

FEBRUARY 2022 UPDATE ON SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The invasion of Ukraine which began on 24 February 2022 suggests a need to update the review of Bible prophecy issued in July 2021. The comments made in that review remain as relevant today as they were then, so this update will be treated as an addendum to it.

In this update we will use a series of articles interspersed with comments on prophetic requirements which those articles support. It is emphasized that it is necessary to include the articles in full. The author does not necessarily agree with every sentiment in those articles. However, the email received on 24 February 2022 (the date of the Russian invasion of Ukraine) from Bro. Ken Whitehead whose writings on China in history and prophecy were included in the 2021 mid year review is copied below with our full endorsement.

The political requirement of Ezek. 38:2 is that Gog is of the land of Magog and the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. Young's Literal version translates that verse – "Son of man, set thy face unto Gog, of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy concerning him."

Historians say that ancient Magog incorporated Ukraine and Belarus as well as Germany in the west. This is the slide used in recent signs of the times presentations.



Ezek. 38:2 strongly suggests that the territory of the old kingdom of the Rus would be central to formation of the Gogian confederacy. The fact that Russian troops were stationed in Belarus (note the 'rus' that forms part of the name), and used that country as a military base for the invasion of Ukraine from the north also suggests that the future of Belarus is in doubt. Alexander Lukashenko the aging dictator of Belarus has almost worn out his welcome as leader of a country that voted him out of office in the last presidential election only to have him steal the office by force and chase his competitor out of the country. Lukashenko had to call on Putin to rescue him from persistent protests against him within the country. A week ago he asked Putin when Russian troops might leave. He clearly fears they will never leave. Now that the invasion of Ukraine has begun there are unconfirmed reports that Belarussian troops have joined Russian troops in crossing the border. What seems

clear is that Belarus will eventually be incorporated into Gog's empire. When Ukraine and likely Belarus become part of the Russian state, the original heartland of the Rus will be secured for Putin. Gog (a title meaning "the one at the top") will truly be of the land of Magog.

The excerpts below were used in the "2021 in review" signs of the times talk delivered on 8 December 2021 and posted on Christadelphian Videos. They show very clearly what Vladimir Putin intended for the Ukraine.

Article by Vladimir Putin "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" – 12 July 2021 – During the recent Direct Line, when I was asked about Russian-Ukrainian relations, I said that Russians and Ukrainians were one people – a single whole. These words were not driven by some short-term considerations or prompted by the current political context. It is what I have said on numerous occasions and what I firmly believe. I therefore feel it necessary to explain my position in detail and share my assessments of today's situation.

Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians are all descendants of Ancient Rus, which was the largest state in Europe. Slavic and other tribes across the vast territory – from Ladoga, Novgorod, and Pskov to Kiev and Chernigov – were bound together by one language (which we now refer to as Old Russian), economic ties, the rule of the princes of the Rurik dynasty, and – after the baptism of Rus – the Orthodox faith. The spiritual choice made by St. Vladimir, who was both Prince of Novgorod and Grand Prince of Kiev, still largely determines our affinity today.

The throne of Kiev held a dominant position in Ancient Rus. This had been the custom since the late 9th century. The Tale of Bygone Years captured for posterity the words of Oleg the Prophet about Kiev, "Let it be the mother of all Russian cities."

I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia. Our spiritual, human and civilizational ties formed for centuries and have their origins in the same sources, they have been hardened by common trials, achievements and victories. Our kinship has been transmitted from generation to generation. It is in the hearts and the memory of people living in modern Russia and Ukraine, in the blood ties that unite millions of our families. Together we have always been and will be many times stronger and more successful. For we are one people.

Vladimir Putin is testing the "weak" West in Ukraine and Poland – By Taras Kuzio - 23 Nov. 2021 – Putin's hunger for geopolitical respect and his desire to avenge perceived historical injustices help to explain his apparent obsession with Ukraine. Fueled by chauvinist stereotypes inherited from the Soviet and Czarist eras, Putin continues to insist that modern Ukraine's natural place is with Russia and rejects overwhelming evidence demonstrating the Ukrainian population's preference for Euro-Atlantic integration.

