

MILESTONES TO THE KINGDOM

***A Review of World
Events in 2021/2 in
the Light of Bible
Prophecy***

Don Pearce

A review of 2021

Part 1 of six bi-monthly issues

PART 1 of six bimonthly parts. Issue date: Feb. 2022

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In Surprise Move US, UK Agree To Share Nuclear Submarine Tech With Australia

A US official called the move the “biggest strategic step Australia has taken in generations.”

By AARON MEHTA and COLIN CLARK, on September 15, 2021 at 6:00 PM



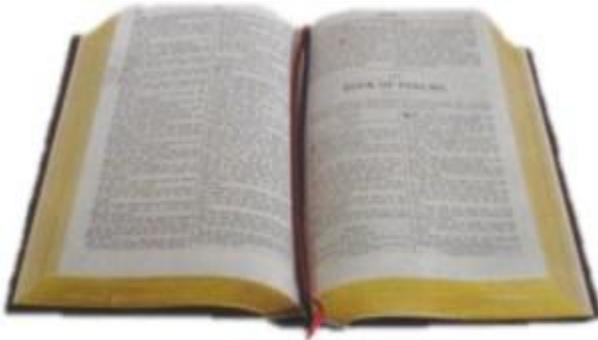
Brilliant Truss has skillset to forge strong ties with Israel

The new foreign secretary has a fierce intellect and the will to get things done



British-Israeli relations have entered a golden era

Despite the joint challenges, there's a lot to be optimistic about



Author's Notes

Background

Milestones has been in print since 1977. As an annual review of the previous year, it enabled an in-depth look at Bible Prophecies, together with a look at the events of the previous 12 months. The booklet consisted of 100 pages, A5 size.

The Problems

With events moving ever faster, as we draw closer to the Master's Return, the booklet was rapidly out-of-date.

Escalating printing and postage costs, have encouraged a fresh look at how to make *Milestones* a more accessible publication, especially to our younger members and overseas readers.

Going Forward

Age and health are key factors in ensuring that the work can continue, if the Lord Will. Supplying *Milestones* free as an electronic version in Word and PDF reduces my workload, and makes it accessible to a much wider audience!

God Willing, it is proposed to produce six issues of *Milestones* 2022 at bi-monthly spacings. In this first issue we will concentrate on a review of 2021. As such it is twice as long as anticipated for subsequent issues. In the following issues, we will have an in-depth look at a particular Prophecy, or Prophetic theme, plus current events over the previous few months. As well as keeping things up to date, this neatly provides *Milestones* in much smaller bites, spread over a whole year!

Our aim is to make this publication freely available. There are basic costs involved, with Mailchimp distribution and subscription costs to on-line news channels, which help supply my basic research items. Donations can be made towards this valuable work.

To be added to the mailing list use this link to subscribe <http://eepurl.com/b6i8sj> to the Mailchimp mailing list. You can also sign up at this link to Snippets, and the Christadelphian Video Newsletter. [See further details at bottom of page 5.]

Don Pearce.

Feb 2022

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NB. Original article spellings and punctuation are retained.

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Milestones Snippets: invaluable free source of world news

This is a 12–16-page A4 newsletter of interesting articles that I glean off the web and email 3 times a week. Sent in both Word and PDF versions. Articles are indexed. Use signup link at bottom of page 2.

Christadelphian video The www.christadelphianvideo.org site, has many exhortations, Daily Bible Readings videos, Prophecy Days and Bible School videos of really stimulating material, especially in this difficult lock-down situation. Use signup link at bottom of page 2.

Author's review of 2021 given on 30-Oct 21. Looks at God's basis of Judgment and how events in the Middle East are preparing nations for Kingdom life!

Link: <https://cdvideo.org/3GDpe0u>

Rugby Prophecy Day 26 Feb 2022.

Link to this day: <https://cdvideo.org/rpd2022>

Chapter 1: A review of 2021—Britain, a merchant power and her “young lions”

The year 2020 ended with a last-minute Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed with the EU, after many months of wrangling. Britain thought that she had finally thrown off the EU yoke and was now free to trade as she wanted, where-ever she wanted. This greatly under-estimated the zeal of the EU to keep the United Kingdom within her grasp. The last thing that Europe needed was an independent Britain prospering in the world markets, in competition with her own markets! The Agreement signed on Christmas Eve 2020 covered trade and cooperation—there proved to be little of the latter as we progressed through 2021. The UK is now considered but a 3rd party country. The fact that Britain had been a major contributor for years counted for nothing. Every obstacle was put in her path.

For Europe, Britain’s departure was a blow to their desire for “ever closer union”. Anxious to make Britain an example to other “wayward” members, it was important to show that leaving the safety of the EU ship was a dangerous and costly step.

We know from Scripture that God has a very different pathway for Britain. Although reduced now to only being a nominal Protestant country, Europe is very much under Roman Catholic influence. The purpose of the founding fathers of the EU was to recreate the Holy Roman Empire. This was Hitler’s goal, but the time was not yet right. Europe will be part of the Northern Confederacy of nations who plunder and spoil Israel. Its military might will be led by Russia, but under the direction and support of the Roman Catholic church.

Britain’s latter-day role is as a friend of Israel, who with her young lion (Eze. 38:13) Commonwealth allies, will be strongly opposed to the Northern Confederacy. This being so, it is clear that Britain’s attempts to remain friends with Europe are doomed to failure. What is so thrilling is that the timing appears to be just right! In later issues we will revisit Isaiah ch 23 which indicates the latter-day revival of the Tarshish/Tyrian trading power at the end of 70 years, with the seeming throw-away line according to the days of one king v15.

70 years for a ruler to be on the throne is a remarkable thing—there have been few who have attained this length of rulership. Yet, in the latter-day Tyre, we have the world’s longest reigning living monarch, in Queen Elisabeth! 2022 is her Platinum Jubilee. Sadly, Prince

Philip is no longer at her side, but in spite of all her family troubles she is determined to serve “her King” (the Lord Jesus), as long as she can. We await the outcome of the discussions at the present time which point to a parting of the ways between the UK and the EU, as we reach this 70-year milestone in the Queen’s reign.

Relations with the EU desperately need improving

It is now clear that the Trade deal that was agreed last December, has turned out to be a disaster. It would have been better to have left without a Deal and traded under World Trade Organisation rules—a situation we may well see unfolding in the coming months.

As the dust settles on Britain’s departure nearly three months ago from Europe’s internal market, two things have become abundantly clear.

One is that the so-called Trade and Co-operation Agreement to replace previous trading arrangements with the EU is an extremely poor deal for the UK. The second is that relations with the EU, further soured by quarrels over vaccine supply and safety, need urgently to be repaired, both to reduce already intolerable frictions in trade and to give the City a fighting chance of regaining access to European markets.

Better solutions to the Irish border issue also need to be found. In its present form, the Northern Ireland Protocol is manifestly unworkable. Rather than guaranteeing the peace in Northern Ireland, as it is supposed to, its implementation threatens only to reignite sectarian divides.

As it is, the TCA is a sell-out for the fishermen, a sell-out for financial services – Britain’s most successful export – a sell-out for Northern Ireland and a sell-out for tens of thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises that find it scarcely worth trading with the EU at all any more, such is the multitude of charges, form filling, non-tariff barriers and delays that now confront them. As one small trader put it to me: “It’s actually easier these days to sell to the United States, where we have no trade deal” *Sunday Telegraph* 21-Mar-21

The Battle over Northern Ireland

The biggest battle that Britain had with the EU in 2021—and indeed is still ongoing—has been over Northern Ireland. When Ireland broke away from the United Kingdom of Great Britain after the end of WWI, 6 counties voted to remain part of the UK, the remaining 26

counties formed the Irish Republic. The Irish Republic joined the EU at the same time as the UK. With both countries in the “Common Market” as it was then called, there was no need for a customs border between the two countries, a fact greatly appreciated by those living on either side.

With the UK leaving the EU, it was necessary to reinstate a hard border between the two countries. Neither side wanted to go back to the old border. Eventually a compromise was agreed when the UK agreed to putting



a border between the UK mainland and Northern Ireland. What was little appreciated at the time was what a clever move it was on the part of the EU negotiators who were desperate to retain as much control as possible over the departing UK. Although Northern Ireland is part of the UK, the negotiation had put this province under the control of the EU. Uniquely it is under the jurisdiction of the EU without any say in the laws being passed which she is obliged to keep. For the EU this was a coup, remembering that their long-term goal is the reunification of Ireland!

As 2021 unfolded, the problems the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP) gave rise to, had the effect of bringing the North under the influence of the South. The EU could have applied a light touch with the paperwork required for every consignment from mainland Britain into Northern Ireland. But no, every last item had to have the required paperwork, even if it was destined for a store in Northern Ireland with no prospect of it reaching the South.

The chairman of Marks and Spencer, a well-respected UK food and clothing brand with no stores in the South, only in the North, complained of the volume of paperwork especially where food like sandwiches was involved. Every ingredient had to have supporting paperwork!

“Each wagon typically has about eight documents, 720 pages per truck, that’s three large books! It’s about 40,000 pages per week!

