

[Blue text = my highlight. Don.] 23-03-2021

Bible Magazine Spring 2021

Our last update was written in the middle of December when it looked as if Britain would be leaving the EU without an agreed trading deal. Although Britain had formally left at the end of Jan 2020, she was still subject to the EU regulations and bills, until the end of 2020. The eleven-month period was in order to agree the terms on which the UK would deal with the EU—a Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

After 11 months of tortuous talks, it wasn't until Christmas Eve that suddenly hours of wrangling resulted in a deal. And so, at 11pm on 31st Dec 2020, Britain was finally able to set out on her former pathway as an independent trading nation. Nearly 50 years of EU membership had come to an end, but the bruising battles had left the country exhausted and the year-end celebrations were far more muted than those at the end of January 2020.

Now three months down the road, it is clear that the Agreement has proved to be fundamentally flawed. It would appear that Britain would have been better off without a deal. It is all in the Hands of God. He has marked out a destiny for Britain that its rulers are ignorant of. In the day when Europe and Russia are united in their determination to bring the State of Israel to an end, Britain is to be found in opposition to this move. (Ezek. 38:13) The ties of the last 50 years have to be thoroughly broken—Britain has no future in Roman Catholic Europe. Although sadly anti-Semitism is still rife in this country yet generally the movement in Britain is towards Israel. We can see the evidence of the blessings that come to those nations who stand by Israel. Europe on the other hand has a centuries-old background of Jewish persecution—led by Rome—a matter we deal with later.

Britain finds herself constantly being pushed away by the EU despite the sacrifice of many of Britain's young men in two World Wars in coming to Europe's rescue. Her successful handling of Covid has exacerbated the continent's deep-seated resentment of Britain.

An acrimonious divorce

For Britain, the pent-up energy that had been suppressed by EU regulations, aimed at keeping Britain very much under the thumb of the EU, was now ready to spring into action. The old mantra, fuelled incessantly by a mainly EU-centred media, that Britain was a spent power, is far from the truth. A new spirit is evident, wanting to go back to the enterprising days of freedom to trade around the world. The amazing number of Trade Agreements drawn up by the indefatigable Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, bears testimony that the UK has friends around the world, anxious to do business, especially following the trade slump caused by Covid-19.

On the other hand, it soon became clear that any thoughts of Britain's relationships with the EU would continue to be as friends and neighbours, was far off the mark. For almost 50 years the EU had plotted to break the power of Britain, by introducing regulations which damaged her abilities to prosper. In spite of the professed sadness at seeing one of their key members leave them, this divorce was never going to be easy. And so it has turned out.

The many gloomy predictions that Brexit would turn out to be a disaster for the UK's economy, proved not to be the case. It has been the EU that has lagged behind. At every turn, the EU's heavy-handed approach to make life as difficult as possible, especially in Britain's exports to the EU, has rebounded on their own head. Petty insistence that customs forms have to be completed in black ink for some EU countries and in red for others, and don't forget to use a different coloured ink for your signature to that of your letter heading! This is supposed to be the 21st century with electronic clearance procedures. Even lorry drivers' ham sandwiches were impounded as being illegal imports of meat!

'It's like whack-a-mole: a problem crops up, you hit it on the head and fix it and then another two crop up at the same time.' *Mail Online* 04-Feb-21

Exports to the EU have drastically slumped as it is just not worth the hassle for many small businesses. And so new markets are being looked for, where they welcome the trade rather than using every rule in the book to hinder it.

Relations with the EU desperately need improving

It is now clear that the Trade deal that was agreed last December, has turned out to be a disaster. It would have been better to have left without a Deal and traded under World Trade Organisation rules.

As the dust settles on Britain's departure nearly three months ago from Europe's internal market, two things have become abundantly clear.

One is that the so-called Trade and Co-operation Agreement to replace previous trading arrangements with the EU is an extremely poor deal for the UK. The second is that relations with the EU, further soured by

quarrels over vaccine supply and safety, need urgently to be repaired, both to reduce already intolerable frictions in trade and to give the City a fighting chance of regaining access to European markets.

