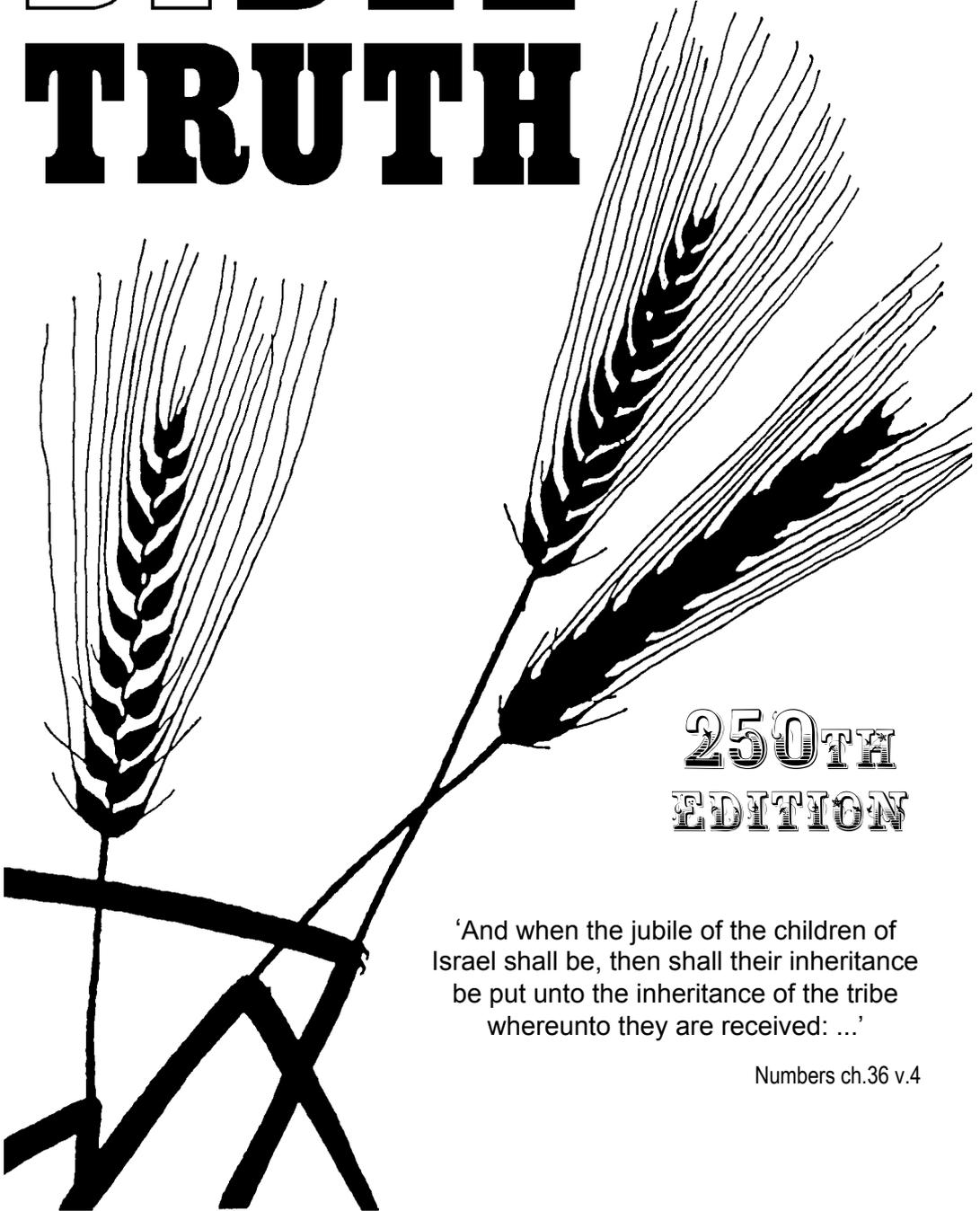


# BIBLE TRUTH

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'And when the jubile of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: ...'

