

# THE BIBLE MAGAZINE



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January 2008

## The Shocking Truth About The Vatican & The Jewish State



# ENEMIES OF ISRAEL



“...thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”

*Revelation 18:23,24*

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Written in 1948 by Graham Pearce

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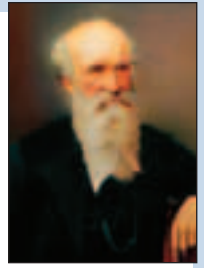


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▲ Zion was the royal city of the kingdom. When the kingdom is restored again to Israel, Zion will again be the royal city of the house of David.

# Rachel Weeping for Her Children



The passage referred to in Jeremiah reads thus—“Thus saith the Lord: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children because they were not. Thus saith the LORD: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for there is a reward for thy work, saith the LORD; and *they shall return from the land of the enemy*. And there is hope for *thine end*, saith the LORD, and *thy children shall return to their own boundary*” (Jer. 31:15-17).

A voice was heard in Ramah. Ramah was one of those cities which were allotted by Joshua to the tribe of Benjamin on the frontier of this canton, and that of Ephraim. The word signifies an eminence. Sometimes it is put simply for a high place, and then signifies neither a city nor a village. In Ramah, or on the high places of Benjamin and Ephraim, was a voice to be heard—in the city of that name, and in all the region round about. This voice or cry was foretold by Isaiah as well as by Jeremiah. “Ramah,” says he, “is afraid, Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth” (Isa. 10:29-30). Gallim and Anathoth, the latter the birthplace of Jeremiah, were cities of Benjamin. Referring to the same event, Hosea says,

“Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah; cry aloud Bethaven after thee, O Benjamin. Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound; therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water” (Hosea 5:8-10).

Hence, the voice to be heard was lamentation and bitter weeping on account of the desolation and slaughter, of Benjamin and Ephraim, by the enemy, and their deportation into their destroyer’s land. The contexts of these references show that the predictions relate to the removal of the whole twelve tribes from their land by the Assyrian power. Benjamin stands for Judah and Jerusalem as well as for its own particular canton; for the kingdom of Judah included Benjamin, and Jerusalem was one of the cities that fell by lot to it when Joshua subdued the country. Ephraim represents the rest of the tribes, or kingdom of Israel as distinguished from that of Judah, inasmuch as Samaria, the seat of government, belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh.

The prophecy of this voice of lamentation in Ramah found its initiatory accomplishment when the overthrow of the twelve tribes was consummated by Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean head of Assyria. Then captives of Judah’s kingdom were gathered together in Ramah, and with them Jeremiah the prophet, at the disposal of Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard” (Jer. 40:1). The voice of lamentation ascending from these prisoners, can better be conceived than described. The tender and delicate of the upper and wealthy classes of the state, whose children and relatives had been slain by the sword, and their palaces and mansions burned with fire, were there assembled to be marched off by a barbarian soldiery into

their enemy’s land. The cry of that day was a loud, shrill, and bitter lamentation, not confined to Ramah, but extending throughout the land from Beersheba to Laish or Dan. Jeremiah, though especially protected by the favor of God and the king his servant, mingled in that lament for his country’s ruin.

“How doth the city sit solitary,” he exclaims, “that once was full of people! As a widow is she become! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, tributary is she become! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the nations, she findeth no rest: all her pursuers overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: *her children are gone into captivity before the enemy*” (Lam. 1:1-5)—that is, “they are not.” But, notwithstanding all that calamity, “there is hope for thine end: they shall come again from the land of the enemy—they shall return to their own border.”

And they did return *in part* as an earnest, so to speak, of the great restoration in Israel’s “latter end” (Deut. 32:29). Benjamin, the son of Rachel’s sorrow, and the son of Jacob’s right hand, returned with Judah, his fraternal ally, from the land of the enemy to his own border, seventy years after his deportation. This was the first and only restoration of the Hebrew commonwealth. But there was little comfort in it. Ephraim and Manasseh “were not,” being still exiles beyond Bashan. These were Rachel’s children as well as Benjamin, being the descendants of Joseph her first born. They have never yet returned from the land of the enemy to their own border. The time for this is not arrived; but of its certainty there can be no doubt in the mind of him who is intelligent in the faith, believing the words of Moses and the prophets.

But the voice of lamentation and bitter weeping was not stifled by Benjamin’s return. There was another crisis in Hebrew affairs to be encountered, which would cause that voice to rend the air with piercing cries of lamentation and woe. Its echoes would sound from one end of the Roman world to the other, and be hushed only by a second deportation of Benjamin into the land of the enemy. After this the cry would be heard no more in Ramah, or on the high places of the land of Israel. “Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears.” This “refrain” hath continued hitherto. Since the destruction of Benjamin’s city, the metropolis of Judah’s kingdom, the tribe’s lament has no more been heard in Ramah; for Rachel’s weeping and tears can only result



from the eyes and voice of her descendants in the land.

The reason why the voice of weeping no more ascends is because there is hope for Benjamin, Ephraim, and their companions; and this hope is, that they will return from the land of the enemy to their own border. This restoration is the subject of Jeremiah's prophecy found in his thirtieth and thirty-first chapters. Let the reader peruse them in connexion. They contain the gospel of the kingdom with *its mystery unexplained*. The following are a few quotations from them. "The days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

Speaking of the day of Israel's future engraftment into their own olive, he saith, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even *the time of Jacob's trouble*; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of armies, I will break his (Gog, the Russo-Assyrian) yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall *no more* serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David (the Beloved) their king, whom I will *raise up* unto them." "I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof." "Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and *I will punish all that oppress them*. And their nobles (the saints) shall be of themselves, and their Governor (Christ) shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and *He shall approach unto me*:"—or be High Priest. "In *the latter days* ye shall consider it."

In reference to these "latter days," the LORD saith, again, "I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt be adorned again with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth," the land of the enemy; "for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD redeems Jacob, and ransoms him from the hand of him that was stronger than he"—"and they shall not sorrow *any more at all*." Then comes the passage about Rachel in Ramah.

These quotations show what the hope is for Rachel's end; and what is meant by the return of her children from the land of the enemy to their own border. There is a mystery, however, connected with this the obvious import of the prophecy, which I shall explain presently. But before proceeding to this I would remark, that Rachel is representative of the polity of which Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, were important constituents. Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin; and *literally*, or in fact, never wept for her children "because they were not," inasmuch as she died long before them. The voice of lamentation is therefore affirmed of *her* in a figurative sense. The voice was a real voice of woe, and declared of Rachel in the case of her descendants. The appointment of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as patriarchs of tribes with Benjamin, made her the mother, or matriarch, of a fourth part of Israel;



## Rachel's Tomb

The site known as Rachel's tomb (left) is near Bethlehem but as with so many ancient sites it is impossible to prove its genuineness. Some point to Genesis 35:20,21, "And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." This does show that the site was known when Moses penned the book of Genesis, and it was known in the times of the judges and kings (1 Samuel 10:2). In more recent times our knowledge goes back to about 1620 AD when the Ottomans built the dome that covers the site. It was renovated by Sir Moses Montefiore in 1841. Today a new enclosure has been built around it.

and by their political relations to the other tribes, the chief mother of the flock. Hence, the inheritor of Joseph's preeminence is styled "Ephraim my firstborn." Laban would have had Leah for the matriarch of Jacob's posterity; but God, who establishes all things by an election, chose Rachel, as he had done Isaac and Jacob in preference to Ishmael and Esau, the beloved of their fathers, to be with Sarah and Rebekah, the matriarchs of Israel.

Rachel's children, then, are constitutionally the whole twelve tribes. She died and was buried near to Bethlehem-Ephratha, afterwards rendered famous as the birthplace of David, and his son Jesus Christ. Sleeping in the dust of Judea, she is personified as weeping in bitterness of soul for the cruelty inflicted upon her sons in the land of the living. *Her* tears fall from their eyes when Nebuzaradan, Herod, or Titus, become a sword in the hearts of their children and friends; and as Israel's mother she refuses to be comforted so long as they are in the land of the enemy, exiles from home.

But there is a mystery, or hidden meaning, to this prophecy, which doth not appear to the careless reader. Hosea, referring to the restoration of Israel, says to Rachel's son, thus saith the Lord, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: but in me is thine help. *I will be thy king*." "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up: his sin is hid." "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will by thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from my eyes." Ephraim is politically dead, and buried; so also is "the whole house of Israel;" for, say they, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts," or native homes. But, saith the Lord God, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and *bring you into the land of Israel*." The bringing them *into* the land of Israel is national restoration. The nations are the graves in which Israel is nationally entombed; but the time is at hand when their king shall say "to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back." He will be the plagues of these death-dealing and destroying powers; and until this come to pass, Rachel will not be comforted, individually nor matriarchally; for till then she will not be raised from the dead to see her beloved Joseph and Benjamin, and her children the whole house of Israel, rejoicing within their own border under their glorious Shepherd, "the Stone of Israel," wearing Joseph's crown as the one like him who was "separate from his brethren."

Rachel being the constitutional matriarch of Israel, is the mother of the tribes according to "the adoption which pertains to Israel;" for all Israel not being her natural descendants, they become her sons by a constitutional provision. At present "they are not;" but when God shall graft them into their own olive upon a principle of faith, with believers of all other nations of past generations, she will no longer "refuse to be comforted." She will rejoice because "they are"—because they are

children returned from the land of the enemy to live in their own border, and a multitude of them *for evermore*.

But saith the inquirer, if this exposition be admitted, what does Matthew mean by saying that Herod's slaughter of "all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof," was the fulfilment of this prophecy of Jeremiah about Rachel? Matthew does not say that that event fulfilled Jeremiah's *prophecy*, but the (Greek: *to reethen*) **the saying**. The saying was fulfilled in *an* appropriate sense; for Bethlehem and the limits thereof were the resting-place of Rachel's dust, which might be figuratively said, in the words of the prophet, to utter a voice of lamentation and bitter weeping, when the cry of her daughters rent the air for their bereavement. On that occasion "a voice was heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning." This was a fact. The mothers of the murdered infants would not be comforted, because they were dead. This was another fact. It was also a fact, that the mothers were Rachel's people; but it was figurative to say that Rachel wept. Taken altogether, the saying of Jeremiah was very applicable; especially as it was the earnest of a lamentation which would be the accomplishment of his prophecy in full—an accomplishment to which Jesus alluded when he said to the women who bewailed and lamented him, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

In the fifteenth verse of Matthew 2 there is another example of a prophet's *saying* being fulfilled, or rather applied to an incident to be taken as an earnest of the fulfilment of the thing predicted. "When Israel was a child," saith Jehovah, "then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1). This is an historical fact. But Matthew intimates that it is more than history; that it is a prophecy also; and this intimation is found in the saying that the exodus of the child Jesus from Egypt, was the calling of God's Son out of Egypt in *a sense* of the prophet's saying. Christ is called Israel in Isaiah 49:4. He bears Jacob's new name, and the name of the nation of which he is king. God loved his people Israel in childhood, and Jesus too. He called them both out of Egypt, where *pneumatically* the tribes are to this day. But "out of Egypt call I my Son." Their king's exodus is an earnest of theirs. Ephraim, God's firstborn of the nations, will come out of Egypt's antitype, to return again no more. Then will Hosea's saying find its accomplishment in full, when "the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Egypt." Out of Egypt will Ephraim then be called.



# Food For Thought



**"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."**  
*Leviticus 25:23*

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."  
*Jeremiah 8:11*

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not."  
*Numbers 11:23*

**"Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment"**

*Job 32:9*

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."  
*Proverbs 19:27*

"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?"  
*Jeremiah 8:9*



**"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."** *John 2:5*



**"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."**  
*Psalms 102:16*

"...and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."  
*Daniel 12:7*

"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"  
*Acts 1:6*

**"The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you"**

*2 Chronicles 15:2*

# Purifying Our Hearts by Faith

**G**od's estimate of the human condition before the great flood is recorded for our learning in Genesis chapter six: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (vs. 5-6).

That view was not changed after the flood, for in Genesis 8:21 we read that the LORD said, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Neither did this human condition seem to improve as is seen from the words of Jeremiah 17:9—or from what Jesus said as recorded by Matthew in chapter 15:19.

Such a description is not in keeping with most people's view of themselves—and certainly not with the reigning philosophy of our time. Humanism sees a little good in everyone, and as Proverbs 20:6 puts it: "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness..."

How do we see ourselves? How do we view our own condition, and that of mankind?

## A Choice

We know from the book of Genesis that God created man in His own image, and that in surveying His creation He declared it "very good." But we also know what happened in Genesis chapter 3. Trust in the word of God was destroyed by false reasoning and that resulted in disobedience—which in turn brought death. Now however we choose to explain it, the consequences of this have been with us ever since. "There is no man that sinneth not" said Solomon (1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chr. 6:36; Ecc. 7:20).

The root of the problem, as seen from Genesis 6:5 is in "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart." Both mind and heart are involved here; the "heart" indicating the affections that give rise to the thoughts and the imaginations—the desires which are natural and innocent except when they contravene the Divine will as expressed in His word. It is when the desires of the heart and mind conflict with the laws of God that a trial or test ensues. As with that first test in Eden, the choice becomes one of obedience, or disobedience. That is the choice that each one of us faces throughout our lifetime—and it is a trial which, left to ourselves, we shall inevitably fail. We will please ourselves rather than obey God.

## Two Minds

"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" says Psalm 49:20, and as we are all born without understanding of Divine things, our minds are merely animal. Many never advance beyond that state of ignorance in spite of the fact that as human beings they have the potential to do so.

The apostle Paul puts the issue before us in clear language:

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:17-18).

If we think carefully about what God says through the prophet Isaiah (chapter 55:7-9), we shall see that He is saying essentially the same thing as Paul:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

**...we are all born without understanding of Divine things, our minds are merely animal. Many never advance beyond that state of ignorance**

We must understand that Divine thoughts and ways are far superior to those of man—they are on a different level altogether. One is natural and animal, even though it may be capable of sophisticated expression in art, music, science and so forth; the motivating impulses are produced by the affections and desires of the natural man. The other higher level is that of the Divine mind—what is sometimes called the "spiritual mind," or "the mind of the spirit."

The Almighty God has made known His mind to us through the holy Scriptures. From those writings we learn what God thinks and how he views various issues and circumstances. It is true that He revealed this word through the instrumentality of certain men—men such as Moses, David, and those whose names are often attached to the books and letters that they penned. But these written words are "the oracles of God;" as David expresses it in 2 Sam. 23:2-3, "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel

said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

If we desire to elevate our thinking and grow in understanding, then we must give attention to reading what God has to say—we must become familiar with the Scriptures.

## Unpopular Truths

The great difference between human reasoning and thinking, and God's, is seen from Isaiah 55:7-9 quoted earlier. This difference became manifested in two classes from earliest times, and as it did so it resulted in hostility between the two—thus:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed..." (Genesis 3:15).

The apostle Paul writes:

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

This "carnal mind" is the mind of flesh; the animal mind as in Genesis 3:15. Here is the mind and "heart" of which God spake in Genesis 6 when He said of man that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

It is because of this enmity, this aversion to the things of God, that Divine teaching in the Bible is so unpopular. In more detailed terms we can identify some of these, for they embody Bible truths which few people view favourably today.

First we may point to the principle of Divine selection. The Old Testament tells us how God has chosen one nation, Israel, above all others. This does not prevent those of other nations from benefitting through becoming joined to Israel (e.g. Ruth, Rahab etc.), but Israel is God's choice. The human mind does not like this and rebels against the idea.

Then there is the fact that God's purpose is that the whole world is to be governed by His Law. There will be no room for human values in the kingdom of God. The principle to grasp is given by Jesus in Luke 16:15, "for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." The world does not want to be governed by God's laws, it has no use for the ten commandments (Exodus 20) or any of the other principles. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus states:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

To suggest that the Law will be fulfilled when it goes forth from Zion and that it will govern the nations when the kingdom is restored again to Israel (Isaiah 2:2-4), is enough to make many so-called Christians angry. Such a gospel is foreign to them. They do not believe it.

### Judgment to Come

We must also mention the Biblical principle of judgment. Human nature does not warm to the idea of being judged—and it especially recoils from the idea of being judged according to the standards set forth in the Bible. Yet this is what must happen. We must face up to this on the personal level and recognise what God’s law prescribes for offences such as adultery, homosexual behaviour, false worship and false teaching—Leviticus 20:10, 13; Deuteronomy



...by learning about God’s ways, His view of things and His choice, we transform our minds so that they are brought into harmony with His.

chapter 13. God is just and righteous and He can extend mercy and forgiveness where He sees fit—but no one should presume upon His forgiveness. There has to be a change of mind and heart—and it has to be genuine.