“To do that we are employing 13 full-time vets, they are not looking after animals or welfare, they are simply ticking boxes and

filling out forms.” A. Norman M&S Chairman. *Daily Express* 22-Jul-21

Brexit slump in Irish imports from Britain—cross-border trade flourishes

For many smaller firms this was a burden too far! They simply gave up supplying their goods to NI. This opened the pathway for firms in the Irish Republic to sell goods into NI, and for goods to be imported into the South from NI instead of sourcing them from mainland UK.

Over 40% of the Republic of Ireland’s imports from the United Kingdom overall came from Northern Ireland in the first half of 2021 — up from just 6% in 2015.

But imports from Britain represented just 7.2% of total Irish imports in the first half of 2021, down from 23% in 2015.

TheJournal.ie 21-Dec-21

Mainland Britain has lost out on trade, because of the heavy-handedness of the EU’s interpretation of the import rules.

Britain has also lost out in being the bridge for Irish lorries going to the continent. Border checks now meant it was cheaper for lorries to make the longer sea crossing direct to France.

The volume of accompanied freight on the main routes between Dublin and Britain fell by 21% to 703,000 while the 259,000 units on direct routes to continental Europe represented a three-fold increase, figures from Ireland’s largest port showed. *Reuters* 21-Jan-22

Lord Frost resigns as Brexit Minister

On the 19 Dec 2021, Lord Frost the UK negotiator with the EU resigned from Boris Johnson’s cabinet. He was swiftly replaced by Liz Truss, a rising star in politics, who as Secretary of State, was given the poisoned chalice of trying to resolve the still wide gulf between the UK and the EU over the NIP. She has promised to be as hard-line as her predecessor, and has made it clear that, if necessary, she will trigger Article 16. This is the escape clause written into the NIP, for either side to trigger if they felt that matters were not working out. It has been evident that this is the situation. It awaits the courage to take this ultimate step. The EU have said that if this is triggered, they will withdraw from the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)—which was hammered out at the end of 2000. They would impose tariffs rather than trade on World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms which would be the normal default

situation. This would mark a huge split between the UK and the EU, which is what we have been looking for, as Britain’s future role, as ordained by God, puts her in an opposing camp to the EU. We look with interest at the unfolding saga, as the talks reach a critical point in late January 2022.

Britain Regains her Maritime Power

Britain as the latter-day Tyre/Tarshish power, is something that we will re-examine in latter issues, God Willing. For now, we want to recall the amazing projection of power, as Britain’s state-of-the-art Aircraft Carrier, HMS Queen Elisabeth sailed across the world.

The trip comes after the UK Government’s Integrated Review of defence and foreign policy decided Britain should “tilt” its focus towards the Indo-Pacific region, seen as a response to the growing influence of China on the world stage.

Mr Johnson said: “This is an opportunity to work with friends and partners around the world, about 40 countries will be joining us on this operation.

“This Carrier Strike Group will be going through Suez, through the Red Sea, round India, through the south China seas.

“And on the way, the people who will be going on this mission will be doing a number of things – they’ll be projecting not just Britain’s hard power, military capabilities, which are obviously extraordinary, but also our soft power, our values, what we stand for, our belief in democracy, in the rule of law.

Evening

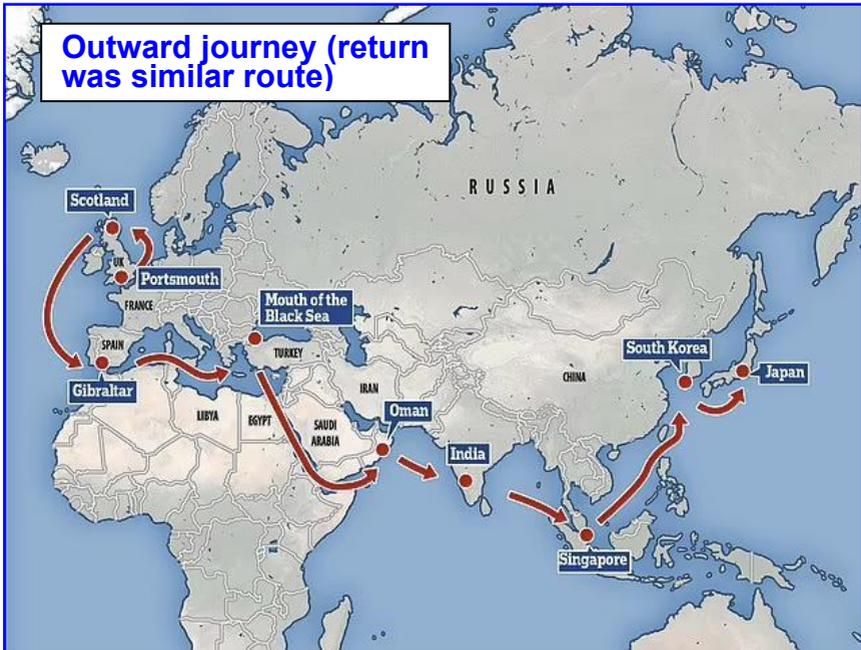
Standard 21-

May-21

The Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21), as the fleet was called consisted of the Aircraft Carrier with UK and US

helicopters and fighter jets on board, accompanied by 8 support vessels.





They set off from Portsmouth in the UK on May 22, returning in early December after a journey of some 27,000 nautical miles, conducting over 70 exercises in 40 different countries.

It was seen as a great success, cementing friendships with navies around the world. On their return journey, HMS Queen Elisabeth, berthed in the newly constructed British base at Duqm in Oman, where she will likely be based in the future. This is of interest to Bible students as this is part of the Sheba-Dedan territory of Ezekiel 38:13. The area will be at the heart of Britain’s future power base. It was thrilling to see her cooperating with many of her “young lion” commonwealth countries’ navies: India, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, US, Australia, and New Zealand.

UK Army to abandon Canada base for Oman

Another encouraging headline concerned the news that Britain was re-locating her main training base from Canada to Oman. This was not because of any fall-out with Canada, but a recognition that she needed to have equipment closer to future anticipated trouble spots. Oman’s eastern seaboard is strategically positioned for Britain’s new focus of attention—the Indo-Pacific region. Oman’s newly constructed Port Duqm was designed to be able to accommodate both

of Britain’s new aircraft carriers. As the UK’s Carrier Strike Group’s tour of the Far East was drawing to a close, Port Duma hosted the fleet in November 2021.



The desert region

behind Duqm is already being used for joint training with the Omani army. Increased facilities will form the main UK Army training base, with tanks and military vehicles based here for training and ready for deployment as needed. The UK’s other main overseas training base is in Poland in support of NATO.

U.K. defence sources said the shift to the Gulf would enable British forces to position hardware closer to allies such as Ukraine and Bahrain, and to potential adversaries such as Iran.

This will reduce the time necessary to respond to any crisis in the region and allow the U.K. government to showcase British military technology to boost potential arms sales.

“If you only have 148 tanks and 22 of them are stuck in Canada, that’s 22 tanks that are not at readiness and not available to do anything operational.” *Daily Telegraph* 24-Nov-21

Britain’s Remarkable Friendship with Israel

One of the outcomes of the Abraham Accords (we look at these again when considering Israel and the Middle East in Ch. 2), is that Britain, like many other countries, doesn’t have to worry about “not offending the Arab nations”. The moderate Arab nations are themselves embracing Israel’s technology and know-how. Britain no longer has to choose between working with Israel or working with the Gulf States—she can openly now work with both!

Britain’s relations with Israel have deep roots in the Balfour Declaration. of 1917, promising a homeland for the Jews. Her shameful treatment of the returning Jews because of her desire to please the Arab nations, upon whom she was heavily dependent for her supplies of oil, was a sad chapter in her relations with Israel. She suffered her punishment from Israel’s God, for this, slipping into decline as foretold in Isaiah 23 for a 70-year period. We are finally

(6-Feb.2022) at the end of those 70 years and we witness the revival of Britain, for her God-ordained latter-day role of being a friend and defender of Israel's right to her homeland, in preparation of Israel's Messiah and King's return.

Israel a Key Market

Early in 2021, as Britain became able to sign Trade Deals with countries around the world, Israel was one of the first to sign a continuity Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Britain so that Trade could continue under the same tariffs as when the UK was an EU member.

In May, Liz Truss, at that time the UK International Trade Secretary, held talks with her Israeli counterpart, Tzipi Hotovely about drawing up a more tailored FTA, which would cover areas including digital and data. Britain's exports to Israel are worth £2.9bn in 2020 and her imports £2bn. There is enormous scope for increasing these figures.

Tzipi Hotovely, was a minister in the Israeli government. She described Britain as “one of our biggest allies” and said she is “probably the highest representative” Israel has ever sent to the UK.

Brilliant Truss has skillset to forge strong ties with Israel

Israel welcomed her elevation; she is a great fan of Israel and gets on well with the Israeli Ambassador to Britain, Tzipi Hotovely.

Anyone who believes in strengthening the relationship between Britain and Israel should be delighted by the appointment of Liz Truss as the new Foreign Secretary.

Her promotion comes just a few weeks after a brilliant visit to Israel to kick start talks on a new bespoke post-Brexit trade deal.