Numbers ch.36 v.4

# *A More Sure Word of Prophecy*

*by Dr Michael David Bennett*

## **The 250th issue of Bible Truth Magazine**

The first issue of Bible Truth magazine was published in January 1975. Thirty-three years later this present issue (number 250, April-June, 2008) is published. We thank the Lord for His guidance and provision which has allowed well over a quarter of a million copies of this magazine to be printed and distributed, free and post free, over a period of one third of a century. We also rejoice to know from the many letters received from our readers that this magazine has been widely appreciated as a link between people of like precious faith. Indeed, its message has brought hope and encouragement to many bereft of such fellowship locally in a world experiencing a growing famine of preaching and hearing the pure word of the Lord — Bible Truth.

Issue 250 represents a milestone in the history of the magazine. As such it presents an opportunity to stop and consider the big picture of Bible prophecy and world history.

It is therefore timely to both review some key events and developments which we have seen since Issue No. 1 in 1975, and to highlight others which we patiently await with excited expectancy. It is too easy to focus close up on threads in the tapestry of life while losing sight of the overall picture and its glory. It is a human failing to see the individual waves of the threatening storm and to sink in fear. Our attention should be fixed on God who walks easily on water above chaos, and invites us to join Him and enjoy His point of view, secure in knowing His personality, power, and providence. To help us do this, we need to remember some key foundational verities.

## **God's blessing on Israel can never be reversed**

Our ultimate surname 'Israel' means 'a prince of God'. It was given to us by God Himself, and for His expressed reason,

'... for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. ... And he blessed him there'. Genesis ch.32 vv.28-29

We should always remember that God's pronounced blessings cannot be undone nor gainsaid, no matter how many oppose us, nor how strongly they attack us.

'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!'

Numbers ch.23 vv.19-23

Many are too ready to magnify and dwell on what Satan and his servants have done, as though that is permanent. They forget that only God's plans and purpose will last.

Men build mighty forces and empires, but God holds their continued existence in His hand at each moment. He alone decides the time and manner of their destruction.

'Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.'

Isaiah ch.40 v.15

Long ago, man's project Babel ended suddenly when God confused their language and blocked their communications (Genesis ch.11 vv.7-9). Later, Egyptian oppression was broken as God used the forces of nature. Enslavement was ended overnight by God's angel of death (Exodus ch.12 v.29). He blew with His wind and they were scattered.

Do earthly nations opposed to God's truth and people, have great armies? Yes they do, but their military power is nothing compared with God's power and the angelic forces at His command. Many people feel surrounded by the enemy, when they should know much more that they are surrounded by God's protection, providence and power.

'And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.'

2 Kings ch.6 vv.15-17

Later the angel of the Lord destroyed an Assyrian army of 185,000 in one night, forcing Sennacherib to retreat just when victory seemed firmly in his grasp.

‘For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, ...’

Isaiah ch.37 vv.35-37

While Babylon is great, God is greater. No stage of Babylon has a lasting future. Its destruction is decreed by God in heaven and revealed on earth by His prophets. Great Babylon felt impregnable. However, God wrote His Old Testament words on Belshazzar's palace wall, and Daniel interpreted His judgement which was executed by the morning. New Testament ‘Babylon the great’ faces similar sudden oblivion.

‘Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, ... In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: ... And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. ... In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.’

Daniel ch.5 vv.1, 5, 25-28 & 30

‘And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, ... For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. ... Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.’

Revelation ch.18 vv.1-2, 5 & 8

Unlike Babylon, God's construction is everlasting as ‘a continuing city’ — something soon certain to come.

‘For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.’

Hebrews ch.13 v.14

'But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.'

Isaiah ch.45 vv.17-19

'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ... that ye, ... May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, ... Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.'

Ephesians ch.3 vv.14-15, 17-19 & 21

'And he ...shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ... he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city ... The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, ... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. ... the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ... there shall be no night there; ... for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.'

Revelation chs 21 vv.10, 15-17, 23-24 & 22 vv.3, 5

## **We have 'a more sure word of prophecy' until God's new Millennial day dawns**

So where are we on the map of history, and which light can we navigate by now?