With that background, we can turn to Bro. Ken Whitehead's email referred to above.

Bro. Ken's email was headed – **At last....The Prince of Rosh**

Things are moving fast now with Russia starting to make its grand move. I didn't realise it before, but up until now we couldn't really call Vladimir Putin the Prince of Rosh!

Ezekiel 38 divides Russia into three geographical zones – Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.

Rosh refers to the ancient lands of the Rus in the western regions. East of that came Muscovy – Meshech – i.e. Moscow and areas towards the Ural Mountains. Then the huge sparsely populated eastern expanse beyond – Siberia, with its early capital Tobolski, the River Tobl – the area of Tubal.

The Soviet Union did embrace the areas of Rosh, but that region became a group of independent countries – Ukraine, Belarus and others, in the early 1990s, before Vladimir Putin came to power!! So he personally has not controlled that area until now. He has often said that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a terrible tragedy, and he planned to reinstate the former situation. We are being shown a great prophetic sign right now, if we are awake to it!

Now he is moving in dramatic fashion to bring Kiev, the original capital of the ancient Kievan Rus, under his power, and he will then truly be the Prince of Rosh of Ezekiel 38.

It could be said that the angels were at work a thousand years ago in Kiev, laying the ground work for the events we are witnessing today.

The first great ruler of the Kievan Rus in 980 AD was none other than Vladimir the Great, who became Saint Vladimir after he converted from paganism to Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

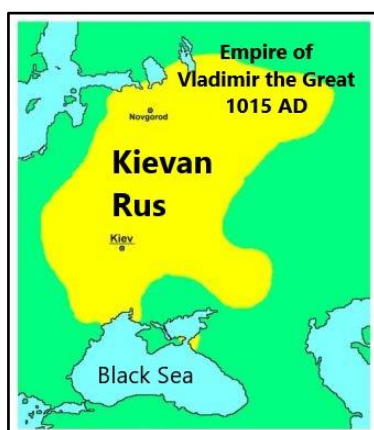
Interestingly, legend has it that when he decided to renounce paganism, he sent ambassadors to learn about Mahommed, and the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic faiths. When they reported back to him that Muslims couldn't eat pork or drink alcohol, he quickly dismissed that option, saying that "drinking is the joy of all the Rus". Eventually he chose to follow the Christianity of Constantinople, because their churches were much more beautiful than the Roman Catholic variety, and worshipping at the magnificent Hagia Sophia cathedral had made his ambassadors feel like they were almost in heaven.

Upon hearing this report from his ambassadors, Vladimir was immediately baptised, and ordered all his subjects to follow suit, and thereafter the foundations of the Russian Orthodox Church were laid in the great cathedrals standing today in Kiev.

So now Vladimir Putin seeks his own destiny and glory as the modern successor of Vladimir the Great of Kiev. He will truly be Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal! (See maps below).

And after taking Kiev, should we not expect Putin to cast his eye on the historical heart of eastern orthodoxy – Constantinople!

Without a doubt, the "grand move" Brother Thomas foresaw has begun!



THE PART THAT RELIGION PLAYS IN PUTIN'S INVASION OF THE UKRAINE AND IN THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Bro. Ken's email above mentions how the kingdom of the Rus became Orthodox Christian in the time of Vladimir I (Putin's hero).

Armageddon will be not only a political war, but also a religious war. This is made clear by several considerations. Firstly, the head of Nebuchadnezzar's Image is Babylon founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:10). In the latter days that will be 'Babylon the great' or the Roman Catholic Church headed by the Pope as Nimrod's successor as Pontifex Maximus of the Babylonian system. The head is the thinking part of the body. Hence, the plans and long-held desires of Rome will animate the Gogian "evil thought" that spurs the invasion of Israel. That invasion will be launched from Constantinople the very home of the Russian Orthodox religion that Putin is using as his partner in the push to absorb Ukraine into Russia's orbit.

