EUROPE’S TOWER OF BABEL
"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." — John 17:17.
In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation is a prophecy concerning “the Great City which sits on Seven Hills,” and which in the days of the Apostle John, “reigned over the Kings of the Earth.” Is anybody so ignorant as not to know, that this city is Rome! If there be then “let him not continue to be ignorant still;” for not to know this is next to being a dunce without remedy. In John’s day Rome was pagan; but his prophecy has reference to her when she should be Papal. Papal Rome, then, is very appropriately styled “The Great Harlot;” and because of the corruption and confusion she has originated, she is termed “Babylon the Great;” and moreover, seeing that she has given birth to so many forms of superstition, papal and protestant, she is called the “Mother of Harlots and abominations of the Earth.” Her motto is “mystery,” for she delights in deeds of darkness; and once inscribed the word upon the tiara of her Imperial Image; therefore also her name is Mystery. The spirit of God represents her as a Drunken Harlot—drunk with the blood she has caused to be shed of the saints and witnesses of Jesus. This beastly murderess not content with getting drunk herself set to work to intoxicate all that had any thing to do with her. Hence it is written, “The inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (verse 2).

And again, “All Nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (spiritual abomination and idolatries;) and the Kings of the Earth” also—18:3, and by her sorceries were all Nations deceived—verse 23.

The Mother of Harlots is now about 1240 years old. She is to continue till she is 1260; and then like a great millstone from aloft plunging into the sea, she is to sink down with violence into the molten flood beneath her, and thenceforth “to be found NO MORE—at all—verse 21.*

It is worthy of remark here, that a short time anterior to this “consummation so devoutly to be wished” by the Heirs of the Kingdom, the affairs of the Drunken Harlot become remarkably prosperous, and her prospects exceedingly flattering. Hence she is represented as “saying in her heart I SIT A QUEEN AND AM NO WIDOW, AND SHALL SEE NO SORROW.” She draws the eyes of all the nations to her, as a City, whose sovereignty is again shining forth with its ancient lustre, and, under the auspices of the Eighth Head, Imperial life her old Caesarean sovereigns is entering upon a new and brilliant era of light and progress in harmony with the spirit of the age! Vain, illusory expectations of a deceived and drunken world! With what unerring truth the apostle said, “they that dwell on the earth shall admire (thaumazontai) whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the World.” They will admire and praise the Imperial Head of the Harlot City. They vote addresses to his Image from the Western Hemisphere; pay flattering compliments to his officials in the Land of the Pilgrims; give ear to his siren sorceries in Legislative Halls; and shout vivas to “His Holiness” Editor’s Note: It will be noted that 20 years after this was written, papal Rome lost her temporal power—the first stage in her fall and to her ultimate doom, which will be witnessed upon Christ’s return from heaven.

in the doomed cities of his domain! How little do they know, that the desolation of the Harlot is nigh even at the doors! The sign of her eternal overthrow is the fitful flashing of her expiring wick—a little brightening of her affairs, precursory to the “plagues which shall come in one day, death, and mourning and famine;” when “she shall be utterly burned with fire.” Reader, be upon your guard, for the end is near.

In conclusion. When we contemplate the Nations, all of them, by the “sure word of prophecy,” we behold them, haughty, proud and idolatrous; their minds veiled with a covering of gross darkness; without divine knowledge; unrighteous; walking after the imagination of an evil heart; deaf, of vain minds; darkened understandings; alienated through ignorance from the life of God; past feeling; strongly deluded, believing a lie; and drunk with the intoxicating sorceries of the scarlet-robed, adulterous, and lascivious “Queen.” Such is the scripture delineation of those who manufacture “Public Opinion!” In view of this, is the doctrine of Jesus, strange, that “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God;” or that of Paul, that if he “pleased men, he should not be the servant of Christ.” Can a man advocate the truth of God, and continue in harmony with Public Opinion? Impossible! With such opinion there must be war even unto death.—Herald of the Future Age 1848, Page 104,106.

Pray Always and Faint Not

It is the duty, the safety, and the glory of every believer to pray for the coming of the Lord’s Anointed in judgment upon the adversary of his Ecclesia—to pray always, and not to faint; and those who have so little discernment as not to dare to pray for the downfall of the oppressor, the casting out of Satan, the destruction of Babylon, have neither lot nor part in this matter. Those who will not pray for Christ to come, who feel shocked at the thought of the rending bolt which bears him, and the arrowy shower of lightning which goes before him; those who have not their peace made with him, and are hanging in doubt whether they be his or not; those who love father, mother, brother, sister, or life, more than him; those who love traffic, wealth, goods, estate, more than him; those who are not ready to take wing, like doves to their windows; those who are not, like old Jacob, waiting for their salvation; those who have a divided heart, like Lot’s wife—what shall be said of such? That they shall not enter into his kingdom! Do these words strike home to the quick; to the deepest recesses of the soul? Do they pierce the heart? It is fit they should, that men might be loosed from the fetters that bind them to the craft by which their destroyers are enriched; and that being freed, they may put on the linen vestment and burn incense in the sanctuary, and, without fainting pray always for the appearing and kingdom of the Lord.

HERALD OF THE KINGDOM & AGE TO COME. 1860, page 44.
A believer in God has many ways to prove to himself and others the existence of an eternal and all-powerful God. He only needs to consider some of the intricacies of nature: the migratory instincts of many of the species of birds, the marvellous structure of the human eye or the miracle of human development in the womb. As our understanding of the world around us expands, so too the overwhelming proof that there is a God who has set this complex and elaborate creation in motion.

While nature itself is a powerful witness to the existence of God, there is another very valuable proof that is difficult to refute, a latter-day miracle that is clear evidence that God exists. The modern nation of Israel as prophesied in the Bible is perhaps the greatest single proof that we have been given. The entire history of this small nation in the Middle East has been prophesied in the Bible, written years before the events. Written not in vague, indefinite terms but in vivid and convincing detail.

God’s Chosen People

It is impossible to read the Bible without noting that the Jewish nation is fundamental to God’s work and purpose. It is a book that has a distinctively Jewish flavour: the Old Testament was written originally in Hebrew, the Jewish language; its authors like Moses, David, Peter and Paul—all Jews; the narrative in many senses is a Jewish history book; and almost all of the principle characters are Israelites, Hebrews or Jews.

The Bible makes it quite plain that God has chosen to work with a special few, and a quick scan of scripture shows clearly that Israel was God’s chosen nation. From its early beginnings with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through the times of the later Old Testament prophets and into the New Testament there is repeated emphasis that God gave this tiny nation priority. The following verses are some of the many that demonstrate this fact:

“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

“And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath
Witness of Israel and His Purpose

Promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken” (Deuteronomy 26:18,19).

“For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure” (Psalm 135:4).

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts: After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye” (Zechariah 2:8).

“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24).

The Jews Prove God’s Existence

As the careful reader notes the important position given to this tiny and seemingly insignificant nation, he must ask himself, “Why?” Why is it that God chose to emphasize the history and events of this people? What does it mean to those of us who are not Jews? A clear reason as to why God accentuates the nation of Israel is given in the book of the prophet Isaiah, where we are told twice within one chapter that the Jews are God’s witnesses (Isaiah 43:10-13). That is to say that God is using the nation of Israel to prove his very existence and his position as the only true God.

“First I predicted your deliverance; I declared what I would do, and then I did it—I saved you. No foreign God has ever done this before. You are witnesses that I am the only God, says the Lord.” (Isaiah 43:12, New Literal Translation).

During the days of the life of Abraham, even before the nation existed, God predicted their captivity in the land of Egypt. He continued to predict their deliverance after a period of 400 years in bondage (Genesis 15:13,14). As the reader of the Bible knows, this prophecy was fulfilled to the letter when Moses dramatically delivered his oppressed nation from Pharaoh. This sensational rescue would serve as definitive proof of God’s existence and control over world events for hundreds of years. In the very account of the Exodus we are told that the plagues on Egypt were intended to show to the Egyptians that the God of Israel was the Lord (Exodus 7:1-5). The events were so dramatic and well known that men and women from many nations learned to fear God after hearing of the Exodus. One such example is that of a woman that lived hundreds of miles from Egypt and was several generations removed from the events: the confession of Rahab the harlot is found in Joshua 2:9-11.

Throughout much of the rest of the Bible, both the prophets of Israel and God Himself make reference to the miraculous deliverance from Egypt in an effort to remind the common Israelite of the power and existence of Yahweh. However to those of us living today, thousands of years after the fact, this may not seem like a convincing proof. The events occurred so long ago that they seem to many as mere stories or myths. It is here that the miracle of modern Israel has much value.