'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: ... For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

2 Peter ch.1 vv.19 & 21

Before a jet takes off from London to New York it has a known destination and the pilots are given a flight plan setting out details of

the route to be followed to that city and its timing. It is a line drawn in the heavens reaching from the Old World to the New World. The line is written down before the journey starts and then followed despite crosswinds. Indeed, the flight plan notes the positions and times of storms to be encountered, so travellers are forewarned of turbulent conditions they will pass through along the way. Our journey to New Jerusalem is very similar. The destination is foreknown, as is the route to be followed and its dangers. Drawn in heaven, it was written down and given to us as Bible prophecy. So we are wise to study and know what it reveals, and to make sure we live according to its light.

We recently celebrated Christmas. In services of lessons and carols, millions heard again the story in a form emphasising how details of the manner and place of Christ's birth were given in the Old Testament and were known to many who studied it.

‘And when he [Herod the king] had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.’

Matthew ch.2 vv.4-6

Then, as now, few lived as if they expected its real and literal fulfilment. Indeed, it struck me how few people (even Christians) show any interest today in knowing the key events regarding Christ's return to earth, or in discussing the signs marking the situation on earth which precede it – also clearly foretold by the prophets and given to us in the Bible. His return is increasingly imminent. We would be wise to meet and discuss this, and increasingly so, as things get worse around us.

‘And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; ... Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, ... For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, ... But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; ...’

Malachi chs 3 vv.15-17 & 4 vv.1-2

'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 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.'

Hebrews ch.10 vv.23-25

The next outstanding event in world history is the imminent Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its importance is pre-eminent both as a subject in Bible prophecy, and in its promised effects on all life on earth. Interest in this subject, and excitement at its prospect, burned high between 1850 and 1950. Its fulfilment is now so much closer, yet interest is low or absent, and excitement replaced by doubt or indifference in most Christians today. Many disciples commanded to watch would rather sleep at the crucial midnight hour. We are wise to remain patiently alert, to maintain a holy expectation, and to proclaim our faith by teaching His imminent literal return. This attitude brings hope and blessing rather than the fear and depression found in others.

'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.'

Titus ch.2 vv.13-15

'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. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.'

Luke ch.21 vv.25-28

### **Signposts to the Second Coming in the Last Days**

Recent generations witnessed major events which clearly fulfil Bible prophecy. One such was the capture of Jerusalem from the Turks by the British General Allenby in December 1917 (2,520 years = seven times after its fall to Nebuchadnezzar in 604 BC). The establishment of the Jewish Israeli State in Palestine in 1948 (the fig

tree budded) was another. The advent of nuclear weapons which for the first time made it possible for man to destroy life on earth (putting Matthew ch.24 v.22 in context) was another. We can ask 'Did the period 1975-2008 of Bible Truth's publication witness further events of similar importance?' The answer seems strongly affirmative.

### **9/11 – 'the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall'**

On September 11th, 2001 Islamic terrorists flew hijacked planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York which after burning fiercely, collapsed in apocalyptic clouds of dust, killing about 3,000 people. Its destruction affected trade, travel and international politics with immediate and long term effects. The New York stock market was shut and went into near meltdown when it opened six days later. These events are recognised as marking a great turning point in world history. They also show a remarkable fit with Bible prophecies regarding the fall of economic power, identified as 'Egypt' and 'Babylon' in Isaiah and Revelation. These speak of falling towers, burning, dust and serious damage to all world trade. This fit was highlighted in *Target America* (Bible Truth 214 November/December 2001 pp. 11-23).

'And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.'

Isaiah ch.30 v.25

'And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, ... And the kings of the earth ... shall bewail her, ... when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: ... and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, ... for in one hour is she made desolate.'

Revelation ch.18 vv.2, 9-11 & 17-19

### **Chernobyl (Wormwood)**

If the US experienced a fulfilment of Bible prophecy on 11th September, 2001, the Soviet Union had a world changing disaster on 26th April, 1986. This saw the worst nuclear power plant accident in history when a reactor exploded at Chernobyl. The resulting fire sent a plume of highly radioactive fallout into the atmosphere. The plume

drifted over the Soviet Union and Western Europe. The contamination caused over a third of a million people to be resettled and an estimated 10,000 deaths due to cancers in the region. The event was instrumental in undermining Russian confidence which led to political changes of global significance including the end of the cold war and the reunification of Germany. Interestingly, the name Chernobyl means 'Wormwood' which links to a prophecy in Revelation.

