

Until The Trumpet Sounds



***Ten Prophetic Signs That
Have Intensified since 2009***

by Pastor Denny Johnson

Forward and Dedication

The morning of Wednesday, November 7, 2012 was one rough morning. I was stunned by the decisive and categorical defeat suffered by the pro-marriage cause in the state of Minnesota. Not only had voters rejected the traditional (and biblical) definition of marriage – one man to one woman – by a 52-48 margin, but legislator after legislator who had staunchly defended marriage went down in defeat. The forces favoring the gay agenda were firmly in control, and only a few months would pass before a bed-rock institution would be redefined.

On the national scale, things weren't any better. Three other states had also voted in favor of gay marriage (Maine, Maryland, and Washington). And the most liberal president in history was re-elected.

Even after more than five years of his presidency, Barack Obama remains an enigma. We should rightfully celebrate the progress in racial relations that his ascendancy represents. Moreover, one has to respect the manner in which he and his wife have modeled a warm and healthy marriage and family for our nation.



And yet, it is no accident that the ten prophetic signs that we are examining in this book have accelerated under our current president's watch. Mr. Obama is first and foremost a globalist, seemingly unfazed by the fact that he has presided over the steepest decline in American influence in history. His Middle East policy has meandered about in bewildering ways, often puzzling the Israelis, who find themselves more isolated than ever before.

God, however, is not surprised by any of this. Psalm 121:4 says, *“Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”* In tumultuous times, we need to remember how this same Psalm begins (121:1-2), *“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”*

I affectionately dedicate this booklet to my best friend, my confidante, my soul-mate, and my lover, Sue, who has journeyed with me during the past 32 years as my wife, eagerly watching with me as the prophetic signs have unfolded. Together, we have consistently prayed Matthew 5:6 over our children, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled”*.

With that in mind, I also dedicate this booklet to my four adult daughters, Bethany, Anna, Carrie, and Kelly, to Carrie’s husband, Matt, and to the Larson twins who’ve often lived with us (Andrew, Natalie, and Natalie’s husband, Brady). Sue and I have so often prayed Matthew 5:6 over you that I am confident you will faithfully carry the torch of faith forward until the trumpet sounds and our Lord returns!

Denny Johnson
July 31, 2014

P.S. – This booklet is intended to be a sequel to my 2009 booklet *100 Fulfilled Prophecies in 100 Years: A Convergence of Signs Pointing to the Soon Return of Jesus Christ*.



Left to right: Brady, Natalie, Andrew, Denny, Sue, Carrie, Matt, Kelly, Bethany, Anna



Table of Contents

The Purpose of Prophecy..... Page 4

The Global Signs..... Page 10

- 1) A Surge toward a Global Economy..... Page 13
- 2) A Shift in Global Power..... Page 13
- 3) A Decline in Global Morality..... Page 15
- 4) An Explosion in Global Technology..... Page 16
- 5) A Uniformity in Global Religion..... Page 17

The Israel Signs..... Page 19

- 1) An Explosion in Jewish Conversion..... Page 20
- 2) An Acceleration in Jewish Immigration..... Page 21
- 3) The Growing Cancer of Anti-Semitism..... Page 22
- 4) The Blossoming of Israeli Prosperity..... Page 25
- 5) Growing Hostility toward Israel from the Professing Church..... Page 27

