



Two Cities



of Destiny

The drama of life is found in the remarkable story of two great cities. Traditionally opposed to each other, they have nevertheless swayed millions in emotion and devotion to their particular causes. One city is Jewish; the other is of Gentile origin. Both are the centres of world religions; both draw thousands to their streets every year. But one will achieve an amazing glory and become the focus of world worship; whilst the other will fail miserably, and pass into oblivion. We can align our hopes and aspirations to one or the other, for they present two diverse beliefs: one true, the other false. Our future depends upon to which city we align ourselves!

In this article, we set forth the amazing history of these two cities, and outline Bible prophecy concerning both. We urge the reader to carefully consider the quotations submitted, for it is only by examining the Bible's claims and the evidence of Scripture, that a true understanding of the future can be obtained.

Questions and comments are invited upon the matter contained in this booklet. We are happy to correspond upon the clear Bible teaching in regard to eternal salvation, and hope that the reading of this subject will prove both enjoyable and instructive. For this is more than the story of two cities: it is the pathway to personal salvation.

Editor

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

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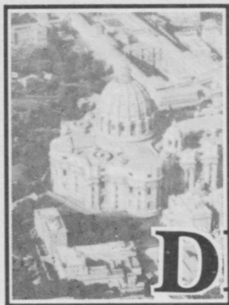
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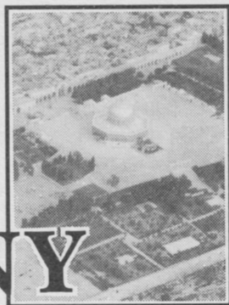
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TWO CITIES OF DESTINY



THE waters of the Mediterranean Ocean roll in upon the shores of two nations whose capitals have exercised perhaps a greater influence upon the course of world history than any other two cities on the face of the earth.

Both cities date far back into antiquity. Both have been the centres of great kingdoms or empires. Both have been focal points for the birth of religions which have exercised enormous influence on unfolding history.

Italy became the centre of the Roman Empire. In 27 B.C. Octavian took the name of Augustus and became the first emperor of Rome. The last Roman emperor was Augustulus, circa 475 A.D.

In A.D. 313 Constantine I issued the edict of Milan, legalising "Christianity" — which by then had taken a form far removed from that originally taught by Christ and his disciples — and which later was to give birth to the Roman Catholic Church.

Across the wide expanse of ocean lay a country known as Palestine. From thence went forth a message to the world which, to this day, remains largely unheeded, but which is destined to ultimately completely change the way of life on earth.

The two cities are Rome and Jerusalem.

Past and present policies emanating from these two cities will bring them into open conflict in the near future. The result will be the destruction of the one, and all for which it stands, and the elevation of the other to become the capital city of a

worldwide Kingdom which will embrace every nation on earth.

How is it that the history of these two cities is so inextricably linked? How is it that both have played significant roles in the unfolding of world history?

The answer to this curious question will become apparent only through a consideration of the teaching of the Bible upon the subject.

Unfolding History: Jerusalem, 2,000 B.C.

Jerusalem is mentioned historically almost 4,000 years ago. The Bible records that there lived in the city of "Salem" (an abbreviation for Jerusalem) a king-priest of the Most High God (Creator of heaven and earth) who was known as Melchizedek. This is a title, not a personal name. It means "king of righteousness."

Melchizedek was associated with Abraham, a man so important in Bible teaching that he is mentioned more than 80 times in the New Testament. His name was originally Abram, and was later changed to the more familiar name, Abraham. The Bible thus introduces us to the city of Jerusalem in Genesis 14:18. Abram came to the city after pursuing and destroying certain kings from the north who, heading a confederacy of nations, had invaded the land then known as Canaan. Upon his victorious return to Jerusalem, he was met by Melchizedek, who said: "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, who hath *delivered thine enemies into thy hand*" (Genesis 14:19-20).

Jerusalem thus appeared upon the pages of history in relation to the God of the Bible and His faithful servant, Abraham. This man became "the friend of God" (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23) because he showed great faith in God. As a result, God made "great and precious promises" to him (2 Peter 1:4; Acts 26:6; Romans 15:8). Those promises — still to be fulfilled (Hebrews 11:39-40) — concern God's purpose with the earth and mankind's hope of eternal salvation.

