

ISRAEL RUSSIA CHRIST'S COMING



and
ARMAGEDDON

WHY WE PUBLISH THIS ARTICLE

Throughout the western world people have been alerted to the frightful possibilities of nuclear war if and when it may come. Protests are becoming more and more vocal and violent as though noise or nuisance will stop the preparations of a war that is inevitable.

The Bible speaks of "the slain" being from "one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth" (Jeremiah 25:33), of a "plague" of warfare which will result in the very condition we know comes from the effect of nuclear action: "Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth" (Zechariah 14:12).

Bible prophecy therefore predicts the very state that men fear today; but, in addition, it provides a message of hope for those who are prepared to hearken to its counsel and apply its teaching. The Gospel provides a way of escape from troubles today as well as those of tomorrow. It is, itself, a prophecy anticipating vast changes in the earth; for it is scripturally summed up in seven words: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). God's purpose is not to destroy the earth, but to change man upon it; and so alter conditions upon it as to convert it into a realm in which its inhabitants will find pleasure and happiness. Therefore, as Christadelphians, we do not only warn of coming trouble; but provide a message of consolation for all who desire to heed it. For that reason this book is published. We are not politically motivated in setting forth this teaching. We do not take sides with the ideologies of men, but proclaim the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up his kingdom at Jerusalem and extend its influence throughout the earth. We set forth the scriptural, prophetic way as taught in the Bible; the way to life eternal at the coming of the Lord.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES REVEALED FOR THE SALVATION
OF THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S WORD;

AND PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.



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ISRAEL, RUSSIA, CHRIST'S COMING & ARMAGEDDON

IN February 1945, in the last hours of World War Two, the three Allied wartime leaders — Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt — met at Yalta to decide the shape of the post-war world. The decisions reached were disastrous for the western world, and granted outstanding advantages to the Soviet Union. It was at Yalta that Poland was sold out to the Soviet regime. The betrayal of Poland was the key to the betrayal of the whole of Eastern Europe to Communism. It permitted Russia to extend her influence as far west as to what became known as the Iron Curtain, indicated in the map above. And in this Bible prophecy was fulfilled.

Since then the Western World has been weakened by the infiltration of the spirit of Communism. This, together with Socialism has resulted in the decline of religion, the uprise of political confusion, moral declension, the weakening of the family unit, international antagonism and other evils. Reverence toward God and the Bible have fallen as an atheistic political philosophy has permeated society.

Whilst these evils are disruptive of modern life and challenge the future of civilisation, political antagonism between East and West has resulted in the most ominous preparations for a war of annihilation. It is assessed that every minute of every day the world is spending over \$1.5 million on manufacturing weapons of destruction, with some sixty million employees throughout the world dependent upon munition making or its relative trades for a livelihood. Priority is given to the development of nuclear weaponry, until today man has the capability of not only more widespread destruction than ever before in history, but the potential



to render the earth completely uninhabitable by pollution and social cancer.

This, however, will not happen, because it runs counter to God's purpose with the earth and man upon it. He has declared that *"all the earth shall be filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea"* (Numbers 14:21). The Bible reveals that there is a divine purpose to the existence of mankind, an underlying future plan of God directing the flow and course of human events.

A consideration of the events themselves is depressing, and causes the future to look gloomy. But in comparing them to the sure word of prophecy, a clearer, broader, and brighter view is obtained.

This is in exact accord with Bible prophecy. It states that there would be *"upon earth distress of nations with perplexity... men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"* (Luke 21:25-26); it predicts a *"time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"* (Daniel 12:1). The world is clearly preparing for such an occasion. To give only one example of this, consider what is perhaps the only thing which humanity fears most in these modern times — nuclear war. We are told that in the event of war in the short space of a few hours civilisation as we know it, could be completely devastated. Scientists predict that the eventual misuse of these weapons is unavoidable, and that it is only a matter of a few years before the inevitable will take place. Mankind shivers in anxiety and strives to postpone this predicted doomsday by organising worldwide anti-nuclear marches and protests — efforts which can only be seen as puny gestures by a world which bows to the philosophy that might is right. It is clear to any who are not deluding themselves, that the situation has reached the point of no return. Every passing year adds to the drama.

