

Bible Magazine Summer 2021

Once again it has been a busy three months since our last update. Israel has a new government, another war has been waged against Hamas and anti-Semitism has surged around the world. As Britain strikes more deals with countries afar, her relations with the EU have continued to deteriorate. Iran now has a new President elect, as the US President Biden begins to shape his policies. Much for Zion's watchmen to ponder during the continued unrolling of the Covid pandemic and its world-wide repercussions.

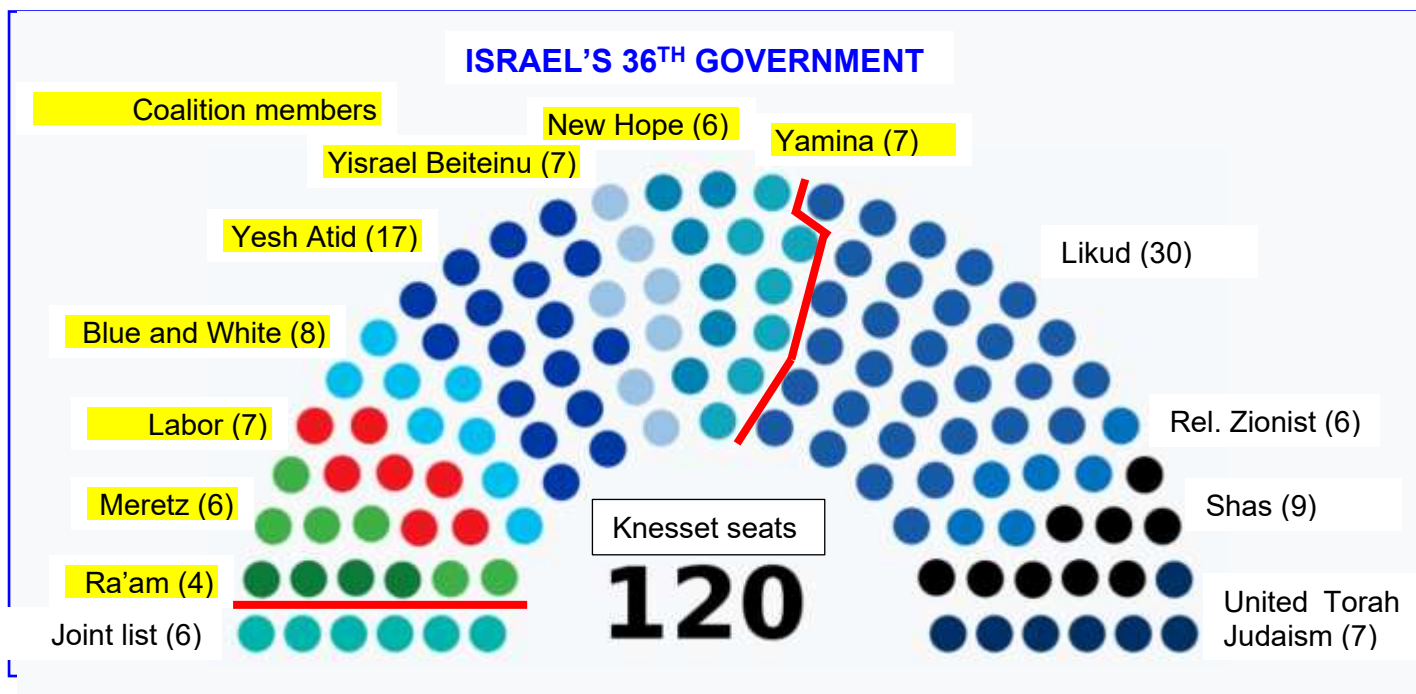
We will begin this review of world events in the light of the return of our Master, by looking at the focus of God's Word – the nation of Israel.