Read carefully the words of the promise recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. The promise comprises seven parts:

1. **"I will make of thee a great nation"** — This is a two-fold promise, and refers to the nation of Israel and also to a body of people who would become "spiritual" Israelites by receiving and accepting these promises in faith (Genesis

- 15:18; Galatians 3:26-29). Because of these promises, the people of Israel have survived through the ages. Ultimately they will be gathered back to the Promised Land, to become a great kingdom with Christ as their King (2 Samuel 7:10; Ezekiel 21:25-27; Jeremiah 33:13-17; 30:3-11; Malachi 3:2-4; Matthew 19:28; Luke 1:30-33). True "spiritual" Israelites will reign with Christ over his kingdom, having become possessors of divine nature (Daniel 12:1-3; Matthew 25:46; Revelation 2:26-28; 5:9-10).
2. **"I will bless thee"** — God would ensure the future well-being of Abraham. No-one would ever be able to deny Abraham that which God had promised him. God will demonstrate His care and fidelity to all who honour Him as He would have them do.
 3. **"I will make thy name great"** — Abraham's name is "great" to all who have learned of these promises, and become heirs with Abraham (Galatians 3:29). All such individuals acknowledge Abraham's faithfulness and "the gospel" which was preached to him by God (Galatians 3:8-9). But there is a further fulfilment to come: in the Kingdom Age, all peoples and nations will respect the "greatness" of Abraham as a man of faith. This is shown clearly in the seventh point of this promise.
 4. **"and thou shalt be a blessing"** — Through his faithfulness and obedience to God's word, Abraham would be able to provide a blessing for *others*. All who understand and emulate his faith will share in the blessings God has promised to Abraham. An understanding of God's promises to Abraham will explain the significance of 2 Peter 1:4.
 5. **"I will bless them that bless thee"** — To receive blessings from God — especially the greatest blessing of all: the gift of eternal life — it is necessary to believe and identify with the faith of Abraham (See point 1 above, Romans 11:21-23).
 6. **"I will curse him that curseth thee"** — To bear evil against the Israel of God, whether it be the nation of Jewry or true spiritual Israelites, invites the wrath of God (Jeremiah 50:17-18; Zechariah 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). The Roman Empire provides an example of the truth of these words in the way the empire declined and collapsed. In modern times, Adolf Hitler and those who supported him

similarly attempted to destroy Jewry but were themselves defeated. From ancient times, every attempt to decimate the Jew has met with failure, and has received the divine punishment God had decreed. Israel remains, but many of its oppressors are no longer.

7. **“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”** — The final point in the promise embraces all nations, and will apply internationally. It guarantees a time to come when all nations will become truly united: under the one King, in one Empire, with one true religion. This will become a reality when the Kingdom of God is ushered in upon the earth (Isaiah 2:2-4; Daniel 2:44, 7:13-14; Micah 4:1-8; Psalm 72; Revelation 11:15).

It should be noted that God *firstly* gave a promise concerning Abraham's *seed* (offspring) — (Genesis 12:7; compare 13:14-17). This was before He promised an eternal inheritance *on the earth* to Abraham. The apostle Paul stated that this was to be a *singular* seed, whom he identified as the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

This is significant from numerous points of view. It is important to connect the early historical mention of Jerusalem with the life and times of Abraham, and the clear link between Abraham and Jesus Christ.

It is also remarkable that at this period of history the name of Rome cannot be found, either in the pages of Biblical or secular history. The so-called “eternal city” simply did not exist.

Jerusalem: 1,000 Years after Abraham and Melchizedek

From Abraham developed the Hebrew nation, called Israel. Following a period of isolation in Egypt they returned to the Promised Land, taking possession of key areas under the leadership of Joshua. Despite many vicissitudes and periods of instability, the nation remained in the land. Eventually a system of government was established which was monarchical. Israel's greatest king to ascend the throne was David. Reigning from Jerusalem, he was of the 14th generation in direct line of descent from Abraham.

History still made no mention of Rome! But at that time, it was said of Israel: “And what one nation in the earth is like unto Thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a Name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people,

which Thou redeemest to Thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" (2 Samuel 7:23). Israel, indeed, had been chosen from among all nations to become a "special people" for God's purpose. He chose them because He had so promised Abraham.

God intended that Israel should develop into a "kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Exodus 19:5-6).