Consider the massive preparations for war. It is assessed that during the whole of World War II the equivalent of three million tons of TNT, including the two atom bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were used. But today the USA and Russia have enormous stocks of TNT in nuclear weapons alone! As one scientist stated: "In other words the two super-powers could fight the equivalent of 5,000 World War II's in an afternoon." In fact, Russia possesses the largest stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in the world. The country declared an arsenal of 39,967 tons of chemical weapons in 1997. The Federation of American Scientists, a renowned organization for assessing nuclear weapon stockpiles, claims that Russia has 4,650 active nuclear warheads, while the U.S. has 2,468. Other sources however say that the U.S. has more nuclear warheads and the actual numbers remain a subject of estimations and ongoing constant discussion depending on their respective source. Alexander Khramchikhin, an analyst at the

Institute of Political and Military Analysis, for instance, said Russia has 3,100 nuclear warheads while the U.S. has some 5,700.

About fifty million people were killed during World War II. But on the ratio of explosives and weaponry on hand, the major powers have the potential in theory to kill everyone on earth 47 times over! And that does not include the weaponry stored by other nuclear powers such as Britain, France, China, India and others. The figures are so enormous as to be beyond comprehension. In comparison, it is claimed that the arms race draws more money than health, education or welfare combined.

Some time back, President Reagan, in a comment to *People Magazine* stated: "There have been times in the past when we thought the end of the world was coming, but never anything like this." It was reported that "on at least five occasions in the last four years, President Reagan has referred to his belief that Armageddon may well occur during the present generation." He has drawn attention to the Bible prophecy of Ezekiel 38 which predicts the attack of Russia on the Middle East, a subject we treat within this article.

A Message of Hope Beyond the Fear

Let us make it clear, however, that though the Bible does predict that mankind in "*the last days*" will have the capability to destroy itself, it assures us that God will not let time exist long enough for that to happen. There are many prophecies in the Bible concerning these last days, when "*knowledge has been increased*" (Daniel 12:4) and when "*men's hearts are failing them for fear*" of what is coming upon the earth. ***But it clearly shows that God will intervene in the course of the world's fate, and "destroy them which destroy the earth"*** (Revelation 11:18).

When these prophecies are studied, the picture changes from one of helplessness and chaos to one of planned purpose and eventual redemption.

Over 2,000 years have elapsed since the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we believe that the prophecies of the Bible clearly testify that the time of his return from heaven is at hand. All signs point to this imminent event: an event which will be the culmination of human history and the beginning of a new era.

Therefore in spite of the problems of the present, and the ominous threat of the future, with Bible in hand a message of hope can be given, the truth of which is vindicated by the fulfilment of Bible prophecy both in the past and the present.

Russian Aggression

Meanwhile, the growth of Russian power since Yalta fulfils the requirements of Bible prophecy. Since the three Allied leaders met to carve out the post-war world, nation after nation has been swallowed up

by Russian aggression. Here is a record of its conquests:

1939: Occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Finland.

1940: Annexed Estonia.

1946-49: Annexed Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Occupied half of Berlin.

1956: Brutally crushed Hungarian opposition.

1968: Occupied Czechoslovakia.

1975: Intrigued in Vietnam.

1976: Communist troops invade Angola.

1978: Communist troops enter Ethiopia.

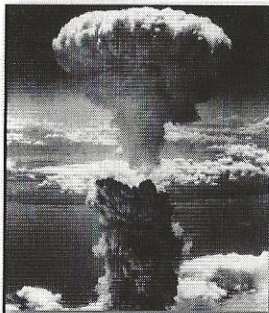
1979: Assisted in the invasion of Kampuchea.

1979: Afghanistan invaded.

The invasion of Afghanistan alerted even President Carter to the menace. Before then he had placed his confidence in a policy of *détente* with Russia, but with that act, which put vital oil supplies to the West under risk, he saw the light, recognising it as a direct challenge to the West and reacted accordingly.

