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Pearce

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THE TIMES

SATURDAY

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Samantha, as he
prepares to resign

Brexit earthquake

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[To contents page](#)

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of the
World Events of
2016 in the Light
of Bible Prophecy***

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- *Milestones*

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- *UK printed edition*

Printed by Longsdale Direct

Website: www.lonsdaledirect.co.uk

- *Australia printed edition*

Printed by Stallard & Potter

Website: www.stallardpotter.com.au

Published by
CHRISTADELPHIAN SCRIPTURE STUDY SERVICE



JANUARY 2017

Preface**[to contents](#)**

On the 23rd of December the UN Security Council adopted a resolution that the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 have “no legal validity”, constitute “a flagrant violation” under international law and are a “major obstacle to a two state solution”.

Anti-Israel resolutions are an annual event for the United Nations and its special 15-member Security Council. This august body has 15 members and 5 of them, the US, France, China, Russia and the UK have permanent membership and veto power over any major decision.

The resolution on the 23rd of the last month of the year 2016 was the most damning resolution to pass the Security Council. Normally the US vetoes such resolutions which therefore fall harmlessly into history. The timing was special too because it was proposed in the last days of the Presidency of Mr Obama of the United States and his last opportunity to side with an old friend. The US has always voted against these anti-Israel resolutions.

This time the US abstained from voting! So the resolution went through 14 – 0. Worse than that, the President of the United States and his officers were behind the whole scheme. They wooed New Zealand to propose the motion, stood back and watched the voting as the nation of Israel was effectively humiliated and their settlements about the city of Jerusalem blamed for the failure of the UN to find a solution to the Palestinian issue.

“So the Jewish state has no claim on the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, indeed the entire Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. They belong to Palestine. The Temple Mount is the most sacred site in all of Judaism. That it should be declared foreign to the Jewish people is as if the Security Council declared Mecca and Medina to be territory to which Islam has no claim.” (Charles Krauthammer).

So in one stroke, the legitimacy of the land of Israel was brought into universal doubt and its capital Jerusalem declared illegal.

That news went around the world with stunning effect. As 2016 was playing out its last days, Israel’s legitimacy was called in question by the great powers of the world and Jerusalem declared to be “occupied territory”!

It is well known that Mr Obama has reacted bitterly to the Israeli Prime Minister’s strong defence of Israel’s national stand. But to leave this stroke of gall against Israel to his last days of office has quite shocked the world. It seems that very few saw the enormous potential of this blow. It opens up opportunities for all Israel’s enemies to block her voice in all countries and call for antagonism against Israel at home and abroad. Within days the Palestinians had produced a cartoon with a dagger held in the hand of a Palestinian soldier above a pool of Jewish blood.

So what were the key issues in a year of vast activities all around the world? The year closed with the focus upon the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem and all the world talking about it!

How remarkable when we remember those covenants of the Land to Abraham and the city of Jerusalem to King David. These are fundamental to our Christadelphian faith: we learnt these covenants when we were in Sunday School!

As one President prepared to leave the Oval Office another was preparing to occupy the Chair. What was his reaction? “Don’t worry Israel, only 20 days to go”. In the boldest way he stated his full backing of Israel, the acceptance of the settlements and that the US would be shifting its embassy to Jerusalem the capital of the Jewish people. We cannot endorse all the other bold statements of Mr Trump but it was wonderful to see the hand of God uncovered and a strong clear stand for the returned people, who had 1800 years of exile among the Gentiles.

We are very thankful to bro. Don Pearce and his team (including the new member!) for their diligent work in putting the Milestones together. What a remarkable year. The British-related nations seem to have a will to work together; the members of Catholic Europe are beginning to give Russia a second chance. All great items in Daniel and the prophets.

May all this excitement stimulate us to hold onto our faith, to boldly declare it to a darkening world and to labour for the King of kings whose voice may be heard at the door!

Brian Luke

Secretary

January 2017

CONTENTS

<u>PREFACE</u>	3
<u>CONTENTS</u>	5
Milestones Snippets: a free email news service	8
Milestones in Electronic form	8
<u>Chapter 1: THE PURPOSE OF MILESTONES</u>	9
The word of Prophecy	9
The structure of this year's <i>Milestones</i>	11
<u>Chapter 2: FROM EARLY MILESTONES—1981</u>	12
<u>Chapter 3: POST ARMAGEDDON PROPHECIES</u>	15
A time line	15
A 10-year gap?	17
40 years to establish Kingdom	18
Hour of judgment	18
A jubilee period	19
Post Armageddon prophecies	19
The armies in heaven	21
Helpful books	22
<u>Chapter 4: PROPHECIES CONCERNING TYRE & TARSHISH</u>	23
Tyre and Tarshish in the latter days	23
The link between Tyre and Tarshish and the Phoenicians	24
Britain's connection with Tarshish	25
The latter-day Sheba and Dedan powers	27
The Merchants of Tarshish	28
All their young lions	28
<u>Chapter 5: MERCHANTS & LIONS IN SHEBA & DEDAN TODAY</u>	29
Britain and her young lions, in the Gulf and Israel in 2016	29
Operation Kipion	33
Parker Review: Blueprint for a strong naval shipbuilding sector	33
Britain's links to Israel	35
Young lions' links to Israel	37
Young lions in the Gulf Region	39
Summary	39
Operation Northern Thunder	39
<u>Chapter 6: BREXIT, THE START OF A LONG ROAD?</u>	40
Lisbon Treaty Article 50—Summary	40
Tyre—singing as a harlot in the latter days	41
“Give me three good reasons why Britain should be part of Europe”	42
The run up to the Brexit vote	43
The amazing events of polling day	44
A Dis-United Kingdom	45
A new leadership team	46
The long process of unravelling from Europe	46
Now 27 countries around the world want trade deal with UK	47
Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations	48
Australia was wounded when Britain joined the EU now put right as partners	48
It's time for the City to move on from the gloom	49

<u>Chapter 7: BRITAIN, ISRAEL AND THE COMMONWEALTH</u>	50
Britain and Israel	50
Leaving the EU—and entering the Israeli market?	51
Brexit may be an opportunity for Britain and Israel	52
In historic first, senior British Royal said to be planning official trip to Israel	54
Brentry	54
British warship docks in Haifa	54
High-tech is ‘the new engine’ of UK and Israel trade	55
Britain and the Balfour Declaration	55
Britain and the Commonwealth	57
Through greater trade we can have a greater Britain	58
Britain and the Middle East	58
Britain and the US	59
<u>Chapter 8: FRANCE & GERMANY, THE BEAST MOVES FORWARD</u>	60
The picture of the future Europe in Rev. ch 17	60
Europe’s eyes on Merkel to rebuild EU after Brexit vote	62
Germany: Trump victory to spur EU military union	64
Dawn of EU Army	65
Kaliningrad: Russia in the heart of Europe	66
Europe’s choice	67
Germany to take on military leadership in global conflicts	67
Germany and France to share transport planes	68
The dream of a eurostate	68
The euro still wobbling	69
Reversal of Trend in Business with Russia	70
Nord Stream 2 ‘Ready to Proceed’	71
<u>Chapter 9: RUSSIAN BEAR STAYING IN SYRIA</u>	72
Russia expanding her footprint	72
Tartus: expanding her port	72
An Existential Battle for the Demographic Future of Syria	73
Russian ships return to the Mediterranean	74
Russia uses an Iranian airbase	74
<u>Chapter 10: RUSSIAN BEAR DANCING WITH TURKEY</u>	75
Russian sanctions hurt Turkey	75
Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan blinks first	76
Turkish Stream back on track	77
Erdoğan escapes coup d’état	77
Russian Ambassador to Turkey killed	78
Putin visits Greece	78
NATO and Russia	80
Russia building more bases	80
Russia strengthens links to Crimea	81
Putin encircles Turkey in massive troop buildup	81
Moscow Deepens Its Eurasian Security Tendrils	82
Russia sells \$14 billion worth of military hardware in 2016	82
<u>Chapter 11: PUTIN AND THE CHURCH</u>	83
Orthodoxy and Russia inseparable - Putin	83
Have Israel forfeited the Promises of God?	84

‘Thinking an evil thought’	85
Russia to defend all Christians of the world	85
<u>Chapter 12: POPE FRANCIS BRINGS BACK HIS DAUGHTERS</u>	86
Rome, Greece and Russia	86
Why the Holy See Seeks Cooperation with Moscow	87
Reconciliation with the Lutherans	87
Church of England	88
Francis awarded the Charlemagne Prize	88
<u>Chapter 13: ISRAEL’S CONTINUING PROSPERITY</u>	89
Israel—a concentrated source of energy!	89
Euro-Asia Interconnector	90
Israel government invites bids for new gas exploration	90
Israel and oil	90
<u>Chapter 14: ISRAEL AND THE TRUMP EFFECT</u>	91
Israel’s hope for better relationships with America	91
The Dangers of UN Security Council Resolution 2334	92
The Settlements	93
Netanyahu links in a pro-Russian political party	94
Netanyahu visits Putin—again!	94
Developing Israeli-Russian ties	95
Israel and the West Bank Arabs	95
A seaport for Gaza?	96
Israeli links to Arab countries	97
Egyptian and Israeli Cold Peace Has Never Been Warmer	97
Israel and the Eurasian Economic Union	98
Israel sees drop in aliya numbers	98
A good economic year	98
<u>Chapter 15: SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES</u>	99
<u>Chapter 16: A CALL FOR WATCHFULNESS</u>	100
<u>Keep up-to-date!</u>	101
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Abbreviations used

EU European Union. Was the Common Market, EEC, then EC, now EU

m = million; **bn** = billion; **GDP** = Gross Domestic Product;

\$1= £0.81; €0.95; A\$1.39; CA\$1.34; NZ\$1.44 at 1-1-17 rates.

\$1 million = £811,000, \$1 billion = £811,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

Author’s important notes

I would like to especially thank my family, Bre. Kevin Allison and Stephen Whitehouse and the CSSS for their helpful comments on the draft. It is all put together in three weeks at the end of the year, so please bear with its imperfections! *Milestones* quotes extensively from overseas sources, and as **I retain original spellings, etc., check whether it is a quote before blaming my excellent proof-readers!**

Conventional religious terminology is used, sometimes put within “ ”, but often not. Readers will appreciate my understanding on the falseness of many of these terms. Conventional names are used: e.g. West Bank, Palestinians, Pope. Dates are always day-month-year. Any items in **bold** are my emphasis, i.e. not emboldened in the original, unless stated. I am very grateful for items sent in; please ensure date and source are indicated.

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Type size and electronic copies

We have increased the font size and the line spacing of the main text this year to make the pages look a little less solid. We hope you like it. The length has been increased to partially compensate. With the electronic copies of *Milestones* one can normally adjust the size of the typeface thus making it easier for the visually impaired. See inside back cover.

Helpful aids. Booklets obtainable from: Bible Magazine agents, CSSS agents or *Milestones*.

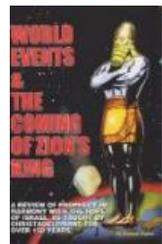
The True Gospel. Defended & Explained. by Bro G. Pearce

This 72 page booklet looks at the Hope of Israel and the meaning of the New Covenant.



World Events & the Coming of Zion's King. Bro G. Pearce

This 100 page booklet examines most of the scriptural passages concerning the time of the end events and puts them in a logical order. At the same time, Bro Graham Pearce looks at some of the newer ideas and show where they fall down when examined by scripture. For brethren and sisters looking for the return of their Master, it is essential reading.



Milestones Snippets: a free email news service

Sent out 3 or 4 times a week, these are the items that catch my eye and form the basis of writing the *Bible Magazine* quarterly updates and the annual *Milestones*. Consisting of about 8-12 pages, it keeps you up-to-date with events from around the world of interest to Bible students. Each article is indexed and cumulative indexes are published quarterly. See inside back cover for details. Email to don@MilestonesUK.org

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THE PURPOSE OF MILESTONES

We all need encouragement as we face the trials and tribulations of life. Our world is so alien to the things of God, that the things of the Kingdom seem a distant dream. Soon, in God's mercy, we will be working for the Lord Jesus in bringing about the transformation God has promised. Our desire is to serve the Lord Jesus in his Kingdom, but the present reality is so different.

The word of Prophecy

One of the ways we are greatly encouraged is through the word of prophecy. When John was instructed to write down these words, *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*, his reaction was to fall down before the one speaking to him!

*And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: **for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***
Rev. 19:9,10

The Greek word for *testimony*, *maturia*, means “evidence given” (Strong’s), normally translated *witness*, *evidence*, or as here, *testimony*. When the apostles preached, they could perform many signs as a witness to their teaching. In the following ages, when the Holy Spirit gifts would be withdrawn, then the great witness to the work of Christ lay in his words in this last book. Containing an unfolding of historical events in relation to the saints, it would give much hope to each generation as they saw where they were in God’s scheme. And through the wonderful construction of the Book of Revelation, with its frequent end-time snapshots, it gave believers the hope that their Master’s return was not far off. For all God’s servants, the return of their Lord will appear to be at the same time as their falling asleep. Their next conscious moment will be the resurrection day.

Our generation has a double dose of signs fulfilling. The coming of the Lord Jesus is to establish God’s Kingdom on earth. For this he requires his helpers, hence the first stage is the judgment for his household. Next, he has to rescue his nation from the hands of their enemies who have come and taken over their land and city. Having achieved their rescue—and conversion—the work turns to bringing scattered Israel home and at the same time bringing the world under his jurisdiction.

Now the Old Testament prophets recorded many prophecies, most of which spanned their times, but parts reached out to the future restoration of God’s nation. Living in the time when the Times of the Gentiles is about to end with rise of Zion again, our generation has the benefit of both Old and New Testament prophecies reaching their fulfilments.

In an age of great ungodliness, we have this *more sure word of prophecy* to encourage us and to bear witness to the incredible foreknowledge of our God, who caused the prophets of old to record His Words which describe so accurately matters which are unfolding before our eyes.

Our contemplation of the political world serves to strengthen our faith. If our God could so accurately speak of the things happening today, then how can we doubt that He will indeed send His Son at the appointed time. His Name will indeed be glorified to the ends of the earth. As Bro John Thomas put it:

These are wise in the wisdom of God, and venerate His word above all things. Though not His counsellors, He has graciously condescended to inform them what He intends to do before it comes to pass. Hence, it is testified by the prophet, that *the Lord God will surely do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.* (Amos 3:7). This revelation is made that His people's faith may be confirmed and enlarged; and that in every generation they may know the times and seasons to which they stand related. Knowing the signs, they are enabled to discern the times; and while consternation and dismay cause men's hearts to fail, they are courageous, and rejoice in perceiving the approach of the kingdom of God. This is the proper use of the prophetic word.

From these premises we may conclude, that as the Lord has also revealed what is to come to pass in these latter days, it is both our duty and privilege to make ourselves acquainted with it, that our faith may grow and be strengthened; our affections be detached from the fleeting present, and set more firmly on things to come; that our minds may be fortified against error; and that we may be prepared to meet the Lord as those who have kept their garments, and shall not be put to shame (Rev. 16:15). It is our own faults if we are not *light in the Lord*. He has plainly set before us what is happening in our day, and what is yet to occur. *Elpis Israel* p.333/4

If we had any doubts about Scripture fulfilling, then surely this year has been a historical year!

With Britain packing her bags, as it were, Europe feels free to pursue her dream to become an equivalent of the USA, a United States of Europe. Germany is the natural leader. Again, it will enable the *Beast* system of Revelation 16 to develop. Based upon previous manifestations of the *Beast* it is to be led by Germany.

Running in parallel, as far as the nation of Israel is concerned, is the final development of Nebuchadnezzar's Image. Many centuries have gone by since the two-leg phase, but now Israel is a nation back in their land. The Image edifice, representing the Kingdoms of Men in opposition to God's Kingdom and People, is beginning to enter its last final phase. It has had to wait until there is a nation of Israel in possession of Jerusalem. That now being the situation, the Eastern and Western feet and toes are being formed

before our eyes, ready for the whole edifice to be reared up upon this precarious base of iron and clay. It will be short-lived, because it comes to destroy Israel and although allowed by God to succeed because it leads Israel to repentance, it is destined to be utterly destroyed. It will be replaced by the little-stone Kingdom, that will gradually grow until it fills the whole earth.

We watch with interest at the regrouping of Europe and Russia and her former satellites into two groupings, East and West. Although divided by ideology (as they were in the days of the Roman Empire), yet they will be finally united under the golden headship of the latter-day Babylon. Ancient Babylon desired to replace the things of Israel's God by the false worship of Babylon. Despite Babylon's superior might and its success in crushing Judah, Nebuchadnezzar was brought to realise, *the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* (Dan.4:25) Similarly, the nations will come to learn that Israel's God is supreme. We are seeing the forming of this golden head which will lead the Image against Israel.

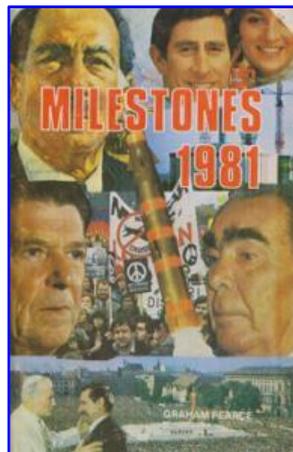
We see the growing hostility to Israel and the desire of many nations to remove Israel's control over Jerusalem. In today's situation, we can see how the Image nations will unite to seize that *burdensome stone* (Zec. 12:3) of Jerusalem, only to be cut in pieces by the stone's Defender and King.

The structure of this year's Milestones

- 1) To continue looking at prophecies for our days and consider prophecies which lie beyond Armageddon.
- 2) Look specifically at prophecies concerning Tyre and Tarshish as our background to Brexit and then see their outworking today.
- 3) We then take a couple of chapters to see Brexit and Britain's new role with Israel, the Gulf States and the Commonwealth.
- 4) We then look at where the EU is now heading and especially Germany's role in a post-Brexit Europe.
- 5) A couple of chapters looking at Russia in Syria and in Turkey together with developments in the northern Middle East.
- 6) A chapter on the coming together of the Pope and the Patriarch, an important step in the churches coming together, ready for the final stage of the Babylonian Golden head in its religious aspect which directs the movements of the Image.
- 7) Two chapters on Israel, looking at her economic progress which is making her a desirable prey and her relations with her neighbours and other Middle East items and the possible "Trump" effect.
- 8) 2017 and 2018 are significant years as far as anniversaries are concerned. They may well be very significant years for disciples.
- 9) Our final chapter, as always is an exhortation to us all.

FROM EARLY MILESTONES—1981

What were the issues of 35 years ago? This looking back gives us a brief insight into the world situation as seen through the eyes of a Bible Watchman a generation ago. Milestones that year wasn't completed until March 1982. It was shorter, running to 59 pages with just five chapters. For the first time it had an illustrated cover with a montage of faces.



There was former President Anwar Sadat of Egypt who had been assassinated in 1981; a young looking Charles and Diana who had been married that year; A Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament rally with President Reagan and Chairman Brezhnev out-staring each other on either side of a ballistic missile; the last picture was a flash-back to 1979 with Pope John Paul II embracing Lech Walesa, the Solidarity movement leader, against the backdrop of crowds of Poles who had turned out in Warsaw Victory Square to greet the Pope.

In the introduction, my father wrote:

1981 has been crowded with events, bringing to mind the closing words of the end of Isaiah chapter 60: *I the LORD will hasten it in his time*. These are some of the highlights of the year: the assassination of President Sadat and the attempted assassinations of President Reagan and the Pope; crisis conditions in Poland, with the people and the Catholic Church ranged against the Communist government; France and Greece turning to Socialist governments; President Reagan's 'confrontation' attitude to the Soviet; Western Europe's alarm at this and the vast anti-nuclear demonstrations in most countries; Begin surprisingly re-elected Prime Minister in Israel; world-wide condemnation of Israel following the smashing of the nuclear plant in Iraq, the 'indiscriminate' bombing of Beirut, and the annexation of the Golan Heights.

Things appear to be very busy back in 1981! It would be another 10 years before communism would fall, but the long pathway to the great changes in Russia and Europe was well underway. Communism was the means of holding back the latter-day development of the Dragon power of Revelation ch 16—the eastern foot of Nebuchadnezzar's Image of Daniel 2.

The first chapter had the ominous heading: **Western Europe Torn between U.S. and USSR**. As today, America was complaining about the cost of defending Europe against the Soviet Union. Voices were calling for America

to withdraw her troops from Europe, as Europe, increasingly seeing that WWII would be fought in Europe and faced with the Soviets escalating spending on armaments, were facing the same dilemma as today. They were asking whether they should work with America (with whom they had a deep-seated dislike), or work for a compromise with Russia? In this chapter, Bro Graham recounts the rise of neutralism in Europe. WWII was seen as involving nuclear weapons; did people want to live with that prospect hanging over them? America would be OK—they lived far away, Russia was so huge, such destruction would only affect a small part of it. For Europe, it would be a very different matter, faced with 10,000 nuclear weapons blitzing them!

Not only was there an anti-American movement in Europe, there was a strong Socialist movement there. Many Western European countries now had Socialist governments—Greece, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They favoured an accommodation with the Soviet Union and the establishment of disarmament movements.

The Roman Catholic Church threw her weight behind disarmament groups:

“The teaching of the church is clear—nuclear weapons and the arms race must be condemned as immoral,” Archbishop John Quinn had proclaimed.
The Guardian 03-Jan-82

Another section of this 1st chapter was headed: **Western Europe’s growing trade and economic cooperation with the Soviet**. As today, America had been calling for sanctions over the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and Europe wasn’t happy, Germany especially wanted the trade. In 1981, a deal was signed for the construction of a 3,000-mile gas pipeline to connect Russia with France and Germany, much to America’s strong disapproval!

The next heading in this chapter was: **Russian arms outnumber NATO’s**. This was the height of the Soviet Empire. They had 4.8 million active service men compared to America’s 2 million; 4,306 nuclear warheads to 2,154; 85 vessels to 41 and a tank force 5x’s the size of its rivals.

Chapter 2 was devoted to **Britain**. The first section was on the power and continuity of the Monarchy and the example set by the Queen. The Royal wedding had been a boost for family life and the sanctity of marriage, though sadly this didn’t prove to be the longer-term situation. Britain’s hostility to much of the EEC’s regulations and opposition to the many Socialist governments was discussed with this poignant comment:

So though we do not know how it will happen, Britain will separate from Europe. The time will come when the European system will be bound together as the Fourth Beast of Daniel, to be destroyed by the saints, and its body given to the burning flame (Daniel 7); or in terms of the

Revelation, the Beast and the False Prophet *were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.* (Rev. 19:20).

Bro Graham then considers **Roman Catholicism and its evil influence.**

Compared to Protestantism, Rome's errors are of a worse kind. Among the prime ones are—

1. The infallibility of the Pope as Christ's representative on earth;
2. Authority of the priesthood to crucify afresh Jesus Christ at the Mass;
3. The elevation of Mary to a key position in the work of saving souls.

With the planned visit of the Pope to Britain in 1982, Bro Graham appealed for a witness against the errors of this evil system.

Next, was a look at the Pope's successes in Poland, pushing at the walls of communism through the power of the Solidarity movement.

The penultimate chapter was headed **The North-South Grouping in the M.E. Continues to Grow.** There had been a series of remarkable events which were turning the balance of power into a N-S split. This is what we continue to witness today, it has taken 35 years to get here!

America was rebuilding her sea power and in 1981 had agreed to invest \$100m in improving facilities on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. This put the Americans firmly on the M.E. map.

Britain too, was re-establishing her presence in the Middle East. Mrs Thatcher was the first British Prime Minister to visit the Gulf, vowing to end Britain's neglect of the region. Princes Philip and Charles visited Egypt.

The Gulf Cooperation Council was founded in 1981. It is remarkable how many of these items which were live then, feature in *Milestones 2016!*

To the north, the Soviet had made a Defence Treaty with Syria the previous year and was getting more deeply involved there and in Libya. The biggest news was covered by this headline: **The Soviet invited into Iran.** Bible watchers knew from Ezekiel 38 that Persia/Iran was the chief companion of Gog. Now they were firmly in. *Time* magazine 23-Nov-81 ran the headline **Big Brother Moves In.**

The final chapter was entitled **Growing Hostility to Israel.** 1981 had been an eventful year for Israel. Israel had destroyed the nuclear reactor in Iraq; waged a 12-day mini-war against Lebanon and bombed the nerve centre of the PLO in Beirut. They had taken areas on the West Bank under direct control and formally annexed the Golan Heights. The new government under Mr Begin was deeply unpopular with the West.

Milestones 1981 closed with a consideration of a time of working together with the true Arabs—Abraham's descendants of Keturah and Ishmael—and their place in the Kingdom as blessed with Abraham's seed.