Secondly, Ezek. 35 and 36 speak of the motivation behind the Gogian invasion of the land of Israel. The Seir (or Edom) of these chapters is a reference to the Antisemitic powers of the latter days who have a history of hatred and persecution of the Jews and seek to destroy them so they can seize the Christian 'holy places' in the land of Israel. It is clear that the context is about events in the latter days. In Ezek. 35:14 we read – "Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate." That can only be when the Kingdom of God has been established.

The citation by Christ of Isa. 34:9-10 in Rev. 14:10-11 identifies who the Edom of prophecy is. It is Babylon the great (the Roman Catholic system). Note Rev. 14:8 – "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Identification of Latter Day 'Edom'

Isa. 34:9-10

And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Rev. 14:10-11

...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Bro. Thomas was very clear about this in Eureka. Here are just a few quotes:

In commenting on Isa. 41:11-16 Bro. Thomas wrote - "This has never come to pass since it was recorded by the prophet; for hitherto Jacob has been under the heel of Esau, whose metallic Image stands unbroken upon its feet of iron and miry clay. The work of the Second and Third Angels is to grind to powder the various metals of

which it is composed; and to do the work so effectually that no place be found for the things they represent (Dan. 2:35).” Eureka Vol. 5 pg. 50 (Logos Edition)

“Edom, in the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel’s kingdom in “the latter days,” is representative of the enemies of Jacob, banded together under the guardianship of Gog, who is then the Chief of the House of Esau. Obadiah had a vision of this Confederacy, occupying a similar relationship to Israel hereafter, that Edom did in the typical times of the prophet.” Eureka Vol. 1 page 46

In this way, Babylon and the Goat-nations are “made to drink of the wine of the wrath of the Deity, prepared without mixture in the cup of his indignation.” Esau will have had the dominion over Jacob long enough; and the time will now have arrived to prove to mankind “that there is a God that judgeth in the earth”. Esau has lived by his sword, but not righteously. He crucified the king of Israel, persecuted and killed his brethren, corrupted the faith, trod under foot the Holy City forty and two months, and poured out the blood of Jacob like water upon the ground. But they who war against Zion and her sons “shall be as nothing, as a thing of nought”. Eureka Vol. 5 pg. 50 (Logos Edition)

In Ezek. 36:5 reference is made to the Gogian invasion of the Land of Israel – “Therefore, Thus, saith My Lord, Yahweh, Surely in the fire of my jealousy, have I spoken against the rest of the nation and against **Edom** all of it,— Who have given my land to themselves for a possession, In the rejoicing of all the heart in contempt of soul, to make of its produce a prey.” (Rotherham). As Bro. Thomas noted, “Gog is for a time the head of the house of Esau”. Their driving ambition is to seize the Orthodox ‘holy places’ in the Land many of which were designed and financed by Helen the mother of Constantine (the first ‘christian’ emperor of the Roman Empire). Hence:

Ezek. 36:2 – “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even **the ancient high places** are ours in possession.”

If there was any doubt about the religious motivation behind the future invasion of Israel by Gog, the following article by a religious journalist will help to support what the Scripture clearly teaches. There is an additional article at the end.

Putin’s spiritual destiny

The religious president wants to rebuild Christendom

BY GILES FRASER

Giles Fraser is a journalist, broadcaster and Rector at the south London church of St Mary’s, Newington

February 24, 2022

Threatened by an uprising of his treacherous generals, the Christian Emperor Basil II, based in the glorious city of Byzantium, reached out to his enemies, the pagans over in the land of the Rus. Basil II was a clever deal maker. If Vladimir of the Rus would help him put down the revolt, he would give him the hand of his sister in marriage. This was a status changer for Vladimir: the marriage of a pagan to an imperial princess was unprecedented. But first Vladimir would have to convert to Christianity.

Returning to Kyev in triumph, Vladimir proceeded to summon the whole city to the banks of the river Dnieper for a mass baptism. The year is 988. This is the founding, iconic act of Russian Orthodox Christianity. It was from here that Christianity would spread out and merge with the Russian love of the motherland, to create a powerful brew of nationalism and spirituality. In the mythology of 988, it was as if the whole of the Russian people had been baptised. Vladimir was declared a saint. When the Byzantine empire fell, the Russians saw themselves as its natural successor. They were a “third Rome”.