The Modern Restoration of Israel

“Therefore, behold, the days come saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers” (Jeremiah 16:14,15).

The new proof of God’s existence (that the “Lord liveth”) is the modern restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine. Today’s believer does not have to rely on the events of ancient history to find support for his faith, he can turn to events that have occurred in recent years, perhaps in his very lifetime. The salvation that Jeremiah prophesied, when the children of Israel would be delivered from all nations and restored to the land of their fathers, is the miracle of Israel witnessed in the events

The Modern Nation of Israel Has Been Called a Miracle: A Miracle That Testifies to the Truth of the Bible and to the Basic Message Outlined Therein

After nearly 2000 years of dispersion, Jews gather to offer prayers of Thanksgiving in 1948 at The Arch of Titus in Rome which had been built in honour of the Caesar that had destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
The story is an incredible one, of a people deprived of human rights for centuries; subjected to brutal persecution and that merciless hatred known as anti-Semitism. What is even more incredible is that it was all foretold in the Scriptures — in their own Law and by their own Prophets!

But so also was their survival assured, and recorded as a witness to the nations of God’s very existence. For example Isaiah wrote: “Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this... let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.” The history of the last century is an amazing testimony to Truth!

leading up to and following the year 1948. On May 14th of that year the new state of Israel in Palestine was declared. After nearly 2000 years of captivity among the nations, the Jews finally returned to the land of their fathers.

This second “Exodus,” that has occurred in our days, is the subject of many scriptural passages, several of which are found in the book of the prophet Ezekiel. One of these passages reads as follows: “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land” (Ezekiel 36:24). It is clear from the immediate context of this verse that God intends for these events to serve as proof that he continues to exist. He says in verse 23 of the same chapter, “...and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord...”

Jesus in his remarkable prophecy from the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, an event that would occur some 35 years later in the year 70 AD, when the Romans besieged the city and destroyed the temple and its worship. However in that same prophecy, Jesus also spoke of the restoration of Jerusalem to Jewish control. In Luke 21:24 he said, “...Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” In saying this Jesus foretold a day when Jerusalem would return to Jewish control. That day was a day in June of 1967, when during the 6 Day War, Israel captured East Jerusalem from the Jordanians. The next day, the headline in the Jerusalem Post Newspaper read, 200,000 AT WESTERN WALL IN FIRST PILGRIMAGE SINCE DISPERSION.

The Jewish Holocaust

Other less glorious moments in the modern history of the Jews also have their roots in Bible prophecy. Perhaps the most regrettable event of the 20th century, the Holocaust, was an event foretold in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 28 outlines both the blessings that would come to the nation for obedience and the curses that would come as a result of rebellion. One particular section of this chapter, a chapter which is dominated by curses, provides a remarkably vivid and succinct description of the conditions the Jews experienced during the Holocaust:

“...And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other... And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see” (Deuteronomy 28:64-67).

While many cite the Holocaust as a reason not to believe in God (saying that no God would allow such horrors to occur), the Bible reader cannot but recognize it as yet another proof of
God’s existence and control over world events. They only need to point to the warnings given by God thousands of years ago, that such events would come upon the nation for their disobedience. Others have seen this connection with the Holocaust: the words “Ye are my witnesses,” a quotation from Isaiah 43:10, are inscribed upon a wall inside the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

The very survival of this tiny nation throughout the centuries is witness to the power of God. While all of the great world empires: Rome, Greece, Babylon—empires that conquered Israel and carried her captive—have disappeared, one single nation has continued to exist, despite the great efforts which have been taken more than once to destroy her. The remarkable history of this people gives credence to the words of God in Jeremiah:

“For 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” (Jeremiah 30:11).

God’s Purpose with Israel

God had a special purpose for the descendants of Abraham when he chose them to be his peculiar nation—they were intended to become a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). Not merely a passive witness to the existence of a divine creator, but an active force in spreading God’s message of salvation. They were to be an entire nation that was obedient to the laws of God, a separate people who would teach other nations of God’s ways.

“For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy: for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44,45).

“The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways” (Deuteronomy 28:9).

Spiritual Israel

From biblical history it is quite clear that the nation of Israel did not live up to this calling. Apart from a few periods of general obedience, the Jewish nation as a whole was quite rebellious. Repeatedly God found it necessary to send prophets to his people to turn them from their wickedness. Periods of captivity in Assyria and Babylon were also used in an attempt to turn the hearts of the people back to their God. As such, God intends to fulfill his original purpose working with a group of men and women who will obey his commandments and walk in his precepts—a people that we could term Spiritual Israel.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God’ (Romans 2:28,29).

God is actively selecting out of all the world, a people who will be his children (Romans 9:6-8). These men and women, both Jew and Gentile, will become his royal priesthood and holy nation, showing forth the praises of the Lord (1 Peter 2:9). These are those who in obedience accept the call of the gospel and through faith are baptized into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. These become the true descendants of Abraham and rightful heirs to receive the promises that were made to Abraham (Galatians 3:27-29).

The Future Role of Natural Israel

Nonetheless, there remains an important role for the natural Jews. In accepting men and women from all nations, God has not cast away his chosen nation, but in the near future will again show favour to his people. He has suffered with them through many of their rebellions but has always been careful to preserve a remnant. There will come a time when, as a nation, the Jews will return to God and be saved, along with the faithful from all nations (see Romans 11:1-27; Jeremiah 3:17-19; 31:31-34; Zechariah 8:23; and others). As they have in the past, the nation of Israel will continue to serve as a witness to the existence and power of the Almighty God. When God saves his people from further threats of destruction and establishes them as part of that holy nation that will declare his righteousness to the entire world, there will no longer be any room for doubt that God exists.
I n John 17:16-17 Jesus prayed for his disciples saying: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy word is Truth.”

To sanctify, is to set apart; to separate something (or someone) for a specific purpose—dedicate. It carries the same idea as “holy” or “saint.” There is nothing mystical about the word. The idea of separating out for a special task or purpose is the underlying concept. In the Scripture before us, Jesus is saying that The Truth accomplishes this in his true followers—it separates them from the world and its evil.

**A Necessary Separation**

In 2 Corinthians chapter 6, the apostle shows that this separation is a necessary condition of acceptance with God. There can be no unequal yoke, no fellowship between believer and unbeliever. The clear message is “come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Only upon this basis can a relationship be formed with the Almighty—verses 14-18.

In the Scriptures this separation from the world often involved even close family connections. It was so in the case of Abraham (see Genesis 12:1), and it was a trial to be faced by many of Christ’s followers also, for he said:

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37).

This of course, is where issues arise and when choices have to be made—do we please the family or obey Christ?

While the Truth separates a disciple from the world and from fleshly ties, it also unites him to those of “like precious faith.” Jesus prayed for this unity among his followers also, for he said:

“You then, my fellow servants, who sit at meat in the house of your master; take no thought who is the master, even Christ” (verses 12-15).

**The Context of Christ’s Words**

This phrase has been hijacked in recent years by ecumenists—and by John Paul II in particular in his Ut Unum Sint (1995), in an attempt to unify Christendom under his dictatorial organisation. But the words of Jesus must be taken in their proper context—the oneness and unity that he speaks of is based upon the Truth. A first essential is “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ...” (verse 3). Jesus prayed: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...verse 21). So how, and in what sense are these disciples in the Father and His son?

There are several ways in which this can be answered, but in this chapter Jesus provides an indication that should not be missed. He says, in reference to his disciples: “keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” In the Revised Version (and R.S.V) this reads: “keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are.” These disciples then are “in the Name” (c/p Acts 15:14). Here then is the idea of a people being separated—taken out—for, and into the Name of the Father. So Jesus asks the Father to keep them in this Name, that they may be one “even as we are.” From this we may understand that being “in the Name” is equivalent to being in the Father and in the Son—which is but another way of saying “in the Truth” (see Ex. 34:5-6; John 1:14; 5:43; 14:6).

There is a logical connection in this, for to believe the truth is the same thing as believing the word—for Jesus says, “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). This word is the word of God, so to believe it is to believe in God who is the Author. To believe in the Father has to involve believing what He says—and his word is “the record that God gave of his Son,” and is able to teach us about the eternal life that is seen in His Son (1 John 5:10,11).

**One Mind**

If we can grasp this connection in the various expressions that are before us, it will help us to understand and appreciate just how believers can be “in” the Father, the Son, the Name, the Truth and the way of eternal life. They are united by the Truth, which makes them of one mind.

