THE FUTURE MOVEMENTS OF RUSSIA ARE NOTEABLE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, BECAUSE THEY ARE PREDICTED IN THE SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH.

RUSSIA’S CHALLENGE TO EUROPE

THE MEANING OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17

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The Power of Creation

The key word is power—that power is in the word of God and it is that power, that energy, which lies at the basis of all creation. In Jeremiah 51:15 we read this:

“He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.”

This is literally true as the following words, written several years ago demonstrate:

“The building-block of matter and ultimately of the universe is the atom. No one has ever been able to define the energy that binds the atom, but it is this intangible something that holds the form of the universe. If, by some magic, the energy of the atom were to be switched off, the whole of material creation would vanish, for the atom has no material substance within itself. Only when it is built into molecular structures do we arrive at the stage of matter and solidity. This is the underlying reality of the universe we inhabit and of our selves. Can we expect to probe deeper? We look for the edge of the universe; but the galaxies continue on as far as our finest instruments can penetrate. What is the energy that sustains the universe, and where does it originate?”

Jeremiah, writing about 600 years before Christ, tells us the answer. “He hath made the earth by his power.” The power, the energy, that no one has been able to define, is God’s power.

Science involves the search for truth, and that search is not easy. Methods include investigation, comparisons, analysis and discovery. A project may begin with a theory (an educated guess) but goes on to collect facts. In the search for the truth, all the facts must be brought together. There has to be honesty and integrity in the work—all the facts must be taken into account, and not only those that favour the theory that a scientist may have published, and upon which he thinks his professional reputation depends. He cannot choose those facts which lead to a distasteful result.

But honesty has not always been the priority that it should be in the field of science and archaeology. The so-called Piltdown Man “discovered” by Charles Dawson between 1908 and 1912 is a classic case of fraud. That hoax deceived the world for some 40 years (until it was exposed in the 1950’s), and had been given a credibility boost by the Jesuit priest and paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin.

Not a Scientific Text-Book

The Bible was provided for ordinary people in order to make them wise unto salvation through “faith.”

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Corinthians 1:26-27).

It was in a prayer of thanksgiving that Jesus said: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Matt. 11:25-26; see also Luke 10:21).

Scripture is a rock (not a fossil), and careful study will show that science doesn’t contradict what the Bible teaches us.

It must be clear to us surely, that when it comes to creation, the Scripture must be taken as read; if we want the Truth, as this has been revealed in the word of God, we cannot allegorize, spiritualize or dismiss as poetic, those literal passages that we find (like the Gnostics of old) to be “repugnant.”

Those people who cannot believe in the creation record, or in the Genesis Flood when “the mountains were covered” (7:19-20), so that “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Peter 3:5-6); and cannot believe that “the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day” (Joshua 10:13), or in the reversing shadow on the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:11 and Isaiah 38)—will certainly have difficulty in believing what Moses says in his writings.

In describing the early development of the Church, Gibbon in his Decline and Fall comments on the beliefs of the Gnostics:

“The Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profligate derision by the Gnostics, who would not listen with patience to the reproof of the Deity after six days’ labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the speaking serpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced against human kind for the venial offence of their first progenitors … Acknowledging that the literal sense is repugnant to every principle of faith as well as reason, they deem themselves secure and invulnerable behind the ample veil of allegory, which they carefully spread over every tender part of the Mosaic dispensation.”

It was hardly a surprise then when the late Pope John-Paul announced that evolution “is more than just a theory” (October 1996). But never mind the attempts of men, even religious men, to bring the Bible down to the level of human (and even so-called scientific) reasoning. There are plenty of reasons for simply believing what the Bible says. One reason is seen in the power of prophecy. Consider for example, Jeremiah 31:37; he who created all things and sustains them by His great power is also the One who has foretold the end from the beginning. The Bible has foretold the history and future of Israel. It has foretold the destiny of many nations, including Russia and the nations of Europe. There is power in this; the power to convince the ignorant of God’s wisdom and righteousness, the power to overthrow the foolishness of human philosophy and atheism, but this depends upon the application of the word of God upon an open mind.
One of the greatest challenges to Bible truth in our time is the philosophy of humanism, supported as it is by the quasi scientific theory of Evolution. Humanism has permeated the Christian religion and has saturated academia, and it is promoted by a powerful media. Just over a century ago most English-speaking countries were home to a Bible-based culture and retained a social structure that reflected—to a large extent—values which rested on the Bible. The principles enshrined in the Ten Commandments and in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ were generally recognized as being the moral foundations that most people based their lives on. As Winston Churchill put it: “We owe to the Jews in the Christian revelation a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other wisdom and learning put together.”

At her coronation Queen Elizabeth was presented with a Bible while it was declared: “We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.”

Today, that “system of ethics” and valuable wisdom has been abandoned by a world which has now embraced a form of philosophy which undermines everything that previous generations had been taught to honour and respect.

**Human Reasoning & Philosophy**

The Oxford Concise English Dictionary defines philosophy as follows: “philosophy the use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge of reality, esp. of the causes and nature of things and of the principles governing existence, the material universe, perception of physical phenomena, and human behaviour. [Middle English from Old French filosofie via Latin philosophia ‘wisdom’ from Greek (as philo-sophos ‘wise’)]”

So the word philosophy is based upon the Greek *philosophia*, meaning “wisdom.” In 1 Corinthians 1:22 we read: “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom (sophia).”

It was philosophers such as Voltaire (1694-1778) who observed the injustice and inequality in the European society of his time and therefore began to reason upon ways whereby a better world could be brought into being. During the Middle Ages society had been dominated by the ruling classes and by the Roman Catholic Church (see chart “layers of Society”). The uneducated peasants of those days virtually carried emperors, kings and priests bearing the burden of production that was required.

Commenting upon this in 1849 John Thomas wrote: “The ascendant evil of more than 1300 years, incorporated in the imperial, regal, and sacerdotal (empires, monarchies and religions) institutions of Europe, has fostered and matured the earthly, sensual, and devilish spirit of the masses. The powers that be have kept the people in ignorance of the only knowledge that can make them participants of the divine nature, that is, the WORD OF GOD. They have sought to indoctrinate them with the crude and jejune (i.e. shallow) precepts of a dogmatic and professional theology. They have reduced them to the lowest degradation, and to the verge of destitution; and converted them into mere instruments of agriculture, and factory machines. Thus demonized by ignorance and priestism, and goaded to desperation by oppression, the deep groans of the suffering and festering masses have roared forth in thunders of civil discord and convulsion. Knowledge of an unsanctifying character has been industriously disseminated among them, by men who have discernment enough to perceive that the social fabric is a system of fraud and violence incompatible with the benevolence of God, and the rights of men; but who are also as destitute as themselves of the truth, and the righteousness and peace it inculcates.”

Beginning with the French philosophers this “knowledge of an unsanctifying character” spread throughout Europe. The Times newspaper (July 5, 1791) recorded the re-burial of Voltaire and commented upon his character: “This man, who was the professed apostle of infidelity—whose writings make a mockery of every religious faith upon the face of the globe—who lived a blasphemer and died blaspheming—who had no one virtue, and whose genius was the powerful instrument of vice, receives the posthumous veneration of a people whom...
he had corrupted; and who, in the madness of infidel fanaticism, pay such honours to his remains as have never yet been offered to the friends, to the instructors, the illuminators, the fathers of the human race.”

**An Invasive Cancer**

Such was the character of those whose writings were to influence the future of Europe. In the language of the Apocalypse it was “a noisome and grievous sore” (Rev. 16:1-2), (a malignant ulcer—Rotherham). It was an invasive cancer and was spread through Europe by the forces of Napoleon who exported the philosophy and its resultant revolutions through the continent.

The French political earthquake of 1789 brought one of the greatest social upheavals in Europe’s history. In the symbolic language of Revelation 16:13, 14 it is described as three unclean spirits like frogs, and as the spirits of demons. This is telling us of an unclean teaching — an unsanctifying philosophy like that of frogs; that is to say characteristic of the French democracy practiced by the barbarian Franks who originated from Westphalia in Germany. Gibbon in his *Decline & Fall* says “the love of liberty was the ruling passion... They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen...”

*The Barbarians* (published by Time-Life Books) says:

“The barbarians contributed a genius for organization that galvanized the society of Europe. In the course of relinquishing their tribal identities, they stubbornly clung to their tribal attitudes toward law and the rights of the individual—and thereby preserved a priceless tradition until the time for democracy was ripe—and a civilization that led all others in personal freedom.”

Several illustrations have shown us that the frogs were the recognised heraldic arms of the barbarian King Pharamond, and of King Clovis, so that the use of the symbol in the Apocalypse points us directly to the concepts of Liberty (Freedm) and the doctrine of “human rights.” democracy, which lies at the root of that philosophy that we call humanism. But when developed into a political agenda it has produced Socialism, Communism, National Socialism (or Naziism) and other forms of Liberalism. These have proved to be unworkable movements and have provided no remedy to social poverty and degradation. Yet the basic philosophy has saturated much of Europe and the world. Today for example, it is the guiding light of the Obama administration in the United States of America.
This madness and confusion; this foolishness, is reflected in the culture and art which followed the revolutionary philosophies that came out of France at the end of the 18th century (see picture bottom of page 9).

**The Carnal Mind**

Romans 8:7 tells us that “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” or as the Revised Version has it: “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.” From this we learn that the human mind (the mind of flesh) is hostile to the things of God. It is in rebellion against Truth and against the Word of God. That is why the teaching and morality of the Bible is rejected by human wisdom, by human philosophy—and consequently by humanism.

The official humanist position has been stated by the American Humanist Association which states that the enemy of humanism is Biblical Fundamentalism, “...especially those filling the ranks of the ‘Religious Right,’ (who) reject the theory of evolution... (and) sex education... situation ethics...”

The statement goes on to say, “Humanists reject arbitrary faith, authority, revelation... Humanism is a philosophy for the here and now” (American Humanist Association).

The spreading cancer of human philosophy or wisdom offers no hope for mankind and must end—as malignant cancers often do—in cessation of life. The record is clear: Human philosophy is a failure:

- The quest for Human Rights brought Revolution.
- It brought violence and death.
- Socialism has not produced the promised utopia!
- Communism has failed.
- National Socialism was a monster that failed.
- Liberalism has corrupted society and has failed.
- Democracy is manipulated and corrupt.
- Material benefits provide temporary comforts only.
- Foreign Aid to Third World Countries is inadequate. It is not a solution.
- Medical Science cannot save from Death.
- The Theory of Evolution offers no Hope.

**The Foolishness of Modern Philosophy**

“The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.”

The foolishness of modern philosophy goes from bad to worse. It not only...
challenges the Bible, it abandons reason itself as is revealed in several publications, including one entitled “The Age of Unreason,” which appropriately has a frog depicted on the front cover.

Ban the Bible and watch society slowly disintegrate into chaos—that is the spirit described in Revelation 16:14, 15. But this situation was foreseen almost 500 years ago by the translator William Tyndale in his 1534 preface to the Second epistle of Peter. He wrote:

“The first Chapter sheweth how it should go in the time of the pure and true Gospel. The second how it should go in the time of the pope and man’s doctrine. The third how at the last men should believe nothing nor fear God at all.”

He concludes by saying:

“In the third he showeth that in the latter days, the people through unbelief and lack of fear of the judgment of the last day, shall be even as Epicures, wholly given to the flesh. Which last day shall yet surely and shortly come saith he: for a thousand years and one day is with God all one. And he showeth also how terrible that day shall be, and how suddenly it shall come…”

Tyndale foresaw the atheism of our time—a creed which one writer described as follows:

“The belief that there was nothing and nothing happened to nothing and then nothing magically exploded for no reason, creating everything and then a bunch of everything magically rearranged itself for no reason whatsoever into self-replicating bits which then turned into dinosaurs. Makes perfect sense.”

“The Death of Truth”

This is the title of a book which describes a brand of philosophy which emerged after World War 2 and which developed in universities and among those who saw themselves as an intellectual elite. On the cover of this book we read that:

“America is in the midst of a revolution in thinking that impacts every conceivable aspect of life. Postmodernism, the guiding spirit of our times, teaches that things like reason and rationality are cultural biases, and that truth—especially God’s truth— doesn’t exist. A society that forsakes truth believes that:

• All lifestyles, religions, and worldviews are equally valid.
• The only real sin is criticizing someone else’s views or moral choices.
• Opinions matter as much as evidence.
• Reality is in the mind only.”

It is interesting to compare this with the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

“With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

And the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 11:25:

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

The philosophical theory of so-called postmodernism is not only foolish, it has led to an ideological shift which challenges the very reference points of society. For example, it has led to the rewriting of history. History books (as well as encyclopaedias) have been revised in such a way as to alter and destroy our knowledge of the past. The good fellows are now the evil men, the criminals of history have become the heroes. Classic history books such as Rollins (written in the 1700’s) tell a different story to the one we are told today, under the claim that we now have more and improved knowledge. Compare the
Taylor has shown how the theory of evolution and the philosophy of humanism have been disseminated and promoted so as to become the established world view of today. He describes the revolution in belief—and how it was achieved in the following words:

“With a strong Bible-believing community in England, there was little hope of driving the people to revolution against God and king; however, it may be argued that those who wished to see an English Utopia attempted to bring about the social change in a more subtle way.

“Creating doubt and disbelief in long-cherished ideas is a psychological approach used successfully today to introduce new ideas, or new products, to society. The method is as old as mankind. The Bible was recognized as the greatest obstacle to the socialists’ aims, and generating disbelief in it was assuredly the most effective way of changing public opinion.