Talk to anyone in Downing Street and you'll hear her described as “one of the government's deliverers”, someone who “just gets on with it and gets things done”. *Jewish Chronicle* 24-Sep-21

President Herzog pays state visit to UK

Isaac Herzog, son of Chaim Herzog, was appointed Israel's 11th President in July 2021. He and his wife Michal paid an official visit to Britain Nov 21. His three-day visit was primarily to encourage Britain to resist President Biden's efforts to resurrect the nuclear deal with Iran. Israel fears that this will enable Iran to move rapidly to be a nuclear armed country, with Israel as its main target. Britain seemed to be influenced by his message and has become more outspoken

against Biden’s proposed deal. Herzog described the UK as “one of Israel’s most powerful and close allies”

Earlier in November Israeli PM Bennett attended COP26 in Glasgow where he held valuable meetings with Boris Johnson and Liz Truss as well as meeting world leaders who were keen to learn of Israel’s experience with Covid boosters and lockdowns.

In November, the UK government responded to pressure from Israel and declared Hamas a proscribed terrorist organisation, cutting it off from any support from the UK.

“British-Israeli relations have entered a golden era”

November was capped by Israel’s PM in waiting, Yair Lapid, who currently serves as Israel’s Foreign Minister, visiting London. It was part of a tour to strengthen support against any deal with Iran. He was given exceptional access to British leaders during his visit. Liz Truss and he co-wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph*.

There is no greater sign of what can be achieved through open dialogue than the Abraham Accords. The UK was one of the first countries to publicly celebrate this historic step towards normalisation in the Middle East led by Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Morocco and mediated by the United States. One year on, the UK is continuing to play its part in supporting Israel as it works more closely with partners in the region.

Israel and the UK are the closest of friends, and today we are deepening that partnership to become even closer. Together, we will forge ahead and ensure the future is defined by liberal democracies who believe in freedom and fairness. *Daily Telegraph* Liz Truss, Yair Lapid. 29-Nov-21

During the visit Truss and Lapid signed a wide-ranging Memorandum of Understanding, enhancing cooperation in the realms of cyber, tech, trade, and defence. A number of joint military exercises have taken place over the last couple of years.

The UK’s *Daily Telegraph* trumpeted the visit under the above headline. The article, written by *Jewish Chronicle* editor Jake Wallis Simons, claimed that British officials and parliamentarians were “falling over each other in their love for the Jewish state.” He had attended a Hanukkah reception at 10 Downing Street, attended by Johnson and Lapid. “The chemistry between them was obvious.”

“They had spent all day together, an honour that is not normally accorded to a visit from a prime minister of a country with a population of less than 10 million.” *Daily Telegraph* 17-Dec-21

Johnson and Lapid had met in Israel 10 years ago when they were both journalists and struck up a close friendship, which has continued.

“The tectonic plates of geopolitics shifting in front of your eyes”

Britain’s best-kept secret proved to be an exciting event for Bible watchmen! The *Economist* magazine 19-Sep-21 hailed it like this:

Just occasionally, you can see the tectonic plates of geopolitics shifting in front of your eyes. Suez in 1956, Nixon going to China in 1972 and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 are among the examples in living memory. The unveiling last week of a trilateral defence pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States is providing another of those rare occasions.

A new acronym was born: AUKUS (pronounced orcus), an amalgamation of the abbreviations of the three countries: AU, UK, US.

The initial need for secrecy revolved around the increasing dissatisfaction within Australia to the purchase of



twelve diesel-electric powered submarines from France. The order was placed in 2016, at a time when the world had not woken up to China’s aggressive push to expand her influence around the world, using her economic influence. China was a valued customer of Australia, importing coal, iron ore and wines. Since Covid, China has disrupted much of this trade and has acted aggressively against Australia’s desire to trace the origins of Covid. China strongly denies that she had any involvement in its origins and spread.

In a changed relationship with China, the type of submarines on order would not be very useful. Diesel powered submarines have a limited range and Northern Australia is about 4,000 km from China. Nuclear-powered submarines were now needed, which have a much greater range and are far harder to detect—an important issue in a war scenario. Prices from France were escalating and construction delays were becoming a major issue. France is a leading military

hardware country, but much is produced by nationalised firms which have a poor reputation for reliability and delivery times.

Faced with these delays and increasing unsuitability, Australia came to a decision to scrap the existing order with France and turn to the US and Britain to supply her needs. The US pioneered the construction of nuclear submarines—her first was launched in 1950. Under the 1958 US–UK Mutual Defence Agreement, America shared her knowledge with her ally Britain, who launched her first nuclear powered submarines in 1960. Rolls-Royce developed a nuclear reactor which can run for 25 years without recharging.

‘Like a scene from *le Carré*’: how the nuclear submarine pact was No 10’s biggest secret

This was the headline in *The Times* 18-Sep-21, setting out how the deal had been hammered out. Australia first approached Britain.

When the First Sea Lord was invited to a meeting at the Australian high commission in March this year, he had no idea of the magnitude of what was about to unfold. Admiral Sir Tony Radakin — described by colleagues as a “doer” — was asked by Vice-Admiral Michael Noonan, the Australian Chief of Navy, whether the British and Americans could help their ally to build a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines.

“That was the first contact. It was a big strategic play. He [Radakin] then came back and handed the whole thing over to [Sir Stephen] Lovegrove,” said a security source, referring to the permanent secretary at that time at the Ministry of Defence. The source compared it to a scene out of a John le Carré spy novel.

So began Operation Hookless — as it was codenamed inside No 10 — and the most closely guarded secret inside government in years. Only about ten people in Britain were privy to the details, including the prime minister, the foreign secretary, and the defence secretary. Lovegrove, who was still the Ministry of Defence’s permanent secretary when handed the proposal. ... John Bew, Johnson’s foreign policy adviser and the mastermind behind the integrated review that talked of a “tilt” towards the Indo-Pacific region, was also allowed into the fold. Those who were present were “read in”, meaning they had to sign a paper vowing not to let the secret details of the discussions out of the room.

After the initial meeting in March, the proposal was put to the Americans. “It took quite a long time to go through the American

machine—it had to be discussed at the Pentagon, the state department and the energy department,” the source said. In the weeks that followed, those in the British circle believed there was a “20 per cent chance of it falling apart”.

Boris Johnson enthusiastically embraced the proposal, seeing that there could be far more than just submarines.

“Boris really pushed it. There was a choice about how broad it would be — was it just a technical agreement on a specific subject or is this more broad? Boris was pushing that it had to be as ambitious as possible. This was a strategic move,” a government source who was involved in the discussions said.

By the time of the G7 summit in Cornwall in June, the plans were well under way. As the French were occupied with the unfolding so-called “sausage war” over the Brexit divorce deal, Johnson, President Biden and Scott Morrison, the Australian prime minister thrashed out the details of a top-secret pact that would later be known as the AUKUS defence and security alliance.

“There was a lot of noise at G7 about sausages and the EU and there was a lot of excitement around that, and it seemed odd for us that we were doing serious, serious, business in this meeting,” the government source added.

The final details were hammered out and the Agreement was announced on 15 September.

After the announcement of the pact this week, Lovegrove described it as “the most significant capability collaboration anywhere in the world in the past decades.” Senior figures in government have compared it to the 1958 mutual defence agreement (MDA) between President Eisenhower and Harold Macmillan, the British prime minister, and the beginning of the “special nuclear relationship” that allows the nations to exchange nuclear materials, technology and information, an agreement which continues today.

AUKUS is not merely about submarines. It is much more significant. As the Australian prime minister Scott Morrison said, it is “a partnership where our technology, our scientists, our industry, our defence forces will work together to deliver a safer and more secure region that ultimately benefits all.” This is the heart and strength of this new agreement: international co-operation to face challenges together. AUKUS will boost security,

prosperity, the sharing of technology. We will work together in all domains including space and cyber. In the UK it will create hundreds of highly skilled jobs, delivering on our prime minister's policy of levelling up across the country. The Indo-Pacific is increasingly the engine room of the global economy. That best explains the UK's tilt towards the Indo-Pacific. *The Times* 18-Sep-21

Biden's troubled first year

It is clear that there are serious concerns over Biden's health and his ability to speak coherently. He has avoided press conferences as much as possible and is often visibly techy over some of the questions fired at him. His approval ratings have fallen as the year progressed. Many are wondering if he can last a full term in office, let alone think of re-running for a second time.

The disastrous US military withdrawal from Afghanistan allowing the Taliban to swiftly take over was a matter of great concern to her allies, fearing that the West's enemies would see this as US weakness. Many countries wonder to what extent they can now rely on America coming to their aid in time of trouble.

We can see the Hand of our God in the affairs of men. Our historical understanding of prophecy fulfilling has seen Britain as the nation playing a major role at the time of the end. While America was strong and the UK weak, that looked a wistful dream—until now. 2021 saw the shoots of a growing power, and as we move into 2022, I am sure we shall see that our understanding is standing the test of time. It is clear that Britain has a bright future in God's purpose. As the year ends with increasing troubles for Boris Johnson, it may mean that his course is coming to an end and a more anti-Europe leader will be brought on the scene to energise Britain to build up her worldwide trade. In the words of Isaiah 23:17:

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.