Soviet Communism tried to crush all this — but failed. And in the post-Soviet period, thousands of churches have been built and re-built. Though the West thinks of Christianity as something enfeebled and declining, in the East it is thriving. Back in 2019, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, boasted that they were building three churches a day. Last year, they opened a Cathedral to the Armed Forces an hour outside Moscow. Religious imagery merges with military glorification. War medals are set in stained glass, reminding visitors of Russian martyrdom. In a large mosaic, more recent victories — including 2014’s “the return of Crimea” — are celebrated. “Blessed are the peacemakers” this is not.

At the heart of this post-Soviet revival of Christianity is another Vladimir. Vladimir Putin. Many people don’t appreciate the extent to which the invasion of Ukraine is a spiritual quest for him. The Baptism of Rus is the founding event of the formation of the Russian religious psyche, the Russian Orthodox church traces its origins back here. That’s why Putin is not so much interested in a few Russian-leaning districts to the east of Ukraine. His goal, terrifyingly, is Kyev itself.

He was born in Leningrad — a city that has reclaimed its original saint’s name — to a devout Christian mother and atheist father. His mother baptised him in secret, and he still wears his baptismal cross. Since he became President, Putin has cast himself as the true defender of Christians throughout the world, the leader of the Third Rome. His relentless bombing of ISIS, for example, was cast as the defence of the historic homeland of Christianity. And he will typically use faith as a way to knock the West, like he did in this speech in 2013:



“We see many of the Euro-Atlantic countries are actually rejecting their roots, including the Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilisation. They are denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual. They are implementing policies that equate large families with same-sex partnerships, belief in God with the belief in Satan.”

Putin regards his spiritual destiny as the rebuilding of Christendom, based in Moscow. When the punk band Pussy Riot wanted to demonstrate against the President, they chose to do so in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, a vast white and gold edifice, demolished by the Soviets and rebuilt in the Nineties. It is a synthesis of Russia’s national and spiritual aspirations. It’s not just Russia, it is “Holy Russia”, part religious project, part extension of Russian foreign policy. Speaking of Vladimir’s mass baptism, Putin explained: “His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.” He wants to do the same again. And to do this he needs Kyev back.

“The spiritual choice made by St Vladimir still largely determines our affinity today” Putin wrote only last year. “In the words of Oleg the Prophet about Kyev, “let it be the mother of all Russian cities”.

Into this religious intensity we can add some angry church politics. In 2019, the Ukrainian arm of the family of Orthodox churches declared its independence from the Russian Orthodox

Church — and the nominal head of the Orthodox family, Bartholomew I of Constantinople, supported it. The Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko, described this as “a great victory for the devout Ukrainian nation over the Moscow demons, a victory of good over evil, light over darkness”.

The Russian Orthodox Church furiously rejected this claim to independence, stating that Ukraine belonged irrevocably to its “canonical territory”. This led to a historic split within the Orthodox family, with the Russian church rejecting the primacy of Bartholomew, declaring that they were no longer in communion with the rest of the Orthodox family. Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov denounced Bartholomew as an American stooge. Kirill even claimed the reversion of the Hagia Sophia – originally the global HQ of Orthodoxy – to a mosque in 2020 was “God’s punishment”. The Russian Church then proceeded to set up its own Dioceses around the world, especially in Africa. “They are taking to the streets with posters saying “Thank you, Putin! Thank you, Patriarch Kirill!”” was how the Russian church’s propaganda machine described it.

Such is the centrality of Ukraine in general, and Kyev in particular, to the imagination of the Russian church, they have been prepared to fracture the centuries old alliance of Orthodoxy. Again and again, it’s all about Ukraine, the imagined site of the mother church of the Rus.