“...revolutionary aspirants in England at the time included Robert Owen (1969) and the Prince of Wales (Webster 1969, 32), each having his own private motives for wishing to see social change. Nevertheless, the historical facts remain undisputed: First, the members of this influential group were on intimate terms with their French socialist contemporaries Voltaire and Rousseau (Richie-Calder 1982, 142). Second, Charles Lyell, writing only thirty years after Voltaire’s death, effectively cast doubt on the Genesis account of the Flood by expanding the time frame. Darwin himself commented on these very facts in 1873: "...Lyell is most firmly convinced that he has shaken the faith in the Deluge far more efficiently by never having said a word against the Bible than if he had acted otherwise... I have read lately Morley’s Life of Voltaire and he insists strongly that direct attacks on Christianity (even when written with the powerful force and vigor of Voltaire) produce little permanent effect; real good seems only to follow the slow and silent side attacks (Parenthesis in original: Himmelfarb 1968).”

Taylor concludes:

“Although humanism is surely as old as Cain, an attempt has been made in these chapters to trace its path from the Greek philosophers to the plateau reached at the time of the French Revolution. Orthodox religion, and the Bible in particular, stood in the way of further advancement until the mid-nineteenth century. The humanist philosophy then received its most vital impetus at the unwitting hand of Charles Darwin from which it has been propelled into the twentieth century to become secular humanism, the dominant worldview of today.”

The Denial of Reality

“The Spirits of devils” or demons (Rev. 16:14), is the spirit of confusion (James 3:15-16) and it includes deviant (un-natural) sexual behaviour such as we read of in Leviticus 18:22-23, “it is abomination.” See also Romans 1:26-27. Postmodernism calls this “sexual preferences,” but it is what brought fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and will certainly bring judgment upon the modern world. It is gender confusion; a denial of reality.

The situation involves many areas, and as the title of one book expressed it, it is The End of All Reason. The prophet Isaiah put it like this:

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in

Art in the Post-modern era!
“According to postmodernists,” says one writer, “laws aren’t right or wrong. Law is whatever a society’s most powerful group makes it” (The Death of Truth, page 165). It is the anti-Bible unclean spirit of human philosophy and democracy that plagues our time—and it is this unreason that will gather the nations against Zion and against the things of God. It has been produced by the arrogance and pride of man as he vaunts himself against the Most High to his own destruction.

Unity without Truth

This is the humanist and postmodernist solution to differences in religion and politics. Truth is of no consequence to those who are guided by the wisdom of men, and that is why the Vatican now promotes what it calls “Authentic Humanism.” It is introduced under the banner of “Christian Unity” and ecumenism in several papal encyclicals—for example Ut Unim Sint (1995) and Redemptor Hominis (1979). “Activity for coming closer together with the representatives of the non-Christian religions, an activity expressed through dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigation of the treasures of human spirituality, in which, as we know well, the members of those religions also are not lacking” (Redemptor Hominis).

This leads to that “one mind” which is foretold in Revelation 17:13. It refers to both a religious unity and political unity.

As to political unity based upon humanism, Taylor has shown (In the Minds of Men) that Julian Huxley wrote the framework policy for UNESCO in about 1946. Further, in 1976 he wrote:

“From the evolutionary point of view, the destiny of man may be summed up very simply: it is to realize the maximum progress in the minimum time. This is why the philosophy of UNESCO must have an evolutionary background and why the concept of progress cannot but occupy a central position in that philosophy... The moral for UNESCO is clear. The task laid upon it to promote peace and security can never be wholly realized through the means assigned to it—education, science and culture. It must envision some form of world political unity, whether through a single world government or otherwise, as the only certain means for avoiding war... The unifying of traditions into a single common pool of experience, awareness, and purpose is the necessary prerequisite for further major progress in human evolution. Accordingly, although political unification in some sort of world government will be required for the definitive attainment of this stage, unification in the things of the mind is not only necessary also but it can pave the way for other types of unification.”

Clearly, UNESCO and the Roman Church have the same end in view—and the guiding principle for both is the doctrine of humanism. Whether we see this as a conspiracy or not, the fact is that it is leading the world to a unity based on anti Bible, humanistic thinking. This is what is happening and developing today. This demoniac philosophy is going forth to the kings and rulers of the earth “and of the whole world” to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The things of God are in conflict with the philosophy of the world. The question for us, as individuals, is—Can we resist the brain-washing of the world? Can we submit ourselves to that sanctification (separation and dedication) “with the washing of water by the word?”—Ephesians 5:26.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”
The theory of evolution proposed by Charles Darwin has now become entrenched in today’s western society and forms an integral part of education’s curriculum. It is important therefore to identify why this should be the case. Even though the theory existed prior to World War II, there is no doubt that subsequent to that major event the mind of man drifted quickly away from God. In adopting evolution as the new scientific religion the human mind, by rejecting God, has replaced Him with an alternative superior being—man. The theory of evolution sets man at the pinnacle of the rest of creation and makes him the supreme intelligence and therefore master of his own destiny and only himself capable of dictating the values by which man will live by.

In recent years evolution has taken on a new dimension. There are those who are reluctant to remove God completely from the picture, while remaining loyal to the so-called scientific evidence they believe evolution provides. And so the term Theistic Evolution has been created, a solution for blending together both God and “science.”

According to Wikipedia, “Theistic evolution or evolutionary creation is a concept that asserts that classical religious teachings about God are compatible with the modern scientific understanding about biological evolution. In short, theistic evolutionists believe that there is a God, that God is the creator of the material universe and (by consequence) all life within, and that biological evolution is simply a natural process within that creation. Evolution, according to this view, is simply a tool that God employed to develop human life.”

There are variations of thought in this regard. One option for this theory is that God created the building blocks for life, including the natural laws, but that at some point in time God allowed creation itself to develop naturally along the evolutionary process. Another option suggests that God gave life a kick start by miraculously creating the basic elements needed for the evolutionary process to develop, only involving Himself where life was not able to evolve naturally. The fact that there are a variety of views related to Theistic Evolution is in itself sufficient grounds for questioning the theory. Pure science does not operate upon multiple possibilities, neither can the word of God, which is concerned with truth, be called upon to support a variety of options.
There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn about those that adopt this theory. First, that evolution is viewed as a scientific fact and God must therefore fit into that process. Second, the authority of the Bible is seriously challenged, and third, the evolutionist ignores and many times suppresses the real scientific evidence that shows the theory of evolution to be false. If Theistic Evolution is to have any credibility then it follows that the Bible would provide clear evidence for the evolutionary process, after all God has Himself declared, “The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

In other words God has placed on record what he has done and intends to do. This point is emphasized in the New Testament where the apostle records, “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

The purpose of this article is to examine briefly the scriptural record for evidence that theistic evolution is actually taught. When all the details are considered it becomes evident that the scriptures are in conflict with the concept of Theistic Evolution and therefore the theory must be rejected.

The simplicity of the Biblical record

The opening words of the book of Genesis cannot fail to impress the reader with the simplicity and straightforwardness of the text,

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

From this opening statement the record details the various stages through which creation progressed to the final act of man’s creation. Such recurring phrases as, “God said...” and “God divided,” or “God made” followed by “and it was so” are terms which contradict any suggestion of an evolutionary process involved in the Genesis account. God is revealed as being intimately involved at every stage of creation rather than stepping back and allowing a process of natural selection to take place.

There is a simplicity about the Biblical record, yet at the same time a complexity in the events described which defy our comprehension, a complexity which is not conveniently removed by any form of evolutionary process. The Psalmist records, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;...For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:6, 9).

Nothing could be more straightforward; the challenge is having a willingness to accept what the Bible says.

It is easy to become intimidated when we have perhaps no “scientific” background; and when we are presented with a voluminous amount of “scientific” jargon, or “evidence,” we can easily become overwhelmed. The prophet Isaiah offers sound advice: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

The events of creation are summarized in the concluding verse of Genesis 1 and the opening verses of chapter 2. There we read, “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Gen.1:31-2:2).

From this we learn:
1. Creation involved “the heavens and the earth,” including “all his work which he had made.” This consisted of the events described on each day.
2. The heavens and the earth were created in six days.
3. Each day is described in terms as a “morning and evening.”
4. The completed creative work was considered “very good.”

In response to this some have suggested that God is not speaking literally but rather figuratively; that the days represented six divine fiats, that is six quick statements that took long periods of time to accomplish. Other suggestions promote the idea that the days represent a drama of creation given to Moses in a dream; or that each day represented a long period of time, such as a thousand years or more. The evolutionist views the days as geological days, that is representing the same sequence displayed in the geological record.

As appealing as these suggestions might appear, the Bible offers no hint that the days are anything but literal days. When God gave His law regarding the Sabbath to Israel, He commented, “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

Once again we are being told that the creation process covered a period of six days...
in Genesis. If a day is not a day in the normal sense of the word, we are forced to enquire what does a night consist of?

The teaching of Jesus and the Apostles

The opening phrase of the book of Genesis is “In the beginning.” How was that point in time viewed by the New Testament writers? The apostle John commences his gospel with the words, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God” (John 1:1). There is nothing complicated in this statement, it is a reflection upon the words of Genesis One where God spoke and it was done. It was God’s word that initiated the events of every day. The Lord Jesus Christ referred to the beginning as the time when Adam and Eve were created:

“From the beginning of creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6).

The prophet Isaiah wrote that men have been around since “the beginning of the world” (Isaiah 64:4), a thought that is at complete odds with the theory of evolution. Therefore the phrase “the beginning” refers to all those things related to the six days creation.

In the gospel of Mark the Lord describes terrible events which would overtake Israel in AD 70 because of their unfaithfulness, saying, “such as was not since the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time...” (Mark 13:19). According to the evolutionist human injustice could not have occurred until man appeared on the scene, an event which theoretically took place millions of years after the process of life began. This is not what Jesus said, he noted that injustice was evident “since the beginning,” a time which from a Biblical perspective included men and women.

The creation of man is described in very specific terms. The record clearly states, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

The creation of man is described in very specific terms. The record clearly states, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

“...by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation... For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners...” Romans 5:12, 18, 19.
The introduction of death

Another conflict of ideas is found in the way in which the Bible describes the introduction of death into the world. The evolutionary process requires that death was part of the natural process of development which occurred over millions of years. The geologic column supposedly containing the fossil record supporting the evolutionary process indicates that death must have occurred much earlier prior to the appearance of man. This is in conflict with the Biblical record.

We read that all things were created for God’s pleasure (Revelation 4:11) and at the conclusion of God’s creative work He looked upon His handiwork and “behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31), sin had not yet marred God’s creation. The record then proceeds to describe the circumstances leading up to Adam’s disobedience which resulted in God placing His creation under the sentence of death. We read that God placed Adam under a law, saying, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

Adam and Eve disobeyed and the result was that death entered the world (Genesis 3:19). It was on this authority that the apostle Paul wrote, “by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all me, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). The same point is made in the letter to the Corinthians where Paul said, “For since by man came death...for as in Adam all die” (15:21-22). The Biblical record is quite unambiguous, the sentence of death was introduced after the conclusion of creation and was not present at any time during the creative work prior to that point.

What is the real problem?

Several other contradictions, which need not be detailed in this article, reveal themselves upon closer examination. The Genesis account describes birds and sea creatures being created on the fifth day and land animals being created on the sixth day (Genesis 1:21, 24) whereas evolution says that birds evolved from land animals. The recognized dependency of plants and insects upon each other for survival creates a problem with the theory of long epochs of time. Vegetation was created on the third day whereas insects were not created until the sixth day. How would vegetation survive over thousands or millions of years without pollination being provided by the insects?

It all boils down to which authority we are prepared to accept. Theistic Evolution is not about accepting pure scientific knowledge but rather a theory that is in direct conflict with the Bible. It elevates the thinking of man over that of the divinely inspired scriptures. Those who attempt to harmonize the theory with Bible teaching clearly place less credence upon God’s authority than they do on man’s knowledge. Moreover to accept Theistic Evolution is to challenge God’s supremacy and His ability to achieve what is impossible for man to fully comprehend. That is the real essence of attempting to harmonize two diametrically opposed views. “Without faith it is impossible to please (God)” (Hebrews 11:6). Herein lies the root of the problem.

When the apostle Paul spoke about God’s creative handiwork in Acts 17 he also noted that God “hath appointed a day, in which he will judge this world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). That day is fast approaching and when it occurs the prophet Isaiah informs us “the loftiness of man shall be bowed down and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isaiah 2:17).
The aggressive seizure of Crimea by Russia has sent alarm-bells throughout the Western World

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

It is now 3½ months since our last update and at the moment the world’s eyes are focusing on the battle between East and West in the Ukraine, a matter we looked at last time, but which has now moved centre-stage. The West is seeing this as a return to the Cold-War when the Soviet empire was isolated from the Western world and was seen as the great enemy threatening to over-run the West, unless contained by force. The United States was the great defender of Europe, with American troops and missiles stationed in many European countries, ready to spring into action.

How the world has changed since those early post-war days. The Soviet Union itself collapsed, its military power shrunk as Russia struggled economically, burdened with its rigid system of management that encouraged corruption and discouraged initiative. The huge monolith of the Soviet Union was broken up, with many countries gaining their independence, Ukraine being one of them.

It was under Vladimir Putin, who succeeded Boris Yeltsin as President of Russia in 2000, that things began to turn around. As an ex KGB man he has a ruthless streak and finds ways of muzzling any who stand in his way. Under Russian law the President was only allowed to stand for 2 four-year terms. He could re-stand after a break of 1 term. Putin changed this towards the end of his second term so that from 2012, the Presidential term was extended to a maximum of 2 six year terms. He could re-stand after a break of 1 term. Putin changed this towards the end of his second term so that from 2012, the Presidential term was extended to a maximum of 2 six year terms. We remember how he swopped with the Prime Minister, Medvedev who was elected President with Putin as Prime Minister. Having been out of office, Putin was able to stand again as President and seems fairly assured of running...
for 2 terms.