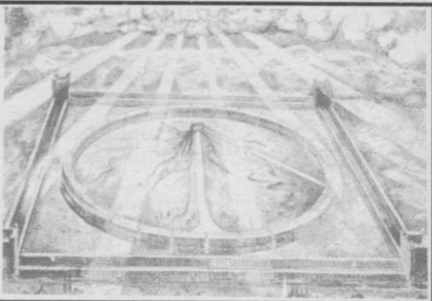
Although David reigned as king, he acknowledged that his throne was really God's. Hence his prayer: "Thine is the kingdom, O Yahweh (the Name of the Creator, the God of Israel), and Thou art exalted as head above all ..." (1 Chronicles 29:11). Hence, it is recorded of David's son, Solomon, that "he sat upon the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh over Israel" (1 Chronicles 28:5; 29:23).

Despite his human weaknesses, David was a great man of faith (Hebrews 11:32-34). And as with Abraham so many years earlier, God made a great covenant of promise with king David. The reader is recommended to carefully read the details of this promise, recorded in 2 Samuel 7.

God's promise to David includes:

- * Israel would be regathered from out of the nations, and be permanently restored to the Promised Land. This implies that for a long period of time they would not inhabit or inherit the land. History has proven the fulfilment of the latter. We thus await only the fulfilment of the promise of Israel's restoration on a scale far greater than ever before (v. 10).
- * Peace and well-being will eventually come to the united nation of Israel. This verse is given in the future tense in the Revised Version (v.11).
- * The events foretold in this promise would be fulfilled after the death of David, and after his imminent resurrection from the dead (compare v. 12 with v. 16 and Psalm 71:20). The "seed" promised here would be a very special descendant from the lineage of David. This "seed" is identified as Jesus Christ in such Bible passages as Matthew 1:1; Romans 1:3; Acts 2:29-30.
- * In this verse (2 Samuel 7) God promised to establish the "kingdom" of Jesus Christ.
- * This promise declares that two "houses" will be built. One

An architect's impression of the majestic temple of the future age, as described in the prophecy of Ezekiel 40-48. This building will be constructed under the supervision of Jesus Christ on the site of Jerusalem for the worship of all the nations.



would be built by God for David (v. 11), the other would be built by David's "seed" for God (v. 13). The first "house" speaks of a family made up of men and women who believe and accept the truth of God's word, thereby becoming sharers in the faith of Abraham and David. Men and women of this disposition allow the influence of God's Word to transform their lives, after the pattern of the character exhibited in the life of Jesus Christ: 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:20-21; Hebrews 3:5-6; 1 Peter 2:5-9, etc. The second "house" speaks of a literal building that will be erected to the glory of God: "he shall build an house for My Name". At the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ he will supervise the building of a magnificent Temple upon the site of Jerusalem: Ezekiel 43:1-7; Haggai 2:7-9; Zechariah 6:12-15, 8:12-13, 14:16,20; Isaiah 56:7; compare Mark 11:17; Isaiah 2:2-4.

- * Note that this verse (2 Samuel 7:13) makes special mention of the "throne of his kingdom ..." This part of the promise assures the restoration of the *throne of David*, from which Jesus Christ will rule. The place of David's throne was Jerusalem. But, while the glory of Jerusalem was forecast, the historians can provide no record concerning Rome, for, at this time it still remained unfounded.
- * In 2 Sam. 7:14 David was told that his illustrious descendants would also be the Son of God. Again, Scripture clearly identifies this promise as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ: Psalm 2:6-7 (this passage is quoted in Acts 13:33 and applied to Christ); Psalm 89:27-29;

16:16; Hebrews 1:1-5.

- * Jesus would not fail to perfectly live up to God's expectations or requirements, as had the first king of Israel, Saul; hence the total fulfilment of all these promises was guaranteed (v. 15).
- * This promise concluded with a very personal message for David himself: in due time, David would be raised from the dead to personally witness the fulfilment of all that God had promised, both to Abraham and David.

Upon hearing this wonderful promise, David realised that it would be a long time before all was fulfilled. Hence his humble response to God: "Thou hast spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come" (v. 19).

In 1948 the world witnessed the proclamation of the re-born Jewish State. It was named "Israel." This partial return of world Jewry to their ancient land was in fulfilment of specific Bible prophecies. Such prophecies indicate that this national development would be the great sign to all who understand that they are living at the very epoch of Christ's second coming (see Ezekiel 38:8 and Joel 3:1, noting carefully the context in which these verses occur. See also Jeremiah 3:14; 30:1-7, etc.). The reader is urged to appreciate the significance of these present times, which indicate that the epoch of Christ's return to the earth is at hand.