Where there is this meeting of minds, unity is the result—but where people have different hopes, or worship a different Lord (“another Jesus,” 2 Cor. 11:4), or believe in things which are contrary to the one Hope—they cannot truly form “one body.” As the Scripture says: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

There is a basis upon which people try to unite without agreement sometimes—but to do so reduces all Truth to a matter of opinion and makes the word of God of none effect. Indeed, those who ecumenize their faith in this way—agreeing to differ, as they put it—will find that there will be a failure to “bond.” In other words, that genuine love of one another (the true sign of unity—John 17:26) will not develop because there is no unity of mind. This is the situation in many churches today where the love of Truth has been abandoned for a formal religiosity that is lacking in power (c/p 2 Tim. 3:5). So the apostle Paul says: “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement”—1 Cor. 1:10.

This oneness of mind is something that must be patiently sought for—and will be sought for by those who, being separated from the world and being in the Name, are humble before the word. Men of the world seek to unite through compromise, through political manoeuvring, intrigue, treaty documents and even force—and they do so for the purpose of achieving power and mastery over their fellows. This is not the way the Truth works. Men who are motivated by the Truth act in love realizing that true unity comes from a process of growth. This is how Ephesians 4 describes “the perfecting of the saints.” Those with different gifts worked together “for the edifying of the body of Christ. So we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God by ‘speaking the Truth in love,’ and grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ” (verses 12-15).

**Fellowship in the Truth**

The Truth then, is the reason and cause for both separation from the world, and unity in the Name. There are and have to be clear “borders” to fellowship which are established upon the teachings of the Truth and its practice. These have to be recognized principles by which “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” may be distinguished from “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:12 and 19). These borders, or check-points, have been put in place by the Truth. Man-made obstacles and divisions however are “carnal” says the apostle (they pertain to the flesh)—1 Cor. 3:3. Someone, somewhere is wrong—either in his thinking, his behaviour or attitude. Such a situation is a trial for all who are concerned—but it is only by handling the matter in a godly (and Scriptural) way that disciples will be approved—1 Cor. 11:19.

Developing the mind of Christ (who is the Truth—John 14:6) does not allow for human pride or impatience. The unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17 was a unity “in the Name”—and in order to achieve that there must first be a willingness to separate from what is detrimental to the Truth. This much the Truth demands of us. The principle is that Truth will separate and sanctify, but it will also unite those who desire to honour it and who show that patience and love that never fails. This should gradually lead to a consensus that will honour the Name of the Divine family.
In this update (Sept. 17-02) the focus is upon the proposed invasion of Iraq by the U.S. and Britain.

By Don Pearce  RUGBY, UK.

Our last update was written in the middle of June. Our focus then was on the attacks that Israel faced from the Palestinian suicide bombers. The world’s eyes are now re-focusing on Iraq and the proposed invasion of that country by the US and Britain. In this issue we want to build on both areas of conflict, to see how they are linked, and to consider Mr Bush’s solution to them both in the light of Bible prophecy.

The Israeli government has effectively dismantled most of the terrorist network in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. By their policy of entering Palestinian towns in response to suicide bombings, Israel showed that they were not going to be cowed by this situation. We must remember that Israel’s response comes from strength and comes from trusting in that might. Sadly they forget that there is a greater power than that wielded by man.

**Watchers of Zion**

As Bible students we have to be watchers. We can’t predict the steps that will lead to the end result. We do however have the benefit of an understanding of the broad brush of Bible prophecy:

- The return of the Master to his household.
- Peace in the land.
- The invasion of the land and Egypt by the Gogian forces.
- The fall of Jerusalem and the death of 2/3rds in the land.
- The deliverance of Jerusalem by the Lord Jesus and the saints and the establishment of the nucleus of the Kingdom.
- The Kingdom then extending to cover all the earth in spite of the opposition of many nations.

Within this broad outline we have many details. For example:

- The opposition to the Gogian forces described in Ezekiel 38:13.
- The role of Moab in the latter-days as a covert to the fleeing Jews in their time of trouble. (Isaiah 16:4).
- The focus of the world upon Jerusalem and it being a burdensome stone (Zechariah 12).

We have to be humble enough to recognise that often events have transpired to move things along in unexpected ways. September 11th being an example. It was not a scenario that had been thought of, but it had the effect of strengthening America’s resolve to combat terrorism—and of bringing Britain closer to America. It also brought Mr Bush to focus on the Middle East—unlike his predecessor, Bill Clinton, this was an area he had been determined not to get involved in.

“When running for President, George W Bush was emphatic. As far as the world was concerned, he was opposed to adventurism and intervention... it was not America’s job to “go around the world saying ‘this is the way it’s got to be.’” At the United Nations he dramatically reversed this position. In a remarkable assertion of global sovereignty, he told the UN to get rid of President Saddam Hussein or he would do the job himself” (The Times 13-09-02).

**Mr Bush and the Middle East**

Mr Bush looks at the Middle East with a Biblical background. He has a religious belief in the role of the Jews in the purpose of God. He has matched his belief in the right for Israel to exist as a State with much practical help. He has a vision of the Middle East at peace and the nations there working together in prosperity. He sees that there can be no solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians until the “fuel” that fires the conflict is cut off. When Mr Bush declared the “axis of evil”—Iraq, Iran and N. Korea, it was because he saw that these countries were the primary source of conflict in Israel and elsewhere. A steady flow of money, arms and terrorists travel from Iran through Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and into the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The flow is augmented by Saddam Hussein, whose payments to the families of the suicide bombers, ensures their relative prosperity for a long time to come.

And so Mr Bush is determined to tackle the Palestinian problem from two sides. Dealing with Iraq will stem the flow of aid and terrorists. By dealing with Mr Arafat and the Palestinian Authority and replacing it with a friendlier group of leaders he hopes that it will bring the carnage in Israel to a halt, and begin to build up peace in the region.

From a worldly viewpoint this is a practical plan. If it is God’s Will that peace and stability come to the region by this means, then it will prosper. If not “then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place” (Esther 4:14).

The three aspects that we are seeking to weave together in this article are:— a time of peace for Israel; a role for Jordan as the latter-day occupant of Moab; an opposition party to the Gogian forces fitting the description in Ezekiel 38:13.

**Sheba and Dedan**

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

In this one cryptic verse Ezekiel indicates that there is opposition to the many nations that band together under Gog to invade the land of Israel.

Biblically there are two Shebas and two Dedans. One pair was descended from Ham (Gen. 10:7); the other pair descended from Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:3). The main Sheba we associate with the spice kingdom of the Queen of Sheba. Archaeology and history points to its location in the south of the Arabian Peninsula—the Yemen of today. Dedan is associated with the area around...
against Saddam Hussein. Making Egypt its centre for the possible war report in the Debka Intelligence the US is enlarging old ones in the area. According to a America and Britain to build new bases and is to see the great activity on the part of Oman, Yemen. The map is covered by an Arabia, across to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, which are the very countries now working together for a solution to terrorist problems.

Tarshish and the young lions

It is not our purpose here to show the strong links between Tarshish and Britain. We would refer the reader to other sources for the convincing evidence. The intriguing thing is that this Tarshish power is associated with young lions—younger countries formally associated with Britain, but now independent such as America, Canada, Australia and India which are the very countries now working together for a solution to terrorist problems.

Tarshish & Young Lions in the Middle East

It is an interesting exercise to mark on a map the British and American bases in the Middle East (right). From the big bases in Crete, Cyprus and Turkey, one sweeps across through Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, across to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen. The map is covered by an impressive number of sites. Several countries having several bases. What has been interesting is to see the great activity on the part of America and Britain to build new bases and enlarge old ones in the area. According to a report in the Debka Intelligence the US is making Egypt its centre for the possible war against Saddam Hussein.

“DEBKA-Net-Weekly’s military sources confirm that US war preparations are in their final stages. Massive consignments of military hardware—including tanks, missiles, heavy artillery, and radar stations—as well as nuclear, biological and chemical warfare units, field hospitals and heavy engineering equipment are landing at Egypt’s Cairo West air base. The air and sea lifts, ordered after the White House and Pentagon decided to make Cairo West its main supply and logistics base for the US military offensive against Iraq, are proceeding round the clock. By using Cairo West, General Tommy Franks’ Florida-based US Central Command, which is running the global war against terrorism, can turn Qatar’s al-Udeid air base into its main regional headquarters.” (13-09-02).

To the south of Egypt lies Sudan and further south still, Eritrea—an area of longstanding conflict. However on an island in the Red Sea belonging to Eritrea, the Israelis have submarine facilities and an air base.

“This month, on June 7, 2002, DEBKA-Net-Weekly again reported that Israeli Dolphin-class submarines, like other naval and air units, were permanently using the big air and naval base on Eritrea’s Red Sea Dahlak Archipelago, near the confluence of the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean” (15-06-02).