Jesus, Lord of History..... Page 29

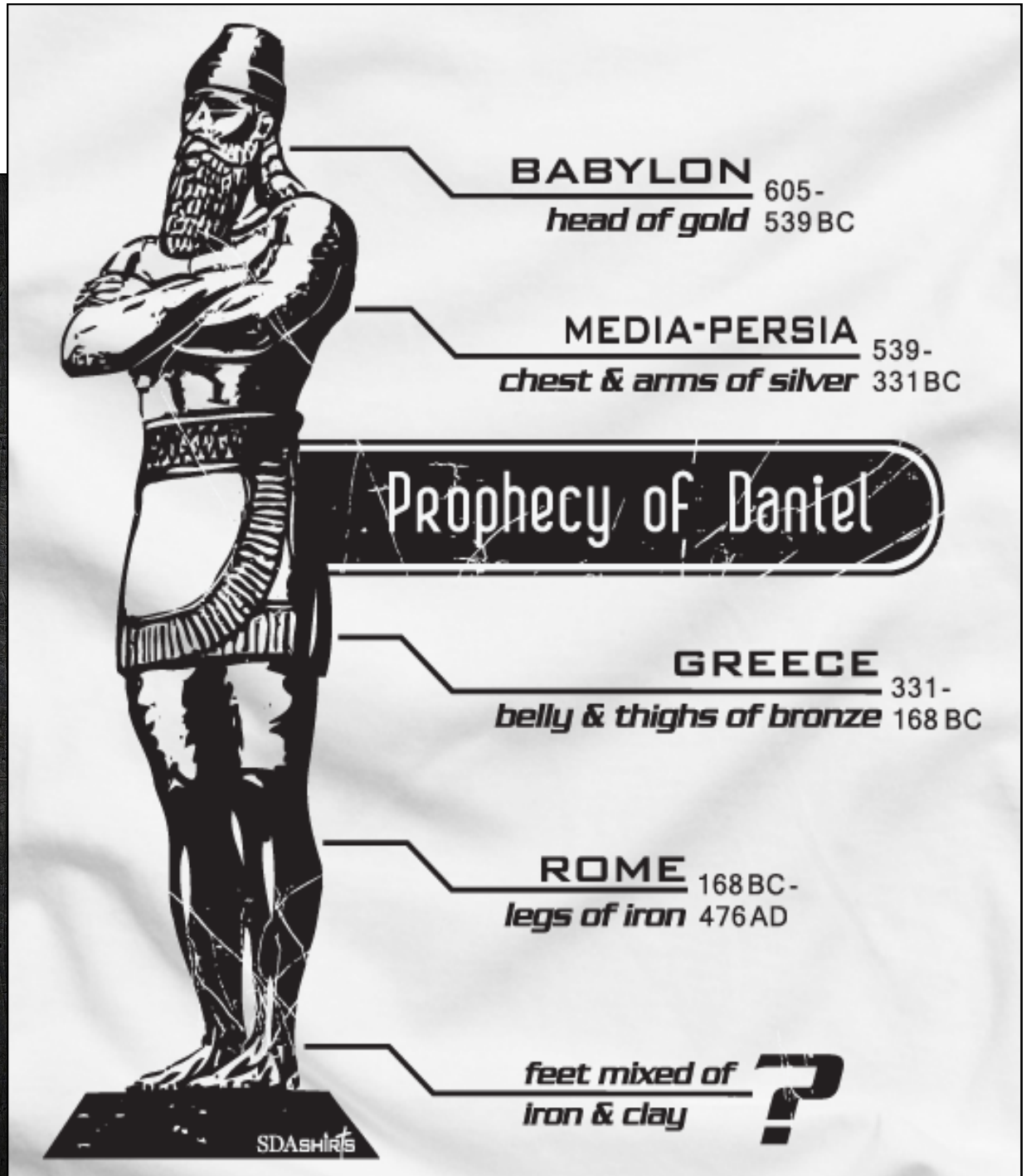
The Purpose of Prophecy

Why does God tell us ahead of time what he's going to do? Have you ever thought about that? Why is 30% of the Bible filled with prophecies about the future?

One Bible scholar counted all the prophecies that are made in Scripture and he estimated that there are about 2500 prophecies that have already been fulfilled, and about 1000 more that will be fulfilled in the future.

Why does God do this? There are four main reasons:

Chart 1



First, He wants to encourage us by revealing His power.

Only God can predict the future and bring it to pass exactly as he has predicted. For example, the prophet Daniel (chapters 2, 7, and 8) prophesies with stunning detail a sequence of empires that would span the next thousand years and beyond. You can see on [Chart 1](#) that four great world empires were foretold, as well as the empire of iron and clay which is yet to come. This empire is that of the Antichrist. It will be powerful, like iron, but the clay depicts that this union of kings and nations will have fatal flaws of human weakness, so that it is inherently vulnerable.

Second, He wants to warn us by revealing His justice.

This is the main message of the OT prophets: Nations, change your ways or God will judge you! He offers us the same warning today. As a young man, one of the influential books in my life was *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* by Josh McDowell. Being a lover of history, I was fascinated at how God holds the histories of nations in his hand. As [Chart 2](#) shows, truly the Lord “*changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings.*” Daniel 2:21.