POST ARMAGEDDON PROPHECIES

We have over the past years looked at many prophecies concerning our times. They have been mainly prophecies which take us up to the gathering of the nations against Israel and their subsequent destruction at Armageddon. These are of course prophecies very relevant to our situation.

This year I want to look at some post Armageddon prophecies. The reason for this is that it helps us to shape our understanding of what lies on this side of Armageddon and what lies beyond. As always, we have to say that there are no prophecies that we know of that have to be fulfilled before the Master's return to his household. This is where God's Kingdom work commences, with the preparation of His saints. His workers for the upcoming work. So, although we could say, well we needn't worry about prophecies that are fulfilled after the Master is here; yet the very fact that God has revealed some details is surely sufficient to whet our interest. The more we understand, the clearer the picture will be. Without a vision of what the Kingdom is about (not that we are dealing with this) and of the events leading up to it, we may not be aiming in the right direction. It is important that we strive to think as God thinks. Today there is much talk about "love" and "tolerance" towards those within and without the brotherhood.

Yet a consideration of some of these prophecies shows us that that is not how God views things. Our love to God should be based upon our love of His Word and obedience to His wishes. John emphasises the connection in his gospel and epistles.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. *John 15:10*

If the Lord Jesus indicates that the false system of worship which passes as Christianity is abhorrent to God, then in wisdom, we should take note and be guided ourselves. It is largely from Daniel, Zechariah, Thessalonians and Revelation that our eyes are enlightened to look at these things from God's perspective.

A time line

This chart shows a possible time line. It shows the return of the Master some years before Armageddon, and, some time before that, the invasion of Israel.

The evidence for this is found in a passage in Leviticus concerning the gathering of Israel to their feasts. In



ch. 23:24 it gives instructions concerning the events of the seventh month of the religious calendar, the time when the harvests had been gathered in and marked the start of a new year on the agricultural calendar. (Israel today still starts its year in Sept/Oct.) So this was a month that was full of meaning. On the 1st day of this seventh month there was a special occasion.

*Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the **seventh month**, in the **first day** of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.*

*Ye shall do **no servile work** therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Lev.23:24,25*

This Feast of Trumpets was the only one that began on the 1st of the month, a new moon, as opposed to the full moon on the 14th day of the first month which marked Passover and the 15th day of the seventh month the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a special *convocation* or *assembly*; it was to be *holy*. No work was to be done and an *offering made by fire* was to be offered. There was an added feature, a *memorial of blowing of trumpets*. The word for trumpets isn't in the original here—there is one Hebrew word for *blowing of trumpets*.

Strong's definition	
convocation	blowing of trumpets
H4744 מִקְרָא miqrâ' mik-raw' From H7121 ; something <i>called</i> out, that is, a public <i>meeting</i> (the act, the persons, or the place); also a rehearsal :—assembly, calling, convocation, reading.	H8643 תְּרוּעָה terû'âh ter-oo-aw' From H7321 ; <i>clamor</i> , that is, <i>acclamation</i> of joy or a <i>battle cry</i> ; especially <i>clangor</i> of trumpets, blow an alarm, rejoicing, shout(-ing)

The word used by James Strong, *clangor*, is from a Latin word meaning *the sound* of a trumpet. It is clearly used to describe the blowing of a trumpet in other occurrences. In Leviticus 25:9 the trumpet (shofar) was blown to mark the jubilee commencement. The same Hebrew word 8643 is used, translated there as *jubile*. What did this all point to? The trumpets give us a clue, that what was being prefigured here was to do with the time associated with the blowing of trumpets—the day of resurrection! Paul speaks of this clearly in his passage on the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:52)

The sound of trumpets occurred at Sinai in the preparation of Israel to become God's people. (Exo. 19:13,16,19; 20:18)

This feast was at the beginning of the 7th month, again a significant number for the commencement of the 7th millennium era, the Kingdom Age.

When we combine this passage in Lev. 23:24 with the following verses, a stronger picture emerges.

Also on the **tenth day** of this **seventh month** there shall be a **day of atonement**: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

And ye shall do **no work** in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. Lev. 23:27,28

This was the most solemn Day of Atonement, when remembrance was made of the sins of the nation and the High Priest entered the Most Holy place to atone for his sins and those of the people. Now it was this very day of the year that God chose, every 49 years, to proclaim the jubilee, freedom for the servants and the dispossessed.

Then shalt thou cause the **trumpet** of the **jubile** to sound on the **tenth day** of the **seventh month**, in the **day** of **atonement** shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and **ye shall return every man unto his possession**, and ye shall return every man unto his family. Lev. 25:9,10

The Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month was a *holy convocation*, no work was to be done. A wonderful pointer to the ending of mortality. Work was a punishment for sin, to refrain from work, in this instance, points to a cessation of that which sin causes—mortality. They had to *offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD*. The offering details are amplified in Num. 29:1-5. A fitting representation of the redeeming work of their Lord and King—the one represented by the bullock, the ram, seven lambs and a young goat, all without blemish and being a *sweet savour to Yahweh*. It was a new moon, the first glimpse of the moon, representing the bride of Christ, hidden away on this special Sabbath day. Unlike the start of other months when a trumpet was blown, this was a whole *day of trumpeting* (Num. 29:1) *Yom Teruah*. Probably *Psalm 81* was written by Asaph for this occasion; a Psalm of deliverance from the darkness of Egypt (vv. 3-6).

It was also a *convocation*. One of the meanings is *rehearsal*. This is the first of two resurrection days, the 2nd being at the end of the Millennium for the mortal population who have lived through the Kingdom.

A 10-year gap?

So, 10 days after an assembly associated with trumpet blowing, was another which was associated with redemption and, every jubilee, with the freedom for Israel to regain their family inheritance. Applying a day-for-a-year principle, do we not have here a foretaste on the 1st of the month of the gathering at the last trump of those whose work it will be to redeem Israel, whose own redemption and possession of their inheritance is symbolically prefigured on the 10th day, or 10 years later?

What is it that triggers Israel's change of heart? It will be the beholding of their deliverer's wounds of crucifixion. (Zec. 12:10) Their High Priest who has entered into the Most Holy, not with *the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood.* (Heb. 9:12)

We have considered in earlier *Milestones* some of the things that will occupy this time slot. What we are not told is the time period between the invasion of Israel and Armageddon. It may be brief, but may well be a year or two of intense trouble for Israel, until they cry to their God for help.

As well as the resurrection and the gathering of the saints to Sinai, there is the actual time for judgment, which may take several years to complete. Then surely a period of intense education before that wonderful change to immortality. There then follows a period for the first phase of Elijah's work, *before—prior to—that great and dreadful day of the Lord.* (Mal. 4:5) This again will not be the work of a moment. It will be a period of re-education to a responsive class of Jew, to take them away from their traditions and back to the Law of Moses. (Mal. 4:4) Then follows Gog's invasion of Israel and then Israel's dramatic deliverance as detailed in Zechariah ch's 12 to 14.

40 years to establish Kingdom

There are several passages which indicate a 40-year period for the full restoration of Israel and the submission of the nations to Christ's rule. These days are paralleled with the original 40-year Exodus journey in Mic. 7:15; Isa. 11:11,12; Jer. 23:7,8; Psa. 68:22

There is a further pointer to this 40-year period in Revelation ch. 14:14-20. Here are described two harvests, the first a corn harvest, described as the *reaping* of the earth, which language reminds us of Armageddon—"a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgment". This is followed by the *vintage* of the grape harvest, which, in the natural world takes place several months later. Out of this winepress came blood which reached *by the space of* (as far as) *1,600 furlongs* or stadia. This is a distance of about 185 miles/300 km. This is a book of symbol. 1,600 equals 40². Is this then a symbol of a 40-year period of intense warfare commencing with the initial harvest of Armageddon?

Hour of judgment

We may also mark a sub-division within these 40 years, of a 30-year period. This would relate specifically to the punishment of Europe.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

*Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for **the hour** of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. Rev 14:6,7*

It makes sense this *hour* terminates at the same time as the ending of the 40-year period. A symbolic hour is $1/12^{\text{th}}$ of a “day”. (John 11:9) We normally apply a day-for-a-year in symbolic time periods, which would make an hour equal to a $1/12^{\text{th}}$ of a year, which is a month. However, scripture uses an intensity of calculation where the symbol requires it. And so a month, being 30 days, will represent 30 years. This would be a fitting length of time. Interestingly we have the use of a period *about the space of half an hour* in Rev. 8:1. This would equate to 15 years, and there was a period of quiet in the Roman world that this refers to, which lasted 14 years, which is *about the space of 15 years*. How long the everlasting gospel is preached before the impending *hour* of judgment falls we are not told. So perhaps it occupies a 10-year period after Armageddon, as Europe prepares to resist Israel’s King.

A jubilee period

Adding the 10-year period before Armageddon to the 40-year period after Armageddon gives us a 50-year period, commencing with Christ’s return and finishing with the Kingdom fully established. The Temple in Zion would be fully operational as *a house of prayer for all nations*. (Mark 11:17 mg) Interestingly, when Ezekiel is shown the Temple of the Kingdom Age, he is shown it as fully operational. Emphasis is placed on when he saw these things. The 10th day of the 1st month, (the 7th month of the religious calendar) of the 25th year of the captivity, on the *self-same* day. (Eze. 40:1) Fifty years earlier Josiah had kept his great Passover on this same day. (2 Chr. 35:1) It was thought that this was a jubilee year, and so Ezekiel would have had his vision on the very day that commenced a jubilee year. So it may be, that in God’s timetable, the Kingdom is fully established in a jubilee year. This would make his return also start with a jubilee year! We will look at significant years in our penultimate chapter.

Post Armageddon prophecies

The details of this period were revealed to John as the *Seven Thunders*. Not surprisingly, having seen, he was about to record, but he was forbidden to do so. (Rev. 10:3,4) These *Thunders* will be poured out after Armageddon (Rev. 16:18) and are directed mainly at Babylon (Rev 16:19)—that power which despised Israel’s God and sought to replace Truth with its own reasoning, a fitting symbol of a Roman Catholic Europe and her many daughters, who refuse to obey the Truth.

The work of bringing Israel back home and purging out rebellious nations who refuse to submit to Christ, as well as the work of educating and helping those prepared to submit, forms the allotted task of what is described in Revelation ch 10 as *the Rainbow Angel*.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

*And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, **seven thunders** uttered their voices. Rev. 10:1-3*

This is a picture of Christ and the saints going forth to establish the Kingdom. The contents of *the Thunders* were not revealed, but we have other passages which span the period from the *Rainbowed Angel* going forth to save Israel from the Gogian forces, right through to the Kingdom fully established. This will of necessity be a brief look. The reader is encouraged to fill this out with the help of the pioneer writers and more recent authors—see end of chapter.

Rev. ch 17 describes the situation after Armageddon. There is no reference to the *Dragon* power, its might will have been destroyed on the mountains of Israel. With the proclamation of the gospel, Europe's reaction will be of strong antagonism to this newly established power in Israel, whose leader is accepted by the Jews as their Messiah and King. His call to submission will arouse the hostility of Europe. In their eyes, this power in Israel will be none other than Anti-Christ! For we know the Lord Jesus will do all that Christendom ascribes to Anti-Christ. So, it is not surprising that Christendom will resist submitting to Israel's King!

If we slot the details given in Daniel ch. 7 concerning the four beasts, which is God's view of the nations that were seen as metals in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we see the end determined.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

*I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the **beast was slain**, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*

*As concerning the **rest of the beasts**, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. Dan. 7:9-11*

So the destiny of the 4th Babylonian Beast is for it to be destroyed. The other three nations submit and continue in the Kingdom as subject nations. So what is spoken of the 4th Beast is picked up in Rev. 17:14:

*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall **overcome them**: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

So Europe's fate is to be *overcome*. More details are given in the subsequent chapters of Revelation. Ch 18 describes the destruction of "Babylon" in one symbolic hour.

*Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for **in one hour** is thy judgment come. ... For **in one hour** so great riches is come to nought. ... for **in one hour** is she made desolate.* Rev. 18:10,17,19

Her overthrow will be dramatic.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. Rev. 18:21

The chapter describes the trade that the merchants of the earth did with Babylon and their mourning at their loss of business.

The armies in heaven

Rev. ch. 19:1-3 opens with praise to God for the victory gained over the enemies of God.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

*For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath **judged the great whore**, which did **corrupt the earth with her fornication**, and hath **avenged the blood of his servants** at her hand.*

And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

The 40 years of warfare is over, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb can be enjoyed, for all the world is now at rest. As is so often the case with such symbolic prophecies, having given the end picture of rest and peace, it then instructs as to how this state is attained. So the closing section describes how this will be done. John is shown a *white horse* and his *rider* waging *righteous judgments*. With him are a host of other *white horses* and their *riders*. (Rev.19:11-14) They proceed to execute God's judgments on the earth.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Rev. 19:19-21

Most of the Old Testament prophecies have to do with the saving of Israel. As well as telling of the events of Armageddon and the subsequent conversion of the Jews in the land, there are several passages which speak of their regathering to their land from where they currently live and also from the places they will be scattered to, following the invasion of their land.

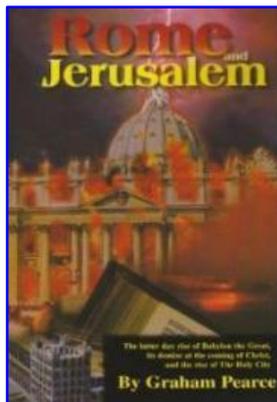
Passages like Ezekiel ch. 20:33-44 speak of the Jews being brought back and the rebels purged out, and of them entering the New Covenant, the same covenant that we have entered, by them being baptised into Christ. They will then be allocated their tribal allotment and enter into their possession.

Passages like Jeremiah 51:19-26 speak of Israel being God's *battle axe and weapons of war*. The Jews in the land, having entered the New Covenant, following their deliverance from Gog's forces, will then join Elijah and the *Rainbowed Angel* work of bringing their brethren out of Europe and Russia. Following the destruction of the cream of the Russian and European armies, in Israel, there will be no place of rest for the Jews. Especially as the mainly "Christian" nations will think of Israel's King in terms of Anti-Christ; they will have no favour for Jews who are seeking to be with this "upstart" King, who is demanding the world's obedience and allegiance.

We think of our Master's advice to his 21st century brethren and sisters.

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Rev. 16:15

Helpful books

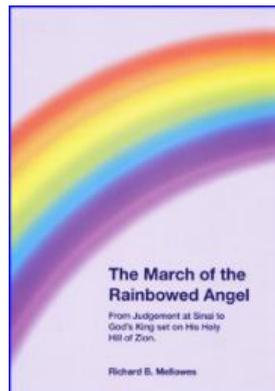


Rome and Jerusalem. By Bro. Graham Pearce. Subtitled *The latter day rise of Babylon the Great, its demise at the coming of Christ and the rise of the holy City*. Third edition, printed May 2015. From CSSS agents and *Milestones*.

This 144-page book gives an excellent, detailed look at the evidence for the Papal system being the latter-day Babylon the Great. In the 2nd section it looks at the situation today. The 3rd section expounds the details of

Revelation ch's 17 and 18 on the Fall of Babylon. A valuable resource for Bible students.

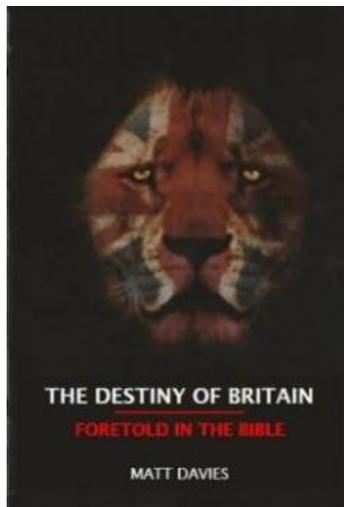
The March of the Rainbowed Angel. By Bro Richard Mellows, Caerphilly, UK. A recent (2013) 225-page exposition of this subject. Available from *Milestones*.



PROPHECIES CONCERNING TYRE & TARSHISH

Following Britain's decision to leave the EU and plough her own way as a trading power, it is appropriate that we take a brief look at what the Bible says about the latter-day Tyre and Tarshish. We want to see just how remarkably the scene is being set for the role set out in the pages of scripture.

For a fuller picture, we would recommend Bro. Matt Davies's booklet published this year entitled: The Destiny of Britain. Foretold in the Bible (Available from Amazon or CSSS or free download PDF.) Bro. Matt has also done several talks which can be seen on the Bible Prophecy Channel. It is heartening to find numerous new pieces of evidence that have come to light which confirm the correctness of our historic understanding concerning Tyre and Tarshish. In our next chapter, we will see in the headlines of today, this new spirit of trading, not only with the world, but concentrating especially upon Israel and the Gulf. How thrilling!



Tyre and Tarshish in the latter days

There are a number of prophecies that are clearly latter-day, which speak of the activity of a power referred to as Tarshish and also Tyre. So there must be a power today that corresponds to ancient Tyre and Tarshish. Our historic understanding is that these two terms are used of Britain of today, and we believe the evidence has grown so much stronger in the new destiny that Britain is seeking in a post-Brexit world. Let's take extracts from these passages.

Isaiah 2. It opens with a picture of the Kingdom and then proceeds to tell us how we arrive at this Kingdom Age. It sets out a graphic description of Israel of today, trusting in her own might. We referred to this in ch 3 of *Milestones 2015*. It then describes the judgments of God upon the nations and includes this section:

For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

*And upon all **the ships of Tarshish**, and upon all pleasant pictures.*
vv. 12,16

Isaiah 60. Again, we can see that this is a prophecy that is fulfilled in the last-days. It speaks of the converted Arab nations descended from Abraham, offering their sacrifices upon God's altar. It also takes a wider picture, not only are Arab nations working with Israel's God but also Gentile nations!

*Surely **the isles** shall wait for me, and the **ships of Tarshish first**, to bring thy sons from far, their **silver** and their **gold** with them, unto the **name** of the **LORD thy God**, and to the **Holy One of Israel**, because he hath glorified thee.*

*And the **sons of strangers** shall build up thy walls, and **their kings** shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. vv. 9,10*

Isaiah 66. Again, this is a clear latter-day prophecy, describing the *new heavens and new earth*. (v.22)

For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.

*And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to **Tarshish**, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javen, **to the isles afar off**, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and **they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles**.*

*And they shall **bring all your brethren** for an offering unto the LORD out **of all nations** upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, **to my holy mountain Jerusalem**, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. vv. 16,18-20*

So, in all these latter-day passages, there is a mention of Tarshish having a role to play, so we must be able to identify who this power is today, as clearly Tyre and Tarshish have long disappeared.

The link between Tyre and Tarshish and the Phoenicians

Tyre was a trading city to the north of Israel on the Mediterranean coast. It was famed for its purple dye from the murex sea snails found on her shores. It is from the word for purple that Phoenicia seems to have been derived.

For the ancient trading city of Tyre, the Mediterranean Sea would be the main means of transporting goods to and from the West. For trade to and from the East, there were two routes: by land or by sea. One brought goods up the Red Sea to Ezion-geber (today's Eilat/Aquaba region) (1 Kng. 9:26) and then across by land to Gaza and onwards to Tyre or by the land route up to Damascus and across to Tyre. The other route was via Dedan (Bahrain) in the Persian Gulf and across land to Tyre.

Tarshish was a descendant of Japheth. (Gen 10:4) Japheth's sons occupied Europe, as Ham's Africa and Seth's the Middle East and further east. Genesis tells us of Japheth's sons

*By these were the **isles of the Gentiles** divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.* Gen. 10:5

So very much occupying *islands*, or coastlines (Gesenius); in other-words associated with maritime powers.

Part of Japheth's family had moved into the Tyre region drawn to its position as far as trade was concerned and its good harbour. Because the trade of Tyre depended on good ships, the Phoenicians developed keeled ships which could sail the seas. One of the important destinations seems to have been Tarshish. There are several references to ships going to Tarshish. (2 Chr. 9:21; 2 Chr. 20:36, 37; Jon. 1:3). Tarshish was obviously a place; Jonah could buy a ticket in Joppa, to sail Tarshish. (Jon. 1:3) There are several references to **ships of T(h)arshish** in scripture. 1 Kgs. 22:48; Psa. 48:7; Isa. 2:16; Isa. 23:14; Isa. 60:9; Eze. 27:25. From what we read, the ships of Tarshish were either ships capable of sailing to Tarshish or had come from there.

We know from Jonah's trip that he was sailing from Joppa and therefore westward and so there must have been a western Tarshish. In 2 Chr. 9:21 we read of ships sailing from Ezion-geber to Tarshish, to bring back gold, silver, ivory and apes and peacocks. This points to an eastern Tarshish and India fits as the source of such goods. Incidentally this verse in Chronicles speaks of the king's ships going out and the ships of Tarshish returning, indicating a connection between the type of boat and its destination.

The Tyrians were **Phoenicians** and they had ships that could travel to Tarshish and were visited by ships from Tarshish.

Britain's connection with Tarshish

The map on the next page indicates Britain as the source of tin. Tin was a very valuable commodity as, when added to copper, it makes a much harder, stronger material—bronze, which was highly sought after because of its superior characteristics. Typically, 12% tin was mixed with 88% copper to produce bronze. Considerable quantities would therefore be needed. The Phoenicians were very keen to guard the location of tin, as it was a very valuable trade secret.

It is interesting that Herodotus (430 BC) seems rather vague as to the source of tin, indicating what a well-guarded secret it was! Talking of the Cassiterides ("Tin Islands") he says "from which we are said to have our tin", but he wasn't sure where they were except they were in the extreme regions!

Diodorus Siculus writing about 60 BC speaks of the preparation of tin for export from what is now Cornwall, by being loaded onto boats for shipment to Morlaix in Brittany and transported across France on pack horses to



Marseilles for onward shipping. A few years ago, the shipwreck of a boat laden with 42 tin ingots was discovered near the mouth of the River Erme in Devon—Dartmoor was a source of tin. These were dated to between 500 and 600 BC. 27 ingots were found in another shipwreck off Salcombe, dating to around 900 BC.

In 600 BC, the Egyptian King Necho II challenged the Phoenicians to sail around Africa in the belief that if they travelled southward down the Red Sea they would eventually arrive at Gibraltar and back to Egypt via the Mediterranean. Herodotus records that the Phoenicians in fact achieved this with a 3-year journey.

In 2008-2010 a reconstruction of a Phoenician trading vessel, built at the ancient Phoenician port of Arwad, embarked upon a journey to re-trace the Phoenicians' route around Africa. Re-creating this historical voyage was the major objective of the Phoenician Ship Expedition and was completed by Captain Philip Beale and his crew in October 2010 after 2 years 2 months, and 20,000 miles at sea.

Ships capable of sailing round the Horn of Africa would be capable of sailing through the Mediterranean and northwards to Britain. The Phoenicians traded with Britain in Old Testament times as ancient Phoenician objects have been found in South West Britain. At Stonehenge, the remains of a Mediterranean young man were discovered, said to be 3,550 years old.

Ezekiel ch 27 lists the origins of the items which were traded in Tyre's fairs. Those from Tarshish are listed too.

*Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of **all kind of riches**; with **silver, iron, tin, and lead**, they **traded** in thy **fairs**. Eze. 27:12*

All these are found in Britain and the origin of their mining goes back to Ezekiel's days.

There is an important verse in Isaiah 23 which indicates that the Tyrian power would be taken away from Tyre to a new base that is *afar off*.

*Pass ye over to **Tarshish**; howl, ye inhabitants of **the isle**.*

*Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her **afar off** to sojourn. Isa. 23:6,7*

This indicates that the base of the latter-day Tarshish power would be found *afar off* from the original position. One can trace a succession of maritime powers that took up Tyre's mantle, before being taken up by the British.

The latter-day Sheba and Dedan powers

Scripture shows a latter-day role for a Tyre/Tarshish power. It operates in companionship with *Sheba* and *Dedan* and is described as a *merchant* power which is associated with *young lions*. This information comes from one verse in Ezekiel 38 in relation to Gog's invasion of Israel.

***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? Eze. 38:13*

These are matters which we have dealt with in *Milestones* many times before. To summarise. Foremost among those who protest at Israel's invasion are *Sheba* and *Dedan*. The Bible relates at least two sets of Shebas and Dedans. One set from Abraham through Keturah, (Gen. 25:3) another from Cush. (Gen. 10:7) They spread out into the Arabian Gulf. The Cushite Dedan is linked in history to the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf.



Dedan, the place where they resided, is believed to be identical with the Daden of the Middle Ages, now called Bahrein, in Arabia Deserts, an island on the western shores of the Persian Gulf. *Castell's Illust. Bible Dict.*

This would also fit with the description of the Dedan traders described in Ezekiel 27:15 who seemed to have traded with India—the source of ebony and elephants.

*The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present **horns of ivory** and **ebony**.*

The Keturah Dedan is associated with southern Jordan/northern Saudi Arabia. Pottery bearing ancient graffiti: “Rahimil, son of Busrat camped in Dedan” was found at Al Ula in northern Saudi Arabia.