Better solutions to the Irish border issue also need to be found. In its present form, the Northern Ireland Protocol is **manifestly unworkable**. Rather than guaranteeing the peace in Northern Ireland, as it is supposed to, its implementation threatens only to reignite sectarian divides.

As it is, the TCA is a sellout for the **fishermen**, a sellout for **financial services** – Britain’s most successful export – a sellout for **Northern Ireland** and a sellout for tens of thousands of **small** and **medium-sized enterprises** that find it scarcely worth trading with the EU at all any more, such is the multitude of charges, form filling, non-tariff barriers and delays that now confront them. As one small trader put it to me: “It’s actually easier these days to sell to the United States, where we have no trade deal, than it is to the EU.” *Sunday Telegraph* 21-Mar-21

It seems quite significant that the EU has not ratified this Trade and Cooperation Agreement! Britain recalled her MP’s and Members of the House of Lords from their Christmas break, in order to get the deal approved. The Queen stopped up in order to add her signature in the early hours of 31st December. Because the EU insists that such deals have to be translated into each of the 22 official languages, and this document was 1,246 pages long, it was agreed that they would be given until the end of February 2021 to approve it. That deadline passed and a new deadline of March 25th was agreed. However, in early March the EU suspended that deadline, in protest at Boris Johnson’s proposals to suspend implementation of the rules for Northern Ireland in the light of the chaos that was being caused by them. At the time of writing, no new date has been proposed. With the growing acrimony between the two sides, it may be that the EU is not able to agree its acceptance as it has to have all 27 members in favour. Britain may well find that she ends up without this Agreement and so reverts to WTO rules. There looks a rocky year ahead for UK-EU relationships.

Vaccine success: Israel's Covid infections plummet 40 days after lifting lockdown

Israel’s surefooted vaccination programme where some 60% of Israel’s total population have now been vaccinated, is bearing fruit. Their lockdown began to be eased Feb 7 and infections continue to plummet. From the January 2021 high, there are 85% fewer daily deaths; 72% fewer daily critically ill; 86% fewer daily cases! (TheNational.ae 23-Mar-21) Israel became the international testbed for the Pfizer vaccine; the world watched to see how successful her programme would be. Many countries, UK included, have followed closely this live test, learning and implementing many of Israel’s steps. How ironic, that this despised little country, the subject of continuing hammering at the UN, should be bringing such blessings to the world, if only they would listen! The UK did, the EU didn’t and the differences are dramatic!



EU’s vaccination antics

Nothing has shown the deep divide between Britain’s surefootedness in rolling out her Covid-19 vaccination programme and the EU bumbling steps to do the same. Boris Johnson chose not to take part in the EU programme to develop a vaccine and a policy to administer it. He chose instead an independent pathway, in spite of the warnings that this problem was too big for a small country to tackle—it needed the collective might of the EU. How right Johnson proved to be. British teams developed a vaccine and found ways of speeding up the approval process, taking months instead of the usual years. Early on orders were placed with various firms who had potential vaccines under development. Money was put into helping these firms develop their products. Britain rapidly rolled out her vaccination programme starting 8 December and by 20 March had reached the milestone of 50% of the adult UK population being injected with the first dose, and 95% of the over 65s. Israel is further ahead, with 60% of their adults receiving their first injection by 15 March.