For God, nothing is impossible!

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Chapter 2: A review of 2021—Israel and the Middle East

In our previous chapter on Britain, we have covered several matters about Israel and her relations with Britain. 2021 also saw increasing ties with Commonwealth countries to Israel and the Middle East—India being one of the foremost. So again, in fulfilment of our historical understanding of the Merchants of Tarshish with all her young lions, they are being drawn to support Israel and work in the Sheba-Dedan territory. Ezekiel 38:13.

May 2021 saw Hamas launch a violent rocket attack against Israel, at a time when Israel had no government. It was met by a firm and surgical response.

For Zion's watchmen, the unfolding involvement of Israel with her Middle East neighbours has been a heartening confirmation of Scripture coming to life. The description of a time of peace and safety, or security, in the region (Eze.38:8-12) has been so far from reality, that alternative interpretations have been put forward. We can now see that our historic understanding is unfolding before our eyes. Far from her Arab neighbours being enemies and attacking Israel, we see them making peace with Israel. The Middle East is dividing into two camps. Those nations who choose to support Israel and her right to live in her ancient homeland and work with her; and those nations still bitterly opposed to Israel. The latter are also increasingly coming into the orbit of Russia and will be part of the Image power of Daniel 2 who come against Israel to destroy her, but find themselves crushed by Israel's King and Messiah. He will grind their kingdoms to powder and replace them with the Kingdom of God. Dan.235,44.

The Scriptures indicate that there will be other descendants of Abraham who will be blessed in the Kingdom Age—these Scriptural prophecies we hope to examine in subsequent issues.

We see the nations represented by “Sheba and Dedan” (Eze. 38:13) now working with Israel. Not only that, but the same verse indicates that “the merchants of Tarshish with her young lions” are also working with Israel and her new-found friends in the Middle East.

Hamas strikes again!

Hamas used the excuse of a civilian court case against non-rent paying squatters in Jerusalem, to allegedly show how Israel was

driving out the Arabs in order to increase the number of Jews in Jerusalem. An incident on the Temple Mount was used to warn the world that the Alaksa Mosque was under attack! Israeli police had to be deployed there as Arabs had stored large caches of stones to throw down on the Western Wall Plaza where Jews gather to pray and had also set trees alight through letting off fireworks.

Heavily backed by Iran, Hamas set off 1,750 rockets in the first 3 days, of what turned out to be an 11-day conflict. At least 300 of these fell short, landing in Gaza resulting in 17 civilian deaths on the first day alone. An errant rocket on the second day knocked out Gaza powerlines, cutting off nearly 250,000 from their power supply and affecting water supplies and sewage disposal.

Hamas used more sophisticated rockets than in previous conflicts, with a much deeper reach. An estimated total of more than 4,000 rockets were fired into Israel over an 11-day period. Many rockets failed and crashed into Gaza, killing civilians and damaging property in the process.

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

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

length. They are used to transport weapons and personnel as well as storing explosives.

Israel made a particular target of these tunnels, claiming to have destroyed 100 km (60 miles). Because many run under civilian houses this was a very difficult task. Pinpoint bombing was used where they were known to run down a street or open ground. Spectacular explosions also occurred, sometimes bringing down nearby buildings when ammunition stores were struck. She struck hard at rocket factories and Hamas military buildings including the main press building which also housed Hamas's equipment designed to thwart Israel's use of the Iron Dome. Through prior warnings there was no loss of life when, in a dramatic explosion, this 14-storey building was reduced to rubble. Hundreds of rocket-launching sites were wiped out and key Hamas operatives targeted.

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

Israel was quietly satisfied at the accuracy of their attacks, reckoning that the militant to civilian deaths were 1 to 1, way below anything achieved by even US or UK armies. Israeli civilian deaths were low, because the sophisticated Iron Dome system was able to destroy incoming rockets—at great expense, and also the warning systems allowed them the opportunity to reach shelters which are abundant in Israel.

Extensive use was made of swarms of drones which gave Israel an unrivalled view of what was happening in real time, preventing civilian deaths and enabling rocket launchers to be wiped out. Drones avoided the need to send Israeli soldiers into Gaza, drastically reducing military casualties. Israel's development of sophisticated drones showed the great benefits of their use.

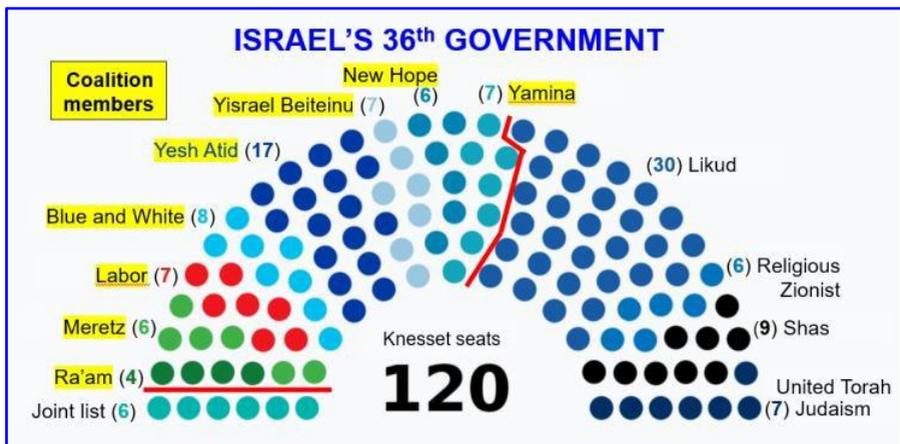
Badly damaged, Hamas never-the-less continues; how Israel manages to break them, in order to dwell securely, we have to wait to see. Hamas lost the support of the moderate Arab nations, who saw them as Iran's stooges and a threat to their own safety.

Israel's new government

For the fourth time in two years, Israel held a general election, following the collapse of the 34th government in December 2018.

The following two elections failed to come up with a majority coalition of at least 61 seats. After the 3rd election a government was formed in May 2020, but collapsed in December, having failed to agree to a budget. So fresh elections were called for 23 March 2021. Mr Netanyahu was given the first opportunity to form a government, but at the end of the 28-day deadline, had failed to gain enough support. President Rivin then gave Mr Lapid the opportunity to build a large enough coalition. With just half-an-hour before the deadline ran out, which would have led to fresh elections, a wafer-thin majority was agreed. Mr Netanyahu, Israel's longest running Prime Minister was now leader of the Opposition! The new coalition had the greatest number of parties in Israel's modern history.

It is a right-centre-left wing coalition compared with the previous centrist-right wing government. There are no deeply religious parties included. There is reasonable balance - the right wing has 20 seats,



the centre 25 and the left wing 13 and the Arab Party 4 seats. Most of the important ministry posts are in the hands of the right-wing parties.

What unites them is their opposition to Bibi Netanyahu as Prime Minister. It does seem that after many years in power, he had succeeded in making many enemies. Perhaps, we see parallels between some of the kings of Israel and Judah, who after being in power for many years, were lifted up in pride, and sought to reinforce their position by unpopular moves. Many former colleagues—Bennett who has formed this new government, Lieberman and Saar who are in the new cabinet—were close to Bibi

and served under him, but strong disagreements drove them into total opposition to him, vowing they would not serve under him, in spite of their shared ideology.

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

The governing coalition includes three right-wing parties, two centrist parties, two left-wing parties, and one Arab Muslim party. For only the second time, there will be an Arab minister, as Issawi Frej from Meretz will serve as minister for regional cooperation. Mansour Abbas, the leader of UAL, is expected to become a deputy minister. *Aust/Israel Jewish Affairs Council* 18-Jun-21

This 36th Government was sworn in on 13 June 2021. Naftali Bennett (Yemina party) is the first religious Prime Minister that Israel has had. He is scheduled to hand over to the Alternative PM, Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid party), after 2 yrs. In the meantime, Lapid is Defence Minister. The two men have worked well together.

Few thought that this unwieldy coalition would last long, but at the end of the year they have shown a strong determination to succeed, having faced tough challenges from the aftermath of Hamas' attack on Israel and from Covid. It may well be that Netanyahu's work is now over, and new hands are moving things forward. There appeared a complete acceptance of this new team by the Abraham Accord nations and the UK.

BICOM's Report on the first 100 days of the new government

At the end of September, BICOM (Britain Israel Communication & Research Centre) produced an 8-page progress report.

Key Points

- In the first 100 days of the Bennett-Lapid government, Israel's foreign policy can be characterised in three ways: restoring ties with strategic neighbours, a new accommodating approach with traditional allies, and continuity with Gulf partners.
- The most noticeable change of the new government's international engagement has been toward restoring ties with neighbours, most prominently the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Jordan. Working under the (Defence Minister) Gantz Track, the

government is setting anew its relationship with the PA through goodwill gestures and mending ties with the Jordanian Kingdom after the hardship Netanyahu-Abdullah II years.

