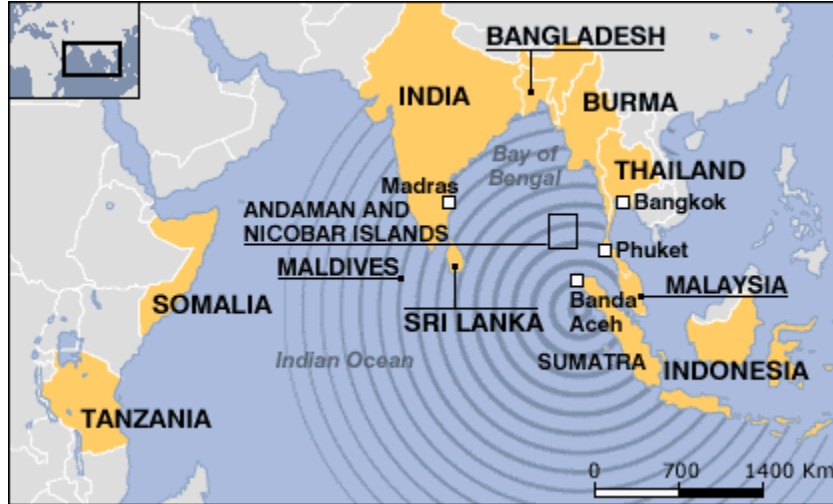


TSUNAMI



A HORRIFIC FORETASTE OF WHAT IS TO COME !

“There will be mighty and violent earthquakes
in various places ... and there will be signs ...
upon earth despair among nations, with
perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.

**Men’s hearts will faint from terror,
being apprehensive of what is coming
upon the world.”**

- Y’shua the Messiah. (Luke 21:11, 25-26)

“The foundations of the earth shake.”

(Isaiah 24:18)

“The sea has come up over Babylon.

**She has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves. Her cities have become an object of
horror.”**

(Jeremiah 51:42-43,

**“The kings of the earth ... will weep and lament ... woe, woe, the great city ...
in one hour she has been laid waste!”**

(Revelation 18:9, 10)

My dear Reader,

The world heaves to and fro; the masses are trauma-tised; the nations stagger under the enormity of the tsunami’s destruction and human agony. The story gets worse every day.

Massive earthquakes, massive tsunamis, massive death tolls; possible widespread epidemics following; and a massive cleanup and reconstruction account.

This is not just another suicide bombing; not just another cyclone, not just another earthquake! This is earth-shattering. This is being described as a “disaster of Biblical

proportions,” which means, it’s like the great cataclysms that the Bible has warned will occur in the last days.

The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Revelation, quoted on page one, describe events scheduled for the Great Tribulation. “The great city” refers to Commercial Babylon and the world’s rebellious system.

What we have seen in the last week of December is a small glimpse of what is to come!

This is a time when believers in Y’shua the Messiah must stand up and proclaim the Word of God, for ...

Yahweh the Almighty “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness.

Therefore God now commands all people everywhere to repent.”

(Acts

17:30-31)

Just as 9-11 was a salvo of the war of terror, 12-04 may be a massive warning of the impending Great Tribulation. 2005 may produce even more tremendous and fearful developments. But believer, LOOK UP! The coming OF our Master is at hand! Redeem the time! Make these days count for eternity! Y’shua shalom be with you! Your brother,

Don Stanton

“THE WORST NATURAL DISASTER IN RECENT TIMES”

IN the wake of the devastation of December 26, the nations are racing against time to save the survivors from epidemics; and under way is the biggest and most costly relief operation ever mounted.

The massive 9.0 earthquake and the waves of tsunamis that slammed into the coastal areas of nations bordering the Indian Ocean, from Indonesia to Africa, have added a new dimension to the “terror” in these endtimes..

The tsunamis were triggered by the world’s strongest earthquake since a 9.2 temblor hit Prince William Sound in Alaska in 1964.