Sheba is associated with the Queen of Sheba in the Yemen region of the Gulf. So, Sheba and Dedan very much points to the Gulf region. The Arabs of this region are predominantly Sunni, in contrast to the Shiite of Iran and Iraq.

The Sunnis are much more friendly to Israel, while the Shiites seek Israel’s destruction. Shiite Iran/Persia is on the side of Gog, it fits that Sheba and Dedan would be opposed to their actions.

The Merchants of Tarshish

The latter-day Tarshish power is not itself located here, but her merchants, her traders, are here and working in the region. This very much fits as we shall see in the next chapter. Britain was a merchant power, lost much of her power after WWII but has steadily regained it and with Brexit, is seeking to be a world-wide trading power again. She has many links to Commonwealth countries spread around the world, but it is so fascinating to see her choosing to concentrate her trading links in the Gulf region and with Israel! She has promised to put the bulk of her defence capabilities here. It is clear that the new British government is seeking to keep the region stable as so much of her trade goes through the Suez Canal. Britain’s Protestant background gives her an affinity with Israel, but again this is doubtless being driven by trade.

All their young lions

Obviously not literal lions. Ezekiel in an earlier chapter had used this symbol to describe young lions in ch. 19. These are grown up, no longer cubs dependent upon their mother. Britain has associated with her a group of nations, that were under her control, but are now independent. The Commonwealth nations are today independent and yet have traditionally helped Britain. Most are still trading powers in the mould of Britain and we find them trading in the Sheba, Dedan region, as well as friendly to Israel.

There is no other power that can be described as **a lion** with a **company** of **young lions** and also:

- is the source of certain minerals in the time of Ezekiel
- is a trading power afar off from ancient Tyre
- is a maritime power
- and has an interest in Israel and the Gulf region.

MERCHANTS AND LIONS IN SHEBA AND DEDAN TODAY

In our previous chapter, we looked at prophecies concerning the latter-day Tyre and Tarshish. We will see how the different parts of Ezekiel 38:13 are coming alive before our eyes. It is a tremendous boost to our faith!

Britain and her young lions, in the Gulf and Israel in 2016

Let's see the progress that Britain and *her* (RV) *young lions* have made in the Middle East in the past year.

In November, Prince Charles was in Bahrain to open a new British naval base, courtesy of the Bahraini King who had generously funded its building cost of £15m. This was not just out of philanthropy. There are close ties between the two countries, which stretch back 200 years! She gained her independence from Britain in 1971 and is home to 7,000 Britons who work here. Bahrain is in the unfortunate position of being located upstream of the Strait of Hormuz and opposite Iran. The Strait is the choke-point to trade up-

and-down the Persian Gulf; and Iran is the great power threatening to cut off trade through it. The US has a naval base at Bahrain and normally has at least one aircraft carrier stationed here, but with cut-backs and refits, this is no longer the case. Hence supplying a base, together with Britain's commitment to



defend the region, would have been a price well-worth paying by this super-rich country. The base was completed in November and officially opened by Prince Charles. It is known as *HMS Juffair*, (naval bases are treated as if a ship). As we saw in Ch. 4, Bahrain is ancient Dedan.

Today on his trip to Bahrain, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has opened a new Naval Support Facility in Manama. It is a fitting way to mark the 200th anniversary of Anglo-Bahraini cooperation but, more importantly, **it is a reaffirmation of the UK's commitment to the Gulf, and to Bahrain in particular.**

With the region continuing to face difficult times, the British return to East of Suez is a reassuring sign that our countries remain **steadfast friends** and **allies**, with **strong diplomatic, military** and **trade** relations.

At the end of last month His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa visited London, where he met Her Majesty the Queen, the Prime Minister, the Ambassadors of Gulf States to the United Kingdom, and a number of parliamentarians.

During the visit, His Majesty extended an invitation to Theresa May to attend the 37th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit being hosted in Manama next month. His Majesty, as the summit's President, also outlined the Council's interest **in a free trade agreement between the UK and the GCC, which would significantly increase the UK's access to the GCC's £1.3 trillion market**; a market estimated to **grow** by a further £400 billion by 2020.

Bilateral trade between Bahrain and the UK generated £432 million in 2015 alone, **an increase of 35 per cent** on the previous year. And the Kingdom is **firmly committed** to expanding these mutually beneficial trade relations. Relative to its size, Bahrain already hosts a large number of British companies: 500 British brands, 90 British company branches, and 350 Bahraini-British business partnerships. These businesses operate in some of Bahrain's key sectors, including banking, accounting, law and industry.

Bahrain is building on its **long-standing status as the gateway to the GCC's rapidly expanding market**, leveraging our highly-educated workforce and liberal business environment—which offers a low tax regime and some of the lowest business costs in the region—to attract international investors.

In this post-Brexit world, these long-standing **trade ties** provide the **perfect platform to deepen and expand trading links with the entire region**. *Daily Telegraph* 10-Nov-16

In December, Theresa May visited Bahrain to address the Gulf Security Council. This is the first time a British PM has been asked to attend, and she was the first female to address this august band of Gulf Monarchs. Founded in 1981, these 6 Gulf States which border the Persian Gulf, have been steadily increasing their integration. Ultimately, they seek to be the EU of the Middle East.



Prime Minister Theresa May attended the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Bahrain on 6 to 7 December 2016 to **reaffirm and deepen the strong partnership and cooperation between the GCC and the UK**.

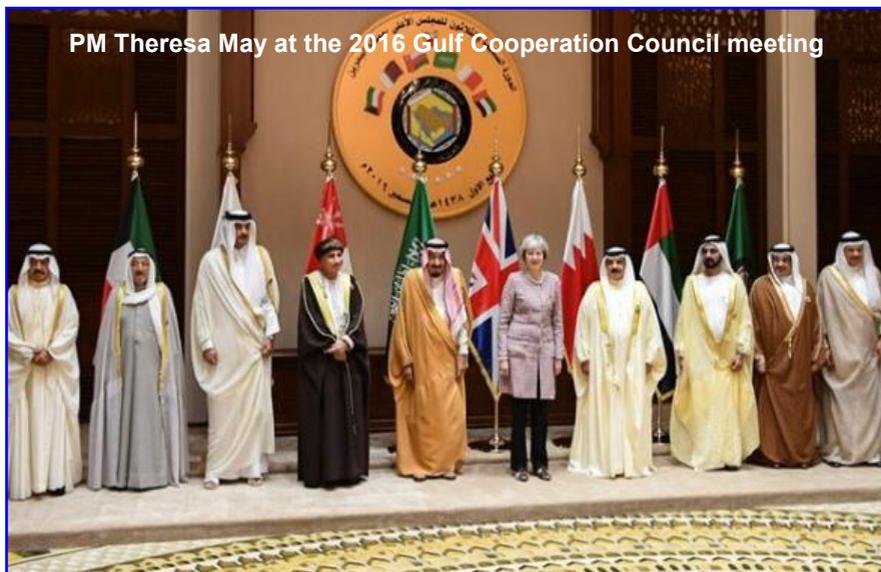
The leaders agreed to launch the **GCC-UK Strategic Partnership** to foster closer relations in all fields, including political, defence, security, and **trade**. They also agreed to enhance people-to-people contact, and develop collective approaches to regional issues to advance their **shared interest in stability and prosperity**. *UK Government website, 07-Dec-16*

Here are extracts from the speech she gave—it was very moving to Bible students looking for Britain to return to the Gulf region. The fact that it was given in Bahrain, ancient Dedan, added poignancy to her words.

The UK stands here today seeking not just to reaffirm a relationship that is of great historic value but to **renew** a partnership that is absolutely fundamental to our shared future.

Not just to offer a message of **continuity**, but to begin to build a **bold new chapter** in our cooperation; not to develop a transactional relationship but rather to forge a **strategic relationship**, a relationship based on true **partnership** and an enduring **commitment** between our countries and our peoples;

Gulf security is our security. ... no country is a more committed partner for you in this fight than the United Kingdom. ... I want to assure you that I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to the Gulf and the wider Middle East. The UK is fully committed to our strategic partnership with the Gulf and working with you to counter that threat.



But as part of the renewed relationship that I want to forge with you, the United Kingdom will make a more **permanent and more enduring commitment to the long-term security of the Gulf**.

We will invest in hard power, with over £3 billion of defence spending in the region over the next decade, **spending more on defence in the Gulf than in any other region of the world**.

Through the construction of *HMS Jufair*, and thanks to the generosity of the Kingdom of Bahrain, we will create a **permanent presence** in the region, the **first such facility east of Suez since 1971**, with **more British** warships, aircraft and personnel deployed on operations in the **Gulf** than in any other part of the world.

At the same time, a **regional land training hub** in Oman is establishing a **permanent British army presence** in the region.

We will also go further in **deepening our defence cooperation** through a new Strategic Partnership between the UK and the GCC, **supporting the development of your defence capacity and capability**, including for humanitarian operations and crisis response planning.

As part of this we will establish a **new British Defence Staff in Dubai** to co-ordinate our regional activities and, here in Bahrain, we will embed a **dedicated military officer** with the Ministry of Interior bomb disposal unit to provide bomb scene management support and training.

In all of these ways, I am determined that the UK will be at the forefront of a wider Western effort to step up **our defence and security partnership**. Not just to provide greater stability and security to the region but also to protect the rules-based order that has been so fundamental to our shared prosperity.

For just as Gulf security is our security, so **your prosperity is also our prosperity**.

Already **the Gulf is a special market** for the United Kingdom. Last year alone, trade between the UK and GCC was worth more than £30 billion.

... So I will continue the work that the UK has been leading over the past 3 years to make **London one of the great capitals of Islamic finance** anywhere in the world. And as Britain leaves the European Union so we intend to take a **leap forward, to look outwards and seek to become the most committed and most passionate advocate of free trade in the world**.

I believe there has never been a more important moment for us to get this right. And under my leadership, Britain will play its full part in delivering on that vision. *Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street 07-Dec-16*

The UAE [United Arab Republic] is Britain's 4th largest market outside the EU, on course for £25bn in annual trade by 2020. 5,000 UK companies are active in this country. (*The National* 18-Sep-16) It was one of the first places visited by Liam Fox as Secretary of International Trade.

Operation Kipion

Britain has maintained a naval presence in the Gulf area since the 1980's. Formally the *Armillar* patrol, it is now code-named *Operation Kipion*. Here are a few statements from their website. (Accessed 19-Dec-16)

Protecting our economy

Maritime trade is the lifeblood of the UK economy and industry. 95% of Britain's economic activity depends on the oceans. And every year Britain imports goods worth £524 billion.

The UK is so dependent on the seas for its prosperity, that without the Royal Navy acting as a deterrent the effect on the economy would be overwhelming.

Our maritime presence is a demonstration of our continued commitment to enduring peace and stability, comprising: a command element, the United Kingdom Component Command, responsible for the wider region, across the Gulf and Indian Ocean, exercising command and control of the RN and RFA ships and cooperating within a 30-nation maritime force. www.royalnavy.mod.uk Accessed 19-Dec-16

Parker Review: Blueprint for a strong naval shipbuilding sector

In November, a report was presented to the UK Government.

Sir John Parker's Independent Report into naval shipbuilding published today (29 November) sets out far-reaching recommendations to transform the United Kingdom's shipbuilding industry and boost the prosperity of shipyards and supply chains across the country.

Based on extensive consultation with government, industry, and trades unions, it will inform the government's National Shipbuilding Strategy to be published in the spring.

Sir John's report is a fundamental reappraisal of how we undertake naval shipbuilding in the UK with the aim of placing it on a sustainable long-term footing. **It enables the foundations to be laid for a modern, efficient, and competitive sector capable of meeting the country's future defence and security needs.**

The government will publish a full response, and implementation plan, in spring 2017. This response will be the National Shipbuilding Strategy and a vital part of the government's industrial strategy that focuses on increasing economic growth across the country and investing in a more skilled workforce.

Sir John's vision means maintaining Britain's naval prowess to ensure its role in the world. It also means using the opportunities of Britain's shipbuilding expertise to become a leading producer of ships for export.

There is already a vibrant shipbuilding and marine engineering sector across the UK. Around 15,000 people are directly employed in UK shipbuilding and repair, with an additional 10,000 jobs indirectly supported through the wider supply chain in the UK. The government is committed to seeing that grow even stronger, with a new focus on exports.

Backed by a rising defence budget, the government is investing billions in a growing Royal Navy building two new aircraft carriers, new Type 26 Global Combat Ships, Dreadnought and Astute class submarines, and offshore patrol vessels. We are also developing a new class of General Purpose Frigate so that by the 2030s we can grow the size of the fleet. This major programme of investment will increase the power and reach of our Royal Navy. *Ministry of Defence 29-Nov-16*

The UK Government is determined to rebuild Britain's naval power. Two of the world's most advanced aircraft carriers are well under construction, the first, *HMS Queen Elizabeth* begins sea trials in March 2017 and is scheduled for commissioning in May. Her sister ship is due for completion in 2020.



Sense of Scale. Computer generated picture of the 280m vessel in front of the 265m frontage of the Houses of Parliament—it couldn't get under the bridges!

Other new vessels are under construction. The government has been in talks with representatives of the merchant navy who have put forward matters that they would like government help to achieve, to ensure Britain continues as a world-class maritime power.

Britain's links to Israel

It is clear from Ezekiel 38:13 that the *merchants of Tarshish* challenge the Gogian invasion. Indeed, it would indicate that in some way they are in the area. *Art thou come ...* they say. The same Hebrew word is used by the widow at Zarephath when standing before Elijah. (1 Kng. 17:18)

Under David Cameron, the UK Government made trade with Israel a target market, putting money and resources into building up this trade. David Quarry, the UK's Ambassador to Israel wrote:

The UK is deeply committed to promoting a flourishing partnership between Israel and the UK.

The reality of the UK-Israel relationship is one of strengthening links across trade, investment, tech, science, education, security and defence. Trade and investment are at record levels. Last year Rolls Royce and EL AL signed an engine deal for EL AL's new Dreamliner fleet worth some £1 billion. This is the UK's largest ever export deal to Israel.

We have also launched a plethora of joint science programmes: for example, our new Researcher Mobility Scheme, which will benefit hundreds of scientific researchers.

Last year the Royal Society—the oldest scientific body in the world—signed an agreement with the Israeli Academy for the first time since 1967. We have increased funding for our BIRAX programme, which tackles some of the world's worst diseases. In April, I joined a conference at Oxford University where over 300 Israeli and British scientists participated, the largest ever UK/Israel science event.

Security cooperation with Israel remains a high priority. *British Embassy Israel Sep-16*

The UK is already setting the example [to the EU], with Israel-UK trade at its highest level and more and more flights between the two nations being established through the 2013 Open Skies agreement between the EU and Israel. *Jewish News 31-Mar-16*

The new government continues to build on this relationship. It is quite remarkable that just at this time, we have a pro-Israeli Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Overseas Development Minister and Overseas Trade Minister.

Theresa May is a vicar's daughter, her father was a Church of England clergyman, and she is a regular Sunday church worshipper. She "has been a long-standing friend of Israel and the Jewish community," according to a former Israel Ambassador to London, Daniel Taub. (*BICOM* 12-Jul-16) The night before she was to be proclaimed Prime Minister, she kept her long-

standing dinner date with the UK Chief Rabbi. She describes herself as a “long-time” supporter of the Conservative Friends of Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke by phone with his recently appointed British counterpart Theresa May on Tuesday afternoon, wishing her luck in her new role.

The two prime ministers discussed ways in which Israel and Britain can **maintain and increase cooperation** in a wide variety of fields, as well as regional issues and the threat of global terrorism. She made her first visit to Israel in 2014 to meet Israeli experts on cybersecurity and combating modern slavery—“two challenges which both Israel and the UK are confronting with great determination,” she said.

In April last year May told a Jewish youth group that she was “appalled” by the reported rise of antisemitism in Europe, including in the UK—“no one should live in fear because of their beliefs,” she said.

She acknowledged that “many Jewish people in this country are feeling vulnerable and fearful ... I never thought I would see the day when members of the Jewish community in the United Kingdom would say that they were fearful of remaining here in our country,” she said. “We cherish the enormous contribution you make... **Without its Jews, Britain would not be Britain.**” *Times of Israel* 03-Aug-16

In July 2016, the *Conservative Friends of Israel* (CFI) were pleased to welcome long-standing friend of Israel and the Jewish community, Theresa May, as Prime Minister, which marks an exciting new chapter in the UK-Israel relationship. Prime Minister May is a **staunch** and **consistent supporter** of **Israel** and the UK’s Jewish community, and has spoken at numerous *Conservative Friends of Israel* events throughout her time in Parliament.

Theresa, as Home Secretary, gave a strong commitment and practical assurance to the British Jewish community. CFI looks forward to working with our new Prime Minister in the months and years ahead to further strengthen the **relationship** and the **commercial ties** between the United Kingdom and Israel. *CFI Magazine* 2016/2017

Boris Johnson the former Mayor of London is now Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. His maternal great-grandfather was a rabbi from Lithuania, and he too is regarded as a long-term friend of Israel. Before starting at University, he spent the summer working on a kibbutz, in Galilee.

Priti Patel is the Secretary of State for International Development; she is UK born to a Ugandan Indian family. She is an officer of the *CFI*.

“I became a friend of Israel way before I became a Member of Parliament ... We relish the work that you [CFI] do collectively at a community level,

but also at a Parliamentary level as well—the delegations and the support that you all bring to our Party.” *CFI Parliamentary Reception 20-Jan-16*

Liam Fox is Secretary of State for International Trade and he too is a member of CFI.

Young lions' links to Israel

This seems quite a remarkable situation. Not only are British leaders favourable to Israel, but many of the Commonwealth leaders are too.

America. I believe that the US should be classed as one of the foremost *young lions*. From Obama who has shown a lack of friendship to Israel, we now have the prospect of Donald Trump as US President who has made it clear that he will be very supportive of Israel. One of the first things he says he will do is to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Consular building in Jerusalem was planned as an Embassy, all it needs is a change of name-plate. We shall see!

His proposed choice of Ambassador to Israel, David Freidman, a deeply committed Zionist, reinforces the closeness of future relationships. He strongly supports Israel's position of not giving up territory, while the Palestinians are so hostile to a Jewish State.

Australia. The Australian PM, Malcolm Turnbull, is a staunch supporter of Israel. He has Jewish ancestry on his mother's side.

“It's always a pleasure to see you, you're a great friend of Israel, Australia and Israel have a solid friendship and I am looking forward to coming to visit Australia,” Mr Netanyahu said to him. *Daily Mail 22-Sep-16*

AIJAC [Australia/Israel Jewish Affairs Council] issued a statement calling Turnbull “an exceptional friend of the Jewish community and a staunch supporter of Israel,” and said it had always “found him to be understanding of, and sympathetic towards, our concerns.” *Jerusalem Post 16-Sep-15*

Julie Bishop, the Australian Foreign Minister visited Israel in September and told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

“I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm our absolute enduring commitment to the State of Israel and our friendship.” Foreign Minister Bishop. *Breakingisraelnews 05-Sep-16*

Mt Netanyahu accepted her invitation to visit Australia and will be the first Israeli PM to do so.

The relationship between Australia and the small Jewish state is warm and close, despite occasional problems. Australia has always been seen as friendly by Israel, although it's rarely been a major focus of policy efforts in Jerusalem.

Israel has sought over the years to solicit Australia's support at international institutions and to gain access to diplomatic and economic opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Both states are immigrant countries. Both societies pride themselves on being down-to-earth and on their egalitarianism, resourcefulness and social mobility. Both appreciate plain speaking and being up-front about the nature of any deal under discussion. All this provides a solid foundation for working together and doing business together.

Australia has a strong Jewish community of around 120,000 that's made an enormous contribution to the country. It can serve as one component in efforts to bring the two countries closer. *"The Wattle and the Olive"* 04-Nov-16

Canada. Stephen Harper, the former PM of Canada was a very firm supporter of Israel. His successor, Justin Trudeau said:

"Canada has been a friend of Israel for almost seven decades—through triumph and tragedy. We will continue to stand with Israel, one of our closest friends and partners, thanks to our shared values and the presence of a dynamic and thriving Jewish Canadian community," he stressed. *Arutz Sheva* 31-May-16

India. India and Israel's friendship has developed over the past 25 years and is described as having "come of age". PM Narendra Modi has proved to be a great friend of Israel. The two countries have similar backgrounds and share common enemies. Israel has the agricultural and irrigation technology to help feed India's vast population. Israel's President was warmly welcomed on his visit to India in November.

The growing closeness between the two countries was nowhere more evident than during Israeli President Reuven Rivlin's visit to the subcontinent last week, where he and his delegation of business leaders and academics were warmly welcomed. Discussions between Rivlin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi further emphasised the strengthening bond between the nations, punctuated by the two men embracing one another at their joint media conference. *Aust/Israel Jewish Affairs Council.* 24-Nov-16

New Zealand's former PM John Key was also a great friend of Israel, his mother being an Austrian Jewess. His successor only came to office mid-December and it is too early to know whether he will continue New Zealand's policy. It was New Zealand, however, that sponsored the UN Resolution 2334, which we will consider in ch 14. In November, the NZ Foreign Minister, Murray McCully, paid an official visit to Israel. Mr Netanyahu's office reported:

They discussed expanding bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The two men expressed their satisfaction over the excellent state of bilateral relations along with the aspiration that they continue to advance *Prime Minister's Media Adviser* 17-Nov-16.

Young lions in the Gulf Region

US trade with the Gulf States is in the region of \$25bn a year and is an important market for armaments.

Canada regards Saudi Arabia as her most important trading partner in the Middle East and recently agreed to supply \$15bn in armaments. Saudi is the 14th biggest market for Canada. Other priority, targeted markets are Kuwait, and the UAR.

Australian bilateral trade with Gulf States amounted to some A\$12bn in 2015.

India's links with the area go back to Bible times. Today, some 7 million Indians work in the region and India's trade with the GCC amounted to US\$46bn in the year 2014-5.

Our historic understanding of Tarshish and her young lions has stood the test of time and we can see it coming together. With the Gulf's increasing willingness to deal with Israel which we will consider in Ch. 14, together with new leadership in Britain and America, it seems as if the scene is rapidly being set for the situation described in Ezekiel 38 to reach its fulfilment.

Summary

Britain under the leadership of Theresa May and America under the leadership of Donald Trump may prove to be the long awaited formidable power that will put an end to the legitimacy antisemitism receives from human rights organizations that are dangerously effective at disguising defamation as legitimate "criticism." *Israel Today* 20-Dec-16.

Operation Northern Thunder

Saudi Arabia hosted a remarkable 12-day military exercise in February. It involved 350,000 troops and 20 Arab nations.

The drills included troops from all six GCC countries, as well as Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Jordan, Sudan, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia.

It focuses on training troops on how to deal with terror groups and how to transfer from traditional to low-intensity combat operations.

The drill comes in light of the growing terrorist threats as well as the political instability in the region. It also reflects the desire of the participating countries in maintaining the region's security and stability. *Saudi Gazette* 28-Feb-16

BREXIT, THE START OF A LONG ROAD?

We have had to wait a long time for it to happen, but on June 23rd 2016, the UK voted by a narrow majority to turn her back on Europe and sail her own pathway on the world's seas. "An earthquake", said The Times! It was a divisive vote, Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to Remain, England and Wales to Leave. It has been a tumultuous six months following the vote. The predicted doom and gloom largely failed to materialise; many who had voted for Britain to Remain, began to see the advantages of an independent Britain. There was no shortage of countries queuing up to sign trade deals with Britain. And with the election of Donald Trump, this may turn out to be a double earthquake.

Brexit:
Britain's EXIT
from the EU

The EU web of regulations binds its members into a tight-knit community. The original intention of a closer political unity of its members has not proved to be so easy. The original Coal and Steel agreement which bound the founding six members together was signed in 1951, 65 years ago. Its intention was to ensure France and Germany didn't go to war again. It has steadily grown and changed its name until it now has 28 members. Britain's decision to leave is a blow to the founding father's ambitions and is a road that hasn't been trodden before by a major member. (Algeria, which as part of France, was a member until independence, left in 1962. Greenland, as part of the Realm of Denmark, joined with Denmark in 1973, but left in 1985 as her fishing industry, which brought in 90% of her income was being badly affected.) It was not until the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 that an escape clause was made part of an EU Treaty; this was Article number 50. It was the last major Article; the Articles 51-55 relate to sundry practical matters.

Let's start by examining a further prophecy.

Lisbon Treaty Article 50 Summary

- Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon gives any EU member the right to quit unilaterally, and outlines the procedure for doing so.
- There was no way to legally leave the EU before the Treaty was signed in 2007.
- Gives the leaving country two years to negotiate an exit deal.
- Once set in motion, it cannot be stopped except by unanimous consent of all member states.
- Any deal must be approved by a "qualified majority" of EU member states and can be vetoed by the European Parliament.
- In November 2016, the High Court ruled that the UK Government cannot trigger Article 50 without MPs voting on the matter first.