Since then the West has continued to develop its military potential so as to effectively counter the Russian attack when it comes. But it is already out-manoevred and out-gunned by their opponent in the north.

An article in *The Bulletin* some time back, claimed that Russia not only worked out a plan for world domination, but has set a time for the accomplishment of its objectives.



Hiroshima devastated by the explosive force of the A-bomb. Death and destruction extended for an area of 3 square miles. Today nuclear weapons are far more destructive. The US has developed the MX Mark 12a missile fitted with ten warheads with a greater explosive potential than all the bombs dropped in World War II. One warhead alone has a destructive potential of 290 square miles! Civilisation could not survive a nuclear war.

The writer declared: ***"Russia's standing army is more than twice the size of that of the United States — reflecting the traditional Russian emphasis, in Tzarist as well as Soviet times, on large standing armies."***

The article concludes: ***"The Russians are on the march. We are witnessing the rise of a would-be world imperial power."***

Let us state clearly that we are not attacking Communism as such; nor supporting Democracy against Socialism. We are not politically motivated. We are interested in the factual development of world events because they confirm what Bible prophecy predicts. The growth of Russian power is a notable sign of the times indicating that the world is on the eve of the most dramatic event of all history: the return of Christ in power and glory.

Time Limit for Survival

Russia, however, is not the only power with a time-table of planning. God also has His set time when He will send back His Son, Jesus Christ, to establish his reign on earth. The Bible teaches, *"there is a set time to favour Zion"* (another name for Jerusalem; see Psalm 102:13); *"the day of the LORD cometh... for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle..."* (Zechariah 14:1-2).

The clear teaching of the Bible is that Jesus Christ must return to the earth to fulfil the plan that God has had from the very beginning: the establishing of His righteous rule thereon. Christ will return as personally and as visibly as he ascended into heaven. As the Apostles stood on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem, and saw the Lord Jesus ascend into heaven, they were told by angels sent by God: *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11).

Accordingly, when the Apostles preached the Gospel, they declared the good news concerning the second coming of the Lord. Listen to Peter: *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:19-21).

Notice how definite is the teaching of the second coming of the Lord! The doctrine was basic to the Apostles' proclamation of the Gospel. Now hearken to Paul as he set it forth in Athens: *"God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; wherefore He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31).

Numerous references to the Second Coming are found in the Bible, clearly showing that it is the design of God to send Jesus Christ back to this earth to replace the rule of man with that of God. What else can the following teaching signify?

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

"The LORD shall be king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9).

"He [Jesus] shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD God shall give unto him the throne of his father David [i.e., Jerusalem – see Jeremiah 3:17]: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is coming to reign on earth.

Significant Parallel Events

The growth of Russian power, and the modern revival of Israel constitute clear signs, plainly foretold in the Bible, witnessing to the imminence of Christ's coming.

Their development has been side by side.

In 1917, the Red Revolution bathed Russia in blood and established Communism in power. In the same year, General Allenby drove the Turks from Palestine, and the British Government proclaimed the Balfour Declaration, offering newly liberated Palestine as a national home to the Jews.

In 1947 the Soviet Confederacy celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, by which time it had developed a world influence; and the same year UNO legislated that the Jewish people would be permitted to develop their independent national existence, which they did under the name of **ISRAEL**, proclaimed in 1948.

In 1967 Russia celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with an ominous display of militarism with a parade of impressive war machines; and the same year, after the amazing victory of the "Six Days' War," Israel governed Jerusalem for the first time in over 2,000 years.

The preservation of the Jewish people throughout the ages, and the amazing revival of the nation in modern times, are essential to the purpose of God, fulfilling the requirements of Bible prophecy, as God declared: ***"I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king unto them all"*** (Ezekiel 37:21-22).

Notice the sequence of development in the above prophecy:

1. **The Jews will be regathered to their own land;**
2. **The nation of Israel will be again revived;**
3. **A king shall reign from Jerusalem.**

The first two events have had token fulfilment during the last fifty years; the Jews have returned to their ancient homeland; and Israel again has come into existence. The third predicted event will be fulfilled when he who was born and died as "*King of the Jews*" (Matthew 2:2; 27:37) will return to take his great power and reign.

