morning. We were in the Jewish area of Hebron for a couple of hours but didn’t see anything out of the ordinary—certainly no riots. The paper reported that “a group of Palestinian protesters” had gathered in order to “march to the Cave of the Patriarchs”—that is exactly where we had been on that day.

We saw nothing of it.

Perhaps we were not the only ones to miss the excitement. A photograph in the paper did show some unruly Arab youths running around (perhaps they were rioting and perhaps not), and it had a caption that actually read: “Palestinian youths clash with IDF soldiers (unseen) in Hebron yesterday.” Why the Israeli soldiers were “unseen” in the photo is something we can only guess at.

A different newspaper carried another photograph of the incident (see right), but again there was no sign of a target—anyone could have staged such a picture in order to create an impression.

Whilst we could not say that there were no riots in Hebron that day, the thought has crossed our mind that any trouble could have been exaggerated by the media.

**Temple Mount Riots**

On another day friends of ours were visiting the Kotel (Western Wall) in Jerusalem. Again, this was a peaceful, non-event, sight-seeing occasion. But according to the media there had been violence and riots on the Temple Mount. On this occasion there had been some kind of explosion—a puff of smoke had been observed by other friends who were on the Mount of Olives, but nothing was seen by the visitors to the Kotel. Are these news stories exaggerated? Why would they be?

Demonstrations, protests and their coverage in the media are useful in moulding public opinion. Incidents of one kind and another take place regularly in most cities all over the world, yet only a few make the main news stories—and that is usually when there is a political agenda of some kind being promoted.

If the Israeli public, and even more importantly world opinion, can be convinced that a Jewish presence in certain parts of the Promised Land gives rise to violence and conflict, it will create a pressure demanding withdrawal from those areas (i.e. parts of Jerusalem and the West Bank). Thus, the formation of public opinion can—and often does—serve the interests of those who wish to influence events for political or ideological reasons. Many are unaware of the fact that main news and media organizations are often driven by such influences.

Opinion columns, news analysis, editorials as well as news and views, usually have a “spin” calculated to serve some interest—whether that is merely the business of selling newspapers and magazines, or improving ratings to attract advertising, or promoting some political philosophy. Most of these avenues are frequently used to mount an assault upon our minds.

**Feeding our Minds**

The point of all this is to say that what we let into our minds will shape our thinking and form our opinions—and our beliefs. Are our minds shaped by the wisdom of the world as disgorged by a powerful media, or by the Holy Scriptures?

Proverbs 19:27 teaches us:
“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”

Obviously, any information that forms our opinions, our beliefs, our view of things, is instruction—it is teaching us, educating us. Therefore we need to be very selective in what we accept into our minds.

We must exercise discernment.

This may not be always easy or straightforward. “Doth not the ear try words?” says Job (12:11). The word try here means “to test—to investigate, examine” (Strong # 974). In the New Testament the Apostle Paul says: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). It is foolish to accept what we are told at face value—even when it appears to come from a “recognized” authority.

If the BBC or National Geographic can teach and promote the theory of evolution (which they do), and discount the Bible as legend and myth, what can we expect when it comes to the Promises made by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? And if there is no respect for those Bible promises, how can we expect them to view the miracle of Israel’s re-birth or the fulfillment of related prophecies? What will they think of Jewish claims to Hebron or the Temple Mount? Are we to allow such sources to feed our minds?

Through Proverbs 22:20, 21 the Spirit of God speaks to us saying:

“Heav not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge. That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?”

The Bible is a well of wisdom that teaches us the Truth, hence we need to fill our minds with it.

As the apostle Peter wrote:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

In order to discern, test and try what the media presents, we must have something to examine it against. We must either make personal investigation (such as we did in Hebron) or we have to obtain other trustworthy information. We can all use the Bible as a means of testing—as we read in Isaiah 8:20,

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

“Take Heed”

The words of Jesus, recorded in Luke 8:18 are worthy of notice. He says:

“Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

We cannot just drink in all that we hear (or read). We need to verify the information that we are given. The sophisticated world of today with its advanced technology and techniques can be very persuasive. Photographs can be staged—as can video footage. News stories can be manipulated so as to put a ‘spin’ on an article. This we have found to be true of news dealing with Israel, the Palestinians and Hamas. Those readers who do their best to understand Bible Prophecy as it relates to events today, must take heed how they hear. The truth is often disguised, sometimes misrepresented and frequently biased. There is an anti-Zionist/antisemitic movement at work in the world today—and we must beware of it.

God is working out His purpose, and will bring all nations against Jerusalem and the territories of Judah and Samaria—taken by Israel in 1967. As it is written:

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land” (Joel 3:1-2).

Those nations that gather against Judah and Jerusalem are to be gathered for one purpose, and that purpose is JUDGMENT. Let us remember this as we read the news headlines—Let us do so with Bible in hand.

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he man we know as Pompey the Great was the Roman military and political leader who was the first Roman general to lead his legions into Judea. At one time he was the son-in-law of Julius Caesar. During his early career, he fought successfully throughout the Republic and its provinces—in Sicily, Africa, Syria, Spain and Italy. In 71 BC he captured the remnants of Spartacus’ army and claimed credit for finishing the revolt. His popularity led to his being elected Consul without having served as a senator, which was the normal pre-requisite. A problem with piracy in the Mediterranean led to his appointment as commander of a naval force with control over the sea and the coasts for 50 miles inland. Using his power he negotiated with the pirates, calmed the situation, and was seen as being responsible for guaranteeing the safety of the Roman grain supply.