Daily Telegraph 26-Nov-16

Tyre—singing as a harlot in the latter days

We have already considered several latter-day prophecies from Isaiah and we looked at several last year; here is another.

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that **Tyre** shall be **forgotten seventy years**, according to the days of one king: **after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.***

*Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be **remembered.***

*And it shall come to pass after the **end of seventy years**, that the **LORD** will **visit Tyre**, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with **all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.***

***And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD:** it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing. Isa. 23:15-18*

It is clear from the last verse that this was not fulfilled in a previous era, previously Tyre had been condemned for being an enemy to Israel. It speaks of a latter-day Tyrian power working with God to help restore His people. This is a role that we have understood Britain will be willing to do, after the time of Armageddon. Britain will be one of the first of the Gentile nations to accept Israel's new King as of greater power than her own.

It speaks of a 70-year period while Tyre is forgotten, but at the end of that period Tyre returns to her trade. Using the symbol of a harlot who sings to draw attention to her wares, Tyre is to change from an insular situation to one where she seeks world-wide trade. Isaiah's description is very forceful.

*... she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with **all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.** v. 17*

A global trader once again!

This is certainly what Britain is planning to do. At the G20 Summit in China, the *Daily Telegraph* 04-Sep-16 recorded:

The new spirit of national assertiveness that seems to have taken root among our senior ministers did not seem out of place as Mrs May declared her intention for Britain to become “**a global leader in free trade.**”

At the Conservative Conference in October, she spoke of her vision of a truly Global Britain.

Whether people like it or not, the country voted to leave the EU. And that means we are going to leave the EU. We are going to be a fully independent, sovereign country, a country that is no longer part of a political union with supranational institutions that can override national

parliaments and courts. And that means we are going, once more, to have the freedom to make our own decisions on a whole host of different matters, from how we label our food to the way in which we choose to control immigration. It was a vote for Britain to **stand tall**, to believe in ourselves, to **forge** an ambitious and optimistic **new role in the world**.

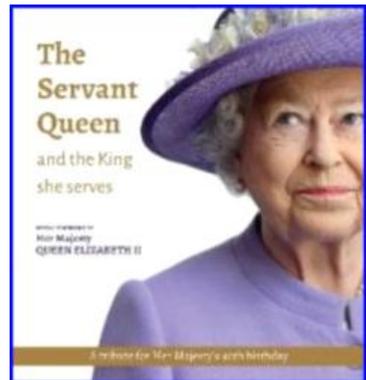
A truly Global Britain is possible, and it is in sight. We are the fifth biggest economy in the world. Since 2010 we have grown faster than any economy in the G7. And we attract a fifth of all foreign investment in the EU. We are the biggest foreign investor in the United States. We have more Nobel Laureates than any country outside America. We have the best intelligence services in the world, a military that can project its power around the globe, and friendships, partnerships and alliances in every continent. We have the greatest soft power in the world, we sit in exactly the right time zone for global trade, and our language is the language of the world. *Conservative Press Office* 02-Oct-16

“Britain is going to be open for business like never before, and we will use our new-found position outside the EU to become the **world’s brightest beacon and champion of open trade**”.

Britain will take up a fully independent place at the WTO [World Trade Organisation] and will be free to strike competitive deals with countries across the world. *Daily Telegraph* 25-Sep-16

“Give me three good reasons why Britain should be part of Europe”

The Queen has championed the Commonwealth for all the time she has been reigning. Without her headship of the Commonwealth, it probably would have long disintegrated. She is a remarkable lady, who celebrated her 90th birthday this year with the publication of a book entitled: *The Servant Queen and the King she serves*. She made it quite clear in the foreword as to the meaning behind the title as this review of the book shows.



Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II reflects on Jesus’ central role in her life in a new book ahead of her 90th birthday, calling Christ “the King she serves” in the title.

“I have been—and remain—very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for his steadfast love,” the British monarch writes in the foreword.

“I have indeed seen His faithfulness,” she adds. *Christian Post* 22-Feb-16

Although the Queen must remain above politics, she found a neat way of conveying her feelings on the matter. According to her biographer, she would ask dinner-guests to: “Give me three good reasons why Britain should be part of Europe” (*Daily Telegraph* 22-Jun-16). The *Sun* newspaper had earlier caused a stir with its front page on 9th March 2016 claiming, “Queen backs Brexit.”

The run up to the Brexit vote

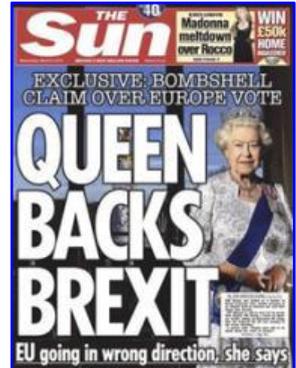
In the months before the vote, the Leave campaign gained ground, which shook the markets who were banking on Britain remaining in the EU. Neither side were very convincing in their arguments. The fear of the unknown and the dire things that would sure follow Brexit, seemed to feed the Remain campaign; better to stick with what you know rather than face the unknown. The Leave view was that it was much safer to leave as it looked as if the EU, as we know it, faced meltdown with several euro-crises running at the same time. Greece, Italy, Spain were all very vulnerable, therefore, it was better to get out and be independent.

The chart below which plots the value of the British pound against the US



dollar neatly demonstrates the feelings of the markets, whose consensus was that it would be better for Britain to remain. From its high point at the start of the year the pound began to lose value as the natural reactions of the markets who wanted to see Britain continuing as an EU member. It had its fluctuations, partly because of the conflicting results of the polls. From mid-May (A on the chart), it began to fall again as more polls predicted a Leave victory. Then, mid-June (B), it seemed the tide had turned and Britain would vote Remain, reaching its peak on the day of the referendum (C). The following day when it was known before the markets opened that Britain had voted to Leave, the pound experienced one of its biggest one-day losses.

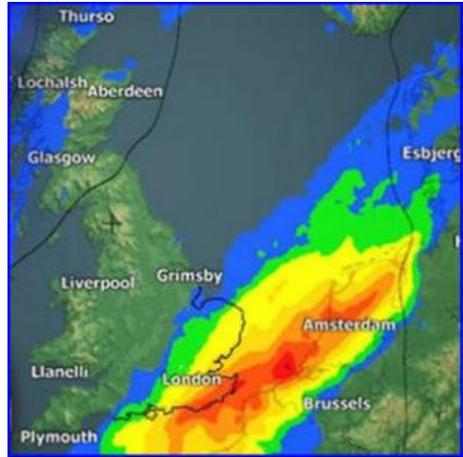
It continued to fall for the next two weeks before recovering to some extent as it was found that life hadn't suddenly come to an end. There were steep falls starting October 1st (D), for 11 days. This was due to the Conservative



Party Conference indicating that there would be a hard Brexit, together with a rallying of the American market when polls were indicating that Hilary Clinton would be the next US President. There was also a strange “flash crash” overnight on the Asian markets which wiped down the pound’s value 8% in just eight minutes! The pound has been generally climbing since then, ending the year having lost 16% in the year.

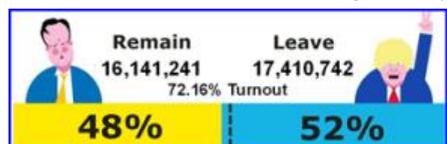
The amazing events of polling day

At midnight at the commencement of polling day, June 23rd, the South East of Britain was hit by a strong storm which caused extensive flooding. It affected rail services, roads, houses and even polling stations. The unusual thing about this storm was that it came, not as is normal at this time of the year from the Atlantic to the west, but came up from Europe. What effect it had on the results can only be speculated. The area affected was where one would expect support for Remain to be strongest. This was predominately the commuter belt where City workers lived. They were more concerned with dealing with flooded houses and overcoming difficulties getting to work, than for voting. The rest of the country had a good day!



A few hours after the polling booths closed at 10pm, the results came in. Gibraltar, a UK dependence was first as with only 20,000 votes to be counted, it didn’t take long for that result to emerge. 96% voted to Remain, just 4% to Leave. Nigel Farage, the UKIP (UK Independence Party) leader and the man most people credit for causing the UK to hold this referendum, sounded downhearted. The opinion polls over the past few days had seen the Leave lead decline and it was expected that the Remain vote would triumph and the markets had shown their relief by rallying. The betting agencies were confidently predicting a Remain vote too! Mr Farage’s speech was that of a man conceding defeat.

By 00.20 five results had come in, the Remain vote was still leading, but by 06.00 the result was clear! We had witnessed a historic turning point in Britain’s history; Britain had turned her back on 43 years of EU membership. Shortly after 08.00, David Cameron stood outside No 10 Downing Street with his wife standing



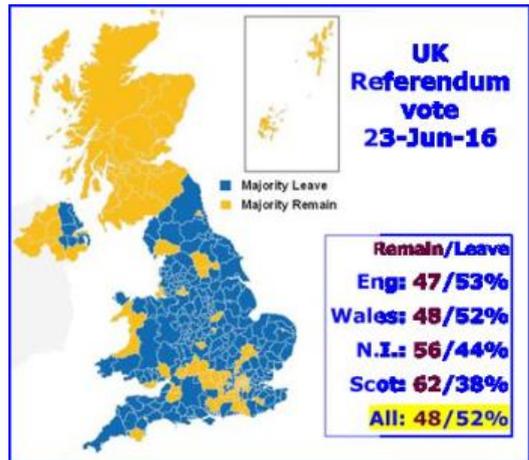
to his side and declared that the British people had voted to leave and as this had gone against what he personally had campaigned for, he wished to stand down in the coming months so that a new leader could begin the negotiations to take Britain out of the EU. His voice was breaking with emotion as he turned his back on the job he had been elected to do.



A Dis-United Kingdom

The final map of how the United Kingdom—England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland voted, indicated that the country was divided. Unlike UK General elections, which use the ‘first-past-the-post’ system of electing MP’s, in this referendum every vote counted; the final result was decided by the total of everybody’s votes added together. By adding up the votes for the four parts of the UK it was

clear that Scotland and Northern Ireland (together with London and the Home Counties), had firmly voted to Remain, while the majority of the rest of the country wanted to Leave. With 62% of the voters in Scotland voting Remain, this put pressure for another vote by Scotland as to whether to break away from the rest of the Union. Although representing 32% of the UK’s area, she only accounts



for 8% of the UK population. Northern Ireland similarly, 6% area, 3% population. The current low price for oil, means that Scotland is financially much weaker than she was before and it is very hard to see how she could survive breaking away and becoming independent. In any case, Scotland would have to reapply for membership and face going through the lengthy procedures that other applicants have to undergo.

Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland’s First Minister presented on 20th Dec. a 50-page blueprint setting out Scotland’s place in Europe. Critics of the report say that with Scotland not being a Sovereign State there would appear no way they could apply for membership of the European Free Trade Association nor the EU. Membership of the EU would result in a “hard” border between England

and Scotland, which, bearing in mind Scotland does four times more business with the rest of the UK than with the EU, would not be practical.

A new leadership team

One of the consequences of David Cameron's resignation was a political blood-bath that has resulted in a considerable change to Britain's leadership. Theresa May emerged uncontested after winning the first ballot as other contenders were forced to step down after bruising battles and she became Prime Minister on 13th July. She was Home Secretary under David Cameron and was considered a safe pair of hands. She is only Britain's 2nd woman Prime Minister and she is the first woman to have held two of the top four governmental offices (known as the Great Offices of State). Although she had campaigned to Remain, she quickly accepted that the people had stated their wishes and has been unwavering in her pursuit of Brexit. She said:

“Brexit means Brexit. The campaign was fought ... and the public gave their verdict. There must be no attempts to remain inside the EU, no attempts to rejoin it through the back door.” *Reuters* 30-Jun-16

She put in a new team, with few surviving from David Cameron's cabinet. “A brutal cull”, said the *Daily Telegraph* 14-Jul-16; “one of the most sweeping government reshuffles for decades”, said *Reuters* 14-Jul-16. Her choice of Boris Johnson, whom many had assumed would have become the Conservative Party leader, to be Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, seems a sensible choice. He is very Euro-sceptical, having lived in Brussels while political columnist reporting on the EU for the *Daily Telegraph* and seeing the inner workings of the EU.

The long process of unravelling from Europe

There are many steps that must be taken and this is an unknown path, with little sympathy from the EU, who is anxious to discourage other members from following Britain's footsteps. The 2-year countdown as stipulated in Article 50 doesn't start until the formal request is made. Mrs May has withheld giving this formal notice until a negotiation strategy has been worked out, as once notice has been given there is only a two-year time slot to complete negotiations. She has said that she intends to give this notice in March 2017. There will be a lot of give and take needed on both sides and she is keen not to reveal how far she is prepared to go. The EU has been totally unwilling to give any clues as to their position ahead of receiving the formal notice. Apart that is, from hints that the EU will demand huge payments—€50 bn is being mentioned in the *Daily Telegraph* 16-Dec-16:

The bill would include the UK's share of outstanding pensions liabilities, loan guarantees and spending on UK-based projects.

Britain would be expected to carry on paying her normal annual contributions until 2020, (or even 2030 according to Herr Schäuble the

German Finance Minister)! After Brexit who pays the EU pensions for UK citizens who have worked for the EU? This is but one of many thorny issues. A “soft” Brexit would probably be harder to negotiate than a “hard” or “clean” exit. If the EU chooses to be awkward about making an amicable trade agreement, it will be the EU that is penalised. Currently, Britain imports far more from the EU than she exports there.

Brexit: “soft” or “hard”

Hard—or clean—is where the UK makes a complete break from the EU.

Soft is where the UK retains some form of EU membership in return for a degree of freedom from EU rules.

The clean break is what the Government favours.

Now 27 countries around the world want trade deal with UK

There is no shortage of countries, eager to do deals with Britain. Under Donald Trump the US is one of them. As a member of the EU, Britain was dependent upon going along with any agreement hammered out by the EU. As such agreements need the unanimous approval of all EU members, it is easy to see why they take so long, many have been going on in negotiation for years. The EU-US agreement known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership began negotiations in 2013, round 15 was held this October, it may take several more years before it sees the light of day!

Free-trade area

A region or individual countries who have signed a trade agreement to increase trade in goods and services. This usually involves a reduction or elimination of tariffs and the lifting of import quotas.

Britain is determined to become the “global leader in free trade”. Liam Fox UK International Trade Sec. (*Bloomberg* 18-Dec-16).

Outside the EU, Britain should be able to negotiate relatively quickly, as it is not being dragged down by unwilling partners, anxious to protect their own interests.

As this section heading indicated, there is no shortage of countries waiting to do a deal. This was back in July and more have been added to the list.

With the UK on the brink of a new era of prosperity free from Brussels rule, new figures have revealed that the euro zone continues to be the dead weight of the world economy.

According to Eurostat, the 19-country currency zone at the heart of the failing EU project only grew by 0.3 per cent in the last quarter, just half the rate of the UK.

According to reports **27 countries** with a combined **GDP** of more than **£40 trillion**—over **two thirds** of the **global** economy—now want to take advantage of Brexit and strike new trade deals with the UK.

The vast economic potential dwarfs **the EU's** single market worth around **£12 trillion**, just **22 per cent** of the world's **GDP**.

While Britain is trapped in the EU it cannot do its own deals and has to compromise with the other 27 members, but with independence on the way new Trade Secretary Liam Fox has been on a tour of America to start work on new deals.

Only two of the world's top 10 economies—Italy and France, which are both on the verge of major financial crises—have yet to express an interest in doing a trade deal with Britain.

The countries which want a deal with the UK are **Australia**, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, **Canada**, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Germany, **Ghana**, Iceland, **India**, Ireland, Japan, **Kenya**, South Korea, Mexico, **New Zealand**, **Pakistan**, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Switzerland, the **United States**, Uruguay and Venezuela. *The Express* 31-Jul-16

Those in **blue** are Commonwealth countries and I have included the US. Unfortunately deals can't be made until Britain is free of the EU, but that doesn't prevent the outline of a deal being thrashed out in the meantime.

Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations

The Commonwealth of Nations consists of 52 member states, most of whom were part of the British Empire. Set up in 1949, with the Queen now as its Head, it covers 20% of the world's land area, about a third of the world's population and has a GDP of \$10.45 trillion (£8.5tr). Although a lot smaller in trade than the EU, it has a much larger population. They are friendly countries who have a common heritage, and are keen to do business with Britain. We see it as a remarkable sign of our times, that this institution should perhaps play a much larger role in Britain's trade than before.

Australia was wounded when Britain joined the EU. Now we can make things right—as partners

This was the headline of an article in the *Daily Telegraph* 17-Dec-16 by Alexander Downer, the Australian High Commissioner to London. His father occupied the same position in the lead up to Britain joining the EEC, turning her back on the Commonwealth and deeply hurting her friends.

My father's generation was deeply hostile to Britain abandoning those Commonwealth countries which had stood by her in her darkest hour. In two world wars, New Zealand, Australia and Canada—with India, South Africa and other members of the then Empire—sent thousands upon thousands of troops, airmen and sailors to help save Britain from the Germans. And during the Second World War, following the fall of Hong Kong and Singapore in 1941, we Australians also had to deal with the Japanese on our doorstep.

Despite this sacrifice, the attitude of the Heath government in the Seventies was “So what?” Government is about the national interest, not emotion. Britain had to make its future in Europe and we could make our futures somewhere else.

We are keen to strike a free trade agreement with the UK. That shouldn't be too hard to do because we are like-minded free traders who know that protectionism makes people poorer and costs jobs.

Finally, we have another hope: that **Britain will continue to recognise it is a global power with global responsibilities, not just a regional player**. If it does so, this will mean Australia and the UK finding yet more ways to work together to promote the values and objectives we share.

In a BBC interview, Mr Downer spoke of striking a free trade agreement.

“It's about political will. A free trade agreement will be no problem. We've negotiated eight free trade agreements over the last twelve years. It would not take very long because we would not want to put a lot of obstacles in the way of British exports. We think alike on most of the great issues facing the world so it makes sense to reinforce each other when we can.” *Open Europe* 19-Dec-16

It's time for the City to move on from the gloom

London had voted strongly to Remain. They feared their world would collapse outside the EU, despite the numerous spats they had with a jealous Europe, seeking to take every opportunity to put obstacles in the way of Britain's growing prosperity. The heading is from the *Daily Telegraph*.

There has been an avalanche of positive business stories over the past few weeks, with company after company announcing a new investment or a fresh job-creating initiative. In most cases, these were the kind of projects we were told would no longer be possible after the Brexit vote.

Many prestige buildings were going up or planned for London. Money from Singapore, China and the Middle East was pouring into the City.

But it is clear that investors are as bullish about the UK and London as they have always been and that is great news. The same is true of the big US tech firms: Amazon, Google and Apple are all hiring and spending in London. Apple's new headquarters in Battersea will anchor that scheme; Google is helping to build the new King's Cross business district; and Amazon is also expanding dramatically.

UK car manufacturing was increasing; Nissan was investing in new plant; Jaguar Land Rover was planning to build a new generation of electric cars.

The challenge of Brexit is now to get it right. It is time, to build the most successful post-Brexit economy possible. *Daily Telegraph* 29-Nov-16

In the last quarter of 2016, the UK's GDP outgrew the other G8 members!

BRITAIN, ISRAEL AND THE COMMONWEALTH

*We continue to look at the remarkable situation that Britain is now in. When Brexit has been finally made, she will be able to rebuild all the links that she wishes, without being restrained by the controlling hand of Brussels. During the past few years we have seen a big change in attitude on the part of the British government towards Israel. With the Civil Service's obsession with the EU, the other part of the title "Foreign and **Commonwealth Office**" seemed irrelevant. Why should Britain be interested in her former colonies. Didn't it smack of a bygone age with Britain as a colonial power? It didn't for William Hague, appointed by Mr Cameron as the Secretary for State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs. The Commonwealth made sound economic sense. Europe was increasingly beset with economic problems, its markets were shrinking and with high unemployment, people weren't buying. So it made sense to turn to a wider world. There were economic gains too. Commonwealth nations largely had English as at least their 2nd language. Their trade laws were, in the main, modelled on Britain's. There was a friendship and often many links that put the edge on trade with such countries.*

Britain and Israel

As we saw in Ch. 5, we have many supporters of Israel within the British cabinet; the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of State for International Development and the Secretary of State for International Trade, and there are doubtless more. According to a Channel 4 TV documentary in 2009, 80% of Conservative Members of Parliament were members of the *Conservative Friends of Israel*.

Yet sadly, in late December, the UK voted for the UN Security Council resolution calling for Israel to stop any settlement activity because it was regarded as not helpful to the establishment of a Palestinian State. The US did abstain, but President Obama refused to veto the resolution as America has done in the past, despite President-elect Trump calling on America to do so. Perhaps when Mr Trump gets to office, Britain may be persuaded to look at the reality rather than the rhetoric. The Palestinians have never wanted to accept the existence of Israel and constantly seek to glorify those who become "martyrs" in their desire to see Israel driven into the sea.

In the wider world, Israel has few friends who are prepared to look at matters through Israel's eyes. One of Israel's policies is to ensure that those Palestinians who are prepared to work with Israel are rewarded. We shall look at this in chapter 14 when looking at Israel and her neighbours.

We have looked in previous years at the desire on Britain's part, to increase her trade with Israel. It makes good sense. The Israelis have lots of good

ideas; the British have the marketing skills to bring these concepts to market. This was traditionally America's role, but Britain has two big advantages—there is only a two-hour time difference and much shorter flights. The British are good at world marketing and this is what most Israeli entrepreneurs seek.

Leaving the EU—and entering the Israeli market?

This was the headline in the Israeli *Arutz Sheva* 04-Jul-16

With the UK having voted to leave the EU, could this be the start of an exciting journey into pastures anew such as the Israeli market?

Thursday the 23rd June 2016 will forever be recorded in the history books as the momentous day which saw Great Britain's record voting turnout of over 70% leading the impending exit of the world's 5th largest economy from the slowly crumbling EU bloc.

At the time of its establishment, the EU was an ideal that appeared to be starting to become realized. It was to become a trading and economic bloc among a handful of European nations that could work together for economic prosperity and stability.

As the years and decades progressed, more and more countries sought and established full EU membership, slowly but surely leading to what would become arguably one of the biggest bureaucracies of our time. In time, the EU shunted itself and its laws into its members' national laws and ways of life; creating a system that entrapped members, but which was almost impossible to get out of.

When it comes to Israel, while the relationship between Israel and the UK has occasionally become somewhat 'strained,' the two countries do for the most part enjoy a good and mutually beneficial relationship. This is particularly clear in the business world of London, where Israelis are the innovators of so many new companies and services. The UK's economy is service-based, with the vast majority of the contributions from the UK being its world-renowned services sector.

This is tied with the relationship between the UK and Israel and it is plain to see. It isn't just the estate agents in London in the prosperous property market who are feeling the benefits of financial and intellectual input from Israelis. For example, increasing numbers of short-term loan companies, start-ups, restaurants and innovative businesses are popping up all over with the strong help of some of Israel's brightest and most innovative minds.

The EU on the other hand does not encourage or help these links. Rather, the 28 (soon to be 27) member union funds questionable and controversial projects, often to the clear detriment of Israel and its citizens.

Britain's looming exit from the EU has huge ramifications for the EU, the 5th largest economy in the world and boasts the fastest-growing western economy in the world today. Alongside the slowing, yet large economy of Germany, Britain has been one of the supporting pillars of the EU.

From its strong economy and more than £10 billion net contribution to EU coffers per year, to its outstanding intelligence services and military power, Britain has over time seen itself contribute disproportionately to the EU and its idealistic projects.

With Britain working towards its exit of the EU, this could and indeed should signal the start of very exciting times ahead. Rather than being heavily restricted to the 17% of the global economy, which is found in the single market of the EU that member states have access to, the UK can look towards building bridges and profitable trade agreements with emerging and strengthening states including the likes of India, China, Brazil, Australia—and Israel.

Britain has never had a problem attracting some of the best and brightest minds and businesspeople to its shores, and the EU's single market has proved itself to be a useful resource for the UK and its industry. However, with the UK soon able to negotiate its own trade and relationship deals and with the EU's slowing overall economy, the tide could be changing for the better for the UK, Israel and the rest of the world.

Brexit may be an opportunity for Britain and Israel

This was the heading to an article in the *Daily Telegraph* 17-Sep-16.

Although Britain's policy towards Israel has not primarily been driven by its membership in the EU, the relationship is likely to improve post-Brexit. The bilateral relationship with Israel has always been more favourable than its relationship with Israel mediated through the EU framework. Prime Ministers from Tony Blair onward have considered Israeli and British security to be linked due to the threat posed by radical Islamists. However, UK support for Israel—especially regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—was sometimes negotiated away on a multilateral level due to other priorities within the EU. With Brexit that factor will be removed.