Recently America has constructed her own massive airbase on one of these Eritrean islands.

“Northern Iraq, including its oil cities, will be under the purview of US bases in southern Turkey and Tbilisi, Georgia. The new Red Sea bases, along with American aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, will round off US coverage of all Iraqi airspace.”

This is all in the region of the old Kingdom of Sheba. Britain and the US have also been building new bases in Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar. It is planned to move the American Command HQ from Florida to Qatar. Other “young lions” are closely involved in the Middle East. We looked at the military cooperation of Israel and India in the previous issue. Their submarines jointly patrol the ocean around the Arabian Peninsula. Australia has offered America troops and aeroplanes. The British and Americans were impressed with the performance of the Australian SAS forces in Afghanistan. Australia is actively involved in the Multinational Interception Force (MIF) which operates in the Persian Gulf, stopping, boarding and searching Iraqi vessels to prevent sanctions-busting.

Fewer nations backing America

In contrast to the great confederation of nations who supported America in 1991 following the invasion of Kuwait, it is interesting that, at the moment, far fewer nations are prepared to join in this present conflict. The majority of the European nations are either opposed to this action—as is Germany, lukewarm as is France, or whose support comes at a price—as Russia (see next section). In the main we are seeing a force that much more corresponds to what we understand is represented by the phrase “Tarshish and the young lions.” Not that we are anticipating that this is the fulfilment of Ezekiel 38 — this is but another step which will build up to the nations confederating together against Israel, invading the land and being opposed by this group of nations described in Ezekiel 38:13.

Seeking support from Russia

The Times (13-09-02) carried the headline US TEMPTS RUSSIA WITH PROFITS OF OUSTING SADDAM. Russia is owed large sums by Iraq.

* Read Cry of The Prophets, published by The Bible Magazine.
British sovereignty. The main island (and the only one inhabited) is on November 4th, 1990. These islands in the Indian Ocean remain under the trading nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38:13, “The merchants of Tarshish and all the young lions thereof.” See World War 1 poster right.

Mr Bush appears keen to bring the area under the control of Jordan. Iraq used to be part of the Hashemite kingdom—relatives of the Jordanian kings ruled Iraq until 1958 when overthrown in a military coup. The late King Hussein had trained his son Prince Hassan to take over as ruler of Jordan, but shortly before his death he changed his mind and chose Abdullah instead. President Bush’s advisors are thinking of Prince Hassan as a possible ruler for Iraq.

“The correspondent (of the Israeli Yediot Ahronot for military affairs) indicates Jordan will play a main role, according to the plans discussed by the Pentagon, noting that these plans point the end of the story of the Iraqi Baathist regime under the leadership of Saddam Hussein and the foundation of a democratic Iraq to be an integral part of the Hashemite Kingdom. The correspondent added it was not a mere coincident that the Americans invited (former Jordanian crown prince) prince Hassan from Jordan to two meetings with the Iraqi opposition residents in London. The correspondent added “Inviting prince Hassan to London reminds us of the Afghani experience: toppling the regime and bringing in the old and good King.” (Arabic News 07-09-02).

We await the outcome of these calls for war. As we write, the Arab world seems to be swaying behind America after months of prevaricating. Britain has been playing her part in convincing the Arab rulers of the potential benefits of peace and stability. If matters do proceed then we can see the possible situation of peace and prosperity in the region. We can see America drawing Russia into the area of “Persia”—which covered Iran and Iraq, and can anticipate a continuing and growing presence and involvement of Britain and America. We can see a role for Jordan working with America, because a “Moab” power has to be in this area in the last days, as Daniel chapter 11 indicates, that the King of the North:- ...

Iraq is also a good customer of Russia—Russia recently announced a £26bn investment programme in Iraq. It was reported that a secret deal had been struck between President Bush and President Putin to make it economically worthwhile for Russia to back America. It is expected that there will be large, lucrative rebuilding contracts to be awarded to those countries that have been supportive to America. The Iraqi oil fields have been starved of investment for many years and would be an attractive investment to Russian firms. Russia is also vulnerable to falling oil prices if the Iraqi oil industry was modernised and allowed to sell freely. An assurance that this would not be the case is a price that Mr Putin would be looking for in return for co-operation.

Bush’s plans for Iraq

Several reports have detailed President Bush’s plans for “post-Saddam” Iraq.

“They amount to the most ambitious exercise in redrawing the boundary of nations in the Middle East in more than 80 years. The world has not been offered such a radical change in the political landscape of the Middle East since Iraq and Jordan were created by then British Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill. He did it by “a stroke of the pen”—as he liked to say—at the Cairo Conference in 1921” (The Globalist 12-09-02).

...shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.” Dan 11:41

God has a role for Moab — she will be a place of refuge for fleeing Jews at this terrible time, just as she was in AD70 when the believers fled to Pela.

“Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.” Isaiah 16:4.

The next verse clearly indicates this is a prophecy of the last days.

Bush’s plans for the Palestinians

No less remarkable than the plans for Iraq are the American plans for the Palestinians. After months of Israeli purging of the terrorist network in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Yasser Arafat’s power is at its lowest ebb. His whole cabinet resigned in mid -September. His popularity ratings have sharply declined to just 34 percent, compared to 46 percent two years ago, before the start of the Palestinian uprising against Israel according to a Jerusalem Post poll amongst the Palestinians in late August. He is blamed for leading the Palestinians down a route that has not brought the promised rewards— far from it. Their economy is in tatters. Corruption is rife. Life is very miserable for the average Palestinian. They want a change. Even some of Arafat’s militant leaders are ready to declare a cease-fire against attacks on civilian Israelis, even though the military are still considered legitimate targets. This represents a great change in outlook. The latest leader of the notorious Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (his predecessors were killed or exiled) admitted, “our greatest mistake was to militarise the uprising.” His agreement to end the violence comes as they fear that if they don’t, Israel will “seize the war in Iraq as an opportunity to drive them out of their homes eastward to Jordan.” (Daily Telegraph. 16-09-02).

In the Spring 2002 issue we detailed the idea that was being floated to involve Jordan in the running of the Palestinian affairs. Since that report in March there have been further details. President Bush seems to have adopted the ambitious plan to replace Mr Arafat and the existing Palestinian Authority with Palestinians favourably disposed to America, under the control of King Abdullah of Jordan.

A DEBKA Intelligence Report on 30th June 2002 said:

“At the G-8 Summit in Canada last Wednesday, June 25, Bush said (if Arafat dug his heels in) he did not rule out military action against him. He did not specify by whom, whether America, Israel or, under a US plan outlined in the past in DEBKA file, by Egyptian and Jordanian security forces taking charge, respectively, of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

“Arafat is clearly cornered; he has been given his marching orders and, for the first time in his political life, there is no wriggling out. US official sources were... Continued on page 23.
Several observers have drawn parallels between developments in Europe today, and what the Bible calls Babylon the Great. Many have noted a symbolic connection also with the original biblical Babel. Today’s multi-cultural, multi-lingual (and even multi-racial) Europe is attempting to overcome the various barriers which divide its several nations so as to forge one vast confederacy. The well-known poster, far right (issued a few years ago by the European Commission in Brussels), expressed the vision graphically with the tower of Babel and the caption: Europe: Many Tongues One Voice.

The new European Parliament building designed by architect Richard Rogers, and which opened in Strasbourg (France) in December 2000, also carries unmistakable influences from the famous painting of the Tower of Babel by Pieter Brueghal (who also happens to have been born in Strasbourg). Clearly, the theme of Babel lies within the conscious spirit of the European movement.

Babel

Newspaper headlines, cartoons as well as other graphics regularly make the link between Europe and Babel. In 1998 a project was completed which sought to provide a common European resource for spoken language from Eastern and Western European research centres: its name was The Babel Project. The European Union, with its eleven official languages decided to mark 2001 as “The European Year of Languages”—and if the target of 27 member states is soon reached through enlargement, there would be twenty official languages in the Union. It is not all that difficult to see why a connection is made with the biblical record of events in Babel!

“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter
them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:4-9).

Not only does the media see Eurobabel in terms of language—it also sees an economic parallel as all these Euroland nations develop a single currency. When the Euro currency was launched in January 1999, Newsweek (right) marked the event with the tower of Babel on its front cover—a tower built with the Euro! We may note the fact that a latter-day Babylon the Great is described in Revelation 18 as having great riches—a system of enormous wealth. Such links with Bible prophecy are hard to ignore.

