

With regard to there being a fifty-year period, there are some very significant dates in the prophecy of Ezekiel. From the eighteenth year of Josiah to the time the prophet Ezekiel saw the vision of the temple, as recorded in chapter 40 onwards, was a period of fifty years all but six months. We read in Ezekiel 40:1,2: "In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD [Yahweh] was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south". The fifty-year period is calculated as shown in the table.³

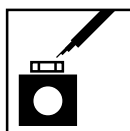
Since it was in the fiftieth year that Ezekiel had the vision of the temple, we wonder whether the temple will be completed fifty years after the return of Christ. The judgement could take place within the first ten years of the fifty-year period, for the first event to take place after Christ's return is the judgement of his household (1 Pet. 4:17). After this, Elijah, having been raised from the dead, will be sent forth on his mission to regather Israel back to the Land. The remaining forty years will be occupied by Israel being re-

<i>Reign of Josiah after Passover in his eighteenth year (2 Kgs. 22:1; 23:23)</i>	13 years
<i>Reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs. 23:31)</i>	3 months
<i>Reign of Jehoiakim (2 Kgs. 23:36)</i>	11 years
<i>Reign of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs. 24:8)</i>	3 months
<i>Captivity of Ezekiel calculated from Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezek. 1:1,2; 40:1)</i>	25 years
Subtotal	49 years 6 months
<i>Intervals</i>	6 months
Total	50 years

gathered in "the wilderness of the people". We propose to consider these events, God willing, in our next article.

3. See *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, Henry Sulley, sixth edition, 1984, Logos Publications, Box 220, Findon, South Australia 5023, or Logos agents, and *Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ*, Graphomatic Publications, 17 Bunora Ave., Ferny Hills, Queensland, Australia.

(To be continued)



Correspondence

Prepared for invasion?

Brother Bill Davison's observation, published under the above title ([Jan. 2001, p. 24](#)), that "Russia appears to be in no fit state to invade Israel", whether or not accurate, seems to me to be irrelevant. We do not need to be unduly influenced by the opinions of the Russians he mentions, since some prophecy (at least) was given to Christ's servants (Rev. 1:1), not to the man in the street, and in any event it would be a mistake even for Christ's servants to base their expectations of future events on what appears likely from the situation at any particular time. Perhaps I might illustrate the point by three examples of varying Scriptural importance.

1. The fall of Communism in the late 1980s/early 1990s. I am not aware of a specific proph-

ecy of this monumental change in European politics, though we can safely say that it contributes towards the call to "the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). Yet which of us would have said that these events seemed possible, even a matter of days before they happened? The speed of it all took our breath away, and simply bore no relationship to the apparent likelihood of it happening.

2. The resurrection of Christ. To the heart-broken and dispirited disciples of the Lord, there was nothing more improbable than that within a few days they would again be speaking with the one they had just seen put to death—the Gospels make it plain that they were simply not expecting the resurrection to take place: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets

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have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Lk. 24:25,26). Thanks be to God, the resurrection of the Lord did not depend on the disciples' perception of how things seemed at the time.

3. The return of the Jews to the Promised Land in unbelief. Brethren of the nineteenth century looked forward to this because they saw it foretold in Bible prophecy, not because it appeared likely at the time. Indeed, humanly speaking, it could hardly have been less likely, as Brother Thomas implies in a well-known passage in *Elpis Israel*, which is worth repeating: "I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances,

heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt" (Fourteenth Edition, p. 442). Our brethren were ridiculed for holding these views, but subsequent events seem to me to have vindicated their understanding of this part of Scripture at least.

Our understanding of Bible prophecy should be based on a careful and consistent exposition of the whole of God's Word, with recourse to whatever external material can usefully increase our understanding of historical and geographical details. If we begin instead to judge only after the sight of our eyes, we build on a most unreliable foundation, as the above examples show, and we increase the risk of being taken by surprise. Prophecy needs to be spiritually discerned, because "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance" (1 Sam. 16:7).

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Reviews

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The British Empire and Israel's restoration*

Chris Carmody

THE BOOK ANZACS¹ *Empires and Israel's Restoration* provides an overview of the restoration of Israel from 1798 to 1948, putting this in a religious and social context that many Christadelphians, especially some of the younger brethren and sisters, will not be aware of in the twenty-first century. Our faith is strengthened as we read how the nations have been manipulated, often by zealous individuals, to fulfil our God's revealed purpose with Israel.

The book is extremely well researched, with footnotes on almost every page plus four pages of bibliography. The back cover of the book, reproduced in the panel opposite, provides an interesting overview of this 390-page publication. This review deals predominantly with the first half of the book, covering the period up to 1918,

as much of this material may be less familiar to the reader.

* *ANZACS, Empires and Israel's Restoration 1798-1948*, Kelvin Crombie, Bookland, Perth, ISBN 0-646-35298-9. Price \$A25.00. Available from Bookland Printing Ltd., 190 Stirling St., Perth 6000, Western Australia. E-mail address info@bookland.com.au. Website <http://www.bookland.com.au/bookland.htm>.

1. The term 'ANZACS', often 'Anzacs' today, is an acronym for 'Australia and New Zealand Army Corps', and refers particularly to soldiers from those countries serving in the First World War, especially in the Middle East, where they played a very prominent part in the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire.