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Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord God; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.” Ezekiel 27:3-4

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17
The author of *Kings of the East* (published in 1842) quotes Moore’s *History of Ireland*, that “the whole of the Cassiterides were in those days (i.e., of Herodotus) called the Britannic Isles. The name Britannia, in Celtic, means a land of metals, and was applied generally to the whole cluster of the Tin isles—the Isle of Man and those of Scilly included.” Klaptorth in *Magasin Encyclopedique*, deals with the hardening of copper by the addition of tin, and says:

“It is astonishing that the practice of imparting hardness to copper, by alloying it with a certain portion of tin, sufficient for sword blades, and other cutting instruments, should have been so generally followed by the ancients, notwithstanding the want of tin mines. All the tin they used they were obliged to procure from the Cassiterides, the present Cornwall; and the trade was exclusively in the hands of the Phoenicians.”

Lysons’ account of Cornwall, says:

“Cornwall has been celebrated for its tin mines from very remote antiquity; we learn from Strabo, Herodotus, and other ancient writers, that the Phoenicians, and after them the Greeks and Romans, traded for tin to Cornwall, under the name of the Cassiterides, from a very early period. Diodorus Siculus, who wrote in the reign of Augustus, gives a particular description of the manner in which that valuable metal was dug and prepared by the Britains.”

The book also quotes Rees’ *Cyclopaedia* as follows:

This metal, named *Kassiteros* by the Greeks, and to which Aristotle has applied the epithet *kelticon*, or Celtic, indicates plainly the country from which it was procured. In the Syriac language, *varatanac* or *baratanac*, signifies ‘land of tin’, from which the name of Britain is supposed to be derived.”

The conclusion is reached as follows:

“Homer lived about 100 years after Solomon, and Jonah 50 years later than Homer. Ezekiel lived 240 years later than Jonah; both of whom speak of Tarshish, and the former particularly, as the place from whence the Tyrians received their silver, iron, lead, and tin. Herodotus was born fifty years after the death of Ezekiel, and lived over eighty years; Aristotle was born fifty years after the death of Herodotus, and each of them speaks of the Cassiterides or Tin Islands, as the place from which the Tyrians obtained their metals; and in the time of Aristotle the chief British islands are mentioned under their old Celtic names—Albion and Ierne. About the same time also, an account of the islands is given by Hamilco the Carthaginian who visited the Aestrumides, or Metal Islands: thus, step by step, from the time of David, till the reign of Alexander, the connexion between Tyre and Tarshish can be traced.”

In 1852 there was published in three big volumes a treatise on Armageddon. This too is anonymous, the author being simply described as “A Master of Arts of the university of Cambridge.” He reviews the evidence already mentioned, with additional quotations to the effect that the whole Mediterranean was comprehended under the name Sea of Tarshish. It is shown that the Tyrians had established emporiums in the South of Spain, hence the name of Tartessus. He, with other writers in this field, refers to the expeditions sent out from Carthage, the colony of Tyre, one under Hanno for the western coasts of Africa, and the other under Hamilco for the western shores of Europe. Hamilco deposited a journal in one of the temples of Carthage, and upon this journal a poet Festus Avienus based his account that Hamilco reached St. Michael’s Mount, situated off the coast of Cornwall. Moore, in his history of Ireland, refers to the expedition...
of Hamilco and says “The commerce carried on by the people of Cadiz with the Tin Islands, is expressly mentioned by the writer who adds that ‘the husbandmen, or planters of Carthage, as well as her common people, went to those isles’.” Moore ventures the statement that “the Phoenicians had for some time formed a settlement in these islands.” Moore also accepted the meaning of Britannia as a land of metals, and others besides are quoted in support. Grote in his well known history of Greece says:

“It was from Cadiz as a centre, that these enterprising travellers, pushing their coasting voyages, established relations with the tin mines of Cornwall, perhaps also with the amber-gatherers from the coast of the Baltic. It requires some effort to carry back our imaginations to the time when, along all this vast length of country, from Tyre and Sidon to the coast of Cornwall, there was no merchant ship to buy or sell goods except the Phoenicians.”

In 1844, Walter Chamberlain, M.A., wrote a lengthy book on the Restoration of the Jews. He, too, traverses some of the evidence already mentioned. He surveys the principal characteristics of Tyre and Tarshish as mentioned in scripture and seeks a power in the last days in whom those characteristics are to be found. His argument leads him to Great Britain as the Tarshish of the last days. So far, then, expositors following parallel lines to the interpretation of Dr. Thomas. Going outside the expositors, Rawlinson’s Herodotus has a note on the reference by Herodotus to the Tin Islands: “The name was applied to the Scilly Isles: and the imperfect information respecting the site of the mines of tin led to the belief that they were there instead of on the mainland.” He refers to the evidence of Strabo, Polybius and Diodorus, the latter mentioning that tin was smelted near Land’s End, and then transported across Gaul to the mouth of the Rhone. Rawlinson adds that the various accounts, in their very confusion, “show how well the Phoenicians kept the secret of the tin mines.” “The Carthaginians also went to Britain for tin as the Tyrians had before.”

In the “Story of the Nations” series, Phoenicia, Rawlinson says, “The Phoenicians had one more colony towards the west, which has a peculiar interest for all English speaking peoples. Phoenician ships from Gadeira braved the perils of the open ocean, and coasting along the western shores of Spain and Gaul, without apparently making settlements, crossed the mouth of the English Channel from Ushant to the Scilly Isles and conveyed thither a body of colonists who established an emporium. The attraction which drew them was the mineral wealth of the islands and of the neighbouring Cornish coast, which may have become known to them through the Galls of the opposite continent. It is reasonable to suppose that the Phoenicians both worked the mines and smelted the ores. They certainly drew from this quarter those copious supplies of tin and lead, which they imported into Greece and Asia, and from which they derived so large a profit. They called the islands and shores
on which they had settled the ‘Cassiterides’ or ‘Tin Islands’, and related of the inhabitants that they ‘were clad in black cloaks and in tunics reaching to the feet, with girdles round their waists’; they ‘walked with staves, and wore beards like goats; that they subsisted by means of their cattle, and for the most part led a wandering life’. Their tin and lead they were ready to exchange for pottery, salt, and bronze vessels.”

“But there was one branch of their distant sea-trade whereto they clung with extreme tenacity and which, at a date long subsequent to the seventh century, they prevented even the Romans from sharing. This was the trade for tin with the Scilly Islands and the coast of Cornwall already mentioned in an earlier section, which was one of the main sources of the Phoenician wealth, tin being found in a few places only, and being largely required for the hardening of copper into bronze by almost all races inside the Pillars of Hercules, with which the Phoenicians had dealings. Tyre, at the height of her greatness, sent her ships year by year through the stormy Atlantic to the British Islands, to fetch a commodity which has largely flowed back to the country of its birth as an ingredient of the precious bronzes that are to be seen in English collections.”

In the volume on Assyria in the same series occurs the following:

“But the great and only reliable tin mart of the world in the bronze ages was England, especially its south-western extremity, now known as Devon and Cornwall, and the islands of the Channel, the first recorded name of which is a Greek one, signifying ‘Tin-Islands’ (Cassiterides). When or in what way the Phoenicians ever heard of so remote a nook, so totally out of the beat and beyond the horizon of all nations then of any note, must ever remain a mystery. But certain it is that already long before the foundation of Gades (about 1100) they in some manner regularly drew thence their stores of the metal which our own islands possess were laid open, and the Phoenicians with their extensive commercial dealings both in the West and in the East, became interested in diffusing it, and obtained the monopoly of the markets wherever Phoenician influence prevailed. Hence the trade with the Cassiterides was constant;” and Rawlinson recounts a well known story from Strabo of a Phoenician captain preferring to run his ship on the rocks rather than let the Romans learn “the secret of how the tin producing coast might be approached in safety.”

Coming to more recent works, the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (1947 edn.) says:

“Tyre was for centuries subordinate to Sidon, but when the Philistines subdued the latter city, probably in the 12th century, Tyre received an accession of inhabitants from the fugitives which gave it the preeminence. From this time dates its great commercial and colonial activity. Its mariners pushed boldly out to the West and founded colonies in Spain and North Africa, some of which, like Gades, Abdera and Carthage, became famous. They extended their commerce more widely than Sidon had ever done and ventured into the Atlantic and reached the coasts of Britain and West Africa. They reached out to the East also, and had their ships in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and their land routes threaded all Western Asia.”

Again, on another page we read, “We know the Phoenicians reached the Scilly Isles in Britain and probably the Baltic.”

The Westminster Bible Dictionary (1944) says:

“The Tyrians got their supply (of tin) from Tarshish. Tin was obtained in Spain, but most of it came from islands in the west ocean. There is little doubt that these islands were the isles of Scilly, off the Cornwall coast, and that the mines of Britain were the chief source of supply to the ancient world, and that Phoenician mariners made direct voyages from Gades in Spain to Cornwall for the metal.”

The Encyclopaedia Britannica suggests that the name Cassiterides “represents merely early and vague knowledge of the Greeks that tin was found overseas somewhere in and off western Europe.” This may be true of the origin of the Greek name in view of the care with which the Phoenicians kept the secret of their source of tin. Was Phoenician tin secured in Cornwall? The bibliography in Encyclopaedia Britannica adds that T.R. Holmes, Ancient Britain (1907), Appendix, identifies the Cassiterides with the British Isles.

Phoenician Traders

Romans came, a thousand years later, they built a fort on the same spot, and that again was succeeded in due time by a strong castle of Norman construction, the noble ruins of which are much visited and admired under the name of Carisbrooke Castle. The knowledge of the sea-route to the Tin Islands the Phoenicians kept strictly to themselves, and were jealously watchful that no one should follow and supplant them there, as the Greeks had supplanted them nearer home.”

Rawlinson wrote a History of Phoenicia, published in 1889. He repeats his views as given in his other books: “Their trade with the Scilly Islands and the coast of Cornwall was especially for the procuring of tin... After the rich stores of the metal which our own islands possess were laid open, and the Phoenicians with their extensive commercial dealings both in the West and in the East, became interested in diffusing it, and obtained the monopoly of the markets wherever Phoenician influence prevailed. Hence the trade with the Cassiterides was constant;” and Rawlinson recounts a well known story from Strabo of a Phoenician captain preferring to run his ship on the rocks rather than let the Romans learn “the secret of how the tin producing coast might be approached in safety.”
The modern city of Tyre, now known as the city of Sur, stands tall and defiant along the Mediterranean coastline. Sceptics of the Bible could be excused for doubting the accuracy of Bible prophecy in view of the fact that the Biblical prophets predicted that the ancient city would be “laid waste,” would be “built no more” and “never be found again.” And so the inevitable statement has been made that here is evidence that the Bible was wrong. Well, was the Bible wrong? Closer examination of the Biblical facts proves without a shadow of doubt that the Bible’s commentary about the city of Tyre is completely accurate right down to the present day. Obviously we need to have a closer look at the role Tyre has played in the past.

Tyre was a city of antiquity which, according to the historian Herodotus, dated back to about 2700 BC. The geography of the region steered the city dwellers in the direction of the sea because inland there were ranges of rugged mountains which hindered trade with countries to the east. Tyre was made up of two parts, a rocky fortress on the mainland, and an island city just short of a kilometre offshore. While the city was well fortified, its notoriety did not lie in its military prowess, rather in its commercial accomplishments. In the book “Keith’s Evidence” Alexander Keith summarizes what most historical writings say about Tyre:

“Tyre was the most celebrated city of Phoenicia, and the ancient emporium of the world. Its colonies were numerous and extensive. It was the theatre of an immense commerce and navigation, the nursery of the arts and science, and city of perhaps the most industrious and active people ever known. In the period of their greatest splendour and perfect independence, Tyre stood at the head of the Phoenician cities. The kingdom of Carthage, the rival of Rome, was one of the colonies of Tyre.”

The Biblical details confirm this description of Tyre and we will identify the details which are relevant.

1. Tyre is described as a well fortified city, a strong city (Joshua 19:29; 2 Samuel 24:7; Zechariah 9:3). This was particularly true of the island portion where the walls traversed the perimeter of the island and were 45 meters high on the landward side.

2. Tyre is described as the “mart of the nations” (Isaiah 23:3,11) because of its trade. Some of these are described as precious metals, trees, precious stones, ivory, animals and linens (1 Kings 10:11; Ezekiel 27).
3. As a trading city Tyre was well connected, its army was made up of foreign troops from nations such as Persia and North Africa (Ezekiel 27:10). The commodities traded by Tyre involved the nations of Egypt, Greece, Armenia, Arabia, Tarshish and many others (Ezekiel 27). Tarshish is identified as one of Tyre’s larger business associates, being spoken of as “thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches” (Ezekiel 27:12).

4. Tyre’s trade appears to have extended in two directions. There was a Tarshish that lay west of Tyre across the Mediterranean sea; Jonah tried to avoid the request of God by boarding a ship sailing from Joppa to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3). But Tyre also traded in an easterly direction. Solomon built ships in Ezion-geber, located near the modern port of Elath, and from there they went with men of Tyre to Tarshish to bring “silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks” (2 Chronicles 9:21). The journey only allowed for travelling once every three years; this coupled with the fact that peacocks are indigenous to India, would indicate that the ships of Tarshish travelled to that region of the subcontinent.

God spoke several prophecies about the downfall of Tyre; these are recorded in the writings of the prophets, three of which are Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. Today the visible ruins of the ancient city of Tyre provide evidence for the accuracy of Bible prophecy, as well as a warning to any nation that interferes with God’s people, the nation of Israel. Not only so, but Bible prophecy also identifies a power of the name of Tyre being present and active during the days prior to and following the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Destruction of Tyre**

The prophet Isaiah, in chapter 23, prophesied against Tyre one hundred and twenty years before the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The prophet describes Tyre’s prestige among the nations as, “the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth” (verse 8). But God had determined that Tyre would fall from its pedestal for we read, “the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof” (verse 11). During the days of Isaiah’s prophesying the Assyrians, under the hand of Shalmaneser, challenged Tyre, laying siege to the city for five years. The challenge was unsuccessful.

Tyre’s prosperity continued beyond the time of Isaiah suggesting to the sceptic that God’s word had failed. But God had determined to destroy her strong holds and so we must now pick up the Biblical record in Ezekiel chapter 26 where we are told that Tyre would be “laid waste” (verse 2). The details contained in this chapter were fulfilled in every particular and provide compelling evidence that “there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (Daniel 2:28). We may sum up the details as follows:

- God would bring against Tyre many nations which would lay Tyre waste (verses 2-3).
- The enemy would engage in siege warfare to break the morale of Tyre (verses 8-9).
- The outcome of these attacks would be that her walls and towers would be broken and the dust of the ground would be utilized, making the city bare “like the top of a rock” (verse 4).
- The ancient city would be reduced to a place for “the spreading of nets” (verse 5).
- Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon would be the first aggressor to lay siege to the city (verses 7-11). Note the use of the pronoun “He” in these verses.
- Others would follow Babylon, for we note that the pronoun changes to “them” from verse 12 onwards.

**“A MERCHANT OF THE PEOPLE”**

- These would cast the stones, the timber and the dust of the city “in the midst of the water” (verse 12).
- The outcome would be that Tyre would “be built no more” (verse 14).

History bears testimony to the fulfilment of these remarkable words. Babylon followed the Assyrians and began to exercise its influence in that region, bringing Judah under tribute in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, in 606 BC. Approximately eight years later Babylon marched on Tyre subjecting the city of Tyre to a siege that lasted thirteen years only to find that the Tyrians had moved all their treasures to the island fortress offshore. The Babylonians were no match for Tyre on the water and finally abandoned their plans. There is an interesting comment in the prophecy of Ezekiel where God, speaking of Babylon’s siege, said that Babylon took “no wages” from Tyre (Ezekiel 29:18); how accurate the word of God is. The old city on the mainland lay in ruins yet despite the setback for the Tyrian people, under the Persians Tyre’s prosperity began to return and they were able to supply materials for rebuilding the Jewish temple following the Jews’ return to the land (Ezra 3:7). Here again is a remarkable detail which fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah; the
The prophet had said that following a seventy year period Tyre would rise to “sing as an harlot” (Isaiah 23:15). The seventy year period refers to the captivity of the kingdom of Judah prophesied by Jeremiah (chapter 25:1, 9-11), a prophecy that would involve the city of Tyre (vs. 22, see also ch. 27:2-7).

Tyre’s arrogance and vanity would challenge the word of God. Once again the city of Tyre continued to flourish leaving the impression that the Bible had got it wrong. The people of Tyre fortified the island city and relied on its maritime skills to ward off any offender. However the prophet Ezekiel had spoken of “many nations” moving against the city of Tyre with the result that Tyre would be scraped bare.

“They shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise; and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones, thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water... I (God) will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more... I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee” (vs. 12, 14, 19).

For two hundred and fifty years after Babylon had attempted to waste the Tyrian strong hold, Tyre “sang as an harlot” proposing the nations with her trade and growing fat from the profit. Then Greece appeared on the world stage, and under the hand of the young Alexander the Great, subdued kingdoms. The island city of Tyre incurred the wrath of Alexander by refusing to submit to him and compounded the problem by murdering some of his soldiers. So incensed was the king that he was determined to destroy the island inhabitants. Rather than meet the enemy on the sea Alexander decided to build a causeway from the mainland across to the island.

God had decreed that the city would be scraped bare and made like the top of a rock. To achieve his objective Alexander used the ruins from the old city, casting the pillars and stones into the sea, and when material became depleted he scraped the dust from the ground, not a remnant of the old city remained. In the “Land and the book” the author, W.M. Thomson wrote:

“The number of granite columns that lie in the sea is surprising. The eastern wall of the inner harbour is entirely founded upon them, and they are thickly spread over the bottom of the sea on every side. Tyre must have been a city of columns and temples par excellence... Should anyone ask incredulously, ‘Where are the stones of ancient Tyre?... they are found spread over the causeway of Alexander, in her choked up harbour, and at the bottom of the sea.”

Alexander the Great dealt a serious blow to the island fortress of Tyre but business continued and for a brief period progressed until Antigonus I Monophthalmus of Greece broke the power of Tyre completely. By the fourteenth century the city of Tyre had disappeared.

The ancient site of the old city has never been rebuilt and the modern city of Sur was built adjacent to the old city. Where the original city was located fishermen, from time to time, spread their nets on the bare rock to dry. Dare we deny the accuracy of Bible prophecy.

The Folly of Tyre

What was so terrible about Tyre that necessitated such judgment? In the days of David and Solomon Tyre enjoyed an excellent relationship with Israel. Tyre assisted in not only furnishing material for Solomon’s temple but providing skilled labour as well (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1-6; 2 Chronicles 2:13-14). So close were these two powers that a league was entered into with Solomon (1 King 5:12). Later the relationship soured and the prophet Amos tells us that Tyre “remembered not the brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9). When Jerusalem fell under the hand of Babylon, Tyre rejoiced at the downfall (Ezekiel 26:2).

The wealth of Tyre evidently influenced the city. Isaiah wrote that Yahweh had purposed the judgment in order “to stain the pride of all glory” (Isaiah 23:9). Wealth corrupted the people and Ezekiel said that Tyre’s “heart was lifted up because of thy beauty” (Ezekiel 28:17). So pompous was Tyre that it claimed a position equal to that of God: “Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas” (Ezekiel 28:2).

