LIGHT FOR THE LAST DAYS
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The Gathering Storm

Over two days in September the United Kingdom had a new Prime Minister and a new King. On September 6th her Majesty the Queen asked Liz Truss to form a government, replacing Boris Johnson. Prime Minister Truss then travelled from Balmoral, Scotland to London arriving in a rain storm, which stopped just in time for her to give her speech outside 10 Downing Street. She promised to deal with the crisis threatening the nation and concluded, "Together we can ride out the storm."

On September 8th Queen Elizabeth II died, ending her 70 year reign and handing over the throne to her son who became King Charles III. The country then went into ten days of mourning for the Queen who was widely loved and praised for her devotion to service of the nation and the Commonwealth. During this time the news in Britain was of little else than the Queen's life and death and we even found God getting a look in as tributes to her life of service focussed on her strong Christian faith.

Her funeral has been described as the most watched Christian service in history, viewed by about four billion people around the world. If they paid attention, they would have heard Bible readings from 1 Corinthians 15 telling us of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the way in to the kingdom of heaven: ***'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'*** (1 Corinthians 15.20-22). The reading from John 14 contained Jesus' promise ***'I will come again'*** as well as His statement: ***'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.'***

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Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke of the Queen's faith in God and understanding of the Gospel message with its hope in the resurrection of the dead through faith in Jesus Christ and the fact of our accountability to God. How much of this sunk in only God knows, but it was a remarkable fact that so many world leaders and different faith leaders, as well as half the world's population were being told about a woman who believed in Jesus Christ as the one mediator between God and humanity and who is able to give us eternal life in heaven. The service at Windsor concluded with the words of Revelation 21:

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."





Coming back to earth.

After the Queen's funeral we soon came back to earth with news of more strikes, race riots and people's fears that in the coming winter they will have to choose between heating and eating. The government published its plan to deal with the cost of living crisis which sparked fears of inflation as they plan to borrow huge sums of money. Immediately the value of the pound dropped and interest rates went up.

So coming back to Liz Truss's statement we ask **'Will we ride out the storm together?**

Probably not. For one thing Britain and most western nations are deeply divided along political, racial and cultural lines. For another thing the problems we are facing are global and international in nature and no national government has an answer to them. And most importantly we have to recognise that during the Queen's 70 year reign, there has been a massive falling away from biblical Christian faith.

Liberal theology has invaded the church with a result that many churches in the land disbelieve whole sections of the Bible, including teaching on God

as Creator and the one way of salvation through repentance and faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus at the cross. Multi faith religion has taken over most of our public life, with the idea that Christianity is just one of many options we can choose to find our path to God. There has been a constant attack on biblical morality and family values with the result that over half of babies are now born outside of marriage and record numbers of abortions are taking place. Gay Pride and transsexuality are now promoted in our schools, media, businesses, parliament and even in parts of the church.

Jesus told the story of the two house builders in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." Matthew 7.24-27.

Since we live in a country and in a world that pays no attention to the Bible's teaching, we have to conclude that our society is like the house built on the sand by the foolish man. When the storm comes it will fall. And great will be its fall. But the wise ones will build their houses on the rock of faith and obedience to God's word and be saved from the coming storm.

World in crisis.

Of course it's not just Britain, it's the whole world that is in trouble. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres gave this speech at the UN General Assembly:

'We are in rough seas. A winter of global discontent is on the horizon. A cost-of-living crisis is raging. Trust is crumbling. Inequalities are exploding. Our planet is burning. People are hurting – with the most vulnerable suffering the most. The United Nations Charter and the ideals it represents are in jeopardy. We have a duty to act. And yet we are gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction. The international community is not ready or willing to tackle the big dramatic challenges of our age. These crises threaten the very future of humanity and the fate of our planet. Crises like the war in Ukraine and the multiplication of conflicts around the globe.

He listed a number of situations around the world where countries are in desperate conditions. Afghanistan, Congo, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region of Africa among the many parts of the world facing poverty, famine abuse of human rights, terrorism by armed groups, and collapse of government leading to conflict and ruin.

He concluded, 'There is another battle we must end – our suicidal war against nature. The climate crisis is the

defining issue of our time. It must be the first priority of every government and multilateral organization. And yet climate action is being put on the back burner – despite overwhelming public support around the world. Global greenhouse gas emissions need to be slashed by 45 percent by 2030 to have any hope of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. And yet emissions are going up at record levels – on course to a 14 percent increase this decade. We have a rendezvous with climate disaster.'

Whatever we think about the causes of the climate crisis, we have to agree that Mr Guterres is right about the threat to the future of humanity. He is also right that the world is gridlocked in colossal global disfunction, which the UN in its current form is powerless to do much about.

Ideally the world should come together in some kind of united front to solve the problems but instead we see it falling apart in conflict and confusion. At the same time coming together may not be so great either, because the Bible indicates that at the end of days there will be a coming together in an antichrist world government and a mass reduction of the world's population. This was the theme of our last magazine (July 2022) in the article 'Is the world coming together or falling apart?' which is available on request.

Accident or design?

One question some people ask – 'Is all this happening by accident or design?' Is it being planned by people who want to bring about a radical change in the present world system through an agenda which will control the population? An article on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) website, 'My Carbon – an approach for inclusive and sustainable cities', introduces a plan for changing how people live in the future. If you follow the bottom line it involves a degree of control over how we live, aided by advanced technology, as in China today. It mentions 'significant developments in last five to seven years on social, environment and technology fronts that could help realise "My Carbon" initiatives. These include new ideas to track everyone's carbon emissions and carbon footprint with the help of advanced surveillance technology.

The article also shows how they saw the Covid crisis as a good way to bring in this kind of control system. It says: 'Covid 19 was the test of social responsibility. **A huge number of unimaginable restrictions for public health were adopted by billions of citizens across the world**. There were numerous examples globally of maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, mass vaccinations and acceptance of contact-tracing applications for public health, which demonstrated the core of individual social responsibility.'

The implication of this is that the Covid crisis was a test case to see how far governments could go in imposing 'unimaginable restrictions' in order to control human behaviour. Rishi Sunak was UK Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time of the Covid

crisis. During the election process to Tory leader in July 2022, he said that at the time of the lockdown over Covid, the government, scientists and media deliberately created a climate of fear in order to make people submit to restrictions on their lives. Doctors or scientists questioning the procedure were side lined, even dismissed. Those who opposed the process were dismissed as crackpots, responsible for spreading the virus. It now appears that Sunak himself questioned it but was overridden and toed the party line.

Now a mass of information is coming out of the harm done by the lockdown, its failure to stop the spread of disease, and the damage this did to people's lives, especially children. We are also learning of the harmful side effects of the vaccine and the damage it does to our natural immune system, and the fact that it does not stop people getting and passing on the disease.

The World Economic Forum declared that the Covid crisis and Climate change are the triggers used to create the 'Great Reset' they want for the world. Another aspect of this change involves the money system, especially if we move towards some kind of financial crisis causing money to lose its value and banks to fail. What happens then? Either chaos or dictatorship.