The 12-04 earthquake was one of at least six measuring 9.0 or above during the past 100 years.

“This may be the worst natural disaster in recent history because it is affecting so many heavily populated coastal areas ... so many vulnerable communities,” said UN emergency relief co-ordinator Jan Egeland.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha of Tamil Nadu, India, said: “It’s an extraordinary calamity of such colossal proportions that the damage has been unprecedented. It all seems to have happened in the space of 20 minutes. A massive tidal wave of extreme ferocity ... smashed everything in sight to smithereens,” she said.

In Sri Lanka officials where more than 28,500 lives were snatched away, President Chandrika Kumaratunga said: “The scale of the tragedy is massive. Sri Lanka has never been hit by tidal waves or earthquakes in its known history.”

In Trincomalee district of Sri Lanka, tsunami waves swept more than two kilometres inland washing away entire villages. And on a coastal track, a train was swept away; and more than 1000 of its passengers perished.

WHAT IS A TSUNAMI?

A tsunami is a series of large waves of extremely long wavelength and duration usually generated by a violent, impulsive undersea disturbance or activity near the coast or in the ocean.

When a sudden displacement of a large volume of water occurs, or if the sea floor is suddenly raised or dropped by an earthquake, big tsunami waves can be formed by forces of gravity.

The waves travel out of the area of origin and can be extremely dangerous and damaging, as we have seen, when they reach the shores.

How are they generated?

The most destructive tsunamis are generated from large, shallow earthquakes with an epicenter or fault line near or on the ocean floor.

They usually occur along the edges of tectonic plates. When these plates move past each other, they cause large earthquakes which displace areas of the ocean floor for up to 1000 km or more.

The sudden vertical displacements disturb the ocean’s surface, displace water and generate destructive tsunami waves.

The waves can travel great distances from the source. For example, a 1960 tsunami was generated by a magnitude 9.5 earthquake that had a rupture zone of more than 1000 km. Its waves were destructive not only in Chile, but also as far away as Hawaii, Japan and elsewhere in the Pacific.

Usually it takes an earthquake with a magnitude exceeding 7.5 to produce a very destructive tsunami.

- Source: International Tsunami Information Centre

The Progress of a Tsunami

1. The rupture on the seafloor pushes water upwards, starting the wave.
2. The wave moves rapidly across the ocean, reaching speeds of up to 1000 km/hr - (faster than a passenger jet).
3. As the wave nears land it slows to about 45km/hr, but is squeezed upwards, increasing its height.
4. The wave crashes onto the shore, and heads inland, destroying everything in its path.

THE TERRIFYING TSUNAMI OF 12-04 "THE DAY THE EARTH WAS SHAKEN TO ITS CORE"

LIKE 9/11, which represents the daring and horrifying terrorist attack in the US, 12-04 will represent the horrific disaster caused by the world's worst tsunami in living memory.

More than **150,000** people are believed to have perished in twelve nations; and thousands of foreigners from other nations have also died in the disaster regions.

Thousands are still missing; a true count will never be made. Hundreds of thousands of livelihoods have been wiped out. Millions have been rendered homeless; and millions are now threatened by life-destroying diseases.

One seismologist likened the power of the 9.0 quake to **a million atom bombs** the size of the Hiroshima bomb on World War 2.

"All the planet is vibrating" from the quake, said Enzo Boschi, the head of Italy's National Geophysics Institute. Speaking on SKY TG24 TV, Boschi said the quake even disturbed the Earth's rotation.

The quake was centered 155 miles south-southeast of Banda Aceh, the capital of Indonesia's Aceh province on Sumatra, and six miles under the Indian Ocean's seabed. It occurred at a place where several huge geological (tectonic) plates push against each other with massive force.

The violent grinding of two tectonic plates caused a rupture in the seabed. The seafloor was pushed up by about 10m, and a 620-mile section along the boundary of the plates shifted. This movement triggered the sudden displacement of a huge volume of water, generating the massive tsunami which fanned out across the Indian Ocean at an enormous speed.