Tyre was also well known for its idolatry. The principal god was Ashatreth, a female god which formed part of the hideous worship of Baal involving child sacrifices and gross immorality. Solomon succumbed to this influence when he married an idolatrous woman and “went after Ashatreth the goddess of the Zidonians” (1 Kings 11:5). Sometime later king Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel married Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-vaal, king of the Zidonians (1 Kings 16:31), who was determined to eliminate the worship of the true God.

All these factors combined to bring judgment upon Tyre. Its people were lifted up in pride and arrogance, they were immoral, they rejoiced in the calamities of others, and they revealed a complete disregard for the Creator.

A Latter Day Tyre

Closer examination of the Biblical text reveals that there will be a latter day counterpart to historical Tyre whose role will be integrated with the maritime power of Tarshish. This modern power will play a prominent role before and after the setting up of the kingdom of God.

The language of Isaiah chapter 23 provides evidence that the merchandise of this latter day power will be devoted to Yahweh, for we read, her hire “shall be holiness to the LORD... for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD...” This can only be the time described by the prophet Zechariah when “holiness to the LORD” shall prevail in the earth and “the LORD shall be king over all the earth”
Tyre is portrayed as “the daughter of Tarshish” in verse 7. The commerce engaged in by Tyre was portrayed as “the commerce of Tarshish and of the isles” in verse 10 indicating that Tyre’s maritime power of Tarshish who like Tyre, was identified by Josephus, not only as the island of Cyprus but “all islands, and the greatest part of the sea coast” (Antiquities 1, vi, 1). In older translations of the Bible the reference to Chittim has been identified as the Romans in scriptures such as Daniel 11:30. It is a fact of history that place names such as Venice and Genoa were strong mercantile cities in the Middle Ages. The name Tarshish also comes within the migratory influence of Tyre’s merchandise. Tyre was to “pass over to Tarshish” (verse 6). Tyre is portrayed as “the daughter of Tarshish” in verse 10 indicating that Tyre’s prosperity had resulted from the fruit of their relationship. The very use of the term “daughter” implies a special family relationship, a bond that went beyond that of trade.

What connection is there between Tyre and Tarshish and is it possible to identify Tarshish? Here are some of the details which will allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion.

1. Tarshish is first mentioned in Genesis 10 as one of the sons of Javan, along with Kittim, of the family of Japheth (verse 4). Of the four sons the record states: “By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands” (verse 5). The connection between Tarshish and the isles is still evident at Christ’s return as can be seen in Psalm 72—“the kings of Tarshish and of the isles” (verse 10).

2. Tarshish was located to the extreme west of Tyre, across the Mediterranean sea. It is described as being “far off” from Tyre (Isaiah 23:6-7).

3. It was a large maritime power whose ships assisted Tyre in transporting merchandise as far as the sub-continent of India. Its ships were large enough to sustain extended voyages and carry cargo (2 Chronicles 9:21).

4. Tarshish was Tyre’s largest merchant whose wares consisted of “silver, iron, tin, and lead” (Ezekiel 27:12). The reference to tin is significant.

It would be presumptuous to claim that the modern day Tyre/Tarshish is clearly identified in scripture, nevertheless the accumulative evidence points strongly in the direction of Britain.

Britain has long been considered the latter day Tyre/Tarshish power and it is the one nation that fits all the criteria. Britain was the country where tin was mined in the region of Cornwall on the south coast and where the Phoenicians traded for these raw materials. Another striking feature is Britain’s trading influence throughout the world. The British Empire may have diminished since the days of Queen Victoria but this cannot be said of its trading power. The City of London is at the heart of the world’s commodity markets, banking facilities and exchanges, fitting her for the role of the latter day Tyre/Tarshish power.

**Tyre’s latter day Role**

If we collect together all the details related to Tyre/Tarshish pertaining to the latter days, the following picture of Britain’s role emerges.

1. Britain as the “merchants of Tarshish” will oppose the invasion of the Middle East a confederate power headed by Russia (Ezekiel 38:18).

2. The opposition will result in Britain being humiliated, for God’s word has decreed, “Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with...” (Isaiah 23:6).
an east wind” (Psalm 48:7). No longer does Britain display the spiritual outlook that existed at its zenith of power. The Bible has been discarded in favour of humanistic values and for this she will suffer humiliation.

3. Following the judgment of the saints and giving immortality to the faithful the Lord Jesus Christ will manifest himself to the world and the battle of Armageddon will take place (Revelation 16:15-16).

4. The Lord will then invite the nations to submit to him (Zechariah 9:10; Psalm 2:10-12).

5. Britain will be one of the first nations to comply and will embrace God’s way and bring presents to the Lord (Psalm 87:4; 45:12; 72:10).

6. Britain will be one of the first to become involved in transporting Jews back to the land of Israel and carrying materials to be used in building the Temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 60:9:17).

In a remarkable way these details have their basis in the historical events surrounding the reigns of king David and Solomon and help to put into context these future prophecies. David established the kingdom of Israel by first rescuing Jerusalem from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:7) and establishing the kingdom at Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:12,17). Solomon consolidated the kingdom of Israel establishing peace for all Israel (1 Kings 4:25). He subdued all enemies (1 Kings 5:3). The nations subject to Solomon brought gifts to him, one of whom was the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 4:21; 10:2,10), which were used in the building of the Temple (1 Kings 9:11; 10:11). Tyre was intimately involved in this work with both David and Solomon. All this will be repeated when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

**Lessons to Learn**

What lessons can be learned from ancient Tyre? The Lord Jesus Christ provides an unmistakable answer. On one occasion the Lord began to rebuke his contemporaries for their lack of response to the teaching of God, he said:

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you” (Matthew 11:21-22).

The reference to Tyre and Sidon. Tyre in particular was judged by God because its sin was great, however the contemporaries of the Lord were far worse, they had witnessed the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ with indifference. Had Tyre witnessed the same miracles the people of that city would have repented and been spared. Is the generation of the twenty first century any different? Today we also are privy to the miracles of the Lord; the Bible has been miraculously preserved, yet it is treated with contempt; during the last century we witnessed the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in the restoration of Israel to their ancient homeland as well as the reinstatement of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, yet these stupendous events are virtually ignored.

Let us learn the lesson of Tyre. It was not the Assyrians, the Babylonians or the Greeks that determined the fate of Tyre, it was “Yahweh of hosts” (Isaiah 23:9), and as sure as Tyre disappeared so also will all those who display the same attitude.

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**Why Study Daniel & the Apocalypse?**

The Apocalypse throws great light upon the Book of Daniel, the “hidden mystery” of which it expounds. The Eternal Spirit, styled by Peter “the spirit of Christ,” is the real author of both prophecies; and what he omitted to tell Daniel, he communicated about seven hundred years after to the apostle John; and all for the benefit of those who “walk by faith,” and are “called according to his purpose.” Should it be necessary, then, to exhort such to make both the Apocalypse and the Book of Daniel the subject of diligent and persistent meditation, that they may be able to take heed to the “sure word of prophecy,” which is in very deed “a light shining in a dark place?” No genuine believer of “the gospel of the kingdom” will need such an exhortation. It is the honor of the kings and priests of the Deity to search out what he has condescended to reveal. Happily the search is not so difficult as in former years. EUREKA and the Exposition of Daniel will facilitate the search, and introduce the reader to the apocalyptic benediction, which saith, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

“To the household of faith, and to Israelites, this work should be found particularly interesting and important. It will demonstrate to both classes that the day of their redemption is dawning. It will enable them to discern the signs of the times, which are so luminously indicative of his appearing, “whose right it is to reign.” Jews by nature and adoption have suffered long and grievously at the hand of the oppressor who has scattered and peeled them by his severities. But the day of retribution approaches, when they shall “Reward Babylon even as she rewarded them, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup that she hath filled, double shall they fill to her.” Therefore, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets: for God will then have avenged you on her.” These are the words of him who said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not fail.” This is the principle—Vengeance on Babylon for his people’s sake: a principle overlooked by the knight-errants of the till, whose most palpable conceptions extend not beyond their balance-sheets and “the light within”!

Having, then, now introduced the reader to the great subject of this work, he is invited to proceed, being well assured that when he shall have reached the end, he will admit that, the Bible being received as true, there are startling and stirring events about to happen, that will not only astonish, but terrify the world. That the reader may be ready is the earnest desire of his friend and well-wisher, John Thomas.
An extract from an article by John Thomas written in 1860, the substance of which was reproduced in Volume 20, issue number 3 of this magazine. The original title also read: The Saints the Spoilers of Britain in the time of the end.

The Royal Merchant-Power of Great Britain is the Daughter of Tyre; the Mystical Tyre in her development beyond Chittim, far away to the westward of its ancient predecessor and parent in the world-wide commerce of the earth. The Spirit of Jehovah, in the prophets cited, spoke primarily of Old Tyre and her traffic; but enigmatically, mystically, spiritually, figuratively, or typically, of the merchant-power of Britain. “The prophecy concerning Tyre” may be compared to a nut; this entire, consists of the hard outside shell, and the kernel within. To the eye of sense, the shell is alone apparent; and when handled by the flesh is too hard to crack: but to the mental eye, an unctuous kernel appears within. The old, historic Tyre is the broken nutshell; while the British power is the kernel of the prophecy; which is destined “for food sufficient for those who” shall hereafter “dwell before Jehovah.”

The clerical commentators on prophecy, such as Rollin, Lowth, Newcome, Newton, &c., historians and bishops of the Apostacy, suck the shells only, and therefore fail to acquire the remotest flavor of the prophetic kernel. They can see nothing in the oracle beyond the events of a past antiquity; but God be thanked, what “the wise and prudent,” in their own conceit, could not discern with all their lore, he has “revealed to babes”—a revelation that comes by a diligent study of the Scriptures, provided that the student utterly discard the traditions and authority of all papistical and protestant “divines;” if he defers to the opinions of these, they will mislead or perplex him in every case. He must begin the study of the word by declaring his independence of them all; for they are only blind leaders of the blind, who cannot see of themselves, and ruin those that trust them.

Having ascertained the relations of things in these prophecies, we are prepared to discern the destiny appointed for the British power and dominion. It is shadowed forth in the destiny of Ancient Tyre. As it was with this power, so it is to be with Britain. To Britain, Jehovah saith, “Thou hast sinned, therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; I will destroy thee, O Covering Protector, from Stones of Fire; I will cast thee to the ground; I will lay thee before Kings that they may look upon thee. I will cause to go forth a fire out of thee which shall devour thee; I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, Before the eyes of all that look upon thee; All that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at thee; Thou wast calamities; and shalt be nothing during the Olahm.”

Britain has sinned as did Tyre of old; and if the confessions of her Spirituals of Wickedness may be received as sincere in her late public fast, she acknowledges the charge, though she has not reformed. “Her heart is lifted up because of her beauty; And she has corrupted her wisdom by reason of her glory.”

The British power will have to contend with the whole strength of Babylon; which will prevail against her so far as to expel her from Egypt, Jerusalem, and Palestine; and she will fall, not by Babylon the Great, but by “Stones of Fire;” and before the Great City is overthrown to rise no more. These Stones of Fire, are Christ, the “Precious Stone;” and the Saints, the “Living Stones;” from whom a fiery destruction, the Jews being the channel, will stream forth against the Daughter of Tyre, or Britain; and all the Continental Kingdoms of the Earth and habitable. These Stones of Fire are “THE KINGS” that shall look upon the Tyrian Harlot prostrate at their feet. They are Jehovah’s Kings, who shall utterly abolish the empire of Britain. They will reduce the nations of the British Isles to perfect subjection to the King of Israel then dwelling in Jerusalem. The Royal Family, the hereditary nobles, the orders of their Harlot Churches, her merchant-princes, legislators, and gentry, as the stars of the Tyrian heavens, will be cast to the ground; and deprived of all honor, wealth, position, and power, which will be appropriated by the victors. The merchant-kingdom will be reduced to ashes by the judicial fires destined to devour her both within and without. The fall of such a rich and powerful state will be “calamities,” or terrors, to all, commercially, financially, or in any other way, connected with her. Their hearts will fail them for fear, and anticipation of what shall break forth upon themselves. The Daughter of Tyre will become a dissolving view; the ships of Tarshish will howl for her departure; and the once powerful Harlot-Mistress of the Sea shall have no political existence “during the Olahm,” nor beyond.

“Her traffic and her gain shall be holy to Jehovah; It shall not be treasured nor shall it be kept in store; For her traffic shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, For food sufficient and durable clothing.”

John Thomas

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Hiram, the king of Tyre, occupies a unique place in the scriptural record. Nowhere else do we find a foreign king who approaches Israel with peaceful intentions, and who helps to build up the nation. From the days of Abraham forward, the kings of other nations presented a threat. It was not until the days of David and Solomon when the surrounding nations were in decline, and Israel was strong, that those nations had any inclination to work peacefully with Israel.

Both David and Solomon developed trade relations with many neighbouring countries. One of David’s wives was a Geshurite, from the area east of the Galilee, but Solomon went much further afield when he married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. The Queen of Sheba also travelled a great distance to pay a visit.

All of the nations had an interest in trade relations. David and his son Solomon controlled trade routes which brought great wealth into and through the kingdom. Gaza was the terminus of the route that brought spices and other luxury goods from the Arabian peninsula, which the Queen of Sheba had followed. The Nabateans, who built Petra, prospered from this trade.

The Phoenicians, who occupied virtually all of the ports on the Mediterranean shore between northern Syria and Egypt, were the dominant trading people. Genesis chapter 10 tells us that the

By Ken Loveridge  

The name Phoenicia comes from the Greek for ‘purple’, as they were the exclusive producers of the purple dye which was worth its weight in gold, much sought after by royalty and the wealthy of all the nations. Other cities were established northward on the coasts of Lebanon and Syria, and southward toward Egypt. Joppa, or Jaffa, which Solomon and Hiram chose as the closest destination for the rafts of cedar logs intended for the Temple, was probably a Phoenician port at the time. Dor, another Phoenician city, further north along the coast of Israel, was chosen by Solomon as one of his administration centers, and his son-in-law was placed there as his governor. Ben-abinadab was married to Taphath, Solomon’s daughter, and was one of the twelve officers “which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision” (1 Kings 4:7). The Phoenician ports provided access to both the trade wealth and the prosperity of the coastal area. Tyre is perhaps the best known of the Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean shore. Four hundred years after the time of David, Ezekiel, writing in Babylon, the empire which then controlled Phoenicia and Middle Eastern trade, tells us of the wide range of goods, as well as the wide area which was involved in their trading business. Tyre was also the setting for two famous sieges with Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great. Nebuchadnezzar apparently failed in his attempt to take the city, although he received tribute,
while Alexander succeeded, and took command of the Phoenician fleets.

But all of this lay in the future. The city of Tyre in 1000 BC was just beginning to spread its wings. For more than 2000 years they had been supplying cedar from the mountains of Lebanon to the pharaohs of Egypt. Boats, boxes and caskets of cedar are still being uncovered. Hiram of Tyre made the offer, apparently unsolicited, to David, to supply cedar wood for the building of his palace in the city of David which he had just taken from the Jebusites to establish as his capital (2 Samuel 5:11).

During the tenth century, the political situation was changing dramatically for states interested in expanding their territory and their trade relations. Tyre was independent, and a leader in their desire for both. Enormous possibilities were opening up, and Tyre had the political organization to take the advantage. The Assyrians were still involved in problems with neighbours closer to home, and the Philistine power, which had taken part of the Phoenician coastal area, was in decline after their defeat by David. Israel was the only adjoining nation growing stronger, as the twelve tribes were re-united. All of these situations, and others that arose, would help to make Tyre the most important commercial and naval power in Asia and the Mediterranean for the next five centuries. More important than all of these worldly factors was the scriptural injunction among the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12. Verses 2 and 3 read:

“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall families of the earth be blessed.”

Hiram and the Tyrians were to enjoy fantastic material blessings and prosperity, because of the attachment to the kingdom of God under Solomon.

Hiram, then, was the king of Tyre when this period began. Rather than confront David and the kingdom of Israel as they gained power, Hiram chose to make peaceful overtures and expand trade relations with his non-sea-going neighbour. As 1 Kings 5 tells us, when Hiram sought to extend his ties with Israel and Solomon after the death of David, “And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.”

Both nations were to profit from the ongoing relationship.

Hiram called himself “king of Tyre and Phoenicia” and it is evident from the scriptural account that Hiram had the resources and the power to organize the long-distance sea-going expeditions which he undertook with Solomon. He sought to control the trade routes between east and west. We get a glimpse of the wealth of the Arabian trading nations in the account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba.

“The queen of Sheba ... came ... with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: ... And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon” (2 Chronicles 9).

We only have to consider the wealth of material that David, Solomon and the people contributed to the building of the Temple, to appreciate just how rich the nation became.

At the same time, Hiram was known for the building of the Temple of Melqart in Tyre which was supported by two pillars, one of gold and one of emeralds. Four hundred years later, Ezekiel was able to write of the city of Tyre “... Thy builders have perfected thy beauty” (27:4).

Cedar appears to have been the basis of the Phoenician economy in the beginning. Hiram was able to provide this and other building material, the advanced technology of the day, technical assistance in the form of skilled craftsmen, as well as services and luxury goods from distant parts. Solomon, in return, secured the access Tyre needed to the routes to the interior of Arabia, as well as Mesopotamia, Syria and the Euphrates. He was able to guarantee cereals and other farm products as food for the Tyrian royal household. Israel became a market for their manufactured products, and also supplied silver to Hiram. The ships for the long-range trading expeditions were built and manned by Phoenicians to sail from Israel’s Red Sea port at Ezion Geber. Every three years, these “ships of Tarshish” sailed down the Red Sea, and returned with gold, silver, ivory and precious stones. The Egyptian monopoly was broken, and the two nations grew and prospered.

Although Hiram was “ever a lover of David...” we do not know whether he worshipped the God of Israel. The Tyrians and Phoenicians did not remain strong friends of Israel for very long. Ahab married Jezebel, a princess of Sidon, and her influence with the worship of Baal that she brought with her did anything but strengthen the people. Pressure from the Assyrians, Babylonians and Greeks brought the Phoenician cities under the control of foreign powers and they lost their independence. The foreign powers wouldn’t stand aside when the trading wealth described in Ezekiel 27 lay within their grasp. That pressure also led to the establishment of Carthage and the expansion of colonies and trading centers in the western Mediterranean. In time, Carthage and Rome were to clash, and the growth of the Roman Empire was to swallow up both Israel and the cities of Phoenicia.

**The Cause of True Unity Among Brethren**

The apostle John wrote:

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

This “anointing” says the apostle “is truth” and it is the Truth that sanctifies says Jesus:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

So the anointing oil is to be understood as the doctrines of the Truth; it is the “dew” of Deuteronomy 32:2:

“My doctrinal shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”

So the Psalmist teaches us:

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments: As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” —Psalm 133

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 26 ISSUE No. 4
The name Suez conjures up the Suez Canal, an important waterway that links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. It takes its name from the port on the northern shore of the Red Sea and marks the southern end of the Suez Canal. Britain and the Suez Canal is a fascinating story of intrigue between Britain and France and so we will look briefly in this first part at its history as it will help us to see why Britain feels a need to have a presence in the Gulf region, which will form part 2. We will also see how Britain’s involvement in Egypt was part of God’s plan to re-establish Israel as a nation again.

The Suez Canal running through Egypt was long regarded as a jewel in the British Empire’s crown. It was a vital link to Britain’s far-flung Empire, enabling ships to considerably shorten their journeys to the Far East.