China has already built up a way to exercise this kind of control. You need the right QR codes showing green on your mobile phones to enter shops, transport, workplaces etc. If it shows red because you have had some Covid contact or some other reason, you are shut out. China is also developing Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) to replace cash and regular bank accounts. Financial authorities in the UK, EU and USA are also working on CBDCs. These may be brought in if there is a banking crisis. If CBDCs are put into place, banks and government can have control over what goes in and what goes out of people's accounts. They can turn it on or turn it off. If they don't like what you are doing or saying, it may not matter if you have £100,000 in the bank. You can't get to it. You can't buy or sell or enter into society. Also you will need some kind of authorisation to get into the system. It could be a debit card, or a QR Code on a mobile phone, or for absolute security some kind of mark or computer code put onto your skin so it can't be lost or stolen. Enter the 666 system of Revelation 13.16-18:

'He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.'

God's word and the coming storm.

Students of Bible prophecy will recognise that all these trends fit in with Bible teaching on the last days of this age.

Here are some examples:
• An increase in wars, famines, plagues and earthquakes. Luke 21.10-11.

• The earth full of violence and immorality and many people afraid of what is going to happen. Luke 17.26-27, Luke 21.25-6, Genesis 6.11. Lawlessness will abound. Matthew 24.12, 2 Thessalonians 2.1-12.

• Widespread pollution of the earth and destruction of the environment. Isaiah 24, Revelation 8.6-11.

• A situation in the Middle East, concerning Israel and Jerusalem, which will have the attention of the whole world and be the scene of the second coming of Jesus. Ezekiel 36-9, Zechariah 12-14, Luke 21, Revelation 19.

• A globalisation process backed by hi tech developments which will bring the world together in the last world government. Revelation 13, Daniel 12.4.

• An attack on the Bible from all sides, but the message of the Gospel reaching all nations despite opposition and persecution. Matthew 24.9-14, Matthew 28.18-20.

Speaking about the days before His second coming, Jesus said,

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." Luke 21.25-27.

In this time there will be a global crisis, which Jesus called 'the distress of nations in perplexity.' The word in the original Greek for 'in perplexity' is 'aporia' which means 'with no way out'. In other words there will be a global crisis which no one can solve, with no way out, which will cause people to be afraid of what is coming on the world. This time corresponds to what Jesus calls the 'great tribulation':

'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.' Matthew 24.21-22

This means that if God did not cut short those days it would mean the end of life on earth, the end of the world. God will not allow this to happen because He plans a period of 1000 years in which there will be peace and justice on the earth in fulfilment of prophecies like Isaiah 2.1-4, Isaiah 11, Revelation 20. This will happen through the most dramatic

intervention in human affairs since the Creation of the World – the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So there is a future and a hope for those who are wise. Jesus will come in a totally different way to the way He came the first time, as King of kings and Lord of lords, with all the power of God at His disposal, to bring an end to the present world disorder and set up His Messianic rule, bringing peace and justice to the world.

There is a way you can escape this time of final tribulation if you are wise. In the Proverbs we read: ***A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself. The simple pass on and are punished.*** Proverbs 27.12.

So: ***'Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.*** Isaiah 26.20-21.

How do you enter into this place of safety? How can you be ready for the coming of the Lord? Repent and believe the Gospel. Trust in God. Build your house on the rock of salvation and faith in Jesus Christ. Then you will be ready when the trumpet sounds and the Lord comes for those who love Him:

'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. I Thessalonians 4.15-18.

Israel and the Messiah



The belief that we are living in the last days before the coming of the Messiah is based on events now occurring in the world which line up with the prophecies in the Bible. The clearest of such prophecies are happening in the Middle East around Jerusalem and the land of Israel. These are connected to Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Prophets, including the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah, as well as New Testament prophecies about the return of Jesus, found in such passages as Matthew 24, Luke 21 and the Book of Revelation.

The modern Jewish state of Israel came into existence in 1948. It faced many conflicts in which Israel held off and defeated superior Arab armies and established itself in the land of the Bible. Israel's victory in the Six Days War of 1967 restored Jerusalem to Israel rule, making it the Capital of Israel, for the first time since the days of the Bible. It also set in motion the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah prophecy that Jerusalem will be a 'burdensome stone, burdening all nations' (in other words a source of controversy for the whole world), as the UN, world powers including USA, EU and Russia sought to bring a solution to the issue of who rules Jerusalem.

In this article we look at some of the things happening now which centre on Israel and the Bible.

USA and Israel.

In July 2022 US President Biden visited Israel and Saudi Arabia. In the same month Russian President Putin went to Iran where he met with leaders of Iran and Turkey.

On his visit to Israel, President Biden was keen to show his support for the State of Israel, declaring himself a Zionist and saying that Israel will always be able to rely on the United States of America for its security. He signed a joint strategic declaration with Prime Minister Yair Lapid on 14 July in Jerusalem, in which the US vowed to use "all elements in its national power" to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. This sounds like the US saying they may be willing to support or even join an attack by Israel on Iran's nuclear facilities.

At the same time US policy (along with

the EU) is pushing for the re-activation of the nuclear deal with Iran. Israel sees this as a betrayal of their interests. This would release huge sums of money to Iran to carry on its aggressive policies in the Middle East. The prospect of Iran obtaining a nuclear bomb is seen as a mortal threat to Israel. A report from the Israeli news site, Arutz Sheva, on 25th August says 'According to the IAEA's assessment, Iran is weeks away from having enough enriched uranium for a first nuclear weapon. ... Iran is inching closer to a nuclear outbreak while the world community is leaving Israel alone in the fight with Iran.'

The Israeli Air Force has carried out a practice run for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities and has developed a new capability to fly its F-35 jets from Israel to Iran without requiring mid-air refuelling. Israel has some of the most advanced hi tech weaponry, able to function with pin point accuracy on its targets. Its Iron Dome air defence system is also very effective, able to shoot down incoming missiles with approximately 96% accuracy. Israel is now working on an even more effective defence system able to shoot missiles out of the sky with lasers. Successful tests of the laser version of the Iron Dome, called Light Shield, have already been conducted.

Russia and Iran.

In July Russian President Putin made a trip to Iran, where he met with Iranian leader Raisi and Turkish President Erdogan. The Iranians showed support for Russia's war in Ukraine by supplying them with drones. Russia has already invested a great deal in Iran including helping Iran with its nuclear programme. Iranian forces have joined with Russia in subduing the rebellion against Assad's rule in Syria. They are supplying missiles to Israel's enemy, Hezbollah, in Lebanon. Putin also met with President Erdogan, whose Turkish forces are also involved in Syria.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan warned "Russia deepening an alliance with Iran is something that the whole world should look at and see as a profound threat.' One motivation for the trip was said to be to show that Russia can still operate in Middle East, and is not bogged down in Ukraine. Putin is also shoring up his alliance with Iran and China in an anti-US / NATO alliance, which is a threat to Israel.

