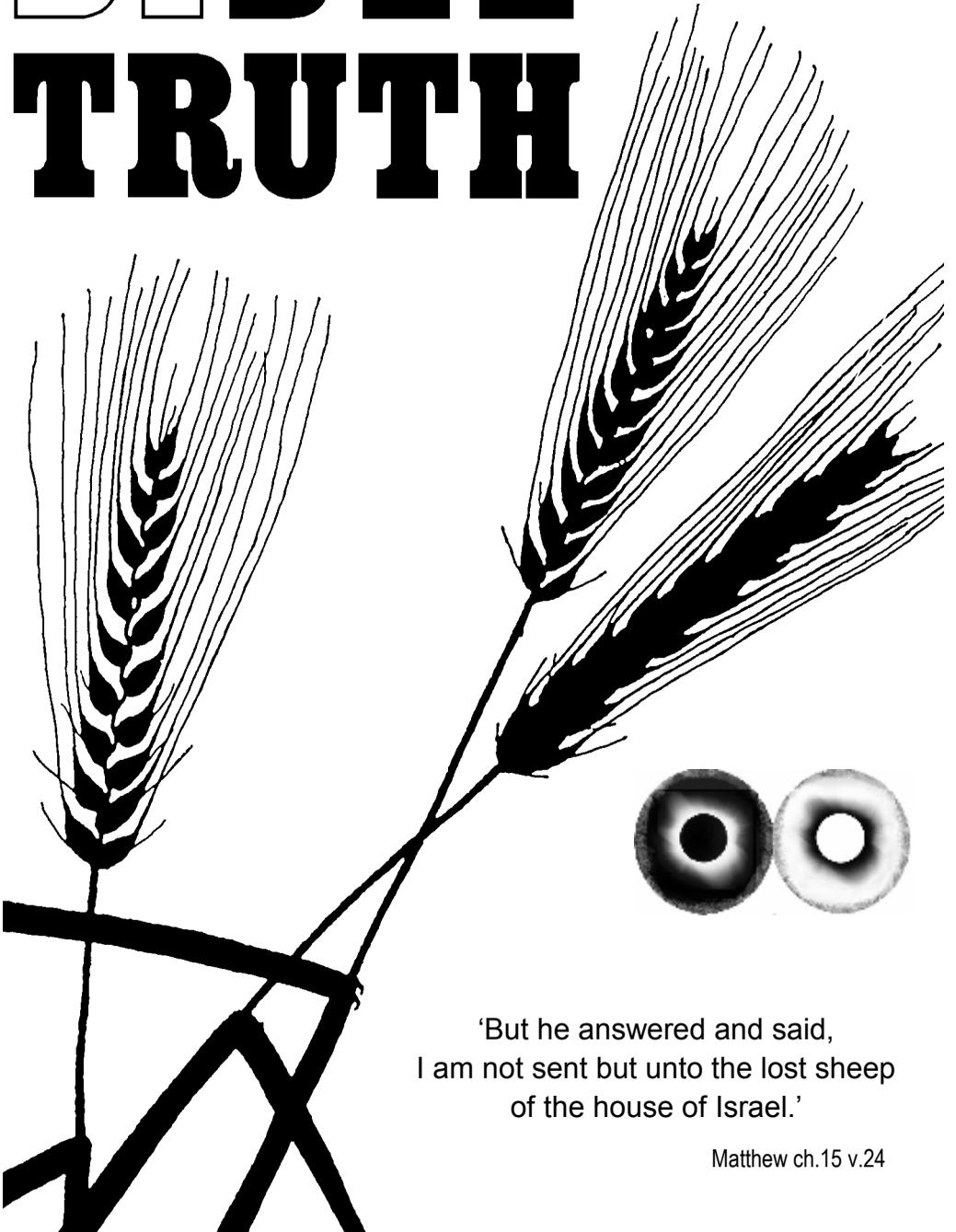


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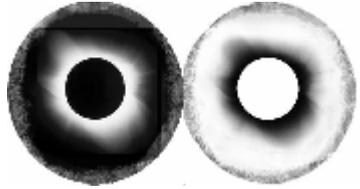
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'But he answered and said,
I am not sent but unto the lost sheep
of the house of Israel.'