Napoleon marched his French army into Egypt in 1798 and he was keen to build a canal which would be under French control and could be used as a means of creaming off money from the British by way of high tolls. Unfortunately for Napoleon, his surveyors erroneously put the difference in sea level between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea at 10m/33ft. This would have meant that locks would be involved and that would push the costs up; so the project was abandoned. In any case his time in Egypt was short-lived; Nelson led the British navy against his ships in the Battle of the Nile, destroying the bulk of Napoleon’s fleet. Although the British planned to build a canal in the 1830’s it was ignored by the Egyptian powers whose cooperation was needed. At the time Egypt was under the nominal control of the Ottoman Empire, but the Khedive, or viceroy, of Egypt held great power. The French persisted in their dreams and in 1846 the Société d’Études du Canal de Suez was established and their engineers found that, of course, there was no difference in sea levels! However the British opposed the construction of a canal, fearing it would provide opportunities to her rivals to interfere with her trade with the Far East, and again the matter was dropped. Instead, the British constructed a railway line to transport people from Alexandria to Suez via Cairo. It was built by Stevenson and opened in 1856; meanwhile goods continued to be shipped round Africa.

The Suez Canal finally Built

The Suez Canal came about through the friendship of a Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps with the man who would become the Khedive of Egypt. Lesseps was appointed Vice Consul at Alexandria and became friends with the Khedive and his son Said Pasha. Having read a copy of Napoleon’s
plans for a canal, he was fired with interest in this idea. Later, when he retired from government duties, he was invited to visit by Said Pasha, who now was the Khedive. Due, it is said, to a particularly daring feat of horsemanship on the part of the Frenchman that so impressed Said Pasha, he was asked what wish could he help to fulfill? Lesseps had no hesitation in asking for permission to build the canal! The Khedive was delighted to offer his backing and work began in 1859 with the work funded by the Khedive (45%) and the balance by European—mainly French—investors. Lesseps refused to accept a loan from the Rothschild bankers, preferring to offer public shares instead, much of them to the French public.

The canal took ten years to construct at what was a huge sum at the time of $100 million, double the original budget! Said Pasha did not live to see the completion, dying in 1863 and his son having pre-deceased him, he was succeeded by his nephew, Ismail Pasha. The Canal officially opened in 1869. Although the British had been opposed to the scheme, they stole the limelight at the opening ceremony! The French Empress, Eugenie, in the Imperial yacht Aigle, had been appointed to be the first ship through.

“With the (ship) Newport, he (Captain Nares) attended the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal. As the time approached for the ships to ceremoniously enter the new canal for the first time, the contingent of British ships were second to the French in the congested approach. Captain Nares had difficulty accepting this positioning, and so, during the night and without using lights, he maneuvered Newport forward into an inextricable position in front of the French yacht accorded the honor of entering the canal first. The French were understandably upset, and protested to the Admiralty. Captain George Nares received an official reprimand from the Admiralty, but was, apparently, the object of great admiration for his clever actions, and was questioned at length about how the feat was accomplished.”

Following its opening, the canal became very popular, the amount of freight carried grew from ½m tons to 5m tons in the first 13 years, 80% of which was carried by British ships. It was also a time of rapid expansion in Egypt’s infrastructure and big irrigation schemes saw an increase in the cotton crops grown.

Britain snatches Canal shares!

The ending of the American Civil War in 1865 brought a crash in the price of cotton, as American markets opened up again. Having borrowed heavily, Egypt’s economy collapsed under the weight of debt. By 1875 the Khedive was forced to sell his shares in the Canal. The French were eager to buy so that they could increase their control of the growing trade. News of the intended sale to the French was quickly passed to the British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli when a British banker became aware of the intended sale. Britain was linked to Egypt by telegraphic cables by this time. The importance of the canal to Britain’s trade was very evident to Disraeli and he acted quickly to persuade his government to purchase the shares, even without parliamentary approval. Queen Victoria gave her blessing to the scheme and before the markets opened on the Monday morning it was a done deal, thanks to the help of the banker, Lord Rothschild who loaned the £4 million needed. Once more Britain had pipped France to the post!

In the following decades, the security of the Suez Canal, as the pathway to India, became a major focus of British foreign policy. A later Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon in 1909 described the canal as “the determining influence of every considerable movement of British power to the east and south of the Mediterranean” (Wikipedia).

So important was it, that in 1882, Britain took control of Egypt and remained there until, under the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, Egypt became independent, but the British maintained their troops in the Suez Canal zone to protect her interests in the Canal. This continued until the Suez Crisis in 1956 when, following the nationalisation of the Canal by President Nasser, the British were ignominiously forced to withdraw their troops when the Western nations refused to back Britain’s attempts to retake Egypt.

There followed a period when Britain turned her back on her Commonwealth friends and in 1973 joined what is now the EU, and her interest in the canal waned. However as Britain became increasingly disenchanted with Europe, as the EU leaders concentrated on integration rather than trade, Britain turned again to the Commonwealth. Under David Cameron, the present Prime Minister, the drive has been on to rebuild her links with the Commonwealth and also with Israel! The Foreign Office under William Hague has now reverted to its original title, The Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Queen has been a life-long champion of the Commonwealth countries and kept the flame burning during the dark days of a Labour government’s pro-European policy.

We will now look at Britain’s re-involvement in the Middle East and the scriptural basis of our expectations.

Part 2. Britain’s re-involvement “East of Suez”

The phase East of Suez has recently taken on a narrower understanding and covers Britain’s involvement in the Gulf Region. In the previous two centuries it also embraces more distant countries such as India, Singapore and Australia. The Suez Canal is still the vital link between Britain, the Gulf and these more distant Commonwealth countries.

Britain’s involvement in the Middle East
is of great interest to Bible students in the light of these words from Ezekiel.

“Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee (Gog), Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezekiel 38:13).

Bible students have long seen that Britain’s interest in Egypt had been part of the Divine plan for the restoration of God’s people, the Jews, to their land in readiness for the return of their Messiah to save them in their hour of trial. Britain’s Protestant background meant that there were influential politicians who were sympathetic to the Jews desire to re-establish themselves in their former homeland. During the 19th century and into the 20th, the great obstacle to the realisation of that dream was the Ottoman Empire which controlled the Holy Land. The Moslem Sultans had little interest in Jewish aspirations. However with Britain occupying Egypt and Turkey having sided with Germany in World War I, Britain seized the opportunity to take from Turkey much of her remaining Empire. The defeat of Germany and her allies changed the face of the Middle East. Jerusalem was now in British hands, thanks to the brilliant support from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp (ANZAC’S). Earlier, Lord Balfour had supported the setting up of a Jewish Homeland in this region that Britain was retaking.

Some 30 years later, in 1948, the State of Israel was established following the withdrawal of British troops from Palestine as the region was called. Together with the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez Canal region in 1956—the Suez crisis already referred to—and in 1967 from Aden at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Britain effectively abandoned the region.

Bible students were puzzled, because Ezekiel 38:13 indicated that at the coming of the Lord Jesus, Britain and her allies would be operating in the region. As with so much of prophecy fulfilling, matters ebb and flow like the tides, so that “high water” is achieved only after many hours of gradual progress! Before looking at the new situation today let’s briefly examine the basis for our expectations.

Sheba & Dedan

The words of Ezekiel 38 paint the picture at the time when Gog and his companions invade the land of Israel. By this time the Lord Jesus will have returned and raised the dead and called the living saints to judgement, which we believe will take place in the confines of Sinai. They will be hidden from view, like the angelic armies that encompassed Elisha when the Syrian army encircled the city of Dothan where the prophet and his servant were stopping (2 Kings 6:13-18).

Ezekiel sees that there are nations that oppose the invasion of Israel by Gog; which would indicate that they are friendly to Israel and are concerned with what is befalling Israel. True their opposition sounds muted, confined to verbal opposition. They, like Israel, are not able to thwart the invasion, for it is of God that the nations come against His people. At the moment Israel are trusting in their own strength. President Netanyahu (01-Sep-13) told the Israelis just prior to the start of Rosh Hashanah, “Israel is calm and sure of itself.”

“The Israeli army believes itself to be in good shape. Netanyahu and chief of the General Staff Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz have repeatedly assured Israelis in the recent threat-filled weeks that they can rely on their armed forces to defend and protect them. Go “enjoy the holidays,” the prime minister told Israelis on Tuesday. And woe betide anyone who thinks he can “shatter the tranquillity” (Times of Israel 04-Sep-13).

No wonder God describes the situation in Israel just prior to their invasion, as a time of “trespass against me” (Ezek. 39:26). Sadly God knows that the only way to change Israel’s heart is to humble them before their enemies, as happened so many times in the past.

So who are Sheba and Dedan—a glance at a Bible concordance reveals that there were two pairings of these two names. One pair were grandsons of Cush (Gen 10:7), the other grandsons of Abraham through Keturah (Gen 25:1-3). These two Shebas appear to have merged in history and are associated with the region of Yemen today. In the time of the Queen of Sheba her kingdom was very extensive, spreading into today’s Saudi Arabia and across into the east coast of Africa.

The Dedans kept their identities separate as indicated by two references to Dedan in the wonderful chapter on the traders in the markets of Tyre in Ezekiel 27:15, 20. Earlier in Ezekiel ch 25:13 the Abrahamic Dedan is linked with the region of Teman, putting them in the area of Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia. The Cushitic Dedan appears to be the one mentioned in Ezekiel 27:15 as a trading nation linked with ivory and ebony which points us to India. According to Castell’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary

“Dedan, the place where they resided, is believed to be identical with the Dedan of the Middle Ages, now called Bahrein, or Arabia Deserts, an island on the western shores of the Persian Gulf.”

This points us to the Gulf region. One immediate question springs to mind. Ezekiel puts these two countries at the top of the list of those who are opposed to the invasion of Israel. Yet these are Arab nations—why are they friendly to Israel? This would be difficult to understand a few years ago, but not now. Against the odds it would seem, there has been a shift in some Arab’s attitude to Israel. The old Arab mantra that the Jews were to blame for all the troubles in the region has proved to be hollow. Far more Arabs have been killed by their own dictatorial rulers than ever perished in battles with Israel! As the Arab “Spring” punches its way around the Middle East, Israel sits there, a beacon within an angry sea of neighbours. Israel’s economy continues to grow while the economies of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran are being severely shaken. Following the overthrow of President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood’s government in Egypt, the military leaders have been working extensively, behind the scenes, with Israel. They are clearing Sinai of its large collection of terrorists, who are backed by Hamas in Gaza. Hamas are also supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. And so we are seeing Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States cooperating with Israel in the background, to strengthen the hand of the military in Egypt and to get rid of the hated Muslim Brotherhood. This may well be a foretaste of things to come.

The Merchants of Tarshish and her Young Lions

These form the second tier of those who protest at the invasion of Israel. We have long seen the aptness of these being a reference to Britain as a trading merchant power, supported by her young lions, one-time colonies such as America, India, and Australia. There is no other country in the world that is looked to as a mother country and who is a great trading country as are her “offspring.” The remarkable confirmation is that they are all today involved in the region...
and are friendly to Israel and therefore would be expected to join the chorus of protest. We refer readers to fuller articles tracing the Tarshish connections to Britain elsewhere in this issue. So let’s now see their involvement in this region.

**Britain in the Middle East**

As well as promoting Israel as one of her key economic targets, the UK government under David Cameron is seeking to woo the Gulf States. Britain sees the Gulf as an area of traditional friendship; Britain’s more quiet diplomacy has more appeal here than America’s gung-ho spirit! Britain thrives on trade—hence the growing disillusionment with the stagnating EU. The Gulf States and the Asian countries are seen as markets to develop. Britain has her main naval bases on either side of the Gulf, in Cyprus and on the Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean. We are now seeing Britain increasing her influence within the Gulf. The RAF is enlarging their base at Al-Minhad in the United Arab Emirates, and the Royal Navy has the UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) in Bahrain. She has close relations with Oman and the Royal Navy frequently carries out joint exercises with the Royal Oman Navy. Britain is the biggest overseas investor in Oman and much of her military equipment has been supplied by Britain. Britain is involved in training and the supply of weapons to Saudi Arabia. Earlier this year Prince Charles and Camilla visited Saudi Arabia, as part of their nine-day tour of the Middle East, to celebrate, amongst other things, 50 years of the British Military Mission to the National Guard. Back in 1963, the Emir, fearing a military coup, as many of his neighbours had experienced, asked Britain to train his “White Army,” also known as the National Guard, which was run by Prince Abdullah, who is now the King of Saudi Arabia. That training has continued to this day. Britain’s supply of military equipment goes back to the mid-1960’s with the still on-going Al Yamamah deals with BAE. It is Britain’s largest ever export agreement with an estimated value of £40 billion and employs some 5,000 people in Saudi Arabia.

According to a BBC site there are around 120,000 UK citizens working and living in the Gulf States.

Britain’s presence is being boosted by the government decision to increase her military presence in the Gulf as troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan and Germany. As America seems to be shifting her military activity eastward to the Far East and the Pacific Rim, Britain is filling the vacuum.

“Yet, just as the UK’s withdrawal in 1971 created a security vacuum that drew the US, somewhat unwillingly, further into the affairs of the Gulf, the US’s cooling of its engagement seems to be drawing the UK back in” (A return to the East of Suez Royal United Services Institute Apr-13).

This report is published by the think-tank which advises the UK military and its 16 page report makes fascinating reading! It became apparent that Britain was getting reinvolved in the region—though the above report makes clear that Britain has never completely left the region—when in November 2012 David Cameron paid a 3 day visit to the Gulf region in an attempt to seal a deal for the supply of Typhoon fighter jets to several Gulf States. This visit is bearing fruit. “In December the government negotiated a £2.5bn deal with the sultanate of Oman to supply 12 Typhoon fighters and eight Hawk jet trainers, both built by BAE Systems. The deal was hailed by the company as ‘an honour’ and ‘excellent news.’

“Britain is currently negotiating the sale of 72 Typhoons to Saudi Arabia and 60 to United Arab Emirates. Oil wealth and a potentially hostile Iran have made the Gulf States an attractive export market for the Typhoon, formerly called the Eurofighter” (The Guardian 20-Jun-13).

The previous month, October 2012, the British Defence Secretary Philip Hammond visited Bahrain to sign the UK-Bahrain defence cooperation treaty, which, among other things, continues the Royal Navy’s use of the Jufair naval base. Then in mid-December, General Sir David Richards, the UK Chief of Defence Staff gave the Royal United Services Institute Christmas Lecture where he spoke of Britain deploying UK military assets to some of the Gulf States and Jordan. It led to the headline: Defence chief signals major UK military presence in Gulf.

British troops and strike aircraft are to be based in the Gulf as part of the most significant new deployment of UK armed forces since Afghanistan.

“His speech was highly significant. It follows from what the Obama administration has been telling the Europeans—they have got to take more responsibility looking after the security of America’s gulf interests.”
interests not only of their own continent but those in the Middle East and Gulf.

“And it reflects David Cameron’s view that British interests—not least commercial ones, and arms sales in particular—lie among the emirates, sultanes, and kingdoms, of the Gulf.

“Though more conceptual work is needed, given the importance of the region and clear prime ministerial intent, I envisage two or more adaptable brigades forming close tactical level relationships with particular countries in the Gulf and Jordan, for example, allowing for better cooperation with their forces” (Guardian 18-Dec-12).

This was then followed by the report by the Royal United Services Institute Apr-13 entitled A return to the East of Suez to which we have already referred. Here are a few more quotes from it:

“Nevertheless, it remains the case that the scale of the military deployment being discussed is significant. The RAF is set to use the Al-Minhad air base in Dubai (currently used extensively in the logistics chain between the UK and Afghanistan) as a hub not only for the 2014 drawdown in Afghanistan, but as an overseas base of some standing in the future. The Royal Navy is also taking a more active interest in Bahrain, which is already home to the United Kingdom Maritime Component Command (UKMCC). Reports also suggest that senior army personnel are keen to build on their strong links with Oman. And the Emir of Qatar has reportedly been assured by Cameron of the UK’s commitment to the gas-rich emirate, with Doha a favoured location for UK military liaison and co-ordination activities in the Gulf.

“There is significantly more at stake in this renewed relationship than mere military posturing. By enhancing the UK’s relationships with the states of the southern Gulf, the UK is committing to the security and longevity of the Arab Gulf states.

“It seems that the UK is taking on this burden of underpinning security in the Gulf both out of necessity and of desire. Certainly, it is of considerable economic benefit to the UK to be the leading European—and, indeed, Western—player in the Gulf. And it is undeniable that the UK defence and policy establishment still finds it straightforward, enjoyable even, to engage with its equivalents in the Gulf in a way, perhaps, that has often eluded the Americans. There is also a ‘domestic’ military rationale for the UK in developing closer defence ties with the Gulf, given that the army’s imminent withdrawal from Germany will both curtail decades of experience of maintaining forces overseas and erode some of what has distinguished the UK military from its European counterparts.”

So, in a wonderful way we are seeing the reversal of the disastrous former British policies under Harold Wilson in the late 1960’s to withdraw troops from the Gulf, a move completed under Ted Heath in 1971.

Young lions stalking the Middle East
A) America and the Gulf States

The same report makes it clear that the US is not turning her back on the Gulf region; she has three important bases in the region with Qatar now one of her main centres. They also have troops stationed in Bahrain (home to the Fifth Fleet), Kuwait, Oman, UAE and Yemen. Overall in the Arabian Gulf region there are reportedly 40,000 American servicemen. She is investing heavily in boosting the defence capabilities of the Gulf States—and Israel—in lucrative arms deals.

The United States unveiled plans Friday to sell $10 billion worth of advanced missiles and aircraft to Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in a bid to counter the threat posed by Iran.

“It was highly unusual for the Pentagon to announce an arms deal covering three countries and the move seemed to be designed to send a warning to Iran that Washington’s partners in the region were beefing up their military power” (UPI 19-Apr-13).

This was another confirmation of the growing change of Arab states being involved in cooperating with Israel.

The Middle East region comes under military responsibility of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), part of the US military’s network of control.

The US exports to the region are soaring. “Based on just-released 2012 data and revised 2011 figures provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. goods exports to the

Unified Combatant Commands Map

22 nations of the Arab world increased from $56.18 billion in 2011 to $65.91 billion in 2012, an increase of 17.3 percent and the highest single-year sales volume ever. By comparison, total U.S. merchandise exports to the world increased by only 4.5 percent, from $1.48 trillion in 2011 to $1.55 trillion, in 2012” (National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce 11-Feb-13).

The US maintains pre-positioned equipment, avoiding having to bring supplies from America in time of conflict, in Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Kuwait—Many of the US troops withdrawn from Iraq are now based in Kuwait where the US is expanding her facilities, unveiling a further investment as part of a $25m project.

“The Defense Department has overseen a project to build a flight training facility in the Gulf Cooperation Council sheikdom. Kuwait has been hosting some 13,500 U.S. troops. The sheikdom has also been used as a U.S. military hub for operations in the NATO stabilization campaign in Afghanistan.

“The Pentagon has awarded a $7.2 million contract for construction at Al Mubarak Air Base in Kuwait.”

Bahrain—This is home to the American 5th Fleet and normally has at least one aircraft carrier docked or in the vicinity. Since 2010 the US is investing $580m on a 5 year expansion plan to double the size of the base.