As well as personal accountability to judgment there is also national responsibility as can be seen from many prophecies. We may also consider the fact that systems which claim to be “Christian” churches, even in an apostate condition must expect to receive judgment for their wicked misrepresentation of the gospel (see 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). This is a prominent theme in the books of Daniel and the Revelation (Apocalypse). Some judgments are poured out in the process of history—see for example Revelation 9:20-21. Others are as yet still future (Rev. 18:8).

### A Change of Heart

Our minds need to be changed and brought in to harmony with Bible teaching—and this can only happen through a continual reading and meditation upon the word of God. Both Old and

New Testaments are equally important. A New Testament only is of very little value, for as Jesus said:

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, *how shall ye believe my words?*” (John 5:46-47).

We must assimilate “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). The words of 2 Timothy 3:16 are well known:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Scripture that the apostle refers to here is what we call the Old Testament, for they were the only Scriptures that existed at that time, and it is through these that we can come to know God. Jeremiah wrote:

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Ch. 9:24).

These characteristics are plainly set forth in the Law and in the prophets—and they are seen in God’s dealings with both people and nations. They are seen in the Psalms as well as in the books of wisdom.

The process is that of the New Covenant as described in Jeremiah 31:33-34. This is quoted in Hebrews 8:10-12 and in chapter 10:16-17. It clearly involves our absorption of God’s laws. It means that by learning about God’s ways, His view of things and His choice, we transform our minds so that they are brought into harmony with His. In Acts 15:9 this is described as “purifying their hearts by faith.” By faith in what? By faith in the word of God, and in the one who manifested that word to perfection—Jesus Christ. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). This is expressed in symbolic language (Ezekiel chapter 3) as eating a scroll and digesting its contents. The consequences of doing this are then seen in the prophet’s testimony to his people. The same idea is seen in Revelation 10:8-11. The watchman or witness is caused to make known God’s mind, to expose falsehood and evil. In today’s world this means that the true believer will contest the false theory of evolution which denies the Creator. It means that he will be stirred up to oppose the false teachings of papal and protestant Christendom. He will seek to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust and, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, he will reprove them (2 Peter 1:4; Ephesians 5:11).

Thus as we see the nations of the world and the papal false prophet preparing themselves for a rendezvous with destiny in the judgment of Armageddon, may we “eat the book” and purify our hearts through faith, and develop that mind of the seed of the woman that is inevitably at enmity with the natural animal mind, its philosophy, its religion and its arrogance.



Not to believe the promises of God is in effect to call God a liar; and no offence, even to men of integrity in the world, is so insulting and intolerable as this.

**JOHN THOMAS,**

*Elpis Israel, written in 1849*

...the trouble of the latter days will pervade not Europe and Asia only, but America as well.

**JOHN THOMAS,**

*Eureka Vol.1, written in 1861*

We commend to the serious consideration of everyone interested, the sobering fact that there is a day appointed when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ...

**ROBERT ROBERTS,**

*Christendom Astray, written in 1862*

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

**JOHN CARTER,**

*Epistle to The Ephesians, 1944*

Christ’s great charge against the rejected generation of Israel of his day was that they believed not Moses and the prophets. Are we familiar with Moses and the prophets? That which we do not know we cannot believe.

**C.H. JANNAWAY**

*Christadelphian magazine, written in 1908*

# MILESTONES UPDATE

## A push for peace in the Middle East faces many obstacles; can they be overcome?

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

Where do we begin? So much has been happening in the past few months! Gordon Brown has reluctantly signed up to the Lisbon “Reform” Treaty; the Peace Talks in Annapolis have come and gone; the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has not only attended a Gulf Council meeting but the Shiite Muslims have gone on the annual Hajj pilgrimage at the invitation of the Sunni Saudi King! The nations have met in Paris to prop up the Palestinians, and Hamas has celebrated its 20th birthday by shouting “Death to the Jews”! Meanwhile rockets rain down in southern Israel whilst the rest of Israel enjoys a tourist boom.

Some of these matters illustrate to us that we should not get over-excited at short-term happenings—it is the longer trend that is important. For instance, we know from Scripture that Iran—Persia—is part of the northern confederacy, being listed amongst Gog’s companions (Ezekiel 38:5). On the other hand the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia are not part of that grouping, but belong to the grouping that includes *the merchants of Tarshish and her young lions* (verse 13). The longer-term trend has been for the Gulf States to increase their ties with Britain and America. There has been a big increase in arms purchases from the West since the Lebanon War, which demonstrated the aggressiveness of Iran’s desire to take over the Middle East, using Hezbollah, her proxy army in Lebanon, to try to defeat Israel. This was a wake up call to the rulers of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Yet at the year-end we see them courting Iran; inviting their great enemy to talk to them and even go on a pilgrimage with them!

Have we misunderstood the scriptural foretelling of the Middle East situation? By no means! The politics of the nations is in constant flux. Like a pendulum it swings to and fro. So we have steps forward and steps back. Rest assured that at the appointed day all the nations will be playing the role foreseen by the Great Foreseer of all things. In that day it will all be plain. Meanwhile it is for us to take encouragement, not to be despondent when things seem to be drifting in the wrong direction, the tide will turn!

So let’s start with the Middle East situation.

### Untangling the Middle East

Let’s dust down the map (above) that shows us the relationships between the two main

annually through the festival of Ashura. But the Shiites haven’t given up trying to take back what they view as their right for the throne of the Islamic world. Armed with a sword and a smile, Iran has been making offers that its cowered Sunni neighbors can’t refuse.”

There is another map we need to examine too. This one shows which are so-called Arab nations and which are not. Clearly Iran is not an Arab nation—they trace their ancestry back to the Medo-Persian Empire of old.

So there is a double difference between Iran and the nations of the Arabian Peninsula; Persian vs. Arab and Shiite vs. Sunni. It was not just seeing how well Iran trained and armed Hezbollah that has put fear into the Arab rulers, it goes back to the fall of Saddam Hussein. Although Iraq is predominantly Shiite, Saddam Hussein was Sunni. He used his ruthless power to survive. With his removal, it has opened the way for Iraq to become ruled by Shiites and Iran has been supporting such a move. This has led both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to begin to erect security fences on their Iraqi borders.

Iran’s growing aggressiveness regarding nuclear weapons has also made the surrounding countries afraid. Against whom would these weapons be used? Well Israel first, but these rulers are aware it would not end there. Hence the move back to the Western camp. Only America and nuclear Israel could counter these nuclear threats. Hence the reluctant acceptance of the presence of Israel as a bulwark against Iran’s expansionist plans—the situation that we looked at in the last issue.

### America’s Bombshell

In early December, Mr Bush astounded not only the Gulf States but also Israel with the release of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate report on Iran’s progress towards nuclear weapons. Its central thrust was that Iran gave up the pursuit of nuclear weapons in 2003. At least that is what the report appeared to indicate at first, footnotes made it clear that what was given up then was the development of weapons to carry a nuclear device. The unanswered question is—have they now resumed such weapons? It is one problem producing a nuclear bomb; it is another to produce such a weapon that is small enough and strong enough to withstand the tremendous forces of being launched by a missile.

“The Dec. 4 release of the NIE has effectively blindsided Israeli policymakers. Whether you



Top: Division of Sunni & Shiite Muslims

Below: Arab nations as distinct from non-Arabs



branches of the Muslim faith. There is a deep division between them, as this article from an Israeli website *YnetNews* (19-12-07) shows.

“Shiites are viewed by many Sunni clerics as infidels. It’s easy to find evidence of that hatred, especially when one looks at the religious decrees originating in Saudi Arabia. One fatwa by Saudi sheikh Abdel-Rahman al-Barrak ruled last year that Shiites ‘in their entirety are the worst of the Islamic nation’s sects. They bear all the characteristics of infidels. They are in truth polytheist infidels, though they hide this.’

“Shiites have long been rejected by Sunnis as fellow Muslims. The split dates back to the origins of Islam, when two camps were battling for the right to succeed Muhammad. In the end, the group that went on to become the Sunnis massacred Hussein, the martyr of the Shiites, along with his army, during a massive battle in Karbala (modern day Iraq). “Shiites will never forget that day, enshrined into their collective memory and relived



believe the NIE was the outcome of a nasty bureaucratic spat between the intelligence community and the Bush administration or a politicized realignment of U.S. policy designed to coax Iran into fruitful negotiations over Iraq (and *Stratfor* believes the latter), the implications are indisputable. Simply put, the United States no longer can make a viable case for military action against Iran. The United States is still pressing on the sanctions front to have a stick to use in negotiations, but Washington's war-mongering campaign has lost its credibility" (*Stratfor* 7-12-09).

Both *Stratfor* and *Debka* are convinced that America has done a deal with Iran to help them with the Iraq situation. Britain is now drawing down her troops, having handed over control of the Basra area to the Iraqi security forces. America too would like to reduce her forces' levels in order to concentrate on Afghanistan. It appears that America has been forced to acknowledge the influence that Iran has in Iraq. If Iran agrees to reign in the elements in Iraq who are loyal to Iran, then America would lift the threat of attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Hence the timing of this report which seems on the surface to lift such a threat.

#### **"Moderate" Arab Rulers woo Tehran and Damascus following Track opened by Washington**

This was *Debka's* headline to an article revealing that a few days after this US report was released, their great enemy Iran was being feted by Egypt and the other Gulf States!

"Dec. 10 Cairo announced plans to resume diplomatic relations with Tehran after 27 years. DEBKAFile's Middle East sources report this step was part of an initiative for Saudi Arabian, Jordanian and Egyptian leaders to come together in a new summit to embrace the Syrian ruler and bridge their policy differences with the radical Syrian-Tehran line.

"Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas will be invited and urged still more emphatically to starting patching up his Fatah's quarrel with the extremist Hamas and adapt to the newly emergent Arab reality with a tougher line against Israel. DEBKAFile's Middle East sources report: The road to radicalization embarked on by this central Arab bloc is the direct result of the dialogue Washington has opened with Tehran" (*Debka* 11-12-07).

There was a similar report in the (*Christian Science Monitor* 14-12-07).

#### **India Offers Persian Gulf Sheikdoms Military Treaty**

In another interesting development, the Gulf States have been seeking other partners to help them maintain their military strength, fearing that America might not always be there. According to *Debka* (21-12-07) only India has responded positively and enthusiastically! So we have one of the **young lions** in discussion with **Sheba and Dedan!** (Ezekiel 38:13)

"The Gulf emirs have responded by diversifying their security options. Although willing to host US military forces on their soil

and across the Middle East, they are no longer willing to rely exclusively on the United States for their security. The Gulf Cooperation Council heads have accordingly gone shopping around for new protectors against military aggression.

"In particular, they want a shield against the clandestine nuclear menace that they feel is breathing down their necks from Iran.

"The only affirmative reply to the Gulf plea came from New Delhi. Indeed, *Manmohan Singh's* government had two optional proposals ready:

"1. A military treaty that would spread India's nuclear umbrella over the entire bloc.

"2. Alternatively, separate pacts entailing the same nuclear shield between India and each of the six GCC members.

"New Delhi, it was noted, is in the middle of a major expansion of India's naval, air and marine forces. They are perfectly capable of detaching the units needed for deployment in the Persian Gulf, the Oman and Arabian Seas and the Indian Ocean.



#### **Deep historic ties: Britain & the Arabs**

"*DEBKA-Net-Weekly's* sub-continental sources report that no time was lost in taking up the offer: Gulf military and intelligence officers have started meeting with senior Indian security officials to develop the terms of the military pact.

"Our sources add that New Delhi's eagerness to go forward with the new strategic association was quickened by intelligence received that Saudi Arabia had signed a secret defense pact with Pakistan's *Pervez Musharraf*, including a nuclear protection clause.

"The GCC has not yet sent its collective response to the Indian proposals. But our sources report at least two of its members, one of which is Qatar, have entered into separate talks with New Delhi.

"The upshot of these moves, if they mature fully, may see India and Pakistan sharing the Gulf region between them as providers of defense guarantees and nuclear shields.

"India's added interest in planting a foothold in the Gulf region comes from the conservatively estimated three million Indian expatriates living and working in those countries.

"Indian citizens make up one-fifth of Bahrain's population; 15 percent of Oman's, a quarter of Qatar's inhabitants and 32 percent

in the United Arab Emirates."

So although we see at the moment a short-term shift towards bringing Iran in on the side of these southern nations, they fear her and are taking practical steps to seek other security partners. In the final picture Iran will be associated with the northern confederacy, not the southern grouping.

#### **Saudi King Pays State Visit to Britain**

King Abdullah paid his first State visit to Britain at the end of October. As well as a wonderful pageant, it underlined the deep historic ties between the two countries.

"...much of the serious talking was about trade and economic issues. Moreover, as well as the sense of our security interests being intertwined, the belief that economic interests are so important has dictated that we maintain a close and friendly relationship with Saudi in particular, but also with the whole of the Arab Middle East" (*Daily Telegraph* 5-11-07).

#### **When they shall Say "Peace and Safety"**

Why are we so interested in the progress of Middle East Peace Talks? There are two main scriptures that guide us. Paul writing to the Thessalonian believers, in the first place about the situation that they would be facing in the run-up to AD 70, but with words that we see as having another fulfilment for our age:

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

The other scripture is that of Ezekiel 38 that clearly sketches out a picture of Israel dwelling peacefully and securely prior to their invasion by Gog. We know that the invasion takes place after the call to the Judgement Seat, and so we expect that this development of peace is something that reaches its climax under the Elijah work of reformation in Israel. However the Thessalonians passage would seem to indicate that as a community we might well see the beginning of this peace and safety, or security, move before being called away. It may well be the last sign for us.

So it is of great interest to us that this is what the nations are talking of. How successful these talks work out to be remains to be seen.

With a great deal of persuasion, the US cajoled and coerced the Arab nations to attend the Middle East Peace Talks, which were held in Annapolis, Maryland in the USA in November. We have been here before!

- There was the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty in 1979.
- The Madrid Peace Talks began in 1991
- The Oslo Agreement signed by Rabin and Arafat in 1993
- The Egypt Peace Accord signed by Rabin and Arafat in 1994, Arafat moves to Gaza as head of Palestinian Authority

- Oslo II Agreement signed by Rabin and Arafat in 1994.
- Wye River Agreement signed by Netanyahu and Arafat in 1998
- Camp David Peace Talks break down in 2000
- Peace Talks in Taba break down 2001
- The US, EU, Russia, and the UN, introduce the “Road Map for Peace” with talks at Aqaba, Jordan 2003

So what is different? There are a number of factors that might, just might, make these talks different! For one these are the first since the death of Arafat. For two, the Lebanon War has shown the vulnerability to Iranian aggression not just of Israel, but Israel’s neighbours. Thirdly, the PA has split between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank. Fourthly, the other Arab nations have become involved.

Before the Peace Talks began there were articles in Arab papers urging the other Arab nations to attend, because the time had now come to face what was the true threat to the Middle East. It was not America or Israel but Iran.

“Arab columnists have been publishing articles emphasizing that the summit will serve Arab interests. The articles argue that it is imperative for the Arabs to support the summit, since it will bring stability to the region, promote a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, put an end to the exploitation of the Palestinian issue by the “unholy alliance” of Iran, Syria and Hamas, and even serve as a deterrent to Iran.

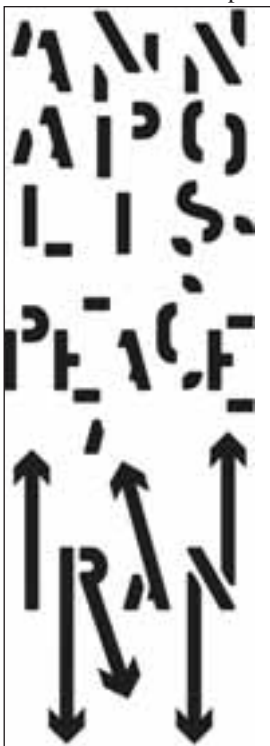
“We must move away from the narrow focus of a Palestinian-Israeli truce towards a broader Arab-Israeli settlement” (MEMRI 9-11-07).

So it is against this background that on November 26th 2007 representatives from 44 countries met together for Peace Talks.

#### The Annapolis Peace Talks

High-ranking officials from most Arab countries attended, although they insisted that “for security reasons” the Israeli officials had to use a different entrance. There were also many other officials from Europe, including the Vatican. They did sit down together and the talks did make some progress, with the Israelis and Palestinians agreeing to move forward on several tracks simultaneously. The optimistic hope was for the talks to achieve success within a year!

“The Arabs have come here not because they love the Jews or even the Palestinians,” said an adviser to the Palestinian negotiating team who spoke on condition of anonymity. “They came because they need a strategic alliance with the United States against Iran” (New York Times 28-11-07).



