

# MILESTONES 2019

Don Pearce

43rd edition



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**Don Pearce**

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# **MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM**

***A Review of the  
World Events of  
2019 in the Light  
of Bible Prophecy***

**Don Pearce**

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**JANUARY 2020**

## *Preface*

## *To contents*

Once again we are very grateful for the annual Milestones that bro Don writes so reliably. It sums up the last year and opens up prospects for the year ahead.

Some three years ago the United Kingdom voted upon the question of continued membership of the EU (European Union). Prime Minister David Cameron, had promised this referendum to the nation and so he finally acted on his word. He was personally against withdrawal from the EU as were many influential leaders and business people, but since the question was coming up more frequently the Prime Minister felt compelled to consult the nation, though he campaigned for Remain.

The result was 52% against the EU and 48% in favour of remaining in the EU. Mr. Cameron resigned from office: the country generally was surprised and many even called the result in question. The Conservative Party generally was shocked and disappointed but chose another Prime Minister in Mrs May, though she, herself, had voted for Remain. The next twelve months witnessed a Parliament in unprecedented confusion, until another leader, Boris Johnson, was appointed. With absolute determination and a further general election (very much in his favour) he set the Parliament on a definite path to Brexit (leaving the EU). The date for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union is set for 31st January 2020, at midnight!

What does all this mean? Where have all these strong passions arisen?

The English Channel may be only 25 miles wide, but it symbolises more than a turbulent narrow seaway. 2000 years ago the British Isles were part of the Roman Empire and remained that way for another 400 years or so. There was no Anglican Church, just the Roman Catholic Church, represented from London to York. Constantine was born in York. Britain was just a part of the western quarter of the Empire and received her governmental directions from Rome (and then later from Constantinople) and her religious instruction from the Papacy in Rome. All roads led to Rome and to this day many of these roads are found throughout Britain, straight, well made and purposeful.

Yet the teachings of the Vatican were not always universally accepted. Various peoples found themselves unable to accept the excesses of the Papacy and the lavishly decorated buildings of the churches and cathedrals and the figures and statues that were treated as though they were living saints or even idols. Then there are the confessions and special services of varying kinds all of which had no Biblical basis. Presiding over their own dioceses the bishops lived like lords on their wealthy estates. One fifth of the land surface of France was owned by the Church and ruled by the bishops. In the "great 14th century" there was a distinct rise in the independence of mind and worship in England and more western countries of Europe. Men like Wycliffe wrote many highly critical essays on the spurious teachings of the church and the mental slavery of the congregations. Wycliffe wrote the first English Bible, at the cost of his life. King John refused the Pope's rental charges! Tyndale was a great man of faith and wisdom and he in the 15th century was the first to translate the New Testament

(and some of the Old Testament) into English. He sought refuge by hiding in Flanders but was eventually captured by officers of the Church and died on the burning stake as he, in his last words, prayed for the opening of the King of England's eyes.

Then early in the next century King James I sponsored the translation of all the Bible into the plain language of the day. The printing of the 1611 King James Bible would be the greatest act of the English government and the most outstanding contrast to the general situation in European countries where the Pope reigned from his Peter's Chair over the millions of Catholic devotees. The Bible is the Word of God, but has never been the authority in their congregations because the Church declared the doctrinal teaching of the Pope to be infallible.

For 300-500 years the UK had given leadership to some forty-eight countries around the world. In Europe since 1961 they had been relegated to one country in twenty-eight others. Britain had twice gone to war for the freedom of Europe and for her own Commonwealth. Is it surprising that by 2016 there was resentment at the minor influence they had over EU decisions that affected them in many ways? Where was her Commonwealth from whom she formerly received so much of her supplies? Britain had been mother to many countries around the world, who spoke her language, operated in her rules and legislation. Westminster House looks splendid alongside the waters of the Thames, but to many Londoners it has very little to do with the business of the day. Across the Channel in the city of Brussels the EU Council and the EU Commission and the EU Parliament and the Council of the EU and the EU Court, look after the vast amount of Britain's decisions and mix up the decisions with twenty-eight other countries. Where is her Majesty the Queen in all this unseen administration and government?

It was the merchants of Tarshish that in the bleakest hours of WWI lifted the Jewish people out of 1900 years of international servitude. The God of Israel says that He has further responsibilities for her and His prophet Ezekiel has made the matter clear. Britain has already expressed her pleasure to trade enthusiastically with Israel. Israel needs friends—she has many enemies. We have seen great things in 2019 and no doubt we shall see some pulling together of those countries of Empire and the Commonwealth that have had such a common history.

Brexit?—of course. Isaiah 23:18 “And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Yahweh: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Yahweh, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.”

If we know these things happy are we if we live up to them for the Lord is surely near.

Brian Luke

Secretary

January 2020

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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; **WEB** = World English Bible.  
**\$1** = £0.76; €0.89; A\$1.44; CA\$1.30; NZ\$1.50 at 06-Jan-20 rates.  
**\$1 million** = £759,000, **\$1 billion** = £759,000,000 approx. \$ always US\$.

**Author’s important notes**

I would like to especially thank my family, Bre. Kevin Allison, Alan Clarke and the CSSS for their helpful comments on the draft. It is all put together in a few 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!** My thanks to Bro Philip Weatherall for Ch. 15—the exhortation.

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. I am very grateful for items sent in; please ensure date and source indicated.

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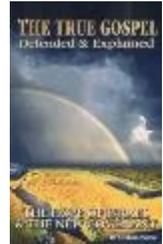
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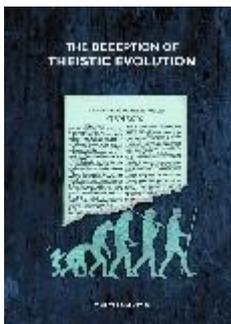
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Bre Mark Allfree, Matt Davies

Pub. 2017. 174 pages

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## Chapter 1:

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# A SYNOPSIS OF Milestones 2019

*2019 has been yet another action-packed year for Bible student Watchmen!*

We have been saying this for the past few years! The pace of change continues unrelentingly. We know there is an end goal and behind the scenes angelic hands under the direction of the Lord Jesus, work to ensure God's Plan is fulfilled.

We can only stand in awe at the incredible foreknowledge of God, who knowing from before creation His outworking plan, caused the prophets of old to record things which were largely hidden from their generation, but now are being clearly seen.

We have a wonderful Biblical canvas upon which to paint the many and diverse happenings around the world, which would appear to be totally unrelated. However, with Bible in hand, we can see that they are all steps within God's overall plan, that will bring about the dramatic revelation of the Son of God as Israel's Messiah and King of the World! How thrilled we should be to see that God's Word is true and active and so relevant to our lives today! At a time when man refuses to even acknowledge the prospect of a Creator God, He has given ample testimony to His existence and power. Hence the severity of God's judgments upon a godless world.

### **The Structure for *Milestones 2019***

- Ch. 2** looks at what was relevant 35 years ago from *Milestones 1984*.
- Ch. 3** looks at relevant prophecies for our times, setting the scene as we explore in later chapters how these are being fulfilled in our day.
- Ch. 4** takes a latter-day prophecy and looks at how it fits today's situation.
- Ch. 5** looks at a second, very relevant prophecy for our times.
- Ch. 6** takes us through Brexit and its torturous path to leaving the EU.
- Ch. 7** looks at Europe's new team ready to form the European *Beast*.
- Ch. 8** assesses the Vatican and her role as the *False Prophet*.
- Ch. 9** takes us to developments in Russia and also her advancing M.E. footprints.
- Ch. 10** surveys Gog's companions of Eze. 38 and their growing alignment.
- Ch. 11** sees the many enemies Israel faces.
- Ch. 12** examines Israel's many friends.
- Ch. 13** is headed: "Israel—an incredible powerhouse".
- Ch. 14** maps out the way Britain is preparing for her post-Brexit role.
- Ch. 15** is an exhortation entitled: "Warnings for the Last Days".

## Chapter 2:

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## FROM EARLY Milestones—1984

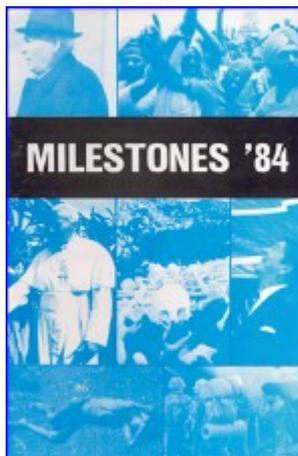
*Unlike Gorge Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel, written in 1949 which looked at the world that Orwell foresaw 35 years ahead; we are able to do the reverse and look back thirty-five years to this same year! It was for Orwell a dark, repressive world, with excessive governmental surveillance and propaganda. By today's world he was overly pessimistic, it would take much longer to degenerate, but never having read the book I can't comment further!*

### *Milestones 1984 by Graham Pearce*

This issue ran to 57 pages and five chapters.

- Ch. 1** A New Initiative to bring about the Unification of Europe
- Ch. 2** US Global Interests and Western Europe
- Ch. 3** Papal and Vatican Objectives
- Ch. 4** Israel, the Arabs and the Middle East
- Ch. 5** (Exhortation) “Lift Up Your Heads”

As Bro Brian Luke put in his opening paragraph in the Preface for this issue:



“1984 has not been a year of sensational new wars or loudly-proclaimed political earthquakes. It has rather been a year of general deterioration of all moral standards and principles, mixed with a growing sense of prosperity in the trading nations, despite grotesque forms of violence and unrest erupting in all parts of the world. It has been a year of strange mixture, of “men’s hearts failing them for fear” whilst, as those in the days of Lot, they eat, drink, buy, sell, plant and build (Luke 21:26; 17:28).”

**Chapter 1.** The Common Market or the European Economic Community as the EU was then called, in 1984 consisted of the founding six countries—France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg—plus Denmark, Ireland and the UK who joined in 1973; and Greece in 1981.

Britain, under Mrs Thatcher at this time, was proving to be a troublesome member, as Charles de Gaulle had feared! The UK was demanding a rebate on her contributions as much of the EEC’s budget was spent on its Common Agricultural Policy, which brought little benefit to Britain’s more efficient farming systems. Also, much of the UK’s VAT contributions to the budget came from trade with countries outside the EEC. In holding out for a rebate, the UK effectively wrecked the December 1983 and the March 1984 Summit meetings. In June 1984, there was a reluctant agreement to pay a back-dated

rebate—which has continued to operate. This made the other members determined to outflank the UK's disruptive influence. This first chapter was devoted to these various issues which resulted in the French President, M. Mitterrand, announcing a dramatic plan to form a European Union to replace the existing EEC.

### Mitterrand Federal State Plan For EEC

In a remarkable speech to the European Parliament yesterday, M. Mitterrand called for a new **European Union** that would effectively turn the Common Market into a federal state. The French President said there should be an end to the practice of majority voting under which individual members could veto EEC policies.

He dismissed the British budget problem as 'petty squabbling' and implied that if Britain did not feel ready to join the march toward European union, then it should be left behind.

"Any country could opt not to join the new union if it did not want to be involved in this further vision of Europe," he declared. *Daily Telegraph* 25-May-84

It would be nine years later, in 1993, that the European Union was launched under the Maastricht Treaty. This 1984 speech was the great starting point, driven by France and Germany determined to avoid a single nation being able to veto their desires for integration.

The other matter discussed in this chapter was Mitterrand's push for Europe to build its own defence force, and avoid its dependence on NATO, which was led by the US and largely set up as an anti-Soviet military organisation. Conveniently there was an existing, but largely defunct, vehicle for this move called the WEU, Western European Union, set up 30 years earlier. The 1984 relaunch took place in Rome and was called the Rome Declaration. Its aim was to strengthen the European 'pillar of defence' within NATO.

These small but significant steps were of excitement to Bible-watchers anticipating a Europe which, in the latter-days, would be able to stand on its own feet and join with Russia in the gathering of the nations against Israel. To achieve this, it needed independence from America and to have its own military resources. Thirty-five years later we can see this coming to fruition. The WEU was integrated into the EU under the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 and was finally dissolved in 2009 when the Lisbon Treaty took over the WEU mutual defence clause.

The **second chapter** looked at America under President Reagan, turning its attention away from Europe to the Far East. Bro Graham lists several newspaper headlines indicating the widening gulf between Europe and the USA. Reagan was a firm believer in the Bible, including the coming Battle of Armageddon, and felt that he had been chosen by God to lead America.

**Chapter 3** covered the growing changes in Poland where Pope John Paul II had begun the process of accommodation with the Communist government to bring about the recognition of the Church. It was a narrow pathway that had to be trodden, involving sacrifices on the Church's part in order to bring accommodation by the government. Seven years later this would all bear fruit with the collapse of Communism. It was exciting for Bible-watchers, knowing that eventually *the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet* would be working together—a distant dream in 1984—but beginning to realign!

**Chapter 4** then looked at the situation for Israel. To the north, the Gulf War was in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. Not the one the US and UK were involved in, but a battle between Iran and Iraq which would go on until 1988. To the immediate north of Israel lay Lebanon and Syria. The PLO had been expelled from Lebanon in 1983, and the US tried to maintain her forces in Syria but had to withdraw in 1984. Russia stepped in to replace the weaponry that Syria had lost during the Lebanon War of the previous year. They were not only upgraded but in greater quantities, as Russia sought to establish a foothold by putting in Soviet technicians to operate the increasingly sophisticated missile weapons. Russia was also involved in building dams, railways and steel mills.

Israel was struggling with a 100% inflation rate as she endeavoured to build up her military strength after the humiliating Lebanon War. There was a breakdown in family life and Israel was at a low point—what a remarkable change we see today! Bro Graham sketched how many of the southern Arab nations were beginning to cooperate, a movement that is still continuing.

He concluded the chapter with an interesting section on the Elijah work. He put forth the evidence that as well as an Elijah work to gather the remnant of Israel after the Battle of Armageddon, there was a need for an Elijah work before then, to prepare a remnant for the troubles that lay ahead.

**Chapter 5** was a seven-page exhortation to “lift up your heads”. He saw “the angels have been very busy in every corner of the earth!”, yet the Gospel of the Kingdom was something increasingly unknown to the world. The Pope was calling for Europe to go back to their roots and become united—not to the glory of God—but of men. The “earth was filled with violence”—half-a-million lives had so far been lost in the Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq wars. Thousands too were dying in the Ethiopian drought with little support from the West who were busy spending vast sums on the nuclear arms race.

The other serious problem was domestic violence and the breakdown of marriages, with the basic pillar of religious teaching replaced with, “do your own thing”. The “Decade for Women” ended in 1984, with its pressure that the woman is free to do her own thing and be freed from domesticity.

Bro Graham's appeal to the brotherhood was to be nourished in the Scriptures, to educate their children in the precious things of God's Word, that they might be as olive shoots around the parental olive tree. (Psa.128:3)

## Chapter 3

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# PROPHECIES FOR THE LATTER-DAYS

*Many and varied are the prophecies we find scattered throughout the pages of Scripture that speak of events which are shaping up in our days. Most would have a fulfilment in the time of the prophet but would carry items which indicated that there was a future fulfilment. Knowing that God's purpose is centred on Israel, it is not surprising that the majority focus on the steps leading to the destruction of Israel's man-centred kingdom. This is to be replaced by God's Kingdom on earth under the wise rule of Israel's Messiah, God's Beloved Son. The transformation of Israel's heart, so that they never again stray from the narrow path, has been a long and convoluted process, but everything has a meaning and a purpose, and all comes right in the end, as it is all in the Plan and Purpose of Almighty God!*

### What Changes Israel's Heart?

In a word—humiliation. The Wilderness Journey was to break their self-centredness, to make them realise that they had to trust in God. They could not save themselves. As God explained at the end of that journey:

*And he **humbled thee**, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he **might make thee know** that man doth not live by bread only, **but by every word** that proceedeth out of the **mouth** of the **LORD** doth man live. Deu. 8:3*

God has taken His People out of their land and they have had a two-millennia “wilderness journey”. Terrible troubles have befallen them—exactly as Moses foretold in Deuteronomy 28. These experiences have been in preparation for a remnant of them to show their faith in their God. They will be heard when they cry out in their hour of need, when all has been brought to ruin and catastrophe in the Gogian invasion. God will hear; their Messiah will be back on earth, unknown to the world, and with him a multitude who also seek Israel's salvation. The dramatic prophecy of Zechariah 12 tells of the opening of their eyes, when they realise the one who has saved them from the hand of their enemies is none other than their rejected Messiah!

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they shall look upon me** whom they have **pierced**, and they shall **mourn** for him, as one mourneth for his **only son**, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his **firstborn**.*

*In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. Zec. 12:10,11*

As on the day of Pentecost, their consciences will be pricked and they will cry out to their saviours, asking what they should do! The answer is the same

as Peter gave. Repent and be baptised into the saving Name of the Lord Jesus, their Messiah and King. Miraculously, as a result of the earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives and changes the topography of the area, a river of water flows out from Jerusalem. (Zec. 14:8)

*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem **for sin and for uncleanness**. Zec. 13:1*

The Battle of Armageddon is the destruction of Israel's enemies who have invaded the land. It is clear therefore that this prophecy in Zechariah is as a result of that Battle, and the dramatic reversal of Israel's fortunes, from a conquered people to a delivered people.

In this chapter we want to concentrate however, on prophecies that speak of the time that leads up to this great conflict in the land of Israel. There are many prophecies that tell of the nation's heart, prior to their invasion and deliverance. Others that tell what unites the nations to come against Israel and guides us as to who they are. Still others tell of the general situation for the world. And yet more that give guidance to God's saints to prepare them for the return of their Master. On page 23 we present many of these prophecies in a tabular form. We will now fill out the details of some of them.

## ISRAEL

### Returned to their Own Land

Many prophets speak of the fact that though Israel would be scattered into all nations during a long period, God would cause them to return to their own land. We have to try to distinguish between the regathering to their land prior to the Gogian invasion, and their **final regathering** after Armageddon. The prophets usually indicate whether it is a regathering under their King, or whether it is prior to their acceptance of Messiah and they are returning to their land in the hope of escaping persecution where they were living and in the hope of prospering. This is the return that we have witnessed. The final, Elijah work of regathering Israel from all countries where they will be living, will be after the Kingdom is established in Israel and be part of the work of the saints to help bring them all back to their Messiah. It is true that many Scriptural passages move seamlessly between the two regatherings.

Ezekiel ch 11 is a typical example. Having clearly stated that they will return to their own land of Israel:

*Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have **scattered them** among the **countries**, yet will I be to them as a **little sanctuary** in the countries where they shall come.*

*Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and **I will give you the land of Israel**. Eze. 11:16,17*

Ezekiel's prophecy then projects into the future when they will *take away all the detestable things* (v18), they will repent, and *their stony heart* will be changed for *an heart of flesh* (v19). *They shall be my people, and I will be their God* (v20). Those who don't repent will be purged out (v21).

Their return in our day in unbelief of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus is a necessary step, in order that there can be a Jewish nation in the land for the Gentile nations to come against. Then, in their dire distress, a remnant will turn to God for salvation, and following their dramatic salvation at the hands of their returned Messiah, they will accept their King. Then the final restoration of Israel will commence.

*Behold, I will gather them out of **all countries**, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will **cause them to dwell safely**:*

***And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:***

*And I will give them **one heart**, and one way, that they may fear **me for ever**, for the good of them, and of their children after them.*

*And I will make an **everlasting covenant** with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that **they shall not depart from me**.*

*Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. Jer. 32:37-41*

So, we have to distinguish between a return in unbelief and the final return in belief of their Messiah being the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Israel's Position Prior to Armageddon**

Isaiah ch 2 makes a good starting point. The opening verses paint a picture of the great changes when the Kingdom is established, when the Lord Jesus is King in Zion. This opening Kingdom picture section closes with this appeal:

*O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. Isa. 2:5*

Why is this appeal necessary? The next section commences with *therefore* (AV) or most other versions, with *for* indicating why a change is necessary.

***Therefore** thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, **because** they be **replenished from the east**, and are **soothsayers** like the Philistines, and they **please themselves in the children of strangers**.*

*Their land also is full of **silver and gold**, neither is there any end of their **treasures**; their land is also full of **horses**, neither is there any end of their **chariots**:*

*Their land also is full of **idols**; they worship the **work of their own hands**, that which their own fingers have made:*

*And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.* Isa. 2:6-9

This sums up the nation of Israel today. We looked at this in detail in *Milestones 2017*, p67-70, so we summarise here.

Notice how clearly this passage is indicating that they are trusting in their own strength:

1. They are replenished from the east
2. They are soothsayers like the Philistines
3. They please themselves in children of strangers
4. Their land is full of silver and gold
5. Their land is full of horses and chariots
6. And full of idols which they have made with own hands
7. They will be humbled when trust in these fails

1. Israel is doing trade deals with those nations to her east—the Gulf States, India, China and Japan. It makes Israel feel strong.

2. The Hebrew word for *soothsayer* is mainly translated *observer of times*. The Philistines apparently were good at intelligence gathering as is clear from their abilities to outmanoeuvre Israel when they had the ascendancy. Israeli intelligence is known to be outstanding. This again inclines them to trust in their own skills, rather than on their God.

3. As the WEB version puts it, *they clasp hands with the children of foreigners*. In the past, the Jews built up a network of fellow Jews around the world with whom they could trade. Today, Israel trades with Gentiles around the world to make themselves rich.

4. In spite of having to spend so much on defence, tiny Israel is a rich country. *Cattle, silver, gold* are used of Abram's wealth. (Gen. 13:2) Such is the wonder of God's Word that there is an appropriate aptness in the choice of these two metals! Today's Israel is second only to the US for high tech industry. Electronics is where gold and silver play an important role in making the circuitry! God's foreknowledge never ceases to amaze one.

5. Horses and chariots were the power of the army in Isaiah's day. Today it is missiles, tanks and aircraft. Again, little Israel excels in armaments: they are world leaders. Even the sophisticated US F15 and F35 planes are retro-fitted by Israel with modifications to increase their superiority.

6. The nation is only able to sleep at night because of their trust in the sophisticated weaponry that defends them. Again, one can only marvel at their ingenuity, born of necessity. An idol is man's substitute for God. Instead of depending on God's protection, they rely on the things which *their own fingers have made!*

## 7. High and low trust in these defences, which will ultimately fail them.

*Man is brought low, and mankind is humbled; therefore don't forgive them.* Isa 2:9 (WEB)

### Trusting in False Friends

The day will come when they find their trust misplaced and they are overwhelmed by their once-upon-a-time friends who *think an evil thought* (Eze.38:10) and turn upon their old friends. This is confirmed by another remarkable verse in Isaiah.

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again **stay** [trust, rely] upon **him** that **smote them**; but shall **stay** upon the **LORD**, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.* Isa. 10:20

This is indicating that Israel is trusting in Russia, for we know from Ezekiel 38 that Russia (Gog) is the one who leads many nations to smite Israel. Israel will find out that their trust was misplaced, because Gog proves to be a treacherous friend in the day when Gog *thinks an evil thought*.

We know how unusual the friendship is between Putin and Netanyahu. As a child, Putin lived on the top floor of a Soviet tower block with four apartments per floor. One on his floor was occupied by an observant Jewish couple who befriended young Putin and looked after him until his parents returned each day from work. He never forgot their kindness and still counts many Jews among his friends. We marvel at angelic hands engineering these circumstances, because the Lord Jesus knew that one day this young lad would be the leader of Russia! Putin's friendship with Netanyahu has been a vital asset, allowing Israel to attack Iran's bases in Syria unopposed by Russia.

### Dwelling in a Once Desolate Land

Ezekiel 38 makes it clear that the return of the Jews in unbelief will be to a land that has long lain desolate. This was exactly the situation that the early settlers came to. The Ottoman Turks had little interest in farming and keeping the land cultivated. Mark Twain's visit to "the Holy Land" in 1867 and recorded in his letters and later in his book "*Innocents Abroad*" paints a gloomy and may well be biased picture of Palestine.

"Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly deserts fringed with a feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowful and despondent."

*After many days thou [Gog] shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is **brought back from the sword**, and is gathered out of many people, **against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste**: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.* Eze. 38:8

*Always* waste has the sense in Hebrew of *continually*. For 1,800 years the land had been neglected until the returning Jews sought to restore its fertility eventually bringing it back into cultivation. Again, in v.12, Ezekiel describes it as once *desolate places*—the same Hebrew word as *waste* of v. 8. In the aptness of the description we can see the accuracy of the Word of God.