Matthew ch.15 v.24

**LOOKING BACKWARDS -
LOOKING FORWARDS**



By Paul Boyd-Lee

A significant amount of the postbag in recent months contained pleas from readers to write about current events; a typical comment being, 'recently had 4 mailings from Anglo-Israel orgs but so far nothing on prophecy and current affairs! (Many articles) are hardly the topic of the moment'. I think this is fair criticism and certainly something that needs to be heeded. There are several reasons, some may say excuses, why this is so. It is hard to find amongst what authors we have, those that will or are skilled enough to write about current events. As far as Bible Truth magazine is concerned our editors try to select material that is constructive and good teaching for our readers to pass on to third parties. So it is gratifying that the greater part of our postbag contains letters from readers who appreciate the magazine for that very purpose. In our view particularly derogatory articles submitted to us that harangue governments or churches serve little purpose for readers already aware of those issues. Lastly, the pace of incidents is often so fast that the article could appear very dated by the time it reaches print. Therefore our aim is largely to equip readers in advance.

'So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.'

Mark ch.13 v.29

In the past many of our authors have done just that, either through the pages of this magazine or through our booklets. Classic titles of this sort include David Watts' *These are the Last Days, leading to the Climax of History* (price £1.50 inc p & p) or Michael Bennett's *Key to the Pattern of History* series with *Wonderful & Horrible* being one of the titles (price £4.50 inc p & p).

As we survey an abundance of signs relating to a climax to the age it is hard to believe that, not so long ago, students of prophecy were anxious for anything, just anything to happen in this field. I am referring to the 1950s and 1960s: the time when Britain was still rebuilding after the Second World War; when the present Queen was

just a youngster upon the throne and a certain Prime Minister said, 'We've never had it so good'. At the time the voice of prophecy seemed to have been silent for some years.

It was then that some Bible prophecy interpreters, and like nowadays there were few of them, were being cautious with their interpretations. This was because the return of Christ in the decade or two previously had been predicted. This aspiration was nothing new; after all, the Apostle Paul at times intimated that he thought the Lord would return in his day also. But the twentieth century does have a difference. The deliverance of Jerusalem from the Turks in 1917 was an important milestone in the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. Likewise, a world war, let alone a second one in 1939, all set the precedent for thinking that a dramatic heavenly intervention would soon take place. Thus it is perhaps not surprising that students of prophecy boldly proclaimed that very soon it would come to pass. However, nothing did so, at least, not on the scale that was expected and certainly history has not yet recorded the visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since then, exponents of prophetic subjects, now somewhat enlightened by experiencing the horrors of war on an international scale and also soberly aware that the dates predicted by their forefathers and sometimes contemporaries, had now passed, modified their messages accordingly. People remained firm in their belief that God always fulfils His prophetic Word which inevitably must come to pass; but unfortunately that Word is so often misread and more often than not, is not read at all. Further, there are those that are inclined to forget that all of it, every detail including the jots & tittles, will come to pass. The fulfilment of prophecy cannot be rushed. In addition and without intentionally doing so, a 'partial' fulfilment may be grasped as if all the prophecy had been fulfilled.

In post Second World War times then, various views of the world in biblical prophetic terms, emerged. Exactly which sort of viewpoint has often been related to how the meaning of the word 'Israel' is defined in contemporary use.

For a long while many people have thought of Israel as one of the three following concepts; 1. the 'Church' (of Christ); 2. the 'Jews'; 3. the ethnic descendants of Jacob son of Isaac and Rebekah, and this last view may well include some Jews but not all of them. Biblical scholars may protest that this grossly oversimplifies the position and I agree, but it needs to be done to prevent straying too far from the

main subject of the article. Incidentally, I have said that 'for a long while many people thought of Israel as ...'. In very recent years and with some rapidity, it seems that throughout the world there are stirrings of seeing Biblical Israel in a different perspective and as a result some interesting developments are taking place.

So, after the 1950s and 1960s had completed their course and the Lord still had not returned, many exponents of prophecy began to place the culmination of the age into some indeterminate time in the future and turned their attention to the longer term events which would precede this. As I have already said, relevant events at that time seemed few and yet with hindsight, it can of course be seen that the theatre of activity as we find it today was well and truly being set at that time. Our speakers and writers of those former times were not idly waiting for something to happen and it is worth listing some more recent fulfilments which were correctly interpreted by them.