'... and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.'

Revelation ch.8 vv.10-11

### **A generation of unprecedented events and problems**

These outstanding events are framed in a context of unprecedented happenings and trends which can be measured against the detail and tenor of Bible prophecy, and especially those highlighted by Jesus as hallmarks of the generation before His return.

'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, ... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. ... 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: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.'

Matthew ch.24 vv.3-4, 21-22 & 29-30

'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. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.'

Luke ch.21 vv.25-32

There have been natural disasters, geopolitical upheavals, and astronomical events throughout history - comets, plagues, storms, earthquakes, wars and revolutions. What sets the period prior to the Second Coming apart is the prophesied higher frequency and unique association of all these things in one lifetime - 'when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled'. So the acid test for recognising the time Jesus spoke of is an unparalleled coincidence of all the identifying signs He prophesied. The last 33 years fit this requirement to an increasingly remarkable degree. Besides a unique threat of annihilation in nuclear war, 1975 onwards witnessed nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, nuclear proliferation, and a risk that terrorists get nuclear devices.

### **The sea and the waves roaring**

Since 1973 the phrase 'the sea and the waves roaring' has become particularly relevant. Climate change research shows oceans recently became more stormy with increased wave action. Tidal surges and rising sea levels are identified as a major threat to many cities and agriculture on flood plains. Indeed, some countries on low lying islands may completely disappear within a century. This was not in the public mind in 1973, but by 2008 it was identified as a top priority on the global planning agenda. This was suddenly reinforced by the large number of hurricanes which battered the USA in 2005 and especially by the tidal surge caused by hurricane Katrina which destroyed the sea defences of New Orleans killing many hundreds in August.

Hurricanes too have increased in intensity. The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active Atlantic hurricane season in recorded history with a record 28 storms, and a record 5 for category 5 (the highest recognised on the scale). The average number of storms is 10, with 0.3 category 5 storms per year. Among the category 5 storms were Katrina and Wilma. The former was the costliest (\$128 billion) and the latter the most intense Atlantic hurricane, responsible for 2,280 deaths, on record.

'To whom then will ye liken God? ... It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; ... That bringeth the princes to nothing; ... he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.'

Isaiah ch.40 vv.18 & 22-24

The world soon had a further reminder of the destructive power of wave activity in the oceans. On 26th December 2005 a major tsunami, caused by an earthquake under the sea, killed 200,000 on Asian shores.

### **Signs in the sun, the moon, and in the stars - to include shaking**

The generation which first saw nuclear weapons and the Israeli state, also saw space travel and exploration, adding a unique new dimension to signs in the heavens. 1975-2008 saw a remarkable number of 'signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars'.

Many, such as the International Space Station (started in 1998), are without precedent in any previous generation. Probes from earth crashed into the sun, flew by every planet in the solar system landing on several, and roved on Mars looking for life. Such events fit the sign in Luke ch.21 v.26, 'the powers of heaven shall be shaken'.

What man can do, God can always do better! There were three notable comets in 33 months in 1994 - 97 starting with Shoemaker-Levi which scored 20 direct hits on the planet Jupiter in July 1994. These impacts would have been unseen in any previous generation. However, pictures of them were beamed back to earth by the Magellan space probe which was close to Jupiter, and published in the newspapers. The first impact was on July 18th, the anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in 586 BC. March 1997 saw the exceptionally bright comet Hale-Bopp, which crossed earth's orbit on March 23 (Palm Sunday). These events were covered in 'Signs of the times in heaven' (*Bible Truth* 181, pp. 9-22 July-August 1996).

The world celebrated its new millennium on 1 January 2000, but two thousand years from the real birth of Jesus occurred several years before (probably in October 1997). There was a total eclipse of the sun in Cornwall in 1999 (the first in a lifetime - since 1927). This became total in Cornwall at 11:11 on 11th August (the eleventh month in ancient Israel's civil calendar). Its significance as a sign to Britain and Cornwall's Duke was questioned in 'Total Eclipse' (*Bible Truth* 200, July/August 1999).