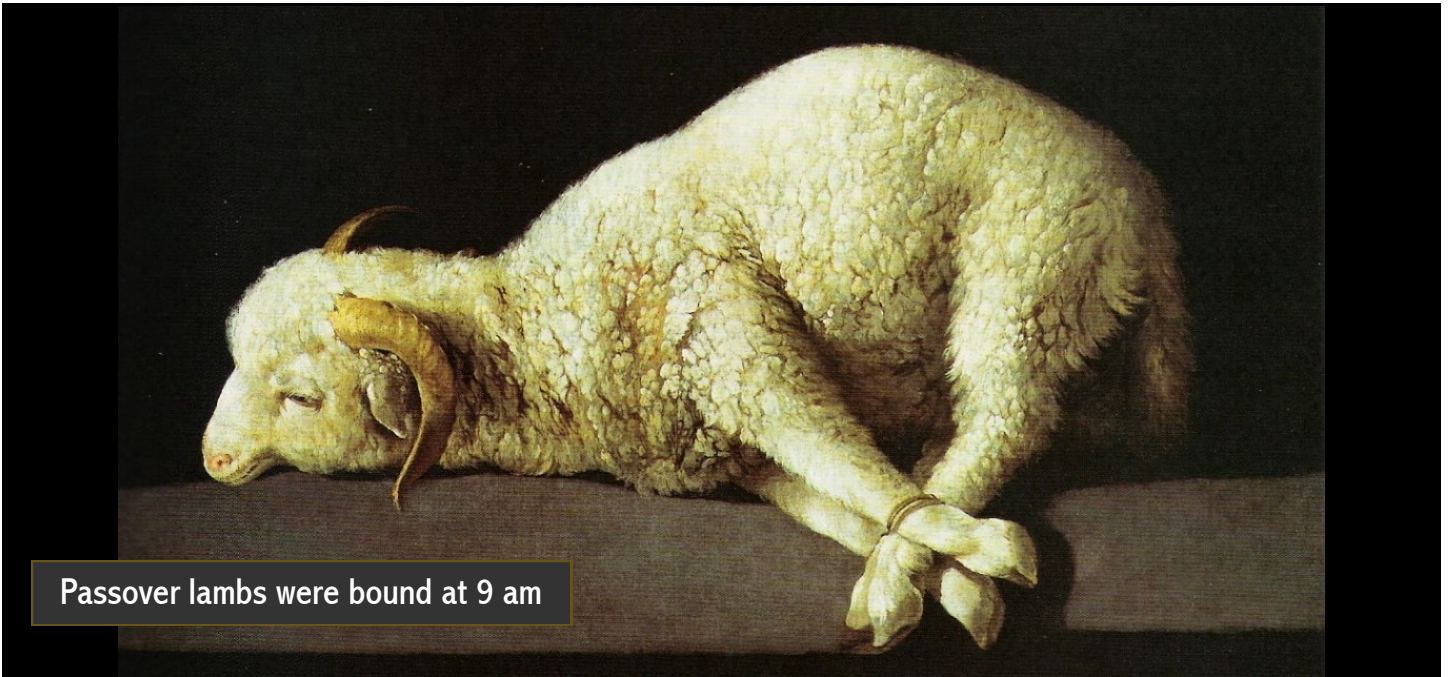
Third, He wants to comfort us by revealing His grace.

“*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.*” John 3:16. The fact that God would invade our time - space universe in the guise of the Messiah was prophesied 365 times in the Old Testament (and that’s just his first coming - see BibleProbe.com for a complete listing). As the hymn says, “Amazing love, how can it be, that thou, my God, shouldst die for me.”

Chart 2

56 Specific Prophecies Regarding the Future Destruction of Each of the Following Cities and Nations Were Foretold by Prophets:

- 1) Tyre (in modern Lebanon) Ezekiel 26:3-21
- 2) Sidon (in modern Lebanon) Ezekiel 28:22-23
- 3) Samaria (in modern West Bank) Hosea 13:16; Micah 1:6
- 4) Gaza/Ashkelon (same as today) Amos 1:8; Jeremiah 47:5; Zephaniah 2:4-7
- 5) Moab/Ammon (in modern Jordan) Ezekiel 25:3-4; Jeremiah 48:47; 49:6
- 6) Petra/Edom (in modern Jordan) Isaiah 34:6-15; Jeremiah 49:17-18; Ezekiel 25:13-14; 35:5-7
- 7) Thebes/Memphis (in modern Egypt) Ezekiel 30:13-15
- 8) Nineveh (in modern Iraq) Nahum 1:8-10; 2:6; 3:10-19
- 9) Babylon (in modern Iraq) Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:23; Jeremiah 51:26,43
- 10) Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (in northern Israel) Matthew 11:20-24
- 11) Palestine (modern Israel, Palestinian territories) Leviticus 26:31-33; Ezekiel 36:33-35



Passover lambs were bound at 9 am

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly the most prophesied event in the entire Bible (see [Chart 3](#)) because the whole sacrificial system is set up to point to the cross. It was not by chance that Jesus was bound to the cross on the exact day of Passover, and at the third hour of the day, or at 9 am.

At this exact time - the third hour or 9 am - the priests were binding the Passover lambs to the altars in the temple.

Nor is it by chance that Jesus died at the ninth hour, or about 3 pm, for it was at this very moment that the priests slaughtered the Passover lambs.

The Father even planned the music for his Son's funeral because the crowds at the temple would always sing the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) when the Passover Lambs were slaughtered. When you take into account that there were up to three million Jewish pilgrims crowded into Jerusalem at Passover, the hills and the valleys surrounding the city would have been filled with thousands of Jewish voices singing the Hallel. This is what they would have been singing as Jesus was crucified:

"The stone which the builder rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:22-24.