In one of his annual televised addresses to the Kremlin and the Russian people in 2005, he used strong language to describe the break-up of the Soviet.

“First and foremost, it is worth acknowledging that the demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century,” Mr. Putin said.

“As for the Russian people, it became a genuine tragedy. Tens of millions of our fellow citizens and compatriots found themselves beyond the fringes of Russian territory. The epidemic of collapse spilled over to Russia itself” (Washington Times 26-Apr-05).

As that century had witnessed two World Wars, it was a surprising statement, but reflected his own passion to put right the “catastrophe.” Mr. Putin’s aim has been to rebuild that old Empire by pulling back these ex-Soviet territories into Russia’s orbit and holding back the advancement of NATO right up to her borders. This is where personal ambitions are harnessed to angelic requirements! As we shall see, the Kingdom of Men must stand up on iron-clay feet. We are witnessing the shaking of the nations into their appropriate foot! But before this, let’s have a history lesson to learn the importance of Ukraine and Crimea to Russia.

**Kievian Russia**

In *Elpis Israel*, John Thomas traces the movement of some of the sons of Japheth, one of Noah’s 3 sons who repopulated the earth after the Flood. John Allfree also has an excellent section on the history of these Japhethites in Ezekiel. An exposition of chapters 1-39. Japheth’s sons moved westward into Europe, leaving traces of their family names in the names of rivers, towns and regions. From the prophecy of Ezekiel 38, which describes the coming of the nations under the headship of Gog to conquer Israel, we are particularly interested in 3 of Japheth’s sons, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. The latter does not occur in Ezekiel ch. 38, but appears under the name of Rosh (as the word chief is translated in modern versions).

Tiras settled in the vicinity of what is now called Constantinople, in Europe, and from him the Thracians descended, and that country was anciently called Thrace (The World’s Great Empires McKinstry).

From here they moved northwards giving their name to the River Tyres—now the Dnieper—and its chief city on the river, Tiraspol. This was the area of the Scythians, whom Byzantine chroniclers termed the Tauro-Scythia or the Tauri.

The Russian historian Gregov remarks: Kiev Rus was for a long time known among the Greeks as Scythia or Tauro-Scythia … these Tauro-Scythians call themselves Rus.

Rosh/Rosh/Rus is the ancient name for Russia. My Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th ed.) says, “the name ‘Russia’ is derived though Rossiya from Slavonic Rus or Ros.” Gesenius, the 18th century German scholar, who was a Hebrew specialist, said of Rosh “a proper noun of a northern nation, undoubtedly the Russians.” The historian Gibbon in his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” (Vol. 7 p. 80) states, “that among the Greeks, the national appellation (for the Russians) had a singular Ros.” They can be traced back to Tiras, the youngest son of Japheth as listed in Genesis 10 (Milestones 2005).

So the descendants of Tiras settled in the region of today’s Ukraine and Crimea, and the Russian nation of today takes its origin from this region. We trace Russian history from the events of the ninth century. Kiev was conquered in around 882 by Prince Oleg of Novgorod (way to the north of Kiev) and founded the state of Kievan Rus. Some historians describe it not so much as a conquest but a merging of the two great cities. It became a flourishing centre.

At its peak Kievan Rus was not only a powerful state carrying on diplomatic and economic relations with a large number of its fellows throughout Europe and the Middle East, but also the centre of a remarkable culture. Some of its princes deserve inclusion among the ranks of the great rulers of medieval times (A History of Russia Paul Dukes).

Oleg was succeeded by Grand Prince Igor, who, according to Dukes, “Soviet historians look upon as the ‘true beginning of the Russian princely line’.” Following his death, his widow Olga took over and the state flourished under her hands. She maintained a strong link to Constantinople and was “converted to Christianity.” Olga’s son remained a pagan, and it was through the “baptism” of his own son Vladimir in around 988 that brought the Greek Orthodox Church to be the State religion of this region. Vladimir had sent envoys to study the religions of the surrounding nations, and they had been most impressed by the Orthodox Church in Constantinople. So Vladimir, having taken part of Crimea, boldly asked the Byzantine Emperor to give him his sister, Anna, in marriage. He agreed to be “baptised” and this ceremony was followed by his marriage to Anna. On his return home he swept away the pagan temples and started building churches!

There followed a turbulent period of consolidation, but by the mid-eleventh century, Russia—Kievan Rus—was “the biggest and strongest state in Europe” according to the Soviet historian Grekov. The Russian Church played an important role in its development.

Under pressure from the Mongols under Genghis Khan, the state of Kievan Rus was
broken up, its rulers and priests barbarously tortured and Kiev was sacked in 1240. As the region fell to the Mongols, it also came under pressure from the Roman Catholic Swedes to the north, who, far from helping fellow Christians, took the opportunity to spread Roman Catholicism. However they were defeated and according to a Soviet historian, the victory “saved the Russian people from fate of the Baltic tribes and the Slavs of the Elbe who were enslaved by the Germans” (Short History Smirnov). Due to Mongol pressure Kiev’s Russian inhabitants were forced northwards, and Moscow began to grow in importance. Our first reference to Moscow occurs in 1137; by the 14th century it became the centre of the Russian nation. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the centre of Orthodox Christianity now flourished in Russia under Ivan III.

In 1462 Moscow had become the political as well as the religious centre of the Russian lands (History of Russia Duke). It was a period in which the basic territory of Russia was welded into a single state and completely liberated from the Tatar yoke, and in which the political foundations of that state took shape (Short History Smirnov).

During the 15th and 16th centuries there was much rebuilding in Moscow including the Kremlin and two of its churches, reflecting Russia’s own take on the architecture of Constantinople. With the Russian Church flourishing, Moscow became known as the 3rd Rome (Constantinople had been the 2nd Rome.)

Ukraine meanwhile was divided up and by the mid-14th century was controlled by 3 powers, the Golden Horde, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. In 1653 they were controlled by Roman Catholic Poland; they rebelled and voted to turn to Moscow. Under the Treaty of Pereyaslave in 1654 Ukraine came under Russian control. By the late 18th century Ukraine was divided by Tsarist Russia and Habsburg Austria. Following the Russian Revolution, Ukraine declared its independence, but by late 1919 the new Soviet army conquered it and it became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Ukrainian language and culture was repressed and millions starved to death.

In WWII Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941, but was back under Soviet control at the end of the war. With the fall of the Soviet in 1991, once more Ukraine became independent.

Crimea

Crimea is an isthmus linked to Ukraine. It has had a chequered history and was not always part of Ukraine. In the mid-10th century, the eastern side was under control of the Kievan Rus, while the southern part was under the control of Byzantium. It then fell to the Mongols, regaining independence in the 15th century and then coming under Ottoman control. In 1783 it became part of the Russian Empire. The Crimean War of 1853-1856 was an attempt by the French and British and the Ottoman Empire to win it back from Russia. Disastrous losses forced a settlement and Crimea was divided between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. After the end of WWI, Crimea became part of the Soviet Union in 1921. After occupation by the Nazis in WWII, Crimea became part of the Soviet Union again until 1954 when the Soviet transferred it to the control of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, following Stalin’s death and as part of the de-Stalinisation of Russia under Khrushchev. It was described as a gift to mark the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslave which was the occasion when Ukraine became part of Russia. Under the Soviet system it meant that Russia was still in control, little imagining that one day the vast Soviet Empire would crumble. Upon the fall of the Soviet it remained with Ukraine and Russia had to pay rental to Ukraine for the privilege of using the facilities on the isthmus! This was the position until the events of March 2014 unfolded and it has now broken away from Ukraine and is back under Russian control and is known as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Crimea’s importance lies in its fertile soil, agriculture is its main business and the fact that it has deep water ports which are home to the Russian Black Sea fleet.

Putin and Crimea

Hopefully with this background, we will have a better idea of the importance of Ukraine and Crimea in particular, in Putin’s plans. One of Russia’s drawbacks is that, vast though it is, the Black Sea ports are her only warm water ports. The vast majority of her ports freeze in winter. Thus the ports in Crimea are especially important. Russia recently signed long-term agreements with Ukraine to continue to station her Black Sea Fleet here, but the matter was a cause of tension between Russia and Ukraine. The main base is in Sevastopol where Russia has some 26,000 troops; Ukraine also has some of her ships here. The Black Sea Fleet is an important element in Putin’s desire to rebuild her links to the Middle East. From Sevastopol, supplies are shipped to Syria via Tartus port and Latakia. A naval presence will be needed if Russia is to exploit the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, and to counter the presence of American ships in the region.

In recent times Russia has been concentrating expansion plans on the eastern shore of the Black Sea at Novorossiysk, the main port for Russian grain exports and on Russian territory. A new naval base is being constructed here and has been in progress since 2007. Her only outlet to the Mediterranean is via the Bosporus and the Dardanelles, both under the control of Turkey. The other strategic value of Ukraine is in the many oil and gas pipes which transport Russian energy to the West.
Ethnic divisions in Ukraine

By reason of her chequered history, Ukraine is divided between the Russian speaking and the Ukrainian speaking. The map indicates the NE/SW divide. Add to this the division between the Churches as we saw last time.

The dominant religion in Ukraine is Orthodox Christianity, which is currently split between three Church bodies: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church autonomous church body under the Patriarch of Moscow, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

A distant second by the number of the followers is the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which practices a similar liturgical and spiritual tradition as Eastern Orthodoxy, but is in communion with the Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church and recognises the primacy of the Pope as head of the Church (Wikipedia).

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate was set up in 1992, and its leader, Patriarch Filaret, has been excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church. There were reports that Russian Orthodox priests, accompanied by armed men were attempting to take over the running of two churches in Crimea (Catholic World News 21-Mar-14). However the Russian Patriarch Kirill was conspicuous by his absence, when on March 17th Putin gave an impassioned speech to parliament, justifying his actions in seizing Crimea. Kirill has been deeply involved in wooing the Ukrainian churches, making some 30 visits in the 5 years since his election. According to the Roman Catholic Asia Times (21-Mar-14), he had been hoping for greater rewards than just Crimea.

Putin’s iron Fist

Putin was greatly disturbed by the West’s interference in Kiev. Germany especially used its influence to rouse the people, leading to the overthrow of the Russian-leaning Ukrainian President, who fled to Moscow. Access to his once guarded palace revealed his lavish life style which was in sharp contrast to the lives of ordinary Ukrainians.

We recall that at the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius at the end of November last year, the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovych, refused to sign the 1,200 page document which would have set Ukraine on the pathway to EU membership. This followed pressure from Mr Putin. Ukraine owes huge sums of money for gas it has received over the past years and not paid for because of economic difficulties. Ukraine already paid a high price compared to some of her neighbours, part of Russia’s tactics to influence these ex-Soviet countries. Following Yanukovych’s refusal to sign, he was rewarded by Russia with the promise of drastic cuts in gas prices and the offer of a substantial loan to help pay the bills.

The EU however was unhappy at this turn of events and rallied their help to the Ukrainian opposition parties. According to Debka (28-Feb-14), the UK M16, working with France and Germany, were aiming to produce a unity government by forcing Yanukovych to work with the opposition party. The revolt grew out of hand and instead, Yanukovych resigned on February 22nd and fled to Moscow. The interim government that took over, told the West that they would have to cough up some $21 bn in order to stave off bankruptcy. This they were unwilling to do.

Putin had to make some rapid calculations. With the capital Kiev in disarray and the West in a quandary as to how involved they wanted to be, this was the right time to act to bring back at least Crimea to the fold to protect his bases there; time will tell whether he makes deeper moves into Ukraine. With Crimea having its own parliament and being predominantly ethnic Russian, a ballot was called for to be held on March 16th. It was a simple—but loaded—form with just 2 questions. Tick either you want to join Russia now, or tick that you want to join later! With the Sochi Winter Olympics over, Putin moved the massive security personnel that had guarded the Games, to Crimea to supplement the Russian troops on the ground. He, out of the blue, organised big troop manoeuvres on the borders of Ukraine! It involved tens of thousands of Russian troops. After a few days they were stood down on Putin’s orders, in early March. A few days later another drill was called for, involving 60,000 troops for a month long drill. This was the biggest exercise for 20 years and is taking place not far from Ukraine’s borders. 4,000 paratroopers are involved, plus 1,000 missile and tank units. Russia also test fired 2 missiles, one an anti-aircraft missile, the other an intercontinental ballistic missile. According to Stratfor (06-Mar-14), the Russian towed a derelict vessel and sank it at the mouth of the port in Donuzlav Lake, home to 7 of Ukraine’s estimated 25 ships and effectively trapping them with no way out!

By the time the referendum was held, Russian troops were in control of key buildings in Crimea and surrounding Ukrainian troops in their bases. The ballot gave an overwhelming assent for Crimea to breakaway and re-join Russia. Russian troops took over the Ukrainian bases, and at the time of writing, Kiev has abandoned Crimea, by withdrawing all her troops, leaving Crimea firmly in Russia’s hands. Many of the troops have taken up the option of joining the Russian army and remaining in Crimea. Will Putin stop here? He has massed troops on the Ukraine borders again, so this may not be the end. Other Russian-leaning areas of Ukraine may follow Crimea’s example and hold their own referenda on joining up with Russia. The Russian government has been busy issuing passports to all Russians who wish them, with the promise that Russia will look after her citizens!

The Russian takeover of Crimea was rapidly rubber-stamped by the Russian parliament, there was no going back. The US and Europe both drew up sanctions against

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Russia, but in reality there is little that can be done without arousing Russian sanction against the West. Energy supply is the powerful weapon that Russia holds. Too late the West is realising how difficult it is to break that dependence. They have called off the planned G-8 Summit which was due to be held in Sochi in June and suspended Russia from the G8. The value of the rouble has dropped sharply over the past few weeks and Russia’s credit rating has been downgraded; worrying but not the end of the world for Putin.