- On Gaza, the government has swiftly returned the flow of goods across the border to the same level as it was before Operation Guardian of the Walls in May (and has gone even further in some measures) and has offered a new initiative under the (Foreign Minister) Lapid in the hope of maintaining quiet with Hamas.
- There has been a clear and more accommodating approach with the US and the EU in which the new government is deploying a less combative and more friendly rhetorical stance when it disagrees with traditional allies over vital issues.
- Finally, the new government is continuing top-level efforts to strengthen the Abraham Accords and ensure its expansion in the region. In his short time as Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid has visited two of the Abraham Accords countries and signed agreements with them that relate to several sectors.

Coalition passes 2021 budget, first in 3.5 years, averting early election threat

After an all-night session, the new government managed on September 30 to get their budget approved, 6 weeks ahead of the deadline. This is Israel's first budget for three and a half years! avoiding the need to dissolve the government yet once again and call fresh elections. This was shortly followed by the approval of the 2022 budget. Money has been allocated to increase investment in the Arab areas under Israel's control, aimed at meeting some of the difficulties experienced in these areas.

Israel prepares to strike Iran

Israel's deep concerns that Biden was prepared to lift sanctions against Iran in return for a meaningless agreement on nuclear weapons, drove Israel to make preparations for taking matters into her own hands. The Arab Gulf State nations would be prepared to assist Israel's attempts to bomb the many nuclear weapons sites that Iran has buried deep underground. The weight of the huge bunker-busting bombs that are the only weapons known to be able to penetrate to the depth needed, would require Israeli planes to fly over Arab territory and allow refuelling planes to be able to ensure the planes had enough fuel to return to base. Israel may be developing unknown weapons capable of deep ground penetration.

Israel opens Chinese-operated port in Haifa to boost regional trade links

Early September, the newly rebuilt Haifa Port came into operation.

This state-of-the-art port can handle vessels holding up to 18,000 containers. It will cut handling costs and times as Israel prepares to see a big increase in her trade, 99% of which is shipped by sea. A new port at Ashdod



is also being built which will be run by a Swiss company and hopes to open in 2022.

Israel's relations with her neighbours

Egypt. Israel signed her first Peace Accord with an Arab country in 1979, following Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977. It has been regarded as a "cold peace", with little change on the ground. Negotiations took place in secret with the political and military leaders. Israeli intelligence proved invaluable on many occasions.

Things have now changed. No longer do the trips have to be made in secret, they can be done openly. Israel cooperates with Egypt to control Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israeli gas is being supplied to Egypt to export as Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). Egypt's growing population consumes all the gas that Egypt produces, Israel's gas enables her exports to boom. With pressure from disruption of supplies from Russia, ship-transported LPG is in great demand. In February, the two countries agreed to increase capacity by building a fresh pipeline to carry gas from Israel's gas fields to the processing plant in Egypt.

In September PM Bennett met with the Egyptian President, El-Sisi in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. At the close of their meeting Bennett said:

"I have just finished a first visit with the President of Egypt. The meeting was very important and very good. During the meeting, first and foremost, we created a foundation for deep ties in the future.

"We discussed a series of issues in the diplomatic, security and economic spheres, as well as ways to deepen ties and strengthen the interests of our countries.

"Israel is increasingly opening up to the countries of the region, and the basis of this longstanding recognition is the peace between Israel and Egypt. Therefore, on both sides we must invest in strengthening this link, and we have done so today."
Israel Ministry Foreign Affairs 13-Sep-21

Such a visit would have been unthinkable just a few years ago!

Jordan. Israel's Peace Treaty with Jordan was signed in 1994. Again, this proved to be a "cold peace". Behind the scenes there was secret contact made with King Abdullah II, but in recent years under Netanyahu it had soured. Israel's new government has been determined to rebuild those ties. In July PM Bennett held a secret meeting with the King, with FM Lapid meeting with his counterpart.

These were productive meetings and Israel, which supplies 55 million M³ of water a year to Jordan, agreed to up that by a further 50 million M³ immediately and a further increase of the same size the following year. Water scarcity is a great problem for Jordan.

They also agreed to allow Jordan to increase its exports to the so-called West Bank, from \$160m to \$700m, giving Jordan's economy a big boost.

In September, the new President of Israel, Isaac Herzog held a secret meeting with the King.

In a further sign of increasing cooperation, a Jordanian jet took part in the massive Blue Flag exercise, involving Israeli fighter jets with planes from eight other countries. In another first, the UAE sent observers to watch this 2-week training exercise in October.

In November, Israel, Jordan, and the UAE signed a memorandum of understanding in Dubai, for the UAE to finance the building of huge solar farms in Jordan from which Israel would purchase 600 megawatts of electricity annually. Israel would build an additional desalination plant to enable her to sell up to 200 million M³ of water to Jordan annually.

United Arab Emirates. This was the first country to sign up to the Abraham Accords in 2020. Of great significance because the UAE and the next country Bahrain were very much on the territory of the Dedan of old. These were ancient trading powers, who, along with many other countries traded in the markets of ancient Tyre. The growth of trade with the UAE and the resulting close friendships, have been a remarkable sign of the tectonic shift in attitudes towards Israel. These countries see in Israel a friend to defend them against an aggressive Iran and a trading partner that can help them green the deserts, as well as supplying them with technical know-how and equipment. At the end of the year, bilateral trade between Israel and the UAE had reached \$1bn and is expected to double by the end of 2022, according to the UAE-Israel Business Council.

"Key sectors include tourism, agriculture, diamonds, renewable energy projects in solar power and water, oil and gas, investments in Israeli technology companies, establishment of Israeli-owned companies in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, consumer goods and professional services," the council said in a statement. *Atalayar (UAE)* 24-Dec-21

Israel's non-military trade with Bahrain, mainly diamonds, tourism and refined metals for chemicals, is expected to reach \$220m by the end of 2021. For all three countries it has been a "warm peace", enthusiastically embraced at all levels.

Expanded Israel-India ties start taking shape, after the Netanyahu-Modi bromance

We know that "*the young lions*" of Eze. 38:13 need to be working in this "*Sheba-Dedan*" region and friendly to Israel. Again, it has been very encouraging to see the recent progress of one of those young lions—India—working with Israel and the Gulf Arabs.

President Modi and PM Netanyahu had a remarkably close friendship, building trade between these two countries facing similar threats from Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Would this friendship continue following Netanyahu's departure as PM?

The answer is Yes! Under the above headline the *Times of Israel* showed that the ties were continuing to grow.

With Netanyahu out of office, Modi now has to carve out a personal relationship with a new Israeli leadership, the very same individuals who banded together for the purpose of driving Netanyahu out of office.

But all signs indicate that even if one half of the duo is out of power, ties between Israel and India will continue to grow, and may even enjoy a significant boost from the Abraham Accords.

“India and Israel have been drawing closer together for many years, and the future points toward an expansion and even greater convergence of interests,” said Oshrit Birvadker, an India expert at Reichman University in Herzliya. “The series of visits by senior officials is entirely in line with the overall relationship.”

India’s Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar wrapped up a five-day swing through Israel, during which he lauded bilateral commercial ties, saying that India regards Israel “in many ways as perhaps our most trusted and innovative partner.”

A day before, Jaishankar extended an invitation from Modi to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to make his first official state visit to India.

“Modi was among the first world leaders to congratulate Bennett on his ascension to the premiership,” noted Birvadker, “and has said that he wants to continue deepening ties.”

But perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Jaishankar’s visit was a four-way Zoom call he conducted with Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The officials participating in that virtual meeting were not cobbled together at random. Their countries represent an emerging alliance that can play a central role in India’s—and the region’s—economic future.

New Delhi, which sees China’s modern Silk Road scheme as a curb on its own growth and international trade, initially sought to avoid being hemmed in by creating its own corridor to Central Asia via Iran, and then on to Europe.

But the project—known as the International North-South Transit Corridor—has been an utter failure.

With the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020, India was presented with a new opportunity to challenge Chinese designs on regional and global trade.

Rail networks being drawn up between Israel and the UAE would allow India to ship goods to the UAE, which would then be spirited by train across Saudi Arabia and Jordan, before crossing into Israel at Beit She’an and then subsequently to Haifa.

From there, goods would be shipped to Greece's Piraeus port, one of the largest in Europe, from which India would be able to access the entire continent.



Though 300 kilometres (186 miles) of rail remain to be built in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the train link is no fantasy. In March, the Transportation Ministry announced that it had given the green light for a rail line connecting Haifa to Beit She'an to be extended east by several kilometres to the Jordanian border, where a new goods depot would also be built.

“This new connectivity constitutes a strategic paradigm shift of enormous geopolitical consequence that could reshape [India’s] role in the Eurasian economic order,” according to Michael Tanchum of the University of Navarra in Spain, who researches strategic connectivity networks between Asia, Europe, and Africa.

And there is already funding available for the project as well. In March, the UAE announced it was setting up a \$10 billion investment fund aimed at strategic sectors in Israel. According to Globes, the railway link to Haifa is one of the fund’s flagship projects.

Goods could reach Europe from Mumbai within 10 days, according to Tanchum—40 percent quicker than the Suez Canal route. *Times of Israel* 23-Oct-21

The report by Michaël Tanchum is entitled *India’s Arab-Mediterranean Corridor: A Paradigm Shift in Strategic Connectivity to Europe* and was published in Aug. 2021. His map above, illustrates India’s plans.