### **Dwelling on the “Mountains of Israel”**

Again, it is one of those little phrases—unique to Ezekiel— which, as we get closer to the time of the end, assumes a greater significance. It is indeed one of the great signs of the times, which we will look at in more detail in Ch. 4.

### **Land Brought Back from the Sword**

Verse 8 quoted above, speaks of Gog coming against *the land brought back from the sword*, omitting the italicized words in the AV, *and is gathered out of many people*. Indeed, the land of Israel was reclaimed from the Turks by the sword in WWI when many lives were sacrificed to gain control by Britain and her Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) allies. It was to become a homeland for the Jew under the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It was persecution that drove the Jews back to their old homeland. It still is the reason why so many Jews are prepared to turn their back on the anti-Semitism that they experience in Russia, Europe and around the world, to set up a new life in Israel, where their Jewishness is the norm, not the exception.

What other nation has been established through escaping from the sword?

### **Prosperous and a Desirable Spoil**

Ezekiel 38 also gives us a picture of a very prosperous Israel in the latter-days which make it a desirable *spoil* and *prey*.

This certainly describes modern Israel as we shall see in Ch. 13. Knowing that the chief enemy is Gog, or Russia, we can see there is much that they would love to lay their hands on. Soviet Russia did just this when Germany fell after WWII, spiriting away many of her top scientists to work in Russia.

### **In Possession of Jerusalem**

It is clear from chapters like *Zechariah 12*, that Israel has to be in possession of Jerusalem, for the nations to come against the Jews in that city. This didn't happen until the Six-Day War of 1967. In spite of international attempts to deny her control, Israel will not let go of this city.

### **With Neighbours as ‘Pricking Briars’ and ‘Grievous Thorns’**

This is yet another of Ezekiel's prophecies, describing God's judgments on Tyre and Zidon to the north of Israel, now Lebanon, home of Hezbollah. The prophecy finishes with an end-time picture of the latter-day situation.

*And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.* Eze. 28:24

So, the time will come when the latter-day Tyre and Zidon will no longer be a terrorist base and thorns in Israel's side when God saves Israel and they dwell in peace in their land as described in verses 25 and 26. So prior to their conversion these nations **are** *pricking briars* and *grievous thorns*. To a farmer these are a great nuisance—part of the Edenic curse—but they are not insurmountable. They can be rooted out, but they tend to grow back! An apt picture of the troubles that Israel has with her neighbours, as destroyed weapons are constantly replaced. It isn't a scenario shared by many nations!

### **A Time of 'Peace and Security'**

Before Gog thinks his evil thought, Israel will be found in peace. This will be the calm before the storm breaks, yet it is hard to visualise. One senses that it is a verse to test the faith of the believers. It seems such an impossibility, yet like the rest of God's Word, it must be fulfilled! God does know all things; our part is to trust and accept the truth of His Word.

Many prophets speak of the terrible destruction that follows this peace, but it is only Ezekiel 38 that spells out in the Old Testament this period of peace.

*Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou (Gog) shalt think **an evil thought**:*

*And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are **at rest**, that **dwell safely**, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, Eze. 38:10,11*

The Hebrew words for *think* (Stg. 2803) an *evil* (7451) *thought* (4284) are the same words used of Haman in Esther 8:3, *the mischief* (7451) ...*his device* (4284) *that he had devised* (2803) against the Jews. Haman was an **Agagite!** Agag is a type of those that seek the Jews destruction. (Num. 24:7; 1 Sam. 15:32; Est. 9:24; Eze. 38:2 LXX translates **Gog** as **Agag**.)

At the time when Gog and his companions invade Israel, they will be dwelling in safety or securely, without walls and bars and gates. This is something that we don't see at the moment, but under Donald Trump there is a strong move to get the Arab nations to come to a settlement of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. This can probably only come from a position of strength—anti-Israeli feelings have been deeply ingrained into the Palestinians from childhood. How this change will come about we have to wait and see. It has to be a matter of faith. Yet we see an increasing movement to recognise Israel's claim to the land. There never has been a Palestinian State which Israel usurped. We shall look in chapter 12 at the growing acceptance of Israel on the part of the moderate Arab nations.

### **GATHERING THE NATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL**

The passage that immediately springs to mind is Ezekiel ch 38! There are many other passages that speak of this time when Israel will be invaded and humbled in preparation to receive their Messiah. Let's briefly pull them

together, to set the scene for later chapters to examine what was, as it were, happening on the ground in 2019. It is a number of years since we last looked in detail at Gog and his companions (*Milestones 2008 and 2005*) Although the prophecies have not changed, the action on the ground has moved forward considerably.

Ezekiel is told:

*Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, Eze. 38:2 (WEB)*

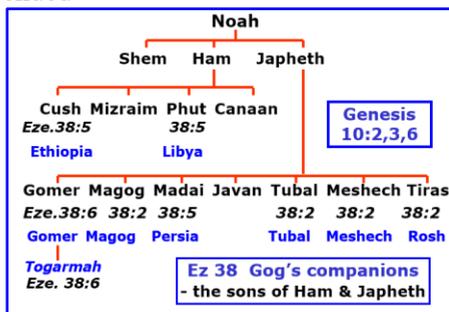
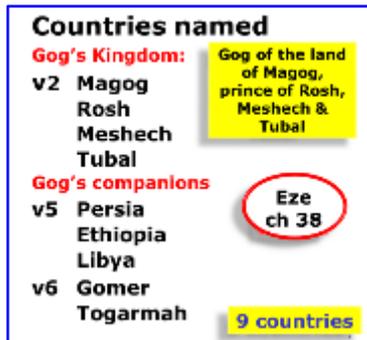
Gog is associated with the *land of Magog*, but is *prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal*.

The first thing to note is that these are Biblical names which we find in Genesis 10. Most of these countries are descended

from Japheth, just two from Ham (see chart). The majority we would today term “Christian”, with a few being Muslim. What is intriguing are the ones not listed—the other two sons of Ham, Mizraim and Canaan and Japheth’s son Javan. Mizraim is Egypt, and we know from Dan. 11:42,43 that Egypt is to be over-run by Gog and his companions. Canaan possessed the land that Israel conquered under Joshua and we know that Israel is to be under Gog’s rule. What of Javan? The early British are among his descendants, as was Tarshish. We know from Ezekiel 38:13 that they are part of a group of nations that oppose Gog’s invasion of Israel.

So where are the countries associated with Gog today?

We refer to Bro John Allfree’s book on *Ezekiel* for extensive evidence as to where we can place them as indicated on our third chart. Gog links us to Russia, for Gog is Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. Rosh, or Ros, occupies today’s Ukraine. When they were driven north by the Mongols, Ros became the ancient name for Russia. Meshech is Moscow, the



political capital of Russia. Tubal, the Siberian Tobolsk, the historic capital of the Siberia region and energy centre of Russia—home to 70% of Russia's developed oil fields, as well as mineral rich. Gog is also described as *of the land of Magog*, which points us to Germany. We have mentioned in the past the heir-apparent to the Romanov throne has a German prince as his father and Russian princess as his mother. If the call for the restoration of the monarchy progresses, this figurehead would indeed be *of the land of Magog and prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal*. We shall say more about him in Ch. 9. Gog and his companions seem to cover Russia, much of Europe, Iran and North Africa.

Ezekiel 38 makes it clear that under Gog's control, they come to invade the land of Israel and to destroy the nation of Israel.

The other great passage is found in Revelation ch.16. Here is described how, with *frog-like* voices, the *Dragon*, the *Beast* and the *False Prophet*, gather the nations to come against the place where Hebrew is spoken—the land of Israel, only to be destroyed. We devote Ch. 5 to this, a great sign for our day.

### THE WORLD OVERTAKEN BY FEAR

One of the details given to the disciples by the Lord Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened 40 years after the Mount Olivet prophecy, was that it would be a time of *great tribulation* (Mat. 24:21). These words, in the Greek are *megas thlipsis*—*exceedingly great pressure* (or oppression, affliction, distress). He used this as a description of the horrors that would befall the Jews when Jerusalem fell. It is reasonable to see that this is going to happen again when Jerusalem falls under Rome's successor. In the Olivet prophecy, Jesus warned of a steady buildup of this pressure, speaking of troubles within the ecclesias; natural occurrences such as earthquakes; persecution; iniquity abounding. Josephus bears testimony of the troubles, natural and spiritual prior to AD 70.

The earth is facing judgment and for Daniel's nation, a time of mega trouble.

*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* Dan. 12:1

The Master's words about AD 70, re-echo down to our days. Luke 21:25-26:

*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

*Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

The Matthew account tells that:

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: Mat. 24:29*

The events of AD 70 ceased any political and religious Jewish “heavenlies”. We have seen Israel and many nations get back in political power, their sun, moon and stars shine in today’s “heavens” awaiting to be replaced by a ‘*new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.*’ 2Pet. 3:13

We see political instability around the world. Earthquakes, fires, floods and droughts bring misery to millions of people. Financial alarm bells are ringing again. Once-sound economies like Germany are shaking and the euro is in difficulties. Extreme parties are gaining votes; murders and terrorist atrocities occur daily. The natural and the political worlds are increasingly restless. Our own community is experiencing a drastic shift away from our historic understanding of creation and the authority of the Bible. The UK Secular Society has raised objections to several Christadelphian teachings—we await the results of the investigation of their claims against us.

The Apostle Paul speaks of a coming time of destruction.

*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

*For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thes. 5:2,3*

It would seem reasonable that, Jesus’ coming in AD 70 to destroy the Jewish kingdom has re-echoes in latter-days with the *them* referring to the Jews in the land.

## **SAINTS AWAITING THEIR MASTER’S RETURN**

Paul then addresses the true believers, whom he says should be awake, so these times do not over-whelm them (1The. 5:4-9). Before the invasion of Israel, the Lord Jesus will be back on this earth, calling to Him his followers and raising *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth* Dan.12:2.

Many of the principles set out in the Olivet prophecy for the 1<sup>st</sup> Century disciples, will surely have a re-echo for 21<sup>st</sup> Century believers at His second coming to save His people. We can see that we are in Noah-like times, when people’s minds are far from striving to listen to the Words of the Living God but seek to enjoy the basics of life—*eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.* Mat. 24:38

In our next two chapters we will look at two great prophecies for our days. First a tabular presentation of some of the many prophecies for our days.



## Chapter 4

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# GREAT PROPHECIES FOR TODAY—ON ISRAEL'S MOUNTAINS

*The first great prophecy for our times that we will be looking at to see how it is especially relevant today, is the Ezekiel 38 prophecy emphasising Israel dwelling on the mountains of Israel. In Ch.5 we will look at a second great prophecy for our days, that of the frog-like spirits of Revelation 16.*

*Both have especial relevance to today and both give us a background to many of today's events.*

### Dwelling on the Mountains of Israel

These are the references in Ezekiel ch's 38 and 39 of Israel dwelling on the *mountains of Israel*. There are more references in earlier chapters of Ezekiel.

*After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, **against the mountains of Israel**, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Eze. 38:8*

*And I will call for a sword against him throughout all **my mountains**, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. Eze. 38:21*

*And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon **the mountains of Israel**: Eze. 39:2*

*Thou shalt fall upon **the mountains of Israel**, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Eze. 39:4*

*... Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon **the mountains of Israel**, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Eze. 39:17*

The Hebrew word for *mountains* is *har*—a mountain or range of hills. It is a contraction of *harar*—to loom up; a mountain. We are not talking about Everest-type mountains. The highest point in Israel is the Mt Hermon range. The ski resort peak is 2,040 m (6,690 ft). Hermon's highest peak is in Syria and is 2,814 m (9,232 ft). The tenth highest is 994 m (3,260 ft). The highest point in the "West Bank" is Mount Nabi Yunis, at 1,030 m (3,379 ft).

For comparison, Australia's top ten range from 2,228 m to 1,912 m. The UK's highest ten are much more modest, from Ben Nevis 1,345 m to Carn Dearg 1,221 m and are all in Scotland! (England's tallest come in at No. 257—Scafell Pike at 298 m (978 ft))!

The phrase *mountains of Israel* only occurs in Ezekiel. The first usage of mountain shows it refers to the mountainous backbone of Israel:

*So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; Jos. 11:16*

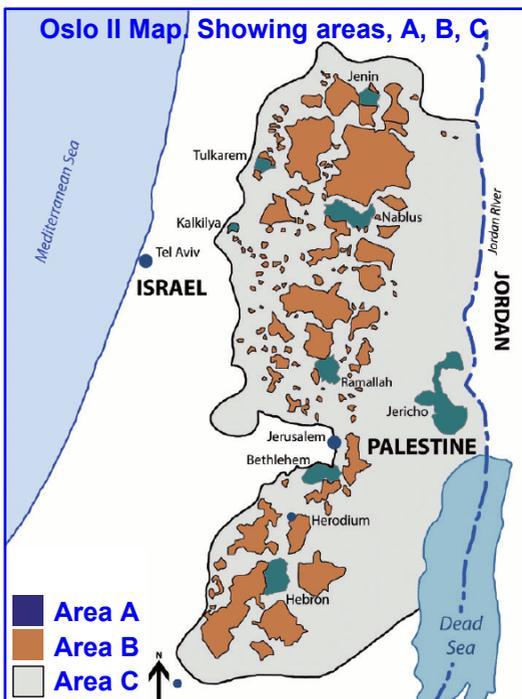
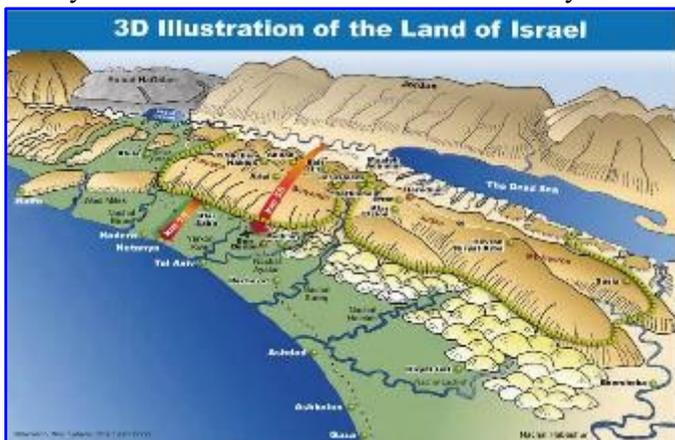
This 3D map graphically illustrates these mountains of Israel. They form the

back-bone of Israel, running from North to South. Much of the southern mountain range falls in what is called the West Bank. Under the 1995 Oslo II Accord, territory that Israel had taken in the 1967 Six-Day War was put in partial control of the Palestinians. It was divided into areas A, B and C.

A is under Palestinian control. B is under partial Israeli control. C is fully under Israeli control, even though there are many Palestinian villages in this area. This is the biggest area.

Because this forms the country's backbone, Israel vigorously defends the area to prevent the coastal areas being under the threat of terrorist missiles raining down from the higher ground.

This control is a matter of contention between Israel and the rest of the world, who, in the main, insist that Israel's



occupation of these mountains is illegal. The UN repeatedly passes resolutions condemning Israel occupation of “the mountains of Israel”. No other country in a similar position is singled out for such constant scrutiny. As we shall see in Ch. 5, it is part of the anti-Israel spirit which permeates much of the world.

This year President Trump gave his backing that the settlements that Israel has in this area C are not illegal. This caused great furore. Even the UK opposed his declaration. There is good support for Trump’s interpretation of international law. Yet President Obama was very critical of settlement expansion.

The US has shifted its position on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, no longer viewing them as inconsistent with international law.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the status of the West Bank was for Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate.

Settlements are communities established by Israel on land occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

They have long been a source of dispute between Israel and the international community, and the Palestinians.

“After carefully studying all sides of the legal debate,” Mr Pompeo told reporters, “the United States has concluded that “the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law”.

“Calling the establishment of civilian settlements inconsistent with international law hasn't worked. It hasn't advanced the cause of peace,” he added. *BBC News* 18-Nov-19

The press makes great play on the alleged huge expansion of settlements. The facts on the ground show otherwise. Settlement expansion plans have to be approved and may take many years to be approved. With growing families, the settlers often live in very cramped conditions. Israel gave up the 18 settlements in Sinai following the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace agreement and 21 settlements in Gaza when she disengaged from Gaza in 2005.

Stories in the press alleged that there had been a big increase in settler building. Yet statistics released by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics showed that in fact there were fewer construction starts in the period Oct. 2017 to Sep. 2018, than in the previous year. It was the smallest number of starts during Netanyahu’s Prime Ministership.

The growth rate in the settler population has slowed under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to its lowest point in over 23 years and possibly its lowest point ever, according to data from the Yesha Council and the Central Bureau of Statistics. *Jerusalem Post* 09-Jan-19

It is hard to find an estimate of how much of the “West Bank” is covered by Israeli settlements, but the Palestinian Authority’s own chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, admitted on Arabic radio “*As-Shams*”, November 2011, that settlements at that time only covered 1.1 per cent of the West Bank. *Canberra Times* 09-Dec-19. Even *Wikipedia* (accessed 09-Dec-19) says they only occupy 1 percent. This is hardly the impression that the mainstream press gives! It is estimated that some 400,000 Israelis live here amongst 2.6 million Palestinians. *Bloomberg* 19-Nov-19

### **A Special Mountain in Israel**

For the Bible, as well as the Jews, there is one special mountain in Israel.

*But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the **mountain of the house of the LORD** shall be established **in the top of the mountains**, and it shall be **exalted above the hills**; and people shall flow unto it.*

*And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the **mountain of the LORD**, and **to the house of the God of Jacob**; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go **forth of Zion**, and the word of the LORD **from Jerusalem**.* Mic. 4:1,2

The Temple was always associated with Jerusalem, and it is clear that this is to be the site of the new Temple as Ezekiel chapters 40-48 show. The great earthquake that splits the Mount of Olives, will allow half the new river of water to flow down to the Dead Sea thus healing it. The rest flowing to the Mediterranean. (Zec.14:8) The whole area is to be elevated as indicated above (4:1, also Zec. 14:10) so that the site for the Temple will be elevated.

This mountain has been a source of strong controversy. Israel’s conquest of the city in 1967 brought consternation to the Christian and Moslem leaders. The Jews now possessed this “sacred” city! Ever since, Jerusalem has been the focus of protests over Israel’s control of their ancient capital. There are strong bonds to Jerusalem by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church who have extensive ownership of parts of the city. The Roman Catholic Church also lays claim to various buildings in the city. Their desire is that the city comes under international control. The thought that the Jews who caused the Romans to crucify the Lord Jesus, and thus, in their Trinitarian eyes, to be God-killers, should now control the city is something obnoxious. Putin as defender of the persecuted Christians has his eyes on taking control of two Middle Eastern cities. Istanbul—Constantinople—the root stock from whence sprang the Russian Orthodox Church; and Jerusalem.

The Double-headed Eagle is the symbol for Russia as the Union Jack is to Britain and the Maple Leaf to Canada. It is worn proudly on the clothing of Russian sports people, emblazoned on passports, flags, churches and signs.

This two-headed eagle is not a modern invention. It is “Byzantine.” The eagle was, if we travel 1,800 years back in time, the imperial symbol of

the Byzantine Empire. It is still at the core of Orthodox Christianity—Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian—throughout the world.

The importance of this Byzantine Empire is not missed by Russia. In a nutshell, Byzantium was Rome. More specifically, Byzantium was the Rome that existed after Constantine I (306-337 AD) turned the Roman world from its “pagan” roots towards Christianity, and after the city of Rome ceased to be the capital of the Roman Empire in 330 AD.

Under Vladimir Putin, Russia's history has been largely Byzantine. *The Byzantine history of Putin's Russian empire*, Theo. Christou, 15-Mar-18

Putin's desire is to restore Istanbul back to its Byzantine roots.

Since the 15th century, Russia has presented itself as the only true successor of the Byzantine Orthodox Roman Empire; indeed, the double-headed eagle on the coat of arms of the House of Palaiologos—the last Byzantine imperial dynasty—today makes up the national coat of arms of the Russian Federation. Capturing Istanbul (Constantinople), restoring the Orthodox cross on the Hagia Sophia, taking the coveted Straits, and ultimately uniting the Balkan and Middle Eastern Orthodox people under Russian rule seemed close at hand several times in the last couple of centuries. ... In 1833, the Russian navy actually succeeded in landing some 30,000 troops on the Bosphorus to stop the advancing forces of Egyptian ruler Mehmed Ali and saved the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II. The Russian forces withdrew only after the Turks signed a mutual defense compact—the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi—effectively turning Turkey into a Russian protectorate with a secret clause requiring the closure of the Dardanelles to all foreign warships at Russia's command. The modern-day equivalent of such a treaty is arguably the ultimate goal of Moscow's present Middle Eastern policy. *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 19-Jul-19

Jerusalem is his other goal. He would win the gratitude of the Pope, for the Roman Church has refused from the days of Herzl to support the idea of the Jews establishing a homeland in Israel and—worse—controlling Jerusalem. In the Roman Church's eyes, it needs to be an internationally controlled city!

For the 30 years after WWI, Britain administered Palestine. Its officials established Jerusalem, naturally, as the seat of government there. Mostly Protestants, they quarrelled with Vatican representatives and Eastern Orthodox Church clerics over various municipal matters, one thing they all agreed on was that the city could not be entrusted to Muslims or Jews.

That was the origin of the idea that, when Palestine is eventually partitioned between the Jews and the Arabs, Jerusalem should be internationalized.

... Jerusalem and its environs would become a zone outside both new states, a “corpus separatum” under international control; so the world's Christian powers could retain influence over the city. *Mosaic* 29-Jul-19

Since ascending to the papacy in 2013, Pope Francis has been working openly to bring Esau and Ishmael together by enhancing Christian-Muslim relations. On the return flight from a visit to Islamic Morocco, the Pope spoke about his vision for uniting the descendants of Esau and of Ishmael.

Pope Francis referred to harmony between Christians and Muslims as “a beautiful flower that promises to bear fruit.”

In that interview, which was published last week, Pope Francis shined a light on an alliance between the Muslim country of Morocco and the Vatican regarding the status of Jerusalem. On his first day in the country, Pope Francis and Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, signed a statement.

The statement, which references Al-Quds Acharif, the Arabic name for Jerusalem, **minimizes the distinctive relationship between Jerusalem and the Jewish people** and calls for Jerusalem to become, “**the common patrimony of humanity** and especially for the followers of the three monotheistic religions, as a place of encounter and as a symbol of peaceful coexistence, where mutual respect and dialogue can be cultivated.”

As is well-known, the Vatican is a supporter of a two-state solution, **further diminishing the singular connection between Israel and the Jewish people**. The Pope calls for Christians and Muslims to see themselves as equally entitled to Jerusalem. “We are all citizens of Jerusalem, all believers,” he said, referring to Muslims and Christians.

Couched in language of peace, harmony and fraternity, the call for greater cooperation between Christians and Muslims, and this specific statement calling for the **universalization of Jerusalem**, would effectively **strip Jerusalem** of its **uniquely Jewish identity**. *BreakingIsraelNews* 07-Apr-19

One can see from the United Nations resolutions that the world is constantly focusing on Israel and its hold on Jerusalem as well as the “West Bank” mountains. Every year the UN holds an **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**, on 29 November. A Special meeting was held on 27 November prior to the Day, where speeches of support for the Palestinian cause were read out from around the world. Following this meeting was the opening of an exhibition in the UN HQ visitors entrance Lobby, this year entitled: ***Palestine: The Most Universal of National Causes!***

This exhibit, through the words of public personalities, explores the roots and depth of international solidarity with the Palestinian people. It also honours the millions of individuals from all walks of life who have found multitudes of ways to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause, sometimes at the expense of their lives.

Organized by Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the UN in cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Affairs.

On display 21 November– 7 January 2020. *UN.org*. Accessed 05-Dec-19

The UN General Assembly will start its annual debate on the question of Palestine on Tuesday, 3 December 2019. At the debate, the 2019 Annual Report of the Committee and four resolutions endorsed by it for adoption by the General Assembly will be considered. *ibid*

### UN General Assembly Debate on Palestine.

This annual debate focused on five draft resolutions, with these, less-than-thrilling titles:

1. “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” (document A/74/L.14);
2. “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine” (document A/74/L.15);
3. “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat” (document A/74/L.16);
4. “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat” (document A/74/L.17);
5. “Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” (document A/74/35).