The fulfilment of such prophecies shows that complete reliance can be placed on all the Bible promises.

The Rise of Russia Predicted in the Bible

Side by side with the uprise of Israel, the world has witnessed a further great sign of Christ's second coming in the emergence of Russia as a world power. Eight hundred years ago, Russia was a tiny nation occupying a small tract of territory adjacent to Moscow. Today, Russian influence dominates no less than one-quarter of the entire land mass of the world, and about 40 per cent of its population. In 1903 Lenin had seventeen inscribed supporters; today Russia counts its adherents in hundreds of millions.

This mighty accumulation of power has gradually developed over the years. It was given particular impetus during World War II. Over fifty years ago, Russia was bottled up in its own vast territory, and found difficulty in conquering the tiny neighbouring nation of Finland. Today she is a world power that is feared by all others. The West knows the threat to peace that Russia, with its dictatorial aggressiveness presents, and is fearful as to when and where she might strike.

The Bible reveals this. 2,500 years ago, the Bible predicted the head-lines of tomorrow's news, and we can see that its predictions are correct, and appreciate the true significance of the times in which we live.

Let the reader open the Bible and carefully read Ezekiel 38. It is a prophecy relating to "***the latter days***" (v. 16). It predicts an overwhelming invasion of the Middle East, by a power that shall descend "***from out of the north parts***" (v. 15) against God's "***people of Israel.***" It is significant that this name, ***ISRAEL***, is used in a national sense, for it was only in May 1948, when the leader of the Jews, David benGurion declared that the new State in the Middle East would be called ***Israel***, for the first time since the destruction of the nation by the Romans in AD70.

This power of the north referred to is Russia. The prophecy of Ezekiel 38 provides the details. The prophet was told: "***Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him...***" (v. 2).

As this prophecy concerns *"the latter days"* (v. 16), these titles must relate to modern nations; but as the titles were those familiar to the world of Ezekiel, 2,500 years ago, it is necessary to turn to the records of history to identify them. Thus Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century shows that Magog related to the ancient Scythians, concerning whom, Herodotus wrote: *"They spread from the River Tanais, or Don, westward along the banks of the Ister, or Danube."*

According to the *Penguin Atlas of World History*, the Magogites occupied the territory of East Germany, or Central Europe, which thus can be identified as *"the land of Magog."* It is of the utmost significance that Soviet Russia once occupied East Germany.

Meshech is the ancient form of Muscovy, from whence came the name Moscow.

Tubal is mentioned in conjunction with Meshech (cp. Ezekiel 27:13), and therefore naturally suggests Tobolski, the metropolis of Siberia. Tobolski gains its name from the river Tobol that runs through that area.

These titles therefore point directly to Russia, whose power today extends to Central Europe, the *"land of Magog."*

Other nations are described as being in confederation with the Russian Gog in his invasion of the Middle East. A consideration of those listed in Ezekiel 38:6 reveals that the Russian confederacy will include all countries of Europe and Asia.

In addition v. 5 adds: ***"Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them..."*** linking these three nations together as being associated with Russia. All three have had an experience in common in conforming to this prophecy. They received their independence following World War II. Persia is today modern Iran. At the conclusion of World War II, the occupying forces of Russia and Britain withdrew from Persia and the Shah was established as head of the State. Vital to the regime of the Shah were the close links established with the West. But from Ezekiel's prophecy and elsewhere, Bible students knew that ultimately Persia (Iran) must fall under the influence of Russia.

Today, the close links that once existed between Iran and the West have been ruptured, and Russian influence in Iran is increasing.

Libya and Ethiopia were part of Mussolini's Italian Empire until the conclusion of World War II. They both received independence at the end of that war; and both commenced their independence with strong ties of agreement and mutual trust with Britain. Since then those links have been severed. Today Libya is closely connected with Russia; since in the past Russian forces entered Ethiopia and established a Communist regime there.

Thus modern history has conformed to the requirements of this amazing prophecy of the latter days.