**Shadows from History**

The idea of uniting Europe—of reviving the Roman Empire—is not new of course. After the fall of the Byzantine empire (the Eastern Roman Empire) in 1453, it became the dream of the Russian Czars to re-establish that empire under the wings of Russian protection. In the West, the Germanic Holy Roman Emperors had the same idea (sometimes in co-operation with the Pope and sometimes not). Napoleon wanted to unite Europe, as did the Kaiser.

Despite strong objections by some, today’s vision of a united Europe may not be so very different from that promoted by the Nazi regime with its slogan “Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer” (One People, One Empire, One Leader). Those inconvenient connections can be too quickly and easily dismissed however. As it has been often said, history repeats itself—and though the parallels are never quite exact, there are definite and unmistakable outlines to the eerie shadows cast over different generations. As Hitler’s rise to power demonstrated, a movement that appears to be democratic in its earlier phases can forge terrifying and autocratic claims later, when power is secured. This characteristic of the Roman
totalitarian system can be expected to re-emerge again in the future—it is a characteristic inherited from ancient Babylon.

**Greater Babylon**

Most readers will be familiar with the prophecy of Daniel chapter two where a symbolic image represents a succession of world empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. But there is far more involved in that vision than the succession of empires which have now passed into history. These empires are not only successive, but are in some way accumulative as well. We cannot ignore what we are being told here. Consider:

- The vision declares “what shall be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). This is its primary concern.
- All the metals of the image are broken together by the stone (see verse 35). These metals are not broken successively at various periods of world history—they are broken together when the stone strikes; that is, in the latter days.
- Verse 45 of the chapter repeats this, telling us that the stone breaks in pieces all the metals of the image—so they must have an existence at the crisis when the stone smites the image upon its iron-clay feet.

The gold of Babylon, the silver of the Medes and Persians, the brass of the Greeks and the Roman iron represent an image of the kingdom of men that has been built up over many centuries. The vision only makes sense if we see it as a system that has accumulated all the elements of this image so that it stands in its completed form in the latter days. What we are seeing in fact is the development of “greater Babylon.”

As Daniel chapter two shows, this commenced with the ancient Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar. This empire, though it was transferred to the Medes and Persians is yet the same power, for in Ezra 5:13 the Persian King Cyrus is called “King of Babylon.” Also in Nehemiah 13:6 we read of “Artaxerxes King of Babylon”—so it is clear that Babylon, rather than being terminated, was incorporated into the empire of Persia—Thus we may say that it was a “greater Babylon.” The next empire, the brass of the image represented the Greeks—and certainly Alexander the Great ruled over Babylon, for history informs us that he died there. Rome’s empires also extended to include the city of Babylon. Thus the influence of Babylon is seen to continue down through the world’s great empires. In fact, every part of the image passed on elements to those which would succeed it, until finally a complete image stands before the world in all its terrifying power. The origin of it all however, is the Babel of Genesis chapters 10 and 11.

**The Kingdom of Men**

The founding father of Babel (Babylon) was Nimrod. This is what Genesis 10:8-12 tells us:

“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.”

This attempt to create one universal empire was crushed by the confusion of languages as described in Genesis 11, and quoted earlier. Babylon in fact, means confusion.

It is important that we understand the mindset of Nimrod and his planners. Their objective was: “Let us make us a name” or reputation. It was a case of exalting themselves—wanting to be somebody—and so it was that they built the tower of Babel to the glory of Man. This is a spirit that has continued among world rulers ever since as they decorate themselves in fine robes, present themselves in bemedalled uniforms and surround themselves with pomp and carefully designed ritual and performance. These kings, queens, lords, popes and cardinals must be approached with a certain protocol and ceremony, as though they were gods and not...
The vision of Daniel chapter two teaches us that the whole structure of the kingdom of men that has been built up for human glory will be demolished. It will be broken to pieces.

**A United Confederacy**

In being informed as to “what shall be in the latter days,” Nebuchadnezzar was told: “Behold, a Great Image (or idol). This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee (in a dream) and the form thereof was terrible,” or terrifying (Dan. 2:31).

This is the final form of the kingdom of men in the latter days—it will contain elements of all the previous empires of other ages, and it will be terrible. A reign of Terror is thus implied—a time when (in the words of Jesus) “Men’s hearts (will be) failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth...” (Luke 21:26).

One element in this final monstrous tyranny will be religious. The kingdom of men in ancient times followed what is known as a pagan religious model (actually a corruption of the religious principles delivered through Noah). In Roman times however the kingdom adopted a corrupt form of Christianity as a convenient stepping stone to power for Constantine. In the period 312-320 A.D. the Roman Empire became synonymous with Christendom and was ruled by the “Holy apostolic Emperor.” It is a system that is still reflected today in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

It is interesting that the late Pope John XXIII had upon his coat of arms the winged lion of Babylon (see Daniel 7:4) and a tower—see illustration below. It was this Pope who launched the Second Vatican Council and fused the humanist principles of the French Revolution together with Catholic teaching during the 1960’s. Here is a religious element that brings together the characteristics of the Roman iron and the humanist clay.

Both the religious and the civil-political kingdom has been divided ever since Roman times. This division has been an east-west division and many have seen this feature in the two separate legs of the image as well as in the iron-clay feet (see Daniel 2:41). In a religious sense it is seen in the Roman and Orthodox churches, but politically and geographically the map of Europe has been divided between east and west right down to our own time. Most adults today have known a Europe which was divided by the “iron curtain.” To reconcile the two opposing camps seemed to be impossible during the 1960’s and 70’s. Also, the division of Europe between its various nation-states has been identified as a cause of many European wars—but those wars usually came when a Napoleon or Hitler tried to unite them by military force. But what once appeared to be so impossible now seems to be happening. The unification of Europe is underway—the parts are beginning to work together.

It is quite remarkable that this latter-day development was seen some 150 years ago by a writer who explained many of these Bible prophecies. The following was originally written in 1854 by John Thomas.

“By turning to a map of Europe and Asia, the reader may trace out the territory of the

![The map above shows the current membership of the Council of Europe, whose headquarters are based in Strasbourg, France. The map begins to look suspiciously like the top one—and through alliances with Middle East countries—like that confederacy of the complete Image which is to be demolished!](image)

men. This glorification of men is in effect the glorification of sin, because all men have sinned and do sin (Romans 3:10, 23), and so the apostle writes: “Let no man glory in men” (1 Cor. 3:21).

The tower of Babel then, was built to the honour and glory of man—it was a monument to the names and prowess of its builders and to the elevation of their reputation in the earth. In more recent times the world has seen the erection of the Eifel tower in Paris (far left)—built in 1889 to commemorate the French Revolution and its glorification of Man in the humanistic principles that came to their political birth at that time. Many churches are also built with a high tower, spire or steeple which rises out of the landscape in many cities, towns or villages. These are monuments to Christendom and its claim over society. It is believed that the tower of Babel had both a political and religious significance, and that this idea has continued down the history of the kingdom of men.

This spirit which has permeated the kingdom of men down to our own day is summed up in the words which fell from the lips of Nebuchadnezzar himself:

“The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30).
A European “Union”

Against the background of the 1960’s and 1970’s who would have expected the union of Eastern and Western Europe? Soviet Russia had sent her tanks into Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the arms race was at its height—yet in February 1970 the following words were published by a keen student of Bible prophecy. After referring to the work of John Thomas (quoted above), Graham Pearce wrote:

“The sequence in outline is that before this great invasion of the land (i.e. Ezekiel 38—P.B.), Nebuchadnezzar’s Image will be erected, as a binding together of Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and much of Asia. The situation will be roughly like the old Roman Empire in the time of Justinian in the 6th century...

“If this sequence is correct there are two important consequences for us. First, East and West Europe are soon to be united...”

The second consequence is even more electrifying—it means the closeness of the return of Jesus Christ as king of Israel!

Others of course did not see it that way at all. The appearances on the current events scene during the early 1970’s persuaded many to ridicule such an idea. One writer displayed his lack of understanding of prophecy by writing in 1973, “...the prospect of the iron curtain being replaced by an entente cordiale is feasible only to the infatuated.”

After the events of 1989-1991 when the Berlin wall came down and Communism collapsed, it became very clear just who understood Bible prophecy and who did not!

During the past decade we have seen Europe coming closer together—especially with the relationship that has developed between Germany and Russia. Eastern Europeans are now lining up to join the European Union—and Russia even has links with NATO. It is a very different world than that which we witnessed in the 1970’s.