During the day-long debate, speakers expressed their support for the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination and **condemned Israel for continuing its settlement activities**. Kuwait’s delegate, echoing the sentiments of several Member States, expressed alarm about Israel’s attempts to **change the historic status of holy sites in Jerusalem**, the freezing of Palestinian tax revenues and the decision not to extend the temporary international presence in Hebron. *Report from UN General Assembly* 03-Dec-19

For a change, the number of countries who voted against Resolution 3, increased considerably this year, following the US endeavours for a more even-handed approach to Israel. The individual members of the EU normally vote for the resolution but following recent protests by Germany about the UN bias, a number of countries rejected the resolutions.

Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Brazil and Colombia for the first time voted against the resolution regarding the Division for Palestinian Rights at the UN Secretariat. The UK, France and Spain abstained, as they do every year. *Times of Israel* 04-Dec-19

Certainly, Israel in possession of the *mountains of Israel* and especially **the mountain of Jerusalem**, is a matter which unites many countries of the world and is an important factor in Gog’s coming against Israel in support of Russian and Greek Orthodox, and Vatican claims on the city and land. As Ezekiel foretold, in these last days Israel would dwell on the mountains!

## Chapter 5

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# GREAT PROPHECIES FOR TODAY—FROG-LIKE SPIRITS

Our second great prophecy for today is found in Revelation 16. Having spoken of the drying up of the River Euphrates in v.12 which takes us back to the events of WWI, which made preparation for the State of Israel to be set up, John then in vv. 13, 14, give a very relevant sign for today. It gives us a vital background to many of today's events.

### Frog-like Spirits Out of the Mouths

And I saw **three unclean spirits like frogs** come out of the **mouth** of the **dragon**, and out of the **mouth** of the **beast**, and out of the **mouth** of the **false prophet**.

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto **the kings of the earth** and of **the whole world**, to **gather them** to the **battle** of that **great day of God Almighty**. Rev. 16:13,14



Let's tease out the significance of these words under a series of headings.

Before we do so, let us note the parallels between the plagues in Egypt and the Vial judgments upon Europe. Both were God's punishments on people who refused to acknowledge the power of God and His righteousness in calling Israel as His people. Egypt had to learn the hard way that Israel was His nation and the time for them to

Plague	Plague No.	Vial No	Exo.	Rev.
Boils on man & animals	6	1	9:10	16:2
Death	10	2	12:29	16:3
Water into blood	1	3	7:20	16:4
Fire	7	4	9:22	16:8
Darkness	9	5	10:22	16:10
Frogs everywhere	2	6	8:3,4	16:13,14
Hail	7	7	9:22	16:21
<b>Happening</b>				
Drying up water		6	14:22 Isa. 51:10	16:12

inherit the Land of Promise had come. Pharaoh was eventually persuaded by the accumulated evidence of ten plagues. The first five Vials of God's wrath were poured out upon a Europe that had persecuted God's saints and His people. The sixth is still being poured out upon a generation that refuses to

acknowledge God, or that the Jews are His People, and have resisted the return of the Jews to their promised land. They hate Israel's current possession of the *mountains of Israel* and support those who would rid them out of that land. The seventh Vial is yet to be poured out, when God destroys those nations who have scattered His people and held them in bondage. They will experience the fierceness of His wrath, and the stretching out of His Arm, when He destroys the political powers of today and establishes the rulership over all nations of His Son and Israel's Messiah.

## Unclean Spirits

The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma*. It is used for human and animal breath, that which keeps life going with all the other elements. In symbolic terms it is used in the phrase *the spirit of the age*. It is *unclean*—the Greek denotes *not clean, impure*. It is a spirit which is against God, this is the spirit of today; this is what empowers men, a *spirit of disobedience to the things of Truth and Godliness*. The disciples were given power to *cast out unclean spirits*. We have examples of the Lord Jesus doing this, the most notable being the healing of Legion recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Legion was very strong, restless, no fixed place, couldn't be bound. (Mark 5:2-5) He was filled with many *unclean spirits*, hence his name *Legion*. (v. 9) He wore no clothes (Luke 8:27), but Christ clothed him (v. 35) after he was cured. He was possessed with a spirit of madness, which he implored Christ to send into the nearby pigs. This caused them to rush downhill to death! (v. 33). How apt for the transformation of mankind from their present godless, naked appearance, in contempt of God's laws and ways to—in the Kingdom—*sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind*. (Mark 5:15). Legion was now a follower of the Lord Jesus and proclaimed the salvation that Christ had wrought.

## Like Frogs

This links us back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> plague. We note from Exodus ch. 8 the salient details. They came out of the river *abundantly—swarming*—and they went absolutely everywhere! *Fields, villages, houses, bedchambers, beds, ovens, kneading troughs!* They were no respecter of persons, everyone was affected, from Pharaoh, his people and down to the lowest servant. (v. 3,13)

Pharaoh begged Moses to get rid of them, and he did so at God's own timing.

*And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs **died** out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.*

*And **they gathered them together** upon **heaps**: and the **land stank**. Exo. 8:13,14*

Where do we find the phrase *gathered them together*? Why! In Rev. 16:16!

*And **he gathered them together** into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon**.*

What does Armageddon mean? A **heap** (of sheaves), in a **valley**, for **judgment** (threshing).

...*the land stank*. There are two OT prophecies speaking of the time of Armageddon that use a word from the root word used in Exodus.

*Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.* Isa. 34:3

*But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.* Joel 2:20

As we have considered, it is an unclean spirit which gets absolutely everywhere. There is another aspect however, and it is the key to what is the origin of this *unclean spirit*. Frogs is used today as a derogatory term for the French. How did this arise? It is because frogs were the ancient symbol of the early French nation. And specifically, three frogs! Clovis, who was the first French king to unite all the tribes of the Franks, had on his banner and on his cloak, three frogs. The pictures are taken from the Bayeux Tapestry in Reims Cathedral, in France. Clovis was King from 481-511 and his kingdom stretched afar, as shown in darker shading on the map.

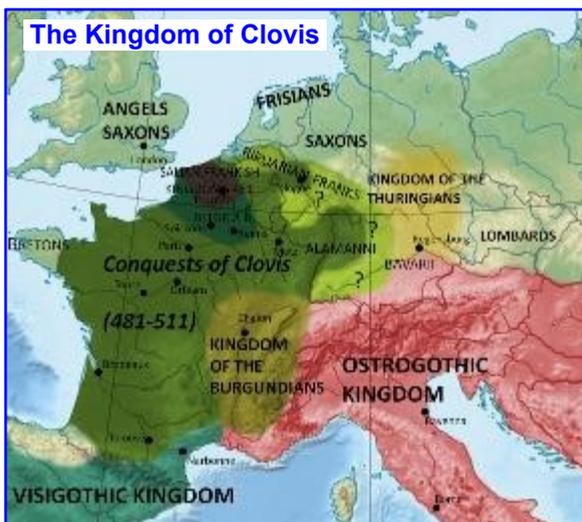
General Charles de Gaulle is cited (in the biography by David Schœnbrun, 1965), as having said “For me, the history of France begins with Clovis, elected as king of France by the tribe of the Franks, who gave their name to France. Before Clovis, we have Gallo-Roman and Gaulish



Bayeux Tapestry



Bayeux Tapestry



The Kingdom of Clovis

prehistory. The decisive element, for me, is that **Clovis was the first king to have been baptised a Christian**. My country is a Christian country and I reckon the history of France **beginning** with the accession of a Christian king who bore the name of the Franks.” *Wikipedia* on Clovis

### **Out of the Mouth of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet**

A mouth is symbolic for the official teaching of a political power.

*A mouth* is apocalyptically a symbol of *government* through which the political organization of which it is the executive, gives *expression* to its policies. *Eureka Vol 3*, p552

We have in the past looked at these three entities with *frog-like-spirit-speaking-mouths*. Today we would identify the *Dragon* as Russia; the *Beast* as Europe; the *False Prophet* as the Roman Catholic Church.

### **What is the Frog-like Spirit?**

The earlier Vials are associated with the French Revolution and its immediate aftermath. The spirit of the Revolution was summed up by their rallying cry of Liberté, égalité, fraternité—liberty, equality, fraternity.

The 1789 **Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen** defined liberty:

Liberty consists of being able to do anything that does not harm others: thus, the exercise of the natural rights of every man or woman has no bounds other than those that guarantee other members of society the enjoyment of these same rights.

And equality:

[The law] must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in its eyes, shall be equally eligible to all high offices, public positions and employments, according to their ability, and without other distinction than that of their virtues and talents.

It didn't define fraternity!

This Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, or as the original French title could be translated today “The Declaration of Human and Civic Rights”, is the basis for all modern Human Rights documents that influence every part of Western thinking.

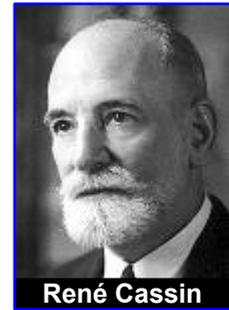
### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

This UDHR document was accepted by the United Nations in 1948, ironically the same year as the establishment of the State of Israel! The irony is that this document will eventually be responsible for the destruction of the State of Israel! For this frog-like spirit *gathers the nations to the battle of that great day of God Almighty!*

Unbeknown to its originators, the outcome of this Declaration will be to usher in the destruction of the political systems of today's world, to be

replaced by the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God. The humanistic kingdom of men will give way to a Theocracy. The only “rights” that man has, is to die! Before we see how this is a great sign for our generation, a few words about this document.

In 1946, 18 members formed the UN Commission on Human Rights, tasked with preparing an International Bill of Rights. One of the main co-authors was a French Jew, René Cassin, who was responsible for the first full draft, receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968 in recognition of his work. His basis was to take all the French 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and add to it. The origin of modern Human Rights is found in the frog-like spirit of the French Revolution.



The Committee presented the document to the UN in 1948 and it was accepted on the 10 December, now the date of Human Rights Day. The emphasis for 2019 is on youth.

Human Rights legislation is all pervasive in the West. It dictates what can or cannot be taught at school. In the UK, Ofsted School Inspections concentrate on checking how the schools are implementing Human Rights policies and that young children are being taught “their rights”. It makes imposing discipline extremely difficult as it is very self-centred. “I know my rights”! Apparently, one is not allowed to teach about the responsibilities which go with those “rights”.



### Gathering the Nations to Battle

*For they are the **spirits of devils**, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, **to gather them** to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Rev. 16:14*

So what are we to understand by these frog-like spirits?

These frog-like spirits are here described as the *spirits of devils* or *demons*. In Greek mythology, demons were the lower gods who mediated between men and the supreme gods (clearly a corruption of the position of the angels). So, in symbol they aptly represent the leaders and officials in the political and ecclesiastical heavens. The spirits of the demons are the policies they formulate and which go out from the ‘mouth’—with the authority of the government. They are unclean or unholy spirits, ‘earthly,

sensual, demoniacal’ (James 3:15). They work ‘signs’ as the Greek word ‘*semeion*’ properly means; that is, they manipulate events and affairs that delude the people and cause them to conform to their policies. This is particularly true of the activities of the Catholic missionaries in their frog-like activities. It is also true regarding the technological marvels that amaze the peoples of undeveloped countries. *Graham Pearce* *The Revelation—Which Interpretation?*

So how does this spirit of humanism gather the nations against Israel? Because the things that Israel stands for—a nation for the benefit of Jews, laws which openly revolve around the Jewish way of life—are antagonistic to the philosophy of Human Rights. Anti-Semitism is rampant in those countries which champion Human Rights! In the UK the Labour Party under Mr Corbyn has a terrible record of support for those who would destroy Israel. Yet they fully support the promulgation of Human Rights! The frog-like spirit linked us back to the plagues in Egypt, when the demands of Israel’s God were ignored until the final plague. The use of this description therefore not only links us to the French, but to the anti-Semitism of ancient Egypt.

We see the UN obsessed with anti-Israel resolutions, repeated year after year. Far less attention is given to conflicts in other parts of the world, because Israel is its constant target.

It is a fascinating sign that we are living in the time of the return of the Master as we see this humanistic spirit coming out of the all three mouths—the *Dragon*, the *Beast* and the *False Prophet*!

### **Frog-like Spirits—Out of the Mouth of the Dragon**

We associate the Russian power as being imperial and authoritarian, and this is right, yet it still speaks with a humanistic voice. As we saw last year in *Milestones 2018*, it was Russia, of all countries, who in 2017, urged the UN to make a big celebration of the 2018 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UDHR! For Putin it gives him a reason to champion the persecuted Christians’ whose “rights” are being trampled on. The fact that any Christian religion apart from the Russian Orthodox Church, is subject to increasing pressures within Russia is of course irrelevant!

### **Frog-like Spirits—Out of the Mouth of the Beast**

The EU is a great champion of Human Rights. On its website it declares:

#### **Promoting and protecting human rights**

There are two main streams of human rights policy and action within the European Union. One is to protect the fundamental human rights for **EU citizens**, and the other is to promote human rights **worldwide**.

The European Union is based on a strong commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law **worldwide**.

Human rights are at the heart of EU relations with other countries and regions.

EU policy includes:

promoting the rights of women, children, minorities and displaced persons  
opposing the death penalty, torture, human trafficking and discrimination  
defending civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights

defending human rights through active partnership with partner countries, international and regional organisations, and groups and associations at all levels of society

**inclusion of human rights clauses** in all agreements on trade or cooperation with non-EU countries.

This thinking pervades much of the legislation coming from the EU. The “rights” of those who choose a lifestyle which goes against Biblical principles are championed, and these matters are now being pushed at ever younger ages even in infant schools. Young children are told it is fine to choose what sex you want to be considered. A BBC Teach film for 9-12-year-olds put out to assist teachers claims that:

“We know we have got male and female, but there are over 100, if not more, gender identities now.” *Daily Telegraph* 09-Sep-19

What perversion and confusion. It is all about “me” and “my feelings”. Tragic stories are emerging of those who have physically changed their genders, only later to realise that they had made a terrible mistake.

This is the logical outcome when children are not told what is right and wrong. Indeed, that there are no standards of right and wrong, it is what you think and feel you want!

As we remarked earlier, this humanistic spirit carries with it, anti-Semitic undertones. The nation of Israel champions its right to run the country for the benefit and faith of the Jews. A not-surprising situation as most countries have laws which reflect their religious background. But because it is Israel, it arouses bitter feelings.

In November, the European Court of Justice ruled that any Israel produce grown “beyond the Green Line”, i.e. the West Bank, had to be labelled as such with a special label so that customers are made aware of its origin. It has made no such ruling against any other country which has “disputed territory”—there are apparently some 200 territorial disputes around the world. *Times of Israel* 20-Nov-19. These Israel enterprises bring a valuable income to those Palestinian workers who are attracted to work for Jewish enterprises because they offer decent wages. The EU follows the UN in their adulation of the Palestinian cause.

EU institutions do not merely legitimize Palestinian terrorist groups, including Hamas and the PFLP, they **enthusiastically embrace them**. For instance, the European Parliament has repeatedly hosted senior Palestinian terrorists. It has given **standing ovations** to senior Palestinian officials, including Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas, as they revived medieval anti-Semitic blood libels. Abbas, for instance, accused Israeli Jews of deliberately poisoning wells. *BreakingIsraelNews* 18-Nov-19

Vast sums are spent in sustaining organisations which seek to undermine what Israel does in her own land.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) registered in Israel and financed and directed by the EU and its member states are **strategic weapons** in this campaign. These **European-financed** and **directed**, Israeli-registered and staffed NGOs routinely submit petitions to Israel's High Court of Justice whose purpose is to stymie the government's ability to implement duly promulgated policies and undermine the Israeli military's ability to defend the country. *ibid*

It is feared that anti-Semitism will rise in the UK following a Conservative victory in the UK General Elections. Many Jews, who traditionally voted for Labour, showed their unhappiness at the measures that the Party had taken to purge out anti-Semitism, and supported the Conservatives. It is expected that they will be blamed for Labour's poor showing.

### **Frog-like Spirits—Out of the Mouth of the False Prophet**

This is probably the most unexpected mouth to have a humanistic spirit coming out of it. A religious system should have nothing to do with this man-centred spirit. But this is the False Prophet! Pope Francis has deeply embraced the spirit of humanism. Last year was the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the acceptance of the Human Rights Day (HRD), and the Pope reinforced the Church's embrace of its teachings.

On Human Rights Day, Pope Francis made an appeal to “**place human rights at the heart of all policies**, even when this means going against the tide.” *Independent Catholic News* 11-Dec-18

His 2019 New Year Address spoke of the UDHR.

Throughout his pontificate Pope Francis has cited **the moral authority** of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“A **fundamental role** is played by the human rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose 70th anniversary we recently celebrated,” the Pope said. *Angelus* 23-Jan-19

In Ch. 8 we will look a little further at this aspect of the modern Papacy.

Once again, we see the remarkable forth telling of today's world in the pages of Scripture. Our God really is an incredible God, Who knows all things!

## Chapter 6

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# BORIS SWEEPS TO POWER—BREXIT BACK ON TRACK

*It was a remarkable victory, made all the sweeter in that its size was not revealed by the Pollsters. His 80-seat victory in the December 2019 elections was of a size that took us back to the days of Mrs Thatcher in the 1980s. Overnight the political scene in Britain had radically changed, enabling the work of Brexit to proceed from a situation of strength rather than the weakness that had characterised the three-and-a-half years since the 2016 referendum. Although the people of the UK voted narrowly to leave the EU, all Parties said they would honour the vote. However, it became clear that many of those in power were so enamoured of the EU that they fought tooth-and-nail to prevent the UK leaving. They thought that they knew better than those who had seen through the EU for what it was. No longer a “Common Market” open for trade, but a political entity, driving roughshod over the wishes of the people, in order to create a United States of Europe.*

### The Power of the British People

They rarely go in for dramatic demonstrations such as the French “yellow vests”, gilets jaunes. Or the Greek or Italian or Spanish fiery demonstrations. They suffered stoically until the pent-up fury burst and they took their revenge on those who had mocked their decision to Leave, with the X of a pen on the ballot paper. Their quiet fortitude had an amazing result. Overnight the majority of those who had pressed to remain in Europe were swept aside, losing their Parliamentary seats. Simultaneously, for the first time for many decades, the red map of Labour was shattered, replaced by Conservative blue in many traditional Labour strongholds. As befits a Party that embraced anti-Semitism, it suffered a humiliating defeat, on a scale not seen since the 1930s. The Labour government which had been determined to nationalise many industries and give back power to the trade unions, was gone, with little prospects of returning anytime soon.

The reaction of the markets was instant, within a few minutes of the results of the exit polls being released at 10pm on polling day—December 12—the value of the sterling shot up. In the next few days, billions of pounds were added to stock market values.

### How Did we Get Here?

At the start of the year, Mrs May was still PM. There was little liking



for the Withdrawal Agreement that she had agreed with the EU. It represented a betrayal of Brexit, handing over to the EU control over many areas of UK life. This was not Brexit but a carefully crafted plan by the EU. It kept the UK under its influence, until the UK could come up with a suitable plan to avoid controls on the border between Northern Ireland (in the UK) and the Irish Republic (in the EU). The prospects of coming up with a solution which the other 27 members of the EU would agree to were minimal. Meanwhile the UK would be continuing to pour in vast sums into the EU coffers, yet having no control over any new EU legislation that she would have to follow. On 13 January, Mrs May suffered the biggest defeat in UK Parliamentary history, as she tried to get her agreement approved, losing by 230 votes.

On her second attempt on 21 March, just a few days before Brexit was due—as long as she could get the Bill through Parliament—she lost the vote by 149 votes. It was clear that it would not get passed by Brexit date so her request for an extension was eventually granted, but only until 12 April; EU Parliamentary elections were looming, and they needed the matter sorting as soon as possible. So, the UK didn't leave on 29 March as had been promised. It was on that day that Mrs May had her third attempt but lost the vote this time by 58 votes. After difficult discussions, the EU granted a 3<sup>rd</sup> extension to 31 October.

### EU Parliamentary Elections

The EU 5-yearly elections were due to be held on Sunday 26 May, but because Britain traditionally votes on a Thursday, they hold elections on that day, but the results are withheld until

### Key Brexit Dates. Part 1

**June 23 2016** Britain holds Referendum on whether to Remain or Leave the EU. Leave won by small majority. David Cameron resigns as Prime Minister.

**July 13 2016** Theresa May becomes PM.

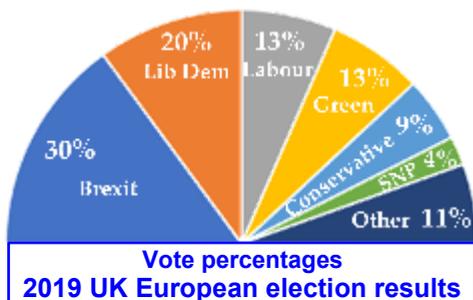
**Mar. 29 2017** Mrs May triggers the starting point of Brexit by sending the required notice of leaving under Article 50 of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty—the escape clause for EU members. This fixed the Brexit date for two years later on **March 29 2019**.

**June 8 2017** Mrs May holds a disastrous snap election. Labour Party surges, she needs the support of the Northern Ireland Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to have a majority.

**Dec. 8 2017** Following late night negotiations, the EU agreed to a UK “divorce” bill which incorporated the Northern Ireland “backstop”.

**July 6 2018** Mrs May having finalised her EU Withdrawal Agreement (WA) calls her Ministers to attend at Chequers, her government house, to reveal her plans. Several resigned in protest at her plans, including her Brexit Secretary and Boris Johnson, her Sec. of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

the rest of Europe have voted. The Conservatives had desperately hoped that Brexit would have been agreed, so they would not have to participate. Indeed, the EU had reallocated the UK seats, most set aside for any future members joining the EU and some redistributed where there was an imbalance between the country's population and their seat allocation. The smallest country has a minimum of six seats, Germany, the largest member has 96. The planned reforms had to be put on hold and for the UK, a rapid choice of MEP candidates. Nigel Farage's newly formed Brexit Party spun out of his previous association with UKIP (UK Independence Party), fielded candidates for all the 73 seats allocated. Campaigning for Britain to leave the EU, this five-month-old Party swept to power, winning 30% of the vote. It was disaster for the Conservatives—pushed to 5<sup>th</sup> place, with only 9% of the vote! Before the



results were published, Mrs May declared that she would stand down, when a successor had been appointed.

It was clear that the electorate were unhappy that the 2016 referendum result had not been carried out. Britain was still in the EU, with little prospect of escaping soon! It was also clear that

### Key Brexit Dates. Part 2

**Jan. 13 2019** Fails to get her Withdrawal Agreement passed—Parliament rejects by margin of 230 votes—biggest parliamentary defeat in UK history.

**Mar. 12 2019** Again loses but by smaller, yet significant margin of 149 votes.

**Mar. 21 2019** EU agrees short postponement to Brexit date to April 12 to enable Mrs May to get WA through parliament.

**Mar. 29 2019.** 3<sup>rd</sup> rejection of her WA, this time by 58 votes.

**Mar. 29 2019 Original Brexit date** passes.

**Apr. 11 2019** With no sign of WA being passed the EU again extends to **October 31 2019.**

**Apr. 12 2019 2nd Brexit date.** That too passes.

**May 23 2019** UK election day for EU Parliament, exit polls show disaster for Conservatives.

**May 24 2019** Mrs May announces intention of stepping down when a successor chosen.

**May 26 2019** EU results show Brexit party victory, driving Conservatives to 5<sup>th</sup> place!

**July 24 2019** Mrs May steps down, Boris Johnson takes over as PM, vowing “we leave Oct 31, do or die”.

**Oct. 17 2019** The EU agrees to Johnson's revised WA.

the EU were unhappy with the delays and the inability of the UK Parliament to get the deal approved.

**“We, as Unbelievers and Heretics, Needed to be Cast Out.”**

The BBC aired a “fly on the wall” documentary called **Storyville, Brexit behind closed doors**. A camera crew was embedded with the ex-Prime Minister of Belgium, Guy Verhofstadt, who led the EU Parliament’s negotiating team. It highlighted the contempt in which the British were held as the EU tried to enmesh Britain as a vassal EU state.