The prophecy requires an Eurasian confederation of nations headed

by Russia to invade the Middle East, in an attempt at world domination. This will ignite the spark that will flame into World War III, and involve all nations in Armageddon (Revelation 16:15-16).

A further point of identification is given in Ezekiel 38:15. Gog is said to descend from "out of the uttermost parts of the north" (Revised Version) against "the mountains of Israel." A glance at the map will show that this can only relate to Russia. Russia is in longitudinal line from Jerusalem, whilst Russia dominates all the territory in the "uttermost parts north" of Israel.

In this remarkable prophecy, God revealed the future intentions and destiny of Russia, and outlined the crisis that will involve all nations without exception.



Russia Directly Named in the Bible

Gog is represented as chief of a mighty host incorporating most of Europe and Asia. Three times he is described as "chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" (Ezekiel 38:2, 3; 39:1).

What does this title signify?

The Hebrew word rendered "prince" signifies "one lifted up," i.e. a dictator, and not necessarily a prince of royal birth. The word "chief" is *Rosh*, and Hebraists state that it is a proper noun and should be rendered as such. The Revised Version (as with other translations) does so, and defines Gog as "Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal."

Rosh was the ancient name of Russia. The historian Gibbon wrote: "Among the Greeks, Russia was known as Ros." George Sava, in *Russia Triumphant* states that Russia was first known by the name of Rus, and the people were called Russi. Bochart, Stanley, Schoffield and other Bible commentators, claim that the word Rosh as used by Ezekiel denotes "the most ancient form in Hebrew for Russia."

Gog is therefore Dictator of Russia, Moscow and Siberia. The prophecy shows that one day the this Power will plunge the world into war by a sudden attack on the Middle East.

The Bait that will draw Russia into the Middle East

But God has set His face against this power from the north: ***"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee O Gog... and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and will bring thee forth, and all thine army..."*** (Ezekiel 38:3).

"I will do it," says God. "I will draw Russia and her armies into the Middle East." He likens Himself to a fisherman with baited hook, inexorably drawing His struggling and twisting catch, to the point where He wants to take it. That is a feature of current events that should not be overlooked. Rulers and Statesmen imagine that they are the arbiters of destiny, and that peace and goodwill of the world depends upon their wisdom and decisions.

Nothing is further from the Truth.

It is God who *"rules in the kingdom of men"* (Daniel 4:17). He uses the ambitions and schemes of men and nations to further His plans. He used Hitler, with his anti-Semitism, to drive the Jews back to their homeland in the Middle East (Jeremiah 16:15-16). He is using the ambitions of Russia to *"gather all nations"* to the Middle East for judgment. And though Russia might attempt to evade the issue, events will ultimately bring her, together with all other nations (Zechariah 14:2), to Jerusalem, the city of destiny.

And what desirable bait is found on that hook! The Middle East provides the richest strategic and economic prizes the world has to offer. It is the bridgehead of three main continents, linking Africa, Asia, and Europe as one. It contains the richest oil deposits in the world. It is the strategic springboard for world dominion.

Take but one of the prizes mentioned above — oil. God, who created the world, not only arranged the land masses so as to cause *"His land"* (Ezekiel 38:16) to be most desirable from a strategic point of view, but also hid beneath its soil that most essential of all commodities today — oil. The Middle East contains three-fourths of the world's proven oil reserves. Even though Russia may have sufficient oil for her own use, her domination of the area would bring most nations subject to her control. But, in fact, current estimates indicate that shortly Russia will be in the position of having to import oil, particularly if she continues to supply her associated, dominated countries of East Europe. If Russia controlled the Middle East, she could dictate her terms for use of its oil to the whole of the western world.

A political commentator recently declared: *"Russia's aim is to use local upheavals to gain control of the entire oil supplies in the Middle East. Having done this, Russia could supply oil to Western Europe on terms involving European surrender, or force Europe to buy from America. If Europe chose the latter course, every NATO country would be dollar bankrupt within a few months. If, in order to allow Europe to*

earn dollars to pay for the oil, America opened her markets, her own domestic economy would be ruined."

This is the dilemma facing the Western World today.