Israel's 36th Government

On June 13th, the 36th government of modern Israel was sworn in. No longer was Benjamin Netanyahu Prime Minister, ending a continuous run of leading Israel since 2009, (with an earlier stint from 1996-1999). It brought to an end 4 elections in the past two years, with the prospects of a 5th election being necessary as forming a coalition government seemed an insoluble problem.

With half-an-hour left, the momentum to avoid a further election, drove together the most diverse government that modern Israel has ever had! Normally the centre parties join up with parties either on the left or the right to achieve the necessary 61 seats or more to give a majority in the 120-seat Knesset.

The new government embraces both left- and right-wing politicians and for the first time, an Arab party.



I am indebted to an Israeli settler's perspective on the elections from a talk by Sondra Oster Baras, Director of the Israeli office of the Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, given on 14-Jun-21 entitled: *Are you totally confused by the politics in Israel?* Many of her points are woven into what follows.

The coalition consists of a record 8 parties: Yesh Atid [17 seats], Blue and White [8], Yamina [7], Labor [7], Yisrael Beiteinu [7], New Hope [6], Meretz [6], United Arab List (Ra'am) [4]. A total of 62 seats. However one of the Yamina party seats has not joined the coalition, reducing them to just 61 seats, with the remaining 59 seats in Opposition. It is a right-centre-left wing coalition compared with the previous centrist-right wing government. There are no deeply religious parties included. There is reasonable balance - the right wing has 20 seats, the centre 25 and the left wing 13 and the Arab Party 4 seats. Most of the important ministry posts are in the hands of the right-wing parties.

What unites them is their opposition to Mr Netanyahu as Prime Minister. It does seem that after many years in power, he had succeeded in making many enemies. Perhaps we see parallels between some of the kings of Israel and Judah, who after being in power for many years, were lifted up in pride, and sought to reinforce their position by unpopular moves. Many former colleagues - Bennett who has formed this new government, Lieberman and Saar who are in the new cabinet - were close to Bibi and served under him, but strong disagreements drove them into total opposition to him, vowing they would not serve under him, in spite of their shared ideology. The right-

wing parties in the Knesset would together give a coalition of some 65 seats. In addition, there were quite a few right wingers in the centrist Parties. But they would not come together under Netanyahu, and he was unwilling to stand down to enable such a coalition.

Bibi Netanyahu brought so much progress economically and politically to Israel. The Gulf nations began to see that Israel was rapidly becoming a nation that they would greatly benefit from by becoming friends and sharing in Israel's advanced technology. Yet sadly he made many enemies within his own country. All things are in God's hands, and it would appear that, like Trump, that phase of their work is done, and it needs other hands to move the work forwards.

Like the previous government, it has two Prime Ministers. Naftali Bennett (Yamina) is scheduled to be in this office until 27 August 2023, when Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) takes over until November 2025. Not that this fragile, disparate, coalition is expected to remain that long! "Bibi" Netanyahu is determined to bring it down!

The new cabinet



Let's look at some of the members of Israel's largest and most "religious" new cabinet.

The new 28-member cabinet features record diversity. It includes nine women (the most in Israel's history) and three observant Jewish men. It has an Arab Muslim member and a Druze Arab member, while another Arab Muslim will be a deputy minister. Five are immigrants – born in Ethiopia, Morocco, and the former Soviet Union.

The governing coalition includes three right-wing parties, two centrist parties, two left-wing parties, and one Arab Muslim party. For only the second time, there will be an Arab minister, as Issawi Frej from Meretz will serve as minister for regional cooperation. Mansour Abbas, the leader of UAL, is expected to become a deputy minister.

There is also a record high of nine women who will serve as ministers, including Labour Party leader Merav Michaeli as Transportation Minister, Yifat Shasha-Biton from New Hope as the Minister of Education, and Ayelet Shaked, from Yamina, who will serve as Interior Minister.