In an interview by the BBC Radio 4 Today programme, the Chief of Staff to David Davis, the UK Brexit Minister at the time, made this interesting comment about negotiations:

“It had from the EU side the feel of a **religious cult** and we, as **unbelievers** and **heretics, needed to be cast out.**”  
*BBC Today* 14-May-19

Shortly after Britain had voted to leave, Mr Barnier, the EU Commission negotiator, was reported as telling the EU leaders:

“I’ll have done my job if, in the end, the deal is so tough on the British that they’d **prefer to stay in the EU.**” Daniel Hannan 23-Jan-19  
*ConservativeHome* (Translating a press report in French)

### Choosing a New Leader

Ten candidates stepped forward by the 10 June deadline to replace Mrs May. The Conservative MPs whittled these down in a series of ballots until only two candidates were left—Boris Johnson, who had resigned from the Cabinet over Mrs May’s deal, and Jeremy Hunt. Both candidates were strong supporters of Israel. They then toured the country, canvassing support from the Conservative Party members, whose postal votes would choose the new leader. The postal ballot results were declared on 23 July, with Johnson a clear winner. The next day, Mrs May stepped down, and Mr Johnson, after visiting the Queen, took over as Prime Minister.

Boris rapidly changed the composition of the Cabinet, swinging the balance of its members from Pro-Remain to Pro-Brexit, people prepared to back

### Key Brexit Dates. Part 3

**Oct. 22 2019** Parliament accepts Johnson’s WA, but runs out of time to get House of Lords approval.

**Oct. 28 2019** EU reluctantly agree another postponement to Jan 31 2020 assuming he gets re-elected and his WA passed by Parliament.

**Oct. 29 2019** Election for Dec 12 agreed by Parliament.

**Oct. 31 2019 3rd Brexit date** passes.

**Nov. 6 2019** Parliament finishes.

**Dec. 12 2019** UK Election day.

**Dec 13 2019** Triumph for Conservative Party.

**Jan. 31 2020 11pm** (i.e. midnight Brussels time!)

**4th Brexit date.**

Johnson's mantra of "do or die, we leave by October 31". A smaller, leaner Cabinet emerged after a few days of "long knives"! Boris was under no illusion, that he was fighting for the Party's survival.

Why did Boris step down from being a candidate to replace David Cameron following his resignation in 2016? His friend Michael Gove was going to support his leadership challenge and then, at the last moment, decided he would stand himself. Johnson stood down, as did all the other possible candidates apart from Mrs May. She was elected without a contest. So why now? There are three things that I believe make it the right time.

**1)** Nigel Farage's Brexit Party's success in the 2019 EU elections, driving the Conservatives to 5th place, with just 9% of the UK vote! It was clear that the Conservative Party was heading for oblivion, unless they clearly stood for leaving the EU like the Brexit Party.

**2)** In 2016, Barak Obama was the US President and his expected successor was Hilary Clinton. Obama was no friend of Israel nor of Britain. Germany was his declared close international partner, and if the UK was foolish enough to leave the EU, they would be at the back of the queue for a trade deal! Donald Trump unexpectedly won the US election in November 2016. It has taken a year or two to get his policies in place and America's economy moving again. He has devoted much effort to Israel and now is looking forward to the time when the UK can sign a trade deal, promising to help make it a great deal and in the shortest possible time. He is a great admirer of the monarchy and it was clear from the camaraderie shown at the G7 meeting at the end of August, that the "special relationship" was still strong.

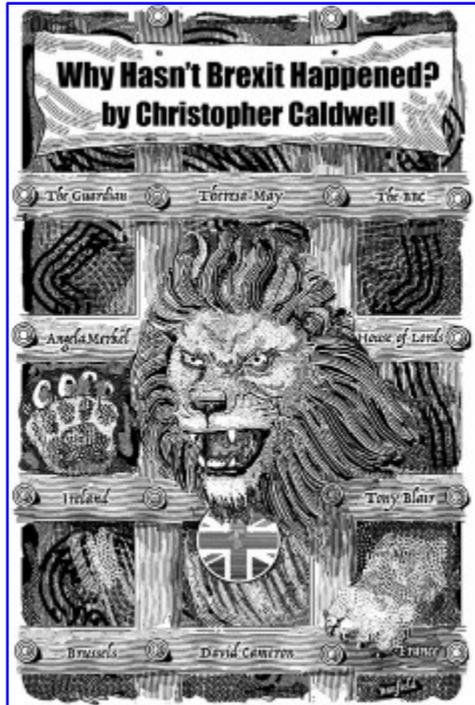
**3)** The benefit of hindsight! Johnson has seen the trials and difficulties that Mrs May had in her negotiations with the EU and the unpopularity of the deal the EU put upon her. This surely would have strengthened Boris's resolve to steer a pathway that breaks the EU's stranglehold and allows Britain to be free from the EU yoke.

Boris's strength, honed as Mayor of London, is that he builds up a team around him and trusts them to get on with matters, in contrast to Mrs May.

### **Democracy Under Attack**

The next few months illustrated just how out of touch most MPs were with the grassroots. In 2016, the UK had voted by a small margin, to leave the EU. Yet the majority of politicians were so much in thrall with the EU that they did their best to frustrate Boris' plans to leave. Every trick was used, and obstacles put in the way, including using—for the first time—the power of the Courts to override the will of the government. The London region was strongly for remaining with the EU. This is where MPs spent most of their time. The BBC was heavily biased against Brexit, as were many former Conservative and Labour leaders. The cartoon overleaf neatly summed up the many forces that were preventing the Lion from getting out the cage. The

names on the bars were these: The Guardian (newspaper), Theresa May, the BBC, Angela Merkel, House of Lords, Ireland, Tony Blair, Brussels, David Cameron, France. The cartoon was designed to illustrate a fascinating article in the *Claremont Review of Books*, by Christopher Caldwell entitled [Why Hasn't Brexit Happened?](#) The author showed just how much the spirit of the EU had replaced Britain's traditional values—supported by the press, the BBC, and MPs. The EU's philosophy is to withdraw power from the people, step-by-step. If the people vote against what the EU wants, it gets them to vote again and again until they change their minds. Ordinary people see that this is not democracy, those in Parliament and the civil service, see the EU as a wonderful cash cow.



Lacking a parliamentary majority, even with DUP support, due to the sacking of 21 MP's over their non-support of Johnson's Brexit plans, Parliament was stuck. No government business could be passed unless supported by the Opposition Parties. The longest session of Parliament since the 1400s was eventually ended on 9 September under special measures taken by Boris Johnson to prorogue this sitting. He planned for the new sitting to commence 14 October with the Queen's Speech, allowing Parliament time to discuss what was outlined before the 31 October Brexit deadline. Traditionally four weeks of Party Conferences takes place, starting mid-September and Parliament is suspended during this period. However, this proroguing measure was challenged in court and on appeal was dismissed as unlawful (the judge was openly biased). Parliament was therefore reconvened on 25 September.

Brexit negotiations had been redoubled and eventually many of the things that had caused problems in Mrs May's Withdrawal Agreement (WA), were modified. Mr Johnson's WA was put to the EU leaders and was accepted 17 October. There was now great pressure to get this through the UK Parliament. This time the Houses of Parliament passed it 22 October, but it ran out of time to get it through a very anti-Brexit House of Lords. As it clearly was not going to get passed before the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brexit date, an earlier Court Order forced Boris to ask for a 4<sup>th</sup> extension—granted to 31 January 2020.

## New Elections Agreed

With Parliament becoming increasingly divided it was clear that the only practical way forward was to call for a General Election. There was great reluctance by Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, to agree to holding fresh elections, in spite of his past insistence that elections should be held. At this time his popularity as leader had slumped to its lowest level. Finally, he was driven by mounting pressure to agree for Parliament to be dissolved and elections held. December 12 was the date chosen by Parliament and this short parliamentary session came to an end on 6 November.

## The UK General Election Campaign

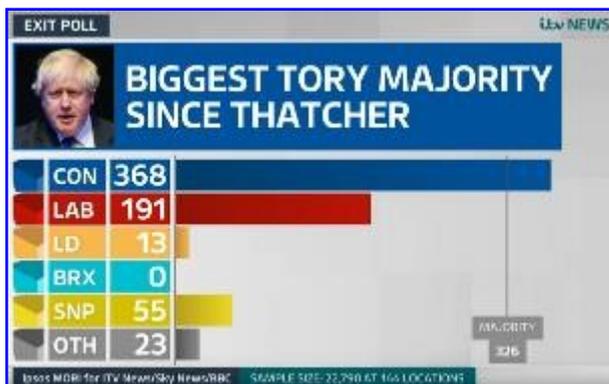
The **Labour Party** wanted to drag Britain back to the dark days of the 1970s when the powerful trade unions held the country to ransom. They wished to nationalise much of Britain's infrastructure. They wished to penalise the rich to pay for wild schemes for the poorer. Promises of huge spending were made without the means to finance them. Their Brexit policy was to have another referendum, promising to honour that result.

The **Conservatives** campaigned to get Britain out of Europe by 31 January. Their spending plans were much more cautious than Labour's, and reflected an understanding that once Britain leaves, investors will once again flow back to a Britain no longer shackled by EU rules. Johnson boldly campaigned that the UK will leave on January 31, and that a trade deal with the EU would be completed by the end of 2020.

## December 12 2019 Polling Day

A wet day for most of the country brought anxiety, would voters brave the rain and the cold to go to vote?

They did, as most realised the significance of the vote. Was Britain to remain or to leave the EU? There is a moratorium on the media making political comments during the time that the polling stations are open. ITV, BBC and Sky News joined together in quizzing people exiting 144 polling stations up and down the country as to how they had voted. Early on it became apparent that it was going strongly one way, as there was a spoiler put out that "the results might make you sick"! On the stroke of 10 pm, up popped the TV Exit Poll results which predicted a



staggering win for the Conservatives and an abysmal showing for Labour! The final results bore out the forecast as our results chart shows. It was the biggest turn-around since the days of Mrs Thatcher and for Labour, the greatest loss in post-war times since 1983 under Michael Foot.



### “What an Earthquake we have Created”, Boris

As the victorious Boris Johnson said at a 7am meeting the morning after the election, when the size of his majority was clear to all:

“Well my friends, good morning everybody. Well we did it. We pulled it off didn’t we. We broke the deadlock, we ended the gridlock, we smashed the roadblock. And in this glorious, glorious pre-breakfast moment, before a new dawn rises on a new day and a new Government.

“This election means that getting Brexit done is now the **irrefutable, irresistible, unarguable** decision of the British people.

“And with this election I think we have put an end to all those miserable threats of a second referendum.

“We will get Brexit done on time by 31 January, no ifs, no buts, no maybes. **Leaving the European Union as one United Kingdom**, taking back control of our laws, borders, money, our trade, immigration system, delivering in the **democratic mandate** of the people.” *Daily Telegraph* 13-Dec-19

### This Election will Change Britain—and Europe—for Good

This *Spectator* 07-Dec-19 article was written the week before the election. It seems spot on!

The effect of a Johnson victory in this election will also be momentous for the EU. Brexit will be the greatest setback, both material and psychological, to the vision of European integration since its beginning in the 1950s. Negative votes in referendums in France, the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark, though they eroded the EU’s legitimacy, were sidestepped with little material consequence. Anti-EU elections in Greece and Italy were more brutally stamped on. Similar tactics were tried with Britain, with the connivance of the transnational elite: there was not even the offer of cosmetic concessions to save the electorate’s face. It was clearly the intention that domestic political chaos would nullify the referendum. But now it seems that for the first time a leading member state

will actually leave the Union, and with a relatively strong and determined government.

There is no way the European Union can replace the loss of the UK. It will be **permanently diminished**. Economically, Britain is the **equivalent of the 18 smaller members combined**. **Militarily**, it is Europe's only tier-one power: British troops are guarding the Baltic. **Culturally**, it is the most influential globally: the EU will still have to use the English language, and its brightest young people will still scramble to study and work here.

Will Brexit be a new beginning for Europe, or the beginning of the end of its great power ambitions?

### UK Brexit Vote has Far-reaching Geostrategic Ramifications

The Dec. 12 general election in the United Kingdom overwhelmingly endorsing the Conservative government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson was also a **pivotal global strategic event**.

The election resoundingly endorsed a **straight Brexit**, which, to give Britain the maximum flexibility, **could be close to a “no-deal” Brexit**. It was now up to the EU itself to scramble to accommodate the UK to avoid an economic collapse on the continent, prompting other EU members to consider withdrawal from the Union.

#### Impact on NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) becomes, again, a potentially significant organization, because it will be given **teeth by the US and UK**. This has begun to meld with a recognition by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg—expressed at the Dec. 3-4 summit in London—that a major threat to alliance members was from the People's Republic of **China's** new strategic weapons. This re-purposes NATO.

It gives an opportunity to formally re-task the alliance for focus in the **IndoPacific**, something to which Prime Minister Johnson has already committed the UK, as has French President Emmanuel Macron. What is significant is that this tacitly comprehends a **diminishing** of the **perceived threat** of a **Russian** aggressive military posture toward **Continental European states**.

#### Impact on Strategic Economic Framework

The strength of the election mandate ensures that the UK's position as a **global financial center** is not weakened but **strengthened**. The UK can restore its centrality to free trade, including unfettered financial services, unshackling from increasingly restrictive EU protectionist practices. The EU will benefit from having the UK as a financial center.

#### Revival of the Commonwealth

The UK had progressively abandoned its global family, the Commonwealth, as it became embroiled in the EU. The UK now has the **opportunity to revive those links**, which remain a **unique strategic asset**. This process will, however, require a comprehensive re-working of the Commonwealth Secretariat, which it can achieve in conjunction with its members. Here, the central prestige of the **Crown**, as **Head** of the **Commonwealth**, is a **critical asset**, but the organization must be seen to be offering **real strategic benefits to all**. *Geostrategy-Direct* 17-Dec-19

Like a tidal tsunami, this election result swept away virtually all who were strongly opposed to Brexit and had caused such disruption in the previous Parliament. The new Parliamentary session opened 17 December, with a new Speaker to replace the anti-Brexit Mr Bercow, with a dominant Conservative Party whose 365 members had given their backing to Boris's plans.

The Queen's Speech—the second in nine weeks—set out Mr Johnson's commitment to not only leave by 31 January 2020, but to get all the negotiations done by the end of the year, with a built-in measure to prevent any slippage of these dates.

Parliament closed for its Christmas Break after they had voted through the second Reading of Johnson's Brexit deal with a majority of 124 votes. The third reading and its completion is scheduled for the New Year, meaning that Brexit is on course for 31 January after three-and-a-half-years of struggle since the 2016 referendum.

### **The Effect of Brexit on Europe**

The economic shock of the UK leaving Europe is likely to be severe, as the dynamics will be greatly altered as this article explains.

The **U.K.**, with a population of **67 million**, represented about **13%** of the EU-28's population as of the UN's population report in mid-2018. The "**EU-27**" will have a population of about **450 million**, still the third-largest entity in the world after China and India, but with **less impact** and **less** of an **advantage** over the **US** and its **327 million** populace.

The demographics of the EU-27 are decidedly **elderly**, with an average median age of 42.9 years, according to the CIA World Factbook. Among the world's "oldest major countries," Germany, Italy and Greece occupy the #3, #4 and #5 spots on the list.

According to the World Bank, the EU-28's GDP was \$18.8 trillion in 2018. Subtracting the UK's \$2.8 trillion figure gives the EU-27 a value of only **\$16 trillion, well behind the US' figure of \$20.5 trillion**. Thus, Europe is at risk of being overwhelmed by China's still relatively fast-growing economy, which totalled \$13.6 trillion as of the most recent data.

So, the decline of the EU's importance on a global scale may be a blow to the egos of the incompetent technocrats who run the European Parliament

in Brussels, but the real impact on the average European is destined to be felt in the worst of places, the wallet. *Forbes* 15-Dec-19

The ceasing of the UK's contributions will have an adverse effect on the EU's budget. Currently the UK contributes £20bn each year, but thanks to the rebate that Mrs Thatcher negotiated, that shrinks to £15.5bn. Britain receives grants to the tune of £4.5bn bringing the net contribution to £11bn per year. There are also grants to the private sector such as universities, which are calculated at around £1.2bn. (Source the UK *Office for National Statistics* 30-Sep-19) The other 27 countries will have to dig deeper into their pockets or slash their budget plans. Interesting times ahead!

### Isaiah's Picture of Britain's Role

We looked in detail at the wonderful prophecy of Isaiah 23 in *Milestones 2017* and *2018*. Isaiah portrayed that there would be a latter-day Tyre-Tarshish power, following the destruction of the original Tyre power by Alexander the Great in BC 332. The maritime spirit of Tyre moved further and further westward (see chart p80 *Milestones 2018*) arriving eventually at the shores of Britain in the Elizabethan Age. In the words of Isaiah 23:7:

... *her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.*

Isaiah then paints a time period when this exiled Tyrian power falls out of favour for a period of 70 years. At the end of that period she resumes her traditional trading ways. We know that this must be a latter-day prophecy, for the wealth she then accumulates will be used for the service of Yahweh. Historically we have seen that there is a role for Britain to assist the returned Lord Jesus, now as Israel's King, who after his defeat of their enemies, opens their eyes to believe that he was the Messiah that their forefathers rejected and crucified. They turn and repent of their unbelief and are baptised into the saving Name of their Messiah and enter into the New Covenant. (Zec. 12: 10-14; 13:1; Jer. 31:31-34)

*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.*

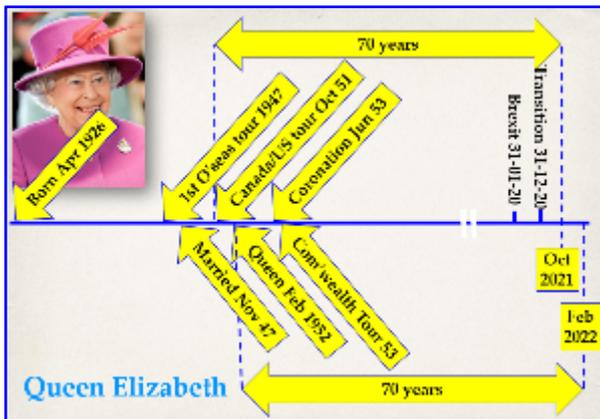
*And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.*

*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*

The Hebrew word for *sufficiently* in this last verse carries the idea of *in abundance*. *Durable* is *eminent, choice, surpassing*. This last verse is re-echoed in a latter chapter in Isaiah.

*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.* Isa. 60:9

The Queen is a remarkably fit 93-year-old. Actively involved still in the politics of the UK, who read out the planned government policy as outlined in the Queen’s Speech. She became Queen in 06-Feb-52 and so, God Willing, she will have been on the throne for 68 years in Feb. 2020 a few days after Brexit. Because of the illness of her father, King George VI, she and Philip her husband



undertook their first Royal tour to Canada and the US in Oct 1951. Boris has fixed the transition period for the end of 2020, when either an Agreement will have been drawn up on the terms which the UK trades with the EU in a post-Brexit world, or failing an Agreement, it will be a “hard” Brexit, on World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. Again, provided the Queen is still alive and on the throne, she would be in her 70<sup>th</sup> year since her first Royal duties began. It is unlikely that Britain will immediately be able to power ahead, the EU is unlikely to stop doing her best to thwart Boris’ plans. So, it is to be expected that only at the *end of seventy years* she will *sing as an harlot* and resume her trade *with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth!*

Monarchs reigning for 70 or more years are fairly unusual. The Queen is the longest-reigning living monarch. A remarkable sign for our days.

The country now embarks on a new and purposeful journey away from domination by economically the weakest continent in the world—apart from Antarctica. Her ambition is to forge new alliances with countries around the world and start a new phase in her history. For Bible students this is exciting because these things are working out in order that Britain can place herself at the disposal of Zion’s King. In the day when he will have prepared his household and gone forth to save Israel from their enemies. These things are our guide to show us how close we must be to our Lord’s coming. We marvel at God’s control of this world, ensuring His Plans come to fruition.

## Chapter 7

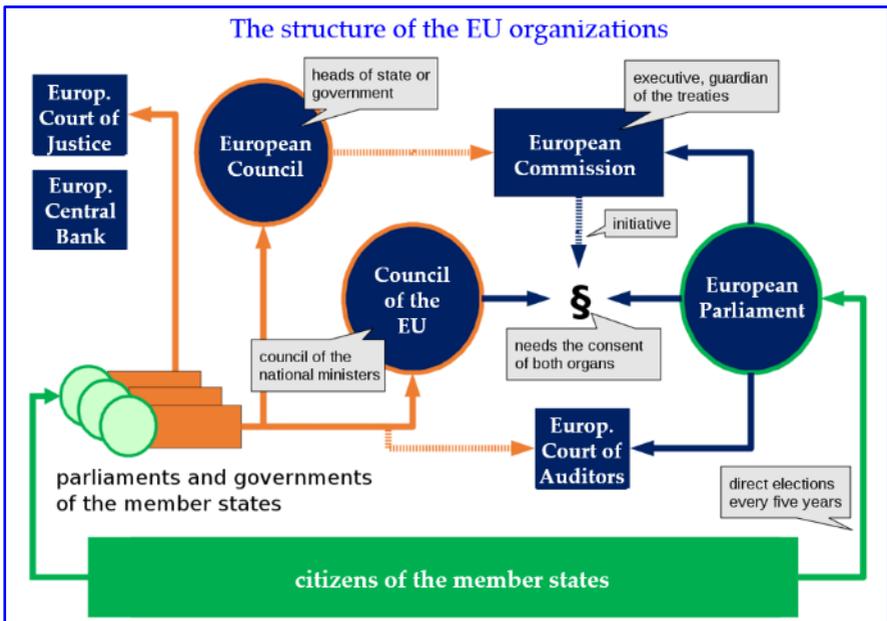
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# EUROPE'S NEW TEAM READY FOR ACTION

*The end of 2019 marked a time of change for the EU with the 2019 European Elections terminating the jobs of many of the European Commissioners, who have shaped EU policy since the 2015 EU elections. It has brought a number of women to powerful positions. It has also coincided with Brexit moving forward with a convincing Conservative election win, hopefully leading to the UK actually leaving the EU. At the same time the rift between the US and the EU is growing, pushing the EU to seek to build up her own defences and to seek to come to some accommodation with Russia. We have arrived at what will probably be a significant turning point for Europe.*

*Before looking at the details it is helpful to look at how the EU is organised, as it is quite complex and has a strong bearing on what we are considering.*

## The Organisation of the EU Institutions



The EU has a complicated structure, which was set out in the Lisbon Treaty which came into force in 2009.

**The European Parliament.** Every five years, the currently 28 member states elect MEP's (Member of the European Parliament) to the European Parliament. They number around 750, the numbers do fluctuate a little—the

new Parliament has 751. Because the UK had not left when the elections took place in May, the UK had to hold EU elections. Her 73 seats will be reallocated when she leaves. Under rules adopted at the June 2018 Summit, 46 of the seats will be set aside for future enlargement and the remaining 27 seats will be redistributed to some EU countries.



EU Parliament Building Brussels

The European Parliament meets in two locations: Brussels in Belgium and Strasbourg in France. Plenary sessions are held in Strasbourg every month. Extraordinary sessions are held in Brussels.



EU meeting and institution venues

**The European Council.** The leaders of the 28 member states form the European Council, together with the President of the European Council (Charles Michel) and the President of the European Commission (Ursula von der Leyen). They meet in the Europa building, Brussels, at least four times a year for 2 days and a night. Here they thrash out big policies and set the future agenda—that's why they normally work though one night until they get a consensus.

**The Council of the EU.** Yes, it gets complicated with similar sounding titles! This is one of two legislative bodies and is where the day-to-day running of the EU takes place. It has ten departments—agriculture and fisheries, foreign affairs, transport, telecommunications and energy, etc.—each department has 28 ministers, one per member state, who would be the minister in his own country for that field. Three of these departments meet every month, the other seven meet as needed. Their task is to negotiate and adopt EU laws and conclude agreements with other countries. Things normally get passed if there is agreement between at least 55% of the members and representing at least 65% of the total EU population. This safeguards against a block of small countries getting legislation through.

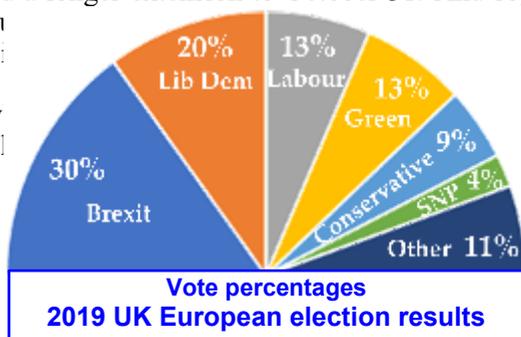
**The European Commission.** This is the Executive branch of the EU—described as the only body paid to think European. These are unelected leaders who point the direction for the EU and ensure EU legislation is implemented. Its President was Juncker but following the 2019 elections, he retired, and his role was taken over by Ursula von der Leyen, a deeply

committed integrationist, who wants a United States of Europe with its own army! The President is one of 28 commissioners—one from each member state, who represent the EU rather than their country. Julian King was the UK representative, a former Ambassador, but Boris Johnson has refused to appoint a new Commissioner in anticipation of Brexit at the end of January. This Commission is primarily based in Brussels, the President's office is on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of the Berlaymont building, the rest of the commissioners and their "cabinets" are housed here. Many other buildings are used in Brussels and in Luxembourg, to house the army of 32,000 European civil servants under them. The Commission ensures that matters passed by the Council of the EU and the EU Parliament are implemented. The Brexit talks are under the European Commission's jurisdiction.