Some post war fulfilments

1. Countries gaining independence.

'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.'

Luke ch. 21 vv 30-31.

'So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.'

Mark ch.13 v.29 (c.f. also Matthew ch.24 vv 32-33).

In biblical symbolism the 'Fig Tree' represents Judah and more particularly the Jews, whereas 'all trees' (i.e. non specified trees) represents various other nations.

With hindsight interpreters of prophecy may now look back and see how to a great extent this prophecy has been fulfilled. First the Israeli State in 1948 (30 years after the end of World War 1) and since then by an extensive number of other countries around the world, many of which are associated with the British Commonwealth. Others like Fiji have also made such claims.

2. Strengthening of the State of Israel, and some would say Zionism, has also been looked to as a precursor to end time events.

The Six-Day-War involving Palestine in the early Summer of 1967 (50 years after the Deliverance of Jerusalem in 1917), probably brought to an end the apparent dearth of prophetic fulfilment;

because since then apocalyptic activity has certainly escalated. In September 1967 Rev. C.S. McKelvey wrote, 'We are not told in the Bible that in the year 1967 Jewry shall take the whole of Jerusalem' and he was correct. Quite possibly for this reason exponents of prophecy did not foresee the Six-Day-War. Nevertheless, when it occurred it was recognised by Rev. McKelvey amongst others that it could well have been a partial fulfilment of Zephaniah chapter 2.

'Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, ... For **Gaza shall be forsaken**, and Ashkelon a desolation: **they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day**, and Ekron shall be rooted up.'

Zephaniah ch.2 vv 1-4

This text aptly describes the situation between 1967 and the present.

Recent interpretations

Another important aspect in post war years is the high degree of caution now exercised in predicting the immediate future from the Bible. Two reasons for this are firstly, the inaccurate forecasts made up to the time of the early post-war years; exponents of prophecy did not want to risk further discredit to the subject. The second reason is partially tied up with the continuing fulfilment of yet another prophecy.

'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.4.

One can hardly dispute that knowledge is now rapidly increasing compared with any previously known age and of course this applies to Biblical knowledge with its prophetic interpretation as much as any other subject. Truly this has happened and as a result I think there has been a transition from when the early post-war prophetic exponents 'saw through a glass darkly' to more recent times when they should be able to see more clearly because they are nearer the fulfilment. It must not be ignored of course, that the Holy Spirit exceptionally blesses some people with revelation beyond the norm. Even so, many of these it would seem from past experience, have only been given sufficient of the gift according to the needs of their particular era. Further, it must be remembered that Daniel's prophecy stated, 'seal the book, even to the time of the end.' Therefore as the Time of the End approaches we may expect the seals to be broken

and revelation granted. It is hardly surprising then, that with the dawn of the 1980s a new age of revelation arrived with God's Word now being writ large upon the wall of human attention.

By the way, I am not aware of the year 1980 itself being exceedingly significant in the prophetic time scale but merely wish to use it as a reference point after which there appears to have been a large increase in events which in themselves would seem to be prophetically significant.

Signs in the sky

The first chapter of Genesis v.14 tells of God saying,

‘... Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven ... and let them be for signs, ...’

So, signs they are. Three of the gospel writers recording Jesus' discourse on the events of the last days preceding His Second Coming, mention that he said there would be unusual behaviour amongst the heavenly bodies. For example,

‘And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; ...’

Luke ch.21 v.25.

What sort of signs may we expect therefore? It is worth mentioning that as well as Luke, both the gospel accounts of Matthew (ch.24 v.29) and (Mark ch.13 vv 24- 25) indicate that the light of the sun and the moon will be darkened, that the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers of the heavens be shaken.

These are profound statements indicating literal events to come. They could also be symbolic and represent a deeper spiritual sense; after all, Revelation ch.1 v.20 equates the symbolic ‘stars’ with angels and Revelation ch.12 vv 4 & 9 show how this symbol is put to use in a prophetic example where some stars (= angels) do indeed fall from heaven as they accompany the downfall of Satan (from heaven, the dwelling place of God in that instance). Be that as it may, from the surrounding verses and sections of the Books of the Prophets it may be deduced that there will be a particular day of literal darkness, and as the prophet Joel reiterates several times, ‘of thick darkness, ...’ (ch.2 vv 2,10,31).