The government will be based on a parity between Bennett's camp and Lapid's camp. There will be 12 ministers in the security cabinet: six from each camp. *Aust/Israel Jewish Affairs Council 18-Jun-21*

PM Naftali Bennett (Yemina). The new PM is similar in outlook to Mr Netanyahu, though he places himself further to the right. At one time he was Director of the Yesha Council that coordinates all the councils of Judea and Samaria. He is the first religious Prime Minister that Israel has had. After the government was sworn in, he

praised God for bringing them to this amazing moment in time.

Naftali Bennett was born in Haifa to American parents, and throughout his childhood, he moved back and forth between Israel and the United States. He served as a company commander in the elite Sayeret Matkal and Maglan commando units and studied law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He then co-founded Cyota, a hi-tech anti-fraud software company, and served as its CEO while living in New York. This company sold for \$145 million to RSA Security in 2005. He moved back to Israel and began his career in politics, serving as chief of staff under Benjamin Netanyahu in 2006 when the latter was sitting in opposition.

In 2012, Bennett was elected chairman of Habayit Hayehudi (“Jewish Home”) – National Religious Party, and in 2013, he led his party to win 12 seats in the Knesset. He was appointed Minister of the Economy, Minister of Religious Services, and Minister of Diaspora Affairs. He held the first two appointments until 2015, while he continued to serve as the Minister of Diaspora Affairs until 2019 alongside his role as the Minister of Education. As Minister of Education, he reduced the number of students in classrooms and added assistants to kindergartens. He also led the national plan for strengthening mathematics and science studies in Israel.

In late 2019, Netanyahu appointed Bennett (now of the Yamina [“Rightwards”] party) Defence Minister – in part to prevent him from joining rival Benny Gantz’s alternative coalition. However, in May 2020, after Netanyahu and Gantz agreed to work together to form the unity government, with Gantz taking the defence portfolio, Bennett refused to join and called for Netanyahu to step down.

Bennett has hawkish views on relations with the Palestinians, but while he has ruled out agreeing to a two-state solution with the Palestinians in the past, in recent years he has somewhat softened his stand on this issue.

He has now joined Lapid and other right-wing, centrist and left-wing parties in a coalition with a narrow one-seat majority. Under the agreement, Bennett will be the Prime Minister for the next two years. *ibid*

PM Yair Lapid, (Yesh Atid) is the Alternative Prime Minister. He and Bennett have a good rapport.

Yair Lapid, the chairman of the Yesh Atid (“there is a future”) party, is the alternate Prime Minister who will take over as PM from Bennett in August 2023 under the coalition agreements creating the new government. Until then, Lapid will serve as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and an “Alternate Prime Minister” will have right to veto any government decision.

His political career dates back to 2012 when he founded the Yesh Atid party, with a secularist and centrist “clean government” platform. It quickly went on to be the second biggest party in Israel’s Knesset in its first election in 2013, winning 19 seats. From 2013 to 2014, Yesh Atid joined a coalition government led by the Likud, with Lapid serving as Finance Minister under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu fired Lapid for alleged disloyalty in December 2014.

In the elections held in April 2019, Sept. 2019 and March 2020, Yesh Atid ran as part of a coalition of parties calling itself “Blue and White”, dedicated to replacing Netanyahu, who was by then under indictment, with Lapid agreeing to be second-in-command to former IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, with an agreement that the two would rotate the prime ministership should they win government. Blue and White won more than 33 seats in each of those elections, and effectively held the Likud to a draw in all of them. In May 2020, Gantz reached a deal to create a “national emergency” government with Netanyahu to deal with the COVID crisis, but Lapid rejected this deal and split Blue and White, taking 17 of the Blue and White’s 33 Knesset members into opposition and becoming Opposition Leader.

In the March 2021 election, Yesh Atid won 17 seats, again making it the second-largest party in the Knesset. Lapid was the key player in negotiating the coalition arrangements that brought about the current government. He was born in Israel in 1963 and is married with three children. He comes from a family history within journalism and politics.