If Crimea had been part of the EU, the ballot results would be declared invalid and they would have been told to try again until the result was “favourable”! Faced with a region where 82% speak Russian at home the EU knows they are not likely to change their minds! Putin is no doubt banking on the fact that the EU will balk at the financial tab that will come if the rest of the Ukraine turns to the EU. Although the interim government has just signed the first step in an Accession Treaty, it has been pointed out that this represents about the first 2% of the journey towards full membership, and the EU is making it clear that membership is a long way off. Further signing has been postponed until after the May election of a new President. Much will depend on who is chosen. One of the favourites is the recently released former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, who would steer a pathway more favourable to Russia. It is difficult to see the economy recovering in the short term, so the cost of bailout seems way beyond what Europe would be prepared to pay, and the austerity measures the EU forced on Greece and Cyprus would pale into insignificance compared with what Ukraine would face. Russia has already cancelled the promised gas price reductions in retaliation for overthrowing the Russian-leaning President. Putin has also said that the $100 discount per 1,000M3 which had been negotiated as part of the deal for using the Crimean bases would also be withdrawn, as Crimea no longer belonged to Ukraine. The powerlessness of the West is captured in this clever ‘photoshopped’ picture. The original picture was of the Russian chess master, Garry Kasparov, playing multiple opponents in 2007. Kasparov’s head has been replaced by Putin’s and his opponent’s heads by Obama, Cameron, Merkel and Hollande!

Putin enlists the aid of the Black Madonna!

We reported in the last issue on the gift that Putin presented to the Pope on his visit last November—a copy of the Black Madonna of Kazan icon. Both men kissed the icon. This icon, or copies of it, has been used on many occasions in battle to “bless” Russia’s military exploits. It was flown around the Black Sea last month; initially it was thought that it was to safeguard the Sochi Winter Olympic Games, now it would appear that Putin had something else in mind! According to an Arab newspaper based in London:

Last month, when Vladimir Putin ordered that the Black Madonna of Kazan, the holiest icon of the Russian Orthodox Church, be flown over the Black Sea, many believed he wished to secure blessings for the Winter Olympics in Sochi. It was the first time the icon, or rather a copy of it, since the original was stolen and possibly destroyed in 1904, was deployed to bless a peaceful enterprise. Over the centuries, the “Black Virgin” has been taken to battlefields to bless Russian armies fighting Swedish, Polish, Turkish, Persian, French and German invaders. Stalin sent it to Stalingrad in 1943 to ensure victory over the German invaders under Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus. With Putin’s troops in control of Crimea and threatening to move further into Ukraine, we now know that the icon was brought in to bless a military operation this time as well (Ashraq Al-Awsat 07-Mar-14).

Putting events into the Biblical context

Before looking at some of the other events that have happened that are of interest to Bible watchers, matters which have not necessarily made the headlines as the press sees little significance, because it does not know God’s plans, let’s set the Ukraine events in context. What we are witnessing is the shaking of the nations into the appropriate foot. Daniel ch. 2 describes the Kingdom of Men as an awesome image of various metals, which King Nebuchadnezzar saw in the visions of the night. The various stages represented by the metals have come and gone in the pages of history. There remains one final stage! That is for the whole edifice to stand upon iron/clay feet. This is the stage in world history that we have reached. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay (Dan. 2:41-43).

The image that the King saw has never existed before in its entirety, it was a vision for the latter-days (v. 28).

The metals in their order do (represent a succession of empires), but not the Image. There are not four images, but four metals in one image. Therefore one image of divers metals, one dominion of divers constituents (Herald of the Kingdom 1852 John Thomas).

It needs its feet and toes in order to be completed. We have been witnessing over recent years that process which will put the correct nations into their respective camps. As history has taught us during the time of the iron, Roman Empire, legs, they were Eastern and Western with their respective capitals in Rome and Constantinople. We should then be seeing the same situation to arise in our times, with the military head possessing Constantinople and the spiritual head occupying Rome. We see the Western foot in the EU and the Eastern Foot in Russia and the Eurasian Union Putin is busy setting up to rival the EU. There are a number of countries that are not yet in either camp, and this is what we are currently witnessing; their movement East or West. From a consideration of the original division of the Roman world as our guide, it is also apparent that some countries are in the wrong “shoes” as it were. Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania are presently in the EU, whereas one would expect them to be in the Eastern Camp. It is not without significance that Greece and Cyprus are facing extreme financial problems, which haven’t been satisfactorily sorted. Another financial crisis can’t be ruled out, which could force them out of the EU, Russia has substantial interests in then stepping into the breach. So what we are seeing happen in Ukraine we would expect to happen in the other “independent” countries in the area such as Georgia, Moldova, and the remaining Balkan states, as they find that in today’s world, independence comes at too high a price, but through political alliances, the weak nations can feel strong (Joel 3:10).

Middle East Peace Talks

President Obama’s determination to find a solution to the differences between the...
Palestinians and the Israelis have been in the frequent visits to the Middle East by his Secretary of State, John Kerry, aided by his Peace Envoy, Martin Indyk. Obama had hoped that in 9 months a settlement would be wrapped up. As that deadline of April 29th fast approaches, the prospects of an agreement are minimal. As we write, there is a last ditch effort in getting the two sides to agree to the deadline being extended. For Israel, they have released 3 batches of prisoners, but have received nothing in exchange. President Abbas refuses to acknowledge Israel’s demand to be recognised as a legitimate State for Jews. Israel is baulking at releasing the fourth and last batch of prisoners, many of whom are in prison for causing Israeli deaths, without having seen any sign that the Palestinians want peace. Neither has Abbas any real authority to negotiate—Hamas is as opposed to Israel as ever.

From a Biblical point of view Israel needs to be in possession of the “mountains” which form the backbone of the West Bank. It was Ezekiel who saw Israel dwelling in the midst of and on the mountains of Israel in the latter-days (Ezek. 38:8, 12).

Israel and Jordan—A growing Partnership

Jordan’s Peace Treaty with Israel has been the basis of much behind-the-scenes contacts between the Jordanian King and Israeli Prime Ministers. Recently there have been more open dealings between the two countries. The long talked about Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal to replenish the drying up Dead Sea with sea water from the Gulf of Aqaba, is now out to international tender. It has great potential for both countries. It will generate electricity, powering desalination plants in Jordan which will supply much needed drinking water to the region and open up the region to tourism. Israel plans to buy some of this water for use in southern Israel and sell to Jordan water from the Sea of Galilee for use in northern Jordan. Transporting water long distances is expensive. By “swapping” water, this reduces distribution costs—a win-win situation.

Another field of cooperation is in the supply of coal. Jordan’s coal-fired cement works lie in the north of the country. Before the Syrian civil war, she was able to import coal from Syria. This is no longer possible and the cost of transporting imported coal from her port of Aqaba to the north where it is needed, is prohibitive. Israel imports big quantities of coal from around the world for her power stations at Haifa. At the moment Israel is running a 3-month trial, transporting the coal the much shorter distance from Haifa. If this proves successful, Israel will increase her coal imports to meet Jordan’s needs.

As Israel steps up the flow of gas from the new Tamar field, which came on stream a year ago, so the Tamar operator, Nobel, is in a position to sell excess gas. Israel’s government policy is to use this resource to help build relationships with her Arab neighbours. Nobel has signed an agreement to supply $500 million worth of gas over a 15-year period commencing in 2016, to the Jordanian Potash company. This is situated on the other side of the boundary to Israel’s own chemical works at Sedom. All that is required is a short extension pipeline to be built to link the two plants. Jordan has been suffering from the constant blowing-up of the major gas supply pipe from Egypt. With Israel willing to supply more of Jordan’s gas needs, this has potential to grow into a multi-billion dollar trade.

It said that a key broker of the deal was Amos J. Hochstein, the US deputy assistant secretary of state for energy diplomacy, a child of Israeli parents, who made 14 visits to Jordan to help pave the way for the agreement. The TV report said Israel’s President Shimon Peres also helped the deal along (Times of Israel 20-Feb-14).

Assad gaining the Upper Hand

As the Syrian civil war enters its 4th year, Assad is steadily securing progress in retaking much of what the “rebels” had seized. The Syrian opposition parties have become more disunited, with a shortage of Western support. Many have seen the wisdom of switching sides, back to Assad. The death toll continues to rise with over 200,000 dead according to one organisation. The numbers of refugees—3 million—are posing terrible strains on neighbouring countries. Within Syria, estimates are of 5 million displaced. Yet the West is powerless to stop the catastrophe. President Putin and the Iranian leaders pour arms, aid and advisors to support President Assad.

The destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons is continuing steadily, but a long way off the target timetable. The UN announced on 19th March that virtually 46% had been removed from the country. A specially equipped US ship destroys the chemicals at sea, as no country was willing to undertake this destruction on land.

Israel seizes Iranian arms Ship

Israel has made several raids into Syria in order to destroy weapons being smuggled to Hezbollah and also advanced weapons being shipped into Syria. But Israel’s arrest of an Iranian ship that had advanced weapons for Hamas hidden in a cargo of cement hit the headlines. Israeli and American spy agencies had been tracking its zig-zag course, ever since the ship left Iran. As it entered the Red Sea, Israeli commandos seized the ship and took it to Eilat where the full extent of the deadly cargo was exposed. So much for Iran’s more moderate path!

We draw our review to a close and contemplate how well blessed we are to witness so many strands of prophecy coming to pass before our eyes. The world is unable to see the connection between the events we have sketched—and many more beside, yet for the Bible student these are powerful evidences that we do indeed live at the end of the times of the Gentiles. Soon Israel will be brought to recognise their Messiah and God’s Kingdom re-established upon the earth when Jesus reigns from Jerusalem with power and wisdom and the whole earth will be brought to serve and fear the only True and Living God. Come quickly Lord Jesus.
By John Thomas IN 1854.

The world’s thinking is the “thinking of the flesh,” unenlightened by the teaching of God exhibited in the Scriptures. When the popular mind, expressed through its leading spirits, undertakes the delineation of the future, its vaticinations are sure to be false; because the people’s thoughts are not God’s thoughts, nor their ways his. God has not revealed his purposes to them, but to “his servants” only; as it is written, “The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him;” and “God gave the Apocalypse to Jesus Christ that he might shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;” “the instructed shall understand, but none of the unjustified shall understand.” Now the people and their civil and ecclesiastical rulers are not the servants of Israel’s God, but of the god of this world, “The prince of the power of the air, (the Gentile atmosphere,) the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Not being instructed in Moses and the Prophets, but only in the discordant and clashing theologies of Gentilism, they know nothing of Jehovah’s secret. By neglecting to study the prophets, they exclude themselves from the knowledge of the future. Jehovah has said, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets:” and in announcing the sounding of the symbolic angel now blowing the seventh and last trumpet, the Spirit saith, “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the secret of God shall be accomplished as he hath declared the glad tidings to his servants the prophets.”

These neglected authorities being the sources of information concerning the future, the people can know nothing aight, and must therefore necessarily always be wrong in their predictions, and disappointed in all their hopes. Hence “popular opinion” of the future

the exposition of the prophets. A “divine”

with his head full of immortal-soulism and sky-kingdomism may as well be abed and asleep as attempt to read the signs of the times, and to divine God’s purposes in the approaching future. Preaching mere Gentilism for gospel, they have no key to the mystery of God. The failure of the whole hierarchy of Gentile divines in Britain and America to discern our times aright, need denter no obedient believer of the kingdom’s gospel from expounding the Word with good hope of success. For a clergyman to give an exposition of the present and future, which should be verified by events, would be little short of a miracle. They have all failed hitherto, and are doomed to failure to the end of the chapter. Mr. Robertson did well not to be discouraged by the croakings to which he alludes. We undertake to teach the people and their leaders what be the principles of the oracles of God, and not to subject ourselves to their opinions. The present times prove our competency to do this without presumption; for the events which characterize our times are such as years ago we showed from prophecy would come to pass. The failure of the clergy will enhance our success, furnishing us hereafter a potent argument against their being accounted exponents of the mind of God at all. Notwithstanding all the “orthodox” failures, a long list of which may be recounted, we doubt not that “Anatolia” will command attention in Britain; for the time has come for the voice of truth to be heard there above the tongues of Babel. The “three-unclean-spirits-like-frogs,” sign of the Son of Man in the heaven, is notable. We can read its significance, and according to our interpretation, observe its verification day by day. We know of a literary certainty that what we have said of Russia will come to pass; and we wish the reader to make a note of our full assurance of faith, that when it comes to pass he may know that prophecy can be understood before it is fulfilled.

The immediate issue in the Crimean war involved the rights of Christians in the Holy Land, which was controlled by the Ottoman Empire. The French promoted the rights of Catholics, while Russia promoted those of the Orthodox Church. Russia and the Ottoman Empire went to war in October 1853 over Russia’s rights to protect Orthodox Christians and their “holy places.” Russia gained the upper hand after destroying the Ottoman fleet at the Black Sea port of Sinope; to halt Russia’s conquest, France and Britain entered the war in March 1854. The leader of the opposition in the British House of Commons, Disraeli, blamed Aberdeen for entering the war and caused the Government to resign in 1855.
"I WILL BRING THEE FORTH & ALL THINE ARMY..."

Russian troops enter Ukraine

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth." 2 Thess. 2

"The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind" Daniel 11:40

"...he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." Daniel 11:40

Ezekiel 38:4.
The countries in Orange have already signed up to join Russia in Putin’s Eurasian Union. It is thought that they are increasingly nervous about Russia’s latest antics in Crimea. However, no action has been taken but rather only guarded comments, aside from the recognition of Ukraine’s new government by Belarus. Putin’s hopes for the Union are no secret. He wants a conglomerate powerful enough to rival the US and the EU. The exact stated details of his end game are not really that important yet; the EU started as economic cooperation, but today is looking ever more like a superstate.