The initial 9.0 quake was followed on the same day by at least six powerful aftershocks, ranging in magnitude from almost 6 to 7.3. An aftershock on Monday rattled India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and in the first three days after the quake, there were 31 aftershocks measuring between 5.5 and 7.3.

Walls of water tens of metres high, and thousands of miles apart, traveled across the seas at the speed of a jet, wrecking havoc on at least twelve nations of the Indian Ocean region.

Some people felt the tremors first, and headed for the beach, thinking they would be safe there. After a couple of hours they saw the sea sucked away from beaches, only to return minutes later as a wall of water up to 30 feet high or more. Some eyewitnesses say that it appeared as though the entire sea was rushing towards them. In places, the water rose to nearly 200 feet.

The waves of tsunami flattened houses, hurled fishing boats onto coastal roads, sent cars spinning through swirling waters into hotel lobbies and sucked sunbathers and fishermen off beaches and out to sea. One survivor said: "It was like being in a washing machine."

Madras has one of the most beautiful beaches in India, stretching more than seven km. It being a Sunday, many people were jogging, walking and exercising on the beach, while some were swimming. Suddenly, huge columns of water surged towards the land without any warning.

In Indonesia the number of dead soared to well over 80,000. In Aceh, the tsunamis reached 2km inland. In the coastal strip of Aceh, whole towns vanished. In some places soldiers were sent to recover bodies from trees where they were dumped by the huge waves.

Thailand's coastal resorts saw the loss of some 8,000.

An eye-witness in Andhra Pradesh, India, said: "I was shocked to see innumerable fishing boats flying on the shoulder of the waves, going back and forth into the sea, as if made of paper."

The death toll in India rose to above 10,000. Thousands of the victims being from the Indian territories of the Andaman and Nicobar islands, where entire communities were swept into the sea. The Nicobar islands, like Aceh in NW Indonesia, are quite close to the epicenter, and took "the brunt of hell's onslaught."

Packed holiday seaside resorts were walloped, and hotels and shops were reduced to rubble.

Low-lying Maldives, more than 2,500km (1,500 miles) from the quake's epicenter, was simply swamped.

The tsunami waves killed people also in Burma, Bangladesh, and hit the east coasts of Africa - Somalia, Kenya, Seychelles and Tanzania where many fisher-men were lost. Huge waves were reported around Asia and even on the west coast of Australia.

The number of children killed was enormous - young children could not run, swim, or catch hold of any-thing secure. Babies and toddlers were cruelly snatched out of their parents' arms.

The cost in human trauma and agony is beyond estimation. Heart-rending tales of the tragedy are endless.

The cost of the physical devastation and reconstruction is being estimated in multiplied billions of dollars.

NO WARNING SYSTEM IN INDIAN OCEAN

This tragedy was unexplainable in the eyes of many people, because there was no warning issued whatever.

People in India and Sir Lanka are quite used to cyclones, and many move to safety when a warning is given. Even then, there are a substantial number of people killed every year from cyclones, either because they can't move in time, or they are too poor to move.

But this tragedy has not differentiated between the rich and poor. Well-to-do tourists suffered along with poor locals. Everyone was affected alike.

There was a tsunami warning from Honolulu within 15 minutes of the quake, and more than an hour before the first wave hit Sri Lanka and India. The scientists, however, were not able to pass the information on to the Indian Ocean region as they lacked the contacts. The sad reality is that there was no warning system for the Indian Ocean. And apart from Indonesia and Australia, none of the region's governments have shown any interest in having one.

In October, 2003, the 27 members countries of the International Co-ordinating Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific, decided to investigate an Indian Ocean and southwest Pacific warning system.

A working group was set up to "evaluate capabilities and requirements" in the region for an early-warning system. Australia and Indonesia were the only Indian Ocean members, and the budget for this year was a mere \$US 5000. So naturally, not much happened!