History Unfolding: Jerusalem and Rome

What of the second city? What of Rome?

Although known today as "the eternal city" Rome was not founded until 753 B.C. According to legend, Romulus and Remus founded the original city on the Palatine Hill, from whence it gradually spread to six other hills east of the River Tiber, eventually becoming known as "the city of the seven hills."

A little more than 700 years after the founding of Rome, an incident occurred of which most people at the time were totally unaware. A man known as Jesus of Nazareth — who had been born of the virgin Mary 33 and a half years earlier — stood before Pontius Pilate, Rome's governor in Judea, to receive the sentence of death.

The willing victim, who was giving unreserved obedience to the command of his Father (John 10:17-18), was not merely Jesus of Nazareth. He was Jesus, the Christ (anointed, or

Triumphal Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the defeat of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. This seven-armed candelabrum is one of the spoils of victory.



Messiah), which means that he was the “seed” promised to both Abraham and David. And he was also the Son of God.

During his ministry he had, through miraculous power which God had given him, fed the hungry, healed the sick, raised the dead, and performed other wondrous works. A few days before his trial Jesus had been enthusiastically honoured and acclaimed by the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now the Jewish leaders had arraigned him before Pilate, demanding his death. He stood accused of blasphemy and insurrection, both charges being totally false and unproven.

Notice the significance of the interchange which took place between Pilate and the Lord Jesus. Pilate asked him: “Art thou a king, then?” — to which the Lord replied without hesitation: “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world — that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37).

Born to be king? Of course. The opening words of the New Testament connect three important names together: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1).

Abraham, David, Jesus. Three men linked together; irrevocably drawn together in a common faith and a mutual purpose and destiny.

This truth is confirmed by combining the following key

passages of Scripture: the first from the lips of John the Baptist's father, the second from the Angel Gabriel:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel (Who) hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant *David* and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father *Abraham*. He (Christ) shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father *David*: and he shall reign over the house of *Jacob* (grandson of *Abraham*) for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:68-73, 32-33).

Decline of Jerusalem

The Roman Empire, having struggled for supremacy over the course of many centuries now stood pre-eminent over the nations. They ruled the northern areas of Africa from east to west; from Egypt to the Black Sea; and from thence onward to the Danube, and westward covering Europe and Britain and all countries bordering the Mediterranean.

From India to the British Isles, from Spain to Syria and as far east as the Caspian, the Roman eagle was the symbol for dominion and power.

Some 600 years earlier, the last king to sit upon the throne of David had been stripped of his authority and power. Jerusalem had gone into ignominious decline; and this state was to continue for more than 2,500 years. However, the question Pilate posed to Christ must not be forgotten: "Art thou king then?" When God finally permitted the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, he told its last king, Zedekiah, of the future in store for the throne of David: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, *until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him*" (Ezekiel 21:27, compare Luke 1:30-33). Thus the prophecy quoted here from Ezekiel foretold the coming of Christ, and the time when he would sit upon the throne of his father, David, in Jerusalem).

Thus, in an era when Jerusalem was in decline and when her people were suffering under the oppression of the Roman Empire, Jesus Christ — son of Abraham, son of David, son of God — was put to death by crucifixion.

Does this mean that Christ's mission had ended in humiliating failure? Certainly not! His mission at his first advent was to be manifested as "the lamb of God", to provide a perfect sacrifice to "take away the sins of the world" (John

1:29). Having lived a life of perfect obedience to his Father's will, thereby overcoming and conquering the power of sin, Christ rose from the grave and was granted divine nature. In so doing, he opened the way to eternal salvation for all who would believe on him "in spirit and in truth." Those who develop such a disposition and belief are the only "true worshippers" (John 4:23-24).

Apart from the resurrection of Christ, there is no hope beyond the grave for mankind. Man is wholly mortal. The generally accepted concept of an "immortal soul" has no foundation whatever, either in fact or in Biblical teaching. In death, man has no state of existence (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Psalm 6:5; 88:10-12; 146:3-4; John 11:11-14). Mankind needs the hope that only God can offer.

Jesus Christ, in fulfilment of the prophecies such as Psalm 110, ascended into heaven, where, as the Psalm shows, he awaits the instruction of his Father to return to the earth that he might "rule in the midst of his enemies"; when God will "strike through kings in the day of His wrath".