How Europe’s hypocrisy enables Putin

BY REMI ADEKOYE

This compliance of the Russian Orthodox church with the political goal of a greater Russia has been shameful. Officially, at least, they make a big deal out of the claim that they stay out of politics. But that has never been true. In the post-Soviet era, the Orthodox Church was handsomely rewarded, not just with a grandiose state-backed church building programme, but with involvement in lucrative business operations including the import of tobacco and alcohol worth \$4 billion. In 2016, Kirill was photographed wearing a \$30,000 Breguet watch. He has also called Putin “a miracle of God”. When Kirill says “the Lord will provide” he could easily be talking about his lords and masters over in the Kremlin. Few churches have sold out to the state more completely than the Russian Orthodox church.

Last year, on the anniversary of the baptism of the Rus, Kirill preached to his people, urging them to stay true to Vladimir’s conversion and the blood of the orthodox martyrs. He told them to love “our homeland, our people, our rulers and our army”.

The Western secular imagination doesn’t get this. It looks at Putin’s speech the other evening, and it describes him as mad — which is another way of saying we do not understand what is going on. And we show how little we understand by thinking that a bunch of sanctions is going to make a blind bit of difference. They won’t. “Ukraine is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space” Putin said. That’s what this is all about, “spiritual space” — a terrifying phrase steeped in over a thousand years of Russian religious history.

These articles highlight how close Vladimir Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church have become. When Patriarch Kirill became head of the church after its former German KGB head died in 2004 he said he wanted to make the Russian Orthodox Church “a Putin church”. He has fulfilled his mission. Putin has established “the vertical of power” that former Tsars enjoyed. One man sits at the top of church and state wielding absolute power. Truly an autocratic dictator as Gog must be.

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The Jerusalem Post has a section in its pages on what is going on in the Christian world. The following article is by evangelist Joel Rosenberg who is scathing in his

criticism of western nations and churches for their inaction over the threat to Ukraine. Interesting that in all his rantings he fails to mention the only thing that can resolve the future dangers he warns about – the return of Christ.

The significant thing about this article is its conclusion encapsulated in its headline. He makes the case that Putin has wider ambitions than just Ukraine. NATO, the Baltic states (once part of the Soviet Union), and ultimately Israel are in his sights. Blind though he is to Bible prophecy, he makes some very relevant points and the article is worth consideration. It is quoted in full.

[Jerusalem Post](#) > [Christian World](#)

Christians, wake up: If world doesn't stop Putin - NATO, Israel are next

Opinion: Putin's alliance with Iran, Syria tells us all we need to know about his ambitions in the Mideast.

By JOEL C. ROSENBERG / ALL ISRAEL NEWS

Published: FEBRUARY 22, 2022

The world was blindsided by World War II and the abject horrors of the Holocaust because it didn't understand the evil nature of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime in Berlin.

The US was blindsided by the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941 because Washington didn't understand the evil nature of the Imperial Japanese regime in Tokyo.

The world was blindsided by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 because it didn't understand the evil nature of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.

Likewise, the US was blindsided by the 9/11 attacks in 2001 because it didn't understand the evil nature of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda terror network.

Today, the world is being blindsided again because it doesn't understand the evil nature of Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

Leaders in Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, Brussels and beyond seem completely baffled by Putin's lust to attack, crush and re-occupy Ukraine.

The West should be:

- Bringing Ukraine into NATO.
- Sending massive arms shipments to Kiev including Patriot missiles batteries.
- Offering full NATO air support to Ukrainian President Zelensky.
- Cutting off the Nordic 2 gas pipeline from Russia.
- Imposing crippling economic sanctions on Moscow.

Instead, the West is issuing feckless press releases and wringing its hands.

If that weren't bad enough, where are Christian leaders in this crisis?

Where is Pope Francis? Where is the Roman Catholic Church? Where are American Evangelical leaders? Where are other Protestant leaders in Europe and around the world? Why aren't they denouncing Putin's flagrant and evil aggression? Why are they

not calling on US President Joe Biden and the rest of NATO to stop Putin now, before it's too late? Why are they not doing everything they possibly can to mobilize Christians to pray for – and stand – their brothers and sisters in Ukraine, a democratic country with a thriving Christian community? Why are they so silent?