Another *New York Times* (2-12-07) article had this heading:

#### Middle East Peace Through Anxiety

“Last week’s multi-national summit meeting here was about many things, the least of which, perhaps, was the pursuit of Israeli-Palestinian peace. Behind the calls for the creation of a Palestinian state that would live serenely and stably alongside the Jewish state, beyond the vision of a Middle East at last absolved of its longest-running conflict, was the paramount question of power—who in the



Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and PLO President Abbas at Annapolis—President Bush seated

region wields it and who in the region wants it. Indeed, while Annapolis is unlikely to succeed in bridging the gaps between Israeli and Arab positions, it effectively drew lines in the sand between those nations siding with America and the West and those allied with Iran.”

There was an extremely apt cartoon (left) that accompanied the article. (Clue! Who is responsible for fracturing the letters?)

“Over the coming months, the talks will break into about a half-dozen subcommittees to tackle such issues as dividing Jerusalem and dealing with Palestinian refugees. But none of those discussions are likely to lead to breakthroughs necessary to clinch a final agreement, analysts say.

“Just as secret back channels laid the groundwork for historic Israel-Arab advances in 1977 and 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas are liable to rely on behind-the-scenes talks far removed from the public, they say. “There is no way they can work out a framework agreement if it’s a public process,” says Gershon Baskin, co-director of the Israel-Palestinian Center for Research and Information.

“Back channels usually involve a limited number of confidants of

each leader, helping the sides build trust while ensuring that compromises with risky consequences for the sides don’t leak. To ensure a blackout, they have been held at remote estates or five-star hotels in third-party countries.

“But instead of focusing on the details of an agreement, the secret talks are expected to find solutions on the three “core” disputes: agreeing on a border and the fate of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, settling the claims of Palestinian refugees, and finding a way to transform Jerusalem into the capital of two states” (www.csmonitor.com 12-12-07).

The first follow-up talks took place on Dec 12 at Jerusalem. Little was achieved, as the Palestinians were angry that Israel had just announced plans to build 300 apartments in Har Homa in southern Jerusalem. Israel struck back that a Fatah policeman had murdered an Israeli settler, and with even more rockets from Gaza that day, there was little evidence that the Palestinians had curbed their terrorist forces. It was not even apparent if another meeting had been agreed on. Both Paris and Moscow had offered to host meetings.

#### The Paris Donors Meeting

Following the Annapolis Peace Talks, the countries of the world met to state what aid they would give to the Palestinians. Thanks to the efforts of Tony Blair, this was judged a success, raising more money in pledges than had been asked for. As in the past the bulk came not from the Palestinian’s rich fellow Arabs but the West.

Let’s now turn and look at Europe

#### Brown has Managed to Alienate both Washington and Brussels

Gordon Brown’s first 6 months as Prime Minister of Britain have turned out to be a disaster for the Labour Party’s poll ratings. He took over unopposed from Tony Blair and at first handled crisis after crisis with confidence. There was much talk of calling an early election to consolidate his position, as he had not actually been elected to be Prime Minister. His period of apparent dithering as to whether to take this risk coincided with a steady slump in popularity as incident after incident battered the party. A *Sunday Times* YouGov poll has now put the Conservative Party 13 points ahead.

Brown’s refusal to attend the main EU leaders meeting in Lisbon to sign the Lisbon Reform Treaty alienated him from his fellow leaders. He flew in after everyone had signed, and after the group photos, and signed it alone. The place of signing was the Jeronimos Monastery, the burying place of the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama. He led the way to the riches of India by sailing round the Cape in 1497. Upon his safe return two years later, King Manuel I commissioned the construction of this monastery to give thanks to the Virgin Mary for de Gama’s success. A large statue of Mary stands outside, overlooking the harbour. Many a Portuguese sailor invoked her blessing as they set out on their journeys. Doubtless many of the

leaders look to Mary, “our Lady of Europe” as they sail the EU ship into uncharted waters.

**Dec 21st—An Historic Day for Europe**

At one minute past midnight on December 21st, the EU expanded its freedom of travel right up to the borders of Russia.



“This Friday, the European Union expands once again in some practical and visible ways. The newest members of the Union—former East Bloc countries now well into fresh democratic starts—will become the new border region of what is known as the European Schengen zone.

“From north to south, the border of the area in which most Europeans can move without passport control stops will shift about 400 miles east, with the instant inclusion of Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia” (*chicagotribune.com* 21-12-07).



This is another bold step in the EU’s drive to become one nation; border controls were a reminder that Europe was made up of many countries. Now in a very practical way one can freely cross from one country to another without any controls. Britain of course has not signed up to this treaty; you need your passport to enter!

**A Tsar is Born**

This was the headline to the lead story in *Time* (31-12-0). Putin was voted “man-of-the-year” and his steely gaze looked out from the cover.

**Elected Emperor**

“Putin has said that next spring, at the end of his second term as President, he will assume the nominally lesser role of Prime Minister. In fact, having nominated his loyal former chief of staff (and current Deputy Prime Minister) Dmitri Medvedev to succeed him as President, Putin will surely remain the supreme leader, master of Russia’s destiny, which will allow him to complete the job he started. In his eight years as President, he has guided his nation through a remarkable transformation. He has restored stability and a sense of pride among citizens who, after years of Soviet stagnation, rode the heartbreaking roller coaster of raised and dashed expectations when Gorbachev and then Yeltsin were in charge. A basket case in the 1990s, Russia’s economy has grown an average of 7% a year for the past five years. The country has paid off a foreign debt that once neared \$200 billion. Russia’s rich have gotten richer, often obscenely so. But the poor are doing better too: workers’ salaries have more than doubled since 2003. True, this is partly a result of oil at \$90 a barrel, and oil is a commodity Russia has in large supply. But Putin has deftly managed the windfall and spread the wealth enough so that people feel hopeful.

“Russia’s revival is changing the course of the modern world. After decades of slumbering underachievement, the Bear is back... Moscow exerts international influence not just with arms but also with a new arsenal of weapons: oil, gas, timber...Russia just made its first shipment of nuclear fuel to Iran—a sign that Russia is taking the lead on that vexsome issue, particularly after the latest U.S. intelligence report suggested that the Bush Administration has been wrong about Iran’s nuclear-weapons development. And Putin is far from done. The premiership is a perch that will allow him to become the longest-serving statesman among the great powers, long after such leaders as Bush and Tony Blair have faded from the scene.

“But all this has a dark side. To achieve stability, Putin and his administration have dramatically curtailed freedoms. His government has shut down TV stations and newspapers, jailed businessmen whose wealth and influence challenged the Kremlin’s hold on power, defanged opposition political parties and arrested those who confront his rule. Yet this

grand bargain—of freedom for security—appeals to his Russian subjects, who had grown cynical over earlier regimes’ promises of the magical fruits of Western-style democracy. Putin’s popularity ratings are routinely around 70%. ‘He is emerging as an elected emperor, whom many people compare to Peter the Great,’ says Dimitri Simes, president of the Nixon Center and a well-connected expert on contemporary Russia. Putin’s global ambitions seem straight-forward. He certainly wants a seat at the table on the big international issues. But more important, he wants free rein inside Russia, without foreign interference, to run the political system as he sees fit, to use whatever force he needs to quiet seething outlying republics, to exert influence over Russia’s former Soviet neighbors. What he’s given up is Yeltsin’s calculation that Russia’s future requires broad acceptance on the West’s terms. That means that on big global issues, says Strobe Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution, ‘sometimes Russia will be helpful to Western interests, and sometimes it will be the spoiler.’”

This is the style that the Russian peoples seem happiest under, they have been used to it

for centuries, the Tsars were Autocrats who gave them the security they desired. A completely different way of life to that of the British!

**Russia: a Major Mediterranean Deployment**

This headline to a *Debka* (17-12-07) article described the biggest naval showing of the Kremlin for a decade. Where is it heading? To the Mediterranean!

“Our Moscow sources report President Vladimir Putin has adopted the strategy of matching—or topping—every US or Western move concerning the Middle East. He also plans, they reveal, to land in Syria in grand style on New Year’s Eve, a week before US president George W. Bush begins his Middle East tour...

“Putin will take the opportunity to pay visits to select Middle East rulers. His bureau is still working on arrangements. The Russian president is reported to be interested in another official visit to Israel, his second, to outdo Bush who is due in Jerusalem and Ramallah on Jan. 9-10 for his first trip to Israel as US president.”

If this report is true it will make for a very interesting end to the year! One of the characteristics of the King of the North’s invasion of Israel and Egypt is that he comes with many ships! (Dan 11:40). This is one of Putin’s priorities—to build up the navy again.

We have run out of space to look at a very interesting development that is gathering pace now, that is, the growing influence of the papacy on the affairs of Europe. (We have just heard today that Tony Blair has converted to Roman Catholicism—another boost to that church!) So much so that the humanists are in despair at the powerful hand of the Vatican in the running of the EU! God Willing this is an area we can examine next time.

And so another dramatic year draws to a close and we are still here awaiting our Master’s call. How long, O Lord? How long? That is the unknown question, and none of us knows the duration of our mortality.

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas 4: 14).

For those of us living in the northern hemisphere these crisp winter days make us appreciate this thought. Our breath condenses in the cold air and then passes away! In the words of one of our hymns

Life is the time to serve the Lord,  
To do His will, to learn His word:  
In death there is no power to know,  
Far less in wisdom’s way to go.

May 2008 bring the fulfilment of our hopes.





# Are You Ready?

By Frank Abel SHELBURNE, ON

**I**n terms of its impact upon humanity and how it will change the world, the greatest event to ever take place has yet to happen. As the Bible states, “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19-20). The sons of God, the few from the many generations of mankind—and for which all creation has groaned and travailed for six thousand years—are about to be revealed to the inhabitants of the earth. Life on this planet is not the product of chance, but has occurred through the determined action of a supreme Intelligence, whose plan and purpose involved selecting and preparing a group of people to bear the Name of God (Acts 15:14).

Many things taking place within our lifetime have been indicating the nearness of this great climax of human history, and even though millions of people have come and gone, our generation may be the one to actually witness this climax. For all involved the first thing to be experienced will be that through some unannounced method our daily life will be suddenly interrupted, following which we will be ushered away to a place of assembly (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Since you may be one of those involved, the question we want to address in this article is, “Are you ready?”

Suddenly and unexpectedly your daily routine will be broken. You could be anywhere and doing whatever. Your mind will quickly assess the wisdom or the foolishness of your state of preparation in the days, months and possibly years that you have known about it. Everyone similarly ‘taken’ will be tingling with the realization that the days of the freedom of choice are over, and what lies ahead is a summons to give an account of what has been done with life. As the Bible states so clearly, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). Are you ready?

Since a great number of generations of people have lived on this earth, many if not most of the people being assembled will have to be

first raised from the dead, for it has been predetermined by our God that the dead and the living should be judged at the same time.

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:39-40).

Readiness for a good part of those who have died may be something they only think of when they are raised to life again. Although some may have died well prepared, patiently waiting for their redemption, others will have died suddenly and unexpectedly. The call to judgment of those who suffered an untimely death exhorts us to try to be ready at all times, lest we be subject to a similar fate. Are you ready?

**‘ Suddenly and unexpectedly your daily routine will be broken. You could be anywhere... ’**

The Scripture is clear that there will be no opportunity for people to alter their life meaningfully after the call to judgment. It is so typical of people who know they need to prepare for an event to procrastinate, until finally it is too late. Many people have gotten themselves into life threatening circumstances only because they did not prepare for an event. So the parable of the ten virgins tells us that some of those waiting for the coming of their Lord did not take a sufficient supply of oil in their lamps. After the call to meet their Lord and their realization that they were not ready, they went to those who bought and sold to try to make up for their lack of preparation. However, the record states, “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor

the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:11-13). Are you ready?

The detail of how such a large group of people could be assembled and judged at once has not been revealed. How we might be told that the Lord has requested our attendance has not been detailed, neither do we know how we might be transported to this place of assembly. Although in many ways we lack the understanding of the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ we should not allow that uncertainty to downplay the significance of judgment to come. The Scripture informs us that all this activity will be supervised by the Lord Jesus Christ “who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1). The Judgment will be efficient, decisive and just. Are you ready?

At the Judgment seat of Christ each person will give an account of themselves for how they have reacted to the Lord’s invitation to become a member of the Kingdom of God. It is abundantly clear from the Scripture record that some of those in attendance will be accepted and be granted everlasting life;

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

Likewise, it is also clear that some will be rejected and will be subject to weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weiling and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41-42).

Out of this plenary session of evaluation, a select group of individuals will have their nature changed to that similar to the Judge himself (Phil. 3:21). These will be the new sons of God and with the leadership of their King, the Lord Jesus Christ; they will set forth on a course of action that will transform life upon this earth so that it is finally brought into complete harmony with the Creator. Are you ready?

To develop these thoughts to another level, and to provide further counsel, we will split them

into four areas, corresponding roughly to the four ways in which humanity will be impacted by this event. First of all, there are those who have so aligned themselves to the hope of the manifestation of the sons of God that it has become the focus of their life, and they have settled in to patiently wait for His appearing. Then there are those who know and understand the significance of the return of Jesus Christ but it would be hard to find a lot of evidence in their lifestyle to suggest they are sincere, or honest to themselves about his return. Still others having had a look at the idea have rejected it from having any influence on their life. They are the disbelievers. Finally there is a very large group of people who out of ignorance, due to age, health, culture or circumstance, continue to know nothing of what we are describing.

***Sincere Believers—They are Ready!***

Anyone who lets the true significance of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ have its affect on their conscience will be keeping in close touch with what is happening around the world. They will be analyzing world events and noting the gradual shift in the alignment of the nations to that situation which the Bible has so accurately foretold concerning the time of the end. In all of this watching, they are not looking anxiously or worriedly about the world news, for having been baptized into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have taken the basic steps of preparation. They know the King they are preparing to meet and they are wearing his team sweater in all aspects of their life. They appear to have little interest in advancing up the corporate ladder, but instead are content to remain at a level where they still have some time and energy for more important matters. They attend almost all ecclesial functions and are busy in the background making sure that ecclesial functions are carried out with a dignity fitting of those serving the Great King. You will not find these people caught up in the frenzy associated with sports; they don't interrupt their home life for such entertainment and neither do they seek to have their children excel in careers where stardom in this life is the goal.

Absolute conviction that the Scriptures are the revealed will of God is a common characteristic of those who are ready, and they are constantly investigating new avenues of thought in this area. These people constantly pray, and pray sincerely for the coming of the Lord, for it means everything to them. Instead of grumbling over how long it is taking the Lord to return they see each day as a further opportunity to help others on their way and seek out occasions to bring the glorious hope of everlasting life into the lives of others. They are examples to follow for they are the ones who are Ready!

***Insincere Believers—Are you Ready?***

The response to the call to Judgment will not be voluntary. All those who have been baptized and have associated themselves with the great act of salvation accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ will be summoned before his presence. They will have to give an account of themselves

whether or not they are ready or willing to do so. Lawyers will not be allowed, neither will spouses or caregivers be permitted to speak in the place of those being examined.

Does not the Lord already know what each of us has done, including the motive and consequences? Why then does he seek our own testimony in the case? The answer is provided in the Scriptures,

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:36-37).

The Lord has already witnessed our life, even the idle words we have spoken and the motives behind them. One of the reasons for the Lord saying this was because idle words are most often spoken with evil intent which needs to be exposed and confessed. His comment recorded in Matthew also serves as a deterrent to those who are inclined to foster sarcastic relationships with others. They often catch themselves in the very act through the work of their own conscience.



**“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out...”**

***Matthew 25:6-8***

However, the greatest insincerity is associated with those whose manner of life illustrates that they despise their baptism. For a person to say they believe the Gospel, and then to go on and live a life of hypocrisy, is the height of duplicity and will be severely judged by the Lord at the seat of Judgment.

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29).

Why would a believer choose to be absent from meetings of the believers when it is largely through those very same meetings that we keep prepared? Why would a believer seek to be a partner with an unbeliever, at any level, if in fact he/she really believed that they would have to account for that action at the Judgment Seat? Why would a believer not always be deeply involved in the work of the Lord, that is, if they really took God's offer of being a priest in his kingdom seriously? If the inconsistencies are there in your life then your conscience should be sufficiently pricked to get you back on course. If by a continual disregard of its judgment your conscience is seared, you are very unprepared for the Day of Judgment (1Timothy 4:2).

The word of God contains frightening statements about the position of those who treat the sacrifice of Christ as an unholy thing, and it will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God because of it (Heb.10:31). Any of us falling into this category of living still have time to repent and be ready, if we wish.

***Unbelievers—Are you Ready?***

The comments contained in this section are designed to support the contention that there are others, apart from those who have been baptized that ought to consider the question—Are you Ready? The Apostle Paul stated to the Gentiles at Athens,

“the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the 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 17:30-31).

The call of the Gospel is universal in its ability to save and just as universal in its ability to condemn.

Beside those that believed Paul when he spoke those words at Athens there were others whose reaction was summarized in the words,

“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter” (Acts 17:32).