The figures for the EU are woefully behind. They were much later in getting their vaccines on order last summer, due to the bureaucratic pace of a large organisation needing to get multiple approvals from its member states. They under-ordered and sought to drive down the price. Vaccine production is a complex process and when setbacks arose, the manufacturers sought to supply those who had put their confidence in them and were prepared to pay a fair price. This left the EU struggling to obtain supplies. Envious of the UK’s success, steps were taken to block EU manufacturers from supplying the UK. At one stage they threatened to tear up the NI element of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement to prevent supplies entering the UK via Ireland. Then, President Macron of France made allegations that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine wasn’t effective for those over 65. This allegation was also echoed by a German Minister. Macron was forced to climb down when it was shown to be suitable for all adult ages. But the damage was done. Many on the continent are against vaccines and take up rates plummeted. Then there was the scare over the vaccines triggering fatal blood clots in the brain. This is one of the side effects of Covid and there could have been many who were in the early stages of Covid when vaccinated, who later died. Was Covid the cause or the vaccine? In any case the numbers affected was little different from those who died of

blood clots on the brain before the Covid epidemic. Europe has only succeeded in vaccinating 12% of its population and has piles of unused vaccines in storage. That has not stopped her from seeking to ban exports to the UK of the very vaccine they claimed was of limited use and had dangerous side effects! Italy refused to release a large batch ordered by Australia. Europe's strange behaviour is a reminder of the words of the Master in the Olivet Prophecy:

*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth **distress** of nations, **with perplexity**; the sea and the waves roaring;*

*Men's hearts **failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Luke 21:25,26*

We recognise that these are symbols for the national and religious leaders (*sun, moon stars and the powers of heaven*) and their peoples (*the earth, sea and waves*). They are gripped with fear as they seek to find solutions to the great problems they are facing. The Master adds the word *perplexity*. This is the only place that this Greek noun *aporia* occurs (it occurs 4 times as a verb). Vine says of this word: 'Literally "at a loss for a way". (Non-Biblical) papyri illustrations are in the sense of being at one's wits end, at a loss how to proceed, without resources.' This seems to sum up the EU's reactions to the pandemic—and we know that these are only *the beginnings of sorrows*. Mat. 24:8. The word here for *sorrows* is *birth pains*—the contractions of a woman giving birth, which get stronger and more frequent as the time of birth approaches. We are seeing a foretaste of the coming troubles which will herald the Master's Return.

Europe's disastrous vaccine rollout shows it to be a dangerous neighbour

Britain is planning to have the majority of British adults vaccinated by late Spring, enabling life to get back to some normality, with non-essential shops and restaurants opening and sporting fixtures open to the public. This should be a big boost to the economy. As Covid cases drop sharply in the UK, they continue to grow in the EU. Without a tremendous acceleration in the roll out and uptake of the vaccine, they would appear to be months away from any respite. The prospect of many more Covid deaths due to the slowness of the vaccination programme is the grim picture that Europe faces.

We can see the prospect of the British choosing Israel, Australia and New Zealand as holiday destinations where infection rates have been brought under control. India too has had good success. Is God ensuring that a wedge is driven between Britain and continental Europe?

As we try to navigate our way through these difficulties, the features and flaws that led Brussels to fail in the vaccination crisis will apply. We will be up against an entity fixated by its own accumulation of power, **stung by its recent failure** and determined to **stop Britain making a success of Brexit**. It will swear by the rules even as it breaks them, give lectures about showing good faith while abusing it, and take a reckless approach to peace in Northern Ireland, which it has never understood nor truly cared about.

We will still be dealing with a **dysfunctional**

yet **often dangerous neighbour** for years to come. *Daily Telegraph 22-Mar-21*



If the EU continues to act like a hostile state, the UK should treat it as one

Step by step the Lord God is bringing many pressures to bear to guide Britain down her pre-ordained pathway. As this article put it so elegantly:

We are thus **both pushed and pulled towards a closer relationship with Commonwealth and Anglosphere countries**. While individual European states might still be considered allies, the EU as a whole has chosen instead to be a **rival**.