Passover lambs were slaughtered at 3 pm

It is estimated that there were at least a quarter of a million lambs sacrificed each year at the temple. Can you imagine the amount of blood? It is estimated that each year about 60,000 gallons of blood would flow. There was a massive river of blood that poured down the right side of the Temple Mount into the Hinnom Valley, which was also called, "The valley of blood."

Crucifixion Forecast

Specific Old Testament prophecies about the events of Jesus' crucifixion are fulfilled in the book of Matthew

A close friend will betray him
Ps. 41:9

Judas betrays Jesus *Matt. 10:4; 26:14-16,23-25,47-49*

He will be sold for 30 pieces of silver; the money will be given to a potter
Zech. 11:12-13

Judas receives 30 pieces of silver for betraying Jesus; it is later used to purchase a potter's field
Matt. 26:14-15; 27:3-10

The sheep will scatter when the shepherd is struck *Zech. 13:7*

The disciples abandon Jesus
Matt. 26:31,56

False witnesses will accuse him
Pss. 27:12; 35:11

False witnesses testify against Jesus before the Sanhedrin *Matt. 26:59-61*

He will remain silent when oppressed
Isa. 53:7

Jesus makes no reply to Pilate when falsely charged *Matt. 27:13-14*

He will be mocked, beaten and spit on
Isa. 50:6

Jesus is spit on, beaten, slapped, mocked and flogged by chief priests, members of the Sanhedrin and soldiers *Matt. 26:67-68; 27:26-31*

He will be given vinegar and gall, a bitter medicinal substance
Ps. 69:21

Before the crucifixion, Jesus refuses to drink wine and gall; he drinks wine vinegar while hanging on the cross
Matt. 27:34,48

He will die among criminals
Isa. 53:12

Jesus is crucified between two rebels
Matt. 27:38

His clothes will be divided and lots cast for his garment *Ps. 22:18*

Soldiers divide Jesus' clothes by casting lots *Matt. 27:35*

Enemies will insult and mock him; he will be an object of scorn *Pss. 22:6-8; 109:25*

People mock Jesus while he hangs on the cross *Matt. 27:39-44*

God will forsake him
Ps. 22:1

Jesus cries out and asks God why he has forsaken him
Matt. 27:46

He will be buried with the rich
Isa. 53:9

Jesus' body is buried in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea *Matt. 27:57-60*

When the Roman soldier took a spear and thrust it into Jesus' side, the Bible says that blood and water gushed out. This happened at the same time that the priests would bring up water from the cisterns to wash away all the blood that had stained the altar area.

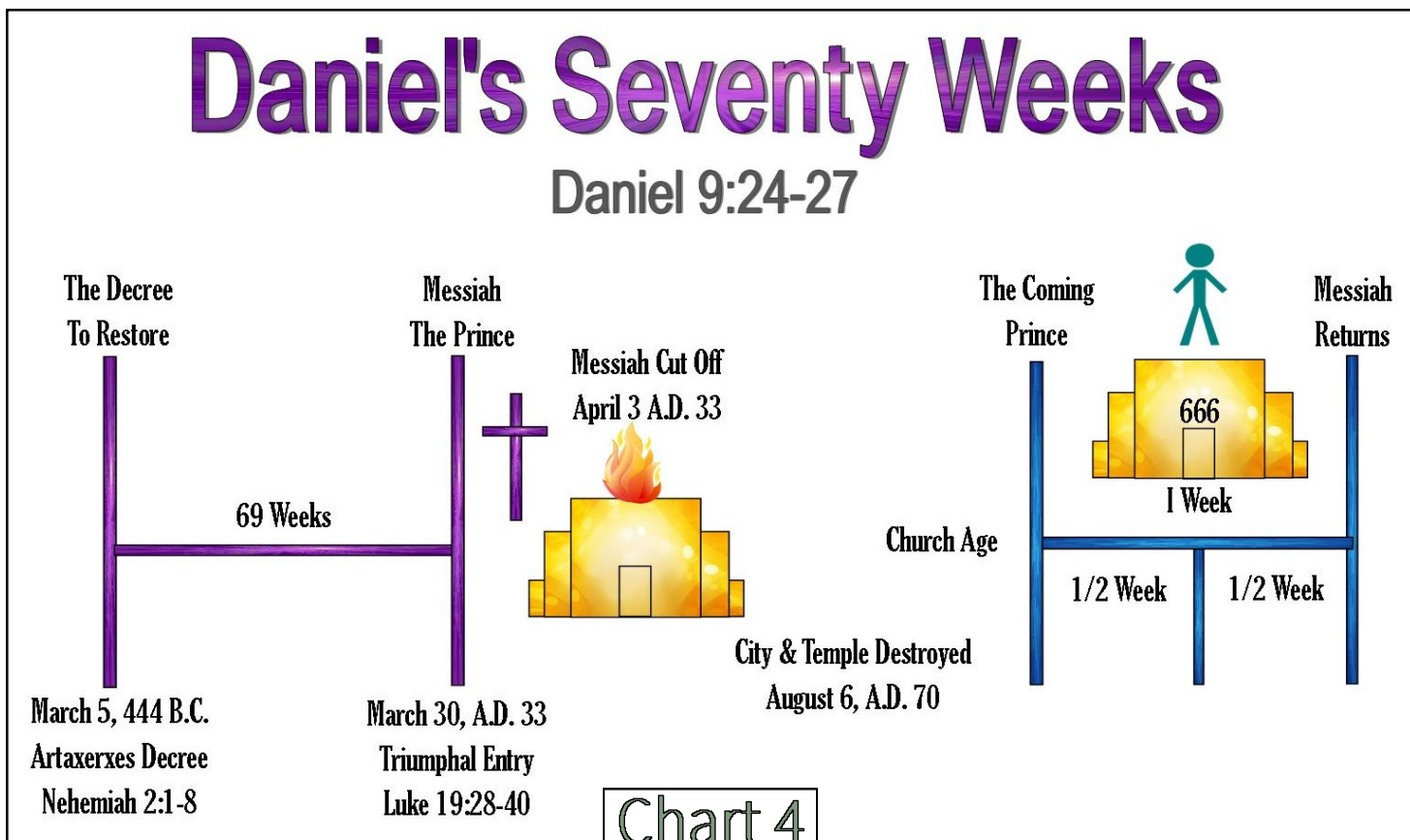
None of this happened by chance. It was all planned before the foundations of the world were laid, and it was foretold and foreshadowed in a hundred different ways in the Old Testament. God loves you that much!