The Yellow countries are ones that were part of the old USSR, but haven’t signed up for the Eurasian Union. Most of these have a high number of Russian speakers, and a large amount of trade with Russia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have joined the EU, but they still fear a repeat of the 1940’s, when they were taken by their large neighbour. Putin’s Russia plays a tough game.
Re-Union?

Russia

Kazakhstan

Georgia

Uzbekistan

Turkmenistan

Kyrgyzstan

Azerbaijan

Tajikistan

The Pale Yellow countries are ones that were not part of the Soviet Union, but were under Soviet military control. Most of these have joined the European Union and the rest are knocking on the EU’s door. It is hard to say if these will be part of the left or right legs of the image, but either way, Ezekiel 38 seems to indicate that they will all be under Gog’s military control, as he is to be a guard unto them.

Russia has also been courting other unions to try to rival the west. These include the Shanghai Co-operation Organization, covering military and energy issues which is currently led by Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization of 6 former Soviet states.

tn't

As we have seen in Georgia and now Crimea, Putin is not above sending in troops to enforce his will, or annex territory. It is a bit of a carrot and an AK-47 policy. Many of these countries also host Russian bases and have military cooperation with Russia.
A REMARKABLE BOOK WRITTEN IN 1854

By John Ramsden  LONDON, U.K.

No! that’s not the front page headline from one of London’s tabloid newspapers announcing the Russian takeover of the Crimea—or the impotence of European leaders to respond to it!

It is, in fact the subtitle of a book written in 1854 by a Doctor of Medicine, John Thomas living in London. Because the book looked forward to events in the Middle East prior to Christ’s return it was called “Anatolia”—a word of Greek origin relating to the rising of the sun in the east.

As his Bible studies had persuaded him to expect great developments in both Europe and Russia he had made an extended tour of Germany, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands to see for himself what was going on. The map of Europe in his day was dramatically different from what his Bible studies convinced him it would be like in the last days prior to Christ’s return. But never did he claim, as many religious writers often do today, any sort of special revelation or inspiration from God nor any special miraculous visitations of the Holy Spirit—only careful analysis of Bible Prophecy.

Based on his understanding of the prophetic books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah together with the book of Revelation, he summarised the general sequence of events which he expected to see coming to pass in Europe and Russia. This formed the preface or title page to his book (See title page top right).

1854—The war in the Crimea

The timing of his book was most significant. Following the 900 year old dispute between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches over their rival claims to care for the Holy Places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Russian Czar was keen to make a move down towards Constantinople. No doubt he was influenced in this matter by the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church as it was from here, back in 1453, that the old Caesars of the Eastern leg of the Roman Empire were expelled by the marauding Ottoman hordes from the east, only to end up as the Czars in Moscow, and what some historians simply called “A third Rome.”

But Czar Nicholas I was not the first to have such an ambition: the panel & picture opposite (far right) tell the story of how since the time of Catherine the Great the Czars have been determined to return to Turkey! Indeed in a dramatic BBC interview, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, a former British Foreign Secretary, reminded his audience that since the days of Peter the Great, Russia’s own security aims required that it controlled its
neighbouring territories. On January 9th 1853 Czar Nicholas declared Turkey to be the “Sick Man of Europe” and with that in mind he embarked on his adventure toward Constantinople—known today as Istanbul. His move caused alarm to the two major European powers of the time, Britain and France, and it was their resistance to him that resulted in the 1854 Crimean war with its famous tale of the Charge of the Light Brigade into the valley of death (top left, opposite)—the very location to which Russia has moved today, to defend its Black Sea naval bases.

**Daniel’s key Prophecies Summarised**

In his 120 page book, John Thomas, reviewed the key elements of the Prophecy of Daniel which he saw as being relevant to future events involving the European powers and Russia’s own ambitions—examples of which we saw just a few years ago in Georgia, and now in Ukraine and Crimea.

Daniel chapter 2 tells of events in “the latter days,” portrayed in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great image symbolising a sequence of great national powers from BC 600 through to the present day. Then in chapter 4 Daniel shows how a symbol of a tree cut down but bound with iron and brass represented the old Babylonian Empire which would re-emerge in a very different form in “the latter days,” becoming a reunified east and west Europe under the leadership of a religious power referred to in Revelation as “Babylon the Great” (see below).

Daniel chapter 7 shows a sequence of powers represented by beasts which would culminate with the 4th such beast representing the papally influenced European Union. Next, chapter 8 records how the Roman Empire would emerge from the preceding power of Greece. So, putting the various prophecies together, Thomas showed how that in the last days there would be two great powers based in Rome and Constantinople—neatly recalling the two legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image in chapter 2. Finally, in an extended prophetic vision from chapter 10 to 12,
looking forward to the time when a great “King of the North” would descend onto Israel, prompting the appearance to the world of the Lord Jesus Christ in the land. This “King” would be the Russian-led power described in Ezekiel 38 which would eventually (though most probably not until after the actual return of Christ) lead a great confederacy of European, African and Arab countries against Israel.

The Title Page Summarises the Sequence!

19th Century writers often summarised the key points of their books on the fly leaf or title page of their work. John Thomas did just that as will be seen from his title page, reproduced on page 25. Also the sequence of maps below showing Europe in 1854, 1948 and 2014 demonstrate how great the changes have been since he first envisaged what would happen from his prophetic studies.

For example; It was inevitable that the old French empire would have to go—and it did so some 15 years later. Despite his defeat at the hands of the British at Waterloo, Belgium in 1815, Napoleon’s imperial ambitions lived on. His nephew Napoleon III sought to expand the empire towards Spain, Italy and Germany, but his adventures came to an abrupt halt with his defeat by Prussia in 1870.

**Russia’s Ambition for Expansion**

Ever since the time of Peter the Great Russian leaders have frequently pursued the ambition to expand their territory, both into Europe as well as southwards to Turkey and beyond. In 1854 Russia was at war with the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) over access to the Holy Places. The First World War was triggered when Austria and Germany attacked Serbia, who was an ally of Russia. When the Second World War ended, Stalin sought to expand Russia’s empire as far west as he could, bringing into being the “iron curtain.” He would no doubt have gone further but for the existence of NATO. His successors followed the same ambition as has been seen during Middle East wars and more recently in Georgia and the Ukraine. Today the ambition has been revived by Vladimir Putin.

Then Britain would have to move into Egypt in order to further its emerging role of promoting the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. In 1875 the Jewish Prime Minister of Britain, Benjamin Disraeli bought shares in the Suez Canal company from the destitute Egyptian pasha for £4 million. Then in order to protect their investment the British were obliged to move in and occupy the Suez Canal zone in 1883. Thus was also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 43:3.

Next, the Turkish Ottoman Empire, which had established itself in Constantinople in 1453, (in fulfilment of the 6th Trumpet prophecy of Revelation chapter 9) had to be removed—again as prophesied in Revelation chapter 16:12. This would eventually enable the Turkish-occupied land of Palestine to give way to the creation of the State of Israel which was an essential requirement prior to the return of Christ. Although envisaged by John Thomas in 1848, it was not fully achieved until after the First World War.

Only then would come about the formation of what John Thomas called a Russian-Latino-Greek confederacy: a group of powers stemming from the relics of the old Roman empire dreamed about by Nebuchadnezzar and further enlarged upon in Daniel chapter 11, Ezekiel 38, and Joel 3.

Thus would come about a great confederacy of powers led by Russia descending on Israel for what Revelation 16:16 describes as the great battle of Armageddon.

**How Europe has Changed since 1854**

A glance at our sequence of maps below shows how unbelievable such a prospect would have been to the man in the street in John Thomas’ time. It is hardly surprising then, that his U.K. sales agent, Richard Robertson, wrote to him, very diplomatically, saying that “It requires no ordinary perseverance to encounter numerous discouragements in the way of disseminating a pamphlet with the ominous title of Russia Triumphant Europe chained;” or as we might put it today “How do you expect me to sell a book saying that our national enemy will win?”

In the event, Russia was not triumphant at that time and perhaps John Thomas had been a little too optimistic in his timing and expectation of the date of the Lord’s return. Nevertheless, the prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation and others still stand, and startling though the prospect may sound to many of our friends today, that book title states very bluntly what we see beginning to happen in our own day. In a major BBC radio interview in March, Sir Malcolm Rifkind—a former British Foreign Secretary—warned that “President Putin was re-drawing the map of Europe along ethnic lines… and would find unacceptable the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” In other words he feared it might not be long before Putin made similar land grabs in Eastern Europe—a fear also echoed by Poland’s Prime Minister to the European Union. And who knows how long it will be before Russia makes a move against Turkey? Something which perceptive Bible readers will not be surprised to see happen.
A Russian Latin Greek Confederacy

A careful reading of Ezekiel 38 reveals several important features about Europe and Russia in the last Days. Note how that in verse 2 Gog, the leader of this confederacy is described as “Chief prince of (Rosh) Meshech and Tubal (alias Russia today), but is also leader of the land of Magog—or Central Europe. Other parts of Europe are also mentioned such as Western Europe, Turkey and others in verse 6. But then in verse 7 Gog is told:

“Prepare for thyself and all thy company that are assembled unto thee and be thou a guard unto them.”

Now that is extremely interesting for several reasons. First: Gog is told to prepare itself, or really it means establish itself. Clearly, establishing such a confederacy cannot be achieved overnight. On the contrary, it could take several years and indeed might well not be completed until after Christ’s return.

Second: note the word guard. Very often original words in the Old Testament for guard mean protecting or defending people but on this occasion the original Hebrew word “mishmar” means to act as a prison guard, or to hold in custody, such as used when Joseph and his contemporaries were shut up in prison. So it is hard to escape the conclusion that even if Russia does not actually invade Europe as she has Georgia, and then Crimea, it could well have Europe in subjection through other ways.

John Thomas wrote his book long before oil and gas were every day commodities and it has only been in the last few years that we are realising the sheer economic power with which Russia could enslave Europe, and for it to become subject to its now re-emerging international ambitions. The extent of these ambitions are obvious from the maps shown on the following page.

What about the Churches involved?

Yet in all this, the Bible also makes it clear that the Roman Catholic Church will be immensely influential at the time spoken of in Ezekiel chapter 38. So we ponder on the prospect of just how the great spiritual power will come to terms with the aggressive ambitions of the Russian leadership.

First is the remarkable way in which after almost a thousand years of being divided since the great schism in the church in 1054, the eastern and western legs of the apostate...
church — the Latin (or Roman) and the Greek legs of the churches — have already reached an astonishing degree of rapprochement in the last year or two. Pictures from the Vatican’s own English language newspaper record the dramatic steps made by the last Pope promoting a growing confederacy developing between the two churches. The new Pope continues to assert himself, albeit in a very different way whilst ensuring that the Russian Patriarch will play second fiddle in this process.

Second, we notice how recent Popes, Russian leaders and Prime ministers are coming together in a way which 30 years ago many would have thought unthinkable. Who, as recently as in the 1990’s would have envisaged a Catholic Pope sitting down with and blessing the President of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and discussing their shared ambitions?

Interestingly enough this was the very situation envisaged by John Thomas when in 1854 he wrote:

“When therefore the Czar gets possession of Constantinople he will not be hostile to the Pope. On the contrary he will honour and acknowledge him and be the enemy of the Holy Land.”

The present Czar Putin’s adventures took him recently into Georgia, within reach of Eastern Turkey, and now, on the northern flank he faces the Black Sea coast of Turkey. Turkey is in the throes of undergoing dramatic changes in its attitude toward Europe. The current Premier is in deep trouble: who knows but what Turkey could easily turn to Russia and its Islamic neighbours for support?

**Headlines or Economic reality?**

So we wonder how long it will be before the sub-titles of a book based on nothing more than Bible Studies 154 years ago do in fact become the headlines, not just of scaremongering London tabloids, but the economic and political reality of the European Union. Its leaders are showing great prevarication in dealing with the current land-grabbing activities of the re-emerging Russian Empire. It is so obvious that together, they just do not know what to do.

**RUSSIA’S OIL WEAPON IN VULNERABLE EUROPE**

Research indicates that the potential for biogas to replace natural gas is very large in Europe. Some studies in fact estimate that by 2020 the EU could replace all gas imports from Russia. Russia must use her power to control energy for Europe and the Middle East while she holds the cards, for as Europe turns to bio-gas and the recently discovered gas fields in the Middle East, Russia’s opportunity to assert her will over Europe will continue to diminish, so we may expect her to become more aggressive.

**TIME RUNNING OUT?**

The present Czar Putin’s adventures took him recently into Georgia, within reach of

**NATURAL GAS PIPELINES IN EUROPE**

**RUSSIA’S CONTROL OF EUROPE’S OIL & GAS**

**TIME RUNNING OUT?**

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It is interesting to note the references politicians and writers have made to the Reputed will of Peter the Great as though it forebodes Russia’s impending next moves.

Early in the 19th century, more than 75 years after he died, a remarkable document, purporting to be the Will of Peter the Great came into circulation in Paris. By the 1840’s it had also turned up in America at the time of awakening interest in Daniel’s prophecies concerning Russia and Europe.1

Napoleon was quick to exploit its content and to some extent used it as black propaganda to justify his disastrous attack on Russia ending in his ignominious defeat at the gates of Moscow.

Although its authenticity has been questioned by some historians, nevertheless its content is very much in line with the undisputed ambitions of Peter the Great. He clearly envied the maritime power of other leading European nations—not least that of Britain and he attempted to create his own navy. At the time, Sweden ruled the Baltic Sea; Turkey dominated the Black Sea and prevented him from gaining access to the South. Hence he saw that the conquest of both Sweden and Turkey would be necessary if he was to achieve a powerful position in Europe.

Be that as it may we can see why it is causing anxiety and comment in certain East European and Middle East countries. Here for example are some extracts from it.