**Other EU Institutions.** The European Court of Justice is based in Luxembourg City, as is the European Court of Auditors. The European Central Bank is in Frankfurt in Germany.

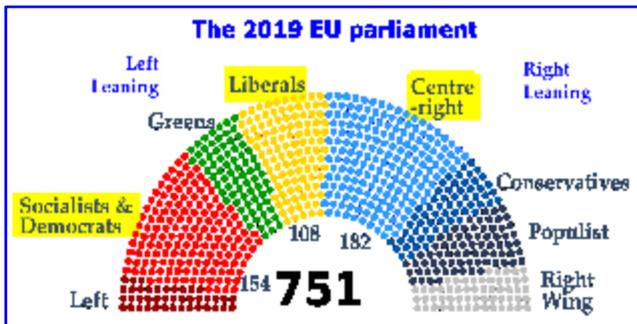
### The 2019 EU Elections

These were held in May 2019 and resulted in a number of changes. Brexit had originally been set for 29 March 2019, two years after Mrs May signed the document triggering Article 50—the escape mechanism built into the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. As remarked earlier, not expecting Britain to be participating in this election, some of her seats had been reallocated and rest put in reserve for any future expansion. When this date passed with the UK still a member, a new date of April 12 was set. When this too passed and the UK Parliament had not ratified Mrs May's deal to leave, Britain was forced to participate. Mrs May had asked for an extension until the end of June, anticipating that the UK would not have to participate as although it was after the election date, it would be before the new Parliament assembled in July 2019. However, the EU granted a longer extension to October 31. And so, candidates were hastily drawn and an election held. It was a humiliated defeat for Mrs May and Conservative Party as the new formed Brexit Party under Nigel Farage, the ex-UKIP leader, swept into power, taking 30% of the UK seats. Conservatives were pushed into 5<sup>th</sup> place with just 9% of the votes. Mrs May resigned, remaining on as a caretaker Prime Minister, until a successor could be chosen.



The other EU members also had problems. Support for the mainstream parties shrank, while votes for more extreme parties rose.

The Centre-right and the Socialists and Democrats have always joined forces to be the dominant party in the European Parliament. But that has now changed. Their 182 + 154 seats = 336, short of the 376 needed to hold the balance of power. So, the Liberals were brought into the alliance giving them a good working majority with 444 seats.



Unlike national elections, the individual parties join up with fellow-minded groups. For example, Mr Macron's En Marche! Party joined up with the Liberal block. The Brexit Party is within a section of the Right-Wing parties which come together under the exciting name of Non-Inscrits, or NI for short! These are too small to form a recognised political group.

### The EU's New Team

The new intake of EU leaders features several women. Although Europa riding the Bull Zeus is the stuff of Greek legends, it is a symbol which is used to identify the EU. It is found on the reverse of the Greek €2 coin, outside the EU



**Europa riding Bull.** Justus Lipsius  
HQ EU Council of Ministers, Brussels

Parliamentary buildings, and in many other EU sites. Even the Scripture has a "woman riding a Beast", which does indeed involve Europe. In Revelation 17, however, the Beast is a representation of Europe, the harlot woman rider represents the Papal System. It is a picture of the situation after Armageddon, of Europe being rallied by the Papal Powers to resist the demands of the Lord Jesus for all the world to submit to Christ's rule from Jerusalem.

It is interesting, therefore, but perhaps not too significant, that we have a surge in women in power.

**Mrs Merkel** is coming to the end of a long time as Chancellor of Germany—she was elected in 2005. Germany controls much of what goes on in the EU

by reason of being the largest and most powerful member. Germany ranks No. 4 in world power ratings (UK 5<sup>th</sup>, France 6<sup>th</sup>).

Once again, she was voted as the most influential woman in power.

German chancellor Angela Merkel has topped Forbes' annual ranking of the world's most powerful women for 2019.

Every year, Forbes compiles a list of the most influential female leaders from across the globe, in sectors including politics, business and entertainment.

Merkel has received top billing on the list for the ninth year running, with the publication praising her “steely reserve, from standing up to Donald Trump to allowing more than a million Syrian refugees into Germany”.  
*Independent* 12-Dec-19

Her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Party is facing a crisis as its popularity ebbs away, and she has declared that she will not stand in Germany's 2021 elections.

[Ursula von der Leyen](#) now holds the most powerful role in the EU, taking over from Jean-Claude Juncker, as President of the European Commission. In 2013, she took over as Germany's Defence Minister from Thomas de Maizière, who had taken over the job on the resignation of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg in 2011. She is a Lutheran member of the Evangelical Church of Germany. The Lutherans in Germany are seeking reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church and now have far more in common than separates them.

[Christine Lagarde](#), a French politician and lawyer, the former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has now taken over as the President of the European Central Bank. With the prospect of an imminent Brexit, the strain will be felt on the euro and it will need great skills to prevent its collapse. She is a Roman Catholic and has had two meetings with the Pope while with the IMF.

[Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer](#), “AKK”. She was Merkel's protégé, and was seen as her natural successor. Following disastrous Party results in the 2018 German elections, she was elected as the CDU Party leader in place of Merkel. She has now stepped into the shoes of Ursula von der Leyen as German Defence Minister.

[Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer brings her faith into the public square.](#)

She also differs from Merkel in being Catholic. Indeed, AKK is known for a serious approach to her faith and is currently a member of the Central Committee of German Catholics, the country's leading lay association. She also brings her faith into her politics. *Catholic Herald* 22-Mar-18

Donald Tusk's successor as President of the European Council, another very powerful EU post, is [Charles Michel](#). He was Prime Minister of Belgium.

Von der Leyen and Michel hate and despise Britain, with the same vigour as Ann Widdecombe and Nigel Farage fight the EU, and they have already indicated that they are eager to see the back of the UK as soon as possible.

Following the Brexit referendum, von der Leyen lambasted the Brits for having “paralysed” and “consistently blocked” the Eurocrats’ ambition to construct a “United States of Europe,” while Michel added that Brexit creates the opportunity for expanding the powers of the EU, “the most beautiful dream of the twenty-first century.” *Daily Telegraph* 10-Jul-19

With Brexit, now close to happening, the UK will inevitably swing towards the US. The EU will proceed at speed to bind themselves closer together as the United States of Europe, with its own defence capabilities, so that it can develop its latter-day role as the Beast system of Rev. 16.

There is another German waiting in the wings for his recall to power. The former German Defence Minister, [Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg](#) who was forced to resign in 2011 over a plagiarism scandal in his thesis. He and his family moved to the US. He returned several times to voice his backing for Ms. Merkel's election campaigning. His speeches were very warmly received, he is widely respected in Germany as somebody who could bind a fractured Germany together, as Johnson has done in the UK. He has purchased a farmhouse in Lower Saxony and in September the family moved back to Germany. The German press have warmly welcomed their return. With “AKK” failing to live up to expectations, surely, he will be in the running for the 2021 elections. He is from a longstanding Catholic family—the House of Guttenberg goes back to 1158! Were it not for the abolition of nobility privileges in the 1919 Weimar Constitution, he would have the title of Baron. His grandfather was nearly executed by the Nazis for refusing to shoot Jews. His wife Stephanie, the great granddaughter of the first German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, is a Lutheran. He is close friends with the Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who is a very staunch Roman Catholic, making clear that his religion guides his politics, and who also looks to the forming of a United States of Europe.

### **Kurz Set to Retake Power in Austria**

He became Austria's youngest Chancellor when at the age of 31 his Austrian OVP People's Party swept to power in the Austrian 2017 elections. Hugely popular, he was unexpectedly swept from power in a no confidence vote, following a successful corruption charge brought against his coalition partner, the leader of the FPO Freedom Party.

A snap election was held in September 2019 resulting in a convincing win for Kurz and his OVP Party. After long negotiations, agreement was reached early in 2020 with the Green Party to form a coalition government. This will

cause problems for Brexit talks as they insist that green credentials are at the heart of any trade agreements. They have indicated that they will reject the 20-years-in-the-making Free Trade Agreement with South America—the Mercosur Agreement—which has been agreed in principle and awaits EU ratification, which was expected at the end of 2020.

Kurz, Macron and Guttenberg would rapidly transform the structure of the EU that we know today.

### **The Growing Rift with the US**

The EU have been bitterly opposed to President Donald Trump and his seeming eccentric ways. The European press frequently features unflattering comments and cartoons about him. His love of Israel and now his support for Israel on *the mountains of Israel*, do not endear him to Europe.

### **Nord Stream Rift**

Nord, or North Stream is the name given to two gas pipelines that run from Russia to Germany on the Baltic seabed. This means that, unlike land-based pipelines, there are no transit payments to countries that the pipelines traverse. It also ensures that transit countries can't disrupt supplies. Russia has had a long, ongoing dispute with Ukraine, through which a major pipeline runs to supply Europe. Nord Stream was, in part, designed to bypass Ukraine as a further step in Russia's strategy to weaken her.

Ukraine's loss of roughly \$3 billion gas-transit fees—about 3% of national GDP—would be a substantial blow to the Ukrainian economy. *Voice of America* 21-Sep-19

The original Nord Stream was completed in 2012, with a capacity of 55 BM<sup>3</sup>. Work on doubling the capacity by laying two more pipes commenced in May 2018, despite strong US opposition. They want Europe to use US gas and reduce their dependence on Russia. At the end of 2019, the US lawmakers brought sanctions against any company associated with the pipeline. These would hit the Swiss company that operated the pipe-laying ship very hard, as it has US offices which would be seized. With less than 100 miles/160 km to go to complete the pipework, the Swiss company pulled out. Russia's Gazprom has a suitable vessel, which is being recalled from the Far East, but will take time before it eventually arrives, putting back completion a few months. (*European Views* 31-Dec-19) Europe is calling for countersanctions against the US. This matter strongly divides most EU members and the US.

Ukraine too is opposed to the pipeline completion as it reduces the flow of gas through the country. Putin has a second prong to his strategy to weaken Ukraine, which is to open TurkStream, a southern gas bypass.

### **TurkStream**

This was originally planned as a twin pipeline going from southern Russia into Bulgaria and so onto Europe. Due to EU intransigence, Putin in 2014

switched the landfall destination to Turkey. Construction commenced in 2017 on the two pipelines, each with a capacity of nearly 16 BM<sup>3</sup>, after a hiatus when Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet in 2015. The work under the Black Sea was completed in 2018 and this year the land base in Turkey was completed, with a planned opening ceremony on 8 Jan. 2020. One pipe is for supplies to Turkey and the other is intended for onward distribution. Gazprom's preferred option is to link to the Balkan States of Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia and eventually, Austria. This would be subject to approval for existing pipelines to be connected with new pipelines to link them all together.

Bulgaria has completed a short, 11 km pipe which connected its network to TurkStream, but has only just commenced the 474km extension to the Serbian border. Under pressure from Russia, it has promised that this will be



completed by Dec. 2020. Serbia is planning to work on its section of pipeline in 2020. It is being laid alongside a new highway being built from the capital Belgrade to Republika Srpska, the Serbian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The link to Hungary is expected to be completed by the end of 2021.

## EU and NATO

This is another source of contention between the US and the EU. NATO is very much American dominated and was set up 70 years ago to be a means whereby the members would come to the aid of each other if threatened by the Soviet Union. That threat disappeared with the fall of the Soviet in the 1990s. Recently however, Russia's militarisation has raised alarm for those countries living alongside her.

Its members are expected to contribute at least 2% of GDP towards its costs. Few reach this level, the UK and France being exceptions. It is the US that has to pick up the bill. With Donald Trump's "America First" policy he fails to see why Europe shouldn't be paying their fair share of NATO's costs which are primarily for the good of Europe against Russia. Germany is one

of the biggest culprits, being well below the threshold 2%. Mrs Merkel has promised that they will increase their contributions but has set 2025 as the target date for a 1.5% level and the 2030s to achieve 2%. This lack of enthusiasm fits with the EU's general attitude to things American. Mr Trump is much keener too on imposing sanctions on Russia. For Europe living under the shadow of Russia, they would much rather try to reach out the hand of cooperation to Russia.

A YouGov poll found that most Germans polled thought that the European NATO members should not depend upon American help to protect themselves from attack. Also, they should cooperate more with Russia. A majority also agreed that the US should pull all or most of its troops out of Europe. *Deutsche Welle* 03-Dec-19

### **Macron: “NATO ‘Brain Dead’”**

The divisions between the EU and the US became apparent at the NATO meeting in the UK in early December. President Macron of France had set the tone prior to the meeting by declaring that NATO was “brain dead”!

The NATO organisation was 70-years old in April 2019. Europe thinks that its purpose has gone. As far as President Macron is concerned he would rather invest in a European army. Many EU members share this opinion.

Macron said he wants “more European defense to get a less unbalanced NATO.” *Associated Press* 03-Dec-19

The December meeting did not go well. The official video of the meetings also included video of private talks afterwards, when members were unaware that what they were saying was being recorded. A recording of the Canadian PM Trudeau, President Macron and a group of European ministers appearing to mock Mr Trump, went viral. Mr Trump decided to leave the meeting early without holding the expected press conference, where the press had anticipated an opportunity to draw out Mr Trump on some of the key issues NATO was facing.

### **Pressing Ahead with its Own Military**

The choice of Ms Von der Leyen as President of the EU Commissioners is a boost for Europe's plans for its army. She speaks fluent French and as the Defence Minister worked with President Marcon to get the largest French-German defence project off the ground—a new European fighter jet. This was achieved against great opposition. *Spiegel* 06-Jul-19 She passionately believes in building a United States of Europe as quickly as possible. When presenting her case as a candidate for the role of the EU Commissioner to the European Parliament on July 16 she explained:

“And that is why there is only one option for me: **to unite and strengthen Europe.**”

“Anyone that is with me in wanting to see **Europe grow stronger and to flourish and blossom can count on me as a fervent supporter.** However, anyone that wants to weaken or divide Europe or rob it of its values will find in me a **bitter opponent.**”

“The world is calling for **more Europe. The world needs more Europe.**

“I believe Europe should have a **stronger** and more **united voice** in the world—and it needs to act fast. That is why we must have the courage to take foreign policy decisions by **qualified majority. And to stand united behind them.**

“The cornerstone of our collective defence will always be NATO. We will stay transatlantic and **we have to become more European.** This is why we **created the European Defence Union.** Our work for **our European Union of security and defence is embedded in comprehensive security.** Stabilisation always comes with diplomacy, reconciliation and reconstruction.” *Speech 16-Jul-19 Europa.eu*

She ended her speech with the cry “**vive l'Europe, long live Europe!**”

Qualified majority voting would ensure that a single member state or small group of states could not block decisions on the world stage.

An examination of von der Leyen's main policy proposals reveals that she is calling for a massive expansion of top-down powers of the European Commission. **Her proposals would substantially increase the role of Brussels in virtually all aspects of economic and social life in Europe—all at the expense of national sovereignty.** *Gatestone Inst.* 23-Jul-19

Her stance is echoed by the new High Representative of the European Union, as the EU Foreign Minister is styled. Josep Borrell is a Spanish politician, who took over from Federica Mogherini in December 2019.

“The EU has to learn to use **the language of power.**”

“We should reinforce the EU’s international role and further our military capacity to act,” the 72-year-old Spanish socialist added. “We should **pool our national sovereignties** together to multiply the power of individual member states,” Mr Borrell said. “I am convinced that if we don’t **act together** Europe will become irrelevant.”

Mr Borrell called for numbers of EU troops that could be deployed to be raised to at least 55,000 to 60,000. He said the 60,000 target was first set in 1999 by EU leaders after the Balkan war. *Daily Telegraph* 08-Oct-19

### **EU Launches 13 New Defence Cooperation Projects**

The EU’s defence ministers have approved the third wave of 13 new proposals under the bloc’s Permanent Structured Cooperation—the PESCO framework – which raised the European Union’s number of joint military projects to 47.

The PESCO framework was adopted in 2017, following a decision of the EU Council. **It allows EU states to jointly develop defence capabilities and enhance the readiness of their armed forces.**

Five of the new wave of projects focus on training, covering areas such as cyberwarfare, and medical training as well as defence drills involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, said after a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in Defence Formation that the focus now turns to implementing and “making sure that these projects deliver on their purpose”.

The European Union's 2021-2027 budget **has €20 billion** earmarked for defence, which includes **€13 billion for the European Defence Fund.** *New Europe* w/c 17-Nov-19

### **Is a European Army Being Created?**

Will Podmore, writing in *BriefingsForBrexit* 30-Nov-19, puts forth his case:

What's the evidence? Are the EU doing anything that looks like creating a European army? Well, yes. **They now have an EU Military Staff and an EU Military Committee, both part of the 'Command Structure' of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. They have created the EU Peace Fund, a military intervention fund of 10.5 billion euros.**

The EU now has its Military Planning and Conduct Capability, its Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, its Defence Intelligence Organisation, its Satellite Centre (its Galileo and Copernicus programmes are both part of its Global Strategy), its European Security and Defence College, its Military Erasmus, to promote a 'European strategic culture', its Institute for Security Studies, its European Political Strategy Centre, its European Air Transport and its European Tactical Airlift Centre.

The EU is taking more and more control over member states' armed forces, defence spending and foreign and defence policy. In April 2016, at the height of the referendum campaign, newspapers published German government documents which revealed that the EU was about to announce a new military strategy. The EU and the pro-EU campaign furiously deny it.

**Just five days after the referendum, the EU announced its new Global Strategy.** Many of these EU structures are new since the referendum. In November 2016 the EU released its Security and Defence Implementation Plan. Only a few EU insiders had seen it, yet that same day it went straight to the EU Council meeting for approval.

Without Britain's veto, France and Germany moved fast. In January 2017, the EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini declared: “Security a

priority. We have hard and soft power. **Done more on defence in the last seven months than in decades.**”

In November last year the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly for a **European Defence Fund**. It committed to spending 13 billion euros for researching and developing weapons and military technology. The government put us into the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence. Just as the Treasury controls the Ministry of Defence’s work, this would control the Ministry of Defence and all the EU defence ministries.

In his new book, the European Parliament’s Brexit Coordinator Guy Verhofstadt writes, **“We must move toward a single European Defense Union, with European armed forces composed of soldiers wearing the same uniform. ... We must turn Eurocorps into a full-scale European army** comprising both land troops and air and naval capabilities. In addition to a rapid response team, the conventional army units will include special forces (for chemical warfare, for example), a logistics corps, and medical capability. All twenty-eight member states **should run a single joint budget for these** and for personnel, military equipment, research, and development. ... this will allow us to set up a European army capable of conducting, simultaneously, a single large military operation and three smaller interventions on land, at sea, or in the air. **The soldiers of the European army will wear the same uniform and the same EU insignia.**

“The EU high representative for foreign affairs must cooperate closely with the European Defense Union and should preferably occupy the same building as the European General Staff. European Defense policy must however fit seamlessly into the union’s general security concept and strategic vision for foreign affairs. ... This will require an amendment to the European Treaty. Among other things we will have to abolish the unanimity rule so that in the future the European Council can make its decisions with **a qualified majority.**”

The European Defense Union “will be financed from general EU resources, supplemented, if necessary, by compulsory contributions from the member states.”

With a new team raring to go, and with the UK’s exit imminent, we must expect to see rapid progress in their drive to a United States of Europe. It will be interesting to see what economic effect Brexit has on the euro. The financial strain will be used to bind them together, maybe a smaller more tightly knit group. Europe will do her best to avoid anyone else following Britain’s example, but may have to compromise on a two-tier Europe.

## Chapter 8

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# THE FALSE PROPHET—THE PAPACY IN ACTION

*As we saw in Ch.5, one of the surprising things is to see the frog-like spirits out of the mouth of the False Prophet. Rev. 16:13. One would not expect a system claiming to be a religious organisation, to be championing human rights. We are not covering the Scriptural grounds for pointing to the Papacy as this new symbol for the latter-days of a False Prophet. We refer readers to Ch. 3 of Milestones 2016 for the evidence. Suffice it to say that this new symbol appears just at a time when the power of the Papacy had been broken in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It lost all her Papal lands, until the restoration of the Vatican City under the terms of the Lateran Treaty, just 90 years ago. A true prophet teaches God's Word faithfully, Scripture abounds with examples of false prophets preaching falsehood. It started with Nimrod, whose corruption of the Truth was absorbed into Babylon, re-emerging in the Man of Sin of 2The. 2:3, who went out from the true ecclesias to form the Papal system. The Popes, in combination with the Emperors, bore rule over Europe for many centuries, persecuting the saints.*

### Calling Up the Jesuit Troops

The Jesuit Order was established in 1534, for the purpose of stopping the growth of the Protestant movement. Reforms by people like Martin Luther, greatly affected the Roman Church membership. Rome challenged with a Counter-revolution, masterminded by the Jesuits. Their success can be seen in that today, there is much more that unites them, than separates them. The Lutherans in Germany especially, think that the time to return to the embrace of the Mother Church has finally come. The appointment of the first Jesuit Pope in 2013, marked a new direction for the Church, to again stem a haemorrhaging membership, and to seek to widen its appeal to other groups.

The appointment of Jesuits to powerful positions at the Vatican represents a significant shift in the Catholic Church. Before Jorge Bergoglio was elected pope in 2013, not a single Jesuit was serving in a leadership position at the Vatican. Now Pope Francis has appointed three of his Jesuit brothers to some of the Vatican's highest posts: Spanish Jesuit Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves heads the Secretariat for the Economy; Canadian Jesuit Michael Czerny heads a Vatican office that advocates for global migrants and refugees; Italian Jesuit Luis Ladaria heads the powerful Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Some Catholics feel uneasy about Jesuits holding senior positions, as they are perceived to **prioritize evangelization over doctrinal orthodoxy**.  
*The Trumpet 29-Nov-19*

That is just the point! By playing down the importance of strictly enforcing doctrines to be believed, it places the emphasis on broadening the appeal.

## Francis' Curial Reform Fundamentally Reimagines Vatican's Role

Francis wants to broaden the appeal of the Roman Church to regain its position as *the Universal Church*. Back in 2013 he set a panel of Cardinals to advise him on reforms in the Roman Curia—the Vatican government. The curia consists of many departments, like any standard government. Many of these had become very powerful and Francis wanted that power centralised and under his control. They have at long last set out the changes in a document which is being actively discussed. One of the main thrusts is that doctrine no longer lies at the heart of the Roman Catholic teachings; the emphasis has now shifted to evangelising—preaching. This is bound up in the document's title *Praedicate Evangelium*—Preaching the Gospel.

*Praedicate Evangelium* offers some subtle but significant changes in its account of the work of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. Where the earlier constitution charged the doctrinal congregation to “**promote and safeguard the doctrine on faith and morals in the whole Catholic world**”, the new constitution situates this task within the **broader work of supporting the pope and bishops in preaching the Gospel**.  
*Ncronline.org* 05-Jun-19

The various departments of the Curia, which were formerly called Congregations, are now known as Dicasteries. It is significant that *Praedicate Evangelium* discusses the Dicastery for Evangelisation before the Dicastery for Doctrine. Francis is hoping that by embracing the spirit of evangelism, he can broaden the appeal and win back the lost sheep. Important changes seem to be afoot. Its publication has been delayed several times as the panel tries to incorporate the suggestions received. The Dec. 2019 date has been postponed to Feb. 2020.

## Reaching Out to Evangelical Charismatic Movements

The Protestant charismatic movement believes that the Holy Spirit gifts are available today and is a very popular movement. There are considerable numbers of Roman Catholic Charismatics too. Francis has strengthened this movement and asked it to produce a service which would widen its appeal to Protestant charismatics. Under the headline of:

### Is Francis our First Charismatic Pope?

Francis may not pray in tongues, but no pope has ever identified as closely with the **Catholic Charismatic Renewal**, nor been so keen to move it **front** and **center** of the church.