Before beginning his political career, Yair Lapid was a one of Israel’s best-known television presenters and journalists, and the author of several books in various genres.

In 2013, TIME Magazine ranked him as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. *ibid*

Benjamin, or Benny, Gantz, (Blue and White) is the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister.

He was born in Israel in 1959 and had a 38-year career serving in the IDF. He was the commander of numerous units: Shaldag Unit, Paratroopers Brigade, Lebanon Liaison Unit, Judea and Samaria Division, GOC Northern Command, and Ground Forces. He also served as a military attaché to the United States and as the 20th IDF

Chief of the General Staff from 2011–2015. This period included command of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), Operation Brother's Keeper (June 2014), and Operation Protective Edge (July 2014).

After leaving the IDF, Gantz took part in social and educational initiatives, serving as the chairman of two organisations and helping found the Pnima (Inward) movement, which seeks to address the rifts and polarisation in Israeli society.

Gantz entered politics in December 2018 when he founded the Israel Resilience Party (Hosen L'Yisrael), which later joined forces with additional parties to form the Blue and White (Kahol Lavan) parliamentary group. He led Blue and White throughout the elections for the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Knessets, leading the party to an effective draw with Likud in each of those elections.

In May 2020, he agreed to form a "national emergency government" with Netanyahu to deal with the COVID crisis. This split Blue and White, leaving Gantz leading only 16 of the party's original 33 members of Knesset. The Government collapsed because of a failure to pass a state budget after bitter disputes between Gantz and Netanyahu.

In the March 2021 election which resulted, Blue and White gained 8 seats. Gantz remains Defence Minister in the new government, a post he has held since May 2020.

Essawi Frej (Meretz) is the Minister for Regional Cooperation.

He is a Muslim Arab-Israeli born in 1963 in Kfar Qasim.

Frej studied accounting and economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He later worked as an accountant and was an activist for Peace Now and other pro-peace NGOs.

He first ran for the Knesset in 2003 with Meretz, but did not obtain a seat until 2013. *ibid*

The first Arab Party in government

Mansour Abbas (Ra'am) is Deputy Minister of Arab Affairs:

Dr. Mansour Abbas is the head of the Islamic Ra'am party, or United Arab List, a party established in 1996.

Abbas has led it since early 2019 when he was first elected to the Knesset.

Abbas was born in the northern Israeli town of Maghar in 1974, and attended the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to study dentistry.

After working as a dentist for a number of years, Abbas became Secretary-General of the United Arab List in 2007, and in 2010 he was elected Deputy Chairman of the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement.

Abbas will now become Deputy Minister of Arab Affairs in the office of the Prime Minister. **He played a vital role in facilitating the establishment of the current government by breaking with past practice which saw Arab-dominated parties refusing to become part of Israeli governing coalitions.**

Through this move, he has said he hopes to wear "two hats": "Arab Palestinian" and "Arab citizens of Israel." A priority for Abbas is solving the various problems that the Arab citizens of Israel face, including law and order in Israeli Arab towns, issues with town planning and building permits, and a lack of funding for Arab municipalities. *Aust/Israel Jewish Affairs Council 18-Jun-21*

His Islamist Party is not affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Although their religious ideology seeks a Sharia state, it is commented in Israel that he knows this is not possible, and he has chosen the pragmatic route of breaking his Party away from the other Arab Parties, in order to help his Arab compatriots from within the Knesset.

One of the determinations of this government is to improve relationships with the Arab population. There was much concern at the unrest in the Arab towns within Israel during the latest war against Hamas. There was violence, Arab against Jew and Jew against Arab. The feeling was that under Netanyahu, developing good relationships with their Arab citizens had been neglected. We know that there has to be a period of "*peace and safety, or security*" (Eze. 38: 11,14). With the Abraham Accords we can perhaps see the beginning of a change in attitude between Israel and her Arab neighbours. But the problems of Hamas and Fatah also have to be dealt with. Maybe this is the reason there has been this change in government with four seats in government being occupied by the Ra'am Party?