While there is time, unbelief can be remedied. Apart from a determination to reject God Himself and the standard of life He represents, how could anyone turn down an invitation to participate in everlasting life? Yet, as there were some that mocked the words of the Apostle Paul in the first century, even so now some mock the concept of future life ordained by God. All such people should take the time to read the words of the Apostle Paul again for they speak of a ‘commandment to repent’ and of a ‘day of judgment’. What could that mean except that they will be rejected when summoned

before the Judgment seat of Christ? Clearly, anyone taking this position is not ready for the coming of the Lord!

The record of Paul's testimony at Athens also identified another group who postponed their decision and contented themselves with the thought that they would hear him again. There is no record however, of the Apostle Paul ever speaking again at Athens and it may very well be that these people never got the opportunity to consider further what he had to say. Procrastination is the downfall of many people and those that put off their decision about getting ready will clearly be lumped in with those who mocked. The word being preached cannot help people who refuse to make a decision; those people will not be ready for the coming of the Lord!

### ***The Ignorant will Never be Ready!***

As humans we have a predisposition to rush to the aid of someone who is in peril and especially so when the one endangered is a loved one. This motivation must have saved the lives of many, as well as being the cause whereby others lost their lives because they were not fully aware of the nature of the risk involved. Many people have tried to educate the ignorant of these things, some with great success and others with great suffering and even loss of life. It is incumbent upon us to preach the gospel to the millions of people who have never heard the message of Christianity. However, when the Lord comes there will still be millions, if not billions, who have never heard about true Christianity. Many of these people however, will survive the great tribulations that will entangle civilization when the Lord Jesus Christ assumes his role as King over all the earth. As the Scripture states, nations will still exist,

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

It is right to say that for this present time, the ignorant, the mentally challenged and young children will not be summoned before the Judgment Seat of Christ because they have either not heard the Gospel or they are not capable of understanding it. Should they survive the overthrow of governments and the natural catastrophies that will enthrall the earth at this time, they will continue to live in the age of the Kingdom that immediately follows the Lord's return. Their well being depends on their reaction to the commandments of the Lord in that age, and if their response is positive and fruitful they likewise can expect to participate in everlasting life.



### **CORRECTION**

We thank Philip Johnson-Smith of Chester UK for pointing out an error on page 27 of our last issue. As he points out, Adolf Hitler did not speak in the Reichstag building or its chamber, although he did address the Reichstag "cabinet." The Nazi government always met in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin. We apologise for this error.

# Christ: "The Destroyer of Churches"

By the late Robert Roberts IN 1897



Now what is Christ's word to us?— meaning by "us" all who believe the testimony. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities;" and John is permitted to see her perdition. The angel lifts a huge boulder and flings it into the ocean, where it makes a great commotion and sinks gurgling down, and says, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." And then he hears the sound, "Rejoice over her, ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Rome has been the destroyer of God's friends from the beginning, destroying the Christ—Roman nails that went through His hands; by Roman authority He was crucified, dishonoured and abhorred of all men; and Rome was the killer of all the apostles, and all the unnumbered crowds of believers that have since been stewed to perdition in Roman dungeons and on Roman scaffolds and roasted in Roman fires—astonishing that people have forgotten all this! They would not forget if they were daily readers of the Bible.

So here is light on the Apocalypse, on this last message—light in relation to the individual

attitude to a great public institution of the age, the great institution of the church. And the English church herself is only a daughter of Rome. Rome is known as a mother, and she has got daughters, and they all own her as the mother church of Rome, and the daughter church of England, and the daughter church of France, and so on. And people, for the sake of respectability, and for the sake of advantage, are willing to coquette with this spiritual harlot. A man who is enlightened in the word cannot. He stands apart. And this is expressed in another way—the redeemed, the firstfruits unto God, are virgins; they are not defiled with women, that is, the Apocalyptic women; that is, the friends of Christ are found outside the pale of all the modern communions—where the word of God is.

And then it proceeds to indicate certain other things that would come as tokens of the approach of the doom from the Lord of glory, and the Destroyer of all churches. That is a new title in reference to Christ, "the Destroyer of churches;" but it is a fact. He is the Great Iconoclast.

*Published in 1897 "The Last Message"*

## THE BIBLE MAGAZINE NOTICE BOARD

### PROPHECY DAYS IN 2008

UNITED KINGDOM Rugby Prophecy Day **Saturday February 23rd 2008**  
Theme: **Chosen to be a Special People.**  
Nick White, Jonathan Cope, Don Pearce. Further details:  
<http://www.milestonesuk.org/>

South West Wales Prophecy Day **Saturday June 28th, 08**, God Willing.  
Contact Brian Woodall.  
01269 596973.  
E. mail. brwoodall@tiscali.co.uk

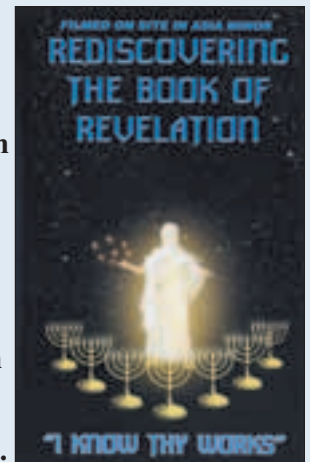
SOUTH AFRICA Pinetown Prophecy Day **Saturday February 23rd 2008**  
Brian Luke, Paul Billington. Further information from blclaw@iafrica.com

UNITED STATES Lompoc Prophecy Weekend, California **Saturday March 15th** Don Pearce, Paul Billington.  
Further information from Ron Stewart  
805-733-5577

**CANADA. A special Prophecy Day is being arranged in Brantford for this coming Fall, focussing upon Israel's sixty years in the light of the Gospel. Details will be announced shortly.**

### REDISCOVERING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

These DVDs take you on location with Frank Abel & Paul Billington as they visit the sites of the 7 ecclesias in Asia (Rev 2 & 3). The DVD format is now available from B.Mag agents. (2 discs give 2 hour running).



# ELON MOREH

“And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.”

*Genesis 12:6,7*

Scripture calls this “the glory of all lands” Ezekiel 20:6&15; it is the Land promised by God to the seed of Abram. As will be seen from the above reference the Land and the seed are inseparably linked together.

It will be noted that when this promise was given “the Canaanite was then in the land” the Scripture thus showing that the possession of the Land by Abram’s seed was then still future.

The King James Version tells us that this promise was given at Shechem and also identifies the spot as “the plain of Moreh.” This is a mistranslation, the Hebrew word *Elon* meaning a sturdy tree, or oak tree. Presumably a tree similar to the one we photographed (below centre). The modern settlement of Elon Moreh is close to Shechem (below left). This is a Land full of promise, and one is reminded of prophecies such as Jeremiah 31:5, “Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things” (below right).



**Modern Settlement of Elon Moreh with Shechem in the background**



**The area of Elon Moreh where Abram received the promise.**



**An old sturdy tree in the area**



**Vines on the mountains of Samaria**

# ENEMIES OF ISRAEL



The shocking truth is that behind the Middle East conflict there is the hidden hand of Rome persistently working to achieve its own long-held objectives

By Paul Billington BRANTFORD, ON

**W**hat, or rather who really lies behind modern anti-Zionism—and before that, anti-Semitism? When we consider the insane hatred of Adolf Hitler for the Jews, the frenzied and murderous malevolence of Arabs against Israel—or the relentless vilification of the media against the Jewish state today—what can we make of it all? How can we explain this blind and unreasonable antipathy towards the Jews? Today's Palestinian hatred of Israel with its *Intifada* uprising and violence is but the latest chapter in a centuries-long malicious resentment against Jews.

## Christian Anti-Semites

For centuries Christian churches were in the front line when it came to anti-Jewish propaganda and persecution. That is simple history. But is there no connection between the historical persecution of the Jews and the situation today—including that animosity towards Israel from the Islamic world? The fact that the Palestinian leader Abbas (and formerly, the late Yasser Arafat) has been on such cordial terms with Christian churchmen ought to alert us to the fact that not only a connection, but eager cooperation exists between the enemies of Israel. First, however, let us examine the Christian side of the question.

Christians claimed that Jews were guilty of “deicide” (of killing God) because they crucified Christ. That accusation is as foolish as it is false of course—for how can anyone put God to death when He is immortal and everlasting?

It is true that the Jewish leadership conspired against Jesus of Nazareth and that they lobbied the Romans so as to have him crucified, but that is not the whole story. Acts 4:25-27 tells us that both Gentiles (heathen) and Jews were involved. Even the Roman historian Tacitus in his *Annals* (he was a contemporary of the apostles who

wrote the New Testament) declares: “Christ had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate.”

## An Apostasy

The very first Christians were themselves Jews and expected the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). “Christianity began as a small Jewish sect whose members saw in Jesus the Messiah of the Scriptures and expected his immediate return to set up the kingdom on earth”—so wrote Gordon Childe a professor of history. They “had the Jewish vision of history as a process working towards the redemption of a chosen people” says Larousse History. That, more or less, summarises the New Testament teaching concerning Jesus, the Jews and Israel.

The one mistake that historians (and many theological commentators) make however, is in saying that the early Christians expected the *immediate* return of Jesus. They didn't. The apostle Paul wrote: “...that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...” (2 Thess. 2:3). The words “falling away” are literally, an *apostasy*—a defection, revolt, or forsaking of the faith. Many other New Testament passages give the same warning, for example 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 1 John 2:18, 19 etc. It should not surprise us then when history tells us that Christians soon departed from the original beliefs.

Edward Gibbon in his famous *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says:

“The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ...”

“Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection...”

“But when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was



**Above:** PLO leader Abbas with (Roman Catholic) Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah at a Christmas Mass in Bethlehem

**Right:** Under the portraits of the late Yasser Arafat and himself, the PLO leader poses for his photograph with the Latin patriarch Sabbah

**“...history tells us that Christians soon departed from the original beliefs.”**

**Below:** A Nazi illustration shows the German confrontation with the Jewish multi-headed snake—all in a “Christian” cause!







(approx. 260-339 A.D.) saw Constantine's new Christian empire as "the very image of the kingdom of Christ." So it was that the Catholic church claimed to be successor to the fallen kingdom of Israel and to the Divine institutions that were established in the holy city.

The Roman church with its papal system is a counterfeit. In many ways it presented itself as a replica of the Mosaic—the pope being high priest, mediator between man and heaven, and reigning from the Eternal City. His priests are seen as ministers before the Altar claiming the position of the Levitical priesthood, receiving confession of sins and offering "the body of Christ." In the days of papal temporal power, judicial and civil authority was exercised just as the Levites did under the Law. It was a theocratic government which spread its control over "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). The Protestant daughters of the Roman mother church also reproduced many of the features of the tabernacle—the altar, the show-bread, candlesticks etc. Christianity had thus become a sham, a system of falsehood that deceived millions "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:9, 10).

The idea that the church has become the new Israel is known as "Replacement theology" or "Supersessionism." In direct opposition to Bible teaching in both Old and New Testaments, this doctrine claims that God has "cast away his people," the Jews (Romans 11:1) and *replaced* them with the Christian church. That, certainly was not the teaching of the apostle Paul in Romans 11 where he wrote:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:25-29).

**Persecution & Murder**

It has to be a source of amazement to any student of history to discover that a system claiming to be the one true church of Jesus Christ turned upon its opponents and critics in such terrible violence and cruelty. Can it be that the true followers of Jesus, of the one who taught love of neighbour and forbade the use of the sword—can it be that such faithful followers would shed the blood of Jews, of Moslems and of those who they saw as Christian heretics? Would we really expect to find the church of Jesus Christ to be burning Bibles, to be conducting the Inquisition, the Crusades, or 'blood libels' against Jews? This is, without

doubt, the great false church that was to arise.

The words of Jesus at the time of his crucifixion are recorded in Luke 23:24. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It could only be a false church therefore who could use the crucifixion of Jesus as a pretext for persecution and cruel discrimination for hundreds of years. Such behaviour completely ignores the plea of Jesus that they be forgiven.

Not only did this "holy Catholic Church" persecute and murder Jews, it shed the blood of Donatists, of Waldenses, of Huguenots and other protestants. They were responsible for the death of William Tyndale who translated the Bible into English. What a record this church has! Surely the words of Revelation 17 fit the character before us:

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs



**"I saw the woman  
drunken with the blood  
of the saints, and with  
the blood of the martyrs  
of Jesus: and when I saw  
her, I wondered with  
great admiration."  
Revelation 17:6**

of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (amazement)" (verse 6).

With such a long history of this character, must we not ask if there is a connection with Arab hatred of Israel today and with the development of anti-Zionism? Is there a tie somewhere between the two?

**The Vatican & Zionism**

This is the title of a remarkable book published in 1990 by Sergio I. Minerbi, and it

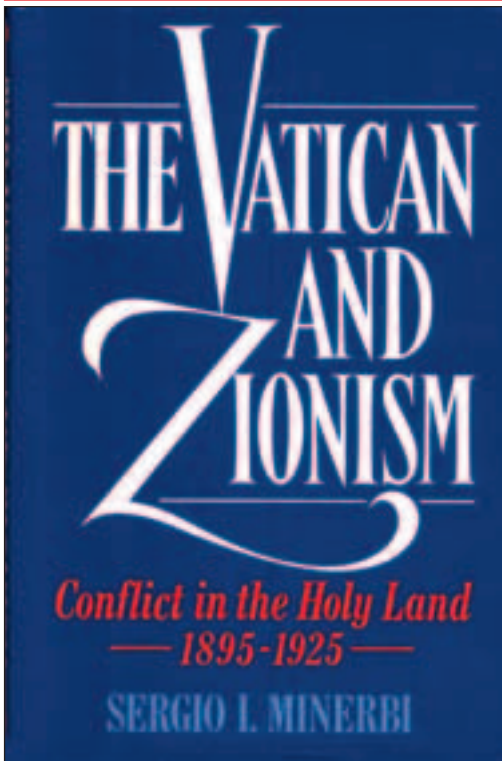
laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism."

Gordon Childe points out that the Church became modelled upon the Roman system: "The Church evolved a hierarchy, modelled on the imperial administrative system." It also grafted in to itself elements of paganism:

"...ritual was enriched by borrowings from the ceremonial of mystery cults and the vestments of priest-kings, while converts were conciliated by the adoption as saints, martyrs or virgins of local heroes and mother-goddesses of neolithic antecedents."

**Israel Replaced**

The original concepts of the first Christians thus became lost. The restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and what Paul called "the hope of Israel," (Acts 1:6; 3:20-21; 8:12; 26:6-7; 28:20) was replaced with the idea that the church itself was the new Israel, and had become the kingdom of God upon earth. The church historian Eusebius



**The above book** is out of print, copies may be found for sale on the internet



**Above:** Sir Mark Sykes, British Roman Catholic worked for Vatican ambition

“As Herzl later recalled, the pope also spoke of the Temple in Jerusalem, which had been destroyed forever, and asked whether any thought were being given to rebuild it and to renew the sacrificial services in the ancient way. Both pope Pius X and the cardinal secretary of state frankly presented Herzl with a position based on theological grounds, one that, at the least, clearly reflected the Church’s view. The pope’s question concerning the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem proves that this issue also worried the pope.”

As soon becomes clear from reading this book, the Vatican was opposed to Britain’s Balfour Declaration because of an “abhorrence of both Protestantism and Zionism.” The Vatican wanted the internationalisation of Jerusalem with a view to gaining temporal power for itself in the Holy City. (Note: see 1949 item on page 29). They raised many objections against the Declaration and endeavoured to block its approval by the League of Nations, thus hoping to prevent the British mandate for Palestine.

“The British government and the Zionist Executive began to work with redoubled vigor to overcome the obstacles to approval. Opposite them stood the Catholic Church, which was applying pressure on the British directly and was working indirectly by mobilizing Catholic powers for the Vatican position and encouraging them to worsen their relations with the mandate government in Palestine. There were rumors to the effect that the Vatican was even supporting Arab ferment against the Jews and British rule.”

In the background to all this there was a (then) secret agreement known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Sir Mark Sykes was a British Roman Catholic, and Picot was his French counterpart. This agreement had designated central Palestine to be under international control—in line with Vatican ambitions.

Felix Pinkus, a Zionist leader in Switzerland wrote to Chaim Weizmann in May 1917:

“The Vatican, he said, was organizing all the Catholics in the world against a Jewish Palestine under British protection. A meeting on the subject was recently held in Chur, Switzerland, attended by the bishop of Chur, high-ranking Italians and Austrians, Reichstag member Matias Erzberger, and the Jesuit general. It was decided at that meeting to organize the Catholics in all countries, and especially in the United States, to bring about the internationalization of Palestine under the

protection of the pope and to oppose British protection for Palestine by all means.”

The author of *The Vatican and Zionism* concludes: “the Vatican position against Zionism was continuous and consistent for the first two decades of the twentieth century.”