During the centuries in which the Lord Jesus has been in heaven, succeeding generations of men and women, though generally not great in number, have believed the message of salvation he came to teach, and accepted without doubt his death and resurrection to eternal life. They await his second coming, when the remainder of all that God has promised will be fulfilled. But the Jewish nation has failed to understand the two-fold mission of Christ: that he should come firstly as a sacrifice for the redemption of humanity, and a second time to reward the faithful and establish God's kingdom over all the earth (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Zechariah 11:12; 12:10). The people of Israel rejected their Saviour and their King. They invoked the Law of Moses as they acquiesced in his execution: "His blood be on us, and on our children!" (Matthew 27:25; compare Deuteronomy 19:10). Which was to say: "If he is innocent, we will accept death for our wrong-doing". And that is precisely what occurred.

A few years after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ to the right hand of his Father in heaven, the armies of Rome came against the Jews with a ruthless determination to crush them (Psalm 110:1-2; Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-36; Matthew 24:16-21; Luke 21:20-24; Matthew 23:36-30).

The Romans massacred the Jews with severe brutality. Jerusalem was taken. The city and the Temple were burned and levelled to the ground. Nearly two million Jews perished. They were destroyed by the sword, fire, plague and hunger. Survivors were made slaves, eventually to become scattered into all parts of the earth (Deuteronomy 28:49-52, 64-66). The Jewish Commonwealth no longer existed.

Rome in Ascendancy

The Roman Empire reached its height of prosperity in the early centuries A.D., having been gradually but surely built upon the combination of wealth, military might and paganism. However, a massive economic crisis — caused in large measure by the need for the Empire to double the size of its armies to protect itself in constant warfare — witnessed the shaking of the foundations of the Empire. During one 67 year period there were 29 emperors and claimants to the throne, only four of whom died natural deaths. In 286 AD Diocletian divided the empire into east and west because he believed it could no longer be safely held together and ruled by one man.

That change to the political structure of the Roman Empire would have a lasting effect on the unfolding of world history to this present time.

Constantine I became emperor in 306. In 313 he issued the edict of Milan, making "christianity" legal. A perversion of some early christian beliefs, combined with paganism, resulted in the development of a powerful church system.

The first "Saint Peter's" was known as the Basilica of Constantine. Work on the edifice was begun in 325 A.D. This is the first historical mention of that which was to ultimately become Vatican City.

It is significant that Jerusalem had been mentioned historically more than 4,000 years prior to this time.

After the death of Constantine in 337, the single growing force amongst the general disintegration of the Empire was the "Church". Paganism, in its most obvious form, could not survive. Thus, pagan temples became churches named after so-called "saints"; pagan feast-days became identified with "christian" festivals, etc. By this time many false doctrines had been introduced into the Church, and others were to follow in due course.

Although the Church was becoming increasingly powerful,

there was still no lasting identification with Rome. In fact, from 1309 to 1377, the popes lived at Avignon, in France. Not until the 1500's did work begin on "Saint Peter's Church", it having been decided in 1506 to demolish the Basilica of Constantine. Gradually the popes gained control over an area in central Italy which became known as the Papal States.

Within walking distance of the River Tiber which wends its way through the city of Rome, Vatican City — with a current population of 1,000 — is today the smallest independent State in the world. Covering an area of only 108.7 acres (44 hectares) it is the governing centre for the Roman Catholic Church, holding sway over the lives of more than 900 million Roman Catholics throughout the world.

Rome has become known in modern times as the "eternal city" largely because of the allegedly "eternal" nature of the Vatican — yet, as a State in its own right, it has existed for a mere 60 years!

Although church records claim to trace their papal origins back to the apostle Peter (who was certainly not "head" of the "church" in Biblical times — see Matthew 19:27-28; Luke 22:24-26; Acts 15:6-21), secular history is not so kind to the Catholic Church. It was not until 533 that Justinian, the eastern emperor, proclaimed the pope Universal Bishop of the Church — a decree which was confirmed by Phocas in 608-610.

The original apostolic faith had begun to be corrupted, whilst the apostles were living (see 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2; Jude, etc.). but the process escalated rapidly with the removal of the direct influence of the apostles. Many examples may be given of false doctrines arising, such as the trinity, immortality of the soul, heaven-going or consignment to the flames of "hell," a supernatural "fallen-angel" Devil, the authority of the church being placed above that of the Bible. These and many other false doctrines are not to be found in Biblical teaching, but were brought into the church thus perverting and debasing the One True Gospel.