One of the reasons that many turned from Netanyahu was that he had promised to take full control of Area C in Judea and Samaria that had been assigned to Israel under the Oslo Accords. This didn't happen, as there seemed to be a greater prize within grasp – the Abraham Accords. And so the pioneers in the many "West Bank" settlements were left bitterly disappointed. Little expansion had been permitted during the past few years, and with large families, expansion just to accommodate natural growth was vitally needed. Neither did he fulfil his promise to legalise the many settlements built with government approval, but which had not been officially recognised. This hinders their connection to the electricity grid and other services. He promised many times to rectify the matter – a simple signature was required, but this has not been done.

Bennett, in 2012/2013, published his ideas on dealing with the conflict between Jew and Arab, entitled "The Israel

Stability Initiative". He proposed that Gaza should come under Egyptian control, and that Area "C" in the Oslo plan should be fully taken over by Israel. Any Palestinians living there would be offered Israeli citizenship. Area's "A" and "B" would remain under Palestinian control under the security protection of the Israel Defense Forces. Better roads were proposed so that Palestinians could travel without roadblocks between the two areas.

The new government plans not to make radical changes in Judea and Samaria, but allow slow expansion of the existing settlements. There seems good chemistry between the various members, and a sense of optimism now that Netanyahu is out of office. Time will tell whether it can hold together, or whether a more traditional right-wing government can be formed. Certainly interesting times!

Hamas strikes again

Hamas used the excuse of a civilian court case against non-rent paying squatters in Jerusalem, to allegedly show how Israel was driving out the Arabs in order to increase the number of Jews in Jerusalem. An incident on the Temple Mount was used to rouse the world that the Al-Aqsa Mosque was under attack! Israeli police had to be deployed there as Arabs had stored large caches of stones to throw down on the Western Wall Plaza where Jews gather to pray and had also set trees alight through letting off fireworks.

Heavily backed by Iran, Hamas set off 1,750 rockets in the first 3 days, at least 300 of which fell short, landing in Gaza resulting in 17 civilian deaths on the first day alone. An errant rocket on the second day knocked out Gaza powerlines, cutting off nearly 250,000 from their power supply and affecting water supplies and sewage disposal. Hamas used more sophisticated rockets than in previous conflicts, with a much deeper reach. An estimated total of more than 4,000 rockets were fired into Israel over an 11-day period. Many rockets failed and crashed into Gaza, killing civilians and damaging property in the process.

As in other Hamas conflicts, the world's press was heavily biased against Israel. Reporters in Gaza are only allowed where their minders choose to take them and only to report what they are told to. Such is the militant's grip that few would be prepared to report otherwise, they would face being expelled from Gaza and physical violence is not unknown. With anti-Semitism being so strong, the vast majority of reporters are happy to toe this line and do as they are told.

Deaths from their own rockets are still classified by Hamas as casualties caused by Israel, and there is no distinguishing of those killed as militants and those as civilians. Israel goes out of her way to minimise civilian deaths, taking steps which no other army takes to warn of impending strikes, using text messages and warning taps on the roof to indicate that shortly it will be struck. Sadly, the people of Gaza have not been provided with shelters, unlike those in Israel. Hamas does not seek to minimise deaths, the greater the numbers, the more sympathy they will get from the world. Israel is faced with the intractable problem that Hamas embeds itself in civilian buildings, schools and hospitals. It has built itself an incredibly sophisticated underground tunnel system, known as the Metro. Gaza is a mere 365 km² (141 sq. mi) in area, yet the 1,300 tunnels, many interconnecting are thought to total hundreds of kilometres in length. They are used to transport weapons and personnel as well as storing explosives.