Scientists said the death toll might have been reduced if India and Sri Lanka had been part of an international warning system designed to advise coastal communities that a potentially killer wave was approaching.

After the disaster, Australia pledged to develop a tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean region in co-operation with other countries. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said: "I know it looks a bit like closing the door after the horse has bolted, but there will be tsunamis again in the future; hopefully never again on this scale."

Without being a prophet, Downer is right. More disasters will occur in these endtimes.

THE BIBLE'S EARLY WARNING

There are two Biblical prophecies that warn of the "ultimate global earthquake" and its world shattering results. Undoubtedly it will be the "mother of all tsunamis" that will destroy whole islands, and bring mountains down.

The enormous tragedy we have just witnessed is a powerful warning of what is ahead. Could it be worse than 12-04? Yes, a hundred times worse. Read the prophecies:

"Terror and pit and snare confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit, and he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare; for the windows above are opened, and **the foundations of the earth shake** .

"The earth is broken asunder; **the earth is split through**; the earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again."
(Isaiah 24:17-20)

"There was a **great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth**, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. And God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup *filled* with the wine of His furious wrath *and indignation*. And **every island fled away**, and the **mountains could not be found**."

(Revelation 16:18-20)

"It will not rise again" may seem to suggest that this is the total end of the planet. But no, it is not yet the end of the world. The prophecy indicates that man's corrupt regime is in ruins, and that man with all his scientific knowledge and technology will be utterly unable to restore the devastated planet.

It indicates also that the earth is unable to heal itself from the apparent total wipeout. Only the Almighty can heal and make things new!

And the good news is that there is a day of restoration ahead, when, after this time of purging, the Almighty will intervene in the course of the planet. The Messiah will come to heal and restore.

“But for you who revere My Name, **the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing** in His wings.”
(Malachi 4:2)

“Repent therefore; return *to God* and be converted - *be changed*, so that your sins may be wiped out, and in order that times of refreshing may come from the Presence of the LORD – *the Sovereign Heavenly Master YHWH*; and that He may send Y’shua, the Messiah who was foreordained *and* proclaimed to you - *He* who must remain in heaven until **the period of restoration of all things**, about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from the most ancient times.”
(Acts 3:18-21)

Yes, Y’shua, Jesus the Messiah, will come to restore the devastated planet, and to establish the Kingdom of God “on earth as it is in Heaven.” This will be the ultimate fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies.

“The kingdoms of the world have become *the kingdom of YHWH* our LORD and of His Anointed – the Messiah; and He will reign for ever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)

“In the last days the mountain of the House of YHWH will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream into it. Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.’

“For the Torah (*instruction*) will go out from Zion, and the Word of YHWH from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations, and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they learn warfare any more.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)

A glorious 1000 years of the Messianic reign is ahead!

Blessed are those who share in the kingdom on the restored earth. But even more blessed are the members of the Body of Messiah who are caught up at the Rapture, and will share His heavenly city both during the 1000 years, and for all eternity.

Y’shua said: “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s House are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I am going *there* to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, so that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:1-3)

“For the Master Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. Then the dead in Christ - *those who died in union with the Messiah* - shall rise first. Then we, the living *believers* who remain, will *simultaneously* be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Master in the air. And so we will be with the Master for ever. Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these words.”
(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

This is “the Blessed Hope” – the Blessed Expectation; the Comfort and Encouragement the believer has – yes, the Hope of Glory!

THE OFFICIAL DISASTER DEATH TOLL

(as on 3 January 05)

Indonesia:	94,080+	Sri Lanka:	29,744
India:	9,654+	Thailand:	5046+
Malaysia:	72	Maldives:	74
Burma:	53	East Africa:	154

Bangladesh: 2

Total: 140,000 and still rising

OUR SHAKING PLANET

FREQUENCY OF RICHTER SCALE MAGNITUDES

Magnitude	descriptor	average frequency per year
8 or more	Great	1
7-7.9	Major	18
6-6.9	Strong	120
5-5.9	Moderate	800
4-4.9	Light	6200
3-3.9	Minor	49,000
2-2.9	Very minor	52,000
1-1.9	Very minor	416,000