Russia has become more and more involved in the Middle East and once it is obvious that political penetration has failed, she will resort to war. Ezekiel 38:16 predicts the "latter day" Russian invasion of the Middle East in these terms: *"Thus saith the Lord God: It shall come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought; and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely... to turn thine hand upon the desolate places now inhabited, and upon the people gathered out of the nations... against My people of Israel"* (Ezekiel 38:11-12,16).

According to former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, Russia already has contingency plans to "wipe out" Israel under certain conditions. In his memoirs *White House Years* serialised in *Time*, he stated that during discussions with the Russian Ambassador in 1971, he asked how would Russia react if Israel threatened the 15,000 Russian soldiers then in Egypt. He was told: "If the Israelis threaten us, we will wipe them out within two days. I can assure you our plans are made for this eventuality."

So evidently the men of the Kremlin have already "thought their evil thought" as the terms of Ezekiel's prophecy state. They already have plans for such an invasion as the prophet anticipated 2,500 years ago.

Israel's Place in Prophecy

Ezekiel 38 thus not only predicts a Russian invasion of the Middle East in the "latter days," but actually describes the political state of the country at the time of the invasion.

And the description exactly conforms to current conditions.

The prophecy declares that Russia will come *"against Israel."* But until May 1948, Israel had no political existence, so that until then this prophecy could not be fulfilled!

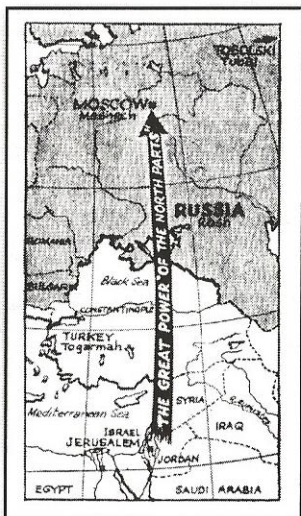
Israel came into political existence in defiance of the will of Britain, America, and the world. The Jews were advised that the time was not ripe for the re-establishment of their nation, and the Western Powers withdrew any help they could have given it. The Arabs waged war on the newly born State in 1948, and threatened to destroy it.

Instead, it emerged as the most powerful nation of the Middle East.

Ezekiel declared that the Israelis would dwell "safely" or "confidently" in the land. Confidence is a feature of modern Israel. On three occasions she has decisively defeated the combined Arab nations, and is confident of doing so again if necessary. Today, Israel dwells with an even greater

sense of "safety" brought about by the signing of the pact with Egypt in 1979, and continued military success in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, let us recognise the uniqueness of her existence today. Israel is one of the most ancient nations of antiquity, and yet one of the newest. It is the only nation whose people have been scattered into all parts of the earth, and yet re-gathered again to the land of their forefathers. Its language is the only language to have been resurrected from a dead language into a living, modern tongue. Israel is a microcosm of the whole world, for the average Israeli comes from over seventy different countries. It is a tiny nation of only about 8 million people, yet it dominates world politics and the daily news events more than other nations ten times its size.



The emergence of Israel as a nation fulfils Bible prophecy and demonstrates that we are living in the very shadow of the most dramatic event of all history: the second advent of the Lord Jesus. The Bible declares: *"Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles far off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him"* (Jeremiah 3:10). It was God who scattered Israel; it is God who is regathering the people. The Bible describes the purpose of the Jewish return thus: *"David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel... for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them"* (Jeremiah 33:17, 26).

Jesus Christ, described as *"the son of David"* in Matthew 1:1, is the one promised by God to sit upon the restored throne of David in Jerusalem (see Luke 1:32-33; Matthew 19:28). Of that time, the prophet Jeremiah declares: *"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it... neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart"* (Jeremiah 3:17).

But the self-confident Israeli State of today is not ready to receive Christ; it must be humbled before its citizens will bow the knee to him. The Russian invasion of the Middle East will accomplish that.