This brought home the fact that planets are struck by objects from space, some with catastrophic consequences. Long known as a possibility, the probability was generally imagined as vanishingly low. However, a significant change since 1975 is the new understanding that it is much higher. This new fear inspired two disaster movies *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon*, and a new international project to scan space and give early warning of objects whose orbits are on a collision course with earth. An asteroid strike would cause tidal waves or earthquakes killing millions, or dust clouds lasting years destroying all human life. Data shows the probability is not one in many millions of years, but a chilling one in several thousands of years. Well might men's hearts fail them for fear for looking after the things they see coming on the earth.

As I write, The Daily Telegraph 26 January 2008 has an item on p. 20 headed *Asteroid fly by*. 'An asteroid up to 600 yards wide will "buzz" the earth on Tuesday. Known as 2007 TU24, the closest it will get is 334,000 miles or 1.4 times the distance from Earth to the Moon.'

### **Population explosion, environmental crisis, 'saving the planet'**

If threats from the sky seem higher, other problems nearer to home have suddenly multiplied causing 'on earth distress of nations'. These include shortages of food, water and energy; environmental pollution; losses of habitat and biodiversity (species extinction); climate change, global warming and desertification. These problems are linked. Growing more food uses more water, fertilizers and toxic sprays causing more pollution, and habitat and biodiversity loss.

Many of these problems have a common cause - the exponential rise in the world's human population from 1 billion in 1800 to 2.5 billion in 1950 and 6 billion by 2000. In 2050 it is expected to exceed 9 billion. The situation is unprecedented in history. The entire population of the world in 1800 (1 billion) is now being added every 12 years. More people need more food, but they produce more greenhouse gases causing global warming. This causes polar ice to melt and the sea level to rise. Finally, coastal land once used to grow food crops is lost due to flooding, salination and erosion.

Faced with the consequences of population growth the world's politicians recently pledged to abolish poverty, fight global warming and save the planet. Interestingly, politicians have had clear repeated early warning of the population explosion and its effects since Malthus (1766-1834), but they have failed to address this root problem effectively. The picture that comes to mind now is of Canute facing a rising tide. Given man's track record, and the revelations in

Bible prophecy, they should not expect great success. Instead we expect a rapidly deteriorating situation, as both the global economy and environment spiral out of control, causing lawlessness, social breakdown, military conflict, sickness and fear to rise to unprecedented levels.

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: ... Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

2 Timothy ch.3 vv.1-5 & 7

'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.'

Matthew ch.24 vv.21-22

'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: ... But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.'

Daniel ch.12 v.1 & 4

### **Unprecedented trouble, mass travel and a knowledge explosion**

The above prophecy from Daniel highlights three hallmarks of the end time, namely: an unprecedented time of trouble coinciding with mass travel ('many shall run to and fro') and a surge in knowledge. Paragraphs above establish beyond doubt that these are times of unprecedented trouble, and the other two conditions are also uniquely met in recent decades. Clearly there are unprecedented levels of travel. Car ownership has soared causing gridlock and smog in western cities and is poised to increase elsewhere. 'This year ACNielsen Co. published a survey that said that currently 9% of Indians own a car and that could easily touch 25% by the end of the decade. India's car-owning middle class is expected to grow to 583 million, or 41% of the population by 2025,' McKinsey and Co., has reported. Air travel, unknown a century ago, has rocketed in recent decades. The Health and Safety Executive noted that '... air transport

has expanded considerably with a five-fold increase in air travel over the past 30 years and a doubling of air freight'. Leisure is estimated to account for 75% of all international travel. The World Tourism Organisation estimates there were 694 million international arrivals in 2003, and they are expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020.

By any measure recent decades also saw an unprecedented knowledge explosion. Like human population, the number of scientific research papers published has also increased exponentially. The term information technology (IT) was recently coined. Most homes now have a powerful computer with an Internet link, and many people also have this on mobile phones. Following the discovery of the genetic code about 50 years ago, the first complete genome sequences for complex organisms were soon published, including that for man in 2000-2003.