In recent months Russia has shown a more hostile attitude to Israel, particularly since they criticised Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It is also becoming increasingly irritated with the attacks Israel has mounted on targets in Syria linked to Iran. Russia has also expressed support for the Palestinian demand for a state within the borders of the West Bank area. The government has closed the Jewish Agency in Russia. Russian Jews are now trying to emigrate to Israel fearing rising anti-Semitism and wanting to escape the draft into Ukraine.

Iran's President Raisi warned that the Biden visit will further destabilise the region and make it more insecure for Israel and made threats to destroy Israel. Iran's ally Hezbollah in Lebanon has threatened war with Israel over the

sea borders of Israel and Lebanon, after Israel began drilling for gas in Karish, saying that not only the Karish gas rig is under threat but all of Israel's gas fields in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Israel said an attack by Hezbollah on the rig will be met with a military response by Israel.

Significantly many Bible interpreters see Russia, Iran and Turkey as the main movers in the end time war of Gog and Magog against Israel according to Ezekiel 38-9. Ezekiel 38-39 is one of the Bible passages that speak of a battle over Israel which will take place 'in the last days' after the people of Israel have been gathered from many nations (38.7-9). It speaks of a great power to the north (Russia?) plus its allies which include Persia (Iran) and Togarmah (Turkey?). Israel's oil and gas fields in the Mediterranean could be the motivation for the Gog and Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38-39: ***Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, ... to take plunder and to take booty.'*** Ezekiel 38.3-12.

In our April edition we examined the possibility that Russia will lead this invasion. At present Russia's involvement in the war in Ukraine and the losses it is suffering there would seem to make it unlikely that it would want to get involved in another war in the Middle East. An alternative explanation is that this war will involve Islamic powers to the north of Israel, led by Turkey, not Russia. Events are unfolding in the world so we may not have to wait too long to see which of these is correct. The most literal interpretation of Ezekiel 38 does make the leader of this alliance a great power to the uttermost north of Israel, 'the prince of Rosh (or chief prince) of Meshech and Tubal.' Interpreters of this passage like Gesenius, the 19th century Hebrew expert, placed this as being modern Russia, long before the present alignment of nations was even considered a possibility.

The two state solution.

When President Biden spoke of his strong defence of Israel against Iran and Hezbollah, he also affirmed his longstanding and consistent support of the two-state solution 'in which Israelis and Palestinians alike can enjoy equal measures of security, freedom and prosperity.' Most of the world, the UN, USA, EU and the UK, agree that the two state solution is the only answer to the Israeli – Palestinian question.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly in September, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said 'In Israel and Palestine, cycles of violence under the occupation continue as prospects for peace based on a two-state solution grow ever more distant.' As is usual with the UN the implication is that it is Israel's fault that there is no progress for peace. However current Israeli PM Yair Lapid, declared at the UN on 22nd September that he supports a two state solution to Israeli-Palestinian question. He went on to say 'Israel has only one condition for the establishment of a Palestinian state: "That a future Palestinian state will be a peaceful one

and will not threaten the well being of Israel.'
Opposition leader Netanyahu condemned Lapid for making this speech which he called 'full of weakness, defeat and surrender'. He said this proposal will 'give them a state of terror in the heart of the country. A state that will threaten us all. We will not allow the establishment of Hamastan (i.e. another Gaza) on the border of Kfar Saba, Petach Tikva and Netanya (Israeli towns near the border of West Bank). We will not return Israel to the Oslo disaster. Lapid endangers our future and our existence both on the Palestinian issue and the Iranian issue.'

He reflects the view of many Israelis who have lost faith in the two state solution, seeing it as a recipe for Israel's destruction. They have no trust in the Palestinian government which supports terrorism against Israel and uses its schools, media and mosques to call for the destruction of the Jewish state (for examples of this see the website Palestinians Media Watch https://palwatch.org).

Back in 1974 the PLO developed what it called the '10 Points Phased Policy' which aimed to set up a state or an entity on any territory that Israel withdrew from and then use that as a springboard from which to attack and dismantle the Jewish state. The Oslo Accords signed in 1993 apparently meant the end of this aim, as it contained a statement of recognition of Israel by the PLO. However the Palestinians have never given up on their aim of the elimination of the State of Israel, as typified by the slogan, 'From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free.' The river is the Jordan and the sea is the Mediterranean so this slogan means they are looking for a Palestinian state to replace Israel, not to live alongside Israel.

At the same time Israel does want peace with its Arab neighbours and is working on this. Israel maintains full diplomatic relations with two of its Arab neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, after signing peace treaties in 1979 and 1994 respectively. In 2020, Israel signed the Abraham Accords with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and established diplomatic relations with Sudan and Morocco. On 15th July 2022 Saudi Arabia opened its airspace to Israeli aircraft as the first signs of a normalisation process between Jerusalem and Riyadh appeared to take shape. This came amidst hopes of a peace deal with Saudi Arabia and opening up of trade and diplomatic relations.

Israeli Finance Minister Avigdor Liberman expressed his hopes that this peace programme will lead to the creation of 'a new common market of the Middle East common to Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates.' Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to bring full peace agreements with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries if he wins Israel's upcoming election.

Peace with Saudi Arabia, the heart of the Sunni Muslim world, would be an amazing turn of events after continuous wars since Israel's creation. Some would call such a peace agreement even 'prophetic'.

Peace plan and the Bible.

Judea and Samaria are the heartland of biblical Israel and Jerusalem is the ancient capital of Israel. On June 7th 1967 when Israel captured the Old City of Jerusalem in the Six Day War, Israel's Defence Minister Moshe Dayan said, 'We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the holiest of our Holy Places never to part from it again.' In 1980 Israel passed the Jerusalem Law declaring **"Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel"**.

The Palestinians demand that a peace settlement means Israel withdrawing from the West Bank to the pre 1967 borders and dividing Jerusalem so that it is the capital of Palestine on the east and the capital of Israel on the west.

At the heart of the peace question for Israel and the Palestinians is the status of Jerusalem. Should it be the capital of Israel, or divided between Israel and Palestine?

Prophecy teachers have long said that one of the single most important prophetic events to watch for as an indication of the start of the final seven year period of world history before the coming of the Messiah will be the signing / ratifying of a seven year agreement between Israel and many nations. Beyond doubt this agreement will concern the status of Jerusalem.



Daniel 9:27 tells us that this specific prophetic period of time will begin when ***"He will confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven years).' In the middle of the week (i.e. after three and a half years) he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."***

Sadly this agreement will not be a true peace. The person described as 'he' here is the coming antichrist who brings the "abomination that causes desolation" (Matthew 24:15) and is called "the beast" in Revelation 13. Any peace agreement will be a deception and will lead to Israel being betrayed mid way through the seven year period. This will lead to the final conflict aiming at Israel's destruction, which will only be saved by the coming of the Messiah (Zechariah 12-14).