- Source: US Geological Survey

SUPER "9+" EARTHQUAKES IN THE LAST 100 YEARS

1908	Italy	9.0
1952	Russia	9.0
1957	Alaska	9.1
1960	Chile	9.5
1964	Alaska	9.2
2004	Indonesia	9.0

SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST QUAKES

856	GREECE		killed	45,000
1556	CHINA		killed	830,000
1737	CALCUTTA		killed	300,000
1755	LISBON		killed	60,000
1819	GUJARAT	8.0	killed	2,000
1883	DUTCH INDIES		killed	36,000
1897	SHILLONG Plateau	8.7	killed	542
1902	MARTINIQUE		killed	40,000
1905	HIMALAYAS	8.0	killed	20,000
1906	SAN FRANCISCO	8.3	killed	700
1908	ITALY	9.0	killed	100,000
1915	ITALY		killed	29,900

1920	CHINA		killed	180,000
1922	JAPAN	7.9	killed	143,000
1923	JAPAN	8.3	killed	140,000
1927	CHINA		killed	200,000
1932	CHINA		killed	70,000
1933	JAPAN	8.1	killed	3,064
1934	INDO-NEPAL	8.3	killed	10,000
1935	QUETTA, India	7.5	killed	50,000
1939	CHILE	8.3	killed	28,000
1939	TURKEY	7.9	killed	33,000
1950	ASSAM	8.5	killed	532
1952	RUSSIA	9.0	killed	???
1957	ALASKA	9.1	killed	???
1960	MOROCCO	5.7	killed	12,000
1960	CHILE	9.5	killed	5,700
1962	IRAN		killed	10,000
1964	ALASKA	9.2	killed	114
1968	IRAN		killed	11,500
1970	PERU		killed	66,700
1972	IRAN	7.9	killed	5,000
1976	GUATEMALA	7.5	killed	22,778
1976	Tangshan, CHINA	8.2	killed	240,000
1978	IRAN	7.7	killed	25,000
1980	ALGERIA	7.5	killed	20,000
1985	MEXICO	8.1	killed	9,500
1988	ARMENIA	6.9	killed	25,000
1990	IRAN	7.7	killed	50,000
1993	LATUR, India	6.4	killed	10,000
1995	KOBE, Japan	7.2	killed	6,000
1998	AFGHAN & TAJIK	6.9	killed	5,000
1999	COLOMBIA	6.0	killed	1,171
1999	TURKEY	7.4	killed	17,000
1999	TAIWAN	7.6	killed	2400
2001	GUJARAT	7.9	killed	30,000
2002	AFGHANISTAN	5.8	killed	1000
2003	ALGERIA	6.8	killed	2300
2003	BAM, IRAN	6.5	killed	30,000
2003	JAPAN	8.3	killed	???
2004	INDONESIA	9.0	killed	150,000+

VOLCANO-TSUNAMI THREAT TO U.S.

A BRITISH geologist has warned that a tsunami, unleashed by an imminent collapse of a volcano in the eastern Atlantic, could destroy the US east coast.

Tsunamis are commonly caused by earthquakes under the sea, but scientists have determined that such gigan-tic waves could also be caused by collapsing islands.

Since an eruption in 1971 loosened a 12-mile-wide chunk of the Cumbre Vieja volcano – part of the Canary Islands, off the coast of NW Africa – there has been a very real threat of an immense disaster.

Dr Simon Day, of the Benfield Grieg Hazard Research Centre at University College London, says the 500 billion tonne of rock could collapse the next time the volcano erupts. The collapse would send a 100m high tsunami racing across the Atlantic at 800-900 km/h. Waves would hit the west coast of Africa and the south coast of England within a few hours. Eight hours after the collapse, the US east coast and the Caribbean would bear the brunt. Waves would be capable of surging 20km inland, according to Dr Day's research. He first published his findings on Cumbre Vieja in 1999 after a two-year study into the volcano.