Some countries – **Australia**, say – are so close to us in temperament and outlook that we can treat each other's interests as semi-interchangeable, **swapping the most intimate intelligence secrets and habitually combining**

our Armed Forces. At the other end of that spectrum are antagonistic states, such as Iran. We need to face the fact that **the EU is now closer on that spectrum to, say, Russia than it is to Canada.**

For now, Brussels does not regard us as a neighbour whose economic success will enrich its own peoples, but as a renegade province whose wings need clipping. Our response must be to soar higher. *Sunday Telegraph* 21-Mar-21

Cross-Channel decoupling: capital leaves EU and floods toward Britain

In spite of the hiccups, the world is looking favourable on Britain's prospects, now free of the EU, as this article showed. The eye-wateringly large monetary outflows from eurozone may accelerate into outright flight.

Ursula von der Leyen has invoked the nuclear option of the Lisbon Treaty. By threatening to activate emergency powers under Article 122 **she has told the world that Europe is no longer a safe place for private capital or inward investment.**

The clause allows Brussels to seize factories, take direct control over the production process, and redirect vaccine flows. It enables war-time occupation of companies.

HSBC says outflows reached **half a trillion euros in the fourth quarter**, an annualised pace of **20pc of GDP**. It quickened to €250bn (£214bn) in the single month of December. **The scale is breath-taking.** It happened before the vaccine debacle condemned Europe to an extra quarter of economic recession and social despair.

"Relative to GDP, these outflows were the largest we have seen going back 20 years," said Paul Mackel, the banks' currency chief.

You can interpret these outflows in many ways but one thing **they are not is a vote of confidence in eurozone growth and recovery, or indeed the political management of the EU.** The exodus is likely to gather pace this quarter as American reflation and the vast funding needs of the Biden treasury suck capital out of the global system.

For now sterling is in rude good health. The pound has hit a one-year high of €1.17 against the euro this week and is nearing the top end of its post-referendum trading range. Bank of America says the pound is undergoing a "cyclical rehabilitation". Fears that inward investment would dry up have proved unfounded. **"There are clear signs of pick-up in flows into UK Plc,"** it said.

Funds are rotating back into UK equities," said Geoffrey Yu, the bank's Europe strategist.

All the stars are aligning for what the Bank of England's Andy Haldane calls a "coiled spring" recovery. The spectacle of cross-Channel decoupling will profoundly change the global discourse on Brexit. The real test comes later during the hard grind of the 2020s. But my hunch is that **the first year of independence will be much better than almost anybody expected.** Ambrose Evans-Pritchard *Daily Telegraph* 18-Mar-21

It was interesting to learn that the British pound is ranked as the 5th strongest currency, ahead of the euro (8th), Swiss franc (9th); and the US dollar (10th). Furthermore the 4 strongest currencies are of small countries and not widely traded. The British pound is not only the oldest currency still in circulation but is the strongest widely used currency in the world. It accounts nearly 13% of the daily trades on the foreign exchange markets. (cmcmarkets.com accessed 23-Mar-21)

Britain as a trading maritime nation

On March 16, the UK government launched its long-awaited Integrated Review on security, defence, development and foreign policy. It was clear that Britain's leaders have a vision of Britain as a maritime power with a global reach. There is to be a big investment in the navy while the Army is being slimmed down as manpower is not so needed for modern warfare, as sophisticated weaponry and robotics play an increasing role.

It was clear that Britain was far from sinking into gloom and despondency, there was a real buzz about what she could do. The main focus is on the Middle East and the Far East, where many of her Commonwealth partners are. Britain's naval presence in Oman is to be strengthened by tripling the size of port the facilities there.

In presenting this review, Boris Johnson told Parliament:

The overriding purpose of this review, the most comprehensive since the cold war, is to **make the United Kingdom stronger, safer and more prosperous, while standing up for our values.** Our international policy is a vital instrument for fulfilling this Government's vision of uniting and levelling up across our country, reinforcing the Union, and **securing Britain's place as a science superpower and a hub of innovation and research.** The review describes how we will **bolster our alliances, strengthen our**



capabilities, find new ways of reaching solutions, and **relearn the art of competing against states with opposing values**. We will be **more dynamic abroad** and more focused on delivering for our citizens at home. I begin with the essential fact that the fortunes of the British people are, almost uniquely, **interlinked with events on the far side of the world**. With limited natural resources, **we have always earned our living as a maritime trading nation**. In 2019, the UK sold goods and services overseas worth **£690 billion—fully a third of our gross domestic product**—sustaining millions of jobs and making our country the **fifth biggest exporter in the world**. Between 5 million and 6 million Britons—**nearly one in 10 of us—live permanently overseas**, including **175,000 in the Gulf** and nearly **2 million in Asia and Australasia**, so a crisis in any of those regions or in the trade routes connecting them would be a crisis for us from the very beginning.