On a somewhat lesser scale, dramatic events have truly adorned the sky above us in recent years and some of these have either not occurred in living memory or for centuries beforehand; yet again others have set new precedents having not been known before. It

was in 1980 itself that quite an extraordinary configuration of the planets in our solar system took place and although it was reported upon at the time, it is worth briefly mentioning again now. The wonder of this was that the orbits of the majority of our planets including Earth and the Sun brought them into the pattern of an almost straight line. The importance of this occurrence stems from the fact that even in terms of the span of the whole of Earth's written history, it is an extremely unusual event to occur, yet here it happens within the age that we are now living. With good reason there have been those that said it heralds some greater event yet to come.

In 1985-6 our solar system was again visited by Haley's Comet, the thirtieth observation of this comet since it was chronicled by the Chinese in 239 BC and more recently others noted that it marks the Seventieth Jubilee of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. It might well usher in something of great importance therefore. Certainly several of its previous visits (every 76 years) coincided with or shortly preceded notable events of significance to bible students.

- In 11BC it came just before the death of Agrippa & birth of Christ.
- Next was AD 66, only 4 years prior to Jerusalem's destruction.
- The Bayeux Tapestry records its 1066 appearance!
- John Wycliffe, the 'Morning Star of the Reformation would have seen it as he completed the translation of the Bible into English for the first time.
- In 1531 it coincided with the Abolition of the Monasteries and the end of Papal rule in Britain.
- It visited again in 1607 preceding the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611.
- The last visitation was 1910 in advance of the outbreak of the First World War and Jerusalem delivered from the Turks.

These regular occurrences with such historic events are they not too frequent to dismiss lightly as just coincidences?

Down through the years commentators have linked the appearance of this comet with many other events in the fields of politics, military endeavours and various successes and failures of all sorts as well. With these thoughts in mind, people have certainly seen Haley's Comet's 1986 appearance together with that of another

comet Hale-Bopp coming shortly after, eclipses when the moon turned red, unusual planetary alignments and so on, as precursors to a turning point in world history and politics, particularly with regard to the Israel peoples.

Signs of Man

In these heavenly phenomena, man's participation was largely just to observe them. Nevertheless, there have also been a whole spate of other events in recent times which man probably was able to control but did not. Consequently, catastrophes occurred and sadly, in spite of man's increased knowledge, the resultant disasters still show man's impatience, folly, greed and other similar failures.

Such events coming to mind have several factors in common. First, they were all well publicised and for much of the time the world's eyes through TV media and so on were actually watching the calamity unfold. This was partly due of course to advancing technical skills of the media, and by being able to capture a story live, i.e. history in the making. In other cases though, newsmen were on the spot for an entirely different reason. Secondly, these particular disasters were not just another horror story to disappear amongst the many reported so frequently these days. They hung on for days and weeks, some to surface again, months and years later if court or medical cases were involved. Some have had a profound effect on the whole world such as 9/11. Thirdly, legislation has followed in every case which created repercussions far beyond the country which initially suffered the tragedy. In fact the whole run of names that have appeared in the headlines, themselves notably hinted at the state of and challenge to modern society. These were a few of them.

- Challenger - the American space shuttle catastrophe.
- Herald of Free Enterprise - the Euro ferry that went to sea with its mouth open leading to calamity.
- Wormwood - translated 'bitterness', site of Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster.
- Hungerford - the many senseless killings by a single man in southern England.
- King's Cross - the place of London's underground fire tragedy.
- Costa Concordia - 'the Roman goddess of harmony', cruise ship disaster 2012.

Recent *BIBLE TRUTH* articles

With respect to the current financial situation, its huge debt, the Euro, terrorism and such things, it is worth recapping some of what has been written in our recent editions.

My article 'Wealth - Bitter Harvest or Eternal Treasure?' written three years ago, dealt in some depth with the global financial crisis that was perceived to be developing. The article compared these events with how they were prophesied by even such as the Apostle James regarding the abuse of wealth.

'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.'

James ch 5 vv 1-5

The Bitter Harvest article touched on what could be learnt from past climaxes of history such as the time when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt or Daniel was restricted in Babylon. In both examples, following soon on the heels of anguish came deliverance. In the case of Israel in Egypt it was progress towards the Promised Land; following Daniel's captivity in Babylon, it was freedom of worship in Esther's time and commencing to rebuild Jerusalem's temple shortly after.