#### **Rome & the Arabs**

Sergio Minerbi reproduces part of a letter sent to Chaim Weizmann by a Catholic acquaintance. It reads:

“I warned you, some 4 years ago, to beware of Rome...[They] are actually intriguing with the greatest foe Zionism possesses, though a disguised one. I will give you a hint. Whenever and wherever in the Press, or at conferences, or at interviews at the Vatican, the word ‘Christian’ is used, substitute the word ‘Romanists’ and you—unless willfully blind to patent facts—will, I hope, perceive that it is not the Christians who join Arabs in opposing Zionism in Palestine—but those who, under the false garb of ‘Christianity,’ pretend—for a special object to have dread of the Jews and to agree with the Arabs or more correctly the Moslems...”

“You Zionists have grandiose schemes for a



**Above:** Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Luigi Barlassina openly supported Arabs against the Jews

University, which naturally aroused suspicion; for museums, for schools, for this and for that, as though the place already belonged to you, so that, of course, the Romanists took alarm, made friends with the Moslems, and started riots, and agitation—which has checked immigration, and is raising up a hornets’ nest... you gave time for the enemy to bring in fanatical Maltese and Syrians and so-called ‘Arabs,’ who now pose as ‘inhabitants’ and pretend to fear the Jews.”

The Latin patriarch of Jerusalem at that time was Luigi Barlassina, and he openly supported the Arabs against the Jews. A newspaper, *L’Italie*,

deals with events connected with the Holy Land between the years 1895 to 1925. The relevance of this book may be seen from a short paragraph in the introduction. The author writes:

“I also note in this book the similarity between the objections of the Arabs in Palestine and those of the Vatican. Despite the various reasons for this, it should be remembered that in the steadily escalating conflict between Jews and Arabs, from the beginning the Vatican took a position that favored only one side.”

Minerbi presents the results of his research in a well-reasoned and well-documented volume (over 50 pages of close-typed notes). He demonstrates the opposition of the Vatican to Zionism from the very beginning of that movement in the days of Theodore Herzl. He records the interview between Herzl and pope Pius X on January 25, 1904:—

“THE POPE: We cannot encourage this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem—but we could never sanction it. The ground of Jerusalem, even if it were not always sacred, has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ. As the head of the Church I cannot tell you otherwise. The Jews have not recognized our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people.

“Herzl then asked about Jerusalem’s current status:

“THE POPE: I know, it is not pleasant to see the Turks in possession of our Holy Places. We simply have to put up with that. But to support the Jews in the acquisition of the Holy Places, that we cannot do.

“HERZL: We are not asking for Jerusalem, but for Palestine—only the secular land.

“THE POPE: We cannot be in favor of it.

reported him saying: “A new strong crusade is needed by means of pen, action, and money. Zionism must be fought to rescue the land of the Savior.”

Weizmann, wrote Minerbi, “had no doubt that the Arab agitation was to a great extent encouraged by the Vatican. The Latin Patriarch (Barlassina) had made inflammatory speeches and had become a great source of anti-Zionist propaganda.”

The following decade saw the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, the growing power of the Nazis, and an escalating problem for the British in Palestine. The evidence is that the Vatican never completely gave up its dream of temporal rule in Jerusalem. Minerbi wrote:

“Thus the plans for the internationalization, extraterritoriality, or international supervision of the Holy Places in Palestine were shelved for a number of years, although they did not vanish. The *corpus separatum*, an international enclave of Jerusalem and its surroundings, of the 1947 United Nations partition plan was the last vestige of those earlier plans. And today, too, the Vatican would still like to see a “special statute internationally guaranteed” for Jerusalem, a city considered holy to the three monotheistic religions.”

#### The Nazi Connection

Many will know of the connection between the leader of the Palestinian Arabs, the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, and Nazi Germany. The Mufti called Hitler who was a Roman Catholic, the “protector of Islam” and met with him on November 28, 1941, requesting “a solution of the Jewish problem in Palestine and the Arab countries, according to the same methods by which the problem was solved in Nazi Germany.” The course of the war—and especially the defeat of Rommel in North Africa—prevented that “solution” from being put into effect.

An article in the *New York Jewish Times* entitled “Arabs and Nazis—Can it be True?” carries the story forward. The article can be seen on the website: <http://www.nyjtimes.com/cover/03-22-05/Arabs&Nazis-CanitbeTrue.htm>

There is much to learn from this article:-

“Admiral Canaris of German Intelligence, the Abwehr, provided support for the so-called Arab revolt in mandatory Palestine (1936-1939), the first intifada. Meanwhile, the Mufti sent emissaries to Berlin in 1937 and 1939 to discuss financial, diplomatic, and weapons assistance. He also received financial support for the Arab revolt from the wealthy American and anti-semitic and Hitler sympathizer, Charles R. Crane...”



**1965 Edition      1995 Edition**  
*The Arabic translation of Mein Kampf is a best seller among Palestinians and other Arabs today.*

The article points out how the Mufti disseminated Nazi and anti-Jewish propaganda throughout the Arab world. What happened, in a sense, was the Nazification of Arab countries. They were in sympathy with Germany.

“The former Egyptian Army Chief of Staff, Aziz Ali el-Masri, was arrested on his way to Rommel’s headquarters to aid the German war effort. One of the plotters in this affair was Anwar Sadat, then a young officer and comrade of Nasser. Sadat wrote of this at length in his early book of memoirs, *Revolt on the Nile* (London, 1957).

“He wrote: ‘We made contact with the German Headquarters in Libya and we acted in complete harmony with them.’

“He added: ‘We prepared to fight side by side with the Axis.’

“Through the Allied victories at El-Alamein and Stalingrad, he (Sadat) wrote, ‘both arms of the German pincer movement on Egypt were broken, and Egyptian hopes were broken too.’”

The N.Y. Jewish Times article continues:



**Above:** *The Mufti Haj Amir al-Husseini greeted by high ranking Nazi officials during the Second World War*

“From the 1930s till now, Mein Kampf, other Nazi writings, and earlier Judeophobic works like the forged protocols of the Elders of Zion, have been commonly read in Arab countries. And Arab writers have made their own contributions to this literary genre. PLO publications have joined in the chorus of Holocaust denial.

“Arab leaders freely expressed pro-Nazi sentiments even years after the war. For example, Nasser told a German neo-Nazi editor in 1964: ‘Our sympathies in the Second World War were on the German side.’

“Nazi war criminals were granted refuge in Syria and Egypt. Some of them, such as former Goebbels assistants, Johann von Leers, Franz Buensche, and Louis Heiden, helped those governments make anti-Jewish propaganda, while others helped Nasser to set up a security police.”

#### Post W.W.2 Rattlines

This story was taken up again in the book *The capture of Adolf Eichmann* by Moshe Pearlman (1961). In describing the escape of wanted Nazi war criminals (in which the Vatican itself was involved) this writer says:

“South America indeed is not the key area of refuge for former Nazis. The Arab States of the Middle East are undoubtedly the countries which have received more Nazi escapees than any other. And in these lands, Nazis have found the political atmosphere more congenial than elsewhere, with wider scope for the continuation of their activities. The most important Nazi centres in this region are in Egypt and Syria...”

After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 Arab states joined forces in an attempt to eliminate the new Jewish state, but failed:

“In the months that followed their defeat, the Arab countries began casting about for means to build up their national forces so that a new

attack on Israel might be more successful. There were soldiers of fortune in many lands who could be recruited as instructors. But Germany was the most fruitful source. For here was a defeated country, occupied by Allied troops. High ranking German officers were unemployed—and would presumably remain unemployable for a long time. Moreover, they were likely to share the same ideology as the Arabs, and they would certainly share the Arab view of Israel.

“Through contacts with the Nazi underground in Germany, Egyptian emissaries were the first to undertake the serious recruitment of former German army officers to build up the Egyptian

## ROME THE ENEMY OF ISRAEL

# Catholic Leader rejects Israel's Identity as a "Jewish State"

Latin Patriarch claims that Israel discriminates against non-Jews (December 19, 2007)



Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah calls for an end to the "Jewish" State while demanding that Palestinians should have "right of return."

At first we might be tempted to think that all this is alarmist; that it is being overdramatized and means nothing. That would be a great mistake. What we are seeing here is the beginning of something highly significant from a Bible perspective. For several centuries expositors of Bible prophecy have concluded that when the Israelitish Messiah is revealed, the pope and his church will oppose him. In 1643 Joseph Mede wrote to that effect, saying that the worshippers of the Roman Beast would think that "their imaginary Antichrist" had come! Others followed, including John Thomas in his *Eureka* (Vol.3 page 602 old edition).

Vatican also called "for a special 'internationally guaranteed' juridical status for the city of Jerusalem..."

Not only have we heard all this before (that is what the Vatican wanted instead of the British mandate), but we now hear that same cry echoed by the United States, Britain, Europe—and even some Arab states. But that 2-state idea is only step one. It has been tried before and it didn't work. The British tried it when they created Trans-Jordan and Palestine. The United Nations tried it with the partition plan of 1947. Within a year it brought war—and several other Arab-Israeli wars since.

Alongside the call for two states, the Vatican also declares that "Palestinian refugees have the right to return to their homeland" (*Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 28, 07). This "humanitarian gesture" is aimed at diluting the Jewish character of Israel—or of whatever may be left of it.

Making sure that everything goes according to plan, the Vatican sent a delegation to the



Israel's Ehud Olmert tries to appease the masters of deception; the leaders of the false church

Annapolis Conference held on November 27th 2007. Monsignor Pietro Parolin and Monsignor Franco Coppola attended, while a week previously (November 20) Monsignor Antonio Franco let it be known that the Vatican was 'frustrated' with Israel over other matters—tax exemption, visas... The very same issues that the Vatican complained about during the period of the British mandate. They are well practiced at agitation!

While we watch the Vatican pulling all the strings it can in the name of "Christianity," influencing nations to heap favour and money upon the Palestinians, we see the pathetic attempts of the Olmert government in Israel trying to appease the enemies of the nation. The Bible shows us that such attempts to make friends with these treacherous enemies is doomed to failure. There is a lesson to be learnt from Jeremiah 4:30,

"And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life."

### *The Vatican's Fear*

We noted earlier from the discussion between Theodore Herzl and pope Pius X, that the idea of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem was one that "worried the pope." Benedict XVI has far more reason to be worried about it today than was Pius X in 1904.

It was the writer Avro Manhattan in his book *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance* (1982) who pointed out the Vatican's dread of a Zionist theocracy arising in the Holy Land:

army. Long before Soviet arms and technicians began pouring into Cairo, following the armaments deal in 1955, the Egyptian forces were being trained by a first group of sixty German military experts, most of them former SS officers with 'safe' Nazi backgrounds. They were drawn from various branches of the Nazi armed services, and were headed by General William Farmbacher, former Chief Supply Officer of the German Army. His principal aides in the group were SS Colonel de Bouche, arms, ammunition and ballistics expert; Colonel Gerhard Mertens, for paratroop and field craft training; Colonel Zolling, army intelligence and security expert. The Gestapo Chief in occupied Warsaw, who had escaped the death sentence passed by a Warsaw tribunal, arrived to organize the Security Police in Egypt. And the former Gestapo Chief in Dusseldorf came to establish the Egyptian Secret Service on the lines of the German RSHA."

### *The Vatican & the Holocaust*

Much has been written upon this subject, and apologists have churned out many books, the effect of which has been to whitewash the pope and his Vatican. The last issue of this magazine (Vol. 20 Issue No. 4) contained material which we will not reproduce here. In a small book entitled "The Vatican versus Mankind" written some years ago, the writer—Adrian Pigott—said:

"Defenders of pope Pacelli have plausibly suggested that he was instrumental in saving some thousands of Jews. This is, to some extent correct, but we must observe a sense of proportion in this matter. The few thousand Jews who were saved were "a drop in the bucket" of the 6,000,000 who were victims of Nazi genocide."

The Vatican has been around for a long time and has learnt to cover its tracks well. Is there a world issue that she seeks to promote? She will have people in both camps—both for it, and against—as an insurance. The Vatican has been opposed to a Jewish state in the Middle East, and she made no objection to Hitler's policies, just as today she keeps silent about anti-Zionism and terrorist organisations whose objective it is to wipe Israel off the map. Why would the Vatican oppose these terrorists? She never wanted a Jewish state in Palestine to start with! That is her position to this day.

### *Vatican Policy Continues*

When the Scriptures clearly teach the restoration of Israel and the return to favour of the Jewish people, what are we to conclude from the continuous and sustained doctrine and policy of the Vatican? It is not a matter of erroneous belief merely—of wrong doctrine—but a calculated attempt to influence and urge many nations along a path of anti-Jewish sentiment and anti-Israel activity. Vatican statements are not only deceptive, they are promotive of policies that have the ultimate objective of eliminating the Jewish state.

The Catholic World News website announced (Nov. 3 2006) "Vatican seeks 2-state solution to Israel-Palestine Conflict." The

“The spectre of the creation of such a theocracy has haunted the inner chambers of the Catholic Church from her earliest inception, and is still a dominant fear. Hence her equivocal role in world affairs surrounding the birth and existence of the State of Israel... “In Vatican eyes, therefore, the millenarian yearning for a global Hebrew theocracy represents a deadly threat to the eschatological teachings of the Catholic Church. When translated into concrete political terms, such a view spells not only rivalry, but implacable enmity.”

The growth of religious Zionism together with the news that Israel is becoming less secular will do more than “worry” the pope and his Vatican! When they see the Zionist “settlers” taking over the West Bank (the Biblical heartland), and groups such as the Temple Institute preparing for the temple services, they will be bringing all the pressure they can upon the United States, Britain, the European Union—and upon the government of Israel itself—in order to force a withdrawal from Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The government of Israel has been aware of these Vatican sensitivities over many years—and that is why when Israel took the Temple Mount in 1967 and hoisted their flag on the Mosque of Omar, Moshe Dayan ordered it to be taken down.

Not only are Jewish religious Zionists condemned, but so also are their supporters—the so-called Christian Zionists. An article on the website *Catholic Online* had the heading “Holy Land religious leaders condemn Christian Zionism as false, a corrupting influence.”

“Christian Zionism is a false and extreme theological and political philosophy that has become a corrupting influence in the politics of Israel and the United States, said a Catholic patriarch and three other religious leaders here, urging Christian churches to break their silence.

“The statement, ‘The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism,’ released by Aug. 22, was signed by Catholic Latin-rite patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem and other leaders of Christian churches in Jerusalem, Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem... “Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel,’ the religious leaders said.

“Christian Zionism, the statement said, is an ideology that views the gospel through the prism of ‘empire, colonialism and militarism’ emphasizing in its extreme form ‘apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ’s love and justice today.’

“We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation,’ the four leaders said.”

Well, this magazine does not subscribe to many beliefs held by Christian Zionist



**Orde Wingate, a “Christian Zionist” who assisted Israel to develop a military capability.**

movements. Their “evangelical” character is not based upon a right understanding of Scripture. However, that being understood, their approach towards Israel is far nearer to original Christianity than is the apostate Catholic Church.

**“Jewish State” Rejected**

A headline in *The Jerusalem Post* on December 19, 2007 read: CATHOLIC LEADER REJECTS ‘JEWISH STATE.’

“Israel’s identity as a Jewish state discriminates against non-Jews, the Holy Land’s top Roman Catholic clergyman said in a pre-Christmas address on Wednesday.

“‘If there’s a state of one religion, other religions are naturally discriminated against,’ Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah told reporters at the annual press conference he holds in Jerusalem before the Christian holiday.

“In his address, which he read in Arabic and English, Sabbah said Israel should abandon its Jewish character in favor of a ‘political, normal state for Christians, Muslims and Jews.’

“This land cannot be exclusive for anyone,’ he said.”

This is in strict harmony with the Vatican’s long-standing policy towards the concept of a Jewish state. It echoes the spirit of Edom as presented by the prophet Ezekiel (ch. 35:10-13):

“Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there: Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee. And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy

blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.”

This is also “the king” of which Daniel the prophet wrote (chapter 11:36)—the “king” in his latter-day Roman phase. In the Revelation it is “the false prophet” (who claims to be the infallible pope!) who, together with other political powers gathers the nations to do battle with God Almighty (chapter 16:13-14). This battle is to be a war over God’s Land, and is identified “in the Hebrew tongue” as “a place” in verse 16. As the prophet Isaiah has told us:

“For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion” (ch. 34:8).

This is the great crisis towards which we can see events leading today.