Qatar—America has around 5,000 troops stationed here in three bases, one of which serves as the CENTCOM forward headquarters.

Oman and UAE—Important army, navy and air force bases.

B) Other Young Lions in the Gulf.

It is most remarkable that most of Britain’s former Empire members retain strong links to Israel and the Gulf region. The links with Israel are understandable: where Britain went, the Bible went too, with a Protestant understanding of the role of the Jewish people in the purpose of God. But their link to the Gulf States was not so automatic, yet we find many links.

India not only has strong links to Israel,
but her largest diaspora live in the Gulf region—the money they send home is an important boost to India’s economy. She buys half her oil from this region and has built up strong trade links and is one of the biggest customers of the Gulf States in non-oil products. As a merchant power herself, she has made several defence agreements with Gulf States. The headline in GeoStrategy direct (13-Mar-13) was: India reaching out to Persian Gulf states for ‘defense cooperation.’

_Australia_—has a big market for her cars in the Gulf; Saudi Arabia is her biggest export market. The UAE is her biggest trading partner in the region. There is a valuable export market in sheep and cattle to Bahrain which is about to be restarted after a hiatus. Bilateral trade stands at A$11bn—the Gulf States are keen to double that figure and a Gulf State Bank has been set up in Australia to facilitate this growth. The new Australian PM, Tony Abbott, would be expected to seek to boost Middle East trade. He is a strong supporter of Israel and seeks to increase trade links between the two countries.

**Britain still a strong Trading Power**

As well as military ties with the area, Britain has strong non-military trading links with the region. Britain has rebuilt her trading ties with the world in recent times. Around

“Banking, law firms, IT and other consultancies are selling well in non-EU countries. And because these countries are growing fastest, the services surplus is getting bigger. This means that Britain’s EU trade is being nudged further down the list. Yet the fact that links with the Americas and Asia are becoming closer is just a return to the commercial liaisons of the past” (Economist 18-Jun-13).

In fact, as Britain’s 2nd Quarter preliminary trade figures show, as Britain’s European trade continued to shrink, her overseas trade has surged—the exports to China are up 20% on a year ago. Hence, it is not too difficult to visualise Britain’s renewed interest in the Suez Canal—if European trade is on the decline and she seeks to re-establish her links to the East of Suez countries, then the Canal assumes growing importance.

A terrorist blocking of this vital waterway would have serious consequence for Britain’s markets. We consider in our Milestones Update the dramatic changes in Egypt, with the military having re-imposed control and are firmly breaking the power of the Muslim Brotherhood’s year-long control of Egypt. With Israeli help, the Egyptians are putting a stranglehold on terrorism in Sinai which poses a very serious threat to Suez shipping. Only last week there was an attack on a Chinese container ship in transit through the narrowest part of the Canal. No damage was done, but if their plans had succeeded, the Canal would have ground to a halt. The Egyptians have increased their security along the total length of the waterway. With so many changes in the Middle East, it is entirely possible for Britain to step in and help with the defence of this vital transit route. It would have been unthinkable when Egypt was under Muslim Brotherhood control, but if the military are using Israeli intelligence in their battle against terrorist threats against Egypt, then it does not seem too fanciful to see Britain operating again in Egypt.

_Egypt is seen as a key export market for Britain—understandably the recent troubles have considerably dampened Egypt’s trade, but it is anticipated to grow again under the hand of the military leaders. The UK is Egypt’s biggest investor, with over 900 UK firms here. BP who are very active in oil and gas exploration in Egypt have just announced a ‘significant gas discovery’ while drilling in deep waters in the eastern Nile Delta (UPI 09-Sep-13).

**Britain’s links to Israel and Jordan.**

We have concentrated mainly on Britain and the Gulf States. It is evident from Ezekiel’s words that Britain as the Tarshish power is concerned about what will envelop Israel when Gog invades. Britain has had strong links with the area and was instrumental to the events that lead to a Jewish homeland being set up. Although Britain’s relations with Israel cooled after the Suez Crisis, it is also very clear that relations have now very much warmed. In Milestones 2012 and in various Bible Magazine Updates we have looked at the recent drive by the British government to make Israel a key target market and to encourage Israeli entrepreneurs to come with their ideas to Britain. _The Jewish Chronicle_ (13-Jun-13) carried the headline:

**Record surge in Israel-UK Trade**

“Trade between Britain and Israel rose by 21.9 per cent year-on-year between the first quarter of 2012 and 2013. “The UK is Israel’s second largest export market. The US is the largest.”

David Cameron’s newly appointed Trade Minister, Ian Livingstone, takes up his role in December to “promote UK trade globally and attract investment in the British economy” and is “an active Jew and admirer of Israel.”

Britain has also been working with the US in Jordan, training the Jordanian troops in an effort to prevent the spill over of the Syrian war into neighbouring Jordan. The Muslim Brotherhood has considerable influence here, and King Abdullah is pleased to have the assistance of Britain and America in ensuring the stability of his kingdom. They have also been training the Jordanians in setting up refugee camps.

**American links to Jordan**

In June, Jordan was host to _Exercise Eager Lion_ 2013, 12 days of war games exercises that brought together land, sea and air forces from 19 countries involving 8,000 troops. “All are engaged in learning counterinsurgency techniques, fighting terrorism, non-standard warfare methods and border security” according to Israeli news (Arutz Sheva 17-Jun-13). Britain and Canada were participants in this exercise.

The Americans retained a considerable amount of equipment in Jordan after the exercise. The US has its own base in Jordan and underground headquarters for its operations in Syria.

“Top US soldier Gen. Martin Dempsey has just inaugurated Centcom’s Forward Command in Jordan manned by 273 US officers. This underground facility near Amman is linked to US, Israel, Jordanian and Saudi Air Force commands ready for an order from President Barack Obama to impose a partial no-fly zone over Syria.

“There are today some 1,000 US military personnel in the Hashemite Kingdom, plus a squadron of F-16 fighters and several Patriot anti-missile batteries strung along the Jordanian-Syrian border to shield
Jordanian and American bases and the capital, Amman” (Debka 17-Aug-13).

With America being the oldest and most powerful of the young lions and who has dominated the region, it is good to see that perhaps the pendulum is swinging back to reverse the balance, so that it will be not be “the young lions with the Merchants of Tarshish” as at present, but, as Ezekiel puts it, “the Merchants of Tarshish with all her young lions” (Ezek. 38:13 RV) who speak out in defence of Israel.

**Britain as King of the South**

The picture painted in Daniel ch. 11 of the time of the end is of there being 2 powers, described as the King of the North and the King of the South. These are rival powers and have their origins in an earlier chapter in Daniel, ch. 8, where different symbols are used to describe the situation in the Middle East between the Testaments. Daniel sees the triumph of the Greek goat over the Persian ram—a dramatic picture of Alexander the Greek conquering with great speed the Persian Empire. His early demise is seen in the breaking of the horn on the goat’s head (v. 8). Eventually 4 more horns came up (v. 8) as his Empire was divided amongst his generals and which history informs were reduced to just two—the Seleucid to the north and the Ptolemaic to the south. Israel was “piggy-in-the-middle” of these two rival powers. Out of one of them, again history tells us it was from the northern horn, a little horn emerged (v. 9)—the power of Rome—who was to take over the region and be the power that had Christ put to death (v. 11). This power was to continue until the time of the end, but meet its doom at the hands of the prince of princes (v. 25), even the returned Lord Jesus.

In Daniel ch. 11, the northern and the southern horns are introduced under the symbols of the King of the North and the King of the South. Then in verses 36 to 39, it introduces us to the power of Rome as the King who would exalt himself and magnify himself above all and is spoken of in chapter 8:9-12 as a little horn, growing out of the Northern, Seleucid, horn. Pagan Rome became “Christian” Rome under Constantine, who moved the seat of his government from Rome to Constantinople. The Emperor in Constantinople gave his support to the Bishop of Rome, which developed into the Papal system. Meanwhile, in Constantinople, the Greek Orthodox Church developed, following splits with the Papacy and when in 1453 the Turkish-Ottoman power took Constantinople, the things of the Emperor and the Orthodox religion moved to Moscow, which became known as the 3rd Rome. The third section runs from v. 40-45, and tells how that in these latter days there is to be a recreation of the Northern and Southern Greek Goat horn powers.

The critical verse is verse 40. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

So who is the him of v. 40? It refers back to the Constantinople-occupying King of v. 36-39. Taking our established view, Britain, in the role of the King of the South, occupied Egypt and Ethiopia/Sudan and from there pushed at the Turkish Power in World War I. This enabled the resettlement of Palestine by the Jews and led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. But Britain did not take Turkey—it is still there waiting for more than just a push this time, by the King of the North, (Russia together with her allies of Ezekiel 38 such as Persia/Iran). They will attack from the north and occupy Turkey and Constantinople. The King of the North will sweep onwards to occupy the rest of the former territory of the King of the North and push southward to occupy Egypt, the King of the South’s territory. Are we to see Britain in Egypt again? Quite likely—it would be a very fitting re-enactment of what happened in the past, when the power of Egypt was swallowed up by the Northern King.

The picture in Daniel 11:43 is of Egypt having treasures of gold and silver and precious things which is hardly a picture of a country in abject poverty. It would appear that Egypt prospers during the yet future time of peace and prosperity for Israel. Israel, the Gulf States and Egypt working together is the picture the prophets indicated, with the overwhelming hand of Britain and her allies. A picture which probably lies beyond the return of Christ to his household, but obviously just prior to Gog’s invasion of the region, when countries like Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Israel are swallowed up—but only for a brief time. Zion’s King will go forth to save his nation and in defeating the nations gathered in Israel, will bring liberty to the surrounding nations, who early on submit to his rulership, and Israel’s now exalted position.

We can have confidence in our long anticipated understanding of prophecy concerning the latter-days. We need patience to await the final steps that will bring all the pieces of the prophetic jigsaw into their appropriate places.

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**Alexander’s early demise is seen in the breaking of the horn on the goat’s head (v. 8). Eventually 4 more horns came up (v. 8); his Empire was divided among his generals**
It was not without some reason that ancient Tyre of the Phoenicians considered itself to be the ruler of the waves. Her borders, boundary and frontier were on the high seas. “Thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots” (Ezekiel 27:8). These wise men guided and navigated the ‘ship of state.’

As her ships sailed the seas, they were an extension of Tyre itself and spread themselves abroad. What Scripture tells us about them being “a merchant of the people for many isles” and coastlands is confirmed by history. The McGraw-Hill History tells us:

“They were enterprising explorers and colonists, founding trading posts on the coasts and islands of the whole Mediterranean, from Cyprus to Sardinia and Sicily, from Spain and France to Africa, where Carthage, founded in 814 B.C., grew into a considerable independent kingdom. They used the Pole Star for their observations, and are said to have circumnavigated Africa, and to have reached as far north as Cornwall in search of lead and tin.”

In her book The Encircled Sea (1990) the Israeli writer Sarah Arenson says:

“With the advance of the Bronze Age, hugging the coast became impractical. As early as the second millennium B.C., the Phoenicians were practising direct crossings to the African shores and beyond Gibraltar, although the details of their ventures there were kept secret and have not reached us. They are confirmed by the spread of their colonies west of Gibraltar and by the presence of tin as a major item of their international trade. Through the Red Sea, they carried on regular traffic to Arabia and East Africa. Around 600 B.C., they were believed to have circumnavigated Africa, as Herodotus tells us (4:42).”

Arenson translates the passage from Herodotus as follows:

“Africa, except where it borders Asia, is clearly surrounded by water. Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt around 600 B.C., was the first we know of to demonstrate this. When he finished digging out the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea (one of the precursors of the Suez Canal), he sent out a naval expedition manned by the Phoenicians, instructing them to come home by way of the straits of Gibraltar into the Med., and in that fashion get back to Egypt. So, setting out from the Red Sea, the Phoenicians sailed into the Indian Ocean. Each autumn they put in at whatever part of Africa they happened to be sailing by, sowed the soil, stayed there until harvest time, reaped the grain, and went on; so that two years passed, and it was not until the third that they rounded the Pillars of Hercules and made it back to Egypt. And they reported things which others can believe if they want, but I cannot, namely that in sailing around Africa they had the sun on the right side.”

It is interesting to ponder how it was that Pharaoh Necho knew that such a voyage was even possible. What was the source of his information? Whilst we cannot answer that question, we do know that trade was conducted along the Red Sea and from Arabia to India. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz (Sept 4, 2013) reported the discovery of 3,000 year old Phoenician jars at Tel Dor containing traces of cinnamon—and the nearest source for that spice would have been southern India. So this suggests trading links between Phoenicia and India. If the merchants of Tyre reached India, there is no reason to doubt that they would have sailed around Africa as claimed by Herodotus. The scepticism of modern scholars in regards to the range of Phoenician travel, whether north in the Atlantic, or south into the Indian Ocean, simply demonstrates the lack of understanding which these scholars have of the past. The Bible tells us that the pilots from Tyre were wise men whose frontiers were the high seas!

The Phoenicians are known to have kept their trade secrets to themselves. We still do not know the full extent of their operations. As their power receded and the Romans began to discover some of their activities and know-how, other aspects of it were lost.

It is high time for us to realize that the ancients were not so stupid and “primitive” as they have been made out to be. Perhaps they took three years to circumnavigate Africa, whereas this present writer was able to accomplish it in three months or
The ancient Phoenician traders could have reached the British Isles by sea and circumnavigated Africa? While the evidence is that they did, there have been those who have either denied it or who have cast doubt upon the claim and even mocked it.

So it is reasonable to ask, could they have done so? Would these primitive sailors have been capable of such long voyages? The question is of special interest to those who study Bible prophecy and who have identified the Biblical Tarshish with Britain in the north west, and with India and Africa in the east and south. If this identification is correct, then there are solid grounds for believing that Britain, India and Africa have a prominent part to fulfill in the latter days.

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep” (Psalm 107:23-24).

Tarshish of course was the source of “all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded” in the markets of Tyre (Ezekiel 27:12). The British Isles could certainly have provided these materials. But we also read of another Tarshish in 2 Chronicles 9:21:

“For the king’s ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Huram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.”

The ships “went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram” on voyages which took three years, bringing back the products of either India or Africa—and perhaps both. Adam Clark in his commentary notes: “went to Africa—Targum.” Smith’s Dictionary (1863 edtn) says that:

“... the reasonable answer seems to be India, or the Indian Islands. This is shown by the nature of the imports with which the fleet returned, which are specified as “gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks” (1 K. x. 22). The gold might possibly have been obtained from Africa, or from Ophir

By Paul Billington

Beale is now Planning a voyage to Burma

The circumnavigation of Africa

Reconstructed Phoenician ship sails the oceans

Replica of a Phoenician trading ship under construction in Arwad, Syria
The ship named *Phoenicia* was launched from Arwad, Syria with Philip Beale taking her on a voyage that was to circumnavigate Africa over a two year period:

“The voyage was 20,000 miles in total and took *Phoenicia* from the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Republic of Yemen in January 2009, and then from the Horn of Africa up to the west coast of Africa, reaching the Straits of Gibraltar before sailing back to Syria in October 2010.”

Beale not only took the *Phoenicia* round Africa, proving that the statement by ancient historian Herodotus was perfectly feasible, but he has also taken it north to Britain where it formed a focus in the Southampton Boat Show. An exhibition at the Boat Show testified to “the Phoenicians being an advanced civilization for their time... The Phoenicians developed the earliest form of maritime insurance and pioneered trading from one continent to another, which formed the basis of their international wealth and power... Exhibits included an example of pegged mortise and tenon joints (known to the Romans as the Phoenician joint) and iron nails... They were originally developed by the Phoenicians to make robust seaworthy ships capable of withstanding the worst of the elements.” “They had knowledge of astrology and currents,” says Beale.

“Along with their sophisticated seafaring skills, the Phoenicians were renowned as an intellectual and industrious civilization who helped develop the alphabet we still use today. Highly skilled in metalwork, ivory carving and glass-making, the name Phoenician derives from the iconic purple colour they used to dye their superior textiles.”

As Ron Kidd has pointed out elsewhere in this issue of *The Bible Magazine* (Page 9), there is to be a modern day Tyre/Tarshish, and in seeking to identify it “the accumulative evidence points strongly in the direction of Britain.”

**The Latter Day Tarshish**

It is relevant to our subject to notice what others have deciphered from the prophetic word with regard to those that go down to the sea in ships during these latter days. For example, George Stanley Faber whose *Dissertation on the Prophecies* was published in 1806, in writing...
about the restoration of the Jews concluded that “the Jews will begin to be restored by the great maritime power of the age.” He wrote that “The isles of the sea, and the ships of Tarshish must begin the great work of the restoration of the Jews.”

Faber based his remarks upon the passage from Isaiah 60:9 which reads:

“So all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord...The isles of the sea, and the ships of Tarshish shall bring their merchandise unto thee. They shall be unto thee for corn, and for water, and for the wheat, and for the wine, and for the oil, and for the sheep, and for the oxen, and for the swine, and for horses, and for chariots, and for晌s, and for men, and for the brave nation. And the nations shall be thy servants, and also thou shalt know the Lord. For thou shalt be a consecrated Lord unto me, and every one that sacrificeth to me shall be as consecrated vessels. For as the gold among the filth, so shalt thou be among my people...I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. The isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish and G地位 great maritime power of the age.” He wrote more specific. The following paragraph

Bein more specific. The following paragraph

From Isaiah 60:9 which reads:

“Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons together. The name of the Lord thy God, and of the house of Judah first, that the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.” If Judah then is to be saved first, it is evident that the division, which Zechariah terms Judah, will be restored by the maritime power before the other division, which he terms the house of David and Jerusalem.”

So his conclusion was (and this was published 207 years ago): “The great maritime power of the day shall take the lead in the restoration of Judah.”

John Thomas (Elpis Israel 1848) is much more specific. The following paragraph

penned by him demonstrates a remarkable grasp of the prophetic word:

“But to what part of the world shall we look for a power whose interests will make it willing, as it is able, to plant the ensign of civilization upon the mountains of Israel? The reader will, doubtless, anticipate my reply from what has gone before. I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt. The present decisions of “statesmen” are destitute of stability. A shooting star in the political firmament is sufficient to disturb all the forces of their system; and to nullify all the theories of the political astronomy. The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them.”

The latter day “ships of Tarshish” were thus identified with Britain, and her part in the early restoration of the Jews to Palestine.

The Works of the LORD

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep” (Psalm 107:23-24).

Britain has certainly seen the works of the LORD! The nation has witnessed the work of Israel’s restoration—a work that was clearly foretold in the Bible, and which former generations of Britons recognized and wrote about. Joseph Mede in 1649 wrote about it, as did Sir Isaac Newton (1700) and Thomas Newton (1754), Alexander Keith (1839), H. Grattan Guinness (1880) and many, many more. The knowledge of these things influenced the rulers of the land; people like Prime Minister Lloyd George and Arthur James Balfour—and even Winston Churchill. “These saw the works of the LORD.” As Tyre of old heard the wisdom of Solomon, so Britain was given the Book which was called “the secret of England’s Greatness.” But like Phoenician Tyre Britain turned away from the source of her wisdom and strength, and as a result, stormy winds were raised against her, and immigrants from many nations have come up against her “as the sea causeth his waves to come up” (Ezekiel 26:3; Psalm 107:25), so she is swamped by them! Waves and waves of peoples from the sea of nations so that the British are at their wit’s end!