Also, it is worth noting the comment I made at the top of p.6 of the article, that when the British Museum Babylon Show 'finishes on 15 March 2009' it would be 'a useful date to review how global finances are faring'. As it turned out, 15 March was a key date because that very weekend was when global stock markets hit their deepest low of the decade. It is not the intention to repeat the whole article here so you are encouraged to read it again in *BIBLE TRUTH* 253 January/March 2009.

Our magazine's coverage of current matters and Babylon goes back much further. *BIBLE TRUTH* 214 November/December 2001 contained 'Target America'. Though this majored on the destruction of the World Trade Centre in the 9/11 event, it closely linked it with Babylon. 'Four faces of Babylon', 'The Hallmarks of Babylon', Revelation 18 and the fall of Babylon, were all covered in the article intimating that the fall of the Twin Towers heralded the collapse of the Babylonian System. It certainly did: global financial markets have never been the same since!

The Babylonian situation and finance

Though it may be argued that the Babylonian System has its foundation in the Tower of Babel (See Genesis ch.11), the Babylonian Empire also fuelled its existence. That empire happened to head the image dreamt of by its emperor Nebuchadnezzar, where the interpretation was given by Daniel the prophet.

'... Thou art this head of gold.'

Daniel ch.2 v.38

So said Daniel to the great king. What doomed the image, how did its end commence? The clue is given a few verses earlier.

(v.34) Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

(v.35) Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.'

Daniel ch.2 vv 34-35

Notice the 'then' at the beginning of the second verse, indicating a chronological sequence of events; that is to say that verse 34 has to be fulfilled first.

The feet and toes of this image are also important for they symbolise certain nations.

'And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

Daniel ch.2 v.41

Exponents of prophecy generally agree that the iron and clay symbolise the nations of Europe, which are the very ones that are faced with the perplexity of unimaginable debt. The eyes of the world are presently upon this eurozone in wonderment of, if and how, they might tackle this horror, because all may be affected by the fallout. Many of these have in recent years poured great effort into a One-World government, the concept of which harks right back to Babel the foundation of the Babylonian system. Thus, since we may well be witnessing the demise of the iron and clay nations and they are the precursor to the collapse of the entire Nebuchadnezzar's dream image, we may well ask how long will it be before we see the other components of the image start to crumble? It has not all fallen yet but its supports are in grave danger of caving in.

Conclusion

So we are now in a very different phase of fulfilled Bible prophecy, compared with the early post-war years. With hindsight one could well ask, did 'we see through a glass, darkly ...' in that past time? Yes of course, though at present the more pertinent question to us is whether the Israel nations are as a whole, any nearer being fit to see God, 'face to face'? I think not. In former days scripture was read in the Western World far more than today and as a consequence was known the better for it. With respect to the study of prophecy, it meant many more people were investigating it in those earlier times whereas these days this is not the case: there is a lack of searching the scriptures let alone prophetic portions. What a shame, for here God's plan and purpose for man throughout the ages unfolds. Surely, once a grounding of what scripture has to teach on other subjects has been acquired, it is our Christian duty to press on with the prophetic content, for herein is a way that God speaks to us, in our day just as He has done in the past. Did not Christ berate those of His day with,

'... O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.'

Luke ch.24 v.25.

Even more disturbing is the knowledge of whom those words were spoken to. It was not the Scribes, Pharisees or even the populus in general, but to some who were closest to him, namely Cleopas and 'another', on the road to Emmaus!

Obviously all people have not the same ability to study but all can try. Besides which, the Holy Spirit's purpose is not only to comfort but guide us in such things. In any case, in view of the urgency of the age, the subject must not be ignored but rather let those who do pursue it be encouraged to the full,

‘... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him’.

Hebrews ch.11 v.6.

In essence then, our magazine's task is not to be hypercritical of the society surrounding us or to say, 'I told you so' when we think a prophecy has been fulfilled. After all, prophecy is for God's edification, not ours. Rather, our calling is to be the watchman on the tower crying a warning in order that,

‘... when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.’

Luke ch.21 v.28

So watchmen we should be, but more of that another time.