The beliefs of Christ's first century disciples centred upon his second coming. However, the corrupt church rejected this and other apostolic teaching. The historian Edward Gibbon, in his well-known work *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* wrote: "The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful

and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism." No wonder Paul warned: (The day of Christ) "shall not come, except there come a falling away (Greek *apostasia*; English, apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). In this same section of Scripture Paul warned that this power would remain "secret only for the present, until the Restrainer disappears from the scene" (v. 7, NEB). The "Restrainer" was Paganism, which, in Paul's day, was the power which ruled the Roman Empire. Ultimately, it was swept aside when Constantine laid the foundations for the development of a church-state system, which falsely claimed to represent the religion of Christ and his apostles.

Both Cities Diminished and Demeaned

The days of the Roman Empire were numbered. Theodosius was the last Emperor to reign in Rome (379-395). In 410 the Visigoths captured and sacked Rome. Forty-five years later, massed Vandal tribes attacked the city. In 476 Odoacer dethroned Romulus Augustulus, the last of the Western Emperors.

Europe entered the era which became known as "the dark ages" — for a period of some 500 years from the late fifth century; when the most dominant power then was the Catholic Church. The period is aptly named. Significantly, Christ taught: "If the light that is in thee be *darkness*, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23). The people were poor, oppressed, and kept in ignorance. They lived in fear and superstition under the yoke of the unbelievably wealthy and powerful church.

The year 1870 was of profound significance. An important Biblical prophetic time-period had ended. During the struggle for reunification of Italy (1848-70), all the papal states were confiscated by the State. Pope Pius IX and the three popes who followed him during the next sixty years confined themselves to the Vatican. Stripped of their temporal power the popes no longer exercised national or international predominance, thereby losing their influence to invoke war and sedition. No longer did the papacy have the authority to openly persecute those who challenged its power or despotism.

What made this year and this development so significant? A

prophecy in Revelation 11:2 foretold a period of “forty two months” that would see the establishment of a power which would “make war against the saints (*true* believers of the gospel of Christ), and overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are *not* written in the book of life” (Rev. 13:7-8). “Forty two” Jewish “months” (each of 30 days) are 1260 days. Biblical time periods are sometimes based on the “day for a year” principle (see Ezekiel 4:4-6). It is, then, of considerable importance that from the year 610 when Phocas proclaimed the Bishop of Rome to be *sole* Pope (father) — to be recognised as Head of the Church — until that power was removed in 1870, was precisely 1260 years.

The 1260-year period of the book of Revelation has another interesting fulfilment. As stated earlier, the year 533 witnessed the decree of Justinian, which laid the foundation for papal supremacy. 1260 years later, in 1793, Europe was shaken by the French Revolution, which resulted in political changes of lasting effect. Significantly, papal influence in Europe received a major reversal during this period of history. In 1929 the pope made a concordat with Mussolini. The pope renounced his claims to the papal states, in return for which — together with a massive amount of money paid to the Church — Italy agreed to the establishment of the independent State which became Vatican City.

So far as Jerusalem was concerned, the centuries which had passed, including the “dark ages”, had been “dark” indeed. Jesus Christ had prophesied of the city: “Jerusalem (following its desolation by the Romans) shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24, compare vv. 20-23). In 395 the city became a part of the Byzantine Empire, the eastern half of the original Roman Empire. During the early 1600s, control of Jerusalem changed three times. Persians, Muslims and others fought over the city. Constantly, Jerusalem became a place of warfare and bloodshed. In 1099 the Crusaders captured the city, killing Jews and Muslims indiscriminately. Warfare continued. The Ottoman Turkish power gained control in 1517, and generally remained in domination until 1917. Certainly, this was a long period of “treading down”, as Christ had predicted.

Jerusalem: Risen from Ashes of History

The well-known Arch of Titus, erected in Rome to mark Rome's great victory over Jerusalem, depicts the Romans removing the vessels of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Such was to be understood not only as representative of Rome's triumph over Jerusalem, but also as a complete end to all Jewish hopes for a revival of their nation and city.

Today, the Arch of Titus stands amidst the ruins of ancient Rome. What of the seven-branched lampstand of the Jewish Temple, portrayed in stone upon the Arch of Titus? Whilst the glory of the so-called "eternal city" is no longer evident, Jerusalem has risen from centuries-old obscurity, to become one of the most politically sensitive cities in the world.