Do Western government officials truly not understand what is at stake here? Are Christian leaders really so wilfully ignorant of the threat Putin poses to both Jews and Christians? If such immediately demonstrate true grit and resolve – militarily, diplomatically, economically and prayerfully – they might yet dissuade Putin from invading Ukraine. But if they remain in denial – if they let themselves be blindsided and simply surrender Ukraine to Moscow without a fight because they don't understand who Putin really is, they will be unleashing catastrophic consequences far beyond Ukraine.

Don't they understand what happens if you give a wolf a cookie? Christians, wake up! World leaders, wake up!

Vladimir Putin is not a man we can do business with. He is a very dangerous man, as I explain in detail in my recent book *Enemies and Allies*.

At his core, Putin is a mafia boss, obsessed with power and wealth, and willing to rob, kill or destroy to obtain both. Using the Red Army, he already seized control of 20% of Georgia, all of Crimea, the eastern section of Ukraine and all of Syria. And murdered and imprisoned Russian dissidents. And co-opted Belarus. The list goes on and on.

At the same time, Putin sees himself following in the tradition of the Russian czars, believing he has a divine right to rule with an iron hand and is permitted to use any means necessary to rebuild the glory of Mother Russia. What a chilling combination.

Once you understand all this, you'll understand that Putin doesn't simply want to retake Ukraine – he wants more. Specifically, he wants to force the collapse of NATO, as well. As senior officials in Estonia said last week in Tallinn, a Putin in control of Ukraine will soon come after the Baltic states. Why? To bring Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania back under the Kremlin's control. And to prove that NATO does not have the will to enforce the mutual defense pact known as Article 5, thus ending NATO once and for all. This was the premise of my 2018 political thriller, "The Kremlin Conspiracy." But that was fiction. This is all too real. And then what?

Once Putin has seized Ukraine and the Baltics, will any small country be safe from his grasp? Will Israel? No. Putin's lust for power and wealth will be unstoppable at this point. How long would it be until Putin's allies in Tehran and Damascus ask him: Which side are you on, ours or Israel's? Why do let Israel keep attacking Iranian positions in Syria? Why do you let Israel keep threatening to take out Iran's nuclear facilities? You are the new Master of the Universe, why don't you show Israel who's boss? Remember: Putin has sold the Iranians and Syrians billions of dollars in advanced military hardware.

Putin has sent military forces into Syria to save the Bashar Al-Assad regime. Putin is building a huge naval base in Syria. Putin has also provided continual political cover for Iran and Syria at the UN.

Yet Putin has simultaneously maintained a working and even friendly relationship with Israeli officials over the past 22 years in office.

How much longer do you think that will last if the West surrenders to him in Ukraine and the Baltics?

What's especially troubling is that the West has vastly superior military power compared to Putin. Yet they refuse to use it.

They keep dismantling it. And they refuse to join forces with Ukraine, which is one of the few major military powers left in Europe. Robert Zubrin made a great set of points in a recent National Review column, "NATO Needs Ukraine." Let me close with his words:

"As a result of a series of decisions made during the Clinton, Bush, and, especially, Obama administrations, NATO has virtually disarmed itself.

"At the end of the Cold War in 1989, the United States had some 500,000 troops stationed in Western Europe.

"Now, we have 30,000, with practically no tanks. The British have removed virtually all their forces from the continent. Germany — which is showing itself increasingly unreliable in any case — has cut its army from twelve divisions down to four.

"The cold fact of the matter is that the only serious NATO ground force east of the Rhine is the Polish Army, which has 180,000 active-duty servicemen. It's not enough.

"But then there is Ukraine, which has 450,000 active-duty servicemen, more than all NATO forces east of the Rhine combined.

"If properly armed, and backed up by Anglo-American air and sea power, they could be formidable, and consequently, very valuable.