John Ramsden

Foot Note: 1. One version of the Will appears in the Herald of the Kingdom 1851, pg. 224

Peter the Great of Russia

In the name of the Holy and Invisible Trinity, we, Peter and Emperor of all the Russians, to all our intercessors on the throne and in the government of the Russian Nation—Providence has evidently designed Russia to be the conqueror and ruler of all Europe, and of all the world.

Rules for the Attainment of that Object
8. We must keep steadily extending our frontiers northward along the Baltic, and southward along the shores of the Black Sea.
9. We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India he who can get possession of these places is ruler of the world. With this in view, we must provoke constant quarrels, at one time with Turkey, and at another time with Persia; we must establish wharfs and docks in the Euxine, and by degrees make ourselves masters of that sea as well as the Baltic, which is a doubly important element in the success of our plan; we must hasten the downfall of Persia, and push on in the Persian Gulf, if possible re-establish the ancient commercial intercourse with the Levant through Syria, and pierce our ways into the Indies, which are the store-houses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with English gold.
11. We must collect around our house as around a centre, all the detached sections of Greeks which are scattered abroad in Hungary, Turkey, and South Poland. We must make them look to us for support, and thereby establish beforehand a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy, which will pave the way for universal sovereignty.
13. Should the improbable case happen of both respecting the propositions of Russia, then our policy will be to set one against the other, and make them tear each other to pieces. Russia must then watch for and seize the favourable moment and pour her already assembled hosts into Germany, while two immense fleets laden with Asiatic hordes, and conveyed by the armed squadrons of the Euxine and the Baltic, set sail simultaneously from the Sea of Azoff and the harbour of Archangel, sweeping along the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, they will over-run France on the one side, while Germany is over-powered on the other. When these countries are fully conquered, the rest of Europe must fall—must fall easily, and without a struggle—under one yoke. Thus Europe can and must be subjugated.

2014 ONTARIO WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL
DECEMBER 20th to 26th (God willing)
Presenters this year will be BRIAN LUKE (Australia), JON OWEN (U.K), BRYAN STYLES (Detroit)
For further information see our website: www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com
While both Catholic and Orthodox priests waved their crosses before police and protesters in the Ukraine, events in Crimea escalated into what the Secretary General of NATO has called “the greatest threat to European security and stability since the end of the cold war.” As the crisis deepened and a tug-of-war over Ukraine followed Russia’s annexation of the Crimean peninsula, there was concern that the “aggression” (as the Secretary General called it) could be expanded to threaten countries such as Poland, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

A headline on the Yahoo news website read: GERMANY ACCUSES RUSSIA OF TRYING TO BREAK APART EUROPE (March 22, 2014), and the article reported that the foreign minister of Germany said that Putin’s increasingly belligerent stance meant that the continent’s entire future was at stake.

That position contrasts sharply with the claim made by U.S. President Obama, that Russia is weak. We shall see! As we write these lines another headline is before us reading: UKRAINE FEARS RUSSIA ‘READY TO ATTACK’ (March 23, 2014).

Conflicting views are constantly being put forward, some pointing to Russia’s aggressive empire-building agenda while others accept Putin’s assurances of peace and his promise not to grab further territory. We are reminded of John Thomas’ comment in his book Elpis Israel (1849) when referring to Daniel 11:40. He wrote: “The whirlwind-nature of the attack implies, I think, not only its overwhelming character, but that when it is made, the allies of the Sultan (i.e. Turkey) will be off their guard; that is, by the Autocrat’s assurances of peace and moderation for which they will give him credit. Constantinople will be left unprotected, and it will fall into his hands before they can come to the rescue.”

Who’s Next?

Russia’s take-over of Georgia in August 2008 led the Canadian news magazine Maclean’s to ask “Who’s Next?” Now, just six years later, we have the answer—the Crimea in the Ukraine. Maclean’s declared:
Moscow has shown the will to crush small neighbours” and went on to list other nations who faced “the growing threat.” These included Ukraine, the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech republic, as well as Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia.

At that time, just six years ago, a professor of international relations at the University of Toronto was reported as saying: “Unless Russia pays a cost for this (invasion of Georgia), unless we really think of this as a very major event and an extraordinary set of moves by Russia, then further down the line we will be paying collectively in the West a really heavy price... We could, six months or a year from now, be facing a situation in Ukraine which would be much more difficult to ignore.”

During the height of the Russian action against Georgia, the then President of the country said: “If the whole world does not stop Russia today, then Russian tanks will be able to reach any other European capital” (Reuters, Aug 8, 08).

But “the whole world” did not stop Russia back in 2008, and last December (2013) Vladimir Putin bluntly declared: “Nobody should have any illusion about the possibility of gaining military superiority over Russia... We will never allow this to happen. Russia will respond to all these challenges, political and military.”

Reuters (March 19, 2014) commented: “The result of Russia’s seizure of Crimea from Ukraine, following its 2008 war with Georgia, could be a modest reversal of years of European defense cuts and a bigger U.S. military presence in the NATO members of central and eastern Europe... While some Western governments regarded Russia’s war with Georgia as a one-off, they see its annexation of Crimea as a sign of things to come.”

A United States intelligence officer is quoted as saying: “Putin has made it very clear he intends to reassert Russia’s sphere of influence... We don’t have a strategy to deal with that.”

The Reuters report continued: “The potential flashpoint, however, is the Baltic states. These former Soviet republics are now in NATO and therefore protected by Article 5 of its treaty, which requires all members to help an ally under attack. Like Ukraine, they are home to significant Russian minorities.”

Another NATO diplomat put it this way: “I think people do understand continental wars in Europe are not over... We will not
be credible if we simply continue as if nothing has happened.”

But no one is willing to take the remarks of a Russian broadcaster seriously when he made an explicit nuclear threat saying Russia remained “capable of turning the United States into radioactive ash.”

So a headline on another news website is understandable: “PUTIN’S CRIMEA TAKEOVER SENDS SHIVERS ACROSS EX-SOVIET UNION”

The article said that:

“The significance of Russia’s absorption of Crimea has not been lost on the fellow Slavic nation of Belarus whose cities of Gomel, Mogilyov and Vitbesk were once part of the republic of Soviet Russia under the USSR. Since the start of the crisis, the country’s authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko has been manoeuvering to hedge his bets and remain on good terms with Moscow, agreeing to station additional Russian fighter jets in his country.”

Meanwhile, the Vatican has remained conspicuously silent about Russia’s move into the Crimea.

Russia in the Bible

The remarkable prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 38 describes an alliance of nations that is to exist “in the latter years” (verse 8), and this group of nations includes Rosh. The Revised Version, as well as several other versions, reads (verse 2):

“Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him.”

The Authorised King James version reads “chief prince,” but there are good reasons for taking this word as a proper name. When Jerome produced the Latin Vulgate version in AD 405 he rendered the passage with the comment “Sive Ros;” pointing out that it was the name “Rosh.” So the name has been understood in that way for over 1,600 years. In the 1739 commentary by Lowth we read: “Rosh, taken as a Proper Name, signifies those inhabitants of Scythia, from whence the Russians derive their Name and original.” This identification of the name was made 275 years ago. Also, Gesenius in his Hebrew Lexicon (1846 edition) says that it is the proper name—of a northern nation, mentioned with Tubal and Meshech—undoubtedly the Russians, who are mentioned by Byzantine writers of the tenth century, under the name Poξ, dwelling to the north of Taurus....

Thus, it is a well established concensus that Russia is identified in this passage from Ezekiel. It was with this understanding that the author Robert Roberts made the following statement in his 1884 book Christendom Astray:

“The supremacy of Russia is foretold... She is to vanquish many countries, and hold a protectorate over them as indicated by the words, “Be thou a guard unto them.” Those countries include all the nations of the Continent. ‘Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters,’ will be found, on reference to ancient geography, to embrace nearly every country in Europe; and, in addition to these, there are ‘Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them,” showing that at the time, Russia will have attained to something like universal dominion.”

The Land of Magog

Gog (a name which means “all that is powerful, gigantic, and proud”—Companion Bible) is to be “of the land of the Magog” as well as prince—or ruler—of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal (c/p RV). It is fascinating to follow the clues provided by both Scripture and history in order that we may trace these ancient names and places.

“The land of Magog” is clearly geographic information and must be considered with the further statement that Gog’s “place” is in “the north parts” (v. 15)—or more correctly, “the uttermost parts of the north” (R.V.). The Hebrew text is crucial to our consideration and speaks of the remotest extremities of the north. In fact the word “north” actually carries the idea of “hidden, unknown.” The land of the Magog, to which this prophecy refers obviously lay beyond the civilised world of Ezekiel’s time.

It has long been noted by students that the Jewish historian Josephus (writing at about the time of Christ) identified the Biblical Magog with the Scythians of Greek literature. An even earlier historian Herodotus (approx. 450 BC), placed the Scythians north of the Black Sea.

All these ancient documents tell us that the land of Magog includes territory stretching across Asia to the Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and as far as Germany. Certainly this answers the requirements of the prophecy in placing the land of Magog in the remote and unknown north of Ezekiel’s time.

“Prepare for Thyself”

The union of “Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” followed the rise of Moscow as leader of Russian lands. In just over 150 years (from 1533 to 1689), territorial expansions were tremendous—bringing practically the whole of northern Asia under “the rule and protection of Moscow.”

This welding together of the Russias,
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.” — Daniel 11:40
Moscow and Siberia, fulfilled the first step in a long period of preparation as required by Ezekiel 38 (see verse 7). The prophet had foreseen these peoples and their lands under one rulership—and so it must be.

Further territorial gains (1801, 1855 and 1904) pushed the frontiers of Russia further east, south and west.

Territorial gains were made again following the Second World War when half of Europe was chained. But God had said through the prophet “I will turn thee back...” (Ezekiel 38:4), and this certainly followed the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991.

But the prophecy continues, “... and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army...” So there was to be a resurgent Russia who comes forth with a revitalized military capability. And also with new allies.

**Gog’s Allies**

Ezekiel names several allies of the latter day Gog. Ezekiel 38:5 reads: “Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them...”

We can hardly ignore the growing and obvious support that Russia is giving to Iran (the Biblical Persia) today. But there are to be others: “Gomer, and all his bands” (v. 6) requires some investigation. Josephus (Antiquities Book I, chap. VI) says Gomer answers to the Galatians and Galls—“Gallia” was the Latin name for what is now France.

The Assyrans had noted a northern tribe by the name Gimirrai which has been equated with the ancient Cimmerian. The Encyclopaedia Britannica comments: “The name (Gimmirrai) has also been identified with the Biblical Gomer.” This identification of Gomer with the Cimmerians supports Josephus.

Young’s Concordance has the following: “Gomer: He was progenitor of the Cimerians, Cimbri, and other branches of the Celtic family, as well as the modern Gael and Cymry...” The descendants of Gomer “settled on the north of the Black Sea, and then spread themselves southward and westward to the extremities of Europe.”

Ezekiel’s phrase “... and all his bands (or tribes)” requires that we include all main branches of the Celtic race—in short, this must mean that Western Europe is to become an ally of Gog.

**The Construction of an Empire**

Another prophecy which mirrors that of Ezekiel 38, is that of Daniel chapter 2 where the latter day Babylon is described as a terrible metallic image. This image represents the kingdoms of men which are destined to be broken in pieces in the latter days (see Daniel 2:28).

The explanation of this vision tells us that the metals represent four kingdoms (verses 36-40), and a mixed state in the feet and toes. It must stand as a complete structure and then be “broken to pieces together.” In explaining this vision of the image, the author John Thomas applies it to Russia’s coming empire and places it as a parallel to Ezekiel’s prophecy—which Ezekiel 38:17 allows for. He wrote:

“By turning to a map of Europe and Asia, the reader may trace out the territory of the Kingdom of Babylon as it is destined to exist in its last form under the King of the North in his Gogian manifestation. The
names of countries furnished by Ezekiel will lead him to a just conception of its general extent. Beside ‘All the Russias,’ it will take in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Prussia, Austria, Turkey, Persia, Tartary, Greece, the Roman Africa, and Egypt. This will be a dominion of great magnitude, extending from the North Sea to the Wall of China and Afghanistan, and from the Ice-Sea to the Deserts of Africa and Arabia.”

It is Russia’s mission to build this image empire of the latter-days and that is what some are saying Vladimir Putin is wanting to do. Stephen Hadley, former National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush is reported as saying that Putin has a pretension for, in some sense, a new Russian empire, “and that is what he is trying to build.” Again, U.S. Senator Pat Toomey has said that the vote on the Crimea could advance “President Vladimir Putin’s designs for a new Russian empire.” Several others have used similar language.

So how is this vast empire to be established? Since the Cold War ended and Europe was seen to be uniting, many have thought that Russia’s Image empire would be established by peaceful means. We must now question that assumption.

Vatican Co-Operation

We should understand that Russia has been working on this grand scheme for several years, and that she has not been working alone. Many people scoff at what is sometimes called a “conspiracy” as if no one could be so evil as to participate in such an agenda—yet it is a fact of life that people do engage in them—in business as well as in political and social life.

The United Nations Organisation suggests the idea of a World Authority, and many political leaders have voiced approval of the concept, as has been pointed out by political scientists such as George Catlin (1966). The European Common Market, now the European Union, has gradually transformed itself into an authoritarian form of government. There have been—and are—many conspiracies. Most come to nothing and are of no real consequence, but we cannot say that of all secret agendas.

The Vatican has been promoting the plan to establish a world-wide community of nations for many years—this has been plainly set out in several papal encyclicals. The divided and dangerous world of the 1960’s which threatened both the communist east and the capitalist west with a nuclear holocaust required that the major powers work out a plan that would accommodate co-existence.