Francis' “renewal of the renewal” is also reflected in the new body itself, *Charis*. Back in 2015 Francis asked the two existing charismatic liaison organizations recognized by Rome, *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services* and the more recently established *Catholic Fraternity*, to work with the new Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life to create a new, single “service of communion” to the renewal worldwide. In his address

on June 8, Francis said *Charis* serves all the charismatic groups that the Spirit “has raised up in the world,” not “one office to serve some and another office to serve others” but “one office for all”.

*Charis*’s role will be to help forge communion among the **world’s hugely disparate charismatic groups**, some of which have fallen prey to the evangelical vice of authoritarian, self-enriching leaders. In his address Francis told charismatic leaders to guard against “the ambition to stand out, to lead, to make money”, warning that “corruption enters that way”. The purpose of the renewal was “service, always service”: serving the Spirit, each other and the poor. “Service is not about filling our pockets—the devil enters through the pockets”, he said, but “about giving, giving, giving of oneself”.

**Christian unity** is also key: Francis sees the charismatic renewal as the **church’s bridge** with the fast-growing **Pentecostal world**, the place where the Spirit is forging a “reconciled diversity” out of churches separated by history. *America, the Jesuit Review* 14-Jun-19

### Reaching out to the Russian Orthodox Church

Pope Francis met with Patriarch Kirill in Cuba in 2016 and they warmly embraced each other. This meeting was a big step towards reconciliation between the two Churches who have been separated for a millennium. However, the tensions are still there and no visit of the Pope to Russia is yet planned. Since that meeting, Francis has carefully sided with Russia over the matter of Constantinople’s recognition of the Acephalous Church in Ukraine. He very much wants to visit Russia and start the process of Europe breathing with both her lungs.

It is clear from Scripture that they will see the benefits of cooperating together in order to come against Israel in the latter-days. When Nebuchadnezzar’s Image stands finally upon its iron-clay feet there will be full cooperation between them. It will be the False Prophet of Rome who, as the eyes and mouth of the Babylonian head, will direct its steps against God’s people of Israel. In the language of Revelation 16, the *Dragon*, the *Beast* and the *False Prophet* work together to *gather them to the battle* [or war] *of that great day of God Almighty*.

### Putin Visits the Pope—Again

Mr Putin held his 5th meeting with a Pope at the Vatican and his 3rd with Francis, on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Mr Putin is an astute man; he recognises what influence the Pope wields. If the schism between the Churches could be healed, what a powerful spiritual force this would represent! Pope Francis is also astute, he sees Church and State working hand-in-hand in Russia and longs for a similar situation in Europe. It may

#### Putin’s Vatican visits

2000 Jn Paul II

2007 Benedict XVI

2013 Francis

2015 Francis

2019 Francis

not be long in coming, as we see the latter-day forming of the European Beast system of Revelation 16 and 17.

Putin can see the value of there being strong cooperation between the Roman and the Russian Churches. Pope Francis finds a champion in Putin who, unlike the West, is prepared to use his military might to defend Christians facing persecution.

There is frequent interchange of clerical visitors between Rome and Moscow, even if there is not yet a top-level meeting. Step by little step they are searching for unity.

The fifth study visit to Russia of young Catholic priests took place from 23 August to 1 September upon the invitation of the Moscow Patriarchate. The delegation comprised twelve Catholic priests from different countries studying at Roman Pontifical Universities. The visit took place in Moscow, Novgorod and Saint Petersburg, and included a number of meetings with representatives of the Russian Church, as well as attendance at liturgies and visits to departments of the Holy Synod, educational institutes, monasteries, Orthodox holy sites and monuments of the Russian cultural heritage.

The initiative, which aims at promoting mutual understanding between the Churches, was launched in 2015 by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate within the ambit of cultural projects between the Holy See and the Russian Orthodox Church. A similar delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate is invited yearly by the Pontifical Council for a study visit to Rome. *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* 02-Sep-19

### **The Pope Visits Two Eastern Orthodox Countries**

During May, the Pope visited two EU countries which were formerly part of the Soviet orientated Eastern Bloc, Bulgaria and Romania, where the Roman Catholic Church has a very small minority. The majority of Christians belong to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, which unlike the Vatican don't have a central authority, but is divided into groups of Churches who run themselves but look to the Patriarch of Constantinople as "first among equals". Before the 1054 Schism they were in communion with Rome. The Bulgaria trip in early May was cordial, but there was a reluctance to join together in any of the acts of worship. The end of May visit to Romania was more positive; the Pope seemed to be well received by the Patriarch Daniel and held some joint services. Pope John Paul II had visited 20 years earlier, becoming the first Pope since the Schism to visit a predominately Orthodox country.

### **Reaching out to the Greek Orthodox**

For many years the Roman Church and the Greek Orthodox have been fairly closely aligned, with joint meetings at least twice a year on the occasion of

their celebration of the Feasts of “St Peter and St Paul”, and “St Andrew”. On the occasion of the Greek delegation to Rome in June, the Pope surprised the leader, Metropolitan Job, when he led him to the Pope’s private chapel. He handed over a box containing bits of bone—relics allegedly of “St Peter”. These had been discovered during excavations that go back to the 1940s and 50s. In the 60s they were promoted as the remains of Peter. There is a collection of hundreds of bone pieces. The box that was sent back to Constantinople contained nine bones.



Metropolitan Job commented: “This time, for the first time in history, the relics of St. Peter are being given and sent out of Rome to the Church of Constantinople. **This is a giant step towards a more concrete unity.**” *Catholic World News* 05-Jul-19

The gift was enthusiastically received by Patriarch Bartholomew, who declared:

“Pope Francis made this grand, fraternal, historical gesture of giving us fragments of the relic of Saint Peter, the founder of the Church of Rome, that I venerated just a moment ago and I was deeply moved. It was a brave and daring decision taken by Pope Francis to the Church of Constantinople, for which we express our gratitude to him”. *Romfea.news* 01-Ju-19

In mid-September, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch visited Pope Francis at the Vatican and had lunch together.

### **Pope Francis Reaches Out to the Moslems**

In early February, Pope Francis undertook a very special journey to the United Arab Emirates, to attend an interfaith conference on “Human Fraternity”. This was the first time a Pope had visited the Arabian Peninsula, an area which is 76% Moslem and only 13% Christian. There are roughly 1 million Roman Catholics living here, mainly



migrant workers from the Philippines and India. He was warmly welcomed by the Grand Imam of al-Azhar University of Cairo, Ahmed al-Tayeb, who is one of the highest Sunni authorities. His University is one of the most revered teaching centres of the Sunni world. The conference was followed the next day by a Mass for the Pope's followers, attended by an estimated 130,000 people!

"I believe that this is a very positive sign for the relationship between Islam and Christianity in the region", Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak, head of the Coptic Catholic Church, commented. In a talk with Aid to the Church in Need on Monday in Abu Dhabi, he said, "We Christians in Egypt may harbour renewed hope. The fruits will not become apparent immediately, but the message of tolerance and fraternity has been sown." *Aid to the Church in Need* 06-Feb-19

The conference was the first of a number that have been held and is due to end with a special invitation by the Pope to a closing conference in Rome.

### **"Reinventing the Global Educational Alliance"**

Pope Francis' invitation is to the political, cultural, and religious leaders to a meeting at the Vatican in 2020, to agree on "A Global Compact on Education" to better prepare the young for economic, environmental and social challenges.

I wish to endorse a global event, to take place on 14 May 2020 on the theme Reinventing the Global Compact on Education. This meeting will rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education, including patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding. Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity. *Global Compact on Education website* 12-Sep-19 Accessed 04-Oct-19



These are *frog-like spirit* words indeed. He has talked of Europe being an old person, he is trying to lead the way back through young people, hence the need to motivate those responsible for the training of the young.

### **Pope Francis Supports the Palestinian Christians**

Yet more relics have departed from the Vatican in an effort to show support. Christmas came early to the Franciscans in Jerusalem, tasked with the

“Custody of the Holy Land”. The manger, which the Lord Jesus is supposed to have occupied had been donated to Rome by the Patriarch of Jerusalem around AD 645. It is now very fragile and a small, thumb-sized part of it (arrowed), has been mounted in the centre of a costly array and was handed over by the Apostolic Nuncio of Israel and Cyprus, Leopoldo Girelli. After several ceremonies it was transferred to Bethlehem to the Franciscan Church of St Catherine, next to the Basilica of the Nativity. The Nuncio declared:

“Before us we have a precious fragment: caressed by the soft hands of Mary, by the rough hands of Joseph and which the tiny hands of the divine baby brushed against,” the Nuncio recalled, “may the return to Bethlehem of this piece of holy wood arouse in us the profound desire to be bearers of God. Now it is our hearts that are a manger: the Holy Crib of God made man.” *Custodia.org* 29-Nov-19



### **The Church is Still Decades Away from Full Recognition of Israel**

With this flurry of activity to reach out to other religions, where does this leave the Vatican’s attitude to Israel? With another Papal visit to “the Holy Land” scheduled for 2020, this Jewish magazine article looked at matters from Israel’s viewpoint.

The Vatican attaches great weight to the churches of the Middle East, all of which have been more or less hostile to the Jewish state since its inception. This hostility has endured, despite the indisputable fact that Israel has treated its Christian minorities incomparably better than have any Muslim countries in the region.

In their own implacable resistance to overtures from Israel, leading Palestinian Christians in particular have tended to be, as it were, more Islamic than the caliph. Inevitably, their influence has been growing in global Catholicism as it has elsewhere in Christendom. Similarly, the decision by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 to recognize “Palestine” as a “non-member observer-state” has also had an impact at the Vatican. The Holy See, which enjoys the same “observer-state” status at the UN, followed the crowd.

This, indeed, became an issue when Pope Francis visited the Holy Land in 2014. Unlike John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who had visited Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank in that order, Francis made a point of entering Israel only after the West Bank, where he paid a visit to Mahmoud Abbas, “the President of the State of Palestine,” before basing himself in the Papal Nuncio’s residence in eastern Jerusalem. He also insisted on meeting

Prime Minister Netanyahu in the Notre Dame complex, a Vatican sovereign territory located on the old dividing line between Israeli and Arab Jerusalem.

Replacement theology has yet to be replaced. Which means that the Church is still decades, perhaps generations, away from embracing the full implications of its recognition of Israel. For that embrace to become a doctrinal reality would require not only a miracle, it would also require a leap of faith. *Mosaic Magazine* 16-Sep-19

### The Goal of a Universal Church

As we have seen, Francis has shifted the emphasis from doctrine to evangelisation to make the Church appeal to all. He is toning down the message in order to reach out to other churches and beliefs. Despite the disquiet this is causing, he is pressing onwards, devolving power from the centre to the regions, empowering different countries to focus on local needs.

Vatican II was, according to Karl Rahner, the beginning of the “**world church**.” Elected bishop of Rome half a century after Vatican II, Francis is the first pope who is not from the Euro-Mediterranean area, and he can therefore be understood as **the first pope** of Rahner’s “**world church**”: **a truly global, non-Eurocentric church**. But theological globalization and institutional globalization are two different things, and they have been surprisingly disconnected from each other in the recent history of the church. The institutional shock of a Latin American Jesuit being elected as pope has been slower to influence theology than one might have expected in 2013.

In his June 21 speech to the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy in Naples, Francis expressed his vision for “a theology of welcoming and dialogue,” an “interdisciplinary theology” that takes place in an environment of freedom and **in relationship with the whole people of God—with peoples (plural) and cultures all over the world**. He did not mention or quote from the documents of Vatican II; he did not need to. It was clear to anyone who heard the speech that this pope’s vision is profoundly conciliar. It clearly laid out Francis’s theological agenda.

**A new freedom for Catholic theology is one of the underappreciated contributions of this pontificate.** Francis has offered theologians a new opportunity to interpret the ecclesial and theological event through which his own pontificate must be understood and evaluated—that is, the Second Vatican Council.

At a four-day conference held in June at the Berg Moriah Conference Center near Koblenz, Germany, a large group of theologians and church historians inaugurated an international initiative aimed at exploring the connection between Vatican II and **this pontificate’s shift toward a global Catholicity**. *Commonweal* 15-Aug-19

## Chapter 9

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# RUSSIA'S EXPANDING MIDDLE EAST FOOTPRINT

*In the events of the past year, we can see the growing divisions between Gog and his companions of Ezekiel 38 and those opposed to the Gogian invasion. This chapter looks at the increasing grip that Russia has in the Middle East.*

## Russia's Longer-term Strategy

Putin and many of his compatriots mourn the loss of the former Soviet Empire, when, in 1991, Communism collapsed. As Putin declared in 2005:

Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a **major geopolitical disaster** of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our **co-citizens** and **compatriots** found themselves **outside Russian territory**. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself. *Kremlin.ru* 25-Apr-05

On the other hand, many Communist countries were glad to be free of Soviet control and have the opportunity to run their own affairs. Twenty years ago, on 31 December 1999, President Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned. Putin was Prime Minister at the time and became acting President until elections could be held, which Putin won. He has remained President of Russia apart from a four-year spell from 2008-2012, when he swapped roles with PM Medvedev, as the Russian constitution barred him from serving more than two terms. During this time the constitution was amended to allow a President to stand for two, six-year terms. Putin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Presidential term ran from 2012-2018, when he was re-elected for a 4<sup>th</sup> term to run until 2024.

His aim is to rebuild Russia to its former glory. In the book *Beyond Crimea. The New Russian Empire* Agnia Grigas<sup>†</sup> sets out her explanation of how Putin is achieving this:

Putin has consistently used ethnic Russians and Russian speakers residing abroad to extend its influence and expand its borders at opportune domestic and international moments with the aim of reimperialization of the former Soviet space. Reimperialization is the end of Moscow's policies. The Russian diaspora—reconstructed politically as compatriots—has been the means.

She lists how they were successfully used to achieve territorial gains in eastern Ukraine, Crimea. Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia and Transnistria in Moldova. She then lists other countries which are currently being

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<sup>†</sup> Born in Soviet Lithuanian, emigrated to US when 10. Attended Columbia and Oxford Universities.

influenced by Putin—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Kazakhstan and other states in Russia's near abroad.

She then sets out the seven steps that increasingly are being consistently used to achieve reimperialization. They are aimed at the ethnic Russians living in a country. The Russkiy Mir (Russian World) Foundation and the Russkiy Dom (Russia House) networks are used to influence the Russian speakers that they need Russia's help to defend their cultural heritage.

- 1) **soft power** [building long-term relationships based on culture, political values and foreign policies]
- 2) **humanitarian policies** [human rights protection, cultural and scientific cooperation]
- 3) **compatriot policies** [ethnic, cultural, linguistic, political, spiritual matters]
- 4) **passportization** [offering Russian passports to ethnic Russians, who often have not been granted a passport by the country they now reside in]
- 5) **information warfare** [an aggressive use of Russian orientated propaganda to promote integration with Russia and counter information from resident country. This is a huge "industry" in Russia, used also against the West to promote Russia's aims]
- 6) **protection** [offering Russian military intervention—the military exists to defend the "rights and interests of citizens of Russia and people linked with it ethically and culturally abroad"] leads to the final step
- 7) **informal control** or **formal annexation** of the territories in which the [Russian speaking] compatriots reside.

This fits well to the "Gerasimov Doctrine" set out in 2013 by General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation. He proposed that modern warfare involved ways of gaining control or subverting states without resorting to conventional military means.

### **Crimea—a Forward Base**

Having used these seven steps to annex Crimea, Russia continues to turn it into a military fortress, a stepping stone for its Middle East adventures. This *Defense One* 12-Jun-19 article captures the great changes taking place.

Russia has added troops, aircraft, and weapons to Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in what amounts to a "significant" buildup of forces over the past 18 months, according to US intelligence officials, observers, and new satellite photos that reveal the locations of new S-400 air defense systems and improvements to Soviet-era bases.

Russia was engineering “a deliberate and systematic buildup of their forces on the peninsula.”

Russia is interested in being able to exercise more control over the Black Sea, which then affords them the ability to project power beyond their immediate environment.

Since 2014, Russia has added an airborne battalion to the naval infantry brigade that has guarded Crimea since the 1990s, doubling the total force there to an estimated 30,000 troops. Moscow plans to add another 13,000 within four years, said the first US intelligence official.

The Russian military now has 81 airplanes and helicopters in Crimea. “The combat radius covers all Ukraine and beyond the Black Sea. It significantly increases their strike options, **potentially extending to the Middle East**,” the official said.

Russia’s Black Sea Fleet recently added ten warships that can launch the Kalibr cruise missile: six diesel-electric Kilo-class attack submarines and four surface ships, the official said. The current versions of the Kalibr can hit targets up to 1,500 miles away; and Russia claims to be working on a new variant with a range of 2,800 miles.

The peninsula is “bristling with missiles like a hedgehog.”

The Black Sea Fleet modernization is intended to have effects far beyond Crimea. “**This is their launching pad into the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean.**”

Last year the road bridge link to mainland Russia was opened. This year the railway line that runs alongside was completed and on 23 December, Putin took the controls of the first train to cross into Crimea. At the moment diesel engines operate, but it is hoped the electrification will be completed by June 2020, enabling electrified passenger and freight services to operate.



**Crimean Bridge for road and rail**



**Putin driving first train**

## **Belarus**

This former Soviet State has been in Putin’s sights for a considerable time. It is a landlocked country, bordering Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

Russia has other borders with Latvia and Ukraine, but not Poland or Lithuania. Close cooperation between Belarus and Russia would be a stepping stone to access these former neighbours. Russia has been following

its 7-point plan here, as more than 70% of the Belarusian's speak Russian. It has yielded results. To some extent Belarus has never really left Russia, making reimperialization that much easier. *Stratfor* 16-Sep-19 reported that they were planning large-scale economic integration.

Belarus and Russia are reportedly planning a large-scale economic integration program that includes a single tax code, consolidated customs service and a unified industry regulator for key sectors like energy, *Kommersant* reported Sept. 16, citing a preliminary agreement between both countries.



### Armenia

This is another example of a successful pathway to reimperialization. Armenia is a country that has been an ally of Russia and so the task is relatively easier. Like Belarus, Armenia is an active member of the Eurasian Economic Union—Russia's attempt to copy the EU model.



### Russia Plans to Invest \$500 Million in its Naval Base in Syria

Putin is consolidating his gains in Syria. Having secured long-term leases from President Assad in recognition of Russia's rescue of his tottering regime, Putin is determined to make the most of the Syrian facilities. The Tartus Port is a significant asset for his naval power. It has been greatly expanded so that it can accommodate its Mediterranean fleet, and further expansion is being planned. Full facilities are being installed here to avoid vessels having to return to their home base, when operating in the Mediterranean.

Shortly a maintenance facility that can manufacture parts will be completed. At the moment everything has to be flown in. As well as further modernisation of the port, \$500m will be spent to build a new port and facilities according to a *Reuters* 17-Dec-19 report. In addition, a grain storage and handling facility is to be built as Russia begins to be Syria's main wheat source. 100,000 tons of wheat for humanitarian aid has already been shipped to Syria this year from Crimea.

A further project being planned is to build a railway across Syria and Iraq that will link Syria's Mediterranean coast with the Persian Gulf. *Associated Press* 17-Dec-19

### **Russia to Expand Hmeimim Airbase in Syria**

A new runway is being planned, allowing the base to increase the number of aircraft able to use its facilities. Like Tartus Port, this airbase has been given to Russia on a 49-year renewable lease. More buildings are being installed to protect the Russian aircraft from drone attacks and the blistering heat, which has sometimes prevented engines from starting when parked outside.

A key to understanding what Russia is doing in the Eastern Mediterranean region is to recognize that it wants to have the power to influence the energy-related decisions of Saudi Arabia and other important producing states. Russia often favors instability precisely because it contributes to upward pressure on energy prices.

Russia also has a major interest in arms sales.

When Russia helped save the Assad regime, it ensured the success of Iran's pro-Assad investment and effectively aligned itself with the Shi'ite axis of the Iranian regime, the Syrian regime and Hezbollah. This gives it leverage both with the axis and with the opponents of that axis: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni-run states, as well as Israel. *Jerusalem Post* 28-Sep-19

### **Russia Seeking to Establish Third Base in Syria**

Talks are being held between Moscow and Damascus over the lease of the Qamishli Airport in north-eastern Syria, to house missile defence systems.

"If Moscow establishes a presence there, it will allow neither the Americans nor the Turks to enter the city," it said.

The Qamishli airfield is located only 500km from the Hmeimim base. However, experts believe that it would be used to control American missiles stationed in the Middle East. *Aawsat.com* 12-Nov-19

### **Swallowing Turkey**

Russia has traditionally desired to control two cities in the Middle East—Constantinople (Istanbul) and Jerusalem. Russian access to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea is dependent on Turkey's cooperation to allow transit through the Dardanelles. As Turkey occupies the high ground on either side, she can control transits in time of conflict. Hence Russia's steps to bring Turkey on board as an expendable friend. When the time is ripe, Turkey will be swallowed up by Russia and Constantinople wrested from Moslem control and returned to Orthodox hands. Putin's courtship of Erdoğan is one-in-the-eye to America. Turkey as we saw, is an established member of NATO, but, under Russian influence, is proving a source of

trouble to that organisation. She has spurned American missile shields in favour of Russian. The American air base in Incirlik is under threat of closure (*Reuters* 16-Dec-19) following President Trump's threat of sanctions on Turkey for buying Russian equipment. The US houses nuclear weapons here, and Turkey may not allow their evacuation. America has run down its stocks in Turkey, but still about 50 remain. Although not heavy, nuclear material requires careful handling and would need Turkey's cooperation to allow suitable transportation. The political ramifications would be that Turkey would perceive such a run-down as a threat to her position in NATO and push her closer to Russia. It could also trigger other European countries that host nuclear weapons to seek their removal, as US nuclear weapons stocks are not popular in hosting countries. It is a situation that Putin revels in, pitting one country against another, to Russia's advantage.

We looked in Ch. 7 at the growing energy ties between Russia and Turkey through the TurkStream gas pipeline. Step-by-step Putin is bringing Turkey into a state of dependence upon Russia. We know that, in the language of Revelation 16, *the River Euphrates*, which was greatly dried up in World War I, has not yet completely dried up. This will happen when Russia takes control of Turkey in preparation of her onslaught of the other city that Russia desires to control—Jerusalem, as we shall consider in a later section.

### **Russia's Efforts to gain Power in Libya**

Since the overthrow and death of Col. Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been wracked with civil war. Our interest lies in the fact that Libya is one of the countries listed as a companion of Gog in Ezekiel 38:5. It first appears as Phut, one of Ham's four sons in Genesis 10:6—Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. They were associated with war, listed in Ezekiel 27:10 as part of Tyre's *army*; and in Jeremiah 46:9 as *handling the shield*. Nahum 3:9 mentions them as *helpers* [normally used in a military context] to the inhabitants of No-Amon, thought to be ancient Thebes in Egypt. Ezekiel 38 necessitates that they come under Gog's dominion at the time of the invasion of Israel, equipped with *shield and helmet*.

The eastern part of Libya is ruled by the Libyan National Army (LNA) under General Khalifa Haftar, a friend of Russia, having received military training in the Soviet Union in the 1970s. His forces have gradually enlarged the area they control and at the end of the year, the majority of Libya seems to be under his control. His forces have been trying to take the capital, Tripoli, for the past eight months. This is under the control of the EU and UN backed Government of National Accord (GNA), under the direction of PM Fayez al-Sarraj. Haftar has air superiority and backing from private Russian forces supplied by Wagner, a private Russian company used by Putin to wage many conflicts, without openly using Russian state troops. A *Daily Telegraph* 14-Dec-19 report spoke of the battle entering its "final phase". Egypt supports Col Haftar and has given military support to his forces.

There is an interesting development—Turkish intervention, which pitches Turkey and Russia on opposing sides. Turkey has signed an agreement with PM al-Sarraj to supply arms. (*Deutsche Welle* 29-Nov-19) A *Daily Telegraph* 27-Dec-19 report spoke of Turkey sending Turkish troops to fight in Libya as early as January 2020, but the Libyan Parliament voted this down.