He found that a mass of about 500 billion tonnes of rock is gradually detaching from the volcano and is already slowly falling into the sea. A major eruption by Cumbre Vieja could cause the whole rock to collapse and fall into the sea, triggering a catastrophic tsunami.

Dr Day and his colleagues told a conference on global geophysical disasters that Cumbre Vieja could blow "any time," and that it's only a matter of time before a killer tsunami hits New York and the East Coast.

- Sources: AFP / London Daily News / 28 Dec. 04

EUROPEAN UNION FINALLY WELCOMES TURKEY

AFTER decades of seeking entry into the European Union, and last drama and hitches, the EU formerly offered the prospect of full membership.

The prospect of Turkey joining Europe's exclusive club had sparked opposition in Germany and France. Some opponents, particularly on Europe's "Christian Democrat" right-wing, have focused on Turkey's Islamic religious heritage to argue that Ankara should not be given full member status in the EU.

But Turkey's PM, Recep Tayyip Erdogan rejected arguments based on cultural difference. "Turkey is not an Islamic state but a democratic one with a Muslim majority," he said. "Turkey culturally and geographically belongs in Europe."

At a summit in Brussels, Erdogan accepted the European offer after he agreed to recognise the southern Greek Republic of Cyprus which became a member of the EU last May.

Cyprus was a very sensitive issue as northern Cyprus is Turkish, and efforts to unite north and south earlier this year failed. Instead of a united Cyprus joining the EU, it was only the southern Greek republic that was able to join.

But by an intriguing twist, Greece, Turkey's neighbour, historic enemy and patron of Cyprus, is now a keen supporter of Mr Erdogan and Turkish membership.

Over the past few years, Turkey achieved a remarkable political transformation which was required as a prelude to talks on entry in the EU.

Accession talks are now to begin on 3 Oct, 2005, and it will take about 10 years for all the fine-tuning needed before Turkey becomes an actual member.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT TURKEY

- * Its 779,452 sq km of territory is divided between Europe and Asia. Its European neighbours are Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Cyprus and Armenia. Its Asian neighbours are Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.
- * In the times of St Paul, Turkey was a number of regions - Asia Minor, Galatia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Lycia, Lydia, Mysia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Pamphylia.
- * In 1923 Turkey was formed into a secular republic after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I.
- * Its capital is Ankara (Ancyra in Bible times). Istanbul is its industrial and commercial hub.
- * Its population is 99% Muslim (80% Sunni, 20% Alevi). Armenians are the largest religious minority (45,000), and Jews numbers about 35,000.
- * Its population is 70.7 million, including 13-19 million Kurds. When Turkey finally joins, the EU's population of 455 million in Jan 2002 will increase to above 525 million.
- * Turkey's entry into the EU will bring the number of Muslims in the European block to about 80 million.

BETH-TOGARMAH

IT IS interesting to watch developments in Turkey and the European Union, in the light of Ezekiel's prophecy concerning the Russian-led northern confederation of the endtimes.

"Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, The Sovereign Master, YHWH, says:

'Listen! I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws and bring you out with your whole army - your horses and horsemen all fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing swords. Persia (*Iran*), Cush (*Ethiopia*), and Put (*Libya*) will be with them, all with shields and helmets; Gomer (*Germany*) also with all its troops; and the House of Togarmah from the far north (*Turkey and the Turkic people of Central Asia*) with all its troops - many nations with you'."

(Ezekiel 38: 2-6)

The House of Togarmah in Ezekiel 38:6 is believed to be comprised of the Turkic peoples of central and west Asia – Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Sinjiang.

Beth-Togarmah is linked with Rosh, Gomer and Persia (Russia, Germany, and Iran) and the rest of the north-ern Confederation of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal that comes down against Israel in the early Tribulation.