But all this has a purpose, for:

“But then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psa. 107:28-31).

“Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD” (Psa. 107:43).
“Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God” Deut. 31:12.

Neville Clark  
(Tea Tree Gully, S. Australia)  
ABRAHAM  
Father of the Faithful  
Young People’s Session:  
As for adults

David Nicholls  
(Gorseinon, South wales, U.K.)  
“Under whose wings thou art come to Trust”  
Young People’s Session:  
“Redemption in Christ”

Tim Osborne  
(Okanagan, B.C.)  
The Epistle of James:  
Reflections on the Lord’s Ministry  
Young People’s Session: As for Adults

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OR BY PHONE: 905-820-5209 (Sister Linda Cadieux)
Visitors to the seaside town of Llandudno will rarely have their minds focussed upon the Bible or upon the ancient trade that was once carried out in the area by Bronze age sea traders, yet as a local newspaper recently reported: “...the Great Orme copper mines uncovered in 1987, date back 4,000 years to the Bronze Age... Mining engineers, cavers and archaeologists have been uncovering more tunnels and surface landscape in the Great Orme Mines to reveal what is now thought to be the largest Prehistoric mine ever discovered on earth.” This takes us back to Bible times, and to the days of the Phoenician merchants of Tyre.

Another discovery that links Llandudno’s Great Orme to ancient times has been a stone circle similar to that of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, reinforcing the conclusion that there was a community on the Orme during Bronze Age times, and (says a report) strengthens “its claim to be one of the most important archaeological sites in Europe. Already the Great Orme Copper Mines, less than a mile from the stone circle, have been acclaimed as one of the most important prehistoric mining sites in the world.”

Copper was the main ingredient in the composition of bronze. This was made up of 90 percent copper and 10 percent tin. Whereas there were many sources of copper in the ancient world, the supply of tin was less plentiful—but in Britain both
ingredients were found—copper on the Great Orme and tin in Cornwall. Now that we begin to appreciate the extent of the copper mining that took place in North Wales, it would seem quite reasonable to conclude that as both tin and copper were mined and smelted in the British Isles, they would have contributed in a major way to the bronze industry in that age.

**The Tin Islands**

The 17th century writer Samuel Bochart in his “Geographic Sacra” (1646) says that the Phoenicians obtained tin from Cornwall, and that the name of Britannia was first applied to them, as the name means ‘the land of tin’ or metals. Bochart was doubtless basing his conclusion on a passage from Herodotus who wrote his history in the mid 5th century BC and within about 100 years of the prophet Ezekiel. Herodotus wrote that he did not know “anything of the existence of islands called the Tin Islands, whence we get our tin... (and) in spite of my efforts to do so, I have never found anyone who could give me first-hand information of the existence of a sea beyond Europe to the north and west. Yet it cannot be disputed that tin and amber do come to us from what one might call the ends of the earth” (Herodotus Histories, Penguin Classics).

The location of these ‘tin islands’ was confirmed by the First Century Greek writer Diodorus Siculus who provided a useful description of the mining and trade of Cornish tin.

Diodorus’ account is thought to derive from the lost work of Pytheas of Massalia, a Greek who circumnavigated the British Isles in the 4th century. Diodorus’ account refers to Belerion (Cornwall) as the promontory of Britain where they got the tin, from where it was moved to an island called Ictis, signifying ‘tin port’, where merchants could purchase it. It is thought that St. Michael’s Mount off Penzance in Cornwall is the “Ictis” of antiquity.

The British Museum website (britishmuseum.org) has this to say:

“The major Phoenician cities were Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Arwad. These cities represented a confederation of fiercely independent maritime traders. By the late eighth century BC, the Phoenicians had founded trading posts and colonies around the entire Mediterranean, the greatest of which was Carthage on the north coast of Africa (present day Tunisia). Explorers and traders from Carthage even ventured beyond the Straits of Gibraltar as far as Britain in search of tin.”

Now at the same time that tin was being produced in Cornwall copper was being mined in considerable quantities on the Great Orme and in other parts of North Wales, so the necessary metals for bronze were both being produced in the British Isles at the time when world markets were demanding it. Are we to believe that the Phoenician merchants overlooked the supply in North Wales? God says of Tyre:

“Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches” (Ezekiel 28:3-5).

**Copper Mining**

In Genesis 4:22 we learn of Tubal-Cain who was “an instructer of every artificer in brass (i.e. copper) and iron.” So from remotest antiquity men have worked with metal, and mining activity has a long history. Prehistoric copper mines have been found in many countries, and most notably in the Balkans, Austria and Spain. Britain and Ireland, long regarded as prolific centres of Bronze Age metallurgy, were also major sources of copper. The best known of early copper mines is that which is located on the Great Orme, a limestone headland near Llandudno on the North Wales coast.

As a young boy growing up and going to school in the Llandudno area, this writer was
familiar with several legends and accounts of mining on the Great Orme, but it is only in more recent years that the antiquity and scale of copper mining on the Orme has become known. As the recent North Wales newspaper quoted earlier reported, “the Great Orme Mines reveal what is now thought to be the largest prehistoric mine ever discovered on earth.” The background is given by William O’Brien in the booklet *Bronze Age Copper Mining in Britain and Ireland* (Shire Publications 1996):

“The modern period of investigation at the Orme began in 1976 with underground exploration carried out by Duncan James under Bryniau Poethion. James identified primitive tunnel workings filled with ancient rock debris containing stone hammers and bone tools. Charcoal from this sediment was radiocarbon-dated to 1410-922 BC, thus providing the first scientific evidence of bronze age mining in Britain. Detailed underground exploration began in 1987–8, led by the Great Orme Exploration Society, which discovered a major complex of bronze age mine tunnels in the Pyllau valley. A programme of surface excavation carried out by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in 1989 around the Vivian’s Shaft area has provided further radiocarbon dates and a detailed insight into the development of this important bronze age mine. When the Great Orme Mine Company was formed in 1990 a visitor centre was opened which has grown to become one of the major tourist attractions in Wales.

“Bronze age copper mining on the Great Orme is of a scale previously unknown in Britain or Ireland. While the true extent of this complex site remains to be assessed, bronze age mine workings have been identified over an area of some 24,000 square metres, with underground passages totalling some 5 km in length and workings to a vertical depth of 70 metres. One estimate has placed total rock extraction in the bronze age in excess of 40,000 cubic metres. This scale of mining is directly related to the soft geology of the dolomitised limestone, which allowed the bronze age miners to tunnel in comparative safety against the hard limestone rock. Not surprisingly, radiocarbon dates reveal a long history of bronze age mining spanning a one thousand year period from 1700-700 BC as miners moved from surface to deeper underground workings.”

*Ships that Carried Metals*

The coast around the south west peninsula of Britain is littered with shipwrecks, many bearing evidence of the tin trade. In 1992, 42 tin ingots, were found in a wreck at Bigbury Bay, South Devon and the Royal Cornwall Museum houses a copper and tin ingot found off Looe Island (Lammana), Cornwall, authenticated as 2,000 years old. Also in 1992 a 3,000 year old boat was discovered in Dover, England. Archaeologists believe that the boat was used for cross-channel transport as well as for coastal trading. Traces of copper, tin and shale were found in the boat. The Dover boat is mentioned in an internet article which described the trade with Llandudno during the Bronze Age:

“Llandudno’s beaches first became sea ports thousands of years ago. We can gain some idea of what sort of vessels would have been visiting the beaches from discovery of the Bronze Age boat found in Dover which sailed around the British coast 3500 years ago. It was beautifully made of carved oak planks over 12m long stitched together with bindings made of yew.

“Part of a Phoenician anchor found not too far away on the Llyn peninsular provides evidence of pre Roman trading vessels from the Mediterranean in the North Wales area” (see left).

An article in the National Geographic magazine suggests that the Phoenicians may have used smaller boats to ferry cargo to galleys waiting offshore, and this may well have been the case with some of the smaller boats found around Britain.

*A Fable agreed Upon?*

Whilst it is true that conventional historians have resisted the Cornwall-Phoenician connection and have sometimes ignored evidence that leads to the ancient trading links with Britain, that evidence continues to accumulate. One reason for the resistance to the link has been the connection with the lands of the Bible and its religious association. Barbara Tuchman in her book *Bible and Sword* calls it “A Fable Agreed Upon” yet she places much of the evidence before her readers. She writes:

“Though not proved beyond all doubt, the Phoenician link is well within the realm of probability, but it is not so much its inherent probability as its association with a known people of antiquity, real figures from the Old Testament, that explains the passionate conviction with which British historians defend it.”

What turns probability into certainty here is the conviction in the truth of the Bible. The Bible is the most reliable and the most accurate history book in existence. As Jesus says in John 17:17, “Thy word is truth,” and as the apostle Paul wrote (2 Timothy 3:16) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” This applies to details of history just as it does to doctrine and instruction in righteousness. The present age of unbelief has hardened men’s hearts and minds so that true history is relegated to the realm of tradition and legend when it is linked to the Bible. This blinds men and women from the truth, and
Phoenicians trading merchandise for tin ingots with ancient Britain.

Picture copyright from Look & Learn
consequently from gaining that confirmation which arises from faith and the knowledge of God.

But as the apostle Peter expressed it: “We have not followed cunningly devised fables.” The truth is endorsed by both Scripture and the facts of history. The Phoenician city of Tyre was “a merchant of the people for many isles” says Ezekiel the prophet (chapter 27:3). One of these “isles” is then mentioned in verse 12,

“Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.”

We cannot shut our eyes to the accumulated evidence that is now available to us. Although a sign saying, “Welcome to Tarshish” has not been found, we can say that trading links certainly did exist between the Phoenician Tyre and ancient Britain. Only a stubborn prejudice would deny it.

So what Evidence is there?

The Great Orme at Llandudno is big enough for all to see, and the copper mines located there are physical evidence in themselves. The amount of copper metal produced from the Great Orme mines suggest that it was one of the largest industrial sites in the ancient world. It has been estimated that over 1,700 tonnes of copper were extracted from this location—and there are still several areas of the mine that have not yet been surveyed.

As an article in the Archaeology Magazine stated “the Bronze Age copper mines on the Great Orme Head appear to be the most extensive hitherto discovered anywhere in the world.”

And where was all this copper and tin sold? Who were the customers? The answer given to us by staff on the Great Orme site was quite direct: The Mediterranean countries and the Middle East.

Now consider the following:

• The origin of the name “Tarshish” is found in Genesis 10:4-5, where we learn that Tarshish was a son of Javan and inhabited “the isles of the Gentiles.”

• Jonah, in attempting to flee to Tarshish from Israel boarded a ship at the port of Joppa (on the Mediterranean coast)—Jonah 1:3. This would indicate that Tarshish lay in the west.

• Tarshish was a long distance away—it was “afar off”—Isa. 23:6-7.

• Tarshish traded with Tyre, the ancient capital of the Phoenicians—Ezekiel 27:12.

• Tarshish provided the Phoenicians (Tyre) with “silver, iron, tin and lead” (Ezekiel 27:12). Tarshish then, was a distant land that lay in the west where such metals were found.

• The ancient historian Herodotus who wrote about 450 BC (within 100 years of Ezekiel’s time) and whose writings have survived, wrote about the “tin islands,” in a sea north and west beyond Europe.

• The Phoenicians of Tyre were the great mariners of the ancient world and “a mart of nations” (Isaiah 23:3; Ezekiel 27:3-4). The McGraw-Hill World History says: “They used the Pole Star for their observations, and are said to have circumnavigated Africa, and to have reached as far north as Cornwall in search of lead and tin.”

• Ezekiel says (chapter 27:12, Revised Version) that Tarshish “traded for thy wares.” That is, for the “wares” or merchandise offered by the Phoenicians of Tyre. The Phoenicians were particularly famous for their dyed cloth known as ‘Tyrian purple’ (c/p Ezekiel 27:7; Jeremiah 10:9).

From an examination of literature on this subject it seems that since about the early 1960’s a serious antipathy has developed towards this idea of Phoenicians (Tyre of the Bible and its colony in Carthage) having contact with Britain and trading for metals. The story was put about that Bible-believing English men, hungry for some kind of identity with Bible lands, built up the notion in order to feed their
trading people of the Mediterranean area in its place. The fact is that substituting “Mediterranean” or even dropping references to “Phoenician” and some have sought to compromise by obstinate facts stand in the way however, so interpreted and explained differently. Certain the Truro Museum. A museum booklet states: how old this ingot is. Today it can be seen in near St. Mawes, Cornwall. It is not known lbs. was dredged up in the Falmouth estuary between about 1000 BC and 300 BC were the Phoenicians of Tyre. After the fall of Tyre to Alexander the Great the Phoenicians, operating out of Carthage, still ran their business in the western Mediterranean until that was gradually eroded during the Punic wars. In Ezekiel’s time however the Phoenicians of Tyre—whatever we want to call them—were the trading people that would have been concerned. Any “silver, iron, tin and lead” entering the Mediterranean area from Britain would inevitably come into the hands of the Phoenicians.

In 1823 a tin ingot weighing nearly 160 lbs. was dredged up in the Falmouth estuary near St. Mawes, Cornwall. It is not known how old this ingot is. Today it can be seen in the Truro Museum. A museum booklet states: “Were this ingot Roman or medieval, one would expect a different shape, a different weight and a variety of identification marks upon it... it is a reasonable assumption to think that the river Fal ingot is prehistoric.”

It is difficult to escape from all this evidence. The identity of Ezekiel’s Tarshish with the British Isles is very reasonable and the connection has been made by many different writers and historians. As can be seen from several maps that have been produced, and as can be seen a growing number of modern historians support this general conclusion.

What now seems clear is that as Cornwall and tin have pointed to a Phoenician/British trading link, so now Llandudno and copper reveal a trading connection with the Biblical Tyre “the mart of nations.”

The Antikythera Mechanism

The mechanism shown (right) was discovered on a shipwreck found by a group of sponge divers in 1900, and is said by experts to have been made around 100 B.C. The instructions for the mechanism were written in Koine Greek, but the quality of its manufacture suggests that it may have had undiscovered predecessors.

Made of bronze components, the device has been called the first known analog computer and was designed to calculate astronomical positions, although its purpose was not understood until a century after its discovery. It is now kept in the National Archaeology Museum in Athens.

The Antikythera mechanism was found on the wreck of a cargo ship, and would have been used as a navigational aid. It uses ratios related to Babylonian astronomy. The shipwreck was found off Point Glyphadia on the Greek island of Antikythera.

Canaanites are Phoenicians

So how far did the Phoenicians travel? We are apt to think that the ancients were primitive cave men and ignorant of the global scene. This may be so in some cases but if we believe what the Bible tells us we might find reasons for thinking otherwise. We are told (Genesis 4:17) that Cain “built a city;” this is not what cave men were supposed to do! Not only that but he called the name of the city “Enoch” after his son—and “Enoch” (Chanowk: initiated—Strong & Gesenius; to instruct Davidson) carries the idea of education and so we find very early in the history of mankind a society that possessed building and architectural skills, as well as a knowledge of metalwork (Genesis 4:22). It had certain cultural refinements such as music (verse 21). Where did such knowledge come from? It was either developed or it was past on to them by their forefathers or by the Elohim (angels).

In Genesis chapter 10 we are told that after the great deluge, it was from the families of the sons of Noah that the nations were divided (verse 32). In chapter 11 we are told that from Babel “did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (verse 9). The Hebrew Tanach has—“HASHEM scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Gesenius “the whole, totality”).

We are not told just how these people travelled, just that the LORD scattered them abroad. This implies that they were sent, rather than just wandering off. How did they make their way across land and sea? They were either forced out and then guided by providence, or they were instructed. Either way, men had acquired the skills and knowledge necessary for navigation and long-distance travel very early. In Genesis 10 we learn that Canaan was a son of Ham (verse 6), and that he begat Sidon his firstborn (verse 15). Sidon is one of the cities of the Canaanites, later called Phoenicians, and verse 18 says “... afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.” Here, the Hebrew according to Gesenius is “to disperse selves.”—compare Isaiah 23:7, “her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.” According to the Bible it seems that there was a high level of knowledge and sophistication among earliest civilizations.
This would have been quickly lost as men turned away from God.

In his book *The Interpretation of Radium* (1909) by Frederick Soddy (Glasgow University), we read the following:

“... it is interesting and harmless to speculate whether man has shared with the world its more remote history.

“Some of the beliefs and legends which have come down to us from antiquity are so universal and deep-rooted that we are accustomed to consider them almost as old as the race itself. One is tempted to inquire how far the unsuspected aptness of some of these beliefs and sayings to the point of view so recently disclosed is the result of mere chance or coincidence, and how far it may be evidence of a wholly unknown and unsuspected ancient civilisation of which all other relic has disappeared...

“I prefer to believe it may be an echo from one of many previous epochs in the unrecorded history of the world, of an age of men which have trod before the road we are treading today, in a past possibly so remote that even the very atoms of its civilisation literally have had time to disintegrate.

“Let us give the imagination a moment’s further free scope in this direction, however, before closing. What if this point of view that has now suggested itself is true, and we may trust ourselves to the slender foundation afforded by the traditions and superstitions which have been handed down to us from a prehistoric time? can we not read into them some justification for the belief that some former forgotten race of men attained not only to the knowledge we have so recently won, but also to the power that is not yet ours?”

What was it that Solomon said?

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10).

Another writer said, “... in the dawn of history, a civilization existed which was at least as advanced as our own.” Although our inclination might be to dismiss such statements, we have to recognize that there are things which as yet remain unexplained.

For example, how are the ancient copper mines in North America explained? As one website tells us:

“Sites near Lake Superior are dotted with small pits, typically 15 to 20 feet in diameter but only 6 to 7 feet deep. About 5,000 of these copper mines have been identified, believed to have started between 7th to 5th millennium BC, with the major period of extraction between 3,000 and 1,200 BC. Therefore, North American copper mining was active during the peak of the Phoenician maritime trade network, from 1550 BC to 300 BC.

“It has been claimed that up to 1 billion pounds of copper was extracted in the New World. This figure is seen as extremely high, the most conservative estimates suggesting somewhere in the region of 20 million pounds. Given the volume of ore removed and the likely concentration of metal it contained more recent estimates suggest a maximum of some 80 million pounds of copper.

“Yet conventional wisdom asserts that the copper extracted from the Lake Superior mines was used to make artifacts from the so-called Old Copper culture, from which a total of some 20,000 objects are known to exist in museums and private collections, estimated to weigh around 10,000 pounds, a mere fraction of the total amount mined even if we accept the most conservative estimate of 20 million pounds. Where did all the copper go?”

Others have claimed that there is evidence of ancient copper mines in Queensland area: but is it possible?

The prophet predicts that the maritime supremacy of ancient Tyre would migrate westwards; “Pass ye over to Tarshish... her own feet shall carry her far off to sojourn” (verses 6-7). When Tyre was destroyed—first by Nebuchadnezzar and then by Alexander the Great—the commerce of the “ships of Tarshish” moved west in accordance with the requirement of Isaiah’s prophecy. The historical progress of this commercial centre is easily traced from the original Tyre and Sidon to “Chittim” (Isaiah 23:12—Cyprus), to Alexandria (Acts 27:6; 28:11), Carthage, Venice, Lisbon and finally—following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 to Britain. Britain is therefore, the latter day “daughter of Tyre,” and still holds the same position as her ancestor did in the commercial world. So it is then, that when we come to Ezekiel 38, we see a reference to “the merchants of Tarshish.” This is the “mart of nations” when Gog comes upon Israel and the trading alliance in the latter days. The trading link between the Tarshish alliance and the Middle East is the preliminary step towards making Israel herself the religious and commercial centre of the world under the reign of the returned Jesus Christ.