So the generation which first saw H-bombs and space travel, also saw an awesome increase in knowledge about DNA and life. Man now knows how to do genetic engineering and to clone mammals. These recent advances in cell and molecular biology raise massive ethical and moral issues. Indeed, man seeks the power to create life, and seems poised to do so. As I write, a research paper by the Craig Ventner Institute reports success in replicating a complete synthetic genome for a parasitic organism: 'Complete Chemical Synthesis, Assembly, and Cloning of a Mycoplasma genitalium Genome' in Science published online 24th January 2008. This is an historic step in genome technology which opens a new stage of human knowledge.

Man's ambition at Babel was to build a tower whose top may reach to heaven. God intervened then because what they had begun, if continued, would allow them do anything they could imagine.

'And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; ... And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.'

Genesis ch.11 vv.4 & 6

When constructed near United Nations headquarters in New York the twin towers of the World Trade Centre were the tallest buildings on earth. If new knowledge and skills of genome engineering puts man in a similar position ('... this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.'). God must soon intervene in person, to guard the way to this tree of life.

## **An A B C of unprecedented signs**

The unprecedented events of this generation are amply shown by an ABC of terms which first entered our language or common knowledge since 1945 and most since 1975: Acid Rain, AIDS, Biodiversity, Chernobyl, Climate Change, Desertification, Embryo Cloning, Eurozone, Fertility Treatments, Genetic Engineering, GMOs, Genome Sequencing, Hale-Bopp, Hubble Space Telescope, International Space Station, Internet, Jihad, Katrina, Maastricht Treaty, Nuclear Proliferation, Overkill, Peace Dividend, Personal Computer, Al Qaeda, Rovers on Mars (one called 'Spirit'), Shoemaker-Levi, Sustainable Development, Treaty of Rome, Tsunami, UNO, World Bank, World Wide Web (www), and 9/11.

## **Awaiting fulfilment - 'desolation of Egypt from the tower of Syene'**

This article notes many recent events which fulfil Bible prophecy. Consequently, the number of prophesied signs with no fulfilment fell markedly in recent decades. Yet some major items still await a literal fulfilment. High among these is the desolation of Egypt from 'the tower of Syene' 'to the border of Ethiopia' and a 40-year dispersal of Egyptians as captives to other nations before a regathering to their own land.

'Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.'

Ezekiel ch.29 vv.10-11

Syene was the ancient name for modern Aswan, and some have suggested that the 'tower of Syene' may refer to the Aswan high dam completed in 1970 whose reservoir first filled in 1976 to create Lake Nasser over 350 miles long. This project has caused various environmental problems including coastal erosion and loss of soil fertility in the Nile delta. Some suggest that owing to a geological weakness the Aswan High dam poses a risk that, given an earthquake in the region, the Nile could change course to flow into the Red Sea instead of the Mediterranean. This is only speculation, but we are wise to watch events in Egypt and Aswan. History repeats. The first plague on Egypt was on the waters of the river (Exodus ch.7 vv.14-25) and soon led to the Exodus. Fulfilment of this latter day desolation on Egypt and its river may mark the start of God's final judgements on the nations prior to the third Exodus.

Striking changes in the Nile and its delta are certainly prophesied for the future:

'And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.'

Isaiah ch.11 v.15

### **Distress of nations with perplexity**

Only in this generation has it suddenly dawned on people that earth is a finite resource whose environment can be poisoned, whose natural resources can be exhausted, and whose life forms can be driven to extinction by human mismanagement. It once seemed that the supply of land, water, metals, fish, timber and energy would always vastly exceed demand, and pollution was a local phenomenon to be solved by moving elsewhere. Not any more! Man already uses most of the available fresh water supply. Since the 1960s acid rain caused by industry caused forests to die, and fish to disappear from rivers and lakes. Fish stocks in seas and oceans have also crashed due to pollution and over fishing. Man now uses almost all the land suitable for agriculture. Such land is being lost at an increasing rate due to industrialisation, urban growth, erosion, desertification, rising salinity caused by irrigation, and flooding as sea levels rise.