In addition, Turkey has signed a maritime agreement which extends Turkey's and Libya's area of maritime control, so that the areas meet. This impinges upon Greek and Cypriot maritime areas! If enforced it would prevent the building of the gas pipeline from Egypt-Israel-Cyprus-Greece. It has aroused the ire of the countries affected, as well as the EU. (*Deutsche Welle* 29-Nov-19)



In addition to wanting to secure sources of energy, Turkey wants to make it clear that the Eastern Mediterranean is a region where Turkish interests have to be considered. This places it at odds with almost every power in the region. For Moscow, the planned Turkish intervention in Libya runs counter to longstanding Russian interests. Although, it's possible that Turkey and Russia have made a deal for the joint administration of Libya. Turkish claims in the Eastern Mediterranean also run counter to Israeli drilling projects off the coast of Cyprus. Israel has protested vigorously, in concert with Greece. Egypt, a backer of Haftar's Libyan National Army, is also hostile to the Turkish move and has good relations with Israel and Greece and interests in protecting its resource-rich continental shelf. **Thus, it appears that two blocs are emerging in the Mediterranean: Turkey and the Libyan GNA on one side, and Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece and the Libyan LNA on the other.** *GeoPoliticalFutures* 31-Dec-19

### **An Unprecedented Divide in the Region**

The pipeline that Israel has signed up with Cyprus and Greece to build to take gas to Europe, cuts Turkey out of any Mediterranean gas distribution.

Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, understands that if the diplomatic scuffle over Israel and Greece ends with Turkey's fully blocked access to the gas marathon, it will be a blow to Moscow. **There is now a decisive and an unprecedented divide in the region, with Russia and Turkey on one side and the US, Israel, Greece and Cyprus on the other.** *The Independent* 28-Dec-19

This is not the final division of the nations, Greece and Cyprus will eventually be pulled into the orbit of Russia, whether it will be by force or voluntarily, events will unfold. The above quote shows a dramatic realignment. Turkey is one of NATO's early members, joining in 1952.

## Stepping into Africa

Many African states are sources of valuable minerals, which Russia would like to access. The Sahel is a region at the southern end of the Sahara.

For Moscow, entry into the Sahel thus allows it to pull more African states into its sphere of influence and could open opportunities for its mining industry in a region with known gold and uranium reserves. While the Sahel states probably won't prove an enormous source of wealth for Russia, they would still provide some financial support to its defense industry, an important Russian aim. Russian entry into the Sahel would also put European and US relationships in that region under pressure, something Moscow could leverage in its broader geopolitical competition with the West.

Initial Russian involvement would take the form of increased collaboration, most likely consisting of training local armed forces (competing with existing EU, French and US efforts), and sales of military equipment. As in other theaters, such activity—or more direct engagement in the conflict—could include the deployment of Russian private military forces such as the well-known Wagner Group. *Stratfor* 16-Dec-19



Russia has been working hard to increase its influence in Sudan, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Madagascar, Eritrea and Libya.

## Russia and Israel

One of the biggest Russia diasporas is in Israel where reside 1.5 million people speaking Russian, around 17% of Israel's population. Putin's special friendship with Jews stems from his childhood experiences with a Jewish neighbour. He is finding it difficult to steer a course in Syria that doesn't upset Iran or Israel. So far Israel has been given a fairly free hand to attack Iranian bases and weapons stores in Syria. Mr Putin is due to visit Israel in January 2020, to inaugurate a memorial in Jerusalem to WWII victims.

## Georgy Romanov

This young man, now 38, is a person to watch, as he is regarded as the lawful heir-apparent to the Romanov throne, by the Russian Orthodox Church. There are several other claimants but without Church, and by implication State, support, they have no hope of achieving a position of power in Russia. His parentage—a German prince for a father and a Russian mother, puts him in line with being prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Siberian capital of Tobolsk), as well as *of the land of Magog* (Germany). Apparently, his mother calls him Gogi! Since 2014 he runs his own public

relations business in Brussels, Romanov and Partners, 'working to advise companies how to meet EU regulations and to ensure their voice is heard amongst the politicians and officials at the EU level.' *romanoffpartners.com*

His mother, Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna is descended from the very ancient royal house of Bagratians of Georgia, who ruled as kings of Georgia from AD 886.

The Bagratians have had royal status for over one thousand years, having occupied the throne of the independent Kingdom of Georgia until that kingdom was illegally devoured by Russia in the nineteenth century. Daniel Sargis *The Romanoffs and the Bagratians*

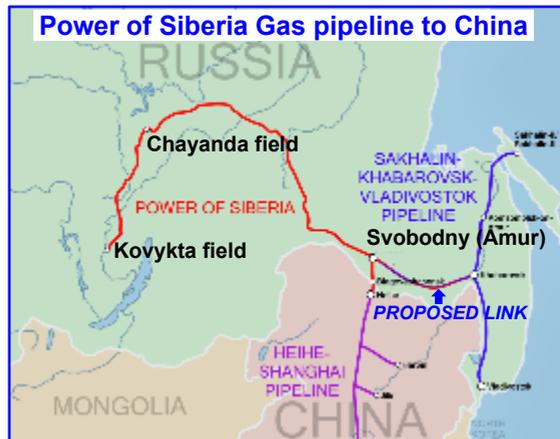
According to Herodotus, the ancient Georgia region would have been occupied by the Moschii and the Tibarenoi tribes in the time of Ezekiel, the descendants of Meshech and Tubal, sons of Japheth. Subsequent conquests pushed these tribes northwards.

There they became known as the Muskovs, and gave their name to the Russian nation and its ancient capital. *John Allfree Ezekiel p393*

It would appear that the name of Tubal was perpetuated in the naming of the River Tobol, and when the new Siberian capital was set up in 1590s at the confluence of the River Tobol and River Irtysh, it was named Tobolsk, after the river. Siberia is the source of much of Russia's gas and oil, thus these two sons of Japheth, Meshech and Tubal, are perpetuated in the names of the political and economic capitals of Russia today.

### Power of Siberia Gas Pipeline to China

This 4,000 km/2,466 ml pipeline takes Russian gas into the heart of China. The first 2,160 km section was opened 2 December this year, delivering gas from the Chayanda gas field to the Amur Gas Processing plant at Svobodny and then southwards across the border to connect to an existing pipeline delivering gas to Shanghai in China. A further 1,000 km



extension from Svobodny to an existing Russian pipeline is planned to boost exports to two Russian ports on the Pacific. A further extension at the start of the pipeline will link to another Russian gas field at Kovykta. It cements Russia as a major gas supplier to China.

## Chapter 10

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# GOG'S COMPANIONS STEADILY ALIGNING

*We know from the Scriptural prophecies what the end-time alliances will be, it is very encouraging to see the way in which regional alliances are being reshaped as Scripture indicates. All in preparation for Nebuchadnezzar's Image to stand on its shaky feet with the companions of Gog happy to work with each other. We saw in the previous chapter that the new regional realignments now observable, are increasingly lining up with Scripture.*

### Europe Reaching Out to Russia

We saw in Ch. 7 that sanctions taken by the US were pushing Europe to settle their differences with Russia. President Macron of France has been foremost in leading this rapprochement. If Europe is to stand on its own feet it needs to wean itself away from the US. However, Russia is too big a threat to be ignored in this scenario. It is better to make friends with Russia, rather than have her as an enemy.

We also saw in Ch. 7 that at the end of the year the completion of the Nord Stream pipeline was put in jeopardy by US sanctions against any firms associated with its construction. Russia has, understandably stepped into the breach, bringing in a replacement pipe-laying vessel. These US harsh measures will drive Europe to make greater accommodation with Russia, in spite of Russia nibbling at the edges of the EU, in her desire to bring former countries back into her orbit. As part of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, we have to see the formation of an Eastern and a Western foot. Based upon the old division of the Roman Empire into East and West, we are guided as to roughly which countries have to be drawn from the West's influence to come under Russian influence. Countries like Cyprus, and Greece which are in the EU, have to shift allegiances. Both are influenced by Russia, Cyprus has a small Russian speaking population and is a popular holiday destination for Russians as well as a place for wealthy Russians to hide their profits, with its low-tax regime. Cyprus is the third biggest investor in the Russian economy. It still is divided between a Turkish Cypriot north and a Greek Cypriot south.

Greece has been one of the poor relations of the EU. Future shocks to the EU, triggered possibly by Brexit, may prove to be the last straw that causes Greece to be discarded by the EU, into the willing arms of Russia.

### France Says the Time Is Right to Bring Russia in from Cold

It is also clear that in the language of Revelation 16:14, there is to be willing cooperation between the *Dragon*, the *Beast* and the *False Prophet*. Together, they *gather the nations to the battle [war] of that great day of God Almighty*.

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Europe imposed sanctions on Russia, banning certain imports and exports and ending any financial

packages. These sanctions were extended again for another six months during December.

Many EU countries and companies are now chaffing at the restrictions which are affecting their profits. In September, France broke rank with Germany as President Macron sent his Foreign and Defence ministers to Moscow to discuss ways of “bringing Russia in from the cold”. (*Daily Telegraph* 10-Sep-19) This followed a visit from President Putin to France in August.

### **Relations with Moscow Emerge as German Election Issue**

In spite of Angela Merkel's support for Nord Stream, she is still holding out for sanctions against Russia to be maintained. This attitude has led to declining support for her Party in recent German elections.

With elections looming in three former East German states this fall, many leading politicians see **rapprochement with Russia as a winning campaign strategy**. But this perspective puts them in direct confrontation with Chancellor Angela Merkel's government in Berlin.

The relationship with Russia is important to Germans. For years, poll after poll has shown that a **majority of Germans** are in favor of a **closer relationship to Russia** and its leader Vladimir Putin. In the former East German states, three-quarters of respondents feel that way. Most in those states also want to see the **sanctions** that were imposed after the annexation of Crimea **lifted**.

Without really having to do anything, Russia has already split German politics. Putin has hosted German governors more than once at the Kremlin. He also has a friendly relationship with former Bavarian Governor Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian sister party to Merkel's CDU. It's likely heartening for Moscow that Merkel's tough approach to Russia has a growing number of opponents, even within her own ranks in the CDU. *Spiegel* 30-Jul-19

The reality of the UK leaving the EU has yet to be absorbed by the EU. Until the December election, the EU had the whip hand. Boris' victory has suddenly and dramatically changed matters. The coming year will reveal how manageable will be the future loss of the UK's contributions to the EU swollen budget. Cooperation, rather than conflict with their eastern neighbour, may well be needed to steady the post-Brexit EU ship.

### **Persia, Ethiopia and Libya**

These are the first listed companions that Gog is a *guard unto*. (Eze. 38:5) Persia—modern-day Iran—is a very anti-Israel country and regularly threatens that she will “wipe Israel off the map”. Tensions have greatly been upped with the US directed assassination of Iran's top general, Major-General Soleimani at the start of 2020. We have witnessed the great drive of Iran to get a foothold in Syria and Lebanon in order to get her troops and

weapons closer to Israel. Ethiopia, mainly represented today by Sudan, is a country which Russia has been influencing, as is Libya. So, no surprise that, in the right situation, they are willing helpers of Gog.

### **Gomer, and the House of Togarmah of the North Quarters**

In the past we have looked at the evidence linking Gomer with Gaul—France of today. France is a strong military power and we have seen her desire to lift sanctions on Russia, and so it is no surprise that she should be a companion of Gog. Togarmah points us to the area of Georgia and Armenia. Parts of Georgia have already declared independence and are aligned to Russia. Armenia is a member of the Russian Eurasian Economic Union and most can speak Russian reasonably well, especially by the older generation who lived there under the Soviet Union.

### **Opponents to What Gog is Planning**

It is clear from Ezekiel 38 that there are countries who will be opposed to Gog's campaign to take control of Egypt and Israel. (Dan. 11:41-43)

*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*

We shall see in Ch. 12 that there is a considerable realignment taking place among the southern Arab nations, who for decades have taken the Palestinian side against Israel. They now see that Israel is not the root of the problem but it is the Palestinians and the militant groups that are trying to “drive Israel into the sea”. Indeed, they approve the way Israel is determined to thwart Iranian aggression. With the growing threat of escalating conflict in the region, they will need Israel's intelligence gathering tip-offs and military might even more! These Arab nations know that should Israel fall, they would be Iran's next targets. *Sheba* and *Dedan* are assisted by other merchant powers, who trade in their region, while supporting Israel.

Hence as we shall see in Ch. 13, Britain, the US and the Commonwealth countries are taking up their roles in preparation for a post-Brexit era. One looks on in awe at prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes, as Israel's friends and foes move into their allotted positions under Divine guidance.

### **A Warning for Saints**

There is still some way to go, yet we must always bear in mind that God has declared that *judgment begins at the house of God*. (1Pet. 4:17) Before God's judgment is poured on Israel and the nations, the saints will be called away for judgment. This is fitting, for Christ and the saints come to deliver Israel from the hand of their enemies. So that call can come at any time. We must not think that we see the invasion of Israel before Christ returns to His brothers and sisters.

## Chapter 11

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# ISRAEL FACES MANY ENEMIES

*The prophet Daniel described God's judgments on Israel as a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to the same time. (Dan.12:1) However for a class of person described to Daniel as 'thy people', they shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

*The salvation of the nation is bound up in the salvation of those who will be Israel's rulers and princes. God has been preparing since the days of creation, a multitude who will be raised from the dead. In Daniel's words:*

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. *Dan. 12:2,3*

*This is why, as we closed the previous chapter, the preparation of Israel's saviours must take place before Israel feels the boots of her enemies—and some former friends—treading her streets in an overwhelming destruction.*

And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and **many people** with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a **great** company, and a **mighty** army:

And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a **cloud** to **cover** the **land**; it shall be in the latter-days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. *Eze. 38:15,16*

## Israel to be Overwhelmed

In the verses above, God through Ezekiel, makes it clear that Israel are to be totally overwhelmed in the day of Gog's invasion. The dark thunder clouds of war will fill the land, and the thing that Israel fears today will be a reality. With all the sophistication of Israel's defence systems there is a limit to what they can cope with. They fear swarms of missiles, troops, tanks in such numbers that they will not be able to cope. In 1948, in 1967 and in 1973, Israel were nearly overwhelmed by the combined Arab forces attacking them. Since then it has been single nations—Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and Iran in Syria. We know from the list of nations in Ezekiel 38, that this future invasion exceeds anything that Israel as a nation has had to face. Against such a foe who can stand? It is clear from the dramatic descriptions in Ezekiel 39 that Gog succeeds in securing the whole land, for when Christ and the saints come forth for the salvation of God's people (Hab.3:13), the bodies of Israel's enemies are scattered far and wide on the

mountains of Israel (Eze. 39:1-5). The AV indicates that all but a sixth of Gog's forces are destroyed, but this is not in the Hebrew text—they are all destroyed. In Revelation 14:14-16 and Joel 3:13,14 it is likened to the harvesting of a wheat field, all is cut down; hence the name given to this phase of God's judgments on Israel's enemies—**Armageddon**—in Hebrew, *Arma-gai-don* = *heap-valley-judgment*. (Mic. 4:11-13 heap of sheaves)

When Israel is totally over-run by her enemies this will indeed be the hour of judgment for Israel. Some will flee across the Jordan as in AD 70. Many will be slain, others, as Joel 3:6 indicates, will be carried off to other lands, but certain will remain and survive in the land, described in Zech. 13:8,9 as being but a third of Israel's population. Out of the plundering and spoiling of Israel (Eze. 38:12) there will be a faithful remnant whom God will preserve, because He sees in this fiery trial of His nation, men and women who will be brought to understand that the leader that has appeared to come from nowhere to save them, is none other than their Messiah. As on the day of Pentecost, with truly contrite hearts, they will repent for their blindness and have their sins washed away in baptism into Christ. Immersed in the water which, subsequent to the splitting of the Mount of Olives, now gushes down as a river to the Dead Sea, now no longer dead, but full of fish and verdant in medicinal trees. (Zec.12:10-14; 13:1; 14:4,8; Eze. 47:5-12)

### **Israel's Enemies**

We come back to the present, and we see that in spite of the efforts of the US to change the attitude of the UN, which is so blatantly hostile to Israel, it continues to rouse feelings against Israel. During 2019 the UN passed 18 resolutions against Israel and 7 against all other nations! More seriously for Israel, the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the end of December announce that they were investigating Israel for alleged war crimes against the Palestinians in the 2014 war against Hamas; and for subsequent handling of the Hamas organised March of Return border incidents which peaked in the past year; also for settler activities in the so called "West Bank".

The ICC sits in the Hague in the Netherlands, as does the similarly named International Court of Justice, which is a UN organisation. The ICC is not UN affiliated. Since it opened in 2002 it has opened ten official investigations and eleven preliminary investigations ongoing, including this one. It has 123 member states, but significantly the US and Israel were founder members but later withdrew.

The ICC's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, said a preliminary examination into alleged war crimes, opened in 2015, had provided enough information to meet all criteria for opening an investigation.

"I am satisfied that... war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip," Bensouda said in a statement.

She said she had filed a request with judges for a jurisdictional ruling because of the contested legal status of the Palestinian territories. *Reuters* 20-Dec-19

Israel's viewpoint is that the ICC can only sit in judgment against individuals or states. As there never has been a State of Palestine, they have no authority to proceed. Because of this uncertainty over the status of "Palestine", having carried out all this investigatory work, the chief prosecutor is asking for a judicial ruling on whether they can proceed.

### **Anti-Semitism Continues to Rise**

We saw what a big role anti-Semitism played in the recent UK elections, as the Jews here largely withdrew their historic support for the Labour Party, because of the widespread anti-Semitism within that Party. Many of these Labour seats were in marginal areas, and so had an important influence on the size of Boris' victory. If the voting had gone the other way, a considerable number of Jews would have emigrated to Israel.

The situation in Europe and around the world shows a trend for anti-Semitism to grow. As Bible reading largely disappears and amidst a media coverage that is normally blatantly anti-Israel, no wonder so many hate the Jews.

One in four Europeans polled fall into 'most anti-Semitic category', harboring pernicious and pervasive attitudes toward Jews, according to a new global survey on anti-Semitism commissioned by ADL (the Anti-Defamation League). While anti-Semitic attitudes held mostly steady in Western Europe, the poll found hateful notions about Jews are rising in Eastern and Central European countries polled, where long-held tropes [stereotypes] about Jewish control of business and finance and of "dual loyalty" remain widespread.

Since the ADL Global 100 Index survey conducted in 2015, anti-Semitic attitudes have significantly increased in Ukraine (up 14 %), Poland (up 11 %), South Africa and Brazil (both up 9 %), Russia (up 8 %) and Argentina (up 6 %). Meanwhile, anti-Semitic attitudes saw significant declines in Italy (down 11 %), Austria (down 8 %) and Canada (down 6 %). *Anti-Defamation League* 21-Nov-19

### **Anti-Semitic Attacks Spike, Killing Most Jews in Decades**

This review indicated that violent attacks against Jews increased considerably last year, Israeli researchers reported.

Assaults targeting Jews rose 13% in 2018, according to Tel Aviv University researchers. They recorded nearly 400 cases worldwide, with more than a quarter of the major violent cases taking place in the United States.

But the spike was most dramatic in western Europe, where Jews have faced even greater danger and threats. In Germany, for instance, there was a 70% increase in anti-Semitic violence.

“There is an increasing sense of emergency among Jews in many countries around the world. It is now clear that anti-Semitism is no longer limited to the far-left, far-right and radical Islamist’s triangle—it has become mainstream and often accepted by civil society,” Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress, said. *Associated Press* 01-May-19

In New York following a Hanukkah party where five Jews were stabbed, the *Washington Post* 30-Dec-19 reported:

Anti-Semitic attacks are on the rise around the country, leaving members of the Jewish community feeling frightened and unsafe. In New York City, anti-Semitic crimes have jumped 21 percent in the past year. According to the Anti-Defamation League, there were 1,879 incidents of anti-Semitism in the United States in 2018, including more than 1,000 instances of harassment.

“This is a national phenomenon that we are seeing and it’s frightening and it’s disturbing,” New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said at a news conference Sunday. “If anyone thinks that something poisonous is not going on in this country, then they’re in denial.”

As we saw in Ch. 5 the frog-like spirit of humanism, springing out of the French Revolution, is causing many to despise God’s people, being fed with powerful propaganda that only sees evil in what Israel does. In the UK, especially during Jewish religious holidays, the police step up their presence outside synagogues.

### **Hamás’ Rocket and Incendiary Attacks Continue**

Hamás has continued to launch rockets against Israel, triggering frequent use of Israel’s Iron Dome air defence system. In one week in May, 600 rockets were fired at Israel, not all cleared the border, some falling into Gaza. Nearly 1,300 have been fired into Israel this year. Israel’s response has been to swiftly follow up rocket attacks; many militant leaders have been targeted and killed and over 1,000 targets struck, mainly connected to Hamás.

The Friday border protests organised by Hamás have caused much damage as low-cost kites and balloons carrying incendiary devices are carried into Israel on the prevailing winds, setting fire to valuable farm crops and woodlands. These started in earnest in April 2018. 3,400 hectares (34 km<sup>2</sup>) were burnt during last year. In June this year, a sophisticated tracking device, Sky Spotter,



**Israeli Sky Spotter**

was employed which predicts where the device will probably land. This is relayed to the firefighters and has greatly reduced the impact of these devices, as they are now dealing more quickly with the fires, before they get out of hand. In spite of this, millions of dollars in damage has been caused this year and environmentalists estimate that it will take at least 15 years to rehabilitate the region's vegetation and wildlife from the destruction of the past two years.

At the year-end, Israel unveiled a laser system called *Light Blade*, designed to destroy incendiary devices in the air from 2 km away as well as drones. When deployed it should mean that they are destroyed before they even cross the border. *Times of Israel* 26-Dec-19



### **A Hamas Cease-fire?**

In view of Israel's success in lessening the impact of the weekly "Great March of Return", Hamas controlled gatherings on the Gaza-Israeli border, as well as their success in targeting Hamas militants, may be bringing a realisation that these protests are futile. It appears that these gatherings have been cancelled from the middle of November. At the year-end Hamas declared a 3-month truce on these marches. The ordinary people in Gaza are dissatisfied with Hamas who have only brought misery to the majority of people there. The vast sums of aid are creamed off into the militant's pockets. Israel continues to pour aid in and help where she can.

Hamas has promised to scale down these protests and is turning its attention to the prospect of elections in Gaza and the West Bank. President Abbas was elected for a 4-year term way back in 2005 and there have not been parliamentary elections since 2006! Hamas won more support than Fatah and in 2007 they launched a coup in Gaza, ending Fatah's control there. Hamas and Fatah have agreed to hold Parliamentary elections in February 2020 and Presidential elections in May.

All previous efforts to bring Hamas and Fatah together have failed, so we wait and see. Both are dedicated to the elimination of Israel. Will the Arab nations who have traditionally supported their cause, cease their support and recognise Israel's right to exist? Or will Israel have to break Hamas?

Within Israel there are many Arabs living in comfort and working side-by-side with Jews.

## Israel and Hezbollah

At the end of 2018, Israel announced the discovery of a deep underground tunnel leading from Lebanon into Israel. This year five more tunnels were discovered and destroyed by pouring concrete into them.

Israel too has targeted Iranian armaments depots in Lebanon. Iran has been updating the many thousands of rockets held by Hezbollah from crude weapons to sophisticated precision guided missiles. With Israel's new F35 fighters able to outwit Russia S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems, Israel



has undertaken thousands of raids into Lebanon and Syria to eliminate manufacturing plants and storage bases. Israel's intelligence sources are second to none and somehow, they find out where these are, tracking flights from Iran and then swiftly eliminating their cargoes on the ground.

Hezbollah is financed by Iran and is based in Lebanon. It is generally considered the most powerful non-state actor in the world and is thought to be stronger than the Lebanese army. Estimates of the numbers of rockets that she possesses range from 40,000 to 150,000. All for the purpose of eliminating Israel!

## Israel and Iran—Threat of War

In spite of crippling sanctions against it by the US, Iran continues to sponsor terrorism around the Middle East. She desires a foothold in Syria to give her access to the Mediterranean Sea as well as to bring her closer to her sworn enemy Israel.

2019 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the take-over of the US Embassy in Tehran, which led to a 444-day hostage situation. The event was celebrated with the burning of the US flag and chants of “Death to America”, “Death to Israel”.

In 2016, Iran unveiled a countdown clock showing the destruction of Israel in 2040! The clock, pictured in 2017, shows “only 8,411 days” to go.

Israel has taken active steps to halt Iran building bases any closer than 100 km from their borders. Many sorties have been flown and buildings destroyed.

Whenever Israel is challenged and its security is threatened,

Netanyahu asserted, “we always remember and apply the basic rule that guides us: Israel will defend itself, on its own, in the face of every threat. The IDF [Israel Defence Force] is prepared to preempt any threat, defensively and offensively, with its overwhelming power in weaponry and in spirit.”