Some hold a far-fetched theory that the ancients reached North America & mined copper in the Great Lakes area: but is it possible?
Little by little, openly or subtly, ungodly philosophies are being put across to our children and to the community at large.

Our urgent need is to strengthen our family ties around the Word of the living God. When the blessings of the faithful man were described by the Psalmist the central picture was a family grouped around a common table (Psalm 128:3). The father had brought in from the field the labour of his hands, abundantly blessed of Yahweh (v. 2). His faithful and fruitful wife was “by the sides of his house” (v. 3), a keeper of the home (Titus 2:5), one in whom “the heart of her husband could safely trust” (Prov. 31:11). This family was totally independent of the philosophies of the heathen world and every influence was Israelitish and directed by the parents. In the picture presented, the children are intriguingly spoken of as “olive plants round about thy table.” Olive shoots spring up around the parent tree. They have only one value as the wood, though hard, is very slow growing and so twisted in its grain that no use has ever been found for it. This tree has only one use—the production of that precious oil which provided the light for the Holy Place of the Temple of God in which the priests officiated.

These sprightly little olive shoots are our children, the precious heritage of Yahweh who, alone in this mad world, are learning the secret of producing the oil of the Word. No other tree can synthesis olive oil; no other children have the blessed opportunity to ‘naturally’ comprehend the Truth of the Word and make it shine like those from our Christadelphian families. The Psalmist’s family was attached to Zion, no doubt attending the annual feasts that confirmed their fellowship in the congregation of Israel (v. 5). Likewise faith-building activities, such as Bible Schools, special efforts and study days, will be strongly supported by those who are anxious to build their families in the Truth. This will supplement their personal Bible study and reading of the pioneer works of the Truth.

So long ago David enquired of God “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do” (Psalm 11:3)? How our troubled world leads us to the same question today! The eye which sees the depth of the prevailing evil must then look above these things and see God’s hand in all our circumstances: “In Yahweh put I my trust” said David, “The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men” (v. 1, 3).

Everything is under control, and we can overcome, with our families, if we put our trust in our God.

“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”—Acts 2:40

Behold how advanced are the days of our pilgrimage. Our redemption surely is near at hand! Whilst we truly live in a wicked generation, our heavenly Father has wonderfully blessed us with the knowledge of the times. The political heavens are full of the signs of the times.

But how shall we deliver ourselves from the rushing tide of the nations going headlong to destruction? Draw ourselves with our children around the Word of God and make its lessons live. Teach them what to look for and the significance of the times in which our lives are cast. Let us be about our ecclesial affairs, building faith and love in all the members of our meetings and boldly exhorting against the brash and profane manners of the rising generation. We must not conform. We must resist every step which seeks under all plausible human wisdom to change the standards of our behaviour and decorum. The ways thereof are the ways of death.

And since, in the blessings of our heavenly Father, we have the message of the times, let us pursue a vigorous proclamation of a true Gospel and be prepared personally to give an answer of the hope that is within us, with meekness and with fear.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him:

Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
For evildoers shall be cut off:
But those that wait upon the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be:
Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

But the meek shall inherit the earth;
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:7-11).
On May 14th, 1948 two different and conflicting statements were made with reference to the Jewish State that came into existence on that day. The Declaration of independence read by David Ben Gurion said:

"Accordingly we, members of the people’s council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement... hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel... It will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel..."

The other statement, issued by the Vatican and reported in L’Osservatore Romano on the same day was as follows:

"Modern Zionism is not the true heir of biblical Israel, but a secular state... Therefore the Holy Land and its sacred sites belong to Christianity, the true Israel."

Here are two positions; two views of the Jewish State which are reflected in Christian attitudes towards Israel today. One view is inspired by a recognition of those Biblical prophecies which speak of the restoration of Israel, and the other view results from a Roman Catholic doctrine known as “Replacement Theology.” expressed in the Vatican statement (left) on May 14, 1948.

The issue was clearly stated by the author, Avro Manhattan in his book The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance (1982).

“Although deliberately muted in public pronouncements, behind the Zionist banner there was to be found the ancient messianic hope for the coming of a global theocracy, as predicted by all the seers and prophets of Zion...

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

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

Although a smiling and congenial Pope may make friendly overtures towards Israel today, the reality is that Rome quietly and effectively uses her considerable influence behind the scenes in such a way as to further the objective of removing Israel altogether from Bible lands. The Vatican’s many agreements with the PLO and the countless papal audiences with Palestinian leaders testifies to this political fact.

The Vatican’s worst fears were realized in 1967 when Israel gained control of all Jerusalem and the West Bank (the Biblical Judea and Samaria). Events since then, and the phenomenal growth of Religious Zionism on the mountains of Israel have become a nightmare for Rome’s priests and their Vatican. But many Christians today are ignorant and unaware of these realities—even many Believers who ought to know.

A Secular State?

To say that Israel today is merely a secular state, a nation of atheists and irreligious is to reflect that Roman Catholic doctrine which has been implanted into Christian sects, and which is amplified by Catholic journalists, authors and broadcasters. As anyone knows who has spent time in Israel and knows the people who live there, such a view does not represent the true facts on the ground. It is not the full picture. Although Israel was established as a democratic political nation in 1948 and does not present itself to the world as a country with a religious constitution, the religion of Judaism is never far from the surface. The Declaration of the State was read out by David Ben Gurion on Friday may 14th out of respect for “the sanctity of the Jewish sabbath” and closed with a reference to “Tsur Yisrael” (the Rock of Israel).

But whatever the original character of the nation might have been in its early years there can be no doubt that a significant change took place under the premiership of Menachem Begin (1977 to 1983). The wars of 1967 and 1973 had a great impact, and it was during this period that Israel saw the birth of Religious Zionism as a political force, and the establishment of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (known as the West Bank).

A Semi-Theocracy!

In December 2009 the Israeli Justice Minister, Yaakov Neeman created a furore when he stated that the modern State of Israel should be based upon Torah Law! In response an article by Gideon Levy appeared in the Haaretz newspaper under the heading: “Let’s face the Facts, Israel is a Semi-Theocracy.” The article gave a view of Israel which few people are aware of. Levy wrote: “Only 44 percent of Israelis define themselves as secular, as opposed to 64 percent of Swedes who define themselves as atheists; and this is reflected in all aspects of our daily life. A mezuzah on the doorpost of almost every home, and the pagan custom at almost every one of those houses of kissing it. Eighty-five percent of Israelis hold a Passover seder, fervently recalling the plagues—pestilence, boils, death of the firstborn. Sixty-seven percent fast on Yom Kippur, which in Western eyes is the strangest of days. The absence of bus or train service on Shabbat, the observance of kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) in every public institution, and Sabbath elevators in every hotel and hospital—these too are not exactly the vision of a secular State. A bar-
mitzvah for almost every boy, matza in nearly every home on Passover, and the kiddush blessings.”

That article appeared in Haaretz, a left-wing newspaper serving the secular “non-religious” public in Israel. The religious “traditions” referred to may not reflect Bible “law of Moses,” implying that they have in some way spiritual or sacred; not concerned with religion or religious belief...” That is not a description of Israel. The Vatican statement of May 14, 1948 quoted earlier is totally erroneous—and those who repeat the statement are either deceived by Catholic propaganda, or else ignorant of the facts.

**What is Zion?**

It is now over 40 years since Graham Pearce considered this question. In 1970 he wrote:

“Zion is a word, or theme, that runs right through scripture. It is first mentioned as the stronghold adjacent to Jerusalem that David took and made the city of David. Here the temple was built by Solomon, and Zion became associated with God’s presence. The Psalmist speaks of it as God’s chosen rest. Later the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah personify Zion as a woman. In his lamentations Jeremiah laments over the widowhood of this Zion woman. “How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become a widow... her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed.” So Zion is used as the mother of Israel, and the prophets speak of Zion downtrodden and desolate while her people are scattered through the long centuries in the lands of the enemy. In contrast we have those wonderful chapters at the end of Isaiah where Zion rises to glory. “Awake, awake; put on thy strength O Zion... shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem.” Isa. 52. 2. Passing on to New Covenant times, Paul says that the believers are not associated with the Mount Horeb first covenant; “But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God... and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” Heb. 12, 18-24. And going right on to the last revelation, we have in chapter 14, 1. “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him 144,000” — Mount Sion as a symbol of the rulership of the coming age. So Mount Zion is a theme through the Bible covering God’s work in the earth, involving the land, the people, and the constitution, and the city of Israel. Even when Israel are scattered among the nations, they are still “the children of Zion” (Zech. 2. 7). And according to Paul all the believers in Christ belong to Mount Zion, though they too have been sojourners amongst the nations and persecuted.”

So the “things of Zion” concern religion and involve the Land, the people, the constitution and Israel. The term may be correctly applied in various circumstances. For example, consider Isaiah 59:20:

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.”

The word translated “transgression” here is from the Hebrew pesha which, according to Josiah Gibbs version of Gesenius Lexicon (1832), means “to fall away, revolt, rebel... Particularly to rebel against God, to apostatize from him, to sin against him... Hence to sin, to transgress.” So we could correctly reword Isaiah 59:20 to read:

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that repent of apostasy in Jacob, saith Yahweh.”

**Political Zionism**

The words of John Thomas written in 1848 will be well known to many of our readers:

“The truth is, there are two stages in the restoration of the Jews, the first is before the battle of Armageddon; and the second, after it; but both pre-millennial. God has said, “I will save the tents of Judah first.” This is the first stage of restoration...”

“There is, then a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-adventual colonisation of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him.”

Those words in the book Elpis Israel foresaw the advent of political Zionism which was introduced by Theodore Herzl exactly fifty years later (in 1898). It was on this political basis that the State of Israel came into being in 1948, exactly one hundred years after the publication of Elpis Israel. So it was that the Jewish colonists returned “in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him.” We have now seen over a century of political Zionism since it was introduced by Herzl, and 65 years since it was embodied in the nation of Israel.

But John Thomas had expected that this political phase would “serve as the nucleus, or basis, of
future operations...” Political Zionism has a purpose; it is a “nucleus” and a “basis” for further development. *(Nucleus: “An initial part meant to receive additions.” Basis: “The foundation support of something” (Oxford Concise Dictionary)).

We know that the “final redemption” of Israel must await the coming of Messiah—the return of Jesus Christ. We know that, but Scripture indicates that an initial turning from transgression (apostasy) will be in progress when the Redeemer comes to Zion. *Rotherham’s Emphasized* translation renders Isaiah 59:20 as follows:

“So shall come in, for Zion, A Redeemer, Even for such as are turning from transgression in Jacob, Declareth Yahweh.”

This clearly refers to those Jews (Jacob) who are living in the Land when the Redeemer comes in. How significant then to witness a spiritual development—however small and however partial.

**Religious Zionism**

Rabbi Yehuda Alkali (1798-1878), a Sephardic Jew, believed that the coming of the Messiah could be hastened by the return of the Jews to the land of Israel, and by their settlement there. In his 1834 work entitled *Shema Yisrael* (Hear O Israel) he suggested that Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel would be a preparation for the Messianic Redemption. He wrote: “It is written in the Bible: ‘Return, O Lord, unto the tent of Redemption. He was thus the ideological father of the settler movement—especially Gush Emunim (the Block of the Faithful, founded in 1974) and later groups.

Among early leading Jewish settlers, after 1967, were Moshe and Miriam Levinger who pioneered settlement in Hebron, moving there in 1968. It was as a result of their courageous pioneering that Jewish communities developed in nearby Kiryat Arba and in Hebron itself. Interviewed in a 1976 film entitled “A people Chosen” she said:

“When we first came to Hevron, those of us who came and lived through the first three years which was a very difficult experience—most of us were religious. We had this very big religious conviction: We felt that this was a logical outcome of everything that had been ever written in the prophets. We sort of felt that we were just continuing. It was a very strong feeling in us—that all these prophecies were coming true in our time. We felt that it was a very great reward to be able to live in this day and at this time.”

**A Period of Preparation**

It is the book of Revelation that tells us of the preparation of the way for Christ and the saints. Revelation 16:12 reads:

“And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising.”

Young’s Literal translation is:

“... Euphrates, and dried up was its water, that the way of the kings who are from the rising of the sun may be made ready.”

So the Ottoman Empire was removed (1918) to prepare, or make ready for the way of the kings of the sun’s risings. Now it is the fact of history which tells us what followed the removal of the Islamic power of Turkey. From 1918 to the present day we have seen the development of the Jewish State—that is almost a century of Jewish immigration to the Land. Accordingly we must see this period (the British Mandate and the present State of Israel) as being preparatory in some way for the Way of Christ and his saints. What we are seeing then is:

“... a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations...”

In what way then is this period preparing, or making ready, the way of Christ and the saints? How is it a “nucleus” or basis for future developments?

The national resurrection of Israel is to be developed upon the same basis, and upon the same principle as physical resurrection from the death state. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:46 says:

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”

This is also the order of the national resurrection of Israel as can be seen from Ezekiel chapter 37. First there is the opening of the graves and a coming together of bones—a process whereby the natural and physical body is rebuilt, “but there was no breath in them” (verse 8). This is followed by a second stage, and “the breath (spirit) came into them, and they lived...” (verse 10).

The bones in this vision represent “the whole house of Israel,” so the principle applies to all Israel (Romans 11:26-27). But we must remember what is written in Zechariah 12:7, “The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first...” So although the process is the same for all Israel, the tents of Judah are saved first. This is because they have a work to do when he “hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle” (chapter 10:3).

Judah then, as the nucleus and basis of future operations in the restoration of the rest...
of the tribes of Israel will be the means (the way) by which Christ and the saints will establish the kingdom. To this end the way (and ways) of Christ and the saints (the kings of a sun’s risings) are to be prepared and developed in the Hebrew nation “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD,” which is called Armageddon. This means that Israel today must be prepared by a religious revival of some kind so that the Redeemer may come “for such as are turning from transgression in Jacob.” As Jesus said to them:

“For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

A Challenge to the World

A purely secular nation of Israel that does not identify itself with the promises and prophecies of the Bible, poses no ideological or religious challenge to the modern world, but an Israel that is rooted in the Law and the Prophets has little prospect of making peace with Islamic Palestinians or with those Christians who believe that they have now replaced natural Israel in the purpose of God. Both Roman Catholics and Palestinians are essentially hostile to Religious Zionism. They cannot be expected to co-exist, and the more Religious Zionists gain a following and become a political force in Israel, the more it will antagonize the world.

The fact is that Religious Zionism is becoming stronger in Israel and has been developing over several years. Over 30 years ago the Guardian Weekly (30.5.82) ran the headline “Israel Subject to Growing Religious Pressure.” Sir Martin Gilbert, the well-known Jewish historian wrote of “Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, a day of fasting and prayer when most Jews, and most Israelis, spend the evening and much of the next day in synagogue.” Is that a secular nation?

On a visit to Israel in May 2013 we were reminded of what was written in Malachi: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments”(4:4).

We found posters in Jerusalem advertising “ALL-NIGHT LEARNING of the Torah (Law of Moses) in English & in Hebrew.” Children are being taught the Law in kindergarten schools. We also found talk of “Teshuva” (repentance). Note the quotations from several Jewish residents (settlers) that we interviewed, and which are transcribed from video on the opposite page.

We met two settlers who run a large dairy farm in Carmel Judea; every morning before starting work they gather for prayer and for a daily reading (termed the parsha, or portion) of Scripture—nd this is supposed to be a “secular” non-religious nation????

There are those people who want to deny that this is happening; they continue to echo the claim of the Vatican, saying that there is no repentance movement in Israel—it is merely a secular nation like any other. They even deny that Israel is a “Jewish” State as the Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah did in 2007. He said: “Israel’s identity as a Jewish state discriminates against non-Jews, in the Holy Land.” What utter nonsense! What gross ignorance! Such people are out of date—they are stuck back in the early days of the State of Israel. Times have changed! It may not yet be the righteous nation that keeps the Truth—and we know that violence, crime and wickedness is regularly reported, but that does not alter the fact that there are many elements within the nation that are seeking a better way. The prophet Hosea wrote this:

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:4-5).

After many days (centuries in fact) the children of Israel are to return and seek the LORD their God. This is what has been happening. It corresponds to the pattern and order of things outlined by the prophets. For example:

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

A partial regathering (one of a city, two of a family) followed by instruction. Again:

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

This is confirmed by Jesus also, when he said:

“Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matthew 17:11).

This is obviously a reference to Malachi 4:5-6. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Among many Religious Zionists in Israel today, there is an expectation that Elijah will come as the forerunner of the Messiah and we have spoken with many who hold this belief. As the way of the kings of the sun’s risings is being prepared, there is a growing hostility in the world towards the religious settlers setting the stage for that great battle of God Almighty. This is the developing “controversy of Zion” (Isaiah 34:8) that will centre upon Judah and Jerusalem (Joel 3:1-2; Zechariah 14:2-3).

If these developments are preparing the way for Christ and his saints to enter as a thief, we must be on the very brink of Christ’s coming to his household and the resurrection of all those who are truly in him.
Why is Teshuva, repentance, such a big deal in Judaism? Because one of the hardest things, for anyone, is change and Teshuva really means change. We want to change our behavior, turn away from a distorted path, and return to Hashem—but it’s hard.

—Yonatan Behar, Mount Gerizim, May 2013

“We are living in the very special time of the Redemption of the Jewish nation after thousands of years of exile... God is bringing the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth, like the prophets said.

The Jewish people are returning to God; we are returning to the Land of Israel and turning to the Torah... We are coming back physically and spiritually.

We are looking forward to having Elijah the Prophet; we are looking forward to the final Redemption. This is what we are praying for... whether there will be trials—we are ready in any case.”

—Yonatan Behar, Mount Gerizim, May 2013

Do you believe the prophets?

“Of course... I believe that people should obey what God is saying; people should continue with what the Bible has told us to do. Unfortunately people today act against the Bible, and I am rather afraid of the result... You know, when people do things against God’s will, something happens...”

—Noam Arnon, Spokesman for the Hebron Jewish Community. May 2013

“Who are we as a people? Where are we going? What are the Jewish values we want to live by? There was a huge awakening; The religious, the Teshuva movement, the Repentance movement, is huge in this country.”—Daniel Luria, Jerusalem, May 2013
It is some time since we looked at the dire situation in Syria, so we will start here in our round-up of news that is of particular interest to Bible students living in these last days and will spend most of our time looking at events in the Middle East.

**Syria, the Grim Statistics**

The Syrian Civil War has now been running for over 2½ years with tragic results. In a country of originally 22 million:

- 110,000+ killed.
- 2.5-3 million internally displaced.
- 2 million refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries.
- 130,000 missing or detained.

These are only estimated figures. Refugees are streaming out of the country at the rate of 5,000 a day! This is an economic burden that is hitting Syria’s neighbours who are trying to absorb what is being described as currently the world’s worse humanitarian disaster. Many have fled to Jordan whose population of 6 million is being overwhelmed by the volume of refugees; Israel has increased the amount of water she supplies to Jordan to help.