The post-Brexit reality will also likely incentivise the UK to search for economic partners outside the EU and Israel could become an attractive option due in part to its innovative hi-tech sector. Despite the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, (and in some instances in response to that campaign) the economic relationship between the countries has increased over the last decade, with greater levels of trade and scientific cooperation. However, it is not clear how much of this relationship will have to be renegotiated as significant elements of the

economic relationship are defined via multilateral agreements with the EU.

Some are suggesting that Israel's current relationship with the EU—which includes more positive agreements than with any other non-EU country and which includes a free trade agreement without freedom of movement—could be an appealing model for a future UK-EU relationship. However, EU-Israel agreements do not touch on the financial sector, which is a key economic issue for the UK.

Israel's relations with the EU are also largely insulated from the referendum result. On the one hand, Israel will lose the UK as a voice raising Israeli security concerns in Brussels. On the other hand, the prioritisation of the economic and migrant crises within Europe means that the EU will have less energy for dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Economic pragmatism is likely to weigh more heavily than ideology. For example, the Greek government led by a far-left wing party—which supported BDS while in opposition—now has very close relations with Israel as it sees Israeli tourists as helping the stuttering Greek economy while also viewing Israel as a potential partner for energy cooperation in the Mediterranean.

At the Conservative Party's annual conference, Boris Johnson, the new Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, addressed one of the biggest fringe meetings. It had been organised by the *Conservative Friends of Israel*.

Boris Johnson has insisted the UK and Israel “must stand and work together”.

He spoke of his “privilege” at attending the former President's funeral [Shimon Peres] ... Johnson recalled a series of epigrams from Peres including: “Count your dreams and your achievements. If your dreams are bigger than your achievements then you are young. If your achievements are bigger than your dreams then you are old’. I put it to you that Britain and Israel are both countries where our dreams are still bigger than their achievements. Our best days are ahead. We must stand and work together. Britain, Israel and *Conservative Friends of Israel* can build those dreams together.”

Israeli Ambassador Mark Regev said, “In being friends of Israel you are not only standing up for British values, you are also standing up for Britain's fundamental interests. When Britain and Israel cooperate in cyber IT, fintech [financial technology], in spawning new start-up companies, we both benefit. When Britain and Israel work together in defence, intelligence and counter-terrorism we are all safer. In the new post-Brexit reality, as we further expand our cooperation, we will be

making the lives of both the British people and the Israeli people more prosperous and more secure”. *Israel News* 05-Oct-16

In historic first, senior British Royal said to be planning official trip to Israel

In all the 68 years of Israel’s existence, there has been no state visit by a member of the British monarchy! Royal’s like Prince Charles have attended funerals—he was there for Shimon Peres’s in October—but these have not been official state visits. With the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, apparently plans are underway for a senior Royal to make an official “royal tour” of Israel, according to a *Times of Israel* report 08-Nov-16. Such visits are sanctioned by the UK Government; there have been many invitations made, but the UK Government has been reluctant to commit to such a show of support for Israel. We shall see.

Brentry

This was a word coined to describe the entry of Israeli companies into Britain! *OurCrowd* is an American group, led by investor Jon Medved, which invests in Israeli technology. Using the power of the internet, private individuals are given the opportunity to invest in Israeli companies. In raising £56 million this year to enable it to open a new office for the company in London, it became the largest equity crowd-funder in the world.

An upbeat Medved said the record amount showed that “the world is beating a path to Israel’s door,” as individuals look to put their own money into a range of industries while start-up companies are still private.

“It’s everything from medical devices, cyber, financial technology, autonomous vehicles, drones, robotics, you name it. Israel is on fire right now. It’s time to make some money.”

OurCrowd has 15,000 members in 110 countries, and describes itself as “a start-up that helps other start-ups raise money”. *Times of Israel* 06-Oct-16

British warship docks in Haifa

The visit by *HMS Bulwark* was the first since 2009 that a British warship had docked here. It was the occasion of joint military exercises between the two countries.

David Quarrey, Britain’s Ambassador to Israel, said the ship has been deployed to the region for several months and was stopping in Haifa for a quick break before heading home.

“There are many shared challenges that the UK and Israel face, and unfortunately many of them come from the region,” he said.

An Israeli navy official, speaking anonymously under military guidelines, said Israel has seen an increase in visits by allies over the past two years.

“It gives us opportunities to cooperate and train with navies that we usually don’t have the opportunity to train with,” he said. “The area of the east Mediterranean has become very crowded in light of the vast presence of the Russians and the situation in Syria. And Israel presents a safe port for them.”

Charles Heyman, a former British military officer who edits *The Armed Forces of the United Kingdom* handbook, said the *Bulwark’s* visit was a “political signal”—reflecting close military and diplomatic ties with Israel. *Associated Press* 23-Nov-16

High-tech is ‘the new engine’ of UK and Israel trade

The British government has invested heavily in putting in the infrastructure that enables every assistance to Israeli entrepreneurs.

Professor Eugene Kandel, economics professor at the Hebrew University and chief executive of *Start Up Nation Central*, said one of the contributing factors to the relationship between Britain and Israel in hi-tech had been the establishment of the *UK-Israel Technology Hub*, first proposed by former UK ambassador Matthew Gould, now in its fifth year.

Israel, said Professor Kandel, was at the forefront of three specific technologies: “smart driving, digital health (the convergence of digital and genomic technologies to enhance the efficiency of healthcare and make medicine more personalised and precise) and agritech.” All these technologies were in demand in the UK. *Jewish News* 01-Dec-16

Another Israeli speciality is cyber-tech, the prevention of cyber-attacks. Some Banks experience over 3,000 attacks a week! Britain’s banking success needs Israel’s advanced technology, a spin-off from the Israeli military. They are world leaders as the Israeli military are under constant cyber-attack.

Britain and the Balfour Declaration

2017 is the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration which granted the Jews a homeland. It was published on 2nd November as Britain and her Australian and New Zealand allies were pushing their way up the “Holy Land” towards Jerusalem, which fell to their hands the following month.

With the growth of Arab influence in the vital oil world, Britain in later years became more ambivalent towards Israel, and became increasingly hostile in WWII, restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine to an inadequate number. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 there has been a continuation of conflict. It is only since the return of the Conservative Government in 2010 that Britain’s friendship with Israel has increased. Britain is now less dependent upon the Arab world for oil.

The celebration of the Balfour Declaration will be a test of Britain’s attitude towards Israel. The Arab world is demanding that Britain pay them compensation for allowing the Jews to come into their land! The government

has rejected these calls, and Theresa May has indicated that the government is planning celebrations to mark the occasion.

One of the leading lights behind the Balfour Declaration was the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. In 1931, he spoke of the Jew's efforts in rebuilding the once desolate land in these words:

“The Jews surely have a special claim on [Palestine]. They are the only people who have made a success of it during the past 3,000 years. They are the only people who have made its name immortal, and as a race, they have no other home. This was their first; this has been their only home.”
Gatestone Institute 09-Nov-16

Michael Gove, who was one of those who fought unsuccessfully for the job of Prime Minister after David Cameron announced his retirement, wrote an interesting piece in *The Times* 16-Dec-16:

Antisemitism has moved from hatred of Jews on religious or racial grounds to hostility towards the proudest expression of Jewish identity we now have—the Jewish state.

This is antisemitism, impure and simple. It is the latest [revival] of the age-old demand that the Jew can only live on terms set by others. Once Jews had to live in the ghetto, now they cannot live in their historic home.

Surrounded by enemies who sought to strangle it at birth, continually threatened by war and constantly under terrorist attack, a nation scarcely the size of Wales with no natural resources, half of whose territory is desert, has become a flourishing democracy, a centre of scientific humanitarian relief and the only state from Casablanca to Kabul with a free press, free judiciary, and a flourishing free enterprise economy.

It is to this country's eternal credit that we rejected centuries of prejudice one hundred years ago and pledged to extend to the Jewish people the rights enjoyed by Germans and Italians, Japanese and Mexicans—the right to a land they could call their own. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 was followed in 1948 with the creation of the State of Israel. Since then, that state's success has been near miraculous.

Because the fate of the Jewish people, and the survival of the Jewish state, are critical tests for all of us. The darkest forces of our time—Islamic State, the Iranian leaders masterminding mass murder in Aleppo—are united by one thing above all: their hatred of the Jewish people and their home. Faced with such implacable hatred, and knowing where it has always led, we should not allow antisemitism any space to advance, or incubate.

Instead we should show we're not going to be intimidated by those who want to treat Israel as a second-class state, we're not going to indulge the anti-Semitic impulse to apply the double standard. **Israel is the only state where we don't locate our embassy in the nation's capital and the only**

ally the Foreign Office has refused to let the Queen visit. So let's celebrate the centenary of the Balfour Declaration by moving our embassy to Jerusalem next year and inviting Her Majesty to open it. What are we afraid of? Earning the enmity of those who hate Israel?
To my mind, there could be no greater compliment.

We shall be interested to see how things work out!

Britain and the Commonwealth

There are many of the Commonwealth countries who are keen to help Britain with her Brexit negotiations. As a member of the EU, Britain had lost the majority of her skilled negotiators, as negotiations are done on her behalf. The Commonwealth countries have retained their skilled people. New Zealand and Canada were among the first to offer their personnel to help.

It was to India that Theresa May made her first main overseas trip. Here is a huge market with growing prosperity. Under EU rules the UK has had to make it difficult for students from India to come to Britain to study. There are very expensive visas to purchase and graduates lose the right to work in Britain after they finish studying; these things act as a barrier. The Indian's are hoping that these barriers will be removed. India has been struggling to sign a trade agreement with the EU. Talks have been going on since 2007, without results so far. Again, Brexit may provide a quicker path to a trade agreement with one of the countries India is keen to trade with.

When Britain eventually leaves the European Union it will prosper by trading farther afield. So argues Theresa May, Britain's Prime Minister, ahead of her first big bilateral trip abroad, a three-day visit to India, which begins on Sunday, November 6th. She talks of forging a "new global role" with this trade mission, hobnobbing with Indian leaders and championing free trade in general. The idea is to promote ties between small and medium businesses in the two countries.

On the face of it, the signs are good. India has nearly 1.3bn people. Many are emerging as middle-class consumers for the first time. The country is creating a single market for goods and services, reducing internal and external barriers to trade and tackling some corruption and bureaucracy. Its economy, worth over \$2trn, is the fastest-growing large one in the world. It is likely to rattle along quickly for many years to come; by 2030, India could rank as the world's third-largest. Prime Minister Modi, wants to make it less difficult for businesses to operate there, and to win more foreign investment and trade deals. British firms are already among the biggest investors. Now India is opening up for foreign activity in sectors that might suit British firms especially: notably in insurance, defence, railways and some retail. At the same time, large Indian firms—such as Tata, which owns Jaguar Land Rover, as well as Tata Steel—are in Britain. London has also become a base for Indian firms, for example in

business consulting, that tap the wider EU market. A common language, shared cultural, historic, legal and sporting ties, plus the influence of the Indian diaspora in Britain, bode well for closer ties. *The Economist* 04-Nov-16

Through greater trade we can have a greater Britain

Brexit will enable the UK to follow America's lead on this. We are ideally placed to build up significant influence in the region with our historic allies in the Commonwealth. BP's recent \$8 billion investment in Indonesian offshore gas is a good example of the huge potential Asia offers to British companies. (By the way, this investment is good news for the many pensioners whose pension funds have invested in BP!)

The increasing demand for British goods and services from Commonwealth nations has the potential to boost the UK economy for years to come. Last month we saw Air Asia make the largest single order of Airbus A321 neo-aircraft at the Farnborough Air Show—again demonstrating the huge potential of Asian markets for UK companies.

Modern technological developments have made trading with the other side of the world easier than ever before. The huge size of these potential markets should have British exporters licking their proverbial lips.

One plan for Dr Fox's new department to consider might be the establishment a Commonwealth free trade area. This should include a free trade zone with common labour and environmental standards, and measures to protect data and the intellectual property of large companies, in a similar vein to the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Unlike the EU's single market, which is based upon protectionist principles designed to prop up uncompetitive companies, this Commonwealth free trade area would encourage greater competition amongst its members. This would in turn drive innovation, and with it, productivity leading to further economic growth. *Commentator* 21-Aug-16

Britain and the Middle East

Britain is widely involved with many Middle East countries. We have already looked at Britain's desire to boost the already considerable trade with the Gulf States.

A UK firm is providing training to an Egyptian airport security provider, following the apparent planting of an explosive device on a Russian plane while at an Egyptian airport. This laxity in security caused many airlines to stop flying to Egypt, a big blow to her tourism industry. (*Stratfor* 21-Jun-16) Later in the year it was announced that the UK would spend millions of pounds in strengthening airport security across the Middle East, in the wake of increasing ISIS terrorist activities. "More than ever, Gulf security is our security," said Theresa May. (*Daily Telegraph* 06-Dec-16)

The UK is still the largest foreign, non-Arab investor in Egypt at \$26 billion. Britain held joint naval training exercises with Egypt, they only lasted two days, but this is the first “flagship visit” for eight years. Britain exports millions of dollars’ worth of arms to Egypt every year. (*Ahram* 18-Oct-16)

London is very attractive for Gulf States investments, many of London’s iconic companies and buildings are owned by Gulf companies.

Harrods, the Savoy, the Shard—London property has long been a magnet for Gulf investors and Britain’s vote to leave the European Union is unlikely to dampen their interest, analysts say.

CNBC Arabiya television recently reported that total Gulf investments in Britain amounted to about \$200 billion, of which \$45 billion was in real estate. And Britain accounts for 40 percent of all Gulf investments in European property, it said.

There is a “historical and linguistic familiarity” with Britain in the Gulf, where most GCC countries are former British protectorates, English is the de facto second language and sizable communities of British expatriates live and work. *Agence France-Presse* 28-Jun-16

Britain and the US

Britain’s relationship to America has normally been warm and special. There is much that links the two countries. In recent times, there have been fewer occasions when the two countries have stood “shoulder to shoulder”. President Obama has had other matters to pursue. Things look set to change under Donald Trump, whose mother came from Scotland.

Donald Trump called the UK a “very, very special place” during a phone conversation with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Thursday (10 November) and invited her to visit the White House “as soon as possible”.

Trump said he would like to **revive the special relationship** between Britain and America that marked the Ronald Reagan-Margaret Thatcher relationship of the 1980s. *EUObserver* 11-Nov-16

Another commentator put it like this:

Trump’s election could be either catastrophic or beneficial for the UK. If the President-elect declares a trade war with emerging economies, the UK (and others) will be plunged into a seismic recession. ... The optimistic scenario would see him invite the UK to join the North American Free Trade Association, or to sign another kind of trade deal with the US. **This would be a game-changing moment for Brexit, giving Britain a huge boost.** It would also dramatically boost our trade with North America, a market that will be growing far faster than the EU over the next decade. It’s time for the City and big business to start thinking about this. *Daily Telegraph* 12-Nov-16

FRANCE & GERMANY, THE BEAST MOVES FORWARD

We contemplate a Europe in disarray, Brexit will severely weaken its standing in the world, and weaken her economically, perhaps leading to the collapse of the EU as we know it today. The world wonders what is next? ISIS terrorist attacks in many places have led to growing fear. Extremist parties are waiting in the wings to change the politics of Europe, fuelled by growing unemployment, especially among the young people of Europe. How does scripture guide us? We know that before the invasion of Israel, the Lord Jesus summed up the political systems as a “Dragon”, a “Beast” and a “False Prophet”. (Rev. 16:13) These are matters we have examined in the past. The Dragon power we equate with Russia, continuing the power of Byzantium, the Eastern Roman system, which was the military might of the Roman world of its time. The Beast existed in different phases in the past in the arena of the Western Roman world, with its last manifestation, the Holy Roman Empire, coming to an end as detailed in the first five Vial judgments of Revelation ch 16. We look for its final manifestation, before it is destroyed by the returned Lord Jesus and the saints as described in Rev. ch 17. The False Prophet must have its origin from within the ecclesias (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1; 2 The. 2:3), and can be traced to the Roman Catholic Church and her daughters of today. (Muhammad didn’t arise from within the ecclesia, and therefore is not the False Prophet described here.)

We probably will not see it in its final appearance on this side of the judgment seat. Due to the great losses that Europe and Russia will face following their defeat on the mountains of Israel at Armageddon, the Europe that emerges will be driven by strong anti-Israel feelings, especially when challenged by Israel’s King to submit to his rule! Knowing that the teachings of the Churches about the work of Anti-Christ, mirrors the work that Jesus will actually then be doing, it seems that the Roman Catholic Church will be taking the lead to hold Europe together and challenge Israel’s King.

The picture of the future Europe in Rev. ch 17

The picture here is of a *Beast* being ridden by a *Harlot Woman*. On the *Harlot’s* forehead is the title: *Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots*. We identify the woman rider as the Roman Catholic Church. She has been the successor to the Babylonian mystery religion which centred around the worship of the Mother and Child. In Babylon, it commemorated Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod and her child, Tammuz, who, according to the legends and traditions handed down from Babylon, was born after Nimrod’s death. Tammuz was said to have been Nimrod, come to life again and that he was supernaturally conceived! The worship of the mother and baby can be found

in history in many parts of the world. It was easily absorbed into Christianity in an effort to bring pagans to Christianity. The worship of Mary and baby Jesus is central to not only Catholicism but Orthodoxy. The Russian Church is especially fond of Mary. Hislop's *Two Babylons* brings together the evidence for this embracing of so much of Babylon's religious ideas.

This Harlot Woman was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, Rev.17:6. She was a persecutor of the true believers who refused the mark of the Beast, Rev. 13:17. She sitteth upon many waters, Rev. 17:1 and caused kings to commit fornication and inhabitants of the earth to be made drunk, v. 2. Her fabulous clothing is described in v. 4. The Beast that she is riding is said to be scarlet coloured with seven heads and ten horns, v. 3.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. vv. 9-12

This gives us a valuable link to the past phases of the Beast. At this time, there are no crowns on the horns, instead the power has been handed over to the central power of the Beast. When John was writing, the Roman world had gone through five types of government, the existing one (the sixth head) was the system of Emperors, but that would end for a time when Rome was sacked by the Barbarians. But this dark period came to an end and the system of having an Emperor was revived. Although that seventh head came to an end with the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, never-the-less, we are being told that there would be an eighth manifestation. So, we would expect it to be similar, yet with some differences, for it is not described as the seventh head revived, but an eighth head.

We are told:

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. vv. 13,14

So clearly this is a time when the Lord Jesus and his followers are established in power. This final manifestation of *Great Babylon* resists the call to

submission and is destroyed. This picks up the language of Daniel 7:11 of the fourth Beast being utterly destroyed.

Revelation chapter 18 and 19 give more details of the Babylonian *Harlot* and her demise at the hand of the rider on the white horse and his powerful companions.

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.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Rev. 19:11-16

So eventually, we expect there to arise a powerful *Beast* system which is very much under the control of the *Harlot Woman* rider. Let us stress again, that this symbolic picture of *ten kings* who submit their power to the body of the *Beast* to which they, as heads, are attached belongs to the time after Armageddon. We therefore should not expect to see it in existence at present. What we do see is preparation for that time. The present EU may well collapse and a new system arise more in line with the time of an Emperor and a Pope who rule together, controlling Europe to resist the claims of the one they see as Anti-Christ. There are moves afoot to restore the monarchy in Russia; there have been also been calls in Austria and Germany for monarchies to be restored. It would not be necessary, but would be very interesting if this were to happen.

With this background in mind, can we see such a *Beast* system emerging?

Europe's eyes on Merkel to rebuild EU after Brexit vote

Like the commentators in the UK, those in Europe thought that a Brexit vote would never be carried. In spite of her awkwardness within the EU, Britain was so deeply enmeshed in all its organisations, that leaving was unthinkable. As in Britain, there was great consternation among the UK's fellow members at this rebuff to what they held so dear and had made great sacrifices to achieve! Brexit was a dagger, thrust into the heart of Europe by

one of her most powerful members. There were strong fears that there were several other countries who would like to follow Britain's path to freedom!

They turned to Mrs Merkel to give them the necessary leadership to steady the European ship. It wasn't as if this was the only problem they faced. Economic growth is very low; several euro countries are on the brink of bankruptcy and unemployment is stubbornly high. Brexit was the last thing they needed to happen!

When the chips are down in Europe, everyone turns to Angela Merkel for a solution. But the German Chancellor often sits on her hands until the last minute, then does the minimum necessary to keep the show on the road.

Since last month's shock British referendum vote to leave the European Union, all eyes have been on Berlin to indicate a way out of danger for the 27 members who will remain.

As usual, Merkel, the continent's most powerful and experienced leader, is biding her time and letting underlings air their differences without tipping her hand before she departs for her three-week summer break this week.

Votes had barely been tallied in Britain when her vice-chancellor, Sigmar Gabriel, leader of the centre-left Social Democrats, and European Parliament President Martin Schulz rushed out a 10-point plan for a "refoundation" of Europe.

Lamenting that ever more citizens doubted Europe's ability to deliver a better future, they called for a more federal Europe with the European Commission as its government, and a more flexible, growth-friendly economic policy turning away from austerity to investment in an "industrial renaissance".

The German and French Foreign Ministers, both Social Democrats, have issued more modest joint proposals for the EU to focus on internal and external security, managing migration and refugee flows, and boosting the economy and job creation.

Their nine-page paper, which would not require changing the EU's founding treaty with the risk of more referendum defeats, called for a European Security Compact with a more integrated foreign and security policy and a permanent civil-military chain of command for crisis management operations.

But when it came to the euro—the economic heart of the European project—their suggestions of investment-boosting measures by surplus countries and a common fiscal capacity (budget) for the euro zone, ran into the same stonewall in the German Finance Ministry. *Reuters* 18-Jul-

The Germans are unhappy with Mrs Merkel; her Christian Democratic Union party slipped to third place in the September state elections in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, its worst showing in state elections since World War II. One poll showed that 50% of the Germans don't want her to stand for a fourth term, a matter she has indicated she wants to do. Germany's problem is that there isn't an obvious successor that they could rally behind. There is the disgraced former Defence Minister, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg. He is happily established in the States as a corporate advisor and investor. Will he be called back to run as Chancellor? We shall see.

Given the situation, Merkel continues to try to guide the EU forward. The prospect of Donald Trump as the next US President is deeply troubling. Europe is used to being protected by American interests in Europe and if they can get away without having to pay much for America's ambitions to show her power, well that is fine. It is unlikely to continue like that under Trump. He has put the NATO countries under notice that they will have to contribute towards the huge costs of defending Europe.

Germany: Trump victory to spur EU military union

France and Germany have never really liked the presence of US troops on their territories. With Brexit in progress, they have been busy planning their own military forces. After all, if they want to become a United States of Europe, they need to be able to defend themselves. The costs however are enormous, faced with the military might of Russia on their doorstep. Supporting NATO would be a much cheaper option, but their dependence on the US is something they would be pleased to see the back of. Just how much America contributes to NATO is a matter of dispute. On one measure America covers about 22% of NATO's costs, but if one takes total military expenditure, then it is about 72% of the other NATO members military spending combined. Much of this is used to operate around the world, but would be used to reinforce NATO if the need arose and if NATO was still defending Europe.

“Europe needs the common political will for more security policy relevance. The outcome of the election in America could provide an additional impetus”, German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said in an opinion article in the *Rheinische Post*, a German newspaper, on Thursday (10 November).

“The Brexit decision and the election in the United States have set a new course” for Europe, she added.

She said it was “difficult for Germany and Europe, on the day after the election, to assess what to expect from a Trump presidency”.

She said EU security would continue to depend on the US and on NATO, but Trump's victory meant that Europe, and Germany as “a great nation

in the centre of Europe”, would have to be “more self-reliant on security issues”.

Federica Mogherini, the EU foreign policy chief, echoed the German minister.

“It is starting to be clear to everyone—that we can only succeed in providing **security to our citizens if we work together as a true Union**, with the **full potential of a super power**, in the field of **security and defence**”, the Italian former diplomat said.

She said NATO was still “the cornerstone of our collective defence”, but that the EU should have “strategic autonomy”.

She called for the creation of **a single command HQ for its military missions**, which she described as a smaller version of Shape, the NATO command centre in Belgium.

Britain was the EU’s top military power and had long vowed to block European security cooperation because it would undermine NATO.

Von der Leyen’s appeal for an EU military force and Mogherini’s ideas on how to take that forward were already set down in a joint paper by France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, circulated in October in reaction to the Brexit vote.

“To be clear: an ‘EU Army’ is not our objective,” they said at the time.

Italy, and Germany, do want an EU army, however, according to separate Italian proposals and according to France’s reading of Berlin.