Potter’s Clay

The re-unification of Europe was not the result of a simple victory over Communism, as is often portrayed by politicians and the media. Rather, it represents an ideological compromise that had been developed over many years—and in which the Vatican played a key role through many high-level meetings with Soviet representatives long before the Gorbachev era. This coming together of ideological and political opposites began with the Vatican itself accommodating, and building into its own doctrinal structure, the essential principles of Humanism and Socialism. This was a coming together of ideological and political opposites that had been developed over many years—and which both Rome decided that she must change her appearance and become a champion of. Based upon early work by the French Revolution. Both the First and Second World Wars had attempted to restore the doctrines of Man)

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organic links in many domains” (quoted from Marxism and The Church of Rome, Institute for the Study of Conflict 1974).

These are the links which, together with other factors, have brought about the reunification of Europe. Biblically it can be understood as a mixture of Roman iron with clay (Dan. 2:43).

The prophecy of Daniel tells us that the clay (fired potter’s clay) represents “the seed of men.” This word “men” (enash), says Davidson’s Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, carries the idea of “the common people.” It refers to man in general; mankind—the masses. We are being told about a form of rulership that will involve the common man—hence, Democracy. In other parts of Scripture “clay” is given a characteristic feature:

“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?” (Isaiah 29:15-16).

“Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What maketh thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?” (Isaiah 45:9).

It is as though the clay (and men are clay) has a spirit of atheism about it—hardened in unbelief and denial of the Creator. Such is the character of Humanism; such is the character of rulership that we see in today’s world. It well describes the ideological basis of society that has gradually taken over the world since the French Revolution. It is this Humanism, this Socialism and Democracy that is to be mixed with the Roman iron “that breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things.”

This is an interesting combination which Scripture says is to be formed—“but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

Who Rules Europe?

In some ways, all of this is focussed today upon the city of Strasbourg which lies on the modern French-German border. This is one of the capitals of Europe and competes for that position with Brussels—and to a lesser extent Luxembourg. The European Parliamentarians literally shuttle between the three cities, together with their filing cabinets, staff and translators. They may have a common agricultural policy, a common political agenda and even a common currency—but not a common language. Cross-border check points may have disappeared, but the language and cultural barriers remain intact. For the French,

Strasbourg is the capital of Europe, whereas some other member countries would like to see Parliamentary sessions moved to Brussels. But as one French MEP put it: “There will never be unanimity; France will not accede.” So for just 48 days of the year the new $400 million tower of Babel building is used in Strasbourg—the rest of the year it lies dormant—as though its builders and inhabitants had been scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth!

But there is more to Strasbourg than the Parliament building that Le Monde called “Pharaonic.” The city is built on the Rhine river which divides France and Germany. As the scene of many Franco-German wars Strasbourg has been seen as symbolically appropriate as the home of administrative bodies devoted to reconciliation in Europe. Hence, the Council of Europe set up in 1949 is also housed there. In fact the so-called “European Quarter” in the city today is the location of the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights.

As events unfold, it may well be that the Council of Europe—rather than the E.U. Parliament—will prove to be more significant in the ultimate binding together of that Europe which has been defined as stretching from the Atlantic to the Ural mountains of Russia. Its membership today begins to take on the shape of those maps which have been produced by students of Bible prophecy in order to depict the confederacy of nations listed in Ezekiel chapter 38 (see map page 15). As will be noted, the Russian Federation is a member state of this institution—and according to the Prophets it is the mission of “Gog, of the land of Magog, Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” to unite these nations as one confederacy.

This fact must be balanced with what we are told in the book of Revelation. In chapter 16:13,14 we are told that “three unclean spirits like frogs” gather the nations. There are sound reasons for connecting these frog-like spirits with France and with Humanism (see The Bible Magazine Vol.11, No.2). Is it just a coincidence that the unity of all Europe seems to be centered in the French city that has—and has had—very strong associations with Humanism? The connection is made in a history of Strasbourg published by the University of Strasbourg—“In Strasbourg, perhaps more than elsewhere, humanism was introduced via theology…”

It seems that we are seeing an ideological and diplomatic union of Europe being forged today, and that Strasbourg is an important centre for this. The confederacy (not necessarily Federal State of Europe) will doubtless be completed by the Prince (Leader or Fuhrer) of Rosh when he chains Europe under the most tyrannical and military despotism ever seen by men.

The Image of Rome

In commenting upon the Babel-like European Parliament building in Strasbourg, one guidebook says: “The round tower appears unfinished on purpose—to symbolize that the union itself is perpetually unfinished…” The agenda—to gather the nations—is thus clearly stated.

Another writer (Atlantic magazine) viewing the building from another angle says its sleek design was meant to embody “democracy in motion”—presumably moving towards ever-greater unity of nations; a New World Order.

But the basis upon which the nations are to be gathered is made abundantly clear upon approaching the entrance to the building where the visitor is confronted by a sculpture (pictured far right) which at first sight might be mistaken for a “mother and child” image, but which upon closer inspection is described upon a plaque as the symbol of a united Europe. If this does not suggest the rather obvious connection between the Church and the European Union, then another guidebook does so when it tells us about “The building, with its majestic curved facade... and its reflective tower, whose summit mirrors the image of the cathedral...” The cathedral that is, which displays a stained glass window donated by the Council of Europe in 1956, and depicts mother and child with the twelve stars of Europe (Revelation 12:1) overhead.

Certainly the humanistic social doctrines of the Roman Church are “mirrored” in the European Union today, and it is indeed a frog-like spirit coming out of the mouth of the False Prophet that plays a significant part in gathering the nations prior to Armageddon. Those nations incidentally, that are listed in Ezekiel chapter 38 and which were scattered at Babel, as recorded in Genesis 10 and 11.
As the world holds its breath waiting to see whether George Bush will attack Iraq, with or without the help of Tony Blair (and in the face of E.U. opposition) there is once again much foreboding about what many are already calling the impending Battle of Armageddon—re-run of what, in 1991, Saddam Hussein famously called “The Mother of all battles.”

But then, as cynics point out, it won’t be the first time there has been an “Armageddon.” It is as if the biblical word Armageddon has become little more than a description applied to a wide variety of disasters. According to the financial press there has been “an Armageddon” on the Wall Street and London Stock exchanges in recent months. Another report labeled as an “impending Armageddon” the situation whereby thousands of refugee-asylum seekers are waiting to risk their lives stowing away on the freight trains that travel through the Anglo-French Channel rail tunnel. Then there have been “Armageddons” in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the African Congo region.

Indeed, the August 19th issue of *Time* Magazine (July 1st issue in North America) even carried an 8 page article reporting how 59% of Americans claim to believe that the prophecies of Revelation will come true. And that includes Armageddon which, however, they quite wrongly describe as being the “Final battle between Christ and the Antichrist”!

**So What is Armageddon?**

What does the Bible say it is?

In an earlier *Bible Magazine* article we reviewed the many suggestions that had been made as to the location of the event of which we read of only once in the Bible in Revelation 16:14 and 16.

“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

But whilst it can be shown that the coming battle of the great day of God Almighty will be focussed on the land of Israel and on Jerusalem in particular, it is important to realise that it is an event rather than a location in the Middle East.

Interestingly enough the event to which the description “Armageddon” refers is contained enigmatically in the very word itself. The Bible tells us quite explicitly that it is a Hebrew word—even though it occurs in the last book of the New Testament which was written in Greek!

**What Does the Word Mean?**

It is probably true to say that for hundreds of years the real meaning of the word has eluded Bible readers. It was not until the advent of concordances in the 18th century that Bible students were able, relatively easily, to unravel the true meaning of the word, and having done so to relate it to the many other places in Scripture where the *event*, rather than the actual place, is referred to.

The word “Armageddon” is made up of three Hebrew words, the anglicised forms of which are very roughly “Arema-gai-dun.” With the
aid of the simplest computer and software programme we can look up the word Arema and discover that it is listed in Strong’s Concordance as word number 6194. The word occurs 10 times and is variously translated as heap (8), heap of corn (1), sheaves (1). A good example of the use of this word occurs in Jeremiah 50:25-26 where Jeremiah prophesies the coming destruction of Babylon (ironically, ancient Iraq!).

“The Lord hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation...in the land of the Chaldeans. Come against her from the utmost border... cast her up as heaps (arena) and destroy her utterly.”

Another occasion is in Ruth 3:7.

“And when Boaz had eaten and drunk... he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn” (i.e. sheaves: arena).

The next word “dun,” or as it sometimes occurs “diyn” is located in Strong’s Concordance as word 1779. It occurs 20 times mostly meaning judgment (9), cause (8), plea (2), or strife (1).

A good example of its use is in Job 36:17, “But thou hast fulfilled the judgment (diyn) of the wicked: judgment (diyn) and justice take hold on thee.”