Syria’s origins in building up chemical weapons goes back to the preparations that Syria and Egypt made to attack Israel in 1973—what would be known as the Yom Kippur War. Egypt supplied Syria with a quantity of sarin nerve gas and mustard gas. Although not used in the ensuing battle, Syria saw the value of chemical weapons to counter Israel’s nuclear weapons. The growth of her stockpile continued to this day; not openly, but still a not very well kept secret.

There have been several reports of chemical weapons being used by the government forces in the current conflict against the many forces seeking President Assad’s overthrow. There are counterclaims that some of these weapons have fallen into the “rebels” hands and have been used against Assad’s forces. The use of chemical weapons was one of the “red lines” laid down by President Obama, in a press conference in Aug 2012.

“We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation” (*President Obama*).

When, in the Ghouta region, on Aug 21st, over 600 people died (other reports put the deaths at twice this figure), with no physical injuries, it was clear that toxic nerve gasses had been used. Turkey, Britain and France were for military intervention, but when the British Parliament was recalled from their holidays to debate the matter, the closing vote went against David Cameron’s proposals. This was rather a humiliating defeat for him. Then President Obama decided to put the matter of military intervention to Congress to gain wider approval. This meant—as Congress too was still on holiday—that any decisions had to be postponed for at least 10 days. France was all prepared for the start that night of strikes on military targets, when news came through of Obama’s about turn, leaving France feeling very aggrieved. This postponement of hostilities gave President Assad of Syria opportunities to prepare for any military actions. Chemical weapons began to be dispersed and soldiers embedded in civilian areas to deter attacks on them and prisoners moved to military locations to act as human shields.

Russia made it very clear that she would oppose any military intervention in Syria, as did the Pope who wrote to the Western leaders pleading that they would not intervene. Then, a seeming throwaway suggestion by the US Secretary of State that perhaps President Assad could destroy his stockpile and so prevent the West’s threatened intervention, was seized upon by Russia as the way forward. This idea rapidly snowballed—it provided a way out for Mr Obama as it increasingly looked as if Congress would follow the British Parliament and reject military measures against Syria. A flurry of talks followed between Russia and the US resulting in an agreement.

“The plan requires the Assad regime to disclose full details of its chemical weapons within seven days and demands unfettered access for inspectors to relevant locations by November with weapons scheduled to be removed for destruction by mid-2014” (*BICOM* 16-Sep-13).
Russia and America finally put together a draft UN resolution by omitting, at Russia’s insistence, any reference to military intervention if President Assad failed to carry out the disposal of his chemical weapons. This draft was unanimously accepted by the 15-member UN Security Council on Sept. 28th.

Assad dutifully produced a list of his chemical weapons, listing some 30 locations—a little short of American and Israeli estimates of 50 locations. At the beginning of October, 20 international inspectors were despatched to check these locations ahead of the disposal teams. By this time there had been many rumours that some of the stocks had been spirited into Iraq and to Hezbollah in Lebanon. There are many uncertainties ahead. The civil war continues unabated; how do inspectors track down stocks in such conditions. Are the chemicals to be destroyed and where? In situ or out of the country? Who will foot the enormous bill? The US has spent years and $35bn and rising, to dispose of her chemical weapon stocks. Admittedly these are much older, some going back to WWI and some 30 times greater than Syria is thought to possess.

Meanwhile Russia had been putting on the pressure, insisting that America was not to supply arms to the rebels, but that Russia would be supplying state-of-the-art weaponry to Assad!

Russia’s Power Grows

It is clear that President Obama has been weakened by this exercise. President Putin has deftly shown himself to be the champion of the West’s enemies, and a decisive leader, seemingly in control of the situation. Unless something dramatic happens it would appear that America’s influence in the Middle East is waning while Russia’s is waxing. America is going to be very dependent on Russia’s influence in Syria for progress in the dismantling of Syria’s chemical weapons. The Economist (27th Sept.) illustrated the matter—in the glass is the lion’s set of false teeth! It is a situation which Bible students have long seen, for it is Russia, as the Gogian leader, who heads the nations that come into the Middle East and against whom Britain, America and the Commonwealth countries—described as the Merchants of Tarshish and all her young lions (Ezek. 38:13 RV)—are powerless to stop. Has Iran by this time acquired nuclear weapons and threatening to use them if there is any interference? This is just a thought—it will be a time of great fear for the world.

How the situation in Syria pans out we will have to wait and see. It looks as if Syria, like Libya, will be greatly weakened; making it an easy target to be taken when Gog comes against Israel. What we do have to remember is that the invasion of Israel lies after the return of the Master to his household. The dead will be raised; the living gathered to the Judgement Seat, unknown to the world, for God has shown before that He can hide from sight his angelic hosts, (2 Kgs. 6:17) so this will pose no difficulty. At this time Israel is to be rich and prosperous, to be a desirable spoil and prey to the Gogian armies (Ezek. 38:12,13). We see the beginnings of this and expect it only to grow. There also has to be a period of peace and relative safety for Israel (Ezek. 38:11). This indicates that quite dramatic changes have to take place. Also the Jews living in Israel have to be educated by the prophet Elijah as part of God’s care for His people, ensuring there will be a faithful remnant who will be prepared to cry to God in their hour of great trial. God is faithful; He will send saviours to save His people, even their Messiah and his helpers.

Will Israel be Affected?

Knowing this ensures that we don’t build up false expectations that the Gogian forces are about to sweep down against Israel and Egypt. Many see in what is happening in Syria as fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the destruction of Syria in Isaiah ch. 17, which foretold a time when Damascus would become ruinous heaps and Israel’s glory made thin (v. 2, 4). Is this a prophecy for today? It would run contrary to our expectations from other prophecies that Israel will be far from thin! If we compare scripture with scripture we can easily see that this was a prophecy that was fulfilled shortly after it was spoken by Isaiah when Syria (Damascus) and Israel were affected together.

“The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The fortress of Syria is broken down: the arms of the mighty are broken.”

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of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day” (1 Chron. 5:26).

“In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpilesar king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria” (2 Kgs. 15:29).

Some 10 or so years later the rest of the 10 tribes were taken into captivity (2 Kgs. 17:5,6). Thus the prediction in Isaiah 17 came to pass; Damascus was taken away into captivity and the city destroyed and the fortresses—main defences of Israel—ceased. Jacob’s glory indeed was made thin and his fatness made lean. This also agrees with an earlier statement in Isaiah:

“For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria” (Isaiah 8:4).

Amos some 50 years earlier had also spoken of Damascus’ downfall:

“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD” (Amos 1:3-5).

As these prophecies were fulfilled in the time of Isaiah, we should not be expecting a time of weakening for Israel, based on Isaiah ch. 17.

**Putin and Francis Singing from the same Song-sheets**

One of the remarkable aspects has been to see the Russian President and the Pope standing as it were shoulder-to-shoulder, united in opposition to Western military intervention to overthrow Syria. Pope Francis, as well as appealing to the Western leaders not to intervene, declared September 7th as a day of fasting and prayer that there might be peace in Syria. Huge crowds gathered for its observance and around the world religious leaders of different shades joined in support. They both recognise that President Assad has supported the Christians in Syria, who consist of 10% of the population. Although President Assad is a Muslim, the minority Alawite sect to whom he belongs is not extremist; Syria is not under a strict Moslem rule, and Christians have mainly been left to practise in comparative safety. However, the opposition forces gathering in Syria are becoming more and more militant, and the many different factions are uniting under the al-Qaeda and other militant Islamist groups.

“Nearly half the rebel fighters in Syria are now aligned to jihadist or hard-line Islamist groups according to a new analysis of factions in the country’s civil war.

“Opposition forces battling Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria number around 100,000 fighters, but after more than two years of fighting they are fragmented into as many as 1,000 bands.

“The new study by IHS Jane’s, a defence consultancy, estimates there are around 10,000 jihadists—who would include foreign fighters—fighting for powerful factions linked to al-Qaeda.

“Another 30,000 to 35,000 are hard-line Islamists who share much of the outlook of the jihadis, but are focused purely on the Syrian war rather than a wider international struggle.

“There are also at least a further 30,000 moderates belonging to groups that have an Islamic character, meaning only a small minority of the rebels are linked to secular or purely nationalist groups” (Daily Telegraph 17-Sep-13).

This now poses a serious threat to the Christians and they are suffering extensive persecution. In Homs, a long-established Christian centre, the population was around 160,000 and has now shrunk to less than a 1,000.

“More than 450,000 Christians have fled their homes, church leaders say, during more than two years of war” (New York Times 10-Sep-13).

The majority of Syria’s Christians are Orthodox, with a minority Roman Catholic. We can now see why these two leaders prefer to see Assad remain in power, than for Syria to be turned into a radical Islamist state. According to Israel Today (12-Sep-13) the al-Qaeda linked terrorists are planning to “subjugate if not slaughter Syria’s Christians, secularists, and non-Muslims.”

**Moscow’s Fear of Jihad Drives Policy on Syria**

There is another reason why President Putin supports President Assad. It is not just that he is a good client for armaments, or that he allows Russia to use Tartus as a port; no, it goes far deeper than that.

“Putin has long feared the prospect of Islamist jihadists in Russia’s restive regions of Chechnya and the Caucasus spreading terror elsewhere in Russia. Putin knows Chechen and Caucasus Islamists are now fighting for Syrian rebels. And Putin fears that if the rebels take power, they may send chemical weapons to Muslim allies inside Russia. No wonder Putin wants Assad to stay in power and in control of his chemical arsenal” (Newsday 17-Sep-13).

Once the war ends, though, the fear inevitably is that they (Chechen Islamists) may make their way back to the North Caucasus—and, as in the 1990’s, they may bring with them allies and money to radicalize and reinvigorate the conflict there. TV footage of graffiti on Syrian walls reading, “We started in Syria, we will finish in Russia” suggests that this is not just Muscovite paranoia” (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 24-Sep-13).

The Chechen militants are said to make up the second biggest group of foreigners fighting in Syria. The Muslims are a growing force in Russia and second only in numbers to the Orthodox Church, though much smaller numbers—it is estimated that there are between 15 and 20 million of them. They are mainly concentrated in the Caucasus region of Russia. So while on the one hand Putin supports Assad, there is a considerable portion of Russians who are fighting a religious jihad in Syria to overthrow Assad! These see this as an opportunity to enlarge
their powerbase and to establish an Islamic State in Syria.

“One of the Chechen leaders was quoted as saying that ‘We have missed many chances, but truly today there is a chance to establish an Islamic state on Earth.’ He clearly meant in Syria” (Reuters 08-Mar-13).

This is why Putin needed to appear strong in this situation, as weakness would open up the danger of Russia’s Muslims seeking to increase their influence as they dream of a Russian Islamic State. It is only 4 months to the Winter Olympics which are being held in Sochi, on the Black Sea, and a potential terrorist target. Grozny, the Chechen capital, is only a few hundred miles to the east of Sochi.

**Russia’s EU**

This is not the only battle on Putin’s hands that needs him to appear strong. He is trying to rebuild a Russian Federation that would bring back the countries which became independent at the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. His aim is to develop the existing Customs Union with Kazakhstan and Belarus into the Eurasian Union—a copy of the EU—by 2015. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia look set to become additional members. At the moment there is a tussle between the EU and Russia for the allegiance of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia. It is a critical time for Putin, he has strong economic pressure which he can bring to bear on these wavering nations but he also needs to be seen as a person who has the power and skill to stand up to America and the EU.

**Rapid changes in Egypt**

At the beginning of the year, who would have thought that we would see the Muslim Brotherhood, not only swept from power in Egypt, but banned from existence in Egypt? A truly remarkable about turn that can have interesting ramifications for the Middle East. The Muslim Brotherhood, or Society of Muslim Brothers, is a Pan-Islamic movement covering religious, political and social aspects. It was founded in 1928 in Egypt where it has its centre.

“The Brotherhood’s credo was and is, ‘Allah is our objective; the Quran is our law, the Prophet is our leader; Jihad is our way; and dying in the way of Allah is the highest of our aspirations.’ The submission of the brotherhood’s members under these credo accords to their absolute obedience to the Muslim Brotherhood’s leadership” (Wikipedia).

It was outlawed in Egypt in the 1950’s following an alleged attempt to assassinate President Nasser. In the 70’s it became more moderate and was allowed to be active.

Hamas in Gaza are a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood; when they came to power in 2007 it was the first time that the Muslim Brotherhood had control of territory. Their fortunes changed in the Egyptian elections of 2011; their newly named Freedom and Justice Party won almost half the seats in the Egyptian Parliament; in the 2012 Presidential elections, their candidate Mohamed Morsi won by a narrow majority. However, on coming to power, “freedom” and “justice” seemed to disappear as they raced to establish Egypt as an Islamic state with sharia law. There was great persecution of the Coptic and other Christians who make up some 10% of Egypt’s population. The shaky Egyptian economy continued to nosedive under Morsi’s rule; food shortages and spiralling prices brought growing discontentment. After a year as President, Morsi faced a growing tide of discontent. The size of the crowds of protestors is said to have been far greater than those whose protests led to Mubarak’s overthrow. The Egyptian military had a strong control over Egypt. They were the power behind Mubarak and under his rule much of the country’s businesses were run by military people; so they retook control. Morsi was deposed and Adly Mansour was appointed as Interim President in July 2013. His deputy and also Defence Minister, Abdul Al-Sisi, was appointed at the same time; a popular choice and a driving force for change as this Debka (13-Sep-13) article shows.

**Rise of a New Middle East Leader. Egyptian Gen. Fattah El-Sisi Quietly Makes His Mark**

“He has taken over a million-strong army from the ageing generals and within three months transformed it into an effective fighting machine.

“This army, operating at warp speed, is accomplishing three assignments set by the new Egyptian strongman:
1. Support for his ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood and Mohamed Morsi as president;
2. Backing for his campaign of detentions against key Brotherhood figures, placing its top political, religious and administrative echelons behind bars. El-Sisi is waiting for the right moment to finally smash this Islamist movement for good.
3. The execution of a large-scale military offensive to eradicate Islamist terrorist networks in Sinai. This offensive, virtually overlooked by the world media, is described by DEBKA Weekly’s military experts as the biggest and most impressive counter-terror operation ever undertaken in the Middle East against al Qaeda.

“A security fence studded with surveillance cameras and sensors and guarded by mixed ground, sea and air units is being set up to secure Suez Canal shipping against attack. The American and Israeli officers watching the Egyptian general at work say that the Sinai landscape is unrecognizable. He clearly remains determined to preserve his independence of foreign powers, accepting only assistance and operating capital from his Saudi and Arabian Gulf backers.

“Our Cairo sources say that El-Sisi has not missed US President Barack Obama’s readiness to embrace the Shiite rulers of Iran and his widening breach with Riyadh and the Gulf Emirates. He expects the remodeled, toughened and indeed reinvented Egyptian army to occupy an important place on the changing Middle
East map.

**Israeli intelligence helping the Egyptian Military**

The Israeli intelligence satellites and Israeli willingness to communicate with the Egyptian military have proved invaluable in the military’s drive to emaciate the Muslim Brotherhood. They have been able to tell the Egyptians where the Muslim Brotherhood convoys have been hiding in Libya, Sinai and in Egypt too; Israel is no friend of the Brotherhood as through its Hamas wing it has caused Israel much grief. This dislike of what the Brotherhood stands for is also shared by most of the Gulf States and it is a banned organisation in Russia too. So it is an interesting situation to see the cooperation of Israel and the Gulf States to ensure that the military stay on top in Egypt, in spite of President Obama and the EU’s support for the overthrown leader, Morsi. The EU’s insistence that Morsi and his fellow comrades be released from prison has been overshadowed by the more pressing matters in Syria and Iran. Meanwhile the Egyptian judiciary has declared the Muslim Brotherhood to be a banned organisation and they are not allowed to hold any meetings. Their newspaper has also been shut down. With the majority of its leaders in prison, it would appear to have been effectively silenced.

As the Debka article above indicated, the Egyptian drive to eradicate militants in the huge area of Sinai is significant. Sinai is 3 times the area of Israel and home to many terrorists who have seen it as a safe haven in recent years. Hamas in Gaza have been very supportive to many of them, providing weapons and training. This has made the Gaza Strip a target for the Egyptian military forces. The smuggling tunnels which passed under the Gaza-Egypt border have been especially targeted, with claims that over 80% have now been destroyed. The Egyptians are busy clearing houses and trees within 500m of the border to make it easier to spot any tunnelling activities.

“Hamas has been hit hard. The Brotherhood is down in Egypt and the country has turned against Hamas. The steady destruction of the tunnels combined with the 500-meters-wide security zone set up along the border are asphyxiating Gaza, where a new political movement calls for the toppling of Hamas” *(Jerusalem Post 23-Sep-13)*.

The Rafah crossing, which Gaza depended on for legitimate supplies, has also been shut except for humanitarian reasons. President Hassan Rouhani of Iran

This has been a great blow to Hamas’ power, and they are having to increase imports from Israel in compensation. The Gaza people are unhappy with their militant rulers. The Egyptian’s aim is to clear all of Sinai of militants and Israel is quietly helping through its transmission of real-time intelligence from its satellites.

So Iran has lost an ally with the sweeping power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as has Hamas. Hamas has further problems weakening her as have Hezbollah. With Israel, the Gulf States and Egypt being on the same side, we may well see significant changes as a more moderate Arab voice reacts to the violence of those seeking to impose an extreme Islamic culture. Russia too would be happy to see this—the Muslim Brotherhood is a banned organisation in Russia and she fears Muslim extremists in power, for she has a growing Muslim population within her borders that Putin is anxious to keep away from such influences.

**The continuing Iranian nuclear threat to Israel**

Running in parallel with America’s endeavours to solve the Syrian crisis has been Obama’s desire to find a way out of the menacing threat of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons. In the hands of Khomeini, the religious Ayatollah, the future for Israel would appear bleak. The purpose of the drive to nuclear weapons is so that Israel might be eliminated from the Middle East. Having achieved that goal, the overthrow of the Gulf States would be next and Iran’s Shia rule imposed. America is committed to preventing Iran getting hold of nuclear weapons. This is another “red line.” Unfortunately Israel and the Gulf rulers are not so impressed at Obama’s ability to enforce measures to prevent this happening; especially in the light of Obama’s handling of the Syrian problem.

Western sanctions have however been biting and the stronger measure imposed in 2010 against Iran’s international financial transactions are finally beginning to have an effect. Hard currency—like US dollars or euros—is rapidly drying up, making it very difficult for Iran to pay for foreign purchases. The situation is becoming critical according to a *New York Times* (01-Oct-13) article: “Western economists believe the crisis point may be much closer than previously thought, perhaps a matter of months. Iran news outlets have reported that the government owes billions of dollars to private contractors, banks and municipalities. “Money has to be physically moved in cash because of Iran’s expulsion from the global banking network known by its acronym Swift, which had allowed the money to be transmitted electronically.”

With the ending of Ahmadinejad’s tenure as Iran’s President, the religious rulers oversaw the appointment of Rouhani, who was considered much more acceptable to the West than his predecessor. Indeed he has offered talks to work out a solution. In return for closing some of the underground factories packed with centrifuges enriching nuclear fuel, he wants some of the sanctions to be lifted. Obama wanted to meet Rouhani during the annual get-together at the UN, where in the past Ahmadinejad has poured out his vitriol against the “Zionist entity.” Interestingly Rouhani refused to meet him; however Obama had a telephone conversation with him, the first such high level direct contact between the two countries since 1979!