The Vatican is a great deceiver so let us beware. Tony Blair as British Prime Minister was an undercover Catholic for years of course. His “conversion” to Catholicism is hardly a surprise, for it was the Roman Catholic Church who brought him to power through (if we will remember) the statement entitled “The common Good” published by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales in 1997 and timed to coincide with the election of that year. That he now holds the post of Middle East peace envoy should put up red flags for all of us. Let Israel beware, and let the Bible-believer be on his guard against this obnoxious and filthy system as it speaks of “justice and peace”—by which it means the humanist doctrine of ‘Liberty, Equality and the ecumenical brotherhood of man.’ These are not God’s principles, for man is not at liberty to disobey God’s laws and pray before images; neither are people all the same in God’s sight (Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:15-18). As for the brotherhood of man, we must recognise that Israel is “a special people” and above all others (Deut. 7:6). Let us not be hoodwinked by the smooth talk of a false prophet! To reject a “Jewish” nation is to reject the purpose of God. This the Catholic church did when it rejected the Gospel (Good News) of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

**Recognise the Enemy**

It is always useful to know just who your enemy is. As far as Israel is concerned, their enemy today is a false Christianity over which the pope presides. This is not the Christianity of the New Testament; it is not the teaching of Jesus or of his first followers. It is the very apostasy that was foretold. Let us beware of it!

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” (Rev. 18:7-8).



1948 - 2008 SIXTY YEARS OF PREPARATION

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL & ARMAGEDDON

This article, published in February 1948, shows what the writer expected 60 years ago, as the nation of Israel was forming.

By the late Graham Pearce  
WRITTEN IN 1948.

**T**he events covered by the phrase “He gathered them together into...Armageddon” is a prominent feature of Old Testament prophecy. Almost all the prophets speak of the great day when Yahweh will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the sequel is that He will overthrow them in battle, deliver his city, and restore his people. If we study from the Old Testament the gathering to Armageddon, we shall find it has such a character as to require the saints to be already on the scene. But this will be more readily perceived after our consideration of another matter.

### *The Elijah-Work in the Land*

We see the Jewish nation forming itself in Palestine at the present moment, and we know that calamity is to again befall it at the hand of the Northern invader. As Zechariah chapter 12 shows, at this time they will be delivered by Divine power, and afterwards “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn...” The state of mind expressed in this phrase cannot arise suddenly in a mass of people. There must be a previous foundation of knowledge upon which the events of calamity and deliverance may operate in order to induce a state of humility. This necessary foundation has yet to be laid. If tomorrow the Northerner were to come down, and the Jews were driven out, and then Christ delivered them; they would be astonished and probably grateful; but it would be impossible for the nation to look on him whom they had pierced and mourn; to say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. They are not conversant with the God of Israel, and the things concerning their Messiah as given in the prophets. They have to be instructed in these things. This doubtless is the work of Elijah and his co-workers, the saints. Hence in this we see



**“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared... 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.”  
*Revelation 16:12-17***

the need for the saints to be on the scene prior to the Northerner coming down.

The following extract from John Thomas will bring to view the nature of the Elijah mission. It appeared originally in the 1854 *Herald* as part of an article “The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land explained.”

### *Extract from 1854 by John Thomas*

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the

day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap...”

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 3:1-2; 4:4-6).

I do not forget what the Lord Jesus said of John the Baptist, and what Mark and Luke say concerning him. Matthew says that John was he of whom Isaiah spoke (Isaiah 40:3) and Luke makes the same reference. Mark quotes both Malachi and Isaiah to prove that a messenger and a proclamation were to precede the appearance or manifestation of the Lord; and having said this, he proceeds with his history of events. Speaking of John, the Lord says, “This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.”

But in Malachi’s prophecies above quoted “a great and terrible day” is spoken of, even the day of the Lord’s coming and appearance as a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap. Now before *that day* says the prophet, a messenger shall be sent; and at the close of his prophecy tells us his name in these words: “Behold, I will send you *Elijah the prophet* before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall restore the heart of the fathers to the children, and (*hashiv* understood, restore, turn) the heart of the

# BEFORE



**“We... hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel to be known as the State of Israel...”**

**David Ben-Gurion, May 1948**

children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.” Now the contemporaries of Jesus understood this in its obvious sense, namely, that the identical Elijah who was translated should return to Palestine on a mission to Israel before their being made to pass through the refining and purifying process on the day of terror. This appears from the question put by the disciples to Jesus after seeing Elijah on the mount with Moses—“Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?” This was a reason urged by the scribes for rejecting Jesus. As if they had said, “This Jesus cannot be the Messenger of the Covenant, for Elijah has not yet made his appearance.” The disciples were in

a difficulty. They acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, but they had seen him before Elijah, which did not harmonize with Malachi’s testimony. Jesus admitted that the scribes were right about the coming of Elijah; for he said, “Elijah *truly* shall *first* come, and *restore all things.*” This is a truth that must not be lost sight of. Elijah’s mission is to restore all things when he comes. What things? Not things pertaining to Gentiles; for *there is nothing Gentile worth restoring.* Destruction, not restoration, is to come upon the things of the Gentiles, both ecclesiastical and civil. The things to be restored are the things of Moses’ law, as far as compatible with faith in the blood of the New Covenant, constituting the *Amended Law.* hence in the verse preceding that about Elijah, the Lord says to Israel, “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even the statutes and judgments” (Mal. 4:4). These are the civil laws of the nation, the law of the state, the existence of which is quite compatible with the New Covenant to which it will be accommodated in the time of emendation.

On a former occasion, Jesus said to the multitude, “*If ye will receive it, John is the Elijah being about to come*”—*Elias ho melton erkesthai* (Matt. 11:14). I understand Jesus to say in these words, that Elijah’s coming is still future. He says too, “*John is Elijah*”—but in what sense are they identical? Let the Angel of Jehovah, who appeared to John’s father, answer the question—“John shall go before the Lord, Israel’s God, *in Elijah’s spirit and power,* to restore to posterity the father’s dispositions, and disobedient ones to just persons’ mode of thinking; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). Then “*Elijah’s spirit and power,*” like his mantle on Elisha, had fallen upon John; and hence the identity, which, however, did not at all affect the proper coming of Elijah at the appointed time. In *this sense* Jesus said to his disciples, “But I say unto you (though there is truth in what the scribes say) that Elijah once came (*elthe 2. aorist*) already, and they did not know him, but have done to him whatsoever they listed” (Matt. 17:12). John said of himself plainly, “I am not Elijah” (John 1:21).

The appearances then, of the messenger of the Covenant (Christ) to the nation are preceded by messengers individually two (John and Elijah) but *officially and spiritually one.* The power and spirit of Elijah, viz. *one spirit-power* through whomsoever manifested, the operation of which in regard to Israel prepares them for the appearance of the Messenger of the Covenant in their midst. This *one spirit-power* is exhibited in the history of Elijah. On comparing his history with John’s, their identity evidently consisted in their both being possessed of the same *spirit* of prophecy and a like *authority* in Israel, which appears to have been “the power” referred to by the Angel. The word of the Lord came to them both while sojourning by the Jordan, and thence their influence was felt among all ranks and classes of the nation. But “John did no miracle” (John 10:41); Elijah performed many of great magnitude: John’s identity in power with Elijah

was therefore not wonder-working. Christ’s mission to Israel was covenant-confirming and individually enlightening and converting (Jer. 23:5) not political: his political mission pertains to the future (Luke 1:32-33). Jehovah’s messengers, who precede and introduce his king’s appearing, have each a mission corresponding to Christ’s. Hence John’s mission (in Elijah’s spirit-power) was confirming and personally enlightening and converting; while Elijah’s, when he comes in his own proper person to Israel, will be nationally enlightening, converting and political. The combined result of the Elijah-spirit-power missions is the spiritual and political restoration of all things before Christ’s manifestation to the Twelve Tribes as their king sitting on David’s throne in Zion. The restoration affected by this power through John was a spiritual restoration affecting the hearts of *many* of the people, not of all; a restoration of the Abrahamic mind and disposition in his contemporaries. Beyond this nothing was restored. But through “Elijah the Prophet” the same spirit-power will “restore all things” and among these the tribes of Israel, when its mission will be complete.

### **The Elijah-Work is before the Great Day**

It is plain from Malachi 4:4-6 that Elijah has a mission to perform before the great and terrible day of the Lord, in restoring his people to some measure of faith in the Promises, and to a respect of the law of Moses. This mission is usually related to the Israelites scattered among the nations, at the time they are invited, after Armageddon, to return to their land; but this could hardly be called a work *before* the great and terrible day of the Lord. Nor at that time would it be appropriate to say “lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” seeing that He would already be established as King in Zion. Surely it must apply primarily to Jews in the land prior to their deliverance by the Armageddon event.

If we wish further proof that this applies to the Jews in the land rather than to the “ten tribes” scattered abroad, we may interpret Malachi 3:1-4 in the light of Zechariah 13:8-9, and its context. Zechariah chapters 12-13 clearly deal with Jerusalem and the land before any gathering in of those scattered abroad. Christ reveals himself in Jerusalem, and at that time “in all the land two parts shall be cut off, and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them.” Malachi 3:1-4 is parallel with this: The messenger of the Covenant comes to his temple; (the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion, Rev. 14:1)—the prophet continues: “but who may abide the day of his coming... and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness.” Accepting these as parallel accounts of the same events, it follows that the “messenger who shall prepare the way before me,” referred to in the first verse of chapter 3 is at work before Christ is revealed in Jerusalem.

The nation in the land is not wholly turned



**2007: Thousands of young Israelis praying for the redemption**

to the Lord by the “messenger who prepares the way” because there is the subsequent refining of verse 3; and the threatened “smiting of the land with a curse” does, in measure, take place in the northern invasion. But the Elijah mission before the great and dreadful day will accomplish its purpose. It will provide knowledge, as did John the Baptist before the first appearing. Some will respond, and some will not. Thus there will be a mixed state of affairs, similar to that when the original Assyrian came down on the land. Isaiah, chapters 30 and 31, speaks of the faithless who would flee to Egypt; yet there was also the Hezekiah party that feared the Lord. Some of the major items in these two chapters were not fulfilled at that time, and it is clear that these chapters also portray the situation when the latter-day Assyrian comes down.

Upon this state of partial enlightenment and partial faith existing in the nation there will operate the calamities of war, captivity, and flight; the miraculous overthrow of the vast armies assembled in the land; and the miraculous provision of water and food in the desert to the outcasts driven into the south country (Isaiah 41:17-20; 42:9-16; 43:18-21). In this way the people in the land are humbled and prepared to meet their Messiah.

It is indeed a general principle that God builds up faith gradually by the combination of instruction and judgments. When Israel came out of Egypt Moses and Aaron first testified to the elders of Israel, then there was the experience of harder bondage together with increasing miracle before the great event of their deliverance in the slaying of the first-born. We should expect a similar process in the future.

It would appear then that there ought to be a re-education of Israel and a partial revival of Jewish faith prior to Armageddon, and this requirement is scripturally provided for in the first part of the latter-day mission of Elijah. Elijah will be helped by the resurrected prophets (who doubtless at this time appear as ordinary men). It should be noted that the matters of the resurrection, Malachi 3:16-18, 4:2-3, precede the reference to the Elijah mission. Hence I conclude that the saints will be on the scene prior to Armageddon, and this agrees with the sequence of events presented in the last two parts of the 6th vial.

It seems to me that while the elements of faith in the Old Testament and the Messiah are being built up among Israel by the resurrected prophets, and while the necessary features of the Gathering to Armageddon are being developed by the One Body, the prosperity and security of the land as required by Ezekiel chapter 38 may co-exist.

John Thomas makes a brief reference to the necessity of Israel after the flesh being “made willing” before the Armageddon conflict. When he wrote the land was still desolate, and it would be difficult for him to visualise the matter as clearly as we are now able to do.

**The Day of the Controversy of Zion**

There is another line of thought that seems to require the saints on the scene prior to Armageddon. As I remarked earlier, Armageddon and the Gathering to Armageddon figure

prominently in the Old Testament prophecies. Here are some of the words of the prophets concerning this time:

“My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy” (Zephaniah 3:8).  
 “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face” (Ezekiel 38:18).  
 “Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger” (Habakkuk 3:12).  
 “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity” (Isa. 30:27).

No wonder Ezekiel records of that day, after the Gogian host is overthrown, “Behold it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken.”

Now what is the cause of such a gigantic assembling of all nations, and of such terrible “indignation,” “fierce anger,” “jealousy,” and “fury,” which God displays at this time? There must be adequate cause to create so marvellous an effect. The prophets give the answer that it is the day of the *controversy for ZION*. It is a conflict between the world and Zion, in which the continuance of Zion is at stake. Thus Isaiah declares, chapter 34, that the fury poured out upon the assembled nations is “the day of the Lord’s vengeance and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion.” Psalm 83 declares that “Thine enemies have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance.” And Micah

says, “Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, let her be defiled and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand his counsel: for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh O daughter of Zion...” And the words of Joel are: “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel.” Such is the character of the Gathering to Armageddon and of Armageddon itself.

Now if God intends to bring the age-long “controversy of Zion” to a head in order to vindicate His name, then at that time “Zion” and “Israel” must be something known and distinct. The passages quoted show that this is so, for their intention is to “defile Zion” etc. Such a situation as these passages describe will require a much more Israelitish character in the land than we now see. Hence it is essential that the nation’s faith in the Promises to the fathers, in Messiah, and the things of the law should be built up to some degree beforehand, and something of a true Israelitish flavour imparted to the nation. This development of a tangible Israelitish policy in the land will stir up anti-semitism among the nations and will provoke a “christian” crusade, thus gathering the nations against Zion.

We can now see another aspect to the Elijah-mission. Not only does it prepare the nation for the coming of their Messiah, but their turning in some measure to the true faith is the means of bringing the controversy of Zion to a head, and gathering the nations to battle, against Israel. Hence we see a further need for the Elijah mission, and for the saints to be amongst Israel prior to Armageddon. We can see that their work among the nation causing it to become more Israelitish is instrumental in “gathering the nations to Armageddon.” Thus “He (the Christ-body) gathered them into Armageddon.” The coming world issue is “Christianity against Zionism” and it is fitting that the Kings of Zion would engineer and develop the situation for the day of glory and recompense.

What I have said does not rule out other factors helping in the gathering. Always in conflicts between nations the issues are complex. In this case we know that two related factors are the ambition of “the King” (Roman) to rule the world from Mount Zion (Isa.14:13; Dan. 11:45); and the taking of a spoil (Ezek. 38).







# ZION, THE ROYAL CITY OF THE KINGDOM

By Daniel Billington BRANTFORD ON.

**S**peaking of the last days, Micah the prophet promises a brighter future for the children of Israel, saying, “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel... I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever” (Micah 2:12; 4:1,7). Of this same time he also says, “O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (verse 8).

From these brief references we learn that:

1. Although God cast off the children of Jacob (i.e. Israel), or “her that halted,” He will yet gather the remnant of them to make them a strong nation.
2. God will reign over the re-gathered nation in mount Zion for ever.
3. Although the daughter of Zion or Jerusalem is to experience a time of trouble (verses 10-11), the first or former (NKJV) kingdom of David, i.e. the kingdom of God, is yet to come to them or be restored.

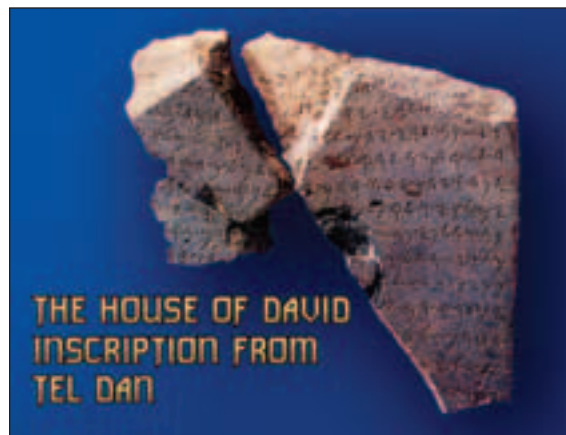
This message is common to the prophets. Zephaniah speaks of these times in his third chapter:

“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack... Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your

eyes, saith the LORD” (verses 14-16, 19-20).

From these passages it is evident that Zion, the capital city of the kingdom or “commonwealth of Israel” past or future (see Ephesians 2:12), speaks to us of that with which it is associated or has authority over. Therefore in our Bible reading, to gain a complete view, we must consider all *Zion’s* characteristics, in particular with regard to the future revival of its:

- Territory or dominion—Land of Israel
- King—Messiah, the Son of David
- Government—resurrected saints of God
- Subjects—restored 12 tribes of Israel, the daughters of Zion



## Zion is the City of the House of David and will be Restored

- Constitution and Laws—Law which shall proceed from Zion

### *Zion, the Royal City of David*

Historically, *Zion* was “the city of David” the place distinguished as the royal throne of the kingdom, and therefore distinct from *Moriah* designated as the place of the altar and temple (1 Kings 8:1; 2 Chronicles 3:1; Genesis 22:2). They are two mountains, and the sites of two cities, even though later surrounded by the same wall, and referred to as “Jerusalem.” The temple was in Jerusalem and the throne in Zion, the city of David’s house. Though often associated, the

prophets speak distinctly of each. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that God chose two families, the house of David and the Levites (chapter 33:15-26). Similarly, calling them “my cities”, He chose Zion and Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:14,17; c/p Isaiah 64:10).