God Challenges Russian Might

Though the Russian invasion of the Middle East will precipitate war

between the East and the West neither side will gain the supremacy. It will conclude as a one-sided contest between the Russian Colossus and Christ; between the greatest accumulation of human power ever wielded by man, and irresistible Divine power in the hands of the Son of God. The Russian Gog is invited to prepare for this battle. In the language of irony, he is addressed: ***"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them"*** (Ezekiel 38:7).

A protest will be voiced by Powers that can be identified as the English-speaking world in conjunction with certain Arab nations (Ezekiel 38:13), but it will prove ineffectual and will be brushed aside. Perhaps the threat of nuclear warfare may prove a deterrent in a full-scale resistance.

Russia is described as a guard unto its satellite nations. The word, in its original form, implies one who hedges in those over whom it has gained control. It is an excellent definition for Russia with its protective policies. The Russian Gog, with its godless ideologies, is invited to mass his mighty accumulation of power, his modern, nuclear weapons of war, his guided missiles, his space rockets, his massed legions of soldiers — for a dramatic contest of power, in which Christ will vindicate his authority, and show the folly of Jew and Gentile who put their confidence in the arm of the flesh.

And Russia's power is mighty from a human standpoint. The influence of the Russia today extends deep into European territory; it wages a constant war of nerves against Turkey; it continually intrigues in the Middle East; manifests open hostility toward Israel.

In due time, Russia, having confederated other European nations under its control, will invade the Middle East. The world will be convulsed in the greatest crisis of all history. The passions of men will overflow until all reason is submerged. It will erupt into a struggle to the death between East and West, which will involve the nations. The Middle East will become the focal point of impact.

Russia will drive south to Egypt (Daniel 11:40-45), and will finally lay siege to Jerusalem, drawing all nations to that city to battle (Zechariah 14:2). The city will fall to her onslaught, and the Jews, with their British and American allies, will be driven back. Russia's triumph will seem complete! The world will appear to be on the eve on becoming completely dominated by Russia, when suddenly a new power will be manifested in the political arena. Jesus Christ will have returned, and then intervenes in the affairs of the nations, to set up his power on earth.

Christ's Coming Humbles the Nations

The Bible indicates that before Russia invades Israel, an event of even greater importance will take place. It teaches that judgment must *"begin at the house of God"* (1Peter 4:17; 2Thessalonians 2:1);

2Timothy 4:1,8). For that purpose, Christ will resurrect those of his followers who have died, and together with living believers will bring them before him, that he might reward them according as their work has been (Revelation 22:12; 1Corinthians 15:20-23). To the righteous, he will grant life eternal (Romans 2:7; Matthew 29:29), but the "second death" will be the lot of those who have proven rebellious (Revelation 2:11; Galatians 6:8).

Having thus judged his own, he will proceed to judge the world (2Thessalonians 1:7-10). He will move against the nations then convulsed in war, seeking, particularly, to cleanse the Holy Land of the polluting presence of their warring armies (Ezekiel 39:11-16). By the exercise of Almighty power his enemies will be defeated. The very elements will be used to that end (Zechariah 14:3). A devastating storm will break over the Holy Land; heaven's artillery will thunder forth; lightning and hail of unprecedented extent will beat down the enemy, a terrible earthquake will shake the ground. The heterogeneous forces of the Russian invader will be seized with fear and panic. In superstitious dread, they will turn their weapons on one another, in a terrible mutual slaughter. The prophet predicts: *"Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel... and I will call for a sword against him [Gog] throughout all My mountains, saith the Lord God, every man's sword will be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD"* (Ezekiel 38:18-23).

Gog's defeat will be complete and final.

What will it accomplish?

The prophet declares: *"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants thereof will learn righteousness"* (Isaiah 26:9). The terrible disaster, the remarkable victory, will result in the elevation of the Lord Jesus. The initial success of Russia will humble the forces of the West and of Israel; its final defeat will lay the pomp and power of man in the dust. God shall then be elevated in the person of His Son.