The covenant he signs will be backed by 'many'. Whether this includes Saudi Arabia as the leading nation of the Sunni Muslim world, is a moot point. It may be that a peace involving Saudi Arabia will pave the way for it. Saudi Arabia has also made clear in the past they would not agree to any peace deal until the Palestinian issue was solved. Will someone finally come up with a solution to this issue, offering peace and safety, and giving the backing of a world power or authority to 'confirm' or 'guarantee' such a treaty? If he does

then he will certainly be hailed as great world leader.

A key component of this agreement appears to be a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. There are Jewish activists working now for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. There was great excitement amongst religious Jews wanting to rebuild a temple, when five red heifers arrived in Israel in September. They see this as a requirement for purification in order to re-institute sacrifices as required in Book of Numbers: ***'This is a requirement of the law that the Lord has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke.'*** Numbers 19.2.

It is hard to see the Muslim world ever agreeing to a Jewish temple near the Dome of the Rock. However if Saudi Arabia were to sign a treaty with Israel a religious component would make sense. It could be that the agreement is signed after the Gog and Magog war of Ezekiel 38, which causes some devastation in the region, including Jerusalem. Ezekiel 38 speaks of an earthquake at the time of this war and says 'every wall shall fall down.' If this strikes the Temple Mount area and causes the collapse of the Dome of the Rock, Al Aqsa mosque and the Western Wall, it could then lead to the construction of a religious building including a Jewish Temple, along with an interfaith building for Muslims and Christians and all religions. Interestingly the Abraham Accords signed between Israel and the UAE in 2020 included an interfaith dimension backed by the Pope as well as Jewish and Muslim religious leaders.

If this is the case such a building will be defiled by the antichrist who puts his image there as the 'abomination of desolation standing in the holy place' referred to by Jesus in Matthew 24. He also puts an end to Jewish offerings there and begins a persecution against Jews and other faiths (Daniel 11.30-36, Matthew 24.15-22). This sets off the final time of great tribulation, which, if God did not cut it short, would lead to the end of life on earth (Matthew 24.21-22).

Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah.

Zechariah 12-14 describes in some detail the events of the last days' conflict over Jerusalem. In Zechariah 12.2-3 we read:
"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it."

This means that in the last days of this age there will be the controversy over the status of Jerusalem. This will involve the 'surrounding peoples' / the Jewish and Arab population living in the region and 'all peoples' / the nations of the world represented by the UN, and the great powers of this age. This conflict will attempt to divide the land of Israel and will cause the last war in history, as the Lord says in Joel 3.2-4:

'I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.'

Zechariah tells us this will bring about the coming of the Messiah:
'For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem ... Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. (Zechariah 14.3-4).'

He will be identified as Yeshua, Jesus the One who came the first time to be 'pierced' (die by crucifixion as a sacrifice for the sins of the world) some 2000 years ago before the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in the year 70:
"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.'
Zechariah 12.10

The one who has been pierced according to Zechariah is Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah, concerning whom Daniel wrote:
And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Daniel 9.26.
This verse prophesies the Messiah being cut off / dying a sacrificial death, for the sins of the world before the Romans came to destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (the Temple). This is what happened at the time of Jesus' first coming. It appears that there is an interval between the end of verse 26 and the beginning of verse 27. According to the pre-tribulation view of prophecy, the present church age fits into this interval, beginning with the Day of Pentecost and ending with the event of I Thessalonians 4-5, the rapture of the church. This is followed by God dealing with Israel in the final seven years, reaching its climax with the revelation and return of Yeshua the Messiah to bring an end to the present age of human rebellion against God and the desolations of Jerusalem.

Following this the Messiah will reign on the earth from restored Jerusalem, bringing peace and justice to Israel and the surrounding nations and to the whole world. (Zechariah 14.9, Isaiah 2.1-4, Isaiah 19.23-24, Revelation 20):
'And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The Lord is one," and His name one. ... Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place. The people shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.'
Zechariah 14.9-11.

Israel is a small country at the centre of the world geographically and politically. It is also at the centre of the end time purposes of God. In the Psalm 122 we are told to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Ultimately praying for the peace of Jerusalem means we are praying for the return of the Messiah Yeshua because He is the only one who can bring peace to Jerusalem, Israel and the whole world.

Why doesn't God stop all the evil in the world?



The 'Hiding Place' tells the story of the Ten Boom family who sheltered Jews in their watchmaker's shop in Haarlem in Holland during the time of the Nazi occupation. Many were saved from the death camps by such heroic actions of the Dutch resistance to the Nazis. Eventually they were discovered and arrested. Corrie and Betsy Ten Boom were taken to Ravensbruck concentration camp. They managed to smuggle their precious copy of the Bible into the camp and read the scriptures to their fellow prisoners and prayed with them to help them in their suffering. Betsy died in the camp, but Corrie was set free 'by a clerical error' on the part of the camp administration.

She returned to Holland and wrote down her experience in the book 'The Hiding Place' which was then made into a film.

In a moving scene in the film, Betsy is reading to a group of women gathered round her bunk from her Bible:
'Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.' Romans 12.

She is interrupted by a lady called Maria on the next bunk who says, 'To the mindless the words sound so comforting. In this place it's mockery.'
Betsy replies, 'God didn't make this place, men did.'
Maria says: 'But he has power. He could stop them. Unless of course he's a sadist.'
Corrie says: 'O no He is love.'
Maria then says: 'Then he's impotent. You can't have it both ways my dear. It's enough to know that we are so much dung, moving from nothing to nothing, but you must believe that your God smells that stench from those chimneys and refuses to do anything. ... I am Maria Poceck, first violinist of the Warsaw symphony orchestra. Did your God do that?' She then shows her hands, battered and smashed by the

Nazis, which will never play a violin again.

Corrie says: 'I cannot answer you. All I can say is that the same God you are accusing came and lived in the midst of our world. He was beaten, He was mocked and He died on the cross and He did it for love of us.'

At the end of the film, Corrie says: 'There is no pit so deep that His love is not deeper still. With Jesus even in our darkest moments the best remains and the best is yet to be. We know that our labour in the Lord is not in vain, which it would be if there were no resurrection.'

This incident raises the questions which have engaged people since the beginning of time.

• If God is good where does evil come from?

• If God is good and powerful, why doesn't He stop the evil?

There is an answer to this question. It involves doing something most people today don't want to do (including many professing Christians):

1. Believing that the Bible is true from Genesis to Revelation, and gives us revelation of things we cannot work out by our human ingenuity.

2. Believing in an unseen world where God dwells and also the existence of power of evil, known as the Devil or Satan.

The Origin of Evil.

The Bible teaches that the Devil is a fallen angel. God created him but he rebelled against God and became the source of all evil. He is the reason for sin, suffering and death on the earth. God has a plan to redeem the world revealed in scripture through the Messiah.

In the Hebrew scriptures there are two passages which give some insight into the origin of evil, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Isaiah 14 begins as a condemnation of the King of Babylon, but in verse 12 it moves on to give an insight into the spiritual power behind Babylon, in a prophecy of a being who is called in Hebrew הֵילֵל, (Helel, pronounced Hay-leel). This is variously translated as Lucifer, or Day Star or Shining One. The name Lucifer is taken from the Latin word for 'light bearer':

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Helel) son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.'