Pompey spent the next year in Cilicia and Pamphylia, as the newly conquered territories were set up to be governed. During his absence from Rome, he was made commander of the ongoing war with Mithridates in Pontus. Mithridates chose not to confront the Romans, so Pompey bottled him up by working in concert with his fleet in the Euxine (Black Sea). Pontus was made into a Roman province. Following in the steps of Alexander, Pompey marched south into Syria in 64 BC, deposing Antiochus XIII, the last of the Seleucid kings, and creating yet another province.

It was 64 BC when Pompey moved into Phoenicia with his troops, and accepted an invitation to intervene in a civil war being waged in Judea between Hyrcanus II and his brother Aristobulus. The Hasmonean dynasty had been established in 140 BC by Simon, the last surviving son of Mattathias who had led the revolt against the Seleucids. In that year, he was recognised by an assembly of the priests, leaders and elders as high priest, military commander and ruler of Israel. The Hasmoneans ruled the land initially as High Priests with political control of Judea. The sons of Mattathias were very reluctant to take the title of king, even though they held the power, as they were not of the royal line of David. The power they held slowly led to their corruption.

Although the Hasmoneans were held in great esteem by the nation, they became estranged from the Pharisees because of their Hellenization. Many were opposed to the transformation of Judea into a monarchy led by a non-Davidic line. The expansion of the kingdom however, continued to increase their popularity with the common citizens.

In 161 BC, when Judah Maccabee took Jerusalem, one of his political moves involved making a treaty with Rome. Neither body saw the other as a threat, so they came to a mutual agreement. The Roman senate commanded its allies in the eastern Mediterranean to also make alliance with Judea. Later, in 142 BC, when Simon succeeded his murdered brother Jonathan, the Romans renewed the treaty with Judea, as they continued to struggle for independence. On the occasion of yet another assassination, this time of Simon, in 134, his son John Hyrcanus also reconfirmed the Roman
He Found The Holy of Holies Empty

treaty. This treaty of friendship did not appear to provide much protection or aid to the Jews when Pompey intervened in the civil war. The allies of the Romans who had been on the fringes, were now Roman provinces for the most part.

Simon, the last of the sons of Mattathias, was murdered by his son-in-law, and succeeded as high priest and leader by his son John Hyrcanus. John ruled for 20 years, until 104, and was succeeded by two sons, Judah Aristobulus and Alexander Yannai (Jannaeus). Throughout this period, the ruling house was at odds with the Pharisees.

This relationship changed with the death of Alexander Yannai. His wife Salome Alexandra succeeded him, but could not personally rule Judea, or act as High Priest. Her son Aristobulus actually held the title of king, after deposing his elder brother Hyrcanus II from both the kingship and the High Priesthood which had been arranged before his mother’s death. Salome Alexandra’s reign (76-67), was a period of close co-operation between the Pharisees and the throne. In her days the Pharisees were given the direction of the state, and their traditions and ordinances, which had been abolished under John Hyrcanus, became once more the rule. Her two sons, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II, wanted the power of both the High Priesthood and the kingship, but could not agree on a division of the titles. Both had competed in attempting to bribe Pompey for his support, but had only succeeded in drawing him into the fray. Judea was to pay the price in the loss of her independence.

Hyrcanus and his Pharisee supporters conspired with the Nabateans, and with their armies, while Aristobulus and the Sadducees were defeated and besieged in Jerusalem. The Romans then arrived, and forced the Nabateans to withdraw. Pompey was left with the decision of who was to reign, and he chose Hyrcanus. Aristobulus surrendered to Pompey, and Jerusalem was opened to the Romans by Hyrcanus’ followers. Only the Temple Mount held out, and it withstood a three month siege before it fell. Thousands of its defenders were killed.

Josephus records:
“Of the Jews there fell twelve thousand, but of the Romans very few... and no small enormities were committed about the temple itself, which, in former ages, had been inaccessible, and seen by none; for Pompey went into it, and not a few of those that were with him also, and saw all that which it was unlawful for any other men to see but only for the high priests. There were in that temple the golden table, the holy candlestick, and the pouring vessels, and a great quantity of spices; and besides these there were among the treasures two thousand talents of sacred money: yet did Pompey touch nothing of all this, on account of his regard to religion; and in this point also he acted in a manner that was worthy of his virtue. The next day he gave order to those that had the charge of the temple to cleanse it, and to bring what offerings the law required to God; and restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, both because he had been useful to him in other respects, and because he hindered the Jews in the

Pompey was intrigued by the Temple of the Jews, and overcame the objections of the priests to enter the Holy of Holies, to find the room empty. Whatever his reasons for doing so, he left the Temple treasuries intact, with the High Priest ruling Judea.

Continuing his military ventures, Pompey was heading for Petra to punish the Nabateans, when he received news of the death of his enemy—Mithridates. Returning to Rome by way of Pontus, he left Judea never to return.

Judea then, was subject to Roman rule. The Hasmonean dynasty itself ended 26 years later when the Idumean Herod the Great became king of Israel and king of the Jews. Such were the political conditions preceding the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.
It may seem a bit fishy if we claim that the ugly brute seen here is the biological counterpart to a rat zapper. The electric eel has “unique organs made of electroplates which are located in rows” says the New England Aquarium. “The electric eel generates its characteristic electric pulse in a manner similar to a battery, in which stacked plates produce an electrical charge. In the electric eel, some 5,000 to 6,000 stacked electroplaques are capable of producing a shock at up to 500 volts and 1 ampere of current (500 watts).

So how did this “unique” creature and its electroplates evolve? The rat zapper requires 4 AA batteries, but this eel carries its electric supply in its tail and can deliver lethal discharges to stun or kill its prey. What a tale! It really is stunning to realize that this all developed before man learnt how to generate electricity. The eel had its electroplates while man was still using candles! Once again we see evidence of an all-wise Creator.