Israel made a particular target of these tunnels, claiming to have destroyed 100km (60 miles). Because many run under civilian houses this was a very difficult task. Pinpoint bombing was used where they were known to run down a street or open ground. Spectacular explosions also occurred, sometimes bringing down nearby buildings when ammunition stores were struck. She struck hard at rocket factories, Hamas





military buildings including the main press building which also housed Hamas equipment designed to thwart Israel's use of the Iron Dome. Through prior warnings there was no loss of life when in a spectacular explosion this 14-storey building was reduced to rubble. Hundreds of rocket launching sites were wiped out and key Hamas operatives targeted.

[IDF operations in the Gaza Strip](#). Summer Rains (2006) went on for four months; Cast Lead (2009) three weeks; Pillar of Defense (2012) a week; Protective Edge (2014) 50 days; Black Belt (2019) less than 72 hours; and now, Guardian of the Walls, 11 days. *Jerusalem Post* 21-May-21

Israel was quietly satisfied at the accuracy of their attacks, reckoning that the militant to civilian deaths were 1 to 1, way below anything achieved by even US or UK military. Israeli civilian deaths were low, because the sophisticated Iron Dome system was able to destroy incoming rockets – at great expense, and also the warning systems allowed them the opportunity to reach shelters which are abundant in Israel. Badly damaged, Hamas never-the-less continues; how Israel manages to break Hamas, in order to dwell securely, we have to wait to see.

Arab nations reaction to “Guardian of the Walls”

Following the new attitudes of several Arab countries towards Israel, culminating in the signing of the Peace Accords, it was interesting to see how this conflict was handled in the Arab press. Normally there is strong support for the Palestinian cause. It was much more muted, than in the past; mainly consigned to the inside pages. There is little sympathy for Hamas, Fatah and Hezbollah, being seen for what they are – proxies of Iran, the enemy they share with Israel. Egypt tries to curb Hamas and has acted as an intermediary in bringing the conflict to an end. Significantly the Egyptian General Intelligence Service head Abbas Kamel visited Israel to meet with Mr Netanyahu in Jerusalem. On the same day (May 31) Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi paid a one-day visit to Egypt to meet with his counterpart Sameh Shoukry and other officials to discuss the situation in Gaza. This was the first trip to Egypt by an Israeli Foreign Minister for over 13 years!

Israeli Defense Minister Orders Forces Ready For Iran Ops

Israel's new government is now turning their attention to Iran - the power behind the many terrorist organisations in the Middle East. The Iranian elections for the next president have just taken place, (18 June) in a poll where the candidates allowed to stand were carefully chosen by the religious leaders. With a very low turnout of voters, the contest was won by Ebrahim Raisi, commonly nicknamed “the Hangman of Tehran” following his policy of hanging the opponents of the regime, while Prosecutor of Iran in the 1980s and 1990s. Thousands of dissidents

perished at his hands. He is due to take over on 3 August from Hassan Rouhani, who has served two four-year terms in office – the maximum allowed in Iran.

Israel is afraid that President Biden may make compromises in order to clinch an Agreement with Iran over nuclear weapons before the new President takes over. It is thought that the chances of a deal under Raisi's presidency is low.

In a last minute attempt to persuade Washington not to go back to the nuclear agreement with Iran, Israel's chief of General staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi met today with Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the beginning of his four-day visit to Washington.

The DC trip is Kochavi's first, and is aimed mainly to present the Americans with intelligence Israeli sources say proves that Iran is cheating on the nuclear agreement. The other topic likely to be discussed is the potential threat posed by Hezbollah in Lebanon, one of the Iranian proxies in the region.

During the planned four-day visit, Kochavi will meet with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, the head of US Central Command, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, and the head of US Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Gen. Richard Clark.

The Israeli Ministry of Defense met to discuss the implications of Raisi's election and concluded he may accelerate the trend of Iranian positions on the borders of Syria and Lebanon. *Breaking Defense (US)* 21-Jun-21

We watch with great interest the many strands of God's working in the affairs of men in order to bring about the new dawn for this troubled earth, when the Master is on the earth and the long process of turning men's hearts back to their Creator and establishing the Kingdom will begin.