This scheme would be a win-win for all its participants, especially India and Israel. A few years ago, such a four-way conversation would have been unthinkable. How rapidly is peace and prosperity

spreading to the region, creating a situation that has been long anticipated from the words of God through Ezekiel describing a period of *peace* and *prosperity*, prior to Gog bringing his companions against an Israel *dwelling securely*. (Eze.38:9-12)

India and Israel Strengthen Their Alliance in the Face of Biden's Pro Iran-Pakistan Policies

For the last several years the friendship between India and Israel has grown considerably to take on the form of an alliance in both technology and defense.

The mutual interests of India and Israel now align with the Sunni Arabs whose interest is in stopping Iranian expansion. For the Indians they are primarily concerned with Pakistan.

The Abraham Accords allowed not only peace between Israel and the Gulf States, but a cross relationship between the Sunni Arabs and India. The power of this tripartite cannot be overstated. All three powers now working together have the ability and appears the will to eject themselves from America's orbit and chart their own independent foreign policy. *IsraelUnwired* 08-Feb-21

Indian firm invests \$2bn in a chemical plant in UAE

The investment is the first in the Middle East for India's largest private petrochemicals company

Reliance Industries, India's largest private petrochemicals company, will develop a major new chemicals facility in partnership with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company at the new Ta'ziz Industrial Chemicals Zone in Ruwais.

It is understood that the deal, the first for Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries in the Middle East, is worth \$2 billion.

Ta'ziz is a joint venture between Adnoc and state holding company ADQ being developed to use refined products as the basis for a range of chemicals and other derivatives used by industry.

The products being produced by the Reliance joint venture, particularly PVC, has a range of uses in pipes, flooring, medical equipment, cables, and the automotive industry, among others.

The deal advances "India-UAE cooperation in value enhancement in the energy and petrochemicals sectors," said Mr Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries and Asia's wealthiest man.

"The project will manufacture ethylene dichloride, a key building block for production of PVC in India. This is a significant step in globalising Reliance's operations and we are proud to partner with Adnoc in this important project for the region," he added.

India is a key importer of Middle East crude, particularly from the UAE, and has looked to strengthen its energy partnership over the last few years. *TheNational.ae* 29-Jun-21

Saudi, Indian Navies Hold Exercise in Arabian Gulf

The Indian navy is ranked No.7 in the world, as befits India being a Tarshish power in the past, and she is keen to build its strength in these last days. As we saw in Ch. 1, India conducted joint exercises with the UK's Carrier Strike Group 21.

Saudi Arabia and India launched their first joint military naval exercises in the Arabian Gulf in August 2021. The exercise aimed to unify concepts, exchange expertise, and develop command, control and communications during joint operations to ensure freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Arabian Gulf.

The Indian embassy in Riyadh said the manoeuvres heralded a new chapter in bilateral defense ties.

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Chapter 3: A review of 2021—Russia, Turkey and Iran

Many of the events in Europe in 2021 have to be seen through the lens of Russia. So before turning to Europe and the Vatican in Ch.4, we will now look at Russia and her allies—Turkey and Iran.

Russia, we know from Ezekiel 38 plays a big role in the events of these last days. Described in v2 as “Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” (RV, etc.). Rosh is the ancient name of Ukraine—Kievan Rus—cultural ancestor of Russia and Belarus. Meshech is Moscow (Russia’s political centre) and Tubal—ancient Tobolsk—became the de-facto capital of Siberia from 1590. Siberia is where the majority of Russia’s mineral wealth is found, chief of which are coal, petroleum, natural gas, diamonds, iron ore, and gold. Magog, we associate with Germany.

It is clear that Gog gathers many companion nations to come against the returned nation of Israel who are dwelling safely (v8,11) in the land. First listed is Persia, today’s Iran. Turkey is not listed as a companion, but from Daniel ch. 11, we understand that Russia takes possession of Constantinople, when he moves down to occupy the “King of the North” territory centred in Syria. It would seem that Russia’s friendship with Turkey changes to one of conqueror and conquered!

In parallel we have the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image of Daniel ch 2. The eastern Roman leg established itself in Constantinople, and with the fall of that city in 1453, the military power moved to Moscow, known as the 3rd Rome. From here the Tsars ruled their vast dominions, adopting the Greek Orthodox teachings to become the Russian Orthodox Church, which worked hand in hand with the Tsars. This eastern leg came to an end in World War I, with the murder of the Tsar and his family. Development of the feet stage had to wait until the ending of the Communist rule in 1991. Since then, there has been a big revival of Church and State cooperation. Putin models himself on Tsar Peter the Great, and longs to see the glory days of the Russian Empire restored. With Bible prophecy in hand, we can make sense of recent events. The Eastern Foot is forming nicely!

Following the swallowing up of Crimea and parts of Ukraine in 2014, Putin has been working to bring more of Ukraine under his heel.

One of the reasons Ukraine holds an important role in Russia's history is that it was from here that Orthodoxy religion came to Russia. Kievan Rus as it was then called, converted to "Christianity" under Vladimir the Great in 988. When 250 years later, it fell to the Mongols, the Orthodox Church moved northward, ending up with its centre in Moscow.

Putin's new Ukraine essay reveals imperial ambitions

This was the headline to a fascinating article written by Peter Dickinson in the *Atlantic Council* 15-Jul-21.

The 5,000-word article, entitled "*On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*," was published on July 12 and features many of talking points favored by Putin throughout the past seven years of undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine.

The Russian leader uses the essay to reiterate his frequently voiced conviction that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people," while blaming the current collapse in bilateral ties on foreign plots and anti-Russian conspiracies.

In one particularly ominous passage, he openly questions the legitimacy of Ukraine's borders and argues that much of modern-day Ukraine occupies historically Russian lands, before stating matter of factly, "Russia was robbed." Elsewhere, he hints at a fresh annexation of Ukrainian territory, claiming, "I am becoming more and more convinced of this: Kyiv simply does not need Donbas."

Putin ends his lengthy treatise by appearing to suggest that Ukrainian statehood itself ultimately depends on Moscow's consent, declaring, "I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia."

The world did not have to wait long for words to become threatening realities!

NATO's Big Concern from Russia's Zapad Exercise: Putin's Forces Linger in Belarus

First there were Russia's annual war exercises, which rotate round the four military divisions of Russia. 2021 was the turn of the Western region. Belarus was the centre for a spectacular display of Russia's military might as over 200,000 troops from all over Russia took turns to hone their skills on Ukraine's NE borders in mid-September. It appeared that many of them did not return to base. Many troops were moved to bases in Russia close to Ukraine's

borders. Belarus is very dependent upon Russia and its President Alexander Lukashenko, is very pro-Russia.

Should Belarus become an appendage of the Russian Federation, Ukraine would be surrounded by Russian forces on three sides. It would also present a dramatic escalation of the existential threat to Poland, the largest front-line NATO state, and open a new border with Lithuania.

Up until last year the possibility of such a move by Putin was considered remote. But concerns spiked last August, when a series of protests began in Belarus over accusations amid significant evidence that Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko rigged his re-election to a sixth term in office.

Breaking Defense (US) 04-Oct-21

Russia war fears explode—Putin readies 100,000 troops at border for ten-pronged attack

Ukrainian intelligence suggest that Russia has deployed 40 "battalion tactical groups" (BTGS) to the border with Ukraine.

BTGs are large formations of troops, armour, air forces and artillery.

These military units are designated specific missions by the Russian Army.

The key directive for these units is the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

An intelligence map released by Ukraine also lists

Russia as having 94,000 troops, 1,200 tanks, 1,600 pieces of the artillery, 330 aircraft, 75 warships and six submarines along the border. *Daily Express 24-Nov-21*

At the year end the situation looked very critical. Would Russia risk invading? How would the world react? We know from the past division of the Roman Empire, that there are many states presently



aligned to the West, that we would expect to be found aligned to the Eastern Foot of Nebuchadnezzar's Image. There is much realignment to take place!

Brutal new Iranian President raises major policy questions

Following Presidential "elections" in June 2021, Iran's hardliner Raisi was elected, taking up office in August. It came at a critical time in the nuclear deal talks and showed that Iran was going to continue her hard-line approach. The *Aust/Israel Jewish Affairs Council* 06-Jul-21 gave this summary of the man.

Ebrahim Raisi's effective appointment to the presidency of Iran has many implications, none of them positive for either ordinary Iranians or the Biden Administration's attempt to re-enter the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal.

Raisi cut his teeth during the 1980's as a brutal enforcer of Ayatollah Khomeini's system of clerical rule. He is most notorious for being one of the four Death Commissioners who oversaw the mass summary execution of thousands of political prisoners over several months in 1988, something of which he remains proud and for which he has been sanctioned by the US.

Since then, Raisi has gone from strength to strength as a torturer and butcher, crushing all opposition and protests in his various judicial capacities, including the 2009 Green Movement. Since 2016, Raisi has increasingly been groomed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as a potential successor.