This should also give us great encouragement because it reveals the awesome power of God who can bring precise events to happen at a specific place at a specific time involving specific people. Only God can do that!

Fourth, He wants to strengthen us by revealing His reign over all things.

There is one Old Testament prophecy that towers above the rest because of its precision and detail. It is the famous "70 weeks" prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, often called "The Backbone of Biblical Prophecy". I can well remember sitting in my classroom at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the fall of 1982 as Dr. S. Lewis Johnson expounded on this prophecy.

The prophecy states, "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city...know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." According to research compiled by Scotland Yard's Sir Robert Anderson and later revised by Dr. Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary, the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given by King Artaxerxes on March 5, 444 BC, and Jesus had his 'Triumphal Entry' into Jerusalem (where he was publicly hailed as king for the first time) on March 30, 33 AD, exactly 173,880 days or 483 prophetic years (360-day years) after the decree was given. For you math wizards, the difference between 444 BC and 33 AD is 476 solar years (remember that there is no year zero). 476 multiplied by 365.2422 equals 173,855 days to which you add the 25 days between March 5 (of 444 BC) and March 30 (of 33 AD) to arrive at exactly 173,880 days (see [Chart 4](#)).



The fact that the timing of Jesus' first coming was prophesied may help to explain why the wise men were so willing to follow a star, and why Simeon and Anna were so prepared for the Messiah's arrival. It also has led to endless speculation that some hidden formula could be deciphered that would allow us to predict the timing of the second coming of Christ. William Miller, for instance, said that Jesus would return before March 21, 1844. And Edgar Whisenant published a best-selling book entitled *88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1988*. Whisenant promised the return of Christ before September 13, 1988. More recently, Harold Camping set a date of May 21, 2011 for Jesus to come.

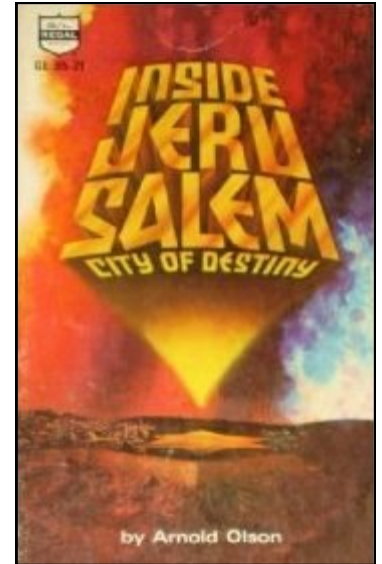
Don't be taken in by any of this! The Bible clearly says, "*Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day nor the hour.*" Matthew 25:13. He will return as a thief in the night, at an hour we do not expect. There are signs, however, that will herald that the time is drawing near. To this we turn our attention in the next two chapters.

The Global Signs



I grew up in a home where my mother loved Bible prophecy and current events. She loved the teaching of our longtime Evangelical Free Church president, Arnold T. Olson.

Dr. Olson was in Israel during the days leading up to the Six Day War in 1967 when the president of Egypt was threatening to wipe Israel off the map. Dr. Olson ended up writing a whole book about his experience and what it meant – *Inside Jerusalem: City of Destiny*.