In this passage we learn something

about the one described, which fits in with what the Bible reveals about the Devil:

- he falls from heaven (verse 12)
- he is cast down to the earth (verse 12)
- he destroyed nations (verse 12)
- he sought to ascend to God's throne (verse 13)
- he desired to be like the Most High (verse 14)
- he is relegated to the lowest part of the Pit (verse 15)

The link of this one to Satan is shown when Jesus uses similar wording in Luke 10.18 "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Lucifer here uses the phrase 'I will be like the Most High (God)'. When the serpent tempts Eve disobey God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, 'lest you die', he says to the woman: ***"You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*** Genesis 3. According to the Bible this act of disobedience, which Adam then joined in with, is the source of all evil that has followed on earth.

The original sin of Lucifer was to want to be like God, to want the praise given to God for himself, to exalt himself above God. The Bible does not tell us where he got this idea from, merely that as a free will agent, he made this choice. This turned him from being a glorious and powerful cherub, serving God, into the source of all wickedness and rebellion against God. All human sin is the result of this original sin which has contaminated the whole human race, bringing death and destruction into the perfect world that God created.

In a similar passage Ezekiel 28 is a proclamation against the King of Tyre, which then develops into a revelation of the power behind the King of Tyre, who is described as being 'the anointed cherub who covers.' This passage from Ezekiel 28.11-19 is also a description of Lucifer before his fall, when he was the 'seal of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty.' Then 'iniquity is found in you':

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour; I cast you to the ground."

This passage tells us that this being was created by God, holy, wise and perfect until sin entered in. He became proud and lifted up because of his beauty. He wanted to direct worship away from God onto himself. As a result he was cast out of the holy mountain of God and became filled with violence and corruption.

So God cast him out of heaven, and he became Satan, (Hebrew word means 'adversary'), the source of all evil. He took one third of the angels of heaven with him. They then became the demons (Revelation 12). We are not told in the Bible how a being created by God could become evil, or where the idea of evil came from. Paul describes this as the 'mystery of iniquity' (2 Thessalonians 2.7). It is sufficient for us to know that good and evil exist and that behind evil there exists a personality who embodies the source of all evil, who is the devil. Through the temptation of Adam and Eve sin entered the human race, which has contaminated the whole human race.

The Coming of the Redeemer.

God promised the coming of the redeemer who would deliver us from this power:
'And I will put enmity between you (the serpent / Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Genesis 3.15.

The Messiah came in fulfilment of this and other prophecies, as the seed of the woman. He came in human form as Son of Man and Son of God, in the person of the Yeshua / Jesus the Messiah. Through His death on the cross as a sacrifice for the sin of the world He 'bruised' the head of the serpent, in other words He inflicted a mortal blow to the Devil. In the process 'you (the serpent) shall bruise his heel.' The Devil will inflict a wound on Him which will cause Him suffering, but not a fatal blow.

Corrie Ten Boom spoke of this as the answer to the issue of evil in the world in the quote above when she said 'All I can say is that the same God you are accusing came and lived in the midst of our world. He was beaten, He was mocked and He died on the cross and He did it for love of us.'

In I Peter 2.24-5 we read that Jesus ***'Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.'***

Hebrews 2.14-15 tells us that ***'through death He (Jesus) might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'***

Jesus did this in fulfilment of the prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53
'Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'

Through what Jesus did for us at the cross, we can receive forgiveness from

God for our sins and eternal life. To receive this we must turn to God in repentance and faith in what Jesus did for us at the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1.12-13.

If we reject this offer we remain in our sins and under the condemnation of God. According to Jesus' teaching this situation will remain during the time between His first and second coming, which explains why evil and suffering remain in the present age. At the second coming Satan's power over the kingdom of this world will be destroyed but until then he remains 'the ruler of this world' as Jesus called him in John 12.31.

The ruler of the world – God or Satan?

The Bible indicates that the devil continues to have power over the world system in the present time. This is indicated by the temptation of Jesus Christ:

'Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' " Matthew 4.8-10.

Note that Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim to have the power to give Him the kingdoms of this world, but He did refuse Satan's condition, to bow down and worship him. Satan always wants to be worshipped. God demands that we worship Him only.

Satan will continue to be the ruler of the present world darkness until the Second Coming of Christ, when his power will be broken for ever. Paul gives insight into this in Ephesians 6.11-12 when he writes: ***'Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'***

This passage indicates the realm where the devil and the demons are operating from. This is not the 'third heaven' where God dwells, but the heavenly places, an unseen realm from which Satan and the demons direct their influence on earth. Since he currently has power over the kingdoms of this world this explains why there is so much evil in the world.

This explains why people who turn to the Lord may suffer as Corrie and Betsy Ten Boom did in the concentration camp and as countless believers do today in lands where Christianity is persecuted. It also explains why demon possessed leaders like Adolf Hitler turn on true Christians and the Jews in view of God's continuing

covenant with Israel. Significantly almost every religious or political system that is anti-Christian turns out to be anti-Semitic as well. This applies to corrupted forms of Christianity too which have suppressed the true message of the Gospel and persecuted the Jews, notably the Medieval Roman Catholic Church.

At the present time this evil may be restrained by the prayers and influence of God's people (I Timothy 2.1-6). Or evil is increased as rulers and governments sell out to evil. It is significant that in the 1920s, a man called Dietrich Eckart initiated Hitler into Satan worship in the occult Thule Society in Munich. He called Hitler 'antichrist' and is quoted as saying on his deathbed: "Follow Hitler. He will dance, but it is I who have called the tune! I have initiated him into the 'Secret Doctrine;' opened his centres in vision and given him the means to communicate with the Powers.' A number of Nazi leaders were deeply into the occult, especially Heinrich Himmler, the architect of the Final Solution and the systematic genocide of the Jewish people.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13.24-43), Jesus shows us that in this present age good and evil will grow together, to be separated at the end of the age in the day of judgement.

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares (weeds) among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."

He then explained this parable to the disciples

He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

This parable tells us that in the present age we have a choice between good

and evil, God and Satan. God has given us free will and does not force us to make the choice. God has the power to bring an end to evil in a moment, as He will do at the end of the age, when He will judge the world in righteousness. But He is delaying doing this to give us the chance to repent. He is now offering us forgiveness and the hope of eternal life with Him in heaven, if we repent and turn to Him in faith. This is the offer of the Gospel that Jesus took the punishment we deserve at the cross when He died for our sins and rose again. When we put our trust in Him we can receive forgiveness and new life with God in heaven.