We know that Iran (Persia) is to be a companion of Gog (Eze. 38:5), seeking the destruction of Israel. This is another clear indication of Scripture coming alive in our days. Iran works through many proxies as she seeks to destroy Israel. She extensively funds and supplies weapons to the Houthi terrorists in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Popular Mobilization Units in Iraq and works directly in Syria to put men and equipment here, in her battle against America and Israel.

Her economy is in a bad shape and with many Chinese workers working on Chinese projects there, has suffered from very high numbers of Covid deaths. Water is in short supply and electricity rationed as Iran faced an exceptionally hot, dry summer in 2021. Much of its electricity comes from hydroelectric dams, where water levels had dropped by 47% from Sept 2020 to July 2021. Corruption is rampant. There is an extensive "brain-drain" as many educated

Iranians flee to find a better life abroad. The average monthly wage of an Iranian worker is less than \$200.

Turkey: Drifting Further into Russian Orbit

Turkey occupies the territory of the “Little Horn of the Goat” of Daniel 8. In 1453 the Ottoman Turkish power conquered Constantinople—modern Istanbul—the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Turkey is not destined to remain in control of her territory for much longer. Russia is to take this region on her way to conquer Egypt and Israel. Dan.11:40-43.

The two leaders, Putin and Erdoğan share an uneasy relationship. Both men have big ambitions, but Turkey lacks the strength to establish herself as a strong power. The two men frequently meet to discuss joint plans, but Russia will not flinch from eliminating this rival for power in the region!

Constantinople (Istanbul) holds a special place in Russian eyes, as this is the birthplace of her religion. Putin seeks to restore “Christian” rule over this region, together with restoring Jerusalem to “Christian” control. Russia’s Black Sea fleet is dependant upon Turkey’s cooperation as warships entering the Mediterranean need to transit through Turkey’s Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits.



Although Turkey has been a long-term member of NATO, her recent turning to Russia for S-400 missile defence weapons has alienated her from NATO and the US. Much of her gas is now supplied by Russia. The Turkish lira has plummeted in value as a result of Erdoğan’s unorthodox measures to try to strengthen it. It lost 40% against the US\$ during the year, more than any other major currency. Inflation at the year-end is running at 20%.

It is not difficult to see Turkey falling under Russia’s control.

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Chapter 4: A review of 2021—Europe and the Vatican

Europe is part of Nebuchadnezzar's Image—represented in these last days by the foot at the base of the Western Roman leg. The feet are an unstable mix of iron and clay. (Dan.2:42,43) The iron of the Papacy with the clay or seed of men, (v43) in the so-called democratic rule of the EU. Together with the newly formed Eastern foot of Russia, an alliance of mainly "Christian" nations (Eze. 38:2,5,6), will be stirred to come against Israel. This takes place after the Return of the Master to raise his dead saints and to gather the living saints to judgment, in preparation for that great work which lies ahead. Following the invasion of Israel and the break-up of the nation, Gog appears to have triumphed—but not for long! Christ and his now immortalised saints will come up from the Judgment Seat to destroy Israel's enemies upon the mountains of Israel as described in the latter verses of Ezekiel ch 38 and in ch 39.

For watching saints, the anti-Israel spirit in Europe has been a clear indication of where Europe's heart lies. The opposition of the Vatican to the Jews returning to their homeland has been well documented. Less well known is Europe's opposition. Most of Europe is heavily influenced by Roman Catholic doctrines. Jews are regarded as Christ Killers, and if one believes in a Trinity that equates with God-Killers.

Why Europe "Will Remain Hostile to Israel"

Rafael Bardaji, executive director of the Friends of Israel Initiative and Spain's former national security advisor, spoke to participants in a February 15 Middle East Forum webinar about the persistent "clash of interests ... between the European Union (EU) and the Israeli government" likely to endure for the foreseeable future.

According to Bardaji, three points of friction between the EU and Israel are prominent this year. The first is the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its former prosecutor, Gambian lawyer Fatou Bensouda, to "accept the Palestinians as a national state ... able to ask for investigation, prosecution and indictment of a non-state-member of the ICC," namely Israel. "The Europeans are very well attached, by heart, to the ICC despite all violations of international law regarding this decision."

The second point of friction concerns Iran. Despite Tehran's violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the EU is eager to "keep it afloat" and press the U.S. to lift sanctions imposed under Trump in order to resume their own trade with Tehran.

The third point of conflict is European eagerness to "pull the Palestinians back into the center stage" of the Middle East peace process, despite the fact that their longstanding belief that "without them, nothing can be done in the region" has been proven wrong.

Furthermore, "a state that is defined by religious belief—the state of the Jewish people"—is seen as an "anachronism" given the "radical secularization of Europe." The average European, ascribing to a "post-modern world," cannot comprehend a people defined by a religion other than Islam surviving in the hostile environs of the Middle East.

Bardaji is pessimistic about the future of EU-Israel relations. Marilyn Stern. *Middle East Forum* 14-Mar-21

One of the ways the EU seeks to oppose Israel's occupation of Judea and Samaria—the so-called West Bank, which avoids pointing to Israel's previous possession of the area in Bible times—is to encourage Palestinian buildings in areas promised to Israel under the Oslo Accords. Large areas of territory allocated to Israel have been built on with EU money. It also pours funds into the Palestinian coffers, which is used to pay moneys to the families of terrorists.

Europe's deadly hypocrisy

The EU also enables the Palestinian Authority to pay the families of terrorists for murdering Israelis. Last December, the PA announced that the EU had contributed 54 per cent of the cost of benefits for "needy" families.

By so substantially helping provide for the "Palestinian needy," the EU allows the PA to use its own funds in order to pay rewards for terror. The purported wall between welfare assistance and "pay-for-slay" is an illusion.

The EU is also pouring money in to create a de facto Palestinian state, regardless of the Palestinian strategy of using such a state to destroy Israel—and while the EU condemns Israel for "illegally" building homes for Israelis in these disputed territories.

The Palestinian news service Wafa recently reported that Germany had pledged 100 million euros to the Palestinian Authority over the next two years for projects in the Gaza Strip, eastern Jerusalem and Palestinian settlements in “Area C”.

This was merely an instalment of a 3 billion euro spending plan by 2030 designed to advance the creation of a Palestinian state, with different countries being allocated different areas in which to concentrate their funds.

According to Wafa, the Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh “expressed ... his appreciation and thanks to the government and people of Germany for their generous and continuous support and continuing commitment to the rights of the Palestinian people to liberation, independence, and to establish their independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of return for refugees”.

Jewish News Syndicate 08-Oct-21

Germany’s New Coalition Government

Germany’s Chancellor, Angela Merkel has now stepped down after 16 years leading Germany—and steering the EU to its present position. Her Christian Democratic Union Party (CDU) performed poorly in the September election polls and was overtaken by the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Germany has had a coalition government for many years. Under Merkel, the CDU and their close allies the Christian Social Union (CSU), have combined with the SPD to form a majority. That long-term alliance has now been broken, and the SPD have made a new coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Green Party winning 416 of the 736 seats in the Lower House, ensuring a comfortable working majority. The SPD leader, Olaf Scholz, was elected as Germany’s Chancellor on Dec. 8, having secured 395 votes for, 303 votes against, with six abstentions.

With substantial differences between the coalition members, we will have to see in which direction Germany now turns. In Israel, a far broader coalition has survived its first six months and exceeded expectations. All is under the Hand of our God to move things along.

One of the first tests the government faces is to decide whether to agree to the commissioning of Nord Stream 2, the controversial second pipeline connecting Russia’s gas fields to Germany. It is all complete, but still needs EU approval before it can be used.

Reuters 06-Dec-21, reported that weaker demand from abroad drove a bigger than expected drop in German industrial orders, including cars, in October, adding further gloom to Europe's largest economy.

Putin uses his gas weapon against Europe

First, he used the gas supply weapon which rocketed gas prices across Europe, by restricting gas sending to the minimum. The effects on the markets were severe. Demand had been growing during the year as industry recovered from the effects of Covid, with prices rising gently. Russia's action greatly accelerated the rises, so that by the year-end prices had risen an unprecedented 800%! Heavy energy users were badly hit, as were domestic users, as colder weather approached.

Europe in disarray facing Russia's threat to invade Ukraine

We saw in Ch. 3, Putin's build-up of troops around Ukraine. Germany was in a weak position while they waited for a new Chancellor, who was only appointed early December and who controlled a new, untried alliance. The EU is also weak as it has to work to a consensus of opinion with 27 members and has lost the strongest military member, Britain. President Macron of France is facing a leadership challenge with French elections due in May 2022. The US president is weak, with disastrously low support in his own country, and tainted with the weakness of his Afghanistan withdrawal policy.

Germany was relied upon in the past to show leadership in such crisis happenings. The problem for Germany is that she has many business links with Russia! Many German manufacturing businesses have been drawn into a profitable export trade with Russia. This has been something that Putin has encouraged, against such a time as this. Europe too is heavily dependent on their gas supplies from Russia. As we shall see in our next issue, God Willing, this has resulted in Germany's unwillingness to supply more than token aid to Ukraine—a field hospital and 5,000 helmets! A few countries, Britain included, have sent military equipment, but apart from some military training, have avoided direct involvement of their troops in Ukraine. Meanwhile Russia continues to build up her troops and equipment on her borders.