"We need to be realistic. Nuclear deterrence is dead. During the Cold War, we were able to deter a Warsaw Pact invasion of West Germany by threatening nuclear war if they tried it. But no one believes that the United States would do anything like that today.

"If Russia moves into the Baltic States or even Poland, the United States is not about the push the thermonuclear-war button, and Putin knows that.

"Consequently, the only way to be able to deter war is to be strong enough to defeat a conventional attack by non-nuclear means. That requires an army."

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT BEYOND THE SEIZURE OF UKRAINE AND PERHAPS BELARUS?

Let us now turn to the aftermath of the present crisis in Europe and ask the question of how close we might be to the return of Christ to raise the responsible dead and take those who are alive and remain to the place of judgement.

Firstly, it needs to be said that the state of the world just before the Gogian invasion of Israel will be quite different from what it is now. Many will be saying then, "Peace and safety" before sudden destruction comes upon them in the events of Armageddon and beyond (1 Thess. 5:3). Europe must be drawn into the Russian orbit and nations like France become part of the Gogian confederacy (Ezek. 38:6). Israel must be at peace with its neighbours and internally (having annexed the West Bank – Ezek. 38:8), and be found unprepared for war (Ezek. 38:11), so that they are taken completely by surprise (as in the Yom Kippur war of 1973) along with Britain and its allies (Ezek. 38:13). Russia has to have taken control of Istanbul (or Constantinople as Putin calls it) as the base for its drive south. These and other things will take time but can be accomplished in "the time of trouble such as never was" era that begins concomitant with the resurrection and removal of the responsible living to judgement. That period can be up to 10 years if we accept Bro. Sulley's understanding of the times of Ezekiel (The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy – Chap. 2). The immortalized saints must be ready for involvement in the judgements

of Armageddon and beyond (Mal. 4:1-3; John 18:36; Ps. 149). This is what Isa. 26:19-21 is about. The resurrection is the subject of verse 19; the rejoicing of the Bridegroom and his Bride is the subject of verse 20; and Armageddon is the subject of verse 21. The “indignation” of verse 20 is not a reference to Armageddon as it occurs while Christ and the saints are in the bridal chamber. It refers to the time of trouble that descended on the world at the time of the resurrection – Yahweh’s preliminary judgements on humanity (like the events of AD 66-68 preceding AD 70 – Luke 10:13-14).

Right now the condition of human society meets all the requirements of prophecy for the return of Christ except for the fullness of Luke 17:27-28 - "They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage,—until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. In like manner, as it came to pass in the days of Lot, they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building..." (Rotherham provides the correct translation according to the grammar – in the Greek it is in the plural, Imperfect tense, Active voice, Indicative mood). The Imperfect tense means that an action has begun, is in progress but is not completed. Such was the experience of people in both Noah’s day and Lot’s day. The rampant prosperity that both eras enjoyed was brought to an abrupt halt in midstream by Divine intervention.

The type of the days of Noah and Lot is well known because it foretells the moral condition of society at the time of Christ's return, but what is not as often mentioned is that it also sets the pattern for what immediately follows the removal of the responsible living. The common denominator for those times was prosperity that led to violence and immorality (Ezek. 16:49-50). Within a very short time of the saints being removed both eras of prosperity came crashing down and a time of trouble such as never was descended upon them (Dan. 12:1-2). This completely distracted men from what might have happened to Noah and Lot and their families. So it will be again.

The Covid pandemic has closed some of the stated activities of the days of Noah and Lot down or seriously restricted them for over two years. The restrictions are being lifted around the world and by mid-year we should see things accelerate as people break out of lockdowns and restrictions on activity and try to make up for lost time. There are already clear signs that people are prepared to take risks to travel and party. The world wants to return to the way of life it enjoyed prior to the pandemic. What will it be like when the pandemic recedes and all restrictions on activity are removed? A glimpse from history may help. Faced with the Assyrian army outside the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, many opted to eat and drink and party – Isa. 22:13 – “And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.” Similarly, our world faced with Russia muscling its way into Ukraine and an uncertain future due to ‘climate change’ is in many countries ready to make up for lost time by “excess of riot” giving themselves over to “lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3-4). This will be just as Christ said it would be when he arrived as a thief to take the responsible to judgement - Luke 21:34.