Although the European (Roman) Confederation is becoming huge and powerful, we can expect a massive cleavage in "The Union" as the Antichrist rises to power. Ten nations will surrender their sovereignty completely to him, but Turkey and Germany will shift their loyalties to the Northern confederation.

TURKEY, SYRIA SIGN FREE-TRADE ACCORD

FORMER foes, Turkey and Syria have signed a free-trade accord and say they agree to put their differences behind them. During a two-day mission to Damascus, Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and his Syrian counterpart, Mohammed Naji Otri, signed the deal.

"We are in agreement. We want a comprehensive cooperation in the region," said the Syrian premier, adding that Erdogan had also agreed to increase the flow of water into Syria.

Regarding disputes over sharing of scarce water resources in the arid region, Otri said those problems “are now forgotten.”

The free-trade accord is the cornerstone of efforts to boost the newly found friendship between the two former foes.

Ankara and Damascus share concerns over the Iraqi Kurds’ aspirations for self-rule in a future federated Iraq as they both have sizeable Kurdish communities of their own.

In 1998, the two countries nearly went to war over Ankara’s accusations that Damascus was sheltering separatist Kurdish militants fighting the Turkish government. - Damascus / AFP / 22 Dec 04

We can almost say that Syria will definitely be allied with Russia in the endtime northern confederation. Both are “Kings of the North.” So watch for signs of the growing Russian-German-Turkish-Syrian-Iran- Central Asia axis.

With Russia now disturbed by Ukraine’s expected defection, Moscow will be more determined to gain influence and woo Turkey and the Middle East.

GEORGE BUSH:

“I WILL TO BRING PEACE TO MIDDLE EAST”

DEC. 20. President George W Bush has predicted that he would bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians during his second term in office.

“I want you to know that I am going to invest a lot of time and a lot of creative thinking so that there will finally be peace between Israel and the Palestinians,” he told the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth*. “I am convinced that, during this term, I will manage to bring peace.”

In an interview with *Time* magazine, which named him its “Person of the Year”, Mr Bush was more cautious about his chances in the Middle East, saying “we’ve got a shot” for peace.

“Next year is very important, as it will bring peace,” said Mr Bush. “Sharon understood this. It is very important that the Palestinians also understand that peace is not something that is arrived at through words, but through deeds.”

SHARON RUNNING INTO BRICK WALL

THE Bush administration’s goal, common to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Palestinian regions, is the establishment of stable and democratic governments even before the winding down of terrorism.

An Israeli-Palestinian settlement has now become a priority for the sake of its potentially powerful impact in the West, on the Muslim world and on America’s standing in the Middle East.

The US has notified King Abdullah, Ariel Sharon, President Mubarak and Mahmoud Abbas that the day after the January 2005 presidential inauguration, the Road Map’s clock will start ticking and the count-down will begin for its implementation.

Tension is building up between Israel and the US as the White House pushes to implement the Road Map.

Ariel Sharon’s plan to incorporate the majority of the West Bank settlements into Israel is running into a brick wall. Evidently George Bush’s recognition of “the new realities in the West Bank” – the large settlements – was not what Sharon thought it was.

Except for minor territorial adjustments, George Bush sees the entire territory east of the as-yet unfinished Israel-West Bank security barrier being incorporated into a Palestinian state, leaving Israel with no more than 5 or 6% of the total land area of Judea and Samaria.

Around 130 settlements will remain on the east of the fence. That includes major towns like Ariel in the central West Bank (population 18,000), Maale Adumim southeast of Jerusalem (30,000), Efrat (7,500) and Kiryat Arba (8,000) adjacent to Hebron.

A rough assessment indicates that a total of more than 100,000 settlers, or 40% of the 250,000 Israelis living in the West Bank, will be evacuated under the US plan.

Former prime minister Ehud Barak has picked up the new winds blowing from Washington and has called for the urgent completion of the defence barrier. "Because of delays in its construction," he said, "Israel may have already lost Ariel," and he is not sure that Maaleh Adumim is not lost too, and Gush Etzion at risk.