The recent rapid industrialisation of nations like China and India (with one third of the world's population) has suddenly changed the world economy, creating massive increases in global demand for commodities, and massive new pollution problems. China is building two Coal-fired power stations a week, and plans to build over 500 more. This will further exacerbate already serious pollution problems including the effects of acid rain on agriculture, forestry and human health in the area.

The serious effects of these changes affect many commodities but can be illustrated by two key examples. Copper is vital in industry. The price of copper quintupled from US \$0.60 per pound in June 1999 to US \$3.50 in April 2007. Earth has only an estimated 60 years of copper reserves remaining, however, environmental analyst, Lester Brown, has suggested copper might run out within 25 years based on a reasonable extrapolation of 2% growth per year.

Helium is a non-renewable resource with no substitutes, produced by decay of radio-isotopes, essential for scientific research (NMR) and cooling. Earth has a very limited supply from just a few areas (mainly in USA, Russia and Australia). There are serious concerns whether it will be available beyond 50-100 years.

There is now even a shortage of land fill sites in which to bury waste produced by our prodigal society. Small wonder that 'conservation' is a buzz word of this generation.

'Sustainable development' is another, as men grapple with trying to balance finite food, energy, water and land resources with the burgeoning human population.

The problem is not restricted to inanimate resources but affects the living world of species and ecosystems. Forests on earth are being destroyed at an accelerating pace tracking the rapid pace of human population growth. Unless significant new measures are taken on a world-wide basis to preserve them, by 2030 there will only be ten percent remaining with another ten percent in a degraded condition. Eighty percent will have been lost and with them the irreversible loss of hundreds of thousands of living species. Experts, such as Peter Raven, predict that about one third of species of flowering plants will become extinct by 2050, noting that extinction is for ever.

The present mood is one of deepening concern and serious worry. Men speak of 'saving the planet', yet targets they set 10-20 years ago are badly missed. In 2007 world food reserves fell to new low levels (cereals are down to just 57 days supply) making mass famine in drought years highly likely and its relief impossible. Faced with crises impossible to solve, such disasters will see the mood change to despair.

'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;'

Luke ch.21 v.25

### **Christ's imminent reign on earth answers all our global problems**

It is no exaggeration to say that mankind has arrived at the landmark situation which Jesus predicted, ('... upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ...') where distress on earth exceeds human solutions. Men talk of 'saving the planet'. Yet their words are just so much wind, as their prodigal arrogance reaps the whirlwind. 'Saving the world' is Christ's mission. It is beyond man's ability but easily within God's power. Bible prophecy long predicted all the problems we now face, and specified His capability to solve them all. The following verses are good examples.

'... the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of

David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.'

Isaiah ch.9 vv.6-7

'... the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, ... Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, ... he will come and save you. ... in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.'

Isaiah ch.35 vv.1-2, 4 & 6

'... out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'

Isaiah ch.2 vv.3-4

'... at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other... These waters ... go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. ... And by the river ... shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.'

Ezekiel ch.47 vv.7-9 & 12

Bible prophecy says we are heading for 'one world government', namely the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly, antichrist forces are hell bent on bringing in a counterfeit one world unification to forestall this. Since 1975 their efforts seem to have suddenly prospered as never before.

### **Man's drive to establish a counterfeit one world government will be destroyed**

A new word entered everyday language during the past 32 years, namely, 'globalization'.

Checking shows it was absent in my Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 1978 revision. Globalization is a process of interaction and integration

among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process is driven by a one-world agenda which seeks to abolish sovereign independent nation states replacing them first with a few large regional units (such as the European Union), and finally with one world government. Thus, people are beguiled to trade off sovereignty for promised wealth and peace, selling their birthright for a mess of pottage! But they ignore some important small print in the planet user's manual.

'But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 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 ... and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.'

1 Thessalonians ch.5 vv.1-5

Globalization, Ecumenism, and the One Planet agenda all seek a return to the situation before Babel. Electronic communication using the Internet already offers a partial remedy to the confusion of languages. It may well be significant that the shorthand for world wide web (www) in Hebrew has the numerical value 666. This is the same number (mark/name) of the beast,

'... that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name'.