Germany is raising defence spending from €34 billion in 2015 to €39.2 billion in 2020, but its spending (1.2% of GDP) is still far below NATO’s target (2% of GDP) for allied states. *EUObserver* 11-Nov-16

Dawn of EU Army

In October, the EU agreed to the establishment of a £420 million-a-year superforce to defend Europe. The vote of the MEP’s at Strasburg was not unanimous by any means; it was carried 369 to 255 with 70 abstentions.

They say that duplication, overcapacity and barriers to defence procurement result currently in annual waste of €26.4 billion and they now want to pool resources meaning they will be able to action a plan to access defence strategies in individual countries.

MEPs call on member states to pursue joint purchases of defence resources, and to pool or share non-lethal material such as transport vehicles or aircraft.

The resolution also called upon the European Council to lead the creation of “common Union defence policy and to provide additional financial resources ensuring its implementation.”

MEPs back the proposed EU investment in defence-related research projects “of at least £76m (90 million euro) during next three years”, suggesting that this should be followed up by a separate European Defence Research Programme with an annual budget of €500 million. *The Express* 23-Oct-16

Britain is not happy with this as she strongly supports NATO and this would divert support from NATO.

At the EU heads of States meeting, 15th December, there was further pressure to establish their own army according to *German Foreign Policy* 16-Dec-16.

Based on the militarization campaign of the preceding months—culminating in European Parliaments resolutions, such as that from last Wednesday—the EU heads of states and governments reiterated, yesterday, their will **to militarize the EU** and strengthen its military cooperation. We will continue to “cooperate more in the future—continually and structurally” in “defense and external security,” according to the German government, following the summit meeting. There will also be “more joint civilian missions,” as well as more “military operations.” The summit gave “a clear impulse” in this regard. The EU Commission’s “*European Defense Action Plan*,” has also been explicitly confirmed.

The official creation of an EU army, which cannot be realized until Great Britain has left the EU, **remains the long-term objective**.

NATO is planning to put more troops into Europe on the Russian borders. It is unlikely that this will be supported by Donald Trump when President. Russia is responding by building up her troops on her borders, ready to face any such buildup. She has one great advantage, an enclave within the EU.

Kaliningrad: Russia in the heart of Europe

The Kaliningrad Oblast is a small piece of Russia in the heart of the EU. It was formally part of German Prussia, but was taken by the Soviet army in 1945, in the closing days of WWII. The German population was subsequently expelled and Russian citizens moved in. It has been used by Russia as a military base and the Headquarters of the Soviet Baltic Fleet. It is ice-free in the winter.

With the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1991 and Kaliningrad’s neighbours gaining independence, it



left it isolated from Russia, and is accessed mainly by air and sea. There are road and rail links that pass through Lithuania and Latvia, but are subject to visa controls and disruptions. In recent years, Russia has installed its S-400 land-based air defence missiles which have a range of 250 miles. In time of tension, Russia installs other missiles. Currently she has Bastion land-based coastal-defence missile launchers, with a range of 200 miles and Iskander-M land-based missiles with a range of 310 miles. In October, Russia sent two ships there armed with the Kalibr ship-based missiles with a range of 930 miles. These have been used with devastating effect in Syria. Russia has been able to gain battle experience with these missiles in Syria, where she has been able to demonstrate that her missiles are a real threat. They can be armed with nuclear warheads, when necessary.

Europe's choice

Germany has no nuclear weapons at the moment but is seriously thinking of purchasing some. France has a limited number, but only sufficient to defend her own country. Europe's dilemma is, faced with a much greater army on your doorstep, do you continue to antagonise her, or seek to make friendships? Germany is powered by exports and Russia was one of her best customers, until sanctions were imposed because of Crimea. At a time when the eurozone is facing declining trade, the Russian markets are very attractive. Add to this an America who may not be as friendly towards you, and Britain who is well armed is leaving, what does one do? It does make sense to reach some accommodation with your enemy and hope that it will not turn around to harm you!

Germany to take on military leadership in global conflicts

Over the past few years Germany's military has been slowly moving from being a passive force to a proactive force. A new post-war generation has grown up who don't have the same feelings as their parents who came through the war. They want Germany to take its place on the world stage. In the past, Germany's role was to be the "reliable partner" in international missions. Now she is taking the lead in conflicts in Africa and a supportive role in Syria. The government has increased considerably the spend on military needs. [This next piece has been translated from German.]

When German President Joachim Gauck speaks at the upcoming "Unification" festivities in Dresden—three years after his October 3, 2013 speech launching a campaign in favor of an extensive German global policymaking, including on a military level—he will be able to look back on a successfully concluded phase in the development. To a large extent, Berlin's global policy is supported, without question, by Germany's elite, especially the media establishment. It has now been clearly formulated in the Bundeswehr's new White Paper, which explicitly states that Germany is "prepared to actively help shape the global order" and to "assume leadership." The Bundeswehr's personnel pool will again be expanded.

The German government has earmarked 3-digit billions in finances for an arms buildup. Bundeswehr missions in Mali, Syria, Iraq, and in the Mediterranean have been broadened; a mission in Libya is still in discussion. A few days ago, the Bundeswehr announced it had carried out its first cyber offensive. At the same time, Berlin is persistently pursuing the militarization of the EU. Even though the results of the past two decades of Germany's wars have been miserable, preparations for new wars are continuing. And ultimately, Berlin expects—sooner or later—serious retaliation on its national territory. A new “Civil Defense Concept” was recently approved, to prepare the population for these retaliatory attacks. The phase of the systematic introduction of Germany's new global policy and its promotion, is now drawing to a close. The phase of its comprehensive implementation is now beginning. *German Foreign Policy* 30-Sep16

According to reports in *Russia Today* 04-Nov-16:

In September, Spiegel magazine revealed the German government's plans to allocate €58 million (\$65 million) to construct and renovate military facilities used by Germany's air force contingent deployed at NATO Incirlik base in Turkey.

Incirlik base has been used by the Americans for many years as a valuable base to keep an eye on the Middle East and is being used in operations in Syria. What was planned by Germany was the building of a new runway and a portable command centre comprising of sophisticated equipment fitted into containers, as well as accommodation facilities. This article in November indicated that Turkey was dragging her feet and so it had not yet proceeded. With Turkey making up with Russia, doubtless Mr Putin was discouraging Germany's presence on this airbase which Russia was hoping to be able to use.

Germany and France to share transport planes

France has on order four C-130J Super Hercules military transport planes, and Germany is contemplating purchasing between four and six of them. According to *The Local* 05-Oct-16, they have agreed to share them and locate them on the same air base in France. This would be a first for the two air forces. It is envisaged this will be in place by 2021.

The dream of a eurostate

Running in parallel with Germany's leadership plans, lies the dream of a eurostate, the United States of Europe. With Brexit looming, the original plans by the founding fathers of modern Europe of political union can move more swiftly ahead without Britain's resistance.

France and Germany moved quickly once the Brexit results were declared. A few days later, their Foreign Ministers outlined their plans.

The Foreign Ministers of France and Germany have proposed creating a “European superstate” limiting the powers of individual members following Britain’s referendum decision to leave the EU, Polish public broadcaster TVP Info has reported.

The document in which the proposals appear is to be presented to Visegrad Group countries meeting in Prague on Monday.

TVP Info said the proposals would mean members of a superstate would in practice have no right to their own army, to a separate criminal code or a separate tax system, and would not have their own currency. Member states would lose control over their own borders and procedures for admitting and relocating refugees. *Radio Poland* 27-Jun-16

The Visegrad Group, also called the Visegrad Four, or V4 is an alliance



of four Central European states—Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia—for the purposes of furthering their European integration, as well as for advancing military, economic and energy cooperation with one another. *Wikipedia* Accessed 28-Dec-16

If these 4 nations did form an alliance with Germany and France, it would largely cover the region of the Holy Roman Empire. Those who didn’t want to integrate would, presumably, form an outer circle of non-integrated allies.

The euro still wobbling

The problems of Greece, Italy and Spain are exerting strong pressures on the euro, and are threatening the whole euro-dream. Germany’s economic growth is very weak, France’s has ground to a halt. Germany’s hallowed bank, the Deutsche Bank is in big trouble, the German government have said they won’t bail it out if the threatened bankruptcy becomes a reality. Germany’s biggest bank employs 100,000 around the world and operates in 70 countries. From a high point of €160 a share in 2007 it fell to €11 in September, though has recovered somewhat, closing the year at €17.

Even one of the architects of the euro, was very gloomy about its prospects! “One day, the house of cards will collapse,” said Professor Otmar Issing, the ECB’s first chief economist and a towering figure in the construction of the single currency.

Prof Issing said the euro has been betrayed by politics, lamenting that the experiment went wrong from the beginning and has since degenerated into a fiscal free-for-all that once again masks the festering pathologies.

“Realistically, it will be a case of muddling through, struggling from one crisis to the next. It is difficult to forecast how long this will continue for, but it cannot go on endlessly,” he told the journal *Central Banking* in a remarkable deconstruction of the project. *Daily Telegraph* 16-Oct-16

Reversal of Trend in Business with Russia

The tide seems to be turning, trade figures have increased for the first time since sanctions were imposed.

Current data on the development of German-Russian business relations seems to confirm the hope, recently expressed by business circles that a reversal in the business trend with Russia could be in sight. In September, the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (OA) noted that the slump in German exports to Russia had significantly slowed down with only 3.5 percent in the first semester 2016, thus seeming to “bottom out”. According to recent reports, German exports to Russia have increased in the third quarter of 2016, for the first time since sanctions were imposed—by 3.9 percent. Even a slight export surplus could possibly be reached for the whole year 2016. Because of Russia’s economic recovery, a boost in exports can be expected in 2017. As far as commerce is concerned, it seems to have “bottomed out.”

The same holds true for German investments in Russia. Here also, the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (OA) recently pointed out that the number of enterprises maintaining production sites in Russia have only slightly declined since sanctions were imposed—from 6,000 to approximately 5,600. Currently, quite a few are trying to use the pressure of the crisis to reduce their staff and “strategically better prepare” for the future. In the meantime, German direct investments in Russia experience an upswing again. This tendency is now confirmed. For example, from January to September, German companies had invested a total of more than two billion euros in Russia—a 46 percent increase in comparison to 2015. This is due to the ruble devaluation, which makes the transfer of profits from Russia to Germany unattractive, while making production in Russia more profitable. Continental, for example, has begun producing tires for German and French markets in Russia. That is cheaper. On the other hand, Moscow’s import substitutions policy, which sanctions have forced the Russian government to adopt, has led German companies to build factories in Russia.

A consortium comprised of Siemens, the Deutsche Bahn, the Deutsche Bank and other companies will lay a rail line from Moscow to Kasan

[capital of Tatarstan Republic], worth 2.7 billion euros. *German Foreign Policy* 15-Dec-16

From Bible prophecy, we expect that there will be a *Beast* system and a *Dragon* system who ultimately work together, under one headship to come against Israel. We would expect therefore that there will be friendly relations between the two systems. This is a trend that we can see increasingly happening. As Europe looks away from the US and Britain, it makes sense to turn to the East. After all, the Eastern and Western feet and toes are attached to the same body!

Nord Stream 2 ‘Ready to Proceed’

Nord Stream is a good example of Germany’s links to Russia. The first twin gas pipe line that linked Russia direct to Germany via the Baltic sea-bed, was completed in two stages; the first of the twin pipes became operational in 2011 and the second in



2012. It is the longest undersea pipeline in the world and the two pipes have a total capacity of 55 bnM³. At the moment, the volume is restricted to about half of that due to sanctions on Russia. As far as Germany is concerned, as it doesn’t run across any other territories, there is no danger of upstream stoppages in times of trouble. The cost of laying it was far higher than a land route, but there is security and there are no annual transit fees either.

Despite sanctions, Germany and Russia are well advanced in plans to double the capacity by duplicating the existing system. Poland objected strongly, as a land-based pipeline would have to cross her territory giving her valuable transit fees. Traditional transit countries such as Poland, Belarus, Czech Republic and Ukraine see this as a move to enable Russia to put pressure on them without upsetting supplies to downstream customers.

The proposed pipeline expansion would follow the same sea-bed route but have different starting and finishing points. The landfall of the exiting pipes at Lubim can’t take any more capacity and other nearby sites are being looked at.

We now turn to look at Russia.

RUSSIAN BEAR STAYING IN SYRIA

2016 has seen considerable changes in the northern Middle East. The battle against ISIS has continued unabated, with gains and counter-gains. At the year-end, ISIS had lost territory and some key towns. With their fanatics moving into Europe under the cover of the migrant movements, it has not lost its ability to inflict devastation and bring fear to the heart of Europe.

Russia has made strong gains in Syria and is busy building and enlarging bases—she clearly isn't there for the short-term. Russia's support for President Bashar al-Assad has meant that far from being on the way out, Assad has reinforced his hold on western Syria, which has been his traditional stronghold.

Russia expanding her footprint

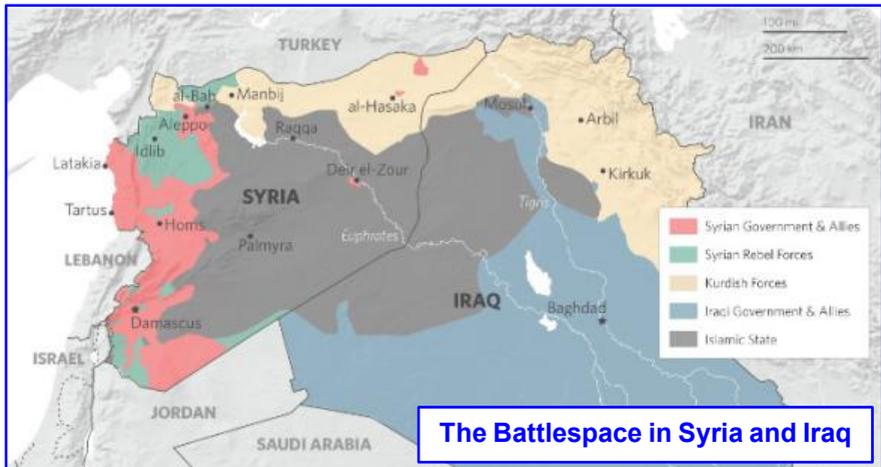
Our newspapers and news reports have been filled with images of the Russian and Syrian advancement against ISIS and areas held by groups opposed to al-Assad. At the year-end, the battle for Aleppo seems to be nearly over, with a great number of deaths and a growing stream of refugees.

The most interesting thing for Bible students is surely Russia's determination to solidify her gains while she has opportunity. While the American Presidential election ensures that America's attention is elsewhere, Putin has been digging in. Turkey is very much surrounded by Russia troops as we shall see in the next chapter, as Russia has made several moves during the year to encircle her. Her progress in Syria has been most striking.

Tartus: expanding her port

Russia has decided to enlarge the Tartus base which she has been using as a small supply port since 1977, under a lease agreement with Syria. At the moment, it can't accommodate large vessels, so a major revamp is underway so that it can berth any of her vessels. It will host a command and control system, an air defence system and anti-submarine defence capabilities as well as fuel and supply stores. (*Russia Today* 10-Oct-16) Russia has already sent to Tartus a S-300 anti-missile defence system which gives protection from missiles up to 350 km away over the sea and 450 km over land. This will join the S-400 system that protects Russia's bases to the north. By using two 100m long floating piers, the length of two of the present piers has been greatly increased.

“It can be called a drastic change because we have never had a full-scale naval base in the Mediterranean. Creating such a base in Tartus can qualitatively change the situation, and we will have a much more formidable position in the southern Mediterranean,” political analyst Andranik Migrayan said. *Sputnik* 17-Oct-16



To the north of Tartus is the main air base of Khmeimim (or Hmeimim) near Latakia. According to *Debka*, this is seeing bold expansion plans following Syria's agreement for Russia to permanently use it.

Hmeimim would undergo a "significant upgrade" with new infrastructure to accommodate its "unlimited use." A second runway would be added to support the "high intensity of activity as a result of operations launched from the airport," a Russian senator said.

Hmeimim would also be expanded in area to encompass defensive positions, more residential and technical facilities and a broader exclusion zone around the base. *Debka* 25-Nov-16.

The *Debka* report also detailed that a further air base is being prepared at Akhtar in to the NE of Aleppo.

The Russian work teams were sighted laying new runways for air force fighters and bombers and building emplacements for advanced anti-air missile batteries.

Russia needed this base because the use of the aircraft carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov* hadn't proved up to the job of being a floating air base. This 31-year old vessel has only a primitive launching system and several aircraft have come to grief.

Russia was keen to consolidate her position before the change in US President. As it has turned out, with Mr Trump being elected, Russia may find greater support than she would have done under Mrs Clinton.

An Existential Battle for the Demographic Future of Syria

This headline from the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 21-Dec-16 gave the details of a vast ethnic cleansing taking place in Syria.

Bashar Assad's regime is Alawite, a sect that was recognized by the Lebanese Shiite religious establishment as a branch of Shi'ism. But Syria's Arab Sunnis never recognized the Alawite rulers as Muslims. By Islamic law, only a Muslim can rule a Muslim country. The Sunnis acquiesced to Alawite rule because of their inability to forcefully remove the Assad family from power. Never-the-less, until today, the upper class Arab Sunnis families who employed Alawites as servants in their households refer disparagingly to their Alawite servants as *abid* ("slaves" in Arabic).

The Syrian government, Russia, and Iran are trying to change the demographic makeup of Syria. They aim to depopulate Syria of the Arab Sunnis, which, before the Arab Spring was the largest religio-ethnic group in Syria. They mostly inhabited a very fertile strip of land between Aleppo in the north, down to Damascus, and then southward to the Jordanian border. Those Arab Sunnis who did not leave are being forced to move to Idlib and Raqqa, near the Turkish border.

The Iranians, Russians, and Syrian governments joined together to fight against the Sunni fundamentalists because all three see themselves in an existential battle against the radical Sunnis. They joined together to "rectify" this problem by ridding Syria of its Sunni Arabs and thereby change the demographic makeup of Syria forever.

Most of the Muslims in Russia are Sunni, so Russia likewise fears any growth in Sunni influence.

Russian ships return to the Mediterranean

There has been a steady stream of Russian naval ships operating off the coast of Syria, providing support for her actions against ISIS. Having built up facilities in Crimea, Putin sees the Mediterranean as the next forward operation zone.

Russia uses an Iranian airbase

For a brief time in August, Russia was allowed to use one of Iran's air bases in her war against ISIS. The Nojeh air base is close to the city of Hamedan in western Iran. Iran has made it clear that Russia is welcome to re-use the facilities there if required again. (*Stratfor* 29-Dec-16)

Next, we look at Russia and Turkey.

RUSSIAN BEAR DANCING WITH TURKEY

The shooting down of a Russian military aircraft for infringing Turkish airspace, back in November 2015, brought to a halt the plans that Russia had for entwining Turkey into a dependence on Russia for energy. At the moment, Turkey imports about 55% of her natural gas needs and 12% of her oil needs, from Russia. Putin had decided in spring 2015 to no longer pursue supplying Russian gas to eastern Europe via a pipeline across the Black Sea to Bulgaria and then onwards into Central Europe. It was beset with EU objections as the EU wanted to punish Russia for events in Crimea and Ukraine. Putin saw the advantage to changing the route so that it was delivered to Turkey and to the border of Greece. It would increase Turkey's dependence on Russia and also ensure that when Greece moved into Russia's arms, it would be independent of the EU for energy.

Long-term, Russia has for centuries wanted control of Constantinople—today called Istanbul—for here was the source of the Russian Orthodox Church. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the region under control of Muslims, the Russian's have sought to bring it back to Christianity. Today the great Basilica of St. Sophia, which was the equivalent of St Peter's in the days of the Eastern Roman, Byzantine, Empire, was turned into a mosque and now is a museum.

Russia also is dependent on Turkey to move her warships through the Bosphorus to reach the Mediterranean. Turkey could easily prevent this happening as she sits on the cliffs on either side the waterway. With Crimea being turned into a forward base, this matter has become more critical. Many vessels have moved men and equipment to Syria to help in the battle to support al-Assad and his regime, as well as dealing with the ISIS threat. Although Turkey supports Russia's aim in toppling ISIS, she doesn't want to see al-Assad remain in power.

Sooner or later Russia will take control of Turkey. This may well be the opening strike when, as part of Nebuchadnezzar's Image she and her companions (Eze. 38) move down to take Egypt and Israel. At the moment, as we saw last year there is an element of carrot and stick in Putin's approach. 2016 saw the healing of the rift that the November plane shooting incident caused.

Russian sanctions hurt Turkey

Following the shooting down of the Russian plane in November 2015, Putin imposed harsh sanctions against Turkey. Banned were imports of fruit and vegetables and poultry from Turkey. Russians were stopped from taking charter holidays in Turkey, this really hurt as Turkey was their top overseas holiday destination. Turkish construction firms were prevented from

working in Russia unless a special exemption was granted and restrictions were imposed on Turks working in Russia. The potential loss for Turkey was estimated at around £7bn a year. In addition, the Turkish Stream pipeline was put on hold. (*BBC* 01-Jan-16)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan blinks first

At the end of June, as losses from Russian tourists began to really bite, President Erdoğan wrote to President Putin apologising for the shooting down incident. This was followed a few days later by a phone call to Mr Putin.

A statement from the Turkish presidency called the conversation positive and productive and said that the leaders discussed cooperation in political, economic and humanitarian crises in the Middle East, as well as in the fight against terrorism. Erdoğan and Putin also agreed to a face-to-face meeting, the statement added. A statement from the Kremlin said the two governments will begin talks to restore bilateral trade cooperation and that measures restricting Russian tourism to Turkey would be dropped, though it did not say when. *Stratfor* 29-Jun-16

The two leaders agreed to meet while attending the July 1st Black Sea Economic Cooperation conference at Sochi.

This was followed by an invitation to come to St Petersburg for a meeting, which took place in early August.

And yet there was a visible difference of tone between the two leaders during their meeting near St. Petersburg on Tuesday. At the final press conference, Erdoğan called Putin his “dear friend” no less than four times. Putin, cool and unsmiling, did nothing of the kind. His attitude may have been reflected in the housekeeping details. Though the two leaders ate off plates decorated with a picture of them shaking hands, the talks took place in the Constantine Palace’s Greek Room. Perhaps this had no significance, as the pro-Putin daily *Pravda* took pains to assure its readers—the ancient Greek theme runs through the palace’s interiors—but Turkey does have a strained relationship with Greece. *Bloomberg* 10-Aug-16



The Russians do like symbolism and Putin is no exception. It would drive home that Russia is connected to Greece—Turkey’s enemy—through

religion. Turkey as Muslim was the odd one out. The double-headed eagle, the Byzantine symbol adopted by Russia, was clearly on show on several dinner-table items! Erdoğan was the successor to the power that swept these things away from Byzantium, centuries ago!

Turkish Stream back on track

At this meeting, it was announced by the two leaders that this project was back on the drawing board and work would commence as soon as the necessary agreements had been put into place. One of the reasons Russia is so keen on this pipeline is that it has the potential to



supply gas to eastern Europe without having to transit through Ukraine.

The first permits were granted in September, and in October the two governments signed the deal which plans to see the first pipeline constructed in 2018. Both the final part of the underwater pipe line and the on-land route to the Greek border needs surveying and agreeing. It is envisaged that it will initially be twin pipes capable of handling 31.5 bn M³/yr, half for Turkey and half for onward transmission.

Erdoğan escapes coup d'état

In July, Erdoğan faced a *coup d'état*—an attempt by an element of the Turkish military to overthrow the government. It was met with strong resistance from forces loyal to him. It is thought that Putin had tipped Erdoğan off, upon learning of the planned plot from his secret service. Erdoğan was whisked away by his security forces just minutes before the plotters arrived by helicopter to kill or capture him.

The unsuccessful plot resulted in over 300 deaths and over 2,000 injured. Government property was damaged with bombs dropped from military helicopters. Erdoğan's response was to carry out mass arrests with 40,000 being detained including 10,000 soldiers and nearly 3,000 judges. More than 100,000 people were purged from their jobs. A 3-month long state of emergency was put in place and extended in October for a further 3 months.

The coup seems to have been a protest against the path that Erdoğan was leading Turkey, making many enemies of Turkey's neighbours. Increasingly the military disagreed with his policies.

“Too late did Erdoğan realise the cost of the role he had chosen for his country. It’s one thing to say sorry to Putin and patch up relations with Netanyahu; but when you can no longer trust your army, there are more serious matters to concentrate upon.” Robert Fisk *Independent* 16-Jul-16

Even if this coup may have failed, Fisk expects another to follow in the months or years to come. (Gleaned from *Wikipedia: 2016 Turkish coup d’état attempt* Accessed 30-Dec-16)

Russian Ambassador to Turkey killed

While addressing the audience at an art exhibition, the Russian Ambassador, Andrei Karlov, was shot dead by an off-duty policeman, who shouted that it was in revenge for all the deaths in Aleppo in Syria. Parallels were drawn with the triggering of WWI, but Putin decided not to make an issue of the incident.