Von Leyen calls for a European army

The European Commission President Ursula von de Leyen called for the establishment of a European Defence force in her State of

the Union speech on September 15. The EU was shaken by the US rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan and Biden’s lack of interest in defending Europe. The EU feels they can no longer rely on the American-backed NATO to defend them. France has been pushing for the creation of such an army and has found an ally in von Leyen. The row with America and Australia over the cancellation of Australia’s order with France for submarines which led to the setting up of AUKUS, gave further impetus to this desire. Every six months a different member state holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union. On January 1 2022 it is France’s turn. This will be Macron’s opportunity to pursue his dreams, especially as it is also being championed by Von Leyen.

This is why, under the French Presidency, President Macron and I will convene a Summit on European defence.

It is time for Europe to step up to the next level. *State of Union 2021 von de Leyen* 15-Sep-21

EU
 President Emmanuel Macron
 (Chair, European Council)

2021 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen
 Thursday, 16 September 2021

STATE OF THE UNION 2021

15-Sep-21

But what we need is the European Defence Union.
 So, we can do a lot at EU level. But Member States need to do more too. This starts with a common assessment of the threats we face and a common approach to dealing with them. The upcoming **Strategic Compass** is a key process of this discussion. And we need to decide how we can use all of the possibilities that are already in the Treaty.

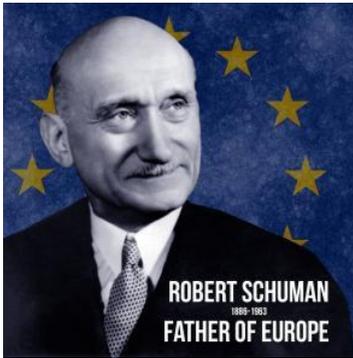
This is why, under the French Presidency, President Macron and I will convene a Summit on European defence.
It is time for Europe to step up to the next level.
 von de Leyen Pres. European Commission

Now Britain has left, we should expect to see the rapid forming of the Western Foot of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image. The Western Leg came to an end (as did the Eastern Leg) in WWI when the final remnant of the Holy Roman Empire collapsed, awaiting the feet and toes stage. As such we would expect the EU to have at least a token army in preparation for joining forces with Russian troops and her allies as they seek Israel’s destruction.

The EU supported by the Vatican, has always been a religious-political system, wishing to re-instate a modern Holy Roman Empire. From its inception it was based upon taking power from its members and concentrating it into a central power with unelected leaders.

Pope puts Robert Schuman, a father of Europe, on sainthood path

It is significant that the Pope has announced that he “has authorized the promulgation of a Decree advancing the causes for canonization of European statesman Robert Schuman the EU’s founding father.



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

If a “miracle” can be attributed to him, he can then be “beatified”, if two miracles, he can be declared “a saint!” We can expect such “miracles” will be found, when the Vatican decides the time is right for her move to consolidate

Europe.

Influencing international affairs: New book ‘God’s Diplomats’ unveils the secret history of Vatican diplomacy

This book by Victor Gaetan was published in 2021.

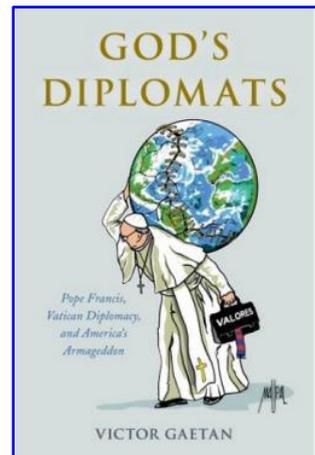
One of the Vatican's most important but least studied departments is actually one of its most extensive: the massive network of lay and religious people engaged in peacemaking, information gathering and international diplomacy who throughout history have swayed governments and challenged kings.

As Pope, Francis practices diplomacy for a multi-polar world,” said Gaetan. “In three major theatres today, the Holy See sees US hubris as particularly counterproductive: Middle East, Russia and China.”

The US is most at odds with the Holy See when it comes to Russia and China. When conflict arose in Ukraine in 2014, “the Holy See and Pope Francis refused to side with one party or the other in the conflict,” Gaetan writes. “They did not want a religious cold war to ensue in the country.”

Francis’ refusal to be sucked into the partisan conflict in Ukraine underlines how “the Vatican leadership believes Russia is a valuable ally for Europe”, Gaetan says. *Amazon summary*

The Pope is hoping to bring closer the alliance between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church.



Plans move forward for 2022 Pope—Russian patriarch meeting

Following the Pope's first meeting with Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Cuba in 2016, the Pope has been pressing for a second meeting. In December, he had a meeting with the Russian Church's "Foreign Secretary", Metropolitan Hilarion, to discuss this among other matters.

Plans are progressing for a possible meeting next year between Pope Francis and the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church following their historic encounter in Havana in 2016.

Metropolitan Hilarion, foreign relations chief of the Russian Orthodox Church, met for about an hour with Francis on Wednesday morning at the Vatican.

"We had a chance to discuss specific dates and venues today, but they are yet to be specified and agreed so we can't announce the date and place yet," Hilarion was quoted as saying by the Russian state RIA-Novosti news agency. *Associated Press* 22-Dec-21

Putin Tells Pope They Can Jointly 'Protect Christians'

Earlier, on December 17, Putin phoned the Pope to tell him:

"It is difficult to overestimate your personal contribution to the development of relations between the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches and to the strengthening of Russian-Vatican ties."

"I am sure that through joint efforts we can do a lot to protect the rights and interests of Christians, and ensure interfaith dialogue."

Putin over his more than two decades in power has made the Orthodox Church a key pillar of his rule, casting himself as a safeguarder of traditional values. *Agence France-Presse* 17-Dec-21

When Nebuchadnezzar's Image stands on its newly formed feet, to come against Israel, it will be the Papal eyes and mouth in the Babylonian head that coordinate its actions. Destined to be crushed by *stone power* of Christ and the saints. (Dan.2:44,45; Eze. 39:4)

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Ch. 5: Exhortation: Freedom to Worship!

Ever since the 1840's revival of the Truth began to spread around the world, there was normally freedom to worship, even in war-time.

This is a very precious heritage which our brothers and sisters of earlier times, living in Roman Catholic Europe did not often enjoy. Bro Mike Jenner's research into the treasure trove of historical material now available on line, showed that very rarely was there a century where those seeking to follow Biblical Truth did not have to meet in fear of their lives. Their persecuting enemy was the Papal system, described in Rev. 17:3-6 as a *harlot woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*. History shows the aptness of this description.

Coincidentally with the rise of the Truth in these last days of Gentile power, was the decline in Papal power, enabling the Truth to flourish. This period of peace has been a great test of faith for believers. Apart from Conscientious Objection tribunals, few had to face persecution for their beliefs. But things are changing. Many brothers and sisters today are facing bitter persecution, mainly from Muslim rulers or terrorists. Several have lost their lives because of their faith. Many have to meet in small groups, no longer free to worship openly.

Now there is the strong drumbeat of humanist thinking, keen to promote lifestyles which are contrary to Bible teachings. Laws are being changed upholding such ways of life. Christians are finding themselves facing prosecution for upholding Bible teachings.

The Covid pandemic has caused many governments to halt the right to assemble together to worship, for months at a time. In developed countries we have been well blessed to have the technology to be able to meet virtually and many will continue to benefit, especially the house bound. Now many of us are facing the challenge. "Why travel miles to meet, when we can Zoom in from the comfort of home?"

We should meet physically if we can. Ecclesial life revolves around the shaping of our lives by fellowship together, which comes from face-to-face meeting. Ecclesial life is based on the template of marriage and the companionship from *help meet for one for another*. Gen. 2:18

In the last days of the Gentile times, let us ponder this exhortation:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Heb.10:25 [Back to Contents](#)

Bible Magazine and helpful sites

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

Contact your local *Bible Magazine* representative for subscription details.

<https://biblemagazine.com/contact-us/>

Milestones Website

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

don@MilestonesUK.org

Prophecy Days

Both the *Bible Magazine* and the *Milestones* websites carry details of known Prophecy Days around the world that uphold our traditional understanding of the fulfilment of prophecy. For latest details of the Rugby Prophecy Day 26 Feb 2022 go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChristadelphianEvents/> or*

<https://cdvideo.org/rpd2022> You can watch 'Live Stream' and Zoom (subscribe beforehand)—details given on these links.

On www.Christadelphianvideo.org site*—<https://cdvideo.org/PROPHECY> you can watch many Prophecy Day talks from the UK and abroad

For my Milestones video updates:

<https://christadelphianvideo.org/?s=pearce%20don>

Christadelphian video The www.Christadelphianvideo.org site, has many exhortations, Daily Bible Readings videos, Prophecy Days and Bible School videos of really stimulating material, a valuable lock-down resource. There is a resources section for Creation-Evolution matters especially material against Theistic Evolution. Link*: <https://cdvideo.org/TE>

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* These links are case sensitive, type in as printed. [Link back to Contents page](#)