The first outcome of the integrated review was the Government's decision to **invest an extra £24 billion in defence**, allowing the **wholesale modernisation** of our armed forces and taking forward the renewal of our nuclear deterrent. The new money will be focused on mastering the emerging technologies that are transforming warfare, **reflecting the premium placed on speed of deployment and technical skill**.

Later this year, **HMS Queen Elizabeth** will embark on her maiden deployment, **leading a carrier strike group on a 20,000-mile voyage to the Indo-Pacific and back, exercising with Britain's allies and partners along the way and demonstrating the importance that we attach to freedom of the seas**. *Hansard* 16-Mar-21

We are greatly encouraged to see the fulfilment of so many Scriptures taking place in our lifetimes! How reassuring it is that the Word of God through His prophets is true and trustworthy. What He has spoken will surely come to pass. After half a century of Britain going in the wrong direction, we rejoice to see that our historic understanding of Bible Prophecy is standing the test of time.

Why Europe “Will Remain Hostile to Israel”

This is a depressing thought, but Scripture tells us that the so-called “Christian Churches” will be foremost in binding the many nations of Europe to form an alliance with Russia and some Middle Eastern and African countries to come to destroy Israel as a nation in their land. (Eze. 38 lists these nations.) So my attention was drawn to this article with the above heading.

Rafael Bardaji, executive director of the Friends of Israel Initiative and Spain's former national security advisor, spoke to participants in a February 15 Middle East Forum webinar (video) about the persistent **"clash of interests ... between the European Union (EU) and the Israeli government" likely to endure for the foreseeable future**.

According to Bardaji, three points of friction between the EU and Israel are prominent this year. The first is the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its former prosecutor, Gambian lawyer Fatou Bensouda, to "accept the Palestinians as a national state ... able to ask for investigation, prosecution and indictment of a non-state-member of the ICC," namely Israel. **"The Europeans are very well attached, by heart, to the ICC despite all violations of international law regarding this decision."**

The second point of friction concerns **Iran**. Despite Tehran's violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the **EU is eager to "keep it afloat"** and press the U.S. to lift its sanctions imposed under Trump **in order to resume their own trade with Tehran**.

The third point of conflict is European eagerness to **"pull the Palestinians back into the center stage"** of the Middle East peace process, despite the fact that their longstanding belief that "without them, nothing can be done in the region" has been proven wrong.

Furthermore, **"a state that is defined by religious belief – the state of the Jewish people"** is seen as an **"anachronism"** given the **"radical secularization of Europe."** The average European, ascribing to a "post-modern world," **cannot comprehend a people defined by a religion other than Islam surviving in the hostile environs of the Middle East**.

Bardaji is pessimistic about the future of EU-Israel relations. Marilyn Stern *Middle East Forum* 14-Mar-21

Israel goes to the polls for 4th time in 2 years

Today, Israel is voting again, the closing polls indicate that Mr Netanyahu has a chance of having a slim majority, depending on which parties are willing to form a coalition. Turnout appears to be lower than usual, election fatigue has certainly set in. Yet amazingly, Israel has continued to prosper and defend herself without a government for much of the past two years! Because of Covid, there will be many postal votes, which this year are to be individually scrutinised to ensure that people have not also voted at a Polling Station. So this will delay final results. Israeli elections nearly always are cliff-hangers, we will see if this one is too.