If we remain in our sins and reject God's way of salvation, He cannot save us. In Isaiah 59.1-2 we read: Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.' The sin of humanity leads us to make the wrong choice over and over again, leading to the terrible crimes like the Holocaust and the multitude of wicked situations existing in the world today. Those who do such things will ultimately face the judgement of God and punishment in hell. Those who receive the salvation God is offering us in Jesus Christ will 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'

The End of the Age and the End of Evil

In this present age the 'sons of the kingdom' (those who believe the Gospel, children of God) live alongside 'the sons of the wicked one' (those who reject God, children of the Devil). Evil will reach its climax in the time of the end of this age, when wickedness will increase and perilous times will come. The end of this will be the Great Tribulation period, which would bring the earth to the point of destruction of life on earth if God did not cut it short.

'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 24.21-22

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In the book of Revelation 13 we read how the devil will give power to his man on the earth, the beast, backed by the false prophet, who will bring in the final period of evil on earth. When Jesus returns He will throw the beast and the false prophet straight into hell, while the Devil will be bound in the abyss for 1000 years (Revelation 19-20). The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ / Messiah and He shall reign forever (Revelation 11.15).

So the day is coming when God will stop all the trouble in the world, but on that day He will also stop the trouble makers. At the Second Coming Jesus will come with all the power of God to put down Satan's rebellion against God, and destroy the works of evil. Those who will be saved are those who repent of sin now and trust in Jesus for salvation. Those who reject Jesus will be cast into hell.

At His Second Coming He will judge the world in righteousness according to how we have responded to the message of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is now working to draw people to faith in Jesus so that they can be saved from the judgement that is coming on the world. The devil is working overtime to make people disbelieve and reject God's message, as he has done from the beginning with the first question in the Bible: 'Has God said?" Genesis 3.3.

That is still his tactic today, to make people question and reject God's word to us. The devil uses a whole battery of weapons to make people disbelieve God, atheism, false religions, humanism, and all kinds of errors inside professing Christianity. He makes people believe that he does not exist or makes them worship him through occult and demonic forces. In the Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis wrote: 'There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves (the devils) are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.'

Satan – a defeated foe.

In the present age, the Bible tells us to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4.7).

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 1 Peter 5.8

Those who do this will be on the victory side because Satan's doom is coming soon. According to Revelation 12, Satan will be cast out of his place in the heavenly realms to the earth during the final 3 ½year period of the great tribulation:

'And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." Revelation 12.7-12.

At the end of this period, Jesus will return will all the power of God to bring an end to the tribulation time and set up His Messianic kingdom, known as the Millennium. At that point the Devil will be cast into the abyss, no longer able to deceive the nations: ***Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into***

the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.' Revelation 20.1-3.

After being released from the abyss at the end of the Millennium, he will mount his final doomed revolt against God. He will then be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity:

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Revelation 20.7-10.

At this point God will create the final state for all believers in the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people.' Revelation 21.1-4

Nothing evil will be allowed to enter there:

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Revelation 21.27.

God's love and power will be then manifested forever. If you want to be there, now is the time to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ by repenting of your sins and believing the Gospel, that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. His coming is near and when He comes He will deal with the Devil and his demons forever and save all those who have trusted in Him.

Signs of the Times



Defender of the Faith.

One of the traditions of the British monarchy is that the monarch should pledge to be the 'Defender of the Faith.' This title was originally given to Henry VIII, who, together with his secretary Thomas More, wrote a pamphlet entitled "Declaration of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther", dedicated to Pope Leo X in 1521. The Pope rewarded Henry by giving him the title Fidei Defensor, 'Defender of the Faith', in recognition of his defence of the Roman Catholic faith against the Protestant Reformation led by Luther.

After Henry broke with Rome in 1534 and the Church of England separated from the Church of Rome, this title was passed on to succeeding Kings and Queens of England. Since the time of the Reformation, it came to mean defender of the Protestant religion.

In his accession oath King Charles declared on 10th September: *'I, Charles III, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of my other realms and territories, King, Defender of the Faith, do faithfully promise and swear that I should inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement of the true Protestant religion.'*

He then gave a speech in which he referred to the sovereign's role as head of the Church of England and called it "the church in which my faith is so deeply rooted".

King Charles brings a great deal of baggage as he steps into this role. His adultery and divorce from Diana and marriage to Camilla are contrary to the Lord's teaching on divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19. In a keynote speech back in 1994, then Prince Charles said he would be "defender of faiths", rather than the historic title of Defender of the Faith, in a desire to reflect Britain's religious diversity. There were suggestions that his coronation oath would be altered. Almost a decade later he made an attempt to correct that impression while appearing to leave the door open as to what his actual position was. Shortly after becoming King he met with leaders of different faiths and told them he has a 'personal duty to protect the diversity of our country'. He said that as sovereign his work must include 'protecting the space for faith itself' and the valued differences which people live by.

According to the book 'The Prince and the Paranormal' by John Dale, written in 1986: 'There is evidence that deep inside himself the Prince is a super-ecumenist – someone who believes that each of the world's religions including Christianity contains a relative truth rather than an absolute one.'

Dale tells of a spiritual experience Charles had in 1977, while on an expedition with the Wilderness Foundation to a remote part of Kenya. This was led by Laurens van der Post, who grew up in South Africa where he lived for a while with the bushmen of the Kalahari, studying their myths, witchcraft and dreams and giving credence to their 'spirit gods' who should not be offended. He was also a student of the Swiss psychologist Karl Jung, who developed what he called the Theory of the Collective Unconscious. Jung believed there is a spiritual dimension to human existence which is stored in our unconscious mind and passed on from generation to generation. Humans can make contact with this other dimension through religious quest, including psychic experiences, dreams and the paranormal.

Laurens Van der Post introduced Prince Charles to such ideas and experiences while on his safari to Kenya, where the Prince had some kind of spiritual awakening. In 1985 Charles said in an interview, 'I think Jung makes a great deal of sense in many, many areas and particularly in what is written in the Bible and Indian religions, and in Islam, and many others ... Definitely a pattern develops, where we are all ultimately trying to explore, to go along the same path, to answer the same questions. We all approach from different paths but ultimately the paths meet somewhere in infinity, and that's the important thing.' Sunday Times 18/8/1985.

We don't know if he still holds this view, but if he does, it means he believes that every faith alongside Christianity contains a path to God. In other words, all gods are equal. It also opens him up to psychic and spiritualist activity, which has played a part in his spiritual quest, according to John Dale's book. This contradicts the biblical revelation that there is one God, who created us and one Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us through His death on the cross and resurrection.

Another issue of concern is his long term involvement in the global government agenda. In her book 'Prince Charles – the sustainable Prince', Joan Veon writes, 'Price Charles has adopted a very radical environmental agenda that calls for a planned society, using the environment and sustainable development as the reason for the change in governance and freedoms.' He endorsed the pivotal World Economic Forum WEF conference in 2019 where its Chairman Klaus Schwab launched the 'Global Reset' agenda, calling for a total reorganisation of our society in order to resolve global crises, in particular the Covid pandemic and the threat of Climate Change.

At the COP 26 UN summit in Glasgow in November 2021 he urged world leaders to take urgent action to combat climate change, saying that time is running out. He called for 'a vast military style campaign to marshal the strength of the global private sector, **with trillions at his (or its) disposal** far beyond global GDP, and with the

greatest respect, beyond even the governments of the world's leaders. It offers the only real prospect of achieving fundamental economic transition.'