Christ will call upon all nations to submit to his rule. Those who refuse will be disciplined or overthrown; those who submit will be incorporated in the Kingdom he will set up on earth. The prophet declares: *"The nation and kingdom that shall not serve Thee shall perish"* (Isaiah 60:12). But he also speaks of vast changes that shall be brought about in the earth: *"It shall come to pass in the last days... that many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for 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 in plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

The prophet saw beyond Armageddon to a time when men will voluntarily turn to God, to learn of His ways and to walk in His paths. Then international peace and goodwill will prevail, and the Lord's prayer be fulfilled: *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."* Then will the words of the angels at the birth of Christ become a reality: *"Glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace and goodwill toward men."*

Christ's victory at Armageddon will be but the first of a series of divine judgments in the earth that will bring all nations ultimately under his control. Men at last will see the folly of placing any confidence in the arm of flesh. They will recognise that Almighty Power is vested in the Creator alone, and will be forced to acknowledge the authority of God and His Son.

Among those humbled by disaster and defeat will be the Jewish people. The destruction wrought by the Russian invasion will destroy much that has been established in the Holy Land. It will bring home to the Israelis the fallacy of placing confidence in the arm of flesh, and will cause them to turn as humble suppliants to the God whom they have neglected for so long (Zechariah 13:8-9), and to His Son, the Lord Jesus, their divinely appointed King, whom their forefathers crucified. They shall *"look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn"* because of the miseries that have come upon them through their past blindness in rejecting their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10). Having been humbled and disciplined by trouble, they will be educated in divine principles, and restored to their position of favour before God, as in the days of old (Amos 9:11).

Jerusalem will become the Metropolis of Christ's reign; it shall be called *"the throne of the LORD"* (Jeremiah 3:17). The city of his humiliation where, over 2000 years ago, the people shouted *"crucify him! crucify him!"* will become the centre of his glory, the scene of his triumph, and will re-echo with anthems of praise to his honour. To it all nations will be gathered — not for war, but for peace, to worship in righteousness before the King of all the earth (Zechariah 14:16).

What This Means to You!

Thus out of the storm-clouds of trouble and war a bright future will unfold for the earth. Russia's bid for world domination will fail, for it is the purpose of God to *"set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed,"* and which shall *"break in pieces"* those nations that oppose

it, incorporating them in its rule (Daniel 2:44).

During Christ's millennial reign, his subjects (the people of all nations, both Jew and Gentile) will remain mortal (Isaiah 65:20-25, but his associates, those who have lived in accordance with his teaching, will be granted immortality (Romans 2:6-8), and shall reign on earth in conjunction with him (Revelation 5:9-10; 20:6). At the end of his 1,000 years' reign, called the Millennium, those of his subjects who are accounted worthy will also be given immortality through a second resurrection (Revelation 20:12-15). Thus the *"last enemy to be destroyed"* will be death (1Corinthians 15:25-26), and a glorified earth and kingdom will be delivered unto God, that He might be *"all in all"* (1Corinthians 15:28).

Daniel was told: *"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him"* (Daniel 7:27).

In Revelation 5:9-10, the Redeemed are represented as singing their future song of triumph: *"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall REIGN ON THE EARTH."*

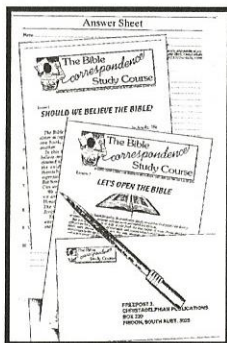
To them, Christ makes this promise: *"He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron"* (Revelation 2:26-27).

The facts of Bible teaching provide a wonderful source of hope and comfort for the future. They enable believers to look beyond the fears and problems of today to the glorious consummation of Christ's coming.

Christ is coming! There is no doubt about that! The purpose of God demands it; the signs of the times indicate it; the needs of humanity require it. The question is: Will we witness it?

The answer depends on our individual attitude to the Bible. The way of life eternal, in the Kingdom the God to be set up on earth, is revealed therein, Christ declared: *"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* He told his disciples: ***"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved"*** (Mark 16:16). A glorious future awaits those who are prepared to accept that invitation. Why not do so yourself? Why not search into these matters? It costs you nothing to do so; yet it can provide you with the means of obtaining peace of mind now, and life eternal in the Kingdom of God.

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