It was always a highlight as a young boy when Dr. Olson preached in our little Free Church that I grew up in, the Lincoln Evangelical Free Church, south of Motley, Minnesota, or when he came to speak at one of the family camps at nearby Camp Shamineau. Dr. Olson was a personal friend of the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, as well as several other high ranking officials in the Israeli government. We sat entranced as he shared his stories.

One story Dr. Olson loved to tell was when the Arabs claimed, in the United Nations Security Council, that American and British planes were flying for Israel. Israel's spokesman (a man by the name of Gideon Rafael) told the UN that these accusations were blatantly false and that Israel didn't need American and British planes. We have something better, Rafael said, for the angel of the Lord fights with us.

I was only ten or eleven years old when I listened to these sermons and I had tons of questions. When we got home, I would talk with my mom for hours about what these things meant.

Dr. James Dobson, the former president of Focus on the Family, said his mom did the same thing. Dr. Dobson was only ten when Israel became a nation, and his mom called out to him, "Jimmy, come and listen to this on the radio. The nation of Israel is declaring their independence. A Jewish nation is being born. You are witnessing prophecy being fulfilled."

What a gift to be raised in a home like that! My advisor at seminary, Dr. David Larsen, encouraged us as pastors to always keep a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, and then note how God is moving in the world. The famous Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards, did the same thing. He kept a notebook always by his side, and kept a running account of God's providence in the unfolding of history. Recently I've read Edwards book *The History of the Work of Redemption*. Edwards was fascinated by biblical prophecy and how the Lord would bring history to a conclusion. Edward's fellow Puritan, Cot-



ton Mather, wrote twenty books on the end times. Over in Europe, the brilliant Isaac Newton, who discovered so many amazing laws in physics, was also fascinated by biblical prophecy. To the deep distress of some of his fellow scientists, Newton spent the last years of his life writing a commentary on the book of Revelation.

Over and over again, Jesus teaches his followers to be watchful. When the disciples asked Jesus about the signs of his coming, he replied, *“For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”* (Matthew 24:37-44).



Notice the words in this passage - we are commanded to stay awake. We are told that Jesus will come as a thief in the night. We are told to always be ready, for we don't know when the Master will return.

In Matthew 25, Jesus again teaches this same thing in the parable of the virgins. They were supposed to always keep their lamps lit, ready for the return of the bridegroom, and Jesus says this in verse 13, *“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”*

This is why I wrote my booklet entitled *100 Fulfilled Prophecies in 100 Years: A Convergence of Signs Pointing to the Soon Return of Jesus Christ*.

This is why Pastor John MacArthur entitled his commentary on Revelation, *Because the Time Is Near*. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for not being aware of the signs of their time. Jesus said to them in Matthew 16:3, *“You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”*



Simeon and baby Jesus

In contrast to their lack of preparation, there were others who were ready, like the Magi who followed the star to Bethlehem. This was probably in response to the prophecies of Daniel and the promise that the Messiah was the star from the line of Jacob spoken of in Numbers 24:17. Zechariah and Elizabeth were prepared for their son, John the Baptist, to be the forerunner to the Messiah because this had been prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6. Mary and Joseph were ready because they were aware of the prophecies that the Messiah would be from the line of David. Simeon is described in Luke 2:25 as “*righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.*” Anna was looking for the Messiah as well, described as “*worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.*” In fact, Luke 2:38 says there was a whole group of devout Jews who were “*waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.*”

This underscores a very important point, for the study of Bible prophecy should always motivate us to live a pure and godly life as we await the return of our Lord. Dr. David Larsen was taught by his parents to never go anywhere he would not want to be when Jesus returns, and never do anything he would not want to be doing when Jesus returns.

I John 3:3 puts it like this, “*We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*”

In the summer of 1976 (shortly before my father found out he had cancer), I read *There's a New World Coming* by Hal Lindsey and it changed my life in two ways. First, I was motivated to live a godly life so I would be ready when Christ returned, and second, it filled me with hope. When my father found out he had cancer and died six months later, I knew that God was in control. If God can bring all of history to a conclusion in his appointed time, then surely he was sovereign over the death of my father and would take care of our family in those dark days.

I finished my booklet *100 Fulfilled Prophecies in 100 Years* on May 16, 2009. Dozens of these signs have accelerated in the last five years. In this chapter I will focus on five global signs that have intensified, and in the next chapter I will focus on five signs regarding Israel that have intensified in the last five years.

Dr. John MacArthur says this, “Scripture declares that the end times will be characterized by great concern for world unity, world government, world economics, and world religion (Daniel 2, 7; Revelation 13, 17, 18). The world is looking for stability and security and is ripe for the unifying role of a world leader who can stop wars and bring an end to political, economic, and social chaos - the role that one day will be filled by the Antichrist.” (See *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Revelation*).

100 Fulfilled Prophecies
in 100 Years

A Convergence of Signs Pointing to the
Soon Return of Jesus Christ

By Pastor Denny Johnson

Global Sign # 1: A Surge toward a Global Economy.