### *Zion Chosen for the Throne*

Having chosen *mount Zion*, God determined that this would be the royal city and throne of His kingdom. From here David and his offspring would rule, “for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah...” and “he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel” (Psalm 78:68-70; 1 Chronicles 28:4-5). Therefore, the royal dynasty of the house of David would rule the kingdom of the LORD from Zion:

“Yahweh hath sworn unto David, in faithfulness, will he not turn from it,—**Of the fruit of thy body, will I seat on thy throne.** If thy sons keep my covenant, and my testimony which I will teach them, even their sons, unto futurity, shall sit on thy throne. For **Yahweh hath chosen Zion,**—He hath desired it as a dwelling for himself: This, is my place of rest unto futurity, Here, will I dwell, for I have desired it;... There, will I cause to bud a horn to David, I have prepared a lamp for **mine Anointed One**” (Psalm 132:11-14,17 *Rotherham*).

Ultimately the throne of David will be given to him whose right it is, the Anointed or Messiah:

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, **upon the throne of David**, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Long before the future judge of Israel was born in “Bethlehem of Judaea” the prophet Micah had prophesied of his coming and the angel Gabriel had confirmed it to Mary:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me **that is to**

**be ruler in Israel;** whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2; cited Matthew 2:5-6).

“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;** and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

### *Jerusalem Chosen for the Temple*

As we have seen Jerusalem was the city chosen by God for the temple, as He had said to David:

“Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel: But **I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there;** and have chosen David to be over my people Israel” (2 Chronicles 6:4-6).

Therefore, “Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in *mount Moriah*, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite” (2 Chronicles 3:1). Following completion and dedication of the temple, the LORD confirmed his choice when He “appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have **chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice... For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever:** and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually” (2 Chronicles 7:12,16). Therefore, two families and two cities were established. The house of David was established in Zion the royal city, and the Levites were established in Jerusalem the temple city.

Therefore, it was from Zion, the royal city of the kingdom, that David reigned “over all Israel and Judah” together (2 Samuel 5:5,7) as will the “son of David”. The Psalmist tells us that “mount Zion” is to be “beautiful in elevation” (NKJV), and will become “the joy of the whole earth” as a consequence of the righteous rule of Messiah, its “great king,” who will establish this city of the Elohim for ever (Psalm 48:2,8).

### *Change Required for the Royal Priesthood*

However, the writer to the Hebrews tells us that when Jesus, the King of Righteousness and “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek” returns, it will no longer be the family of Levi that will be preeminent in Jerusalem. This change to an everlasting priesthood, with an high priest of the royal tribe of Judah, will make of “necessity a change also of the law” (Hebrews 7). Therefore, when the Son of David “shall sit and rule upon his throne ...he shall be **a priest upon his throne.**” Therefore, “they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither

shall it be done any more. At that time they shall call **Jerusalem the throne of the LORD,**” for the LORD has said of His future temple that it will be “**the place of my throne,** and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile” (Zechariah 6:12,13; Jeremiah 3:16,17; Ezekiel 43:7).

To make way for Christ’s new administration the removal of the temporal heavens and earth or human governments and peoples will be required:

“...now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the *earth* only, but also *heaven*. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving **a kingdom which cannot be moved,** let us have grace, whereby



**The temple in Jerusalem**

we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:26-28).

This will be the work of Armageddon which will bring into place the kingdom of God or new heavens and new earth of the future age: Christ, his immortal king priests (the royal priesthood), and his privileged subjects the 12 tribes of Israel—symbolically called “mount Zion” and “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22; see also Revelation 21:9-10,12). Of Jerusalem it will then be said, “there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David” to be occupied by the twelve apostles who “shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Psalm 122:5; Matthew 19:28).

### *The Redemption of the Daughter of Zion*

Despite this glorious future, the prophets tell us that Zion would go into decline and experience great hardship on account of her iniquity. Micah says the *daughter of Zion*, the national subjects of Zion’s throne, would “be in pain...like a woman in travail” for she was to go to Babylon from whence she would eventually

be redeemed. During this time of trouble she “spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her” (Lamentations 1:17).

Many years later, on his way to Calvary, Jesus warned the “Daughters of Jerusalem” not to weep for him, but rather to weep for themselves, and for their children due to the desolation that was soon to come upon her (Luke 23:28; 21:21-24). Jerusalem, and consequently Zion, would “be trodden down of the gentiles, until the time of the gentiles be fulfilled.” Although the prophet had said, “rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee” (Zechariah 9:9), his people rejected him as their king. However, when he comes the second time “there shall be a fountain opened to the *house of David* and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness... And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zechariah 13:1,6). This will bring an end to the time of *Jacob’s trouble* when “upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.” This reversal will be a consequence of the intervention of Christ and the saints, for “*saviours* shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’s” (Obadiah 1:17, 21).

The regeneration of Zion was given as a sign of the coming kingdom to Yahweh’s servants:

“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion... For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof... When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory” (Psalm 102:13-14).

Therefore, we must expect a time when mercy will be shown to Zion and her people, “the daughters of Zion”—ultimately both Judah and Israel. The prophet Isaiah speaks clearly of this time:

“The *Redeemer* shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isaiah 59:20-21).

The apostle Paul quotes the prophet and informs us that this is to bring to an end the partial blindness of the 12 tribes of Israel, which was to last “until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” In response to their belief which we have seen will surely come, we are told they will be grafted back into their own olive tree with us. Therefore, “all Israel shall be saved” and he will “have mercy upon all” (Rom. 11:23-32).

It is at this time of Zion’s revival, that Yahweh will set His king upon his “holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:6) and gather many nations, her enemies, “as the sheaves” into the threshing-

floor of Armageddon. He will use the children of Israel to bring judgment upon these nations:

“Arise and thresh, O *daughter of Zion*: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth” (Micah 4:11-13; see also Zechariah 10:3-6).

#### **A Righteous Law to Go Forth from Zion**

At this time it will be as it was in the days of Solomon, following the conquests of his father David, when “he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree” (1 Kings 4:24,25). Therefore, “they shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isaiah 65:22).

In the future age these conditions will be brought about as a result of the righteous rule of Christ and the saints, for “behold, a *king* shall reign in righteousness, and *princes* shall rule in judgment... and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation” (Isaiah 32:1,17,18). Without righteousness there can be no true peace as we see in the kingdom of men today.

Therefore, to this end “the law shall go forth of *Zion*, and the word of the LORD from *Jerusalem*” (Micah 4:2). The law or *torah* will be amended as Zion’s constitution, subjecting the nations to the law of Christ. The word of Yahweh will instruct the nations in the gospel of the age (Revelation 14:6-7) that they might be able to attain unto the Life of the age. In search of these everlasting truths, the peoples will seek to come up to the house of Yahweh, to Zion and Jerusalem:

“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for **the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it” (Micah 4:1-4).

The results of the word of God going forth to all the earth are clearly seen. There has never been a time such as this on the earth, nor will there be until the righteous reign of Christ is

established from Zion. The faithful of the 12 tribes of Zion will be involved in this work. God says of them, “**ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God:** ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves” (Isaiah 61:6). In this sense then, the nations will benefit from the fruit of the Israelitish vine and fig tree, for after the great trumpet is blown “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isaiah 27:13,6). We are also told by the prophet Zechariah that the Jews will accompany the peoples who desire to go up to Jerusalem:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations

**“For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”**

*Micah 4:2*



shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even **shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you**” (Zechariah 8:20-23).

#### **Bible School in Jerusalem**

Such an occasion as this will be the feast of tabernacles, following the *ingathering* of “the precious fruit of the earth” (James 5:7-9). As in the past, Israel and the nations will be commanded to come to Jerusalem, the place which the LORD did choose (Deuteronomy 16:15), to dwell in booths, to read the word of God, and to instruct their children in eternal ways:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14:16-17).

“And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of

the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, **thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.** Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it” (Deuteronomy 31:10-13).

In the seventh year of release, appropriate to the seventh day of rest in the Kingdom age (Hebrews 4:4-11), there was this special celebration in which the law of God was read each day of the feast as in the days of Nehemiah (chapter 8:14,18, etc.)! The feast of tabernacles was in the seventh month, the month of *Ethanim* (1 Kings 8:2), meaning “the month of perennial streams” (Gesenius) or “permanent brooks” (Strong). The perennial streams were those that flowed continually, and were still flowing following the long hot dry Mediterranean summer. How appropriate it was then, when Jesus on the last great day of this feast “stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow *rivers of living water*” (John 7:2,14,37-38).

The prophet Ezekiel confirms the keeping of this feast of the seventh month in the future age, but under a new order of things under the supervision of David the Prince (Ezekiel 45:22-25). If we compare this future law with that of Moses (Numbers 29:12-38) we find significant changes. Of special note is the complete removal of the lamb from the *olah* or burnt offering offered during the days of the feast. Even the lamb offered as a continual *olah* is reduced by half to one! The explanation of this can only be that the Lord Jesus Christ is the lamb. The focus of the future celebration is on the “very image” not the “shadow of the good things” which have now come (Hebrews 10:1). Therefore, John shows us the Lamb who will reign with the symbolic 144,000 on mount Zion, the source of the life giving perennial streams of the future age:

“These are those who are coming out of the great tribulation, and they did wash their robes, and they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; because of this are they before the throne of God, and they do service to Him day and night in His sanctuary, and He who is sitting upon the throne shall *tabernacle* over them; they shall not hunger any more, nor may the sun fall upon them, nor any heat, because the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto *living fountains of waters*, and wipe away shall God every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:14-17).



# The Babylonians in the Land

By Ken Loveridge PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.



The departure of the Assyrians did not bring independence to the people of Judea. As the Medes and Persians pushed back at the Assyrians, taking Assur and the other cities within the empire, Nineveh the capital was finally destroyed in 612 BC. Retreating to the north, the armies defended Haran for another three years, until finally, the end of the empire came with the capture of the city and the death of the last king—Ashur-uballit—in 609 BC. Giving them aid were their former enemies from the south—the Egyptians.

The 23rd chapter of 2 Kings tells us that King Josiah was fatally wounded at Megiddo, as he tried to stop Pharaoh Necho from leading his army north to Carchemish. Necho was going to support the Assyrians who were fighting for survival, but he was also intent on keeping the Babylonians beyond the Euphrates.

On Josiah's death, the people of Jerusalem made Jehoahaz, his son, king in his place. Three months later, however, Necho replaced him with his own choice—another of Josiah's sons named Eliakim who he called Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz—or Shallum—was taken to Egypt where he died.

When Nebuchadnezzar entered the land for the first time, three years later, he was the Crown-prince rather than the king of Babylon, at the head of his powerful army.

*“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it”* (Daniel 1:1).

We are not told any details of the siege, so the king and the city probably surrendered in short order. It was at this time that Daniel was taken into captivity, first among the exiles to Babylon. Along with him went the vessels and other plunder from the Temple. The kingdom of Babylon was expanding into an empire, and it was necessary to put the minor kingdoms of the land in their place. This was the beginning of Babylonian rule, and for the next fifteen years, Judah went through a period of unprecedented turmoil as the Egyptians and Babylonians vied

for control.

While occupied with Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar received word of the death of his father, King Nabopolassar. Leaving his army to bring the captives and the booty back to Babylon, he set off across the desert with a few trusted followers to claim the throne. Within a month he was King of Babylon, and he was able

to continue his program to conquer and rule over Hatti-land—the countries that lay between Egypt and the Euphrates.

The kings in Jerusalem during this period were the three sons—and one grandson—of Josiah. They were weak, wicked men without exception, each one the pawn of Egypt or Babylon, with no loyalty to either one. Jehoiakim was left in place for 11 years, to be followed by Jehoiachin

who lasted only three months, and then Zedekiah who also ruled for 11 years.

Nebuchadnezzar did not rule Judah personally, but through his client kings, and he often found it necessary to return with his armies to demand obedience once more. At the end of this fifteen year period of instability, the Babylonians made the decision to remove this troublesome people. In 586 BC, after a lengthy siege, Jerusalem was taken, and the people taken into exile. The reigning descendant of David—Zedekiah—was removed from the throne, and he was blinded at Nebuchadnezzar's command after witnessing the slaying of his sons. Eight years later, in Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year, the Babylonians returned to burn “...the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem.” It was almost another forty years before Jews were able to return from exile to rebuild the city and Temple.

During this initial fifteen year period, thousands of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were taken into exile by the Babylonians. Jeremiah

recounts the numbers in his 52nd chapter. He speaks of three lots of captives being taken after the initial carrying away of Daniel and the others of the ‘king's seed’. With the exception of Jeremiah's accounts of the short period of rule of Gedaliah in Mizpah, his account of his being taken to Egypt by those who fled the land, and his Book of Lamentations bemoaning the destruction of Jerusalem, the period of time until the Return to Zion is often labelled the ‘dark



Statue of Pharaoh Necho



The above chronicle from the time of Nebuchadnezzar gives an account of the surrender of Jerusalem in Jehoiachin's reign

ages' by historians. Very little is known of what transpired under Babylonian rule. As well as the royal family, many of the priestly families, the aristocracy of Israel, who controlled the economy of the kingdom had been taken away. The leadership of the nation had been taken from the House of David and given to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam—the Babylonian appointee—but

“Ishmael the son of Nethaniah... of the seed royal...” killed him before fleeing to Ammon.

Jehoiachin was the first of Judah’s kings to be taken into exile. In God’s purpose, it was he who preserved the line of David. While in Babylon, several sons were born to him. Matthew’s genealogy in chapter one tells us that one of his sons was Shealtiel, the father of Zerubbabel, who returned with Ezra at the end of the captivity. We are told of he and his brethren helping Jeshua and the priests to construct the altar in Jerusalem on their return.

Jerusalem was not the only city destroyed by the Babylonians as they exerted control over the land. Lachish was important enough as a military centre that the Assyrians under Sennacherib, as well as Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonians found it necessary to eliminate it as a threat. Most of the other strong centres of government were also reduced and laid waste. As these anchors of population lost their influence, many of the smaller outlying towns also disappeared as the people dealt with becoming a minority in the midst of a growing Arab and Idumean population.

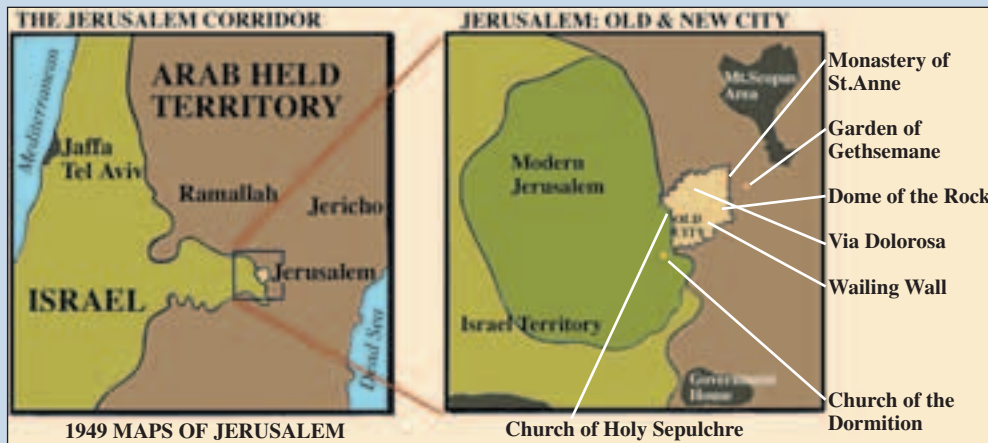
The exiles in Babylon no doubt had a number of problems to deal with in a foreign land, and Jeremiah wrote several letters advising them of the course they should follow. Where they had been the ruling class in their own land, they now had no land, no nation and no Temple. They were exposed daily to the influences of the Babylonian, and eventually the Persian culture. When Cyrus issued his proclamation for the return of the people to the land, only a very small percentage were prepared to go back to Jerusalem. Not all of the people, of course, had been taken to Babylon. The poorer people, as well as those living away from the major centres, were able to remain in place if they so chose. With the vacuum created by the exile, some of these people moved away from the fringes toward the heart of the kingdom. Land that had been controlled by the elite now lay unoccupied, and the areas to the north and south of Jerusalem were now the centres of population. Alternate places of worship were developed both in Babylon and in the land. Synagogues came into being because the Temple was no longer accessible, but places like Mizpah, Gibeon, Bethel, and Shechem became alternatives for those in the land which Ezra and Nehemiah and those who followed them had to deal with. Jerusalem may have become a place of pilgrimage for those left in the land, which may explain the destruction of the city eight years after it fell to the Babylonian army.

