

W

West Bank

The West Bank was captured by the Israelis in the Six-Day War in 1967, having previously been annexed by **Jordan** in 1950. Many of the towns and cities which figure prominently in the Scriptural record are in this region. These include such places as Shechem, **Jerusalem**, Bethlehem and Hebron. The territory of the West Bank also includes lower areas such as the western Jordan Valley. Many Israeli settlements have been built throughout the region. Around seventeen per cent of the population in the West Bank is now Jewish. However, there has always been tension surrounding these settlements. The Oslo peace process, culminating in the Declaration of Principles in 1993, led to parts of the West Bank eventually being given varying degrees of Palestinian civil and security control. However, Jewish influence in the area is still strong. In addition to the settlements, the Israelis control many of the roads, and they also control large areas of land defined as military areas and nature reserves.

The mountains of **Israel**, which form a spine running from north to south, are mostly found in the West Bank. In Ezekiel 38 it is written: "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of **Israel**, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them" (v. 8). In this verse we see that the part of the land of **Israel** which is the focus of the invasion of **Gog** is "the mountains". When **Gog** invades there will be **Jews** present in the mountains of the West Bank who are dwelling safely.

The phrase "midst of the land" found in Ezekiel 38:12 also links with the West Bank. The Hebrew phrase translated "midst of the land" occurs in one other place in Scripture, in Judges 9:37, where it is associated with Shechem. The modern town of Nablus, in the same general area where Shechem was located, is around 550 metres above sea level. Strong says that the word translated "middle" and "midst" in Judges and Ezekiel respectively means 'to pile up', and Strong therefore suggests the word has the sense of 'summit'. Hence the phrase "midst of the land"

in Ezekiel 38 refers to the elevated land of the mountains of **Israel**, the area known today as the West Bank.

- **1950** Annexed by **Jordan**
- **1967** Occupied by **Israel**
- **1987** Intifada launched
- **1988** **Jordan** severs legal and administrative links to West Bank
- **1993** Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements
- **2000** Second intifada launched.

Whore

In Scripture the whore represents those who turn away from the Truth to follow false teachings and worship. In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul writes of the believers in the first century A.D. as a chaste virgin: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (vv. 2,3). As time went on many did become beguiled, and the chaste virgin defiled herself with false teachings. By the fourth century A.D. Christianity had gone astray from the Bible and was gaining increasing influence in the political **heavens** of the Roman Empire, as shown in Revelation 12: "And there appeared a great wonder in **heaven**; a woman clothed with the **sun**, and the **moon** under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve **stars**" (v. 1).

The woman became synonymous with the city of **Rome** itself: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the **kings of the earth**" (17:18); and she had developed into a harlot: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (v. 1).

The judgement brought upon the woman by Christ when he returns will not be the first time she has suffered punishment. For example, during the French Revolution and its aftermath the power of the people turned against it: "And the ten **horns** which thou sawest upon the **beast**, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (v. 16). However, when Christ

returns the Roman harlot will hold sway over many nations: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (v. 15). As Christ and the **saints** carry out the judgements of God upon the harlot, God's vengeance will come on her for the way she led multitudes astray and for the persecution of many faithful witnesses over the centuries: "for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (19:2). (Refs. 10, 15, 16)

Wilderness

The Arabian deserts to the east and southeast of **Israel** are referred to as the wilderness in prophecy. When Christ establishes the Kingdom, these areas will rejoice: "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains" (Isa. 42:11). These arid areas will become fruitful: "The wilderness and the soli-

tary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose . . . Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (35:1,6).

As well as sand and rock, the term is also used of people: "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of **Egypt**, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 20:35,36). Revelation 17 speaks of one such "wilderness of the people": "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured **beast**, full of names of blasphemy, having seven **heads** and ten **horns**" (v. 3). Here the wilderness is Catholic **Europe**, an area which is like a spiritual desert (Amos 8:11). When Christ is King, the call will go forth for the **Jews** to come out of **Europe** and go to the Land of **Israel**: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

Y

Yemen

A predominantly Muslim country, Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Arab world, beginning oil production only in the mid 1990s. It lies at the southern end of the Arabian peninsula, with **Saudi Arabia** to its north. For many years Yemen was essentially two countries, the twofold division going back to the days of the British and Ottoman Empires. In the nineteenth century the British established a protectorate in the area around the southern town of Aden. If **Seba** is to be linked with this area then this protectorate would be part of the "ransom" God gave to **Britain** for the role it was to play in the return of the **Jews** to the Land: "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of **Israel**, thy Saviour: I gave **Egypt** for thy ransom, **Ethiopia** and **Seba** for thee" (Isa. 43:3).

The northern part of the country became an independent country as the Ottoman Empire dried up. South Yemen eventually gained independence from the British, and it was in conflict

with North Yemen until the whole country was unified in 1990 when the Republic of Yemen was formed.

Whilst it is difficult to establish beyond doubt that in prophecy Yemen links with **Seba**, its link with **Sheba** is more definite. In Ezekiel 38 it is written: "**Sheba**, and **Dedan**, and the merchants of **Tarshish**, with all the **young lions** thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (v. 13). Here we see that Yemen is one of the countries who will stand with **Tarshish** and question the invasion of **Israel** by the Russian **Gog**. We can expect, therefore, that Yemen will form close ties with countries such as **Saudi Arabia** and **Britain** as **Armageddon** approaches.

When Christ is King, then Yemen will be one of the countries which will bring him gifts: "The kings of **Tarshish** and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of **Sheba** and **Seba** shall offer gifts . . . And he shall live, and to him shall be