This was not the first time in recent days that Netanyahu had raised the specter of a war with Iran, including the prospect of Israeli preemption.

Two weeks before, on September 26, 2019, Netanyahu spoke during the New Year’s toast at the IDF General Staff forum. He warned the IDF High Command of gathering clouds and rising security challenges. **“Israel’s proven capacity to simultaneously perform multiple missions is about to be challenged as never before,”** he observed. “Hitherto we have navigated affairs boldly and responsibly in several arenas, at times simultaneously, but **not so far in a comprehensive confrontation.**”

This might change soon, Netanyahu warned, raising the specter of an all-out war as a distinct possibility. Such a war might erupt despite the great success of the myriad of strikes against Iran and Iran’s proxies throughout the region. *Oilprice.com* 21-Oct-19

Russia also has an interest in preventing Iranian incursion into Syria, as Iran would be a rival power. So far, Putin has permitted Israel a fairly unfettered access to the Syrian skies, in order to carry out her missions. Israel relies on her intelligence gathering to avoid causing any Russian casualties.

In spite of all these enemies, Israel has a growing band of friends, as we now shall see.



**Iranian count-down clock and poster**

## Chapter 12

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# ISRAEL'S GROWING BAND OF FRIENDS

*As we saw in the previous chapter, the short-term future is bleak for Israel, ending in the destruction of her as a nation. This however is tempered by the certain knowledge of the glorious long-time future when they have accepted their Messiah and King.*

*Before that time of trouble, there is surely a bright economic future for Israel as she is to be a desirable prey and spoil to Gog, as we shall consider in Ch. 13. As part of that future prosperity we have a picture of Israel dwelling securely prior to her invasion, as well as having friends who are opposed to her destruction by Gog, who do not wish to see her over-run.*

*We have looked at this verse earlier and many times in previous Milestones and will pick it up again in Ch. 14 when looking at Britain's future role.*

**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*

*We will briefly look at how the nations termed as Sheba and Dedan are changing in their outlook towards Israel and how those termed the merchants of Tarshish with all their (NKJV) young lions, are also working with Israel as a valuable trading ally.*

## The Growing Acceptance of Israel by “Sheba” and “Dedan”

These ancient territories are now occupied by Sunni Arab nations, who are more tolerant than the Shia Moslems of Iran. We would call these the Gulf States. The past few years has shown a remarkable change in attitude towards Israel. They see the US under Trump as reluctant to involve US troops on the ground in the region. In Israel, they see someone who is not afraid to take on the hostility of Iran. They respect Israel's intelligence gathering capabilities and her ability to penetrate deep into Iranian matters.

They have seen that Israel, far from being the root-cause of Middle East problems, is in fact the solution. It is the terrorist governments of the Palestinians, Fatah and Hamas, that are the problem—not Israel.

## Pence Hails Sight of Netanyahu ‘Breaking Bread’ with Arab Leaders

There was a remarkable gathering in February of politicians and leaders to a US conference in Warsaw in Poland, by US Vice President Mike Pence, to discuss the problem of Iran, but broadened to look at Middle East Stability.

Mr Netanyahu and representatives from ten Arab nations, including the leaders of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, together with representatives from 40 other countries, shared meals and discussed these matters.

“Tonight I believe we are beginning a new era, with Prime Minister Netanyahu from the State of Israel, with leaders from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, all breaking bread together, and later in this conference sharing honest perspectives on the challenges facing the area,” Pence said, addressing the guests. *Times of Israel* 14-Feb-19

In October, Israeli Foreign Ministry official, Dana Benvenisti-Gabay, head of its counter-terrorism department, sat with representatives from 60 nations in Bahrain—the original Dedan—on the Working Group on Maritime and Aviation Security.

### Israel Says Expo 2020 in Dubai Is a Bridge to Arab World

In an unprecedented move, Israel is to have a pavilion at the prestigious Expo 2020 in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, presented as the “World’s Biggest Show”, with 190 participating countries. It runs from Oct. 2020 to April 2021.



Israel’s newly appointed Commissioner to Expo 2020 said that next year’s world fair in Dubai offers the country a unique opportunity to present a fresh face to the Arab world, just as Israel is growing closer to the United Arab Emirates and other Arab Gulf states.

Elazar Cohen presented plans for the Israeli pavilion at the world’s largest exhibition, in which it aims to project its technological, scientific and agricultural innovations to the 25 million visitors expected to descend upon the glitzy city-state. But Cohen said the true target audience was the Emirati hosts and the majority Arab visitors, whom he said would find great interest not only in Israeli technology but in its good intentions and outstretched hand.

Cohen said Israel would have a prominent position in the exhibition, alongside the UAE hosts, the United States, Japan, India and Italy, and not far from Saudi Arabia—another Arab country with which Israel has been developing warmer discrete relations.

The Expo, which takes place once every five years, offers Israel an apolitical chance to take it to another level.

“We know we have a complicated image in the Arab World but we also know there is a lot of curiosity and there is a lot of knowledge about our special abilities,” said Noam Katz, the foreign ministry’s deputy director general for media and public affairs. “Our message to the region is: ‘We

live in this region, and we want to build neighborly relations with all those around us.’” *Associated Press* 11-Nov-19

### **From Covert to Overt: Warming Relations Between Bahrain and Israel**

An interesting comment on Israel’s burgeoning relations with her neighbours came from an Arab paper *The New Arab* 17-Dec-19:

The associations between Israel and some Gulf monarchies have evolved to a point where they have transformed the geopolitical map of the region. In the case of Bahrain, reaching out to Israel has brought numerous changes including a more visible and gradual turn towards normalisation.

### **Initiative to Sign ‘Historic’ Non-aggression Pact with Arab States**

In a further sign of warming relations, Israel’s Foreign Minister, Israel Katz, has been discussing the signing of ‘non-aggression pacts’ with several Arab countries.

Israel Katz says he met with top diplomats from Gulf countries in a bid to ‘end the conflict and enable civilian cooperation until the signing of peace agreements.’

“Recently I have been promoting, with the backing of the Prime Minister, a diplomatic initiative to sign ‘non-aggression agreements’ with the Arab Gulf states,” Katz wrote on Twitter.

“It’s a historic move that will end the conflict and enable civilian cooperation until the signing of peace agreements,” he said, in what appeared to be a tacit acknowledgement that no Arab country is currently willing to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state as long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unresolved. *Times of Israel* 06-Oct-19

### **India, China, Japan**

Israel continues to develop good trading relations with many Far Eastern countries. She has the technology that they need to bring them deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Israel and the UK**

Relationships are greatly improving, Following the first Royal to pay an official visit last year, when Prince William visited, Prince Charles is visiting in January 2020. He has attended funerals twice before, but this will be a Royal visit, centring on attending the World Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

For Hanukkah this year Boris Johnson gave a very moving speech addressed to the UK Jews, pledging Britain’s support whatever the problems they faced.

**“I am Jewish and proud of it,”** he said. Commenting on the anti-Semitism faced by Jews in the UK he pledged **“that they will have every decent person fighting by your side. Because Britain would not be Britain without its Jewish community.** And we will **stand with you** and celebrate with you at Chanukah, and all year round.” *10 Downing Street, London* 22-Dec-19

The top members of Boris’ Cabinet are all pro-Jewish, (see chart), possibly the first time in British politics. This bodes well for Britain’s relationship with Israel in a post-Brexit world. Israel is looking forward to dealing with a Britain no longer bound by EU rules.

PM Boris Johnson excellent links US & Israel. Jewish blood on mother’s side	
Ch of Exchequer Sajid Javid, Muslim, unapologetic supporter of Israel	
First Sec State Dominic Raab, grandfather Jewish, worked and studied in Israel	
Sec State for Home Office Priti Patel great friend of Israel. Pledges support for Jewish community as UK anti-Semitism hits six-month high. 02-Aug	
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove, long-standing friend of Israel, calls himself a “proud Zionist”, wants UK’s Embassy to move to Jerusalem	26-Jul-19
<b>Israel happy with the UK cabinet</b>	

## UK Reaches Out to Israel For Health and Medical Technology Innovations

The UK hasn’t lost its faith in Israel. Far from it. As a matter of fact, **Britain is more interested than ever in Israeli start-ups**, seeking to forge new tech partnerships between the two nations. Back in 2018, the Northern Health Service Alliance signed a memorandum of understanding with the UK Israel Tech Hub (UKITH) to bring health and medical technology innovations to the North of England. The UKITH, which is based in the British Embassy in Israel, is responsible for connecting businesses within the two countries. Up to this time, the hub has closed about 175 partnerships in deals worth approximately £85 million. Israel may very well become one of the UK’s most prominent business partners in the medical device industry.

Israel has been recognized internationally as a place of innovation. According to the annual Bloomberg Innovation Index, it’s the 5th most innovative nation on the globe. Not many are aware of the fact that the medical device industry has made the most significant contribution to its success. UK hospitals will profit from Israeli solutions. *Times of Israel* 26-Nov-19

## Tech and the Israel-UK Trade Corridor

Gil Karni, CEO at [Bank] Leumi UK, explains how increasing trade between the UK and Israel could provide both nations with an important advantage.

As the digital revolution continues to disrupt markets across the spectrum, discovering and implementing the latest technology has become a priority

for businesses globally. In order to remain ahead in this space, establishing lasting trade relationships that offer room for collaboration is vital.

The U.K. and Israel have enjoyed a **close political relationship** since Israel's declaration of independence in 1948. With **common law legal systems, low levels of state corruption**, and **regulatory compatibility**, trade and business movements **yield maximum benefits** for both parties. With levels of bilateral trade increasing year-over-year—hitting a record-breaking \$10 billion threshold in 2018—it is no surprise that Israel was among the first to sign a post-Brexit trade agreement with the UK, marking the importance of this relationship moving forward.

In response to the UK government's calls for a stronger trade relationship with Israel, the **two countries have become increasingly integrated**. **British brands** continue to gain traction in Israel and **easyJet** has become the latter's **second most popular airline** for international flights after its national carrier El Al. When it comes to investments, there is also increasing cross-over, with 76% of Israel's largest trading house, Psagot, now owned by London-based private equity firm Apax Partners.

But it is in the **tech sector that collaboration is really making waves**. Israel is internationally recognised for its contributions to the tech industry.

When it comes to **international expansion, London is a favoured jump-off location** for such businesses—boasting financial clout and a young workforce looking to invest itself in cutting-edge ideas. *CTech* 21-Nov-19

### **Israel-Britain Military Exercises**

In what would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, the Royal Navy participated in the largest international naval exercise ever held by the Israeli navy. "Mighty Waves 2019" took place in August. UK naval vessels are now calling in at Israel ports, no longer having to consider Arab reactions.

In September, Israeli fighters flew to Britain to participate in Britain's annual "Cobra Warrior" exercises, their first joint exercise with the RAF.

In 2020, in another first, the RAF plans to take part in Israel's bi-annual "Blue Flag" exercise, involving air forces around the world, flying in the Negev.

### **The Commonwealth and Israel**

Significantly, Commonwealth countries like Australia, India and Canada also have good relationships with Israel. Like Britain, these "young lions" being innovative merchant nations themselves, see the great advantages of tapping into Israeli technology and trade. How wonderfully the Word of God comes alive in these last days.

## Chapter 13

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# ISRAEL—AN INCREDIBLE POWERHOUSE

*As we have glimpsed in the previous chapter, Israel is an incredibly active, innovative country. In this brief chapter we try to capture a flavour of the greatness of this little country.*

### Small in Size, Great in Output!

With a land area (excluding lakes) of 20,330 km<sup>2</sup> (or with East Jerusalem and the Golan 21,632 km<sup>2</sup>) she is the 149<sup>th</sup> (or 148<sup>th</sup>) country out of 194.

Yet this tiny nation punches far above its size. How often do we read of Fiji (151) or Belize (147)?

If we look at population size, then Israel ranks 101 out of 233.

The land area of Israel is 0.01% of the land mass of the world and her population 0.11% of the world population!

YET she is ranked in the world as:

- The 32<sup>nd</sup> (out of 191) for GDP (nominal)
- The 20<sup>th</sup> (out of 186) for GDP (nominal) per capita
- The 13<sup>th</sup> (out of 156) in Happiness Index
- The 11<sup>th</sup> (out of 167) for Free Speech
- The 8<sup>th</sup> most powerful nation
- The 5<sup>th</sup> most innovative country
- No 1 in World Economic Forum's Entrepreneurship, macro-economic stability

Her intelligence services are revered around the world.

### 2019 a Good Year

For the third year running tourism has boomed, with 4.55m visitors, an 11% increase on 2018. Visitor numbers from China were up 51%.

Her exports of goods and services hit \$114 bn., up 4.5%. Compared with 2009, exports have jumped 68% in the decade. The biggest jump in this period was China, up 402%, followed by the UK up 286%.

Contributing to the growth of exports, Israel has concluded seven new free trade agreements over the past decade, doubling the number of agreements in place in 2009. Agreements have been signed with countries including Canada, Ukraine, Colombia and South Korea. *Jerusalem Post* 30-Dec-19

### Leviathan Gas Field Comes on Stream at Last

This is the biggest gas field so far in Israeli waters. It was discovered in 2010, with the prospect of turning Israel into a gas exporting country. Its

development has been held up over a dispute with the Israeli government over what percentage of the gas can be used for exports. The first gas came ashore into the Israeli gas grid on 31 December. At the last moment environmentalists went to court to stop the purging of the undersea pipes, claiming it would cause heavy pollution of the air. The court over-ruled the objections. Thousands of environmentalists took to their cars on the day of the purging in protest, but there was no measurable change in pollution levels.

Prior contracts with an Egyptian firm and the Jordanian gas company, ensured that at the start of 2020, gas was flowing to Jordan and by mid-January to Egypt. The cost of developing this gas field has been put at \$3.75 bn.

The production platform is situated some 10 km offshore and connected by two undersea pipelines to the four wells that have been currently drilled, situated about 130 km offshore. From the platform a pipe makes landfall near Dor, some 30 km south of Haifa, connecting to the Israeli gas grid.

Minister of National Infrastructure, Energy, and Water Resources Dr. Yuval Steinitz said:

“[Leviathan] will make a huge contribution to Israel for decades; put billions into the state treasury for education, health, and welfare; make it possible to close down the coal-fired power plants in Hadera and Ashkelon; ensure cleaner air for the coming generations; and serve as a critical tool through exporting some of the gas to Egypt, Jordan, and Europe.” *Globes* 27-Jan-19

### **Israel Taps the Sun**

Extensive use is made of the sun to heat domestic water tanks atop most Israeli houses. Israel is developing electricity generation from solar panels especially in the arid Negev where there is year-round sunshine. At the end of August, Israel inaugurated a giant thermo-solar power plant, covering about 390 hectares (3.9km<sup>2</sup>) and generating 121 megawatts of energy a day, sufficient to power some 70,000 houses. This plant in Ashalim is but one of four different methods to tap solar energy. There are two types of solar panels and another scheme that uses 50,000 computer-controlled mirrors to concentrate the sun’s heat on a boiler on top of a 250-meter-high tower. This creates superheated steam which drives a steam turbine-generator. This generates 120 megawatts and came on stream in September. In total these four projects will deliver 300 megawatts a day to the Israel Electric Company’s national grid and this one site will alone contribute 2.5% of the government’s goal of 10% renewable energy by 2020.

### **And Reaches for the Moon**

In April, this tiny country almost succeeded in landing a robotic lunar module on the moon. The Beresheet (“in the beginning”) failed in the last seconds of its journey, crash landing instead of smoothly settling on the surface.

## Chapter 14

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# POST-BREXIT BRITAIN'S MIDDLE EAST ROLE

*We looked in Ch.6 at the amazing events that have pushed Britain away from Europe and cast her eyes upon a worldwide trading market. We saw that these things have been happening in fulfilment of prophecy. The Bible paints a picture of Britain on the side of Israel, unlike Europe which joins Gog in Israel's destruction. We now look at how Britain is casting her eyes on her former territories in the Middle East that she had abandoned—1948 (Palestine), 1956 (Suez), 1967 (Aden). Step-by-step she left her former colonies until the 'red patches' on the Middle East map had disappeared by the late 1960s and she joined the EEC (EU) in 1973.*

## A Nation Reborn

It has taken nearly 50 years for Britain to regrow her strength and confidence to throw off the EU shackles. Brexit lies just a month away, subject to the cooperation of the EU.

A changed spirit is emerging, Brexit is now being seen as an opportunity rather than the negative threat that Remainers were peddling. All the tales of gloom, a million increase in unemployment, for one, and the collapse of sterling, have proved to be wide of the mark. Unemployment is at historically low levels, sterling has been regaining its past losses, stock markets are rising, investments are flooding in.

Hopes of an end to Brexit turmoil at last have put a fire under the pound. Traders piled back into the currency when it became clear Boris Johnson had reached a new Withdrawal Agreement with the EU. *Daily Telegraph* 01-01-20

## East of Suez

As a trading power, the Suez Canal has always been of strategic importance, as 90% of inward and outward goods travel by sea. To the east of Suez lie the rich markets of the Middle East and further east, those of India and China.

Britain has 16 overseas bases, six of which are in this region. From top to bottom on the slide they are Cyprus, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kenya, and Diego Garcia.



From Eze.38:13, we see Israel and the Middle East as key markets where Britain will be involved at the time of Israel's invasion. It was interesting to see that a July conference called by BICOM (Britain Israel Communication & Research Centre) and RUSI (Royal United Services Institute) was titled "**The UK in the Middle East: strategy in a changing region.**"

The Bahrain base, which was opened last year has been invaluable, allowing British Navy ships to protect shipping in the Persian Gulf. Britain's five vessels stationed there outnumbered US vessels in protecting Gulf shipping!

### Port Duqm Oman

Britain and Oman go back over 220 years, in 1798, Oman and Great Britain signed a Treaty of Friendship. Prince William paid a visit in December.

In February Britain and Oman signed a new joint defence agreement.

"It is a pleasure to sign this agreement, bringing us even closer to one of our most important partners. This is an

**historic landmark moment** between our two nations and is a **significant reinforcement** of our mutual security," said UK Defence Sec. Williamson.

The UK Ministry of Defence says that **Duqm** conveys a **strategic advantage** for Britain's "**East of Suez**" naval presence. It is located on the Arabian Sea, near enough to geopolitical hot spots in the Persian Gulf to be useful, but still on the Indian Ocean side of the Strait of Hormuz. *The Maritime Executive* 21-Feb19

Here Britain's latest base opened in March and will probably be the most important one in the region. A joint UK-Omani training base is being built. The US also has a base here. Later in the year, India was also given permission to use the port facilities.

It is planned that the two new UK aircraft carriers can be based here—there is ample room for them both. From Port Duqm Britain can project her naval power around the whole region including India and Australia.

We are greatly encouraged to see the wonderful confirmation of our historical understanding of Biblical prophecy. Let us wait patiently—our Master is at the door, are we ready to open it?

Port Duqm, Oman



## Chapter 15: Exhortation by Philip Weatherall: [To contents](#)

### WARNINGS FOR THE LAST DAYS

*“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning”*: so says the Apostle Paul and it is therefore vital that we do not miss the lessons that God provides in His Word. If we believe that there is little time left before our Lord’s return (which from the earlier chapters in Milestones we know must be so) then the exhortations abounding in the prophets for ‘end times’ have special importance for us. In each period preceding Divine judgments, God is vocal through His prophets and it is imperative that we turn to His warnings as our resource to guard against falling away from grace in our last days.

At the end of the Kingdom of Israel, Hosea and Amos directed much of their words to the ten tribes and we discover the following important points were made. Hosea observed a serious deficiency of knowledge, but more telling was that this was an intentional rejection of knowledge (4:6). It is one thing to dishonour God through failure of human weakness, but Hosea’s comments reveal a more deliberate and calculated mind-set. Frail humans thought they knew better than God! Urgent action was needed but sadly this response was not forthcoming. Amos also noted an air of complacency in both houses of Israel (6:1-6). The result of this was that the people became indulgent, not expecting anything to happen to them (v3) and in particular, they were “not grieved for the affliction of Joseph” (v6).

At the same time and beyond, Isaiah was prophesying in Judah and set out six “woes”, some of these repeating the warnings of the northern prophets. In Isaiah 5:12 the sin of excessive indulgence in the flesh is coupled with absence of knowledge. The people were challenging God to openly work and only then would they believe and respond (v19). The next two woes are very expressive of modern-day thinking where they were “*call(ing) evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness*” and the arrogance of man in being “*wise in their own eyes*” (v20-21). Could these same attitudes be prevalent in some sections of the brotherhood today?

Recent laws passed in the UK and current trends fly in the face of clear Scripture teaching and it is saddening to discover that in some quarters a measure of accommodation (maybe even justification) exists for unscriptural lifestyles. Surely, this shows that some in our generation lack knowledge. This situation can only subsist where man’s reasoning assumes a priority over those clear and unambiguous commandments from God. Evil is not good and good is not evil.

Over 100 years after the overthrow of Samaria by Assyria, Jerusalem became a target for the Babylonians. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that God expected Judah to learn the lessons, but they did not (Eze. 23:11). It is not

surprising therefore that these later prophets are found confronting much the same issues. Zephaniah, who prophesied during the reign of Josiah, Judah's last good king, warned of those who were "*settled on their lees*" and who thought "*the LORD will not do good neither will he do evil*" (1:12). Ezekiel, one of the captives at this time, reported on the words of the people who considered, "*The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off.*" But God's answer was, "*my words shall not be prolonged any more, but the word that I have spoken, shall be done*" (12:27-28). Just as the people in Ezekiel's day sought their own interpretation of God's words, so today we are being told by some that in order to understand sections of the Bible, we need to be acquainted with comparative studies—the writing of [men](#)! But God has given us this formula to understand His Word, we must interpret Scripture [with Scripture](#). (1Cor. 2:13)

In an extended vision in Ezekiel 9:4 the prophet sees one of six men commissioned to set a mark upon those who "*sigh and cry for all the abominations*" done in Jerusalem. The other five were to smite all those who had no such mark on them. God will spare us from judgment to come if we too show respect for His Word by separating ourselves from wickedness, grieving for a society where a 'human dignity' overrides Bible teaching.

Another time of crisis was during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem when his good work was now in danger of being totally lost had he not returned to Jerusalem with sweeping reforms. The people were saying, "*It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance*" (Mal. 3:14). As there was to be famine of hearing the words of the Lord, it was vital that Nehemiah corrected wrong views and instructed in right ways.

In New Testament times, we once again witness those who do not believe that God is ever going act. The situation is probably even worse as Peter speaks of those who were "*willingly ignorant*" of God's former acts, (2Pet. 3:5) in particular the flood. This thinking led them to query the validity of the prophecy that Jesus clearly gave regarding the overthrow of the Temple. But destruction came and not one stone was left upon another.

In each of the above situations, it seems that a time of testing preceded a period of judgment. For the faithful, judgment will result in their change of nature and the blessing of assisting the Lord Jesus in transforming this world. For those who forsake the ways of the Almighty, by elevating man's thinking above God's, judgment will result in being cast out. As we see declining spirituality within the household and great wickedness without, we must conclude that the end times are here and need to sound the trumpet of alarm. The elders in the days of Jeremiah did just this.

When Jeremiah's life was on the line they spoke up and used the prophet Micah to avert judgment at that time (Jer. 26:18-19). We must "*cry aloud and spare not*" (Isa.58:1) holding firm to the very end.

(See next page for link to Bro Philip's longer talk: [For if the Trumpet give an Uncertain Sound.](#))

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### 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 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020 go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChristadelphianEvents/> or <https://cdvideo.org/rpd2020>

You can watch 'Live Stream' (subscribe beforehand)—details given on these links.

On the [www.Christadelphianvideo.org](http://www.Christadelphianvideo.org) site—<https://cdvideo.org/prophecy> you can watch many Prophecy Day talks from the UK and around the world.

There is a resources section for Creation-Evolution matters especially material against Theistic Evolution. Link: <https://cdvideo.org/TE> You will find the link there to download the 174 page book *The Deception of Theistic Evolution*. To buy: Google the title or: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/BibleStudyPublications>

For Bro Philip Weatherall's talk in a series on 'Clarity regarding Christadelphian core beliefs': *For if the Trumpet give an Uncertain Sound*, the link is [cdvideo.org/corebeliefs](https://cdvideo.org/corebeliefs)  
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