Some have interpreted this as Charles making a reference to the coming antichrist as the one who will bring this to pass. It is doubtful that this was what he really meant, but it is clear from this statement that he favours the investment of trillions of dollars in a programme aiming at the fundamental economic change of the present world system, as advocated by the WEF and the UN. Critics of this programme say it will result in the impoverishment of millions of people and the end of freedom and democracy and lead to a world government along the lines of Revelation 13. Now that Charles is King the constraints of his position as constitutional monarch may make it difficult for him to continue to campaign publicly on such matters. But it is unlikely that he will give up his interest in the programme.

Could Russia lose in Ukraine?

At the time of writing (September 20) news is coming in of Ukrainian victories, pushing back Russian troops from areas they occupied in eastern Ukraine. Well-motivated Ukrainian troops equipped with the latest weapons from the west are proving a stronger force on the ground than the demoralised and badly led and equipped Russians.

There are accounts of abandoned Russian tanks and weapons, ammunition dumps blown up and demoralised Russian troops taking off their uniforms, putting on civilian clothes and deserting their posts. Evidence of war crimes and atrocities committed by the Russians are being revealed. A furious Vladimir Putin has sacked his top generals, as a catalogue of errors, bad planning and poor leadership have contributed to what threatens to become a fiasco for Russia, endangering Putin's hold on power.

There is growing criticism of Putin within Russia, from hard liners saying he is not doing enough to crush the Ukrainians and from opponents of the war. Critics have now raised their voices on the heavily censored state TV channel 'Rossiya 1' and in St Petersburg's city council. A group calling itself the National Republican Army has called for revolution, declaring Putin 'a usurper of power and a war criminal who has unleashed a fratricidal war between the Slavic peoples and sent Russian soldiers to certain and senseless death.' On the other side hard line nationalists are calling for mass military mobilisation and for Russia to use its power to crush Ukraine. A cornered Putin could resort to desperate measures, including the use of tactical nuclear weapons and mass missile, rocket and artillery strikes on Ukrainian civilian targets. He is now calling for a referendum in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russia with the intention that these may be incorporated into Russia, after which an attack on them will be considered an attack on Russian territory and a ground for a nuclear response.

Newsmax's Dick Morris said on 10th September that recent developments have put Russia on the verge of a seismic shift against Putin, perhaps lead to his ouster: "I think we're looking at an event of world-shaking magnitude. I think it will be very much like the fall of the Berlin Wall in its impact." Retired General Ben Hodges, former commander of the U.S. Army Europe, told London's Times Radio that the debacle in Ukraine could have grave implications for Russia itself: "We were not prepared for the collapse of the Soviet Union. We need to be prepared for the collapse of Russia."

Such views feed into the Russian paranoia that the West wants to use the war to bring down the Russian regime and divide up the Russian Federation, then incorporate it into the West's world order programme. Russia accuses the West of sabotaging a tentative fifteen-point peace plan to end the war, brokered by Turkey in April. Key points were that Russia withdraw from all Ukraine except for breakaway Donbas and Crimea. Ukraine would forgo future NATO membership, pledging neutrality between Russia and NATO. Ukraine security would be guaranteed by neighbouring countries but no foreign troops would enter Ukraine.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, then went to Kyiv, urging Ukraine to press on with the war, promising arms with which to defeat the Russians. Two weeks later, the US sent Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin to Kyiv to reinforce Johnson's warning and make clear the US and NATO were determined to use the war to "weaken" Russia.

According to a report in Newsweek (13/9/22) 'Ukraine wants a 'NATO-esque' bloc which can be called upon to immediately defend borders with Russia. This was proposed by a working group established by President Zelensky. Crucially it would include the United States and other NATO allies providing Ukraine with "security guarantees". The Kyiv Security Compact (KSC) would also establish a "multi-decade" plan of investment, military training, and intelligence sharing to bolster Ukraine's defensive capabilities as the country pursues full NATO membership.

The Kremlin's reaction to this was swift and fierce. The Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, said that a nuclear holocaust would be the end result. Putin then ordered a mass mobilisation of thousands of troops and declared a sham referendum in areas currently occupied by Russia. These will then be incorporated into Russia and any attack on them could be met with a nuclear response from Russia. Putin warned western leaders that he was not bluffing about the nuclear threat. The latest news is that young Russian men are trying to get out of Russia to avoid the call up and unrest at Putin's futile war is growing.

If Putin fails in Ukraine and his regime falls it will raise a question about how the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-9 (the Gog and Magog war) will be fulfilled. A weakened Russia with a

demoralised army could hardly get involved straight away in another major war in the Middle East. On the other hand if Russia turns the tables and wins in Ukraine or Putin is replaced by someone even more hard line, who mobilises a massive increase in the Russian army, it could be the first step towards the Gog and Magog conflict.

Food, fuel and funds.

The Summer of 2022 in the northern hemisphere saw extreme weather with heatwaves, droughts and floods in different places. This resulted in crop yields being significantly down in Europe, North America, China and India. In East Africa drought has brought more than 20 million people on the brink of death and malnutrition due to water shortages. Drought has caused rivers to dry up in China and the loss of around 33% crop loss in the North China Plain. Pakistan's catastrophic floods have destroyed homes and wiped out agriculture in much of the country. There have been super typhoons and storms hitting Japan, Alaska and Puerto Rico as well as large earthquakes in Mexico and Taiwan and an increase in volcanic activity around the world.

The war in Ukraine has held up export of grain from one of the world's major food producing regions. Failed harvests mean shortage of supplies, which will force the price of food up. We have the prospect of mass hunger coming on the world in the coming year. There simply is not going to be enough food for everyone in 2023, and it will be the poorest countries that will suffer the most. Famines will increase.

The media are telling us this is the shape of things to come, caused by burning fossil fuels which creates climate change. Not everyone agrees. Some say that there are very complex forces driving the climate, including changes in the sun, direction of the jet stream and ocean currents, and changes in the earth's magnetic field, which we can do little or nothing about.

Either way we face a crisis with no way out. If the climate crisis really is the result of burning fossil fuels, then we should stop using them straight away, not wait another seven years to implement the UN's Agenda 30 on sustainability and nearly 30 years to reach net zero carbon use in 2050. The problem with this is that we have built an economic and social system that relies on fossil fuels for electricity, transport, agriculture and more or less everything that people in the developed world need to survive. Despite pledges as conferences, the use of fossil fuels around the world is actually going up. Renewables are not able to replace them. People today could not cope with pre-industrial conditions.

If the sceptics are right and climate change is not caused by fossil fuels, then there is even less we can do. We are powerless to control what happens in the sun and the magnetic field and so on. Some attempts to change the weather by 'cloud seeding' and 'solar geo-engineering' – spraying particles into the stratosphere to block the sun's

rays and create a global cooling effect – could have catastrophic effects on us all.