Revelation ch.13 vv.17

The generation that saw nuclear weapons also saw the United Nations Organisation inaugurated in 1945 - another unprecedented development. Unity needs a common purpose or response to a threat. For 40 years 'cold war' fears of nuclear attack drove opposing groups of nations to unite in large blocs. In the last decade the unification project found its purpose and threat, and hitched its wagon firmly to it. The threat is climate change and the great unifying cause is to fight global warming and 'to save the planet'. The following news item summarises the new global situation perfectly.

'The World Economic Forum (23-27 January 2008, Davos Switzerland) closed with a call by business, government and civil society leaders for a new brand of collaborative and innovative leadership to address the challenges of globalization, particularly the pressing problems of conflict, terrorism, climate change and water conservation.'

'Globalization is forcing changes in how people collaborate in a fundamental way' said former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, a Member of the Foundational Board of the World Economic Forum and one of the co-chairs of the Annual Meeting 2008, at the closing plenary session. 'You need stronger and collaborative political leadership.'

[www.weforum.org/en/events/ArchivedEvents/AnnualMeeting2008/index](http://www.weforum.org/en/events/ArchivedEvents/AnnualMeeting2008/index)

So politicians, business and media are all united and of one message. No doubt any who will not bow down when the band plays will be thrown into the fire! (see Daniel ch.3 v. 6). A cynic might note that those who planned and stoked this fire, are now using it as a unifying issue in one world politics and as an excuse to remove all ancient landmarks.

As with Babel we can expect God to intervene to derail this bandwagon. Indeed, God has a global warming agenda of His own, which is well advertised in Bible prophecy.

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ... Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

2 Timothy ch.3 vv.1-5 & 7-9

'And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.'

Ezekiel ch.39 v.6

'For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;... And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.'

Malachi ch.4 vv.1-3

'... in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that

the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, ... and his tongue as a devouring fire: ... to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. ... And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.'

Isaiah ch.30 vv.25-28 & 30

### **Walls in 'the land of unwallled villages'**

In responding to suicide attacks the Israeli government has recently erected walls as a physical barrier to separate Palestinian and Jewish areas and exclude terror. Similar walls feature in history including Hadrian's wall in Britain, The Great Wall of China, and the Berlin Wall. Their recent development in Israel may be significant given a phrase in Ezekiel's prophecy regarding a great invasion by confederate nations led by Russia 'in the latter years'. This speaks of 'the land of unwallled villages' which may indicate significant developments concerning such walls. Walls are in the news as I write (23 Jan 2008) as thousands of Palestinians pour into Egypt after Hamas blew up a section of a wall built by the Egyptians to separate Gaza from Egypt. It is always wise to consider the bulwarks of Jerusalem:

'Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.'

Psalm 48 vv.12-14

In these 'latter years' it is worth watching all developments concerning defensive walls in towns and villages throughout the region.

'And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, ... I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, ... with all sorts of armour, ... Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; ... 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. ... And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled 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, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, ... that dwell in the midst of the land.'

Ezekiel ch.38 vv.1-5, 8 & 11-12

### **Encouragement to be fearless until Israel owns her identity**

Bible Truth magazine aims to encourage those seeking to obey Christ's command to His disciples to 'watch and pray' (see Mark ch.13 vv.33) and to 'keep my commandments' (see John ch.14 v.15). Only the 'more sure word of prophecy' can show us what to watch for. We believe 'the Spirit of truth, is come' to guide us 'into all truth' and 'he will shew you things to come' (see John ch.16 v.13). We believe that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (see Revelation ch.19 v.10), and 'he that is true' is 'he that hath the key of David' (see Revelation ch.3 v.7). We believe God chose Israel as His wife, and will not break His oath and covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or David. Our history shows that 'the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ'. Revelation ch.12 v.17. These are uniquely dangerous days as the battle of the ages nears its momentous climax. Yet God's blessing on Israel cannot be undone however strong the attack. His choice and love stand sure, and His 'more sure word of prophecy' to us is to be fearless until the time when Israel suddenly recognises her real identity and accepts her destiny as God's witnesses, and He suddenly returns.

'Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I

am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.'

Isaiah ch.44 vv.1-8

'... the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. ... For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

Malachi ch.3 vv.1 & 6