The question of which group was the faithful remnant was a point of contention between the exiles and those who stayed in the land. Jeremiah addressed the problem in chapter 24, where the word of the Lord came to him, explaining that those who were carried away captive with Jehoiachin/Jeconiah were the good figs who would return, while those who remained, with those who fled to Egypt, would be “consumed from off the land.”

The rise of Cyrus the Mede and the capture of Babylon led to a reversal of the process of

# Why Israel Opposes the Internationalization of Jerusalem

Extract from a 1949 publication by the Israel Office of Information



JERUSALEM is a Holy City for half the human race—Jews, Christians and Moslems. But for the Jews *alone*, Jerusalem is not only a Holy City, but a national centre—the core of their history for the last three thousand years.

It was the capital of their First and Second Commonwealths, the object of their prayers during the centuries of their dispersion. They returned to it uninterruptedly through the ages until by the middle of the nineteenth century they formed the majority of its population and began to build a new Jerusalem outside the confining walls of the Old City.

As this map demonstrates, the sacred shrines of Jerusalem are almost without exception in the walled Old City, now occupied by the Jordan Arab Legion. The only Holy Place to which worshippers now have no access is the Wailing Wall, most sacred of Jewish shrines.

The New City of Jerusalem, founded ninety years ago by Jews and developed by them ever since, is in every sense a Jewish city. Almost all its 100,000 residents are Jews. No less than Tel-Aviv or Haifa, it is an organic part of the community of Israel. The Jews of Jerusalem are firmly resolved to remain citizens of Israel.

Almost immediately after the United Nations voted to internationalize the city, the Jews of Jerusalem were attacked by Arab forces. This attack developed into a full-fledged siege by the Arab Legion and the Egyptian

army immediately after May 15, 1948, the day the State of Israel was proclaimed. Jerusalem was cut off from its food and water supply, shelled night and day.

The United Nations, although it had voted for the internationalization of Jerusalem and had pledged its honour to safeguard the city from aggression, took no effective action to restore peace to the City of peace. Jerusalem was allowed to share the fate of all Israel. Unaided by the international community, it was saved from destruction by the heroism of its Jewish defenders and the help of their fellow Jews in Israel who hacked a road through the mountains to bring food and reinforcements.

The Jews of Jerusalem cannot forget that experience. They cannot forget the United Nations’ powerlessness to aid them. Surrounded on three sides by Arabs and linked to the rest of Israel only by a narrow corridor, they can never accept internationalization as a guarantee of peace and security.

Peace and security almost never spring from international regimes.

The internationalization of Jerusalem is not only unrealistic, impractical and unjust; it is unnecessary even from the purely religious standpoint.

International supervision of the Holy Places and of the right of access to them can be assured without the imposition of an international regime upon the whole of the Jerusalem area.

exile. Those who returned did so in faith against all odds. The majority of those settled with their families in Babylon chose not to return, and many of those who were still in the land were probably not eager to resume their old station, subject to the elite in Jerusalem. The land had not been left empty during the years of exile, although we sometimes take that impression from scripture. All of the people were changed by the experience of exile.

Babylon today continues to be a symbol of irreligious worldly influences.

Other nations have been destroyed by a similar experience but all was in God’s purpose. The Jews were able to deal with the loss of their Temple, their land, and the rule of the house of David to continue as God’s witnesses in His land. They did not continue faithful, however, and they were to suffer yet another exile for a much longer period. Our generation has seen their return which speaks to us of the near return of Jesus the Messiah and King who is to take the throne of David. “...and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”



# How Readeest Thou?

*“As also in all his (Paul’s) epistles...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).*

## (3) Before Abraham I Was...

By Ron Kidd LONDON, ON.

**A** great deal of confusion has been created over this comment by the Lord Jesus Christ. The full quotation is as follows: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:56-58).

Two conclusions have been drawn from Jesus’ remark: first, that Jesus was confirming his own pre-existence, that he actually was alive before Abraham existed; secondly, that Jesus was alluding to his position as the second person of the Trinity by the use of the phrase “I am,” which, it is claimed, is a reference to God’s name in Exodus 3:14.

Once again we simply want to examine the facts contained in the immediate context and the various links elsewhere in scripture and form a reasoned conclusion.

### *Before Abraham*

The answer to Jesus’ comment is to be found in his statement in verse 56—“Abraham rejoiced to see my day...” but in order to appreciate why Jesus made this comment we need to examine the discussion leading up to his remarks.

The setting for Jesus’ words is in the temple at Jerusalem and once again he finds himself in conflict with the leaders of the nation. However when we turn to verse 31, Jesus moves the discussion away from the leaders of Israel to a group who had believed on him, but had evidently not committed themselves to him. To this group he says, “If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32).

It is this last comment that sparked off the subsequent debate, which in essence is not about Jesus’ pre-existence before Abraham, but rather his pre-eminence over Abraham. What follows is a discussion about the Jews’ relationship to Abraham. Abraham is the focal point, and a cursory examination of the scriptures will reveal that Abraham was viewed as an important figure in Israel’s national history. Alfred Edersheim, in

his Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah comments upon the Jewish conviction that they were a privileged people because of Abraham:

“...no principle was more fully established in the popular conviction, than that all Israel had part in the world to come, and this, specifically, because of their connection with Abraham.”

It was this superior attitude that John the Baptist encountered when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him to be baptized, he said, “think not within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Matthew 3:9).

**It was altogether inconceivable that someone could claim to be, or even dare to suggest that they were greater than Abraham.**

And so to return to the text in John 8 the Jews claimed to be the seed of Abraham (verse 33); they claimed to be Abraham’s children (verse 39); they claimed to be children of God (verse 41). Whilst Jesus did not deny that they were Abraham’s seed (verse 37), he did question whether or not they were his children (verse 39). Equally questionable was their claim to be God’s children, because in both cases sonship depended upon embracing the same values of the Father, which they did not do: “If you were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (verse 39), and again, “If God were your Father, ye would love me” (verse 42).

The discussion intensifies in verse 47, where Jesus indicts the Jews for not listening to God’s words. But where could God’s word be found? From a source that the Jews refused to accept, from the mouth of Jesus—“If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (verse 51).

This really irritated the Jews, which led to the question, “art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?” (verse 53). It was altogether inconceivable that someone could claim to be, or even dare to suggest that they were greater than Abraham.

It is at this point that Jesus addresses the argument head on—“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad” (John 8:56).

How could Abraham see the day of Christ when Jesus was not yet born? The answer is that Abraham was familiar with his Bible and he knew all about the gospel message. The apostle Paul reminds us that God “preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8), and this blessing would be worked out in Abraham’s seed, his descendent, even the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 16).

At the time this promise was made Abraham was seventy five years old and childless, so how did he react to this promise? The scriptures tell us that Abraham laughed with joy (Genesis 17:17). Moreover because Abraham was a Bible student, the promise of a seed would remind him of a Bible echo; God had mentioned a promised seed before in the garden of Eden, described as the seed of the woman:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

This verse is speaking about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, how he would destroy sin (bruise the serpent in the head) through his death and resurrection (a temporary wound in the heel).

Abraham not only was familiar with these words, but he also understood what they meant. Later in Abraham’s life when his son Isaac was grown up, God subjected him to a severe trial of faith by asking him to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac was the only link with the promised seed, for God had said, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Genesis 21:12). In the course of the journey Isaac asked his father, “where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” to which Abraham replied, “God shall provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:7, 8). That little word

“provide” actually means “to see”, and if you read the context carefully the idea of seeing is emphasized. Abraham was journeying towards mount Moriah, which means in Hebrew “seen of the LORD;” in verse 4 they both lifted up their eyes and “saw the place afar off.” After God withheld Abraham from actually slaying his son, Abraham called the place Jehovah Jireh, saying, “in the mount of the LORD it shall be seen” (verse 14).

Abraham did see Christ’s day, he witnessed the sacrifice of Jesus in the symbolic circumstances of that event. But the reality of that day began to take place two thousand years later when the lamb stood on the banks of the river Jordan and John the Baptist declared of Jesus, “Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Jesus was “before” Abraham both in pre-eminence and in purpose. Jesus existed in the purpose of God from the beginning of the world, just as he can be described as “...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). All these terms are summed up by the apostle Peter when he says that Jesus, “was foreordained (known beforehand) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20).

God’s foreknowledge allows Him to speak about events and people as though they already exist or have happened; God speaks of things which have not occurred as though they are an established fact (Romans 4:17). But the realization of a given event may occur thousands of years further on in history.

### I AM

God declared Himself to Moses as “I am that I am” at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. It is therefore assumed that when Jesus used the term “I am” in reference to Abraham he was


identifying himself as the God of the Old Testament.

There are at least two reasons why this cannot be. The term “I am” in Exodus 3 is a translation of the Hebrew word “ehyeh,” this according to Hebrew scholars should have been rendered “I will be” because of its future tense. The same word is so translated in verse 12 of the same chapter, “Certainly **I will be** (ehyeh) with thee,” and again in chapter 4:12 and 2 Samuel 7:14. Thus in actual fact God revealed Himself as “I will be who I will be.”

Clearly then, the Hebrew word has a *future* application.

However for those who are skeptical about this Old Testament translation, are they justified in suggesting that Jesus is really identifying himself with God’s name?

Grammatically the term “I am” in John 8:58, is the present tense of the verb “to be” and nothing more. Would the contemporaries of Jesus have understood the term in this sense when he also said “Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where **I am**, thither ye cannot come” (John 7:34). We think not, yet Jesus is using the very same Greek construction in this verse. Or when Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, asked the angel about the birth of his son, saying, “Whereby shall I know this? for **I am** an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.” Was Zacharias claiming to be the God of the Old Testament also?

Examples could be multiplied to demonstrate the fallacy of this argument. What we need to do is resist the temptation of assuming the meaning of a verse without investigation. Let us never take for granted the word of God, rather let us heed the instructions of the apostle Paul when he said, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth**” (2 Timothy 2:15). 

## The Remedy to boring Sermons

A sermon, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is a “discourse on a religious or moral subject,” hence to *sermonize* is to “deliver a moral lecture.” Such talks, speeches, and exhortations are a well-known cure for insomnia and are often seen to be so. This is because they fail to communicate the power of the message to the hearers.

The power of the message, that is to say, of the word of God, and not that of some theory that has been concocted by the intellectual genius of the speaker or sermonizer. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” wrote Paul in Romans chapter one.

The gospel that Paul taught involved *vision*, and the vision was of something very specific and defined as “the hope of Israel!” (Acts 28:20).



It was a vision shared by all the faithful who are referred to in Hebrews chapter 11. The vision was that of a future city “whose builder and maker is God.”

The prophet was told: “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may **run** that readeth it.” To “make it plain” is to make it clear; it is to be seen AS A REALITY. A prophecy that is seen as a reality will motivate, it will inspire action — such that the reader or hearer will **RUN**. And it is very difficult to nod off to sleep while running!

Human nature does not respond to sermonizing. Being told to be good and righteous may be very correct advice, but unless the message is powered by the true gospel and conveys a convincing vision so as to act as a wake-up call it cannot achieve anything, it will induce spiritual sleep. The message must be powered by the word of God — by the Bible.

## Editorial & Subscriptions

**Publishing Editor:** Paul Billington  
Phone: (519) 449 3446  
Phone/Fax: (519) 449-3660

### Editorial Address:

The Bible Magazine  
P.O. Box 514  
BURFORD ON,  
Canada.  
NOE 1A0

### e-mail:

Editor@biblemagazine.com

### Subscriptions

#### United States & Canada

As Editorial address above  
subscriptions@biblemagazine.com

#### United Kingdom

Mrs. A. Barnes  
1 Woodrow Lane  
Catshill, Bromsgrove, Worcs.  
B61 OPS

Phone/Fax: 01527-832639

uk.subs@biblemagazine.com

#### For Books & Videos (U.K.)

Mrs. Judith White.

9 Coppice Way

Stone Rd.,

Stafford ST16 1RN

Phone: 01785-213090

uk.order@biblemagazine.com

#### Australia

Aleck Crawford

6 Ingomar Court,

Hallett Cove,

South Australia 5158.

au@biblemagazine.com

Phone: 08-8381-3616

For Queensland contact Neville Bullock  
3, Alana St, Murrumba Downs, Qld 4503

Christadelphian Scripture Study Service  
Local Representatives.

#### New Zealand

Mrs. Beulah Edwards

39, Hendon Street

St. Albans

Christchurch 8013

New Zealand

nz@biblemagazine.com

#### South Africa

Mr. E. Duckworth

Box 1606

Pinetown,

Natal 3600

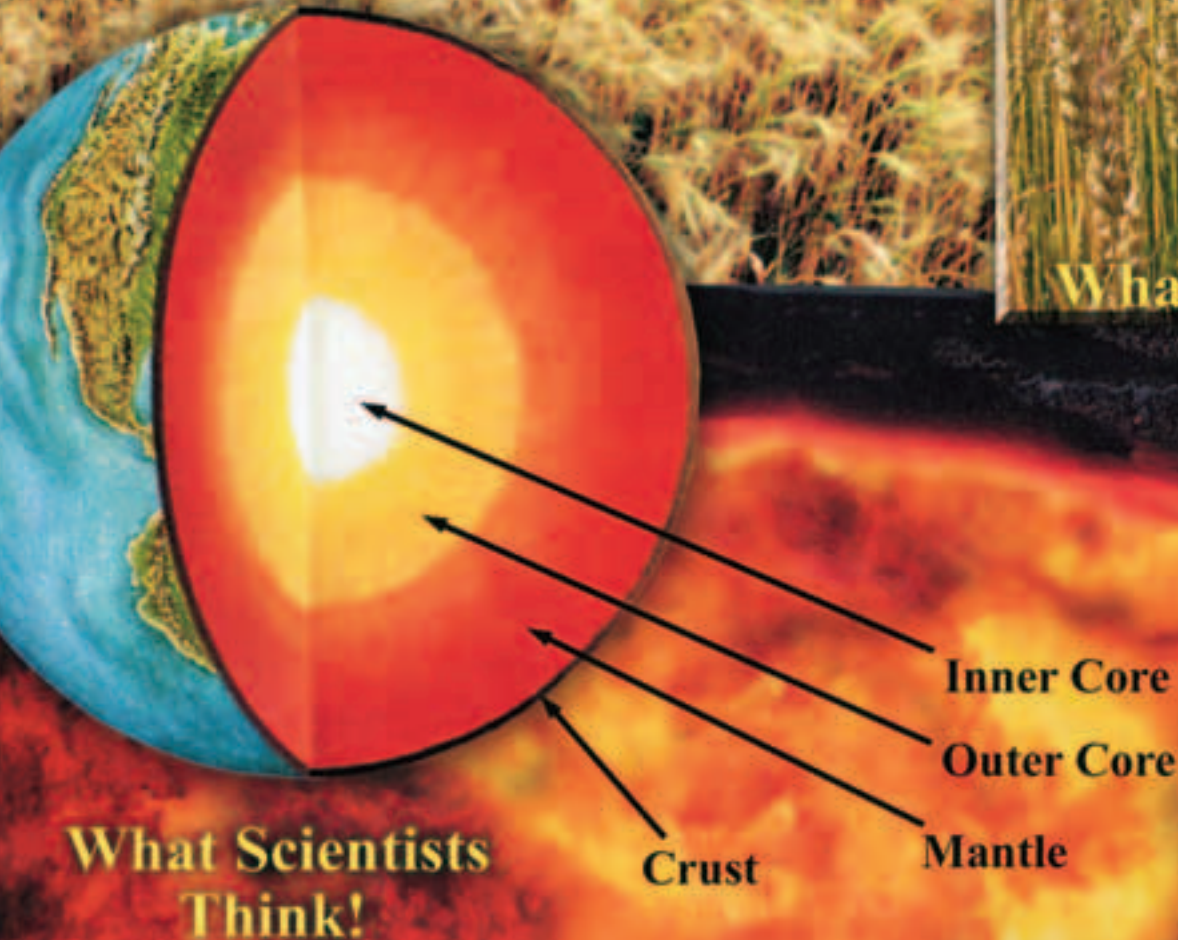
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## LOCAL INFORMATION

# WHAT ON EARTH IS INSIDE IT?

**“As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:  
and under it is turned up as it were fire”  
*Job 28:5.***



No one has travelled to the earth's interior so far, to enable them to tell us just what is inside it; so books of knowledge use cautious phrases like "scientists believe that..." or "many scientists think that..." But Job (quoted above) was quite clear when he told us about the earth over 3,500 years ago. There are of course many modern theories. One is concerned with interior "convection" but we are told: "other forces must also be at work. At present no one is sure exactly what these forces are." The Bible teaches us to look at what is happening on the earth, for Jeremiah 31:37 declares: "Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD." Now there may be fire inside the earth, but there is a hot topic upon earth as well! ISRAEL! And that's food for thought!