We are steadily moving toward the age of the Antichrist. In Revelation 13:16-17, the Bible says this about him, “*He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.*”

We are moving toward a world where one man - one ruler - will control the economy of the entire world. Do you see us moving in this direction? When President Obama took office in 2009, the national debt was 10.6 trillion. By the end of 2014, it will be 17.9 trillion. What inevitably happens when a country carries this kind of debt is that it loses its national sovereignty and becomes dependent on everyone else. That’s why former Labor Secretary Robert Reich said, “We are living through a transformation that will rearrange the politics and economics of the coming century... Each nation’s primary political task will be to cope with the centrifugal forces of the global economy.” (Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations*, 3).

So what are we to make of this as Bible-believing Christians? One can easily be gripped by fear. We can be consumed by worry over our investments, and retirement plans and employment opportunities for our children and so on. Or, we can choose another approach. I call it the Louie Inks approach.

During our church missions conference in 2008, one of the speakers was the founder of Reign Ministries in Minneapolis, Louie Inks. I can remember Louie stepping up to the mic in our fellowship hall. It had been a tumultuous fall, and he said, “The stock market is collapsing. Major corporations are going bankrupt. Home prices are crumbling. Isn’t it exciting?” Well, Louie got a good chuckle out of the crowd, but he also made a good point.

As the Psalmist said, “*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Put your hope in God.*” (Psalm 42:5) This world is not our home. We are just a-passing through!

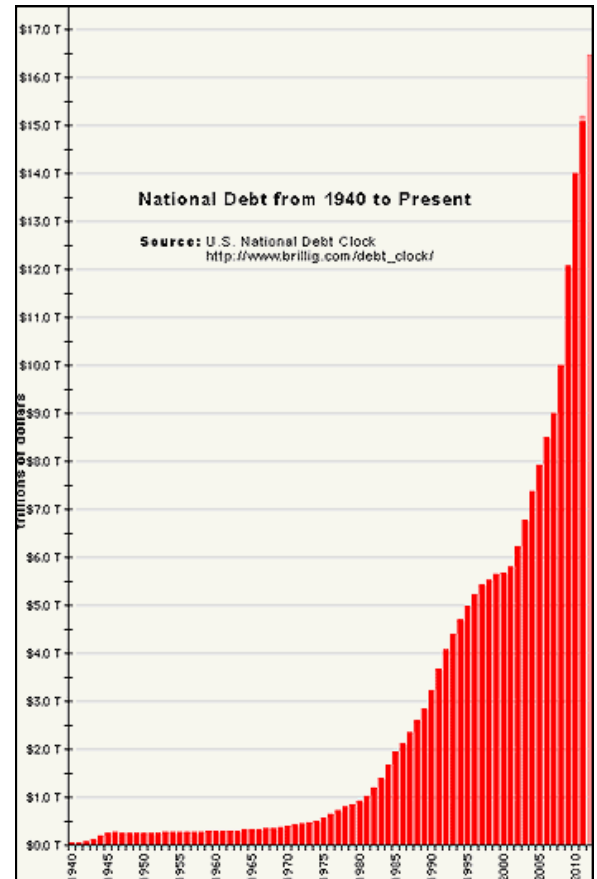
Global Sign # 2: A Shift in Global Power.

Revelation 15:3 says of the Lord, “*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!*”

Our God is king of the nations. He is like a chess grandmaster, moving his pieces here and there in just the right alignment for his greater purposes. And indeed, God has been doing that during the last few years.

Here’s what’s happened since 2009:

- 1) A sharp decline in American power. Prophecy experts have repeatedly observed that America is found nowhere in the prophecies of Scripture. Therefore it has been widely assumed that America will decline on the world stage. Can you see that happening? In Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Syria, in the Ukraine, in negotiations with Iran and with the Israelis and Palestinians, the United States of America has failed to exert any meaningful influence. And all that time, the size and effectiveness of our military forces continue to decline.



Political World map

2011 ©Copyright www.MapsNworld.com



- 2) The rise of the Russian bear, prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Vladimir Putin was recently selected by *Forbe's Magazine* as the most powerful man in the world. His star has been rising while Obama's is declining.
- 3) The rise of extremists in the Muslim world. Russia will eventually attack Israel in coalition with several Islamic nations, according to Ezekiel 38 and 39. Over the last five years, we have seen the Islamic world become more and more radical, more and more extremist, and more and more committed to the destruction of Jews and Christians.
- 4) The continued rise of the European Union. This is prophesied in the book of Daniel as a coalition of ten nations from the old Roman empire. Whether it has to do with the financial troubles in Greece, or affairs in the Middle East, or problems in Ukraine, the Europeans speak and act as a unit.