“Russia and Turkey have every incentive to manage this crisis,” said Aaron Stein, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think-tank.

He added that the assassination is likely to make bilateral ties more asymmetrical than they already are. “**Russia has always had the upper hand. This just makes it stronger,**” he said.

Putin visits Greece

At the end of May, the Russian President made his first EU trip for six months, visiting Greece. Relations between Greece and the EU are fraught, Greece is bankrupt and the financial measures that the EU are imposing are making matters worse. Greece has also been hit by the EU sanctions imposed on trade with Russia.

Before the visit, Putin published an article in Greece’s *Kathimerini* newspaper, where he spoke about the negative effect of mutual sanctions.

“These days, Greece is Russia’s important partner in Europe. Unfortunately, the decline in relations between Russia and the European Union stands in the way of further strengthening our cooperation. Particularly affected were Greek agricultural producers,” Putin said.

In 2015 trade between the two countries fell by 33.7 percent to about \$2.8 billion. Ninety percent of that loss was exports from Russia to Greece. Russian imports from Greece decreased by 54 percent and amounted to \$229.4 million. *Russia Today* 27-May-16

Greece has natural ties with Russia and their PM, Alexis Tsipras, has visited Putin several times. He and Putin were taking the opportunity to remind the EU of this friendship and the need to deal more sympathetically with Greece’s problems.

The Russia newspaper *Pravda* 06-Jun-16 (and remembering that the Russia press is under governmental control) carried an interesting article about this visit. (Translated from Russian.)

The countries of the Middle East paid great interest to the recent visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Greece. ... Vladimir Putin made it clear that **Syria** and **Greece** were **under Russia's protection**, and the enemy would not pass. NATO and the US heard the Russian message.

Covering Putin's recent visit to Greece, Arab media saw his negotiations with the President and Prime Minister of Greece as a message to the West and NATO. During the talks, the Russian President said that the refugee crisis in Europe could be resolved only after the establishment of peace in Syria. To achieve peace in Syria, one needs to destroy terrorism in the country first.

Russian President Putin said that he could understand the complicated position of Greek Prime Minister Tsipras, because Greece is a NATO member. Today, Greece acts as a dissident not only at the EU but also at NATO. Like all other Turkey's neighbors, Greece suffers from the refugee crisis, as well as from the policy of Turkish President Erdoğan, who switched from "zero problems with neighbors" policy to aggressive policies in the relations with all of its neighbors, including Greece and Russia.

While Putin was here he paid a visit to Mt Athos. This is at the bottom end of a long peninsular that juts out from Greece towards Turkey. The 335 km² territory, although part of Greece is run independently, rather like the Vatican. This is the centre of Greek Orthodox monasticism. 20 monasteries dot its landscape. No females, not even female animals are allowed. Visiting is strictly by permit only for men and only 10 permits a day are granted. This was Putin's second visit. On this occasion, he was visiting along with Patriarch Kirill, to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of Russian monks being here from Kievan Rus and establishing the St Panteleimon monastery. Mr Putin is said to have given generous donations to its upkeep. In the past centuries, Russian tsars had helped the monasteries survive with large donations.

A writer for the *Spectator* magazine visited a few months after Putin's visit.

There is building work everywhere, not just restoration but lavish construction. Panteleimon, the Russian monastery, is so perfect that it looks newly made. At Xenofontos we saw two new buildings made of marble and other fine materials within the confines of an historic site. Nearby, we came upon a cellar that housed a lift, six new stainless steel wine-fermenting vats, new plumbing and electrics of the highest calibre.

The stone walls of field terraces are in perfect repair; the vineyards and olive groves are well tended. There are cranes everywhere as well as

yellow earth-moving vehicles and diggers, plus trucks laden with cement, slates and other building materials. Looking at the hillsides, I could see evidence of recently graded dirt roads snaking over tortuous mountain passes — but no roads have been built to link Mt Athos with Greece.

At Vatopedi, works included a new sea wall and dockside, but few boats were in evidence. We saw similar new docks and boathouses under construction elsewhere, despite the ban on private boats landing here.

Mt Athos is currently one large building site in contrast to the dereliction and poverty of the rest of Greece. It seems unreal that humble monks should be employing so much specialist labour. This must be costing hundreds of millions of euros.

We were told that Russian money forms an important source of funding all over the peninsula. Donating to the church to buy favours in heaven doesn't seem a sufficient explanation. Does Russia have a secret agenda to account for such largesse? Why might Mr Putin be interested in this closed, authoritarian and guarded community? *The Spectator* 10-Sep-16

He wondered whether Russia was using this as a strategic centre for spying on NATO, (“we noticed a number of sophisticated looking antennae and dish arrays”). He may have missed the fact that Putin takes his Russian Orthodox religion seriously, and wants to build bridges to Greece, whom the Russians regard as part of their sphere of interest, due to religious links. Based on the geography of the two legs in the past, Greece belongs not to the western leg of Nebuchadnezzar's Image (Dan. Ch. 2) but the eastern leg.

NATO and Russia

Both Greece and Turkey are members of NATO, and neither is supportive of NATO. Greece signed an arms deal to manufacture Russian Kalashnikov rifles, when sanctions have been lifted. Turkey talked of Russia being her “strategic partner” and is seeking to purchase the Russian S-400 long-range air defence missile system, as well as ammunition and missile technology. These matters are of deep concern to NATO. Putin would be very pleased to see NATO troops withdrawn from the region; in his eyes they are a serious threat to Russia's own stability, and Putin seeks to counter NATO's forces with his own forces along the border of Russia.

Russia building more bases

On Ukraine's eastern borders, Russia was constructing bases on Russian territory but close to the border. We reported on two in last year's *Milestones* and there was news this year of yet another one on Ukraine's northern border

When completed, the base will be the latest component in a buildup of forces along a line running from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. *Reuters* 08-Jun-16

We have already seen in ch. 8 the buildup of ships in the Baltic at Kaliningrad to counter NATO's moves in the area.

To the west of Ukraine, Russia has greatly strengthened her position in the border country of Transdnistria. This very pro-Russian sliver of territory on Ukraine's western border broke away from Moldova in 1992, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet. Putin has increased his military presence by enlarging the military airport to take large transporter planes. In elections in December the incumbent President lost out to a very pro-Russian candidate. The previous month, in the Moldavian elections, a pro-Russian candidate was chosen, opening the way for possibly a reunion between Moldova and Transdnistria.



The elections will have important repercussions in Eastern Europe as well.

Mounting challenges in the European Union and an impending political transition in the United States have created a chance for Russia to fill the void left by a distracted and divided West. Countries throughout Eurasia have been forced to re-examine their ties with Washington, Brussels and Moscow as they adapt to a world in which the West has given the impression it will become less involved in certain regional affairs. And judging by the election of pro-Russian Presidents in Transdnistria and Moldova, it seems that the **Kremlin has seized the opportunity to quietly extend its reach westward.** *Stratfor* 13-Dec-16

Russia strengthens links to Crimea

Work is proceeding on a road-rail bridge over the Kerch Straits to link Crimea to mainland Russia, as the only existing road link runs through Ukraine. This has been beset with problems and shortage of funds, but is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018.

The electricity supply from Ukraine was disrupted in November 2015 when some pylons were blown up. With the last of four electrical cable link-ups from mainland Russia completed in May, Crimea is now independent of Ukraine. A gas pipeline was completed at the end of the year. One of the remaining problems is water supply; the North-Crimea Canal, which used to supply 85% of Crimea's water needs was cut off by Ukraine in 2014.

Putin encircles Turkey in massive troop buildup

This rather dramatic headline in the *Washington Times* 25-Feb-16 spoke of the military buildup in Armenia on Turkey's north-eastern border.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's plans in the Middle East are becoming clearer. In a bid to exact revenge on Turkey and in an attempt to split the NATO alliance, Russia is rapidly building up pressure on NATO's southern flank. The new Russian satellite state of Armenia on Turkey's north-eastern border is now hosting a massive Russian troop buildup with the recent signing of an air defense agreement between Russia and Armenia. Along with the buildup of Russian air assets in Syria, Russia selling Iran billions in sophisticated weapon systems, and Russia's support of Kurdish units along Turkey's southern border, Mr. Putin has encircled Turkey in a classic pincer movement.

Make no mistake: The Russian military presence in Armenia represents a dagger pointed at the heart of NATO as the Armenia-Russian alliance strengthens. But while Moscow is rattling its sabers, Washington remains silent.

According to a *Debka* report 26-Aug-16, Russia has been busy enlarging its airbase in Mozdok, Northern Ossetia and adding a second runway for heavy bombers. This is in Russian territory to the north of the Caucasus Mountains. (Pro-Russia South Ossetia adjoins it to the south of the Caucasus Mountains and broke away from Georgia in 2008.)

Moscow Deepens Its Eurasian Security Tendrils

This headline from *Stratfor* 20-Dec-16 detailed Russia's steps to strengthen ties to her Eurasian neighbours. It gave more details about Armenia.

In Armenia, Moscow and Yerevan [Armenia's capital] said they will create a joint army group—the United Group of Troops—that will combine Armenian army units and personnel from the 102nd Russian military base in Gyumri. [Russian Defence Minister] Shoigu said the combined force is intended to “provide an adequate response to any armed attack as well as to other challenges and security threats to the parties.” Further details about the group's mission or structure have yet to be revealed.

The rest of the article detailed plans to bolster the base in Tajikistan which already hosts 7,000 Russian troops.

Russia sells \$14 billion worth of military hardware in 2016

With so much of Russia's military hardware having been battle-tested in Syria, many countries are looking again at what Russia can supply. *Tass* 19-Dec-16 reported that Russia had had a good year, despite sanctions, and had sold approximately \$14 billion worth of weapons and other military hardware.

PUTIN AND THE CHURCH

President Putin has always made clear his support of the Russian Orthodox Church; it lies at the heart of his actions and gives strength to the nation. Church and State work together—which must make the Pope feel envious!

One of the causes he has championed is that Russia should be the defender of persecuted Christians around the world. In part, his actions in Syria were to defend the persecuted Christians there, who, in the past under al-Assad had enjoyed relative peace and protection.

Also, in addition to the spoil and the prey (Eze. 38:12) that brings Gog against Israel, there is a further aspect, that of a Holy War. The prophet Joel speaks of the call to the nations to:

Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: *Joel 3:9*

The word prepare is normally translated sanctify, make holy. Its first occurrence is in Gen. 2:3 where God sanctified the seventh day. It is used earlier in Joel in a similar sense. (1:14; 2:15,16)

Isaiah describes the time of the deliverance of Israel out of the hand of those who have come against her as a day of recompence:

For it is the day of the LORD'S **vengeance**, and the year of **recompences** for the controversy of Zion. *Isa. 34:8*

These passages indicate that there is a religious side to the nations' invasion of Israel. It centres around the controversy of Zion. Is Israel God's nation or not? Is this the land that God has promised or not? Christianity would, in the main, say no, they have forfeited all rights to it in slaying their Messiah and whatever God had promised to the Jews now belongs to "the church". We will explore these aspects in this chapter.

Orthodoxy and Russia inseparable—Putin

Putin expressed his feelings in a film made for Patriarch Kirill's 70th birthday. He commented:

“Orthodoxy and Russia are inseparable. And throughout our entire history, Orthodoxy has been playing a major role in the life of our state and our nation. Our moral values rest on Christian values, so in this sense **Orthodoxy is a major part of Russia's soul**,” *TASS 21-Nov-16*

The church is a useful arm to promote Russian influence.

Mr. Putin has also mobilized faith to expand the country's reach and influence. ... Thanks to a close alliance between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin, religion has proved a particularly powerful tool

in former Soviet lands like Moldova, where senior priests loyal to the Moscow church hierarchy have campaigned tirelessly to block their country's integration with the West. Priests in Montenegro, meanwhile have spearheaded efforts to derail their country's plans to join NATO.

But faith has also helped Mr. Putin amplify Russia's voice farther west, with the church leading a push into resolutely secular members of the European Union like France. *New York Times* 13-Sep-16

Have Israel forfeited the Promises of God?

Our viewpoint is that Israel forms the basis of the millennial rule of Christ, with Jesus as their King. Jesus is returning before he establishes his Kingdom. (Known as *premillennialism*.) Mainstream Christendom of Russia and Europe espouses *amillennialism*—no millennium.

The view known as *amillennialism*, declares Israel's promises forfeited for the most part or transferred to the church of the New Testament. Such promises as require fulfilment are declared fulfilled either in the present age on earth or in the future in heaven. In brief, there is no millennium, no glorious reign of Christ on earth, no future for Israel as a nation, no regathering for Israel except as they are gathered into the church. For the most part Israel's promises are nullified.

Amillennialism is clearly an ancient theory as to its principal points of interpretation. It was the dominant eschatological viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church. . . . *Amillennialism* was early incorporated into Reformed doctrine not as the result of weighty consideration but rather by default. Calvin, for instance, considered *amillennialism* the only possible theory because he thought the millennial reign of Christ a limitation of the eternal bliss of the saints—refuted in its entirety, in his opinion, by the eternity of both Christ and the saints. He brushes aside *millenarianism* as a “fiction...too puerile to require or deserve refutation.” John Walvoord [www. bible.org/seriespage/5-church-israel-god](http://www.bible.org/seriespage/5-church-israel-god)

John Walvoord disagrees with this viewpoint and correctly concludes that:

There is not a single passage in the New Testament rightly interpreted in the light of its context and principal terms that either indirectly or directly teaches that Israel is finally disinherited.

As the only place in the Middle East where Christianity is growing is in Israel, it is interesting that we can perceive a point of conflict. It explains why the majority of the nations mentioned in Ezekiel ch 38 are “Christian” nations, yet, as *amillennialists*, they seek Israel's destruction. Among the nations of the *Merchants of Tarshish and her young lions* are many within the evangelical Protestant sects who view Israel as we do—God's people who following trial will repent, accept their Messiah and be a righteous and holy nation under the guidance of the twelve apostles. (Mat. 19:28)

‘Thinking an evil thought’

Putin’s friendship with Israel, which we examined last year, puts him at odds with the official feeling of Russia, which has for centuries been anti-Semitic. If we are correct in thinking that the invasion of Israel could be some eight or so years after the Master’s return, this would put us in a post-Putin era. Presidential elections are scheduled for 2018, and he could stand for another 6 years. If our Master did return in 2017, then eight more years would take us beyond 2024. Putin would be in his 70’s. We can only ponder, and Putin is imponderable, but it could explain why, with a change to a leader who isn’t friendly to Israel, that they would desire to *think an evil thought*. (Eze. 38:10)

We examined last year the possibility of there arising in Israel actions on the part of zealous Jews against the idolatry of the churches and mosques in Israel at the time of the Elijah work of reformation. This would be the final straw and could trigger such an invasion.

Russia to defend all Christians of the world

Mr Putin has made clear that only Russia has the will-power and ability to defend the Christians. When the Pope met the Russian Patriarch in Cuba in February, he was also seeking Putin’s help. *Sputniknews* 09-Feb-16 wrote:

The upcoming meeting between Pope Francis and Russian Patriarch Kirill will not only be a historic religious event, but could also have major benefits to Christians around the world, the French newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche* reported.

In an attempt to defend Christians in the Middle East and other parts of the world where they’re being persecuted, Pope Francis wants to ask Russian President Vladimir Putin for help.

According to Pope Francis, Putin is “the only one with whom the Catholic Church can unite to defend Christians in the East.”

With the help of Putin, Pope Francis hopes to reach out to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Iranian leader Hassan Rouhani and even the Chinese government elite and work out a plan to help Christians in these regions.

“It’s important to join efforts [with Russia] to save Christianity in all regions where it’s oppressed,” Russia’s Metropolitan Hilarion said.

Vatican Radio 12-Feb-16 detailed their joint conclusion:

The first major concern listed in the joint statement was the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq. “Their churches are being barbarously ravaged and looted, their sacred objects profaned, their monuments destroyed,” the Pope and the Patriarch said. They called upon world leaders “to act urgently in order to prevent the further expulsion of Christians from the Middle East.” ... “our conviction that Europe must remain faithful to its Christian roots.”

POPE FRANCIS BRINGS BACK HIS DAUGHTERS

Revelation ch 17 speaks of the latter-day Harlot Woman as having a name written on her forehead: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. We are looking at this mother aspect. In God's eyes, what is not Truth is evil, a falsification of Bible Truth. Rome has always regarded herself as the "Mother Church", but God regards her as the "Mother of Harlot daughters". On the wall at the Vatican is a plaque bearing the Latin phrase Mater Ecclesia, Mother Church.



2016 was a significant year when, after years of avoidance, the Pope and the Russian Patriarch finally met in the neutral territory of Cuba. It was hailed in the press as the first meeting between Orthodoxy and Catholicism for nearly 1,000 years, following the 'Great Schism' of 1054. This is not strictly right. The Popes have been meeting with the Greek Orthodox leaders for over 50 years, but this was the first for Russian Orthodoxy. Presumably both parties were happy to gloss over the growing reconciliation between the Greeks and Rome, as the Popes have always seen the Russian Church as a much bigger prize.

Rome, Greece and Russia

We saw in chapter 10 the progress that has been made with the links to the Greek Orthodox Churches. It started in 1964 when Pope Paul VI met the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenegorus in Jerusalem on the Mt of Olives, and embraced. The latter had quipped:

“I came here to say ‘good morning’ to my beloved brother, the Pope. You must remember that it has been five hundred and twenty-five years since we have spoken to one another!”

That previous meeting had been in 1438 at the Council of Florence! There have subsequently been frequent meetings between Rome and Constantinople.

The previous meeting with a Russian patriarch had been for a much longer time-span—since 1054! There have been fairly frequent meetings between lesser officials of the Russian Church and the Pope, which we have chronicled over the years, but this meeting was what Putin and Pope had been pressing for.

Why the Holy See Seeks Cooperation with Moscow

This was the headline to an article in the Russian paper *Sputnik* 21-May-16. It was quoting from the French newspaper *Le Figaro*.

According to [political expert, Canstance Colonna-Cesari], the Vatican is interested in rapprochement with Russia for several reasons. First of all, one needs to come to terms with Russia as it is a strong energy and military power, which at the same time is restoring its status as a world power, getting more and more oriented to the east and adheres to Orthodox values.

On the other hand, there is a diplomatic reason behind the Vatican's desire to cooperate with Moscow: a possibility to enhance its involvement in Syria thanks to Vladimir Putin's good relationship with Damascus as well as Russia's ability to veto any decision of the UN Security Council with regard to the Syrian crisis.

According to the newspaper, the alliance also has its political relevance for Moscow, especially taking into account the close connection between the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church, the newspaper wrote.

“Relations with the Holy See are intertwined with the main goal of Putin's foreign policy: to return the status of a super power,” the newspaper wrote.

“The situation in the Middle East gives Putin an opportunity to emphasize Russia's role in the international arena and present himself as a defender of eastern Christians in the spirit of Catherine the Great,” it continued, citing the political expert.

We would expect to see a growing reconciliation between the three main branches of Christendom as they work together in common cause to come against Israel.

Reconciliation with the Lutherans

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's alleged act of pinning to a church door, his 95-point theses against the practice of selling indulgences. It was handed to the local Archbishop on 31st Oct. 1517, and with his subsequent excommunication, it led to the Protestant Reformation.

There has been a steady erosion of the things that the Protestant Movement stood for, and for a number of years there has been a resolving of the difference between the Lutherans and the Roman Church. The start of reconciliation talks began in 1967.

The dialogue produced a significant document in 1999, the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, which established a common understanding on core questions about sin and salvation. In 2013, the two bodies published a joint study document, *From Conflict to Communion*.

On Monday, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis will participate in a joint Lutheran-Catholic worship service in Sweden this October, kicking

off a series of events planned for 2017 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. *New York Times* 26-Jan-16

Pope Francis has appointed an Argentinian Protestant friend of his to be editor of the Argentinian edition of the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. Truly the daughters are coming back to their mother!

Church of England

For the first time for nearly 500 years, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope prayed together publicly at a combined Anglican Evensong and Catholic Vespers service on 5th October at the San Gregorio Church in Rome.

In a Common Declaration, issued in Rome Oct. 5, the two say that the differences “cannot prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism. Nor should they ever hold us back from discovering and rejoicing in the deep Christian faith and holiness we find within each other's traditions.” *ENS* 05-Oct-16

There are problems, especially women priests, but the Pope is anxious to bring this daughter back to the fold; he is making considerable progress!

Francis awarded the Charlemagne Prize

As mentioned in last year's *Milestones*, in December of 2015 Pope Francis was chosen to receive the Charlemagne Prize. Named after the first Holy Roman Emperor, the Charlemagne Prize is given to “public figures or bodies distinguished by their outstanding work towards European unity or cooperation between its states.”

Following his addressing of the EU Parliament in 2014 and the UN in 2015, he was recognised as playing a key role in advancing the European dream.

The award took place in Rome in May 2016 with many dignitaries including Angela Merkel in attendance. The prize citation “commended the Pope's message of ‘peace and understanding’ as well as ‘compassion, tolerance, solidarity and the integrity of creation throughout his pontificate.’ ”

On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech that became a defining moment in the American Civil Rights movement, laying out his dream for a racially reconciled nation.

On Friday, Pope Francis delivered his own “I have a dream” address, in this case dedicated to Europe, calling the continent to undergo a “memory transfusion” to avoid the mistakes of the past and to pursue a future based on economic justice, openness to newcomers, respect for life in all its stages, and dialogue with everyone.

“I dream of a Europe that is young, still capable of being a mother: a mother who has life because she respects life and offers hope for life,” Francis said on Friday, as he was accepting the prestigious Charlemagne Prize. *Crux* 06-May-16

ISRAEL'S CONTINUING PROSPERITY

Although we have left our chapters on Israel towards the end of this year's Milestones we do not underestimate the central place that Israel plays in God's unfolding Plan. The Hope of Israel is at the heart of our long-held beliefs—or should be, if we are to have a true comprehension of God's Work.

It is thrilling to see so many passages of scripture that are coming together just at this particular time in Israel's long history. It shows us the incredible foreknowledge of our God and the certainty of the fulfilment of His Word.

Israel—a concentrated source of energy!

The Tamar gas field has been supplying gas since April 2013 and is now running at the maximum the connecting pipework can take to shore—10 bn M³/yr. The pipework is being upgraded to allow a 22% increase for 2017 and another upgrade to boost that a further 25%. Israel uses all the gas that Tamar can supply. The government's revenues from fees and royalties amounted to NIS411m in the first half of 2016. (US\$107m; £87m) There is also a substantial saving on coal and oil imports to fuel Israel's power stations, which are being converted to run on gas, a much cleaner fuel. Currently a further well, Tamar 8, is being drilled.

The increase in natural gas royalties significantly bolsters Israel's economy. Revenues are expected to rise even further in the next few years, among other things because of the development of the Leviathan field and the opening of the sea to further gas and oil exploration. *Globes* 16-Aug-16

At the year-end, Leviathan owners, Nobel Energy, Delek Group and Ratio Oil Exploration agreed to the drilling of a further exploratory well—the Leviathan 5 well—at a cost of \$77m, which potentially will become a production well. They hope to start drilling in Q1 2017. (The drill is currently drilling the Tamar 8 well.) A total of eight wells will be required which will be linked together. Two wells have already been drilled. Gas is planned to come on stream in Q4 2019. To meet some of the estimated \$4bn-5bn cost of developing Leviathan, Delek and Avner are expected to raise \$390m in bonds in the Israeli financial markets. Delek have already secured a loan commitment of \$1.7bn from HSBC and JP Morgan. The cost does not include the cost of pipelines to allow exports of the gas. We still await to see if Russia's Gazprom will get involved.

Already, some of the Leviathan gas has been contracted to go to Jordan, an Israeli oil refinery and an Israeli power station which has yet to be built. This gives the Leviathan's owners confidence to go ahead with their investments.

There will be gas to export too and there is much discussion on how this can be exported to Europe. The scheme backed by Israel and Russia is a pipeline

connecting potential sources in Egypt, Israel and Cyprus to Greece and then on into Europe. This scheme is supported by the EU. The alternative is a much shorter pipeline to Turkey which would necessitate Turkey and Greece resolving their dispute over Cyprus. Intensive talks recently have failed to come to a resolution that would heal the divided country, although at the year-end there were signs that talks might resume in 2017.

Euro-Asia Interconnector

The Euro-Asia Interconnector which is a scheme to share electricity between Israel, Cyprus and Greece is also looking promising. The sea-bed route for this cable is currently being surveyed to find the best route, and work is anticipated to lay the cable in 2017. Upon the successful development of Leviathan and Aphrodite (Cyprus) gas fields (British Gas has a 35% share in it), both Israel and Cyprus would use some of their surplus gas to generate electricity to supply to Europe.

