

political party Kadima, a centrist party set up after Likud disowned the Gaza withdrawal, has added a new perspective to Israeli politics. The subsequent illness of Ariel Sharon served only to add to the uncertainty. Whatever the outcome there is evidence to suggest that there would be popular backing for talking with Hamas. A recent poll found that sixty-seven per cent of Israelis were not opposed to negotiation with Hamas.²

Russia

There has, however, been a more ominous development since the victory of Hamas. This concerns Russia. We know from Joel 3 that, when Russia invades, the Palestinians will be on their side against Israel. They will take from Israel "silver and . . . gold" and "goodly pleasant things" (v. 5). We should therefore be expecting the Palestinians and Russia to be on the same side. The so-called international Quartet consisting of the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations had supposedly agreed not to speak with Hamas until it recognised Israel and renounced violence. But Russia suddenly broke ranks. As the *Financial Times* reported, "US officials admit they were blindsided and dismayed by Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, when

he proposed on Thursday [9 February] inviting Hamas to Moscow for talks".³ An Israeli minister, Meir Sheetrit, spoke of Putin "stabbing Israel in the back". Russia defended its decision by claiming that Hamas had achieved a valid democratic victory.

Conclusion

Events are certainly moving fast in the Middle East. Whatever happens in the short term we know that Israel is to be invaded by Gog, who will then be defeated by Christ and the saints on the mountains of Israel. Gog will come from the north, but at one point he will lead forces from the direction of Egypt when "tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him" (Dan. 11:44). When this happens, "he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many". This will be an attack on Israel from the rear. But, as we have seen, this will not be the first time that Russia has stabbed Israel in the back.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Dinmore, G. and Spiegel, P. (2006), "Israel and US on back foot over Hamas", *Financial Times*, 11/12 Feb., p. 7.

Tarshish and Dedan

Recent developments

Nigel Bernard

The British navy has recently launched a new technologically advanced ship, consistent with its role as the latter-day Tarshish. Saudi Arabia's economy is growing rapidly, and she is encouraging British companies to trade with her. This reflects the close link between Tarshish and Dedan as depicted in prophecy.

IN EZEKIEL 38 we read of "Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish" (v. 13) being grouped together at the time of the end. Dedan refers to Saudi Arabia and Tarshish refers to Britain. In this article we will consider two recent events which relate to this verse. Firstly, we will consider the launch of a new British naval ship which will strengthen Britain in its role as the Tarshish sea power. Secondly, we will reflect on a recent speech made by the Saudi Arabian ambassador to

Britain, which shows that the link between these two countries is set to strengthen.

Ships of Tarshish

Tarshish will have a significant navy at the time of the end. Some ships will be destroyed as the judgements of God are carried out: "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind" (Ps. 48:7). Other ships will be used to bring Jews back to the Land of Israel: "Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD [Yahweh] thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee" (Isa. 60:9). Therefore, as the country referred to by Tarshish, Britain will have a significant navy at the time of the end. It might be thought that Britain's naval power has faded compared with, for example, the days of

the British Empire. However, the recent launch of a state-of-the-art warship has shown that the ships of Tarshish are still a force to be reckoned with.

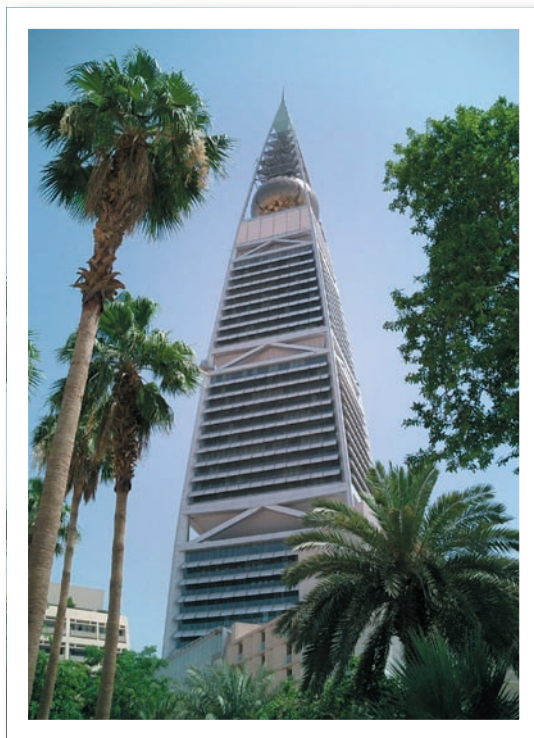
On 1 February 2006, the first of a new generation of British Type 45 destroyers, *HMS Daring*, was launched in the Clyde in Scotland. The Defence Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Thomas Harding, described it as “the most powerful frontline warship since the Second World War”.¹ A key feature of the ship is its defensive capability. Its radar and missiles can hunt down and destroy a target the size of a cricket ball travelling over three times the speed of sound. Harding reported that “the boat’s defensive system, combining a hugely powerful radar and missile system, has left American visitors to the yard ‘shaken and shocked’, according to BAE Systems, its builders”. Given this superiority, we see that America, in this regard, is the technological ‘young lion’ in relation to Britain.