When I see all these things happening, I'm reminded of the words of Martin Luther, who said, "Live as if Jesus died this morning, rose this afternoon, and is coming tonight." We must be prepared to meet him at any moment, and yet Luther also said this, "Even if I knew Christ were coming tomorrow, I would plant my apple tree today." (David Larsen, *The Company of Hope*, 112). In other words, go about being productive, living for the Lord at work, at home, and at church every single day!

Global Sign # 3: A Decline in Global Morality.

II Timothy 3:1 says, “*But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*”



What's pictured here is a wholesale decline in morality on a global basis, and this is exactly what we are seeing. Here are the accelerating trends since 2009:

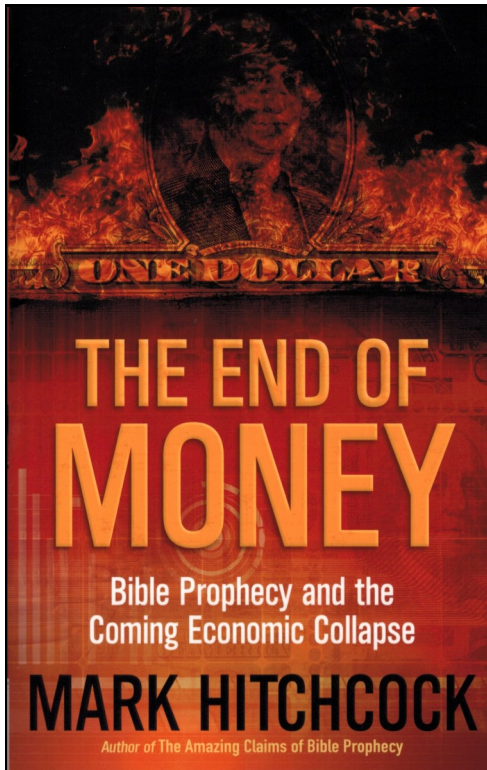
- 1) Widespread acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle. It is shocking how this has changed in five years. Here in Minnesota gay marriage was approved in 2013, but this is only the beginning. I sat next to Minnesota Senate Minority Leader David Hahn at a wedding recently, and he warned of what is to come with the new anti-bullying law that has now passed. Somewhere between \$10 and \$40 million dollars is going to be spent to essentially re-educate the state of Minnesota to accept the gay lifestyle. And it's not just in the US; gay rights is spreading around the world. Even African nations that haven't gone along with the flow are finding themselves condemned by other world leaders.
- 2) With gay marriage has come a further battering of the family unit. If you talk to any school teacher, this is the most pronounced change that has occurred in the last few decades. Fewer and fewer children are being raised in healthy families, especially two parent families.
- 3) We've also seen a continual erosion of any sexual ethics. About the only line in the sand our culture is still willing to draw is around our children. Child pornography and adult-child sex are about the only boundaries left, and you can't help but wonder how long they will be there.
- 4) Perhaps most surprising, we're seeing a massive movement toward the legalization of marijuana and who knows what else. Colorado and Washington are leading the charge, but it appears that other states will soon follow suit.

So what are we to do? Here's what the Bible says, “*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*” Titus 3:11-14.

Global Sign # 4: An Explosion in Global Technology.

Daniel 12 and Revelation 6-18 portray a technologically advanced society in the end times which the Antichrist will use to control and dominate the world.

Daniel 12:4 speaks of a society where travel and knowledge are exploding. Revelation 11:9 portrays a world linked together by satellite TV and the Internet so that anyone anywhere will be able to look upon the dead bodies of the two witnesses. As already mentioned, Revelation 13:17 pictures a world where “no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.”



Mark Hitchcock recently wrote a book called *The End of Money*. Many economists are talking about this. Right now only 27% of all purchases are with cash, and that is expected to drop to 23% by 2017. As Target Corporation found out recently, standard credit cards are a recipe for fraud. This will be phased out and replaced with smart cards or cell phones containing an embedded chip. A McDonalds in Korea is already experimenting with purchasing by cell phone. You point your phone at a menu item which is transmitted to the counter. You get a text message when your order is ready, and the cost is added to your cell phone bill. Pretty slick, eh?

Eventually, Mark Hitchcock believes smart cards and cell phones will give way to biometrics. Biometrics is the science of identifying people based on their unique physical characteristics. Jewel Osco stores in Chicago have experimented with purchasing by using nothing more than your fingerprint. California’s Department of Motor Vehicles is also incorporating biometrics into their drivers’ licenses. Besides fingerprints, there is also face recognition, iris or retina scans of your eyes, or hand geometry, or body odor, or hand veins, or palm prints, or even tongue scanning. Can you imagine going up to the checkout stand and they say to you, “Open your mouth and say aah.”

Please be aware that this is only one area of technology that is exploding.

I haven’t even mentioned medical technology, particularly breakthroughs in the area of genetics, which is making it