Implementing green measures to solve the climate crisis is also extremely expensive and is contributing to rising cost of energy and food. Add to this the effect of the Ukraine war and the shutting off of Russian gas exports to Europe and we have another crisis coming down the road – energy shortages and massive price rises, meaning people may have to choose between eating and heating in the winter. Governments are now stepping in with grants to help people through the winter, which will cost billions. The question is where is all the money coming from?

The cost of the UK government's plan to deal with the energy crisis has been estimated at £100bn by the government and £250bn by others. EU officials intervening to prop up energy markets are talking about a cost of €1.5 trillion. Still we may see energy shortages, rationing and very high energy bills all over Europe.

In the US the country's inflation rate hit 8.3%, the stock market is tumbling and national debt is over $30 trillion. Poverty, homelessness and violence are hitting many big US cities. There are fears of a dollar collapse as the dollar's petro-reserve status and position as the world's reserve currency are in question.

While Russian propaganda says the sanctions are not hurting them, there are signs of an implosion of their economy, as imports are cut off and consumer spending has plummeted while Putin is running a budget deficit.

China's recession is going from bad to worse. Severe long-term drought has caused major increases in the cost of transportation, water, and electricity. Housing is in crisis mode because of a government sponsored scheme which has wasted millions on unfinished and unwanted housing developments. The Belt and Road Initiative that was intended to link China to Europe and other parts of the world has failed due to many of the poorer countries to whom China has loaned money defaulting on their payments. Finally, they continue their zero COVID tolerance policy that is shutting down whole cities and sections of the economy.

Mix all this together and you have a perfect economic storm.

Global religious conference in Kazakhstan.

More than 100 delegations from about 60 countries met from 14-15 September at the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which was held in Nur-Sultan, the Kazakh capital city. Pope Francis and the leaders of major religions called for an end to warfare and bloodshed, urging governments and their leaders to end violence and work towards greater understanding between religions.

They signed a declaration which will be distributed as an official document of the 77th session of the UN General

Assembly, reflecting efforts towards promoting interreligious dialogue and fostering inter-civilization cooperation. In it, the participants express their shared desire for a just, peaceful, secure and prosperous world, affirming the importance of shared values in the spiritual and social development of mankind and calling for an end to all forms of violence and wars.

The declaration goes on to recognize the importance and value of the Document on Human Fraternity signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in February 2019. This states that 'God created all people equal regardless of race, religion, ethnicity and social status, the participants uphold the value of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding that underpin all religious teaching. Differences in religion, skin colour, gender, race and language are expressions of the wisdom of God's will. ... Any incident of coercion to a particular religion and religious doctrine is unacceptable.'

The idea that 'differences in religion' are God's will means that God accepts all religions as valid. The implication of this is that all gods / religions are equal and you must not try to persuade someone to change their religion, particularly by Christian evangelism. Nations and religions should unite in a one world religious and political system in order to save the world. Ecumenical Christianity and Islam should come together in a new religion – Chrislam. A good idea? See Revelation 17.

Last Word

On 4th September I gave my 'This month in Prophecy' talk in which I drew attention to some of the things news reports are telling us that may come this winter.

- **Climate** – we are beyond the point of no return. We are going to fry.
- **Food** – Harvests will fail, food will be scarce. We are going to starve.
- **Energy** – We are running out of gas and fuel. We are going to freeze.
- **Health** – We are facing a winter of disease. We are going to be sick.
- **Money** – Debt, inflation, collapse of currencies. We are going to be broke.
- **War** – It may go nuclear. We are going to die.

How many of these things actually happen in the immediate future remains to be seen. Certainly we hope and pray that the worst things listed here will not happen. But when we look at what is going on we have to acknowledge that things are going from bad to worse for the human race.

Many people try to blank this out, following a philosophy which says 'Let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.' Or watch TV and play computer games. Some people look for someone to blame for the crisis and then campaign against them. Blame the government, blame the left wing, blame the right wing, the Russians, the Americans, the Chinese, NATO, the EU, Brexit, the New World Order. Whoever. All these may have

something to do with it, but none has the whole story.

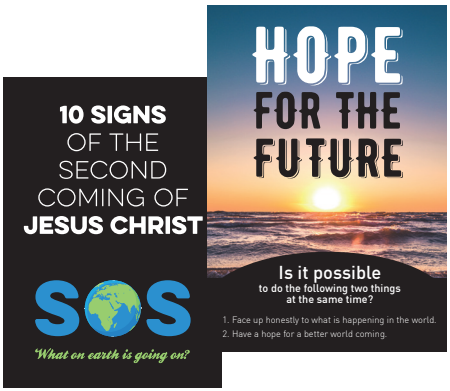
In the end God says 'It's you. You, the human race, are the problem. You've built a world that has left Me out, rejected My commandments and the salvation I am offering you, mocked My messengers. It's a house on the sand and when the storm comes it is not going to stand. If you are wise you will change your ways, build your house on the rock of obedience and faith, a house that will stand in the coming storm. You can save yourself from the disaster that is coming. But you will not be able to save your world.'

It may sound selfish to be worrying about saving ourselves, rather than trying to save the world, but it is actually the wise thing to do. We should then have compassion and concern for the people suffering as a result of the bad things happening in the the world. We should do what we can to help, especially get the message of the Gospel out. But we won't save the world from what is coming. It's too late for that.

The reason why we won't save the world is that we are now moving into the last days crisis and no one can fix the problems we have created, only the Lord. Some of the reasons for this are to be found in this magazine.

God will not allow the destruction of the world through human folly, because He plans a final period of restoration in which there will be peace and justice on the earth in fulfilment of prophecies like Isaiah 2.1-4, Isaiah 11, Revelation 20. These speak of an end to war, the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, balance and renewal of the natural world and the Messiah reigning in power from restored Jerusalem in the Millennium (1000 year period).

This will happen through the most dramatic intervention in human affairs since the Creation of the World – the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus will come in a totally different way to the way He came the first time. Then He came as the Suffering Servant to die as a sacrifice for our sins and rise again to offer eternal life to all believers. When He returns He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, with all the power of God at His disposal, to bring an end to the present world disorder and set up His Messianic rule, bringing peace and justice to the world.
Get ready for the biggest change in world history that is coming soon. Ask the Lord to come into your life by repenting of your sin and believing the Gospel. For details of the Signs of His return and what to do about it send for our booklet '10 Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ' and our leaflet 'Hope for the Future'.





Conclusion

All the things that we write of in this magazine are pointers to the fulfilment of Bible prophecies of the last days in our day and the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most important thing we can do, in the light of this, is to call on the name of the Lord for salvation, so we are ready to meet Him at His coming.

Dear God, I want to be part of your kingdom and be ready for the return of Jesus the Messiah. I believe that Jesus the Messiah died in my place, shedding His blood to pay for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. I repent of my sins and accept Jesus the Messiah as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you and ask you to send the Holy Spirit into my life, to fill me and to take control and to help me become the kind of person you want me to be.

Thank you Father for loving me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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