Israel government invites bids for new gas exploration

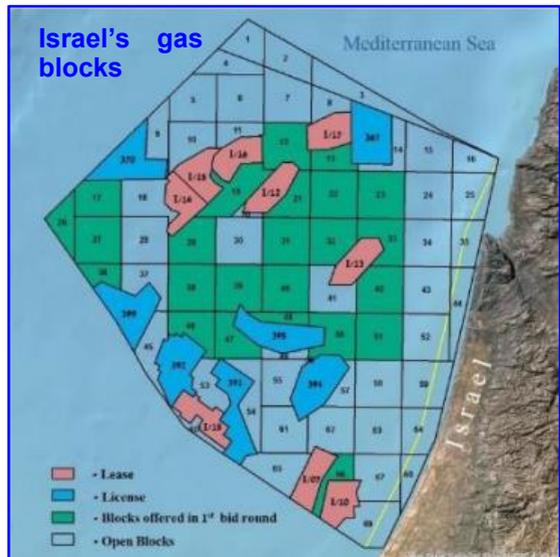
In November, the Israeli Government invited bids to explore and develop a large area under its maritime control. 24 blocks are up for tender, with a closing date of March 2017. It is open to all and it is expected that Gazprom will be bidding. It is estimated that there are at least the equivalent of four more Leviathan's waiting to be discovered.

Israel and oil

Environmental challenges seemed to have halted further development of Israel's shale oil, but conventional oil supplies have been found in the Dead Sea. An old well that was thought to have been exhausted has been found to contain some 7-11 m barrels of oil valued at \$322m. (*Oilprice* 02-May-16)

Vast supplies of oil have been found in the Golan near Katzrin, though environmentalists are preventing further exploration work in case the main water aquifer gets contaminated. It is thought that by deeper drilling in the Mediterranean further oil will be found under the gas layers.

Two items on Aliyah and Israel's good economic year in 2016 have been slotted into the end of Ch.14.



ISRAEL AND THE TRUMP EFFECT

One of the biggest potential for change for the better for Israel, came with the selection of Donald Trump as America's next President. He is a strong supporter of Israel, with Jewish ancestry and his daughter is married to a Jew. So there are strong reasons to explain his desire to reverse the ills of the Obama era with its many snubs to Israel and personal dislike of Mr Netanyahu. During his campaign, Mr Trump opened an office in Israel to try to win the votes of the many thousands of Americans in Israel, eligible to vote in the American Presidential elections.

He has appointed several people to his team who are pro-Israel. The American Ambassador to Israel will be David Friedman, a strong supporter of Israel and her right to a solution to the Palestinian problem that doesn't compromise Israel's security. He supports the matter of moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem. Friedman is a long-time friend of Trump, and Israel will be assured that the ambassador will have the President's ear in the tricky days ahead.

Mr Trump made clear his disapproval of America not vetoing UN Resolution 2334. Any solution must come by negotiation not by imposition on Israel. The Palestinians must recognise Israel's place in the land.

His election was also supported by many of the Gulf States who, like Israel, were very concerned at the nuclear deal between Iran and the US and the lifting of sanctions. Mr Trump has recorded his opposition to this agreement.

Mr Netanyahu, on phoning to congratulate Donald Trump's success in the elections, said that he was a true friend of the State of Israel.

Israel's hope for better relationships with America

Israel's relations with America during Obama's presidency have been characterised as "cold" and the chemistry between the two Presidents strained. Obama was heard to remark to French President Sarkozy in reply to Sarkozy's statement concerning Mr Netanyahu that "he couldn't stand him", that "You're tired of him; what about me? I have to deal with him every day".

Behind the scenes there is great cooperation between the two countries, the military have great respect for each other and work closely together, Obama has shown his interest in the Arab side and the closing days of his presidency were marked by what Israel considers a stab in the back by a country which has regarded itself as Israel's friend. It appears that the American President was closely involved in the shaping of the UN Resolution 2334, which following its acceptance, puts Israel in a very difficult position.

The Dangers of UN Security Council Resolution 2334

The Israeli Government had for some time feared that President Obama would use his last months in office to try to make things difficult for Israel and Donald Trump. At the year-end, he succeeded! The UN periodically puts forward resolutions condemning Israel and her settlements. Normally they come to nothing because they are vetoed by America who has a permanent seat on the 15-member Security Council. This time with a resolution that went further than past resolutions in declaring the illegality of Israel's position, America abstained. The remaining 14 members voted for it. A “fig-leaf” clause had been added which condemned violence and terrorism, which justified New Zealand and Britain voting for it. It had been voted for on Friday night, Israel's Sabbath. Mr Netanyahu summoned all the ambassadors to explain why they had not vetoed it, despite it being a Sunday and Christmas Day!

Although the Resolution is non-binding, it strengthens the Palestinian's position to get their State without having to negotiate and agree to Israel's legitimacy. The Resolution says that it only recognises Israel's pre-1967 borders, except those agreed by both sides. So anywhere in Jerusalem that Israel occupied as a result of that war is illegal—in the UN's eyes. So, all the gains that Israel made to a substantial section of Jerusalem and the West Bank where many settlers live, is, in UN terms, illegal occupation, unless the Palestinians agree to giving some of it to Israel! Bear in mind that it didn't even belong to the Palestinians before 1967, it had been seized by Jordan in 1948 and “occupied” by Jordan!

It also fails to put any real pressure on the Palestinians to cease incitement and terrorism, which is the biggest obstacle to peace for Israel. Everything is blamed on the settlements and Israel occupying territory gained in 1967.

Underlines that it will not recognize any changes to the 4th June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. *UN Resolution 2334*

The Palestinians rejoiced at this Resolution being passed. A Fatah cartoon thanks the 14 nations that voted for the resolution and shows a blood covered dagger aimed at, presumably, Israel's heart.

Mr Trump expressed his disagreement and tweeted his support for Israel.



Fatah's cartoon to thank the 14 countries who voted for Res. 2334

“We cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect. They used to have a great friend in the US, but not anymore. The beginning of the end was the horrible Iran deal, and now this (UN)! Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!”

A few days later the outgoing US Secretary of State John Kerry delivered a stinging rebuke of Mr Netanyahu and his government.

“The two-state solution is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It is the only way to ensure Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state. That future is now in jeopardy.”

He added: “The Israeli Prime Minister publicly supports a two-state solution, but his current coalition is the most right-wing in Israeli history with an agenda driven by the most extreme elements.

“The result is that policies of this government, which the Prime Minister himself just described as more committed to settlements than any Israel’s history, are leading in the opposite direction. They are leading towards one state.” *BBC News* 29-Dec-16

Interestingly, Theresa May was quick to criticise this speech which was so biased against Israel.

“We do not believe that the way to negotiate peace is by focusing on only one issue, in this case the construction of settlements, when clearly the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is so deeply complex.”

“And we do not believe that it is appropriate to attack the composition of the democratically-elected government of an ally. The government believes that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between the two parties, supported by the international community.”

Although she considered the settlements were part of the problem, she added:

“But we are also clear that the settlements are far from the only problem in this conflict. In particular, the people of Israel deserve to live free from the threat of terrorism, with which they have had to cope for too long.”
BICOM (Britain Israel Communication & Research Centre) 30-Dec-16

Australia’s Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, also gave her support of Israel.

The problem is that it will not be easy to undo the damage that has been inflicted, making it almost impossible for meaningful talks to resume. Not that we expect Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, these are part of the *mountains of Israel* (Eze. 38:8) that she possesses *in the midst of the land* (v.12) at the time of Gog’s invasion.

The Settlements

These occupy only a small fraction, less than 2% of the West Bank. The Netanyahu government has been very careful to deny the settlers the ability

to expand; it can only be done, in the majority of cases, within the existing settlement confines. In approximately 75% of the cases the settlement blocks are on land that was always understood to be part of land swaps under previous negotiations. Under this new Resolution there would be nothing to swap, as all is “illegally occupied.” Apparently only five new settlements have been built since 1990. The people that settle, volunteer to go and live there and many are religious Jews. The settlements give employment to an estimated 35,000 Arabs, supporting a population of some 200,000 Arabs.

We turn to Israel’s links to Russia.

Netanyahu links in a pro-Russian political party

Recent changes in Netanyahu’s government have also helped to strengthen these ties. Following the 2015 elections, Benjamin Netanyahu emerged with

a wafer thin 61 seats out of the 120 seat Knesset. This May, he brought into his coalition the

Russian dominated, ultra nationalist party, *Yisrael Beiteinu* (Our Home Israel Party). He

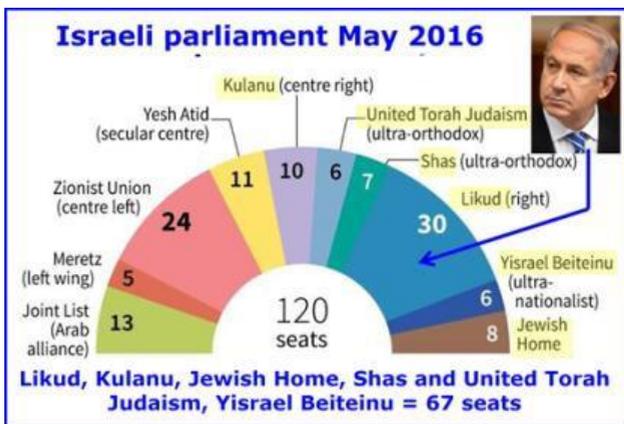
took the leader and founder of this party, Avigdor Lieberman, to

replace the existing Defence Minister. Lieberman is known for his outspoken, hard-line views. He was born in Russia and made aliyah when 20 years old. His Russian is fluent and the Russians regard him as somebody they can do business with. He is said to be an admirer of Putin. His hard-line views win him no friends in the US and the EU. He has been living in the West Bank settler community Nokdim (near ancient Tekoa where the prophet Amos lived) since 1988. Nokdim has a mix of religious and secular Jews.

Netanyahu visits Putin—again!

As we looked at in ch. 3 last year, from Isaiah’s prophecy 10:20, we should expect to see Israel trusting in the one who eventually *smites her*, which would indicate that that she would be friendly with Gog. We see this unusual friendship between the Russian and Israeli Presidents.

His June visit was his 4th visit to see President Putin within the past year, in contrast, he had only met Obama once during that time. His April and June



visits were to lay the groundwork to re-invite Gazprom to help in the development of Leviathan as well as to bid for new areas.

“Our doors are open to every company in every country that has major experience in developing gas fields, including of course Russia.”

He added that there are no legal obstacles preventing Russian companies from operating in Israel. *Globes* 08-Jun-16

Gazprom has considerable experience in deep water drilling.

The warm relationship shared by both men shows no sign of abating. Two headlines sum this up. [Putin is the closest thing to a friend Israel has ever had in Moscow](#), said one. The other: [Israel and Russia: BFFs? Netanyahu's budding 'bromance' with Putin](#). (BFF = Best Friends Forever!). At a time when Obama was winding down in preparation for handing over to a new President in January 2017, Russia has a fairly free hand.

Developing Israeli-Russian ties

Russian is the third most widely spoken first language in Israel, after Hebrew and Arabic. As a percentage of its population Israel has the highest number of Russians outside Russia itself. According to *Sputniknews* 21-Oct-16:

Russia and Israel maintain an active political dialogue, holding regular political consultations. There are also regular delegation exchanges at various levels.

“Vladimir Putin warmly congratulated Benjamin Netanyahu with his birthday and the Jewish holiday of Sukkot celebrated these days. The leaders also exchanged congratulations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Russia and Israel and expressed commitment to further development of the multifaceted bilateral cooperation,” the press service said.

The USSR and Israel established diplomatic relations in May 1948, then broke them off in June 1967. In 1987, consular relations were resumed, followed by the full resumption of diplomatic relations in October 1991. In December 1991, an Israeli Embassy in Moscow and a Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv were opened.

Russia and Israel have signed 19 intergovernmental agreements and work to improve the legal infrastructure of Russian-Israeli cooperation. Israel is an important trade and economic partner for Russia, with bilateral ties in industry, agriculture, high technology and more.

Israel and the West Bank Arabs

The new Defence Minister presented his plan for making changes with Israeli-Palestinian relationships in a “ground up” scheme. Israel has come to realise the futility of trying to negotiate peace with her neighbours through

their leaders and is seeking an economic solution. Using a map of the West Bank with certain villages marked in green and others red:

Israeli Minister of Defense Avigdor Lieberman presented the “Sticks, Blows & Carrots” plan he had consolidated for dealing with the issue of Palestinian terrorism in the Judea & Samaria District.

15 Palestinian villages and towns from which no terrorists have hailed were charted in green and will benefit from a series of immediate alleviations. For example, master plans for villages in Samaria and for the town of Qalqilya will be expanded, an economic corridor will be established between Jericho and Jordan, a western industrial zone will be built for the city of Nablus and a hospital will be built in the town of Beit Sahour, along with kindergartens and football pitches elsewhere in Samaria.

All of the projects for the benefit of the Palestinians in the villages and areas marked favorably will be established in “C” zones—zones under full Israeli control.

Lieberman also presented the 15 “red” villages and areas from which numerous terrorists hailed over the last year. They will suffer from a security crack-down, according to him. *Israel Defense* 22-Aug-16

Lieberman is also planning an Arabic News-site to be launched in Jan. 2017, so that the Israeli Government can reach to the Palestinians without going through their intransigent leaders. He also plans to establish direct links to dozens of influential Palestinians who, so far, have only been able to speak with the cooperation of the Palestinian Authority.

Many Arabs live and work quite happily in Israel. An opinion piece in the *Jerusalem Post* 15-Dec-16, said 23% of doctors and 46% of pharmacists in Israel are Arabs as are 28% of hi-tech students at the Technion. There are 558 Arab teachers in Israel schools and 57 Jews teach in Arab schools; in both situations school racism incidents have dropped dramatically.

A seaport for Gaza?

Israel, with Russian and Chinese help has proposed building a seaport for Gaza. This artificial island would be located about 5km off the coast of Gaza connected by a causeway. It would be an industrial zone and an airport. Lieberman envisages that it could be the new Hong Kong. Off shore, Israel would be able to keep an eye on what was being landed there!



The chances of this being a reality are slim at the moment, given Hamas's hostility to Israel.

Israeli links to Arab countries

This is a remarkable situation, which we have been reporting on for the past few years. Steadily, Israel's ties with the moderate Arabs have increased. In 2016 they became much more open. The Egyptian Foreign Minister paid a visit to Jerusalem in June, quite openly, in strong contrast to the secret meetings in the past at Egyptian air bases. And in July, a delegation of business people and academics from Saudi Arabia came openly to Jerusalem.

According to Israel's new ambassador to the UK, Mark Regev, Israel's relationship with several Sunni Arab states is undergoing a "revolution".

The ambassador indicated that discussions were taking place "as we speak" on deepening security and political ties.

While relations had never been better with Egypt and Jordan, several other Sunni-dominated states were now making explicit their support for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, he said.

Other Sunni countries in the region include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

"We are having good conversations. These are new contacts, these are new relationships, there is new cooperation," said Mr Regev, who began as UK ambassador on April 4.

With many Sunni states feeling let down by the West following the nuclear deal with Iran, Israel has become a necessary ally against a variety of common threats, from Daesh [ISIS] to the Islamic Republic, he said.

"Does Israel threaten [these Sunni states] in any way at all? No. The same forces that threaten them threaten us—whether it's Sunni extremism—Daesh, Al Qaeda, Al Nusra, the Muslim Brotherhood—or, on the Shia side, Iran, Hizbollah. They see them as a threat. So there has been a realignment, and they see Israel as a strong country on their side of the divide. And so there is something to be hopeful for." *Jewish Chronicle* 09-Jun-16

Egyptian and Israeli Cold Peace Has Never Been Warmer

Israel's relations with Egypt have grown increasingly closer since President el-Sisi assumed office in 2014.

"Egypt and Israel are probably closer now for any number of reasons than they have been at any time since the peace treaty was signed in 1979," explains Aaron David Miller, Vice President for New Initiatives at the Woodrow Wilson International Center and an advisor to several secretaries of state on Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Collaboration between Egypt and Israel has centered on security and intelligence sharing, as both countries aim to clamp down on the Islamic State (ISIS) and other militant groups operating in the Sinai Peninsula. In April, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Major General Yair Golan, stated that Israel was enjoying an “unprecedented level of cooperation,” mainly regarding intelligence, with Egypt and Jordan.

Key to the strengthening of Egypt-Israel ties has been the solid relationship between Sisi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which “is probably as good as it’s ever been between heads of state of the two countries since relations were established in 1979,” says Perry Cammack, *Cipher Brief* expert and a fellow in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Conversations between the two leaders may even be a regular occurrence. “Press reports suggest that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Sisi talk frequently—some articles even say as much as once a week,” says David Schenker, *Cipher Brief* expert and Director of the Program on Arab Politics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. *The Cipher Daily Brief* 15-Dec-16

Ezekiel 38:11,14 makes it clear that there will be a period of peace and security in the region prior to the Gogian invasion and we see things moving in that direction, as well as the situation where certain Arab nations will protest against the invasion of Israel (v.13).

Israel and the Eurasian Economic Union

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is Russia’s answer to the EU. At the moment, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are members. They are keen on free trade agreements with other countries and several have already signed up. Israel is very interested, it would open up a vast market for her goods. The Russian Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev, was in Israel in November to discuss “thoroughly and in detail” establishing a free trade link for Israel to the EEU.

Israel sees drop in aliya numbers

2016 showed a drop in numbers in Jews emigrating to Israel, from 31,013 in 2015 to 27,000 this year. 7,000 came from Russia, 5,500 from Ukraine and 5,000 from France. A problem has been that in certain cases Israel doesn’t recognise the immigrant’s qualifications. This is especially the case with the French, so the Israeli Government has been working to improve the situation.

A good economic year

Israel’s economy has shown a 3.8% growth, which was much better than expected, following a difficult first half. Inflation is now in negative figures (-0.3%) and exports rose 3% after falling in 2015. In November, the rating agency Fitch upgraded Israel’s credit rating from A to A+.

SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES

In the Western world, we mark our calendar year from January to December. Israel follows God's civil year calendar and its new year starts normally mid-September. 2016 was an exception as it started on 2nd October, 2017 starts 20th September, and in 2018 on 9th September.

With January 2018 being the 40th anniversary of publication of the first Milestones it is fitting that we look at anniversaries. The next two years are significant for the number of anniversaries which fall in them. I have just gone back 170 years. It ought to make us think seriously, "How close are we to the Master's coming"? We know this event is going to be the most momentous event in our lives. Will it coincide with these significant years? All we can say is that it may not happen, we don't know the day nor the hour. What we do know is that one day it really will have happened! So, this is offered for your interest.

Hebrew year >			2016-17 2-Oct to 19-Sep	2017-18 20-Sep to 09-Sep
DATE	EVENT	YEARS		
22-Jun-1848	Bro Thomas lands in England giving lectures which would form basis of <i>Elpis Israel</i> (Pub. in 1849)	170		
17-Feb 1867	1 st ship through Suez Canal	150		
29-Aug-1897	1 st Jewish Congress	120		
02-Nov-1917	Balfour Declaration	100		
11-Dec-1917	Allenby takes Jerusalem	100		
29-Nov-1947	UN approves a Jewish State	70		
14-May-1948	State of Israel established	70		
23-Jul-1952	European Coal and Steel Community comes into force. The forerunner of the EU	65		
07-Jul-1967	Retaking of Jerusalem	50		
19-Nov-1977	Sadat of Egypt visits Jerusalem	40		
18-Oct-1991	Soviet Russia resumes diplomatic relations with Israel	25		

Exhortation: A call for watchfulness

The exhortation to *watch* is one that is found in many passages in the New Testament. Apart from the words to watch addressed to the disciples to remain awake in the Garden of Gethsemane, nearly all the references are to the disciples to be watchful for the Master's coming. As the Lord Jesus said to the Sardis ecclesia:

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Rev. 3:2,3

The idea behind the Greek word *gregoreuo* (Strong's G1127) is "to keep awake", to watch, to be vigilant. We know that the Lord Jesus addressed words to his brethren and sisters living at the time of his coming, with a similar exhortation:

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Rev. 16:15

Jesus saw the need for us to humbly receive this exhortation to watchfulness. Yet we have so many signs telling us that the Master is at hand, that it surely isn't necessary? Our Master did know the difficulties that our generation would face. We have been living for so long, praying that "this will be the year of our Lord's return", yet, so far, it hasn't happened. There are great pressures upon the lives of brethren and sisters, for them to conform to the thinking of this world. The present does have an air of permanence. Very few, even among Christendom are expecting the Lord Jesus to come to sit on David's throne.

Yet it will happen, one day. God has promised and it will become a reality. We have seen this year how for many, the unthinkable did happen. Britain did vote to leave the EU and the US did vote for Mr Trump; but these will probably not have a huge impact on our lives.

Yet the coming of the Lord Jesus will have an unprecedented effect for the whole of the world! Its greatest effect will be on the lives of his followers. This mortality is to put on immortality. Pain and sorrow, sin and death are to be vanquished. Our "normal" lives will come to an end and instead, the promised immortality, and service to God for eternity!

This is the most precious treasure imaginable. Hence our Master's urge to his brothers and sisters not to quit the race when the finishing post is so near. Let us heed his words: *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain.*

Keep up-to-date!

[back to contents](#)

World events are fast moving and to supplement the yearly *Milestones* review, one can keep up-to-date on a quarterly or a weekly basis.

The Bible Magazine

Each issue of the quarterly *Bible Magazine* carries a *Milestones Update*, which looks at different topical areas of fulfilling prophecy. This lively, full-colour magazine is of interest to brethren and sisters and is ideal to give to our young people and interested friends.

Contact your local *Bible Magazine* representative for subscription details. They are listed at:

www.biblemagazine.com/agents.php

Milestones Snippets (free)

This is an 8-page newsletter of interesting articles that I glean off the web and email 2 or 3 times a week. In Word or PDF versions. Each article is indexed and cumulative indexes are e-mailed quarterly. Email me your name, ecclesia, country and preference (otherwise I will initially send samples of PDF & Word for you to choose) to:

snippets@MilestonesUK.org

Milestones Website

The *Milestones* web site www.MilestonesUK.org carries details of back issues of *Milestones* and a wide range of books expounding prophecy and a section on books and DVD's against evolution, defending the Creation account. These can be ordered from the website or write for booklist.

MP3, Kindle and iPad versions of *Milestones 2016*

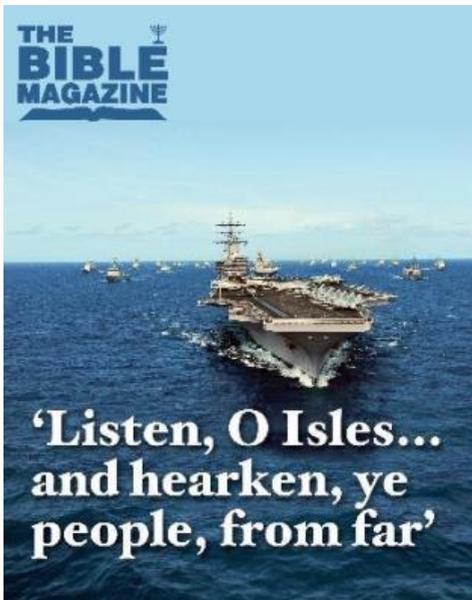
Electronic versions of *Milestones* are now available for reading on Kindle, iPads and similar. There will also be an audio version of *Milestones 2016* in MP3 format, either DropBoxed or on CD. Invaluable to the visually impaired, or those who want to listen on the move! For details contact me at: don@MilestonesUK.org

Prophecy Days

Both the *Bible Magazine* and the *Milestones* websites carry details of known Prophecy Days around the world that uphold our traditional understanding of the fulfilment of prophecy. For latest details of the Rugby Prophecy Day go to:

<https://cdvideo.org/rpd2017> or  Rugby Prophecy Day; At the Bible Truth and Prophecy Channel <https://cdvideo.org/bibleprophecydays> you can watch many Prophecy Day talks from the UK and around the world.

Don Pearce, *Milestones*, 76 High St, Hillmorton, Rugby, CV21 4EE, UK



Milestones 2016

Our main themes for 2016:

- Prophecies concerning Britain's latter-day role
- Brexit and Britain's return to the Middle East—working with Sheba and Dedan



- Britain supporting an increasingly prosperous Israel
- Russia's growing grip on Syria and the Middle East and her encirclement of Turkey
- Historic meeting—Pope meets Patriarch
- Mr Trump, European military, NATO or Russia

We see so many signs that our Master is at the door.

Wake up and watch lest we fall asleep!

The chapters have their usual mix of exposition, prophecy and connections to the events of the year, supporting our established understanding of Bible prophecy.

Milestones 2016 is an antidote to apathy in these difficult times for Christ's brothers and sisters.