“U.S. President Barack Obama called Iranian President Hassan Rouhani last week in the first such conversation in the 34 years since the establishment of the Islamic Republic. The phone call followed tweets and public statements on both sides indicating a willingness to talk. Though far
from an accommodation between the two countries, there are reasons to take this opening seriously—not only because it is occurring at such a high level, but also because there is now a geopolitical logic to these moves. Many things could go wrong, and given that this is the Middle East, the odds of failure are high. But Iran is weak and the United States is avoiding conflict, and there are worse bases for a deal.

“The United States cannot proceed unless the nuclear program is abandoned. Rouhani understands that, but he must have an end to sanctions and a return of Western investment to Iran in exchange. These are doable under the current circumstances.

“The Iranian and American realities argue for a settlement. The psyche of both countries is in the balance. There is clearly resistance in both, yet it does not seem strong enough or focused enough to block it. That would seem to indicate speed rather than caution. But of course, getting it done before anyone notices isn’t possible. And so much can go wrong here that all of this could become moot. But given how the Iranians and Americans see their positions, the odds are, that something will happen” (Stratfor 01-Oct-13).

Rouhani was criticised on his return for talking to Obama. The Foreign Ministers of the two countries met at an informal meeting of what are termed the “P5+1” talks—the 5 permanent members of the UN plus Germany who have been tasked to negotiate with Iran over its nuclear programme. These talks have been going on since 2006 and marked by being long on speeches and short on progress.

It will be interesting if a changed situation prevails. If Syria remains weakened and the Sunnis’ no longer face the imminent threat of an aggressive Iran, and the Gulf States, Israel and Egypt continue to work together, then, with a stronger British interest in the area, a brief period of peace could prevail. We have considered in a separate article (page 14) that just at this interesting time in the Middle East, when the US seems to be losing influence in the region, Britain is preparing to step into the vacuum, together with the commonwealth countries!

What exciting times we live in. How close we must be to the day of Christ’s return. We watch and wait in keen anticipation of the fulfilment of our hopes, that God’s Name will be praised to the ends of the earth, His people of Israel will dwell in faith in their land and the nations will walk in recognition that the King of all the earth is the Anointed Lord Jesus, Israel’s Messiah and King. May we be granted a place to help in the great work of education that lies ahead for the world.
On no subject will Christendom be found to have gone more astray than on the subject of the Kingdom of God, a subject which, without exaggeration, may be said to constitute the very backbone of the divine purpose with the earth and its inhabitants. What is the Kingdom of God? It is one of the most important questions that can be asked, from a Scriptural point of view; for this reason: whatever the Kingdom of God is, it was the great subject-matter of the Gospel preached by Jesus and His Apostles. This we prove by the following citation of testimonies:—


The ministers and clergy of the present day believe that they preach the gospel in setting before the people the death of Christ. The death of Christ, in its sacrificial import, doubtless became an element in the apostolic testimony of the Gospel; but, in considering whether this was the whole gospel of the first century preaching, we must remember that Christ and his disciples preached the gospel three years before the crucifixion. Not only so, but we have evidence that the apostles, while so engaged—while they “went throughout the towns, preaching the gospel” (Luke 9:6), were not aware that Christ had to suffer. Christ told his disciples that he should “suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised again the third day” (Luke 9:22); but it is said, “they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them that they perceived it not” (Luke 9:45). The fact that, while in this state of ignorance concerning the sufferings of Christ, they "preached the gospel," is proof of the most positive character that the gospel, as preached by them, must have been something very different from the gospel of modern times, which consists exclusively of the death of Christ on the cross. The difference is manifest in the foregoing testimonies, which tell us they preached "The Kingdom of God."

The following passages prove that the Kingdom of God was also preached by the apostles after Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, and that it, therefore, continues a valid and essential element of the gospel to this day:—

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

“He went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).

“He expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets” (Acts 28:22). This is not the state of mind that exists where the Kingdom of God is supposed to dwell; and the fact that the statement in question was addressed to men of this character, shows that it had not the significance generally claimed for it. If the reader will examine any marginal Bible, he will find that “among” is given as any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). Hence the gospel, of which he said it was the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth (Rom. 1:16), embraces the doctrine of the Kingdom of God whatever that may be; for he himself continually preached it to both Jews and Gentiles.

We repeat that, in these circumstances, the question we have propounded is the most important to which attention can be invited.

What, then, is the Kingdom of God? Different answers will be given by different classes of people. Some conceive it to consist of the supremacy of God in the hearts of men—a sort of spiritual dominion existing co-extensively with secular life. Others recognise it in the ecclesiastical organisations of the day, styling them, as a whole, Christendom, or the kingdom of Christ, while a third party behold it in universal nature, continuing from generation to generation.

The holders of the first idea find a sanction for their belief in the words of Christ: “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). They overlook the fact that these words were addressed to the Pharisees, of whom Jesus said, “Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matt. 23:28). This is not the state of mind that exists where the Kingdom of God is supposed to dwell; and the fact that the statement in question was addressed to men of this character, shows that it had not the significance generally claimed for it.
the true rendering of the word translated “within,” which alters the significance of the verse. What Christ meant to intimate was his own presence among them as “the Royalty of the heavens,” in answer to the mocking enquiry of the Pharisees.

Romans 14:17 is also quoted: “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit,” but this only affirms one truth, without destroying another. It is true the Kingdom of God, when established, will be characterised by the qualities enumerated by Paul; but it does not therefore follow that the Kingdom of God will not be a real and glorious manifestation of God’s power on earth, through the personal intervention of His Son from heaven.

The second idea, that the Kingdom of God is to be found in the religious systems of the day, as “the visible church,” is without even the semblance of Scriptural foundation. Its existence is traceable to the times succeeding the overthrow of paganism, in the beginning of the fourth century, when Constantine delivered Christianity from its persecutors, and exalted it for the first time to the throne of prosperity and power. In this joy of the great change, the bishops said the Kingdom of God had come in the establishment of the Church. But we must go to the New Testament—not to the ecclesiastical historians—for a Scriptural idea of the Church. The Church, we find, to be composed of the heirs of the Kingdom, in probation for coming exaltation. They are not the Kingdom itself.

The third view, which regards the universe as “the kingdom of God,” has more of truth in it than the first or second, and yet we shall find as much of error. Nature is certainly the dominion of the Deity in a very exalted sense; but it is not that which in the Scriptures is spoken of as “the kingdom of God.” We are bold to make the assertion, because of abundant Scriptural testimony forthcoming.

In endeavouring to ascertain the meaning of this phrase, “The Kingdom of God,” we cannot do better than look at it in its origin. Contrast to “the kingdom of men,” which occurs three times in Daniel 4,—see verses 17, 25, 32. The “kingdom of men” consists of the aggregate of human governments. It is an appropriate designation for them all. They are all the embodiment of one principle—namely, the rule of man by himself.

The Kingdom of God

Jesus taught his disciples to pray “Thy kingdom come.” It is not yet come. If it were, the kingdom of men would not be in existence, for “the kingdoms of this world” are to cease when the kingdom of God comes. They are to become His and the prophets show us that when this comes to pass, the government of the world will no longer be in the hands of unauthorised, ambitious, erring kings and rulers. When the kingdom of God comes, it will displace and overthrow every power in the world, and visibly establish God’s power on the earth, by the hand of Christ and his saints.

The Bearing of these things on the Gospel of our Salvation

Now, we made it evident to start with, that this glorious purpose was announced in the gospel preached by Jesus and his apostles; it was proclaimed for belief. “Go,” said Jesus, “into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved.” Thus belief was made the first condition of salvation, that is, belief in the things set forth in the proclamation to which the commission had reference. These things comprised the doctrine of the kingdom. Hence, no man believes the gospel who is ignorant of the prophetic disclosures concerning the kingdom of God. Be it observed, Paul preached the kingdom of God out of the prophets. PROOF:—

“He expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets” (Acts 28:23; also Acts 26:22; Acts 24:14; Acts 17:2). (There were no other Scriptures at the time than the Old Testament.)

Previous to the death of Christ, the crucifixion formed no part of the Gospel. Subsequently, however, it came to be preached as a supplement to the things concerning the kingdom of God. This appears from the distinction observed in the phrases by which the preaching of the apostles is designated at these two different periods. In the Gospel narratives, the proclamation is described as simply relating to “the kingdom of God;” whereas, in the Acts of the Apostles, the phrase runs, “the things concerning the kingdom of God, AND the name of Jesus Christ.”
With a vision before them of the coming kingdom and life beyond the grave, the early Christians considered their present circumstances as being transitional and part of a process perfecting their character in preparation for the Lord’s coming. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying: “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:15-18).

It was when that vision became less certain and blurred that focus became more attached to the present and its practical arrangement. As one historian has related it: “The first disciples and their immediate followers had no need of an organization, an elaborate ritual or a philosophical formulation of their faith; they expected the Messiah hourly. But when the second coming was found to be delayed, adjustments became inevitable. Leaders were forthcoming to organize the brethren’s meetings, to conduct their devotions, and to proselytize the heathen. The very growth of the Church... made organization imperative. The Church evolved a hierarchy...” (Prof. Gordon Childe).

Edward Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall* put it like this: “The primitive Christians were dead to the business and pleasures of the world; but their love of action, which could never be entirely extinguished, soon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the church.”

Edward Gibbon

The government of the church has often been the subject, as well as the prize, of religious contention.

He continues: “The ecclesiastical governors of the Christians were taught to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove; but as the former was refined, so the latter was insensibly corrupted by the habits of government. In the church as well as in the world, the persons who were placed in any public station rendered themselves considerable by their eloquence and firmness, by their knowledge of mankind, and by their dexterity in business; and while they concealed from others, and perhaps from themselves, the secret motives of their conduct, they too frequently relapsed into all the turbulent passions of active life, which were tinctured with an additional degree of bitterness and obstinacy from the infusion of spiritual zeal. “The government of the church has often been the subject, as well as the prize, of religious contention.”

This contention was manifested even among the earliest disciples, for we read in Luke 22:24-26, “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.’”

But it seems that human nature, being what it is, the teaching of Jesus was soon brushed aside. There were those men in the assembly of believers who asserted themselves and gained the ascendancy among the disciples, becoming prominent brethren and preeminent—3 John verse 9. These became the controllers and managers and sought to govern the congregations.

**Pride of Position**

The governing body of the religious establishment in Judea during the First Century CE was made up of scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and other notables who...
formed the Sanhedrin, the governing council. It would include the chief priests, and the New Testament portrays them to be very conscious of their position and authority.

These people were the controllers of that age, and any individual initiative was frowned upon. For example, Jesus was confronted:

“When he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23).

And to the man who had been born blind, but who was healed by Jesus, it was said by these elders: “Dost thou teach us?” (John 9:34). Such people pride themselves in their intellectual agility and in their sagacity, so we find them coming to Jesus “teeming him” and trying “to catch him in his words” (Mark 12:13). As Milner has pointed out in his Church history:

“The bait of reasoning pride lies more in the way of the learned; and, in all ages, they are more prone to be caught by it.”

And so often it was that the adversaries of Jesus fell headlong into the trap that they had laid for him—however “the common people heard him gladly” says Mark 12:37. Jesus was clearly perceived as being a threat to the establishment—and no wonder:

“And they came to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine” (Mark 11:15-18).

Jesus had just ripped the mask off the self-righteous authorities, exposing the naked wolf—this could not be tolerated, and so steps were taken to eliminate him.

**Ecclesiastical Politics**

We should not be too quick to condemn the Jews, for the same forces are seen to be at work in Christian churches and assemblies. Human nature is ever the same, and we have the words of the apostle Paul to the elders of the Ephesian assembly:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over 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. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28-31).

The apostle Peter likewise:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Peter 2:1-3).

James has this to say (chapter 3:1):

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.”

The Revised Version reads:

“Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgement. For in many things we all stumble.”

When teachers exalt themselves in an assembly as the apostle Paul said they would (Acts 20:30), and do so in such a way as to gather a following, it inevitably leads to faction; a party, and so to division. According to Milner in his Church history this happened among the Donatists of North Africa during the 4th and 5th centuries. He writes:

“They themselves were crumbled into parties, and subdivided into little bodies, which condemned one another, each arrogating to itself the title of the true church, while they all joined to condemn the general church. In the mean time they were extremely active in re-baptizing multitudes in Africa; for the baptism of the general church was not by them allowed to be any baptism at all.”

How many Believers have followed the same path as the Donatists! The apostle Paul wrote (Romans 12:16),

“Mind not high things, but condescend to low things, and be meek and plain in all conceits.”

Jesus “made himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7); he did not seek great things for himself (compare Jeremiah 45:5); he did not seek glory and honour from men. To follow Christ the disciple will not involve himself in the politics of his assembly or congregation—we are not called upon to engage in that.
The Work Before us

Organization of some kind is essential of course and Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus lay out the basic principles believers ought to work by. In our day when there is no direct and obvious supervision by Divine agency, controlling and governing an assembly of believers is a challenge which tries the hearts and motives of the members. It may well be that this is the very reason why a rigid set of rules is not provided. The real focus for the present circumstances ought to be upon the development of characters in the sight of God:

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

A healthy Christian assembly will be one that has its attention on “the day of Jesus Christ” and not on the mechanics of present ecclesiastical organization or its politics. Jesus told Pilate “My kingdom is not of this world (or age)” and his disciples will have the same outlook. They will develop a consciousness and awareness of the one who has said to all congregations “I KNOW THY WORKS.” People need a clear vision of the future such as is provided by the “sure word of prophecy” (2 Peter 1:19), as it arises out of the “exceeding great and precious promises” (verse 4). It is far more profitable to let our minds dwell upon the things of the kingdom than upon petty squabbles and secondary, and sometimes doubtful matters, which only contribute to division and strife.

A healthy Christian assembly then, will be one made up of individuals who speak often one to another about that day when the LORD will make up his jewels, and about that future city (or society) that will manifest the glory of God, and whose light will be like unto a stone most precious, “even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:10-11).

From Gifts to Gratitude

By David & Jacqueline Griffin
BIRMINGHAM, U.K.

This article is an update following the article headed “From Gifts To Gratitude” published in this Magazine Vol. 25 Issue No. 3.

Good News and Grateful Thanks

We are greatly encouraged to be able to report to you all that we have passed a significant milestone in the delivery of warmth and comfort to the destitute Jews in Eastern Europe. Since the beginning of 2011 with the wonderful support of the Christadelphian community all over the World, from very helpful friends and with God’s help, we have delivered over 100,000 items of clothing, shoes, bedding and towels to our distribution partners, World Jewish Relief (WJR). This is to quote WJR “truly remarkable” and is unrivalled by any other Gentile organisation giving support. So please accept theirs and our grateful thanks for all that you do in support of this most worthy cause and please continue to send your knitting, your new and second hand clothing, towels and bedding, and encourage others to do the same.

News of a Significant Change

Humanitarian help has been flowing into Eastern European Countries (not just to the Jews) in ever increasing amounts ever since they became separated from the USSR. The Governments of these new nations have suddenly (or so it seems) woken up to the fact that all this free supply of clothing etc. is harming their economy because a substantial part of the population doesn’t need to buy the
We will sort out all second hand (Christadelphians of other countries) and stopped all humanitarian imports, and it is feared other Eastern European countries will quickly follow.

This political decision has forced World Jewish Relief (WJR) into a rethink on how to continue to help impoverished Jews in the future. We believe that it is a measure of their respect for the contribution being made by Christadelphians that WJR have involved us in the rethink. The outcome for Brethren and Sisters and friends who help us is as follows. The Revised Arrangements

1. Continue to send, as you have done, only in ever increasing quantities, if that is possible.

2. We will sort out all second hand (as good as new items) and send them to WJR in London UK to be sold into the 3rd World. This will raise funds to be sent to WJR field workers in Eastern Europe (who up to now have distributed the clothing you have sent for these stricken people). They will use these funds to fix the housing of these people (some have no windows or doors), and as necessary purchase suitable clothing. In addition they will fund retraining for some of the younger ones to help them become less dependent.

3. All items which do not go forward to London as described above will be sold locally into the recycling market which will fund the purchase of wool for our army of knitters (about £1,000 per month) and also to purchase new clothing, bedding and towels, where we can obtain them at bargain prices, to be sent to Israel.

4. Now we come to the exciting news for all our host of knitters. Because of the tremendous cost of defence and security in Israel there is very little money left to be spent on the Jewish immigrants coming from Eastern Europe and North Africa, consequently these people suffer a similar plight as those in Eastern Europe.

So after an absence of nearly a decade, our knitted goods together with any new clothing, bedding and towels either given by you or purchased with recycling money, are going directly into Israel.

This dramatic change (we believe at God's direction) has come about through the generosity of the owner of a Dutch shipping and transportation company who we met in London UK early September. He is not a Jew but a committed Christian whose faith moves him to deploy the vast resources of his company to help people like ourselves to get our humanitarian aid into Israel. He has been providing this service to other groups since 1999.

In the space of five weeks we have moved from the depressing prospect of the loss of access into Eastern Europe, for all your wonderful donations of clothing etc, to a wonderful new approach to helping these Children of Abraham. In addition we are about to witness the dramatic reopening of the way into Israel which is what our movement did when it first started in 1940. You will have read in our bulletins before today how such dramatic changes in our activities convince us that this work is acceptable to God and provides our team with tremendous encouragement.

Implications of these new Transport Arrangements for Goods from Outside the UK

Following the meeting in London UK with the owner of NMV Transport referred to above he sent us an email from which we quote;

“We can arrange transport from UK and the rest of the World. Let us inspire Christadelphians in other countries to start blessing Israel with humanitarian aid.”

We know that several of you currently struggle with the prospect of shipping goods to us because of the cost of transportation. This man’s offer seems to answer all those issues.

On your behalf we are about to test the sincerity and practicality of his approach by asking him to arrange a shipment of fleece blankets made by the members of several ecclesias in the State of New Jersey USA, directly into Israel. Also on the 24th September the first load of woollens and new clothing specifically directed to Israel from Birmingham UK will be dispatched via London UK. We will let you know how these initial loads prosper.

Power Point Presentations

We continue to respond to the many invitations to talk about the work as fast as we can using our Power Point Presentation.

The dates planned into the future are—

Canada Oct.12th—Brantford (Ontario)
USA Oct.16th—Echo Lake (New Jersey)

2014
UK March 8th—Cambridge, March 22nd—Seaton, April 26th—Norwich, July 3rd—Ashby

Our objective remains as ever to bring warmth and comfort to the children of Abraham who are suffering abject poverty wherever they may be in the World. With your continued help and with the blessing of our Heavenly Father, if it is His will, we will continue to strive towards that objective albeit in a different way.

“For I was... Naked, and ye clothed me” Matthew 25:35 & 36.
NOW DON'T LAUGH: But there are those who like to think that the funny looking grubs that are photographed here came into being by chance; that is to say they evolved with a friendly smile on their faces, or else tried to look like a threatening snake (left).

In fact these caterpillars are employing a defence mechanism in order to ward off unwelcome predators. They suck in air in order to produce a “head” and then rely on markings upon the skin to complete the picture. But our friendly grubs did not think up this trick all by themselves of course, we have to face up to it, they were made —that is to say created— with this ability.

Let us not make the mistake of getting the whole subject up-side-down. You see the “head” of the grub is actually its bottom! And that shows us what happens when men change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator—Romans 1:25. They confound themselves with “the creeping things, that have no ruler over them” Habakkuk 1:14.

“Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.” Psalm 69:34.