However, this return to feverish activity will coincide with the onset of the massive financial and economic collapse that is slated for later this year. The following article sounds a warning for the world. It is just one of many in recent times.

Global financial crash of a 'lifetime' warning: 'Great reckoning is coming' THIS YEAR

SINCE the pandemic stock markets have been rapidly surging to recover lost ground, however economists who previously predicted the 2007 crash are warning of history repeating.

By **TOM HILL**

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Recently renowned investor Jeremy Grantham warned that the US was now in a stock market superbubble with indicators already suggesting a major market correction to come. Economist Harry Dent told Express.co.uk he also foresaw a major crash which in its first instance could wipe 54 to 58 percent off markets. Mr Dent said: "This bubble has to crash, it will crash, it will be the crash of your lifetime, it is only just been a question of when will it crash." He further warned it could be "such a blow to investors they will not buy in next time, they will not jump back in and buy the dip". He said: "They'll say something's wrong."

Mr Dent explained his biggest indicator was demographic cycles linked to when people spend money which he said peaked at 46 or 47 years old.

He previously forecast the 2007 financial crash on the basis the baby boomers would have peaked in their spending by then.

Comparing 2007 with the 1929 Wall Street Crash Mr Dent said it was on "the same cycle" but crucially this time "the central banks realised they had printing power they didn't have back then and they just took out the canons".

He added: "So we've been living off of printed money ever since."

According to Mr Dent this reliance on printing money has made the economy fundamentally weaker though, with companies also taking on more debt.

He said: "23 percent of public companies in the US can't pay their debts, they're called zombie companies, that's not healthy."

"We have a great reckoning coming here."



Harry Dent has a long track record of predicting market crashes (Image: Harry Dent/Twitter)

Levels of debt are also a key indicator for economist Ann Pettifor, who previously predicted the 2007/2008 financial crisis in the book *The Coming First World Debt Crisis*, published earlier in 2006.

Speaking to Express.co.uk Ms Pettifor warned the world had accumulated a "mountain of debt" through a combination of low interest rates and GDP.

Global debt now stands at £168.47trillion (\$226trillion), more than global GDP and the value of listed companies.

Although central banks are now beginning to move on interest rates and reducing quantitative easing Mr Dent warned it was coming too slowly and too late.

He said: "They know if they don't keep pumping more and more the whole thing goes down."

Debt is not the only warning sign of underlying economic problems though.

Ms Pettifor pointed to current volatility in the stock market as a key indicator to look at. She said: "We know the great financial crisis was triggered by the fact investors asked if assets were really worth what they said they were worth."



All crashes since 1929 have occurred in the September/October period. That is because companies perform their inventories in September and the results impact the stock market. However, there are many other factors at work as mentioned in the article above.

One thing we do know. Christ will not come at a time of heightened excitement with everyone sitting on the edge of their seat as the world is now. He said so himself in Matt. 24:42-44 – “Be watching, therefore, for ye know not, on what manner of day, your Lord is coming. But there is, one thing, ye know—That, if the householder, had known, in what watch, the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert, and not have suffered his house to be dug through. Wherefore, ye also, be getting ready, because, in what hour ye are, not thinking, the Son of Man doth come.” (Rotherham). In Luke 21:34-35, Christ includes again his disciples in the warning – “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” This demonstrates that it will be at a time of relative calm and fervent human activity in pursuit of pleasure, not a time of universal concern over war that we see now.

By the middle of the year most Covid restrictions will be gone around the world; the Ukraine crisis will have cooled down somewhat; men will burst out of their Covid bonds and party and 'prosper' like never before while the Great Depression looms upon them (if the commentators prove correct). The saints will be removed and the time of trouble such as never was descend upon an unheeding world (Dan. 12:1-2). We know he must come soon. Let us hope and pray it is this year that we will be rescued.

From the Psalm reading for today: Ps. 102:13 – “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.