Or Psalm 76:8, “Thou didst cause judgment (diyn) to be heard from heaven...”

That leaves “gai”—one of several words translated “valley.” This particular word occurs on some 60 occasions and is the word used to describe the Valley of Tophet or the Valley of Hinnom—known in the New Testament as Gehenna—places of final destruction.

Now when we bring these three words and thoughts together, noting the way and the context in which they are used elsewhere in Scripture, we have a word that indicates “sheaves—in a valley—for judgment.”

So the event of Armageddon is not just simply a pitched battle between the forces of the Almighty and a grand confederacy of nations, but is the occasion of God’s final judgment upon the nations of men which have been gathered together for that purpose.

The Prophets Confirm the Idea

When we grasp that fact, we can readily appreciate the many other references to this event which exist elsewhere in Scripture. Note, for example, the following extracts from the Old Testament prophets as they warn of this coming event and observe the great similarity of the terminology they use.

“Now also many nations are gathered against thee... but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor” (Micah 4:11-12).

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. — Joel 3:12,13.

Daniel, speaking of this event in chapter 2 describes how the nations will become “like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.” And equally significantly, the Apostle John in his vision in Revelation chapter 14 hears an angel speaking of the event of Armageddon—

“Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

It is remarkable the way that these quotations all describe the coming time when the nations will be gathered like sheaves to the threshing floor for judgment in that great valley of destruction.

So are we Heading for Armageddon?

The short answer is “Sooner or later, yes!” But we are in no position to know whether the propaganda war already started by President Bush will eventually end in the event which the Bible describes as Armageddon. In themselves, any such localised conflicts, such as the 1991 Gulf War, or the repeated threatened Arab assaults on Israel just do not conform to the Bible’s description of that final judgment on the nations of men. As noted earlier, that event will be focussed onto Jerusalem not Baghdad; It will precipitate the involvement of a great Euro-Asian confederacy anxious to get into the Middle East—something they are currently keen to avoid. But that is not to say that the final climax of events of Bible prophecy will not come to pass very quickly. We need to be watching for the formation of a Christian led alliance of European and Russian peoples and their strengthening antipathy toward America. Also, we watch for the growing divisiveness among the Arab nations and the attempts to bring about a false peace between Israel and her neighbours—none of whom, incidentally, feature in those remarkable chapters of Ezekiel. These chapters, 38 and 39, deal with the events of Armageddon and list Israel’s enemies at that time.

Christ Must Come First

A Bible based study of the events leading up to Armageddon, however, persuades Bible students that Christ will appear, at least to his faithful believers, before the great event of Armageddon takes place and when he will certainly reveal himself to the world in glory. So if then, you have the feeling that it won’t be long before we see that great battle of Armageddon take place, think what that really means: that the coming of Christ is that much sooner than you may have believed!

Footnote

1 The Bible Magazine: Volume 9, no. 1: “Armageddon: where and when will it happen.”
Catholics, and many others, are at a loss for an answer to the recent disturbing news of wide-spread sex abuse by Church clergy and official cover-up. News of these scandals has been serious enough to prompt the Vatican to take the rare step of calling all US bishops to Rome. Anyone expecting great things from this conference will have been disappointed. The message the bishops came home with was somewhat vague and elusive. History, if nothing else, teaches us that humanity cannot be relied upon for an answer (Psalm 146:3). Only God is able to show us the right way (Isaiah 55:6-7). Therefore, we must turn in humility to His Word the Bible if we are to know the truth.

Is a celibate priesthood of God or men?

Compulsory celibacy of the priesthood, or of anyone else, is not a teaching or concept to be found in inspired Scripture. Encyclopaedia Britannica supports this conclusion: “The majority of scholars agree that the law of clerical celibacy was not of apostolic origin.” The Apostle Paul, who is often quoted to support celibacy, spoke these words through inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach... Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” (1Timothy 3:1-2,12 also Titus 1:5-7).

Paul gave the first century ecclesia a list of qualifications for the ideal bishop and deacon. They were to be married men—at the least they were permitted to marry. This idea is not unique to the New Testament. It was also the norm in the Old. The Jewish priesthood, instituted by God Himself during the time of Moses, included many married men. Aaron, the first high priest, was married and so were most of those who followed after him (Exodus 6:25). If priests were to be celibate, the high priest most certainly should have been. Only he was permitted to come into Yahweh’s presence in the “most holy place” and then only once per year (Leviticus 16:32-34; Hebrews 9:7). At that time the high priest was the ultimate role model of holiness and fidelity.

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that Peter, allegedly the first pope, was married. Jesus refers to Peter’s mother-in-law in Matthew chapter 8: “When Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever” (Verses 14-15).

It is also interesting to note that Paul condones the Apostles being accompanied by a wife in their work: “Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” (1 Corinthians 9:5 RSV). Some have gone to considerable effort in an attempt to glorify the single life. Recently a writer speculated that Paul, to conclude what he did in 1 Corinthians 7, must have had a wife who either died or left him at the time of his conversion: however, in this and like details, where Scripture is silent we would be wise not to pretend we know better.

Marriage is Honorable

Marriage, which Paul tells us is “honorable” (Hebrews 13:4), is an institution of Heaven. It was God, in His wisdom, who created a female partner for Adam to compliment and help him:

“It is not good, that the man should remain alone,—I will make for him a helper as his counterpart.” (Genesis 2:18 Rotherham, also NKJV).

Marriage was designed as a partnership to assist in striving for God-likeness, i.e. “heirs together of the grace of life” (1Peter 3:7). So preoccupation was not the initial purpose for marriage, although the important part this had to play in God’s purpose was soon to be revealed (i.e. Malachi 2:15; Numbers 14:21). Marriage in practice is to be a reflection of Christ and his ecclesia who he will return from heaven to marry (Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 19:7). There are benefits and challenges for both the married and unmarried. We are not told that one is more or less holy than the other.

Not Taught By The Apostles

If we accept Scripture (i.e. the 66 books of the Bible) as our authority we must reconsider the concept of compulsory celibacy. We will not take space to examine the authority of Scripture here as it has been adequately covered in two recent issues of this magazine (Vol. 14 #3 and 15 #3). It is worth noting that even The Catholic Encyclopedia admits, “...we do not find in the New Testament any indication of celibacy being made compulsory either upon the Apostles or those whom they ordained...”

Therefore, we can only conclude that the doctrine of clerical celibacy is based on “inference” not clear Scriptural teaching. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20).

To Glorify God

Paul’s reply letter to the ecclesia at Corinth, which was trying to deal with problems resulting from sexual immorality, is probably the most quoted reference to support celibacy (1Corinthians 7). Scripture teaches that there are benefits to celibacy when it is kept voluntarily for a period of time (v/p ch. 7:5). It should also be remembered that those who are unmarried are required by God to retain their, virginity. We live in a society which is similar to Corinth and is not concerned with God’s holy laws.

Paul describes both married and unmarried states as a “gift of God.” He does not say a single life of celibacy is a pre-requisite to priestly offices nor does he say such a person is more holy than one who is married. His message is clear,

“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.” (Chapter 7:7 RSV).

Jesus spoke in a similar way,

“All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given...He that is able to
Papal Authority

receive it, let him receive it.” (Matthew 19:11,12).

To conclude from these chapters that the single life is the way of the New Covenant, required to give ourselves to Jesus’ work of preaching, would clearly be wrong. Marriage and family life does not exclude this. Aquila and Priscilla, Paul’s “helpers in Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:3-5) provide a beautiful example of how a husband and wife can work together for the Lord (Acts 18:18,24-26).

Paul told the Corinthians to “glorify God” and this is the key. He did not intend to cast a snare by “binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne” no matter what state we are called to:

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.”

“And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction” (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:19,35).

The attitude Paul would have us practice is one which asks, “How can I in my particular situation, glorify God to the greatest extent?” In the case of a young widow woman, Paul’s advice is to re-marry:

“I will therefore that the younger women marrying, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Timothy 5:14).

The idea that those who are called to the gospel in the single state ought to so remain, contradicts what Paul said to Timothy and the Corinthians. Yet, the Western and Eastern Churches have taught variations on this idea through history:

“...according to ancient tradition, a cleric must not marry after ordination...Thus it was the recognized practice of the ancient Church to prohibit the marriage of those already priests, and this discipline is still maintained in the East.”

The one command Paul does give is that marriage be “only in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:39). Christ’s servants are not free to marry out of the faith.