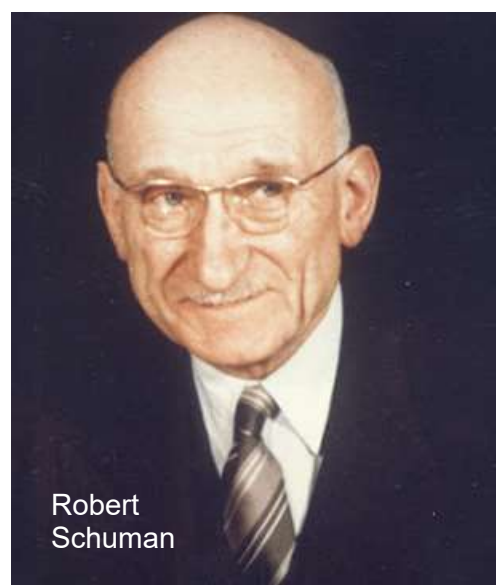
The EU the final phase of the Beast

The European Union is an act of faith. It is a religious-economic power, which from its inception saw power taken from the individual members and concentrated in the central power of its leaders.

It is significant that the Pope has just announced he "has authorized the promulgation of a Decree advancing the causes for canonization of European statesman Robert Schuman", one of the founding fathers of the EU.

The Church has recognised **the heroic virtues** of Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of European unity, thus according him the title "**Venerable.**" *Vatican News* 19-Jun-21

If a "miracle" can be attributed to him, he can then be "beatified", if two miracles, he can be declared "a saint"! Daniel and Revelation points to the EU as the final development of the *Beast* system which will *make war with the Lamb but the Lamb shall overcome them* (Rev 17:14). We can expect such "miracles" will be found, when the Vatican decides the time is right for her move to consolidate Europe.



Britain battles with the EU

It never was going to be easy to break away from the EU. Britain, a nominally Protestant country has always been a thorn in the side of the EU but has been a valuable contributor to her coffers. Her departure and prospering outside the EU, is not what the EU elite want to see. Hence their efforts to put as many obstacles as possible in her path to prosperity as they look to bind her to their rules and regulations. After all one doesn't want other members to follow the same track! It is beginning to dawn on many in the UK that the EU is not seeking harmonious relationships with her neighbours, especially former members. The so-called "sausage war" in Northern Ireland has deep implications. A largely Roman Catholic Europe would love to see the reunification of Ireland, following its separation from the Protestant north, back in the 1920s.

Telling were President Macron's words when Boris Johnson asked if he would like to see sausages from Toulouse being prevented from being sold in Paris. He replied that he did not think it was a good comparison because Paris and Toulouse were both part of the same country. Yet Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, but in the eyes of many Europeans, Northern Ireland is thought of as part of the Irish Republic.

Mr Johnson's threat to postpone the implementation of the Northern Ireland Agreement until the EU softens its hard-line implementation of the rules, is causing great anger within the EU. The Democratic Unionist Party – N.I. Protestant party has lost two leaders in quick succession over the problems the EU Agreement is causing to the supply of goods from the UK. The new leader is expected to take a tougher stand and insist that Britain stands up to the EU and suspends the controversial Agreement. Expect great fury from the EU if this happens. It could result

in the deal so painfully thrashed out last year, being torn up and trading reverting to WTO terms. This would not affect the UK too seriously as although it would be initially disruptive, exporters are used to the necessary paperwork. Britain's success in making trade deals around the world makes the EU market less and less relevant. Many items she imports from the EU can be sourced elsewhere and increasingly without any tariffs.

Bible prophecy indicates a divergent path for Britain as a world trader; her separation from the EU is not yet completed. We watch as angelic hands change the course that nations take, using the vast armoury at God's disposal. Come quickly Lord Jesus!

Aim 4,500 Achieved 4,690