Germany's poor showing for Merkel's Party

Two of Germany's power-house States held regional elections in mid-March, with the Christian Democrats (CDU) suffering a humiliating loss of seats. Angela Merkel, Germany's long serving Chancellor since 2005, is stepping down and the country is girding up to choose her successor in September 26 elections. The normal choice is the leader of Germany's main party, the CDU. Merkel's chosen successor, stepped down as party leader and Armin Laschet was chosen in early January. However, he is not popular, Germany's handling of the Covid crisis has reflected badly on the Party, as these regional elections showed. He is a man to watch, however. A strong Roman Catholic and a great admirer of Charlemagne, the founder of the Holy Roman Empire, whose resurrection as the final phase of the *Beast* system described in Revelation 16 and 17, we are waiting to see. He was born and lives in Aachen and is on the committee who chooses who should win the annual Charlemagne Prize. It was awarded to Pope Francis in 2016. We watch and we wait!

The Abraham Accords bear fruit

It has been exciting to see just how fruitful the Abraham Accords are turning out to be. The UAE and Bahrain have wholeheartedly embraced their friendships with Israel and the business potentials for both Jew and Arab are enormous. There have been many ambitious agreements made in the past few months. God Willing, we will be able to look at how these are developing in our next update.

We have to remember that God works to His timetable, not ours! How many more have been able to respond to the Gospel call, because the Divinely appointed day has not yet arrived. One day it will come!

We follow the cameo set out in John's gospel after the Lord Jesus had fed the 5,000, instructing his disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee, while he tarried in prayer.

*And it was **now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.***

*And **the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.***

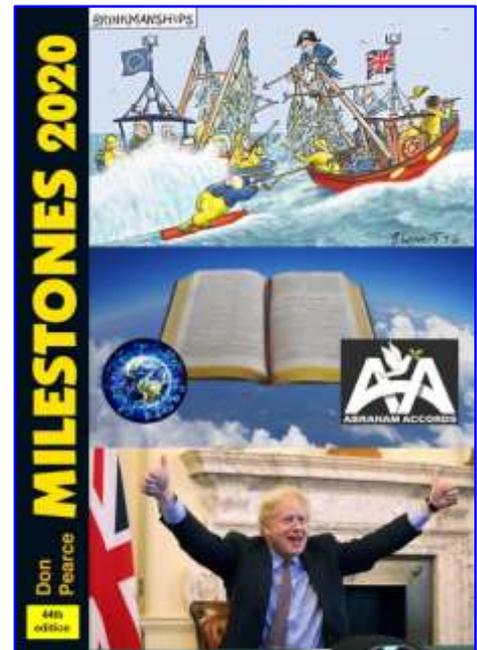
*So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: **and they were afraid.***

*But he saith unto them, **It is I; be not afraid.***

*Then they willingly received him into the ship: and **immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.***
John 6:17-21

We toil in the troubles that are coming upon the world, we are not spared, this is our time of testing, and even for the four fisherman disciples who had spent their life traversing the Sea of Galilee, they too were afraid. It was dark, and the Lord had not come. Out of the darkness of the storm, suddenly he appeared, and the journey came abruptly to an end – *immediately* they were in the Capernaum harbour! Capernaum comes from two Greek words—“a walled village” and “repentance or comfort”. Jesus' destination was to preach in the synagogue there. This was no ordinary synagogue—it had been built by the Roman centurion, whose servant Jesus had healed some time before! (Luke 7:5) He surely would have come to listen to Jesus proclaiming that *I am the Bread of Life*. (John 6:35) He also said, *if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever!* (v51) So it was a fitting cameo of the coming of the Lord Jesus to his disciples and taking them immediately to Sinai, to the place of Judgment, where he will bestow eternal life on his faithful followers, Jew and Gentile. So come Lord Jesus.

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Copies of Bro Don's review of 2020 in the light of Bible Prophecy are available from CSSS Agents or from the Author. Read the 1st 10 pages at www.milestonesuk.org. Also available in electronic versions. don@milestonesuk.org