The Origin of Compulsory Celibacy

The Catholic Dictionary and Encyclopaedia both claim the earliest laws of celibacy are found around A.D. 300 and that “there does not seem to have been any Apostolic legislation on the matter...” The latter point speaks for itself and should remind us of the many New Testament warnings to beware of new doctrines not taught by the apostles (e.g. Galatians 1:6-9). It is interesting to note that early attempts at enacting laws of celibacy were successfully opposed by the clergy:

“It is clear that, during the first three centuries, this practice, although not unknown, had not yet grown into an established or general custom, much less was it enforced by any legal enactment. Even at the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, the attempt made to establish it by law was frustrated... Compulsory celibacy was indeed resisted by the clergy, as an oppressive innovation; and this too with such a measure of success that, during the whole period now under review (300-600), the custom was not legally established as of universal and indispensable obligation.”

Although earlier laws may have begun to restrict marriage of the clergy, compulsory celibacy was not universally adopted until the end of the 11th century. It was not until Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII in 1073 that efforts to enforce celibacy were successful:

“He took the unprecedented and dangerous step of subjects the clergy to the judgment of the laity... exhorting princes and people to refuse, and even to hinder by force, the ministrations of priests who were tainted with incontinence. The temporary harm of such a measure was justified by the permanent gain effected, for the efforts of Gregory and his immediate successors brought about the desired reform.”

In 1123, at the First Lateran Council, an enactment was passed which pronounced the marriages contracted by the clergy to be invalid. “This may be said to mark the victory of the cause of celibacy.” After this any such relations by the clergy were considered concubinage.

Such commandments of men are far removed in both time and doctrine from that of the apostles in the first century.

It is in this context that we are introduced to the gross immorality which has often accompanied these “holy” practices. Mosheim describes the 10th century in these terms:

“The priests, and what is still more surprising, even the sanctimonious monks, fell victims to the triumphant charms of the sex, and to the imperious dominion of their carnal lusts; and, entering into the bonds of wedlock or concubinage, squandered away in a most luxurious manner, with their wives or mistresses, the revenues of the church.”

Our news headlines continue to multiply these crimes at a seemingly ever-quickening pace. It cannot be a coincidence that the priests of Rome are more often than any other implicated in such wickedness. The underlying cause of the problem is the natural wickedness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9,10), exasperated by a failure to give heed to God’s wisdom.
“Sigismund, at the Council of Basil, A.D. 1430, recommended the marriage of the Clergy, because more evil than good resulted from celibacy. ἄνεας Συλίβυς, afterward Pius II., at the same Council deposed the state of the Church on account of it.”

Authority Challenged

Jesus has taught us to look at a prophet’s works to determine if he is good or evil: “You will know them by their fruits.” (See Matthew 7:15-20).

TIME published an article at the end of March 2002 titled “Can the Church Be Saved?” summarizing the current situation in North America:

“The crisis gathers steam day after day, with perhaps 2,000 priests accused of abuse across the country and hot lines jamming with more victims’ calls. It is not just what Boston’s Bernard Cardinal Law called “a tragic error” but a spiritual and financial body blow to church authority as well, demoralizing to every man who wears a Roman collar. Lives have been hurt, trust damaged and the credibility of the church to speak on social issues tainted... The Roman Catholic Church kept silent for decades about the immoral, even criminal betrayal of its children, but in this era of openness, that just won’t do.”

Clearly, this is not an isolated problem. The article rightly points out that this crisis serves to demonstrate just what Boston’s Bernard Cardinal Law called “a tragic error” but a spiritual and financial body blow to church authority as well, demoralizing to every man who wears a Roman collar. Lives have been hurt, trust damaged and the credibility of the church to speak on social issues tainted... The Roman Catholic Church kept silent for decades about the immoral, even criminal betrayal of its children, but in this era of openness, that just won’t do.”

Searching through almost any news archive will show this has been an ongoing problem.

A Sign of Christ’s Return

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul revealed by prophecy that in the latter times there would be some who, having departed from the true faith, would forbid marriage and the eating of certain meats. This is exactly what we have seen in the practices of the Catholic Church.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry; and commanding to abstain from meats...” (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

Surely, this is a wake-up call to any who have ears to hear. Here we have another confirmation of the reliability of God’s Word, the Bible. It is in this climate that Christ will return in judgment:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12).

We must turn in faith to the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, to seek for the truth. Although man has deviated from God’s holy laws, this does not mean his purpose has failed. The way of life is open to those who would humbly seek him in sincerity and truth.

Footnotes

3 The Catholic Dictionary (1905)
4 Ibid.
5 The History of The Papacy, J.E. Riddle, (1851) page 737.
7 Ibid.
9 Delineation of Roman Catholicism, Charles Elliott, (1851) page 737.
Under the headline Comprehensive US Plan to Rebuild Palestinian Administration the DEBKA report 20th July 2002 stated:—

“Without waiting for Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Europe or Saudi Arabia, the Bush administration is forging forward alone with a grand scheme for overhauling the Palestinian Authority politically, economically, militarily and administratively, a scheme so broad that the term “reforms” does not begin to do it justice.”

It involves a radical restructuring of virtually every department, by putting into positions of power leaders who will be pro-western and using Egypt and Jordan to train them. The plan is exceedingly ambitious and will not be easy to impose. However, it was reported that the numbers that wished to serve overwhelmed the American CIA officers sent to recruit support amongst the Palestinians. Yasser Arafat’s reaction was to threaten to liquidate any that dared work for the Americans.

The first practical results of this policy came on early September when DEBKA announced the first Jordanian military police men to arrive in the West Bank.

“In a pivotal though unannounced development last week, 300 troops of the Jordanian Army’s Palestinian Al Bader Brigade crossed the Allenby Bridge into the West Bank as the harbingers of the US program for displacing the Palestinian Authority’s terror-tainted security force operated by Yasser Arafat. According to DEBKA file’s military and Palestinian sources, within 24 hours of its arrival, the vanguard Jordanian force took charge of security in the Bethlehem-Beit Jala-Sahur area abutting south Jerusalem, deferring directly to the new Palestinian interior minister Gen. Abdel Razzek Yahya and collaborating with US CIA and Israeli liaison officers... “(a) fresh unit is standing by at Jordanian bases close to the Allenby Bridge checkpoint, ready to move in. By the end of this month, the Jordanian Palestinian security force in the West Bank should expand to between 2000 and 3000 members, growing by the end of the year to some 5,000.

Arafat’s battered headquarters with Israeli flag raised.

“The American reform plan calls for a total of 10,000 to 12,000 Al Bader Brigade troops to take up security positions in the territory by early 2003.”

“The ICEJ site in Jerusalem reported (17-09-02):

“Security officials from Jordan, Egypt and the United States are training Palestinian Authority security officers in Jericho on the finer points of counter-terrorism.

“The move is a result of the reforms agreed to by the PA in June under European and American pressure. The American contingent is made up of CIA officers.”

A time of peace?

This may be the route that leads to a time of peace and prosperity as foretold by Ezekiel, especially if the terrorism supply is effectively cut off in Iraq. Does Israel dwell at peace before the return of the Lord Jesus to his household?—Or does it occur while the Judgement is taking place? It certainly occurs before the invasion of Israel by the Gogian forces. We are surely so close to the Master’s return that we can’t say this or that has to happen first! In the concluding chapter of Milestones 2001 we looked at the things that had to be in place before the Lord Jesus and the saints go forth to save Israel from their enemies—all of which are now in the past.

All that seems to remain is a time of peace and reform in Israel (Mal. 4:6), events that probably belong to the time when the Lord Jesus is preparing his household for that day which John witnessed in vision:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev19:11-15).

Come quickly, Lord Jesus.
As we have said before in this series, the theory of evolution is for the birds. Take for example the European Cuckoo shown here.

Are we seriously asked to believe that this bird evolved all on its own? The cuckoo has a very lovely song, but its character is anything but lovely!

After careful study of another bird’s nest, it waits its opportunity — and that opportunity comes when the victim lays its first egg. Then, when the coast is clear, along comes the cuckoo, chucks out the newly laid egg (which is dashed to pieces below — see the bird in the very act top left), and then lays its own egg in the nest. The cuckoo egg will closely resemble that of the host bird’s egg (see comparison left). Mother cuckoo then takes off having left the baby-sitting to somebody else!

The baby cuckoo that is born is a chip off the old block — it heaves out any other eggs or chicks in the nest and acts just like Diotrephes did (see John’s third epistle, verses 9 and 10). Now it gets all the attention and all the food and, making a sound that mimics a clutch of chicks, grows bigger than its foster parents who enslave themselves in trying to feed it (see below).

Some people act like cuckoos; they sing very lovely songs but are quite prepared to destroy the lives of others for their own ends. Through such means, the Creator is teaching us to watch over our nests and our young, and to guard them against social parasites who deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:18).