In 1961 Pope John XXIII produced his encyclical entitled Mater et Magistra “A re-evaluation of the social question in the light of Christian (i.e. ‘Catholic’) teaching.” The document addressed “economic and social” matters and urged “World-wide co-operation.” It was a turning point in world affairs and had a deep effect upon society generally, though at the time few people were aware of the great social changes taking place. Then, in 1963 the encyclical Pacem in terris (Peace on Earth) was published, and called for “extensive co-operation” between Catholics and non-Catholics (this was meant to include Communists). But the change could not be sudden. The capitalist society could not be changed overnight; the “economic and social” issues would take time to adjust—years, in fact. Pope John wrote:

“...it is the law of nature that all things must be of gradual growth. If there is to be any improvement in human institutions, the work must be done slowly and deliberately from within.”

And so it has been. Today, the capitalist western world led by the United States of America edges towards financial collapse, while the socialist (post-atheistic and communist) east has past through a cosmetic transformation that has brought Orthodox Christianity back into recognition and respect. Not only so, but there is now a working relationship with the Vatican. So the world-wide community that the Vatican sought in the 1960’s is seen to be emerging in the world of today. In the Bible, this “world community” is given the title: “BABYLON THE GREAT” (Revelation 17:5; 18:2), and is the image-empire of Daniel 2; Ezekiel 38 etc. It is brought into being by Russia as she cooperates with the Vatican, with the Orthodox Church, and eventually with Germany. In
1854 the writer, John Thomas, foresaw this from Bible prophecy—and said of the “Autocrat of all the Russias.”

“As the head of a confederacy of the adherents of the Greek and Latin churches, it will be his policy to cause their priesthoods to be respected as useful co-operators in the subjection of Europe to his will.”

By Conquest!

Over twenty years ago a former Kremlin foreign policy advisor described the situation that he saw developing following the “re-birth” of Russia. In Time magazine (Feb. 3, 1992) he predicted:

“About 30 million Russians are living outside Russia proper. The more hostile toward Moscow and militarily ambitious the non-Russian republics are, the more tempted Russia will be to come to the rescue of Russian enclaves in the republics, perhaps even to establish, by conquest, a Greater Russia.”

In more recent years we have seen the growing rift between the European Union and the United States. We have seen the emerging energy weapon of gas and oil held over Europe by Russia—and now we have seen that Russia is willing to use military force against those neighbouring countries that resist her.

So “who’s Next?” According to Maclean’s magazine in 2008 “Russia’s invasion of Georgia was part of a bigger fight that pits Moscow against the West.” In an article under the heading “Putin’s Master Plan” Russia’s ambitions are explained in such a way as to demonstrate the fact that what Bible expositors have expected is now on the verge of being accomplished.

So we watch the march of events. They are telling us in the clearest possible way that the great crisis predicted in the Bible is almost upon us. Russia must first consolidate her empire—which means her gaining the supremacy over Europe. She must then gather her allies (including Iran) in preparation for her assault upon Israel. It was in 1849 that John Thomas wrote in his preface to Elpis Israel:

“The future movements of Russia are notable signs of the times, because they are predicted in the Scriptures of Truth. The Russian Autocracy in its plenitude, and on the verge of dissolution, is the Image of Nebuchadnezzar standing upon the Mountains of Israel, ready to be smitten by the Stone. When Russia makes its grand move for the building-up of its Image-empire, then let the reader know that the end of all things, as at present constituted, is at hand. The long-expected, but stealthy, advent of the King of Israel will be on the eve of becoming a fact; and salvation will be to those who not only looked for it, but have trimmed their lamps by believing the gospel of the kingdom unto the obedience of faith, and the perfection thereof in “fruits meet for repentance.”

In 2008 as Russia’s Soviet empire crumbled some held doubts as to the fulfillment of prophecy regarding the building up of Image-empire of Daniel chapter 2. But it was at that time that Graham Pearce wrote in Milestones, (published in 1993), the following:

“The speed with which we have witnessed the dismantling of Europe and the economic links being forged between Germany and Russia have tended to make us impatient as we have witnessed the slow ponderous steps of uncertainty in 1992. Out of this human chaos God will prod the Russian bear to reassert its role of guardianship over its allies and confederacies. We await with renewed interest of these skilful and divine manipulations.”

The signs that we are seeing today point to the approaching conquest of Europe. That event, when it becomes an accomplished fact, will change all that we know. It will commence a time of great anxiety so that men’s hearts will fail them for fear as they consider what is coming on the earth.

So the task before each one of us is plain. May the Lord in his mercy strengthen us to prepare ourselves to stand before him.
In an emotional speech given on March 18th president Putin explained the history of the situation now facing the Crimea and the Ukraine, and he explained his justification for getting involved. Surrounded by huge flags of Russia and insignias of the ancient Byzantine logo of the double headed eagle he explained that Crimea had always been part of the Russian territory. When the region had been united under the Soviet Union it was in fact controlled by Russia. The territory of the Crimea as well as Eastern Ukraine had, during that time, been taken by the Communist leaders from Russia and added to the Republic of the Ukraine in 1954. This was done as a political stunt—or as Mr Putin put it “a desire to win the support of the Ukrainian political establishment or to atone for the mass repressions of the 1930’s in Ukraine.”

This was no problem when the whole region was dominated by Russia through the Soviet Union. However with the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia suddenly finds itself without the Crimean peninsula. Due to the strategic placement of the Crimea next to the Black sea, Russia was very upset by this. Mr Putin said that “Millions of people went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones; overnight becoming ethnic minorities in former Union republics, while the Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders.” He said “It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realised that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered.”

Since that time things had continued relatively peacefully with Russia seeking to dominate the area by proxy. It seems though that the Ukrainian government was seeking ways to un-entangle itself from Russian influence as it looked West to Europe to help. The Ukrainian government introduced a draft law to revise the language policy of the Ukraine which would have meant that the use of the Russian language would have been suppressed. The draft law did not go through but did enrage the Russians as they saw it as a way of separating the Ukraine and the territory it still regarded as its own even further. The plans to join Europe were left in tatters after Russia clamped down on its borders and upped its energy prices upon hearing of this idea. The Ukraine only stopped its progress towards the EU after Putin brokered a deal with the Ukraine to keep them alongside (see Bible in the News dated 24th Jan 2014).

According to Mr Putin these steps to move away from Russia were conducted by “impostors” who “are often controlled by radicals.” He said: “We understand what is happening; we understand that these actions were aimed against Ukraine and Russia and against Eurasian integration.”

Those Russian speakers in the Crimea were feeling more and more marginalised. He claims they were pleading with Russia for help. “Naturally, we could not leave this plea unheeded; we could not abandon Crimea and its residents in distress. This would have been betrayal on our part.”

We can see then the characteristic of “being a guard” coming to the fore in these recent events.

Another point the president made was that: “We have already heard declarations from Kiev about Ukraine soon joining NATO. What would this have meant for Crimea and Sevastopol in the future? It would have meant that NATO’s navy would be right there in this city of Russia’s military glory, and this would create not an illusion but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia. These are things that could have become reality were it not for the choice the Crimean people made, and I want to say thank you to them for this.”

So Russia is keen to keep up its military dominance in the Black sea area.

After the pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych of Ukraine abandoned progress towards the EU and the riots in Kiev broke out he fled. Pro-Russian forces then appeared on the ground. Some were volunteers but most looked suspiciously organised like the official Russian army wearing green khaki uniforms with their insignias stripped off. They also donned black balaclavas. These forces surrounded Ukrainian army bases rendering the Ukrainian army useless. A referendum was then held in Crimea to leave Ukraine and join Russia. This has sparked the biggest East-West showdown since the Cold War, with the US and its European allies now threatening to impose sanctions. However with Russia’s dominance as a supplier of energy to Europe it looks like any sanctions will have little or no impact on these events. President Putin is clearly unmoved declaring in his speech:

“Obviously, we will encounter external opposition, but this is a decision that we need to make for ourselves. Are we ready to consistently defend our national interests, or will we forever give in, retreat to who knows where? Some Western politicians are already threatening us with not just sanctions but also the prospect of increasingly serious problems on the domestic front. I would like to know what it is they have in mind exactly: action by a fifth column, this disparate bunch of ‘national traitors,’ or are they hoping to put us in a worsening social and economic situation so as to provoke public discontent? We consider such statements irresponsible and clearly aggressive in tone, and we will respond to them accordingly.”

A defiant, dominant leader then is setting the precedent for Bible prophecy to unfold. A single man at the head of a military power is dominating the nations. It can only be a matter of time before the events foretold in the scriptures come to pass.

The best the EU has been able to do is put asset freezes and travel bans on about 30 Russian individuals it holds responsible. In an article entitled “Putin laughs off sanctions as he signs bills to transfer Crimea to Russia,” The Guardian newspaper reported Putin was jovial about the sanctions and even made jokes on the issue. He knows he is dominant and the West can do nothing of impact.
It is not difficult to see that a time is close at hand when the very perplexing question for many people will be, “What should I do now?” The present leader of the nation of Russia is starting to act with the reckless aggression we have long expected (Ezekiel 38:3). A spoil of great wealth has been discovered in Israel, providing for the land to be exploited as prophesied (Ezekiel 38:13). The nations of Iran, Libya, Egypt and Ethiopia are all in the news as required (Ezekiel 38:5; Daniel 11:43). The frog-like spirits are still vigorously croaking in the remnants of the spiritual Euphrates Riverbed as the Spirit foretold (Revelation 16:12-16). The cry to “Prepare War” continues to dominate the budgets of Gentile nations whether wealthy or poor (Joel 3:9-10). The Tarshish powers are semi-retiring from the role of ‘policing’ the Middle East, creating a power vacuum thereby. With the storm clouds so visible, why do people continue to live so carelessly, except that they have fallen asleep?

There have been a number of occasions in Bible times when individuals were confronted with a crisis so suddenly there was no opportunity to reverse direction. The thought “What should I do now?” usually comes with strong emotion, often fright, sometimes panic. What must Joshua have thought when he found out how the Gibeonites had tricked him and caused him and the princes to bind themselves with an oath not to harm them (Joshua 9:16)? Moses knew the desert area where he led the people of Israel and was well aware there was nothing like an adequate source of water in those parts. Think of the pressure he must have felt when hundreds of thousands of people, were so thirsty they were ready to stone him for leading them into that area (Exodus 17:3-5). Think of Jonah when after being swallowed by the great fish and in the heat and darkness of the stomach of his apparent tomb, he had time to ponder the foolishness of disobeying the command of God (Jonah 2:6-9). Many people, living before us, have had to face the question in desperation, “What should I do now?”

A sudden onset of evil does not usually provide the time needed to investigate and therein lies the apparent enigma of it all—how do you prepare for an event, for which you will likely be unprepared? The Bible is a great resource book to search and find out what to do in a crisis. It may not provide the exact escape route relative to our personal crisis, but the Bible is clear where we are and where we are going.

By Frank Abel  HAMILTON, ON.

As Western powers dither, wondering what to do about Russian moves, Frank Abel asks: What should we do?

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.—Joel 3:9, 10
crisis but it contains enough examples of what happened to other people that we should be able to generalize on how to prepare for such an event.

Men of high calling have been caught up in this crisis and did not perform very well. With regard to the trial of our Lord, Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea stated “I find no fault in him,” (John 19:4) but when confronted by the angry leaders of the Jews, was persuaded to have him crucified anyway. Aaron being unable to explain the whereabouts of his brother Moses was likewise petitioned by a mob to make an idol. The Biblical record illustrates that he was too easily persuaded to do what he must have known was wrong and intensely provocative in the sight of God. He fell under the power of the people and did it anyway (Exodus 32:1-4). During the time while the spies were surveying the land of Canaan, the whole nation waited forty days for their report. When it came time to decide they were suddenly faced with two starkly different choices. The time they had been waiting had worked to dull their spiritual discernment such that, in a span of hours, they chose to faithlessly turn back to Egypt (Numbers 14:1-4).

There can be no doubt that idle time is our enemy. We need to be actively involved in spiritual activity to ever be prepared to make a sudden, but good spiritual decision. If no former preparation has been done, we are far more likely to act out of fear, than out of faith. The sudden awareness of critical information is almost always enough to get us ready for the physical trial but spiritual choices are hard to make when we are paralyzed with indecision and fear.

While Jesus was waiting for Judas and the Jewish leaders to arrive, he went through a period of mental torture where his strong advice to his disciples was also advice to himself. “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Luke 22:42-46). When Hezekiah was told, “Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live” he immediately turned to God in prayer and sought an extension of his life (Isaiah 38:1-5). When David saw the angel of God standing over Jerusalem ready to slay the wicked of its inhabitants, he immediately appealed to God on behalf of the people (2 Samuel 24:16-17).

The pattern of the crisis in the lives of each of those three mighty men was that when they were confronted with great distress, they appealed to God. Their appeals were much more than just a shriek of anguish, for in each case they appealed to their God on the basis of what they knew about Him. The lesson being, that having learned of the character of God, they petitioned Him with understanding and faith, and the One and only God that can hear prayer was present to respond in short order.

Apart from living free of debt and as a sojourner in our present setting, there is little we can do practically to prepare for the coming crisis. We still need to earn a living, have a place to dwell and food to put on the table so we can responsibly look after those in our care. Spiritually however, we need to grow in our understanding of our God and His Son and follow the example of so many others before us to seek strength and guidance through prayer. While in this present period of waiting, we must follow the Lord’s example and “watch and pray” lest we fall into temptation.


disposal.

In his article (opposite) Frank Abel has pointed out the danger in having “idle time,” and how we need to be actively involved in spiritual activity. This is perhaps a time when we should revisit the subject of Military Service, and other forms of national service that could be required by the State. The servants of Jesus Christ have to consider what they are willing to do, and also what they are not willing to do in a national emergency, such as could come about if Russia made a bid to take over other parts of Europe as we have seen her do in Georgia and the Ukraine.