The rebirth of modern Israel is no mere accident of history; nor is it due simply to the political skilfulness of the Jewish people. It is the most significant political event of modern times, and the result of fulfilling Bible prophecy. The fact that the nation of Israel exists in the earth again is the work of God, not man; though He uses men to fulfil His purpose. The Bible foretold a partial restoration of Jews to their land, and their possession of Jerusalem, as a prelude to the second coming of Christ. Compare such passages as Deuteronomy 30:1-5; Jeremiah 3:14; 30:1-7; Ezekiel 38:1-8,16.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.... and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with *power*, and *great glory*" (Luke 21:24-27). We have seen the completion of the first part of this prophecy: the city of Jerusalem returned to Jewish control. We now await the fulfilment of the second part: the actual return of Christ to the earth.

The Present and the Future: Rome, Jerusalem — and You

Christ is coming to reign over all nations from Jerusalem in fulfilment of the promises God made long ago. He will reign as supreme Monarch. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zechariah 14:9; compare Revelation 20:4,6).

During his long reign the nations will be subjected to his authority. A New World Order will replace the existing state of things. The whole way of life on earth will be transformed. Men

and women will learn to worship God acceptably and in truth. The evils of today's society will be swept away (Psalm 2; Psalm 72; Isaiah 2:3-4; 28:17; Jeremiah 16:19).

Rome can offer no such future and blessing. Together with the Vatican, it will vanish from the face of the earth, disappearing beneath the sea (Revelation 18:21). Note: *The Jerusalem Bible*, a Catholic Bible, identifies the "beast" of Revelation 16:10 with these words: "Rome, type of all pagan powers hostile to God". Commenting upon the "famous prostitute" of Revelation 17:1, it states: "Rome, type of any place where evil is supreme. Prostitution symbolises idolatry." Giving a Catholic interpretation of "Babylon the Great" (Revelation 17:5) it admits, simply: "Babylon is the symbolic name for Rome". (Attempts to set these chapters of Revelation in the days of Nero cannot be sustained).

The basic doctrines of Catholicism have no relationship to the exposition of Biblical promise and prophecy.

God offers to perishing humanity that which He offered to Abraham and David: an eternal inheritance upon the earth through a resurrection of the body from the grave. The Bible teaches: "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs *according to the promise*" (Luke 14:14; Galatians 3:29).

The time of Christ's second coming is drawing very near. All signs given in the Bible, as indicators of the Lord's coming, are apparent. Hebrews 7 shows that Melchizedek — with whom we commenced this exposition — was, as King-Priest of Salem, a type of Christ. Christ is the Great King-Priest of the Kingdom Age soon to dawn. Like the first Melchizedek, he will be in Jerusalem and will grant blessings to all men and women who place themselves among the "families" who will be blessed by God through the faithfulness of Abraham and the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now is the time of opportunity to learn the truth concerning the "gospel of the kingdom" and to be baptised into the name of Jesus Christ — "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Rome and Jerusalem — two cities of destiny! But with which one will you link your own future destiny? Your decision must be the right one. It must be in favour of Christ and Jerusalem.

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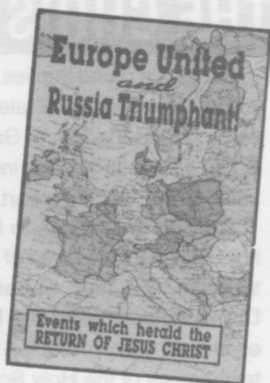
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THE CHRISTADELPHIANS..

Or, as the name implies, the brethren in Christ (Heb. 2:11), are a body of people associated together by a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12); and by immersion into Christ (Gal. 3:27) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and a part in his resurrection (Rom. 6:5).

They do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are able to make wise unto Salvation (2 Tim. 3:15,17). Believing in the Divine Authorship of the Bible, they think it only reasonable to eschew any interpretation thereof which fails to harmonise all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures; and finding that the creeds of the various sects around are, in a great variety of ways, opposed to the direct teaching of the Bible, they feel compelled to stand apart, making appeal in all such matters to the statements of Scripture, and testing all creeds thereby.

They believe in the personal, visible return of Christ to the earth, to set up his power and reign thereon, and they seek to share this knowledge with others. They offer their services in expounding the message of the Bible without cost of any kind.

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