During the next ten years up to eight T45s may be constructed. Other vessels planned include two large aircraft carriers, four hunter submarines and fourteen auxiliary ships. The ships of Tarshish are certainly not in decline. Harding sees the launch of *HMS Daring* as “marking a resurgence of British naval ship building”. This resurgence is part of the providential preparation for the coming judgements of Armageddon and subsequent transport of Jews and wealth to Israel.

Dedan

The use of the word “merchants” in the phrase “the merchants of Tarshish” suggests that trade is a significant factor with regard to the role of Tarshish at the time of the end. It would be expected, therefore, that the link between Dedan and Tarshish will include trade. In the days of Ezekiel Dedan was renowned for its trade. In Ezekiel 27 one group referred to as Dedan traded with Tyre in “horns of ivory and ebony” (v. 15) and another Dedan group traded “in precious clothes for chariots” (v. 20). Saudi Arabia, modern Dedan, is also renowned for its trade, and it is in relation to trade that Saudi Arabia has been making recent overtures to Britain.

After the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, the ties between Britain and Saudi Arabia weakened somewhat. In the face of terrorist attacks, many British workers left Saudi Arabia; there were disputes between the two countries over activities of Saudi dissidents in Britain; and, in 2005, British Airways (BA)



PICTURE: © iStockphoto.com/MICHEL DE NIJIS

Modern skyscraper in the rapidly growing city of Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia.

stopped flights to Saudi Arabia. However, as Dominic O’Connell reported in the *Sunday Times*,² recently this trend has seen a reversal.

In December 2005, Saudi Arabia agreed to a £10 billion deal with Britain to buy the Eurofighter Typhoon and other military equipment. Furthermore, the British airline BMI has picked up the routes vacated by BA. There has also been an increase in Saudi trade delegations to Britain, and British ministers have been making a greater number of visits to Saudi Arabia.

Against this background, on 24 January 2006 Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Britain, spoke at a conference at the Sheraton Hotel, Edinburgh, where he encouraged British companies to take advantage of new opportunities in his country. During the next fifteen years it is projected that there will be \$624 billion (£350 billion) of business opportunities for Britain in Saudi Arabia.

1. Harding, T. (2006), “New warship is ‘quantum leap forward’ for the Navy”, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 Feb., p. 8.
2. O’Connell, D. (2006), “Saudis offer a bonanza for UK”, *The Sunday Times*, Business 3 section, 29 Jan., pp. 1,10.

The population in Saudi Arabia is increasing rapidly. This is leading to increased demand for water and power. To help meet this demand, its ruler, King Abdullah, intends to privatise industries such as oil, gas, water and telecoms. Saudi money is flowing back into the country at the prospect of investment in privatised industries and economic liberalisation. This, together with high oil prices, has caused the economy of Saudi Arabia to boom. Saudi Arabia is keen for Britain

to take advantage of the trade opportunities which this presents.

Conclusion

Naval shipbuilding in Britain is "resurgent". Saudi Arabia is offering companies in Britain the prospect of over \$600 billion of trade. These factors show that the two countries, and the relationship between them, are moving in the direction required by prophecy.

An exposition of Revelation 21

2. The tabernacle of God is with men

Mark Allfree

The opening verses of Revelation 21 are a wonderful glimpse of the future blessings of the Kingdom, blessings which this article shows are firmly based on the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament.

IN THE PREVIOUS STUDY it was suggested that the "new heaven and new earth" that John saw (Rev. 21:1) represented the glorious Millennial age for which we hope and pray. The language used by John is based upon Isaiah 65:17: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind".

Isaiah continues to interpret for us what these new heavens and earth represent: "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create *Jerusalem* a rejoicing, and *her people* a joy" (v. 18). In keeping with this, when John saw the new heaven and new earth, what he actually saw was "the holy city, *new Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:2).

We also demonstrated that the immediate context in Isaiah 65 is that of the covenants made with the fathers. The fulfilment of the covenants of promise is interlinked with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the vision that John saw in Revelation 21 is also based around the covenants made with the fathers of old.

"New Jerusalem"

In Revelation 21:2 it is recorded that John saw "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down

from God out of heaven". We shall look at this in more detail in the next study, but in connection with the covenants we should bear in mind the following two scriptures:

1 Galatians 4. This chapter contains that remarkable allegory in which Hagar and Sarah are said to represent "the two covenants"; Hagar, "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children", and Sarah, "Jerusalem which is above [which] is free, which is the mother of us all" (vv. 24-26). This latter is the Jerusalem that John sees. Table 1 will help us to see the allegory more clearly.

Table 1

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|-------|---|---|
| Hagar | "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children" (Gal. 4:25) | The Sinai covenant |
| Sarah | "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (v. 26) | The new covenant, that is, the promises |

2 Hebrews 11. What was Abraham looking for all his life? The writer to the Hebrews tells us: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (vv. 9,10).

The promise and the city for which Abraham looked are interlinked. This is the city that John