Let us all seek guidance through prayer and the study of the Word of God as we watch events unfold.

ARE WE PREPARED FOR THIS?

Many will know the words of Ezekiel addressing the northern Gog:

“Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them” (Chapter 38:7).

But the question must be asked: Are we prepared? While the Russian Gog has been preparing—and whatever happens in the immediate term—there can be little doubt now about Russian intentions, have we prepared ourselves for events such as is suggested by the poster shown here? Are we prepared for the testing of our faith?

We do not know the precise form that a test or trial may take of course, but if the past can be taken as a guide, then our final time of testing could involve standing before the Authorities. After all, this has been the pattern for believers in previous times of crisis.

It was so during the time of the American Civil War, and it was so again during the First and Second World Wars. On those occasions believers had to register themselves as Conscientious Objectors to Military Service, often facing Tribunal Courts in order to defend their beliefs.

If that should happen today, it is unlikely that we would receive the same sympathetic hearing as did those believers in past times of crisis. Are we prepared for such a trial if it should come?

We would not want to alarm one another unnecessarily, but as we consider the course that events could take, it is wise to foresee the evil and prepare for it. We do not know what time may or may not be at our disposal.

In his article (opposite) Frank Abel has pointed out the danger in having “idle time,” and how we need to be actively involved in spiritual activity. This is perhaps a time when we should revisit the subject of Military Service, and other forms of national service that could be required by the State. The servants of Jesus Christ have to consider what they are willing to do, and also what they are not willing to do in a national emergency, such as could come about if Russia made a bid to take over other parts of Europe as we have seen her do in Georgia and the Ukraine.

Let us all seek guidance through prayer and the study of the Word of God as we watch events unfold.
Although the common ancestor of Moab and Israel was Terah (Genesis 11:27; 19:37) there was no love lost between the two nations. In the thirty eighth year after they left Egypt, Israel reached the Zered river, which runs eastward from the south end of the Dead Sea. They were probably at least 25 miles upstream, on the edge of the wilderness. The Zered was the southern boundary of Moab’s kingdom which extended along the southern half of the Dead Sea, on the east side. The northern boundary was the Arnon River.

We are informed in Genesis 14:5 that the coalition of kings who carried Lot and his family captive from Sodom, also struck the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim. Whether this resulted in a permanent weakening of the Emims we are not told, but Moses states that the Moabites later conquered the Emims and took their lands:

“We turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims’” (Deuteronomy 2:8-11).

This land, taken by Moab, extended along the whole length of the Dead Sea on the east side. But by the time Israel had finished their years of wandering in the Sinai, and were marching towards Canaan, they found Moab in possession of only the southern half of this area:

“For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon” (Numbers 21:26).

Moses sent an embassy to Sihon, requesting peaceful passage. This was refused, and the Amorites attacked Israel. This resulted in the complete overthrow of Sihon’s kingdom. Israel took possession of all his lands from the Arnon to the Jabbok, about a third the way up from the Dead Sea towards the Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee). In so doing, the possessions of the children of Lot (Moab and Ammon) were left intact:

“Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites” (Numbers 21:24, 31).

We are told that the last stop of Israel in their march towards Canaan was “in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho” (Numbers 22:1). Whereas the whole depressed tract along the Jordan and the Dead Sea was called the Arabah, this particular stretch of it, along the full length of the Dead Sea, was called the “plains” or araboth of Moab. The northern end, opposite Jericho, was still given the same name, although it had later been taken by the Amorites (Jephthah, Judges 11, before throwing off Ammonite domination of Israel, showed that he was fully aware of this history, pointing out that Ammon’s and Moab’s territorial claims against Israel were false).

Numbers 22 goes on to show how Balak king of Moab took no notice of Israel’s words of peace. Convinced that Israel intended to attack him, Balak and the Midianite chieftains allied with him, hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel. God refusing to give any words of cursing, and Balak offering great wealth and high honours to Balaam, the prophet gave his own evil council. If Israel could be lured into accepting Moab’s idolatry, they could be deflected from attacking Moab. The scheme was only too successful in corrupting Israel:

“The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods” (Numbers 25:1-2).

Were it not for the zeal of Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, the whole nation of Israel might have been finished there and then. The same danger is very much alive in our day, and the latter-day Israel of God will do well to remember the lesson of Baal-Peor.

After Israel had settled in the promised land, they repeatedly turned to worship the idols of the remaining Canaanites. To bring His people back, God sent them various kinds of adversity, one of which was oppression by Eglon, king of Moab (Judges 3). When Israel turned back to God, he sent a man from the tribe of Benjamin, Ehud, who, having assassinated Eglon, led a victorious revolt against Moab.

Another incident involving Moab—a far more cheering one—is recounted in the book of Ruth. Elimelech and Naomi left their home in Bethlehem and emigrated to Moab. Both their sons married Moabite women but later died with their father. Naomi, deciding to return to Israel, was joined by one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, with those...
memorable words, “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Ruth later married Boaz and so entered the direct lineage of David and Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

In the time of Samuel, King Saul managed to fend off various neighbouring countries, including Moab (1 Samuel 14). After becoming king, David conquered Moab (2 Samuel 8). But as a result of Solomon’s idolatry, God permitted Moab to revolt from domination by Jerusalem. Later, Omri put Moab under the control of Samaria:

“Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel” (2 Kings 3:4-5).

Jehoram, Ahab’s son, raising an army, negotiated a confederacy with the kings of Judah and Edom. With God’s help through the prophet Elisha the reconquest of Moab was certain. But in a final act of desperation the king of Moab sacrificed his eldest son, the crown prince, on the city wall in full view of the besieging armies. This may have been too much for the idolatrous Edomites, who would have abandoned the invasion and so broken Jehoram’s alliance. If so, this would explain how the attempted subjugation of Moab failed.

In 1868, when there was a growing interest among Bible readers in the Holy Land, a German missionary was told about a curious stone monument at Dibon, 40 miles south of Amman. and a couple of miles north of the Arnon river. As a result, and after much difficulty, a copy was made and translated. The 18th line mentions Yahweh, God of Israel. The writing shows that Mesha king of Moab set up the stone as a memorial, praising his idol for the liberation of Moab from Israelite domination. He mentions the reservoirs, cisterns, walls, gates, towers, and the king’s palace he constructed with Israelite slaves. Part of it reads:

“As for Omri king of Israel, he humbled Moab many days (years).”

Also that Israel

“Occupied the land of Medeba, and had dwelt there, in his time (Omri’s) and half the time of his son (Ahab)”.

Medeba was a Reubenite plain and city a short distance south of Heshbon. Mesha recorded the belief that the foreign domination was because of the anger of his god Chemosh with his people. The Moabite Stone (pictured) is now in the Louvre, Paris.

The writing on Mesha’s basalt Stele confirms the facts of Israel’s domination of Moab and Mesha’s rebellion; also the names of the kings, Omri and Ahab. It substantiates the name of the God of Israel, and with Numbers 21:29 and Jeremiah 48:46, calls Moab “the people of Chemosh.” Some scholars tried to find at least some minor discrepancies between Mesha’s writing and the Bible. But others have shown how the two accounts may be harmonized, it being pointed out that Mesha’s additional information supplements the Bible account and does not therefore contradict it.

It seems that the very presence of Elisha kept the Moabites from attacking Israel. But after his death and burial, Moabite raids started up again (2 Kings 13:20). But before another hundred years passed, the Assyrians occupied Moab. Numerous Assyrian inscriptions have been discovered, containing the name of Moab. After the Assyrian empire collapsed Moab regained freedom for a short time, but was then taken by Nebuchadnezzar. From that time on Moab passed under the domination of succeeding empires until the nation disappeared.

Footnotes

An atheist, by definition (Oxford English Dictionary), is “one who denies or disbelieves the existence of a God,” or “one who practically denies the existence of a God by disregard of moral obligation to Him; a godless man.”

Paul uses the Greek atheos only once, in writing to the Ephesians (2:12). He reminds them of their previous life in the world, before they came to know the gospel.

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God (atheos) in the world.”

Atheists have been with us in different forms, for a very long time. We read of Cain that after slaying his brother Abel, God declared that he would be “… a fugitive and a vagabond … in the earth.” Cain replied, “… from thy face shall I be hid;” “And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden” (Genesis 4:14,16). Was Cain an atheist in the sense that he disregarded his moral obligation to God?

David in the Psalms records (Psa. 53:1) the verse that is most often used in reply to atheists:

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

We should not be surprised when ridicule is their response. When we examine the rest of the Psalm, a Christadelphian writer suggests that the man believes in God after a fashion, but believes he can evade his authority “… through pretence and a mere form of religion.” The same writer says that this is the atheism of the Pharisee, rather than the non-believer to whom we are inclined to apply the verse. During the first century, in the days of Paul, and in the persecution that surrounded AD 70 and after, Christians were actually persecuted as atheists and heretics in the Roman world, because they would not worship the god/emperor. Perhaps the atheist label today is simply being applied to those who worship the gods of this world. An atheist believes that his morality comes from within, and not without.

What is the New Atheism? What has changed? The term was first used in 2006. It was meant to describe “… the increasing self-assertiveness of some atheists today and the unapologetic nature of their atheism …” A number of attributes have been assigned to this group which paints them in a very negative way—militant, fundamentalist, rude, intolerant, dogmatic, narrow-minded, and confrontational. If we think about these types of labels, we come to realize that many people in our society today have become less willing to submit to those with power and authority, not just atheists. Another contributing factor to the New Atheism, is the publication of a number of best-selling books.
in the last decade attacking organized religion, and belief in God. "The God Delusion" written by Richard Dawkins, is one of the better known, but there are a growing number of other works that have topped the best-seller lists. They claim that "...belief in God is not only deluded, but dangerous to society." "They condemn not just belief in God but respect for belief in God. Religion is not only wrong; it's evil."

What is the danger that believers present to society? Through aggressive criticism and ridicule, the New Atheists present the case that bringing up our children in a religious atmosphere is child indoctrination, because there is no such thing as a Christian child. Everyone knows that children are very teachable at an early age, and every responsible parent teaches his child what his or her values are, in order to instill moral values. Children growing up with no guidelines still learn, but they learn from their exposure to an amoral world. Atheists maintain that being an atheist means having "a healthy independence of mind," whereas (they say) fundamental believers take religious positions and cannot be persuaded to change them. The evolution/creation debate is the case they point to, declaring that there is more than enough evidence to prove evolution, that it is more than a theory.

The "danger" that believers, and religion, bring to the world, say the atheists, springs from the wickedness and war perpetrated by them over the centuries. Ignored are men such as Stalin and Chairman Mao, responsible for so many deaths, and so much misery for their people. "...atheists in general (says one writer) are on record as saying that in matters of human behaviour, there are no absolutes of right or wrong at all, no good or evil, other than, at best, a consensus of what is good or bad for a particular society at a particular time." Parents try to instill standards of behaviour in their children so that they will have the ability to make right decisions. Looking back in history, the philosophical ideas, and de-Christianization process, that helped to produce the French and Bolshevik revolutions were atheistic in character. They became the basis of our twentieth century wars.

How often do we find ourselves dealing with atheists? Many people we work with and do business with, do not have God in their lives, but are they atheists? An agnostic, for example, is one who holds that human knowledge is limited to experience, and the essential nature of things are unknowable. He questions whether God exists. A humanist is one who follows a system of thought attaching primary importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. A skeptic doubts the truth of Christianity. A heretic, on the other hand, is a professed believer who maintains contrary religious opinions, or rejects the prescribed doctrines of his church. Some of the descriptive terms adopted by atheists, such as "freethinkers" are actually synonyms for these other divisions. One of their writers suggested they call themselves "brights" (as opposed to the "dim" believers).

Because those "without God" have no hope, they turn to the fleeting pleasures of the world. "A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry" (Eccl.9:7). As a result, groups like atheists, are welcome to make their opinions known. Those presenting Bible Talks to the public are sometimes confronted by homosexual/LGBT groups, or others with a different agenda. It may be that vocal atheists may soon appear to make their feelings known!

It must be said that the target of much of atheist religious criticism is directed at church doctrines and teachings which do not have a scriptural basis. Belief in teachings concerning the trinity, and the details of the worship of Mary are prime examples. In most cases the writers of the New Atheism claim that the Bible is a totally unreliable record of what happened, and that the characters probably did not exist. With that as a basis for their criticisms, there is not much common ground.

Atheism, new or old, is the outworking of the mind of the flesh. It is working to destroy the faith of those who believe in God, by ridiculing and demeaning our walk in following the Lord. It is a subtle campaign that has an impact on us every day of our lives. We must not be deluded to believe these lies, and be led astray. In seeking to interest those around us in the good news, we must be aware of these alternate ideas and philosophies that are so prevalent amongst our neighbours. We are accustomed to speaking to people who have an interest in scripture and want to learn more about it. Atheists tend to have little knowledge, and only a contrary interest in scripture.

In conclusion, let us consider Paul’s warning to the believers in Colosse. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

We look forward to the day when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).
GO TO THE ANT...

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”
Proverbs 6:6-8, KJV.

Ants are the only known creature on earth to farm another species for food, other than humans. Aphids, also known as plant lice, suck the sap of plants and secrete the excess sugar through pores in their bodies as a substance known as honeydew. The ants collect the honeydew by stroking the aphids. To preserve a good source of this desirous treat, the ants herd the aphids to a plant, find the best parts of the plant, fend off predators from their farms, collect the Aphid eggs and store them over the winter and put them back at the roots of lush vegetation in the spring. If a winged female is born and flies away to another plant, the ants will chase it down and bring it back.

These ants not only make the evolutionary ‘wisdom’ of this world look like the foolishness that it is, they also teach us an important lesson. We need to diligently prepare spiritual food while we can, so that we will be found among the wise who have their vessels full of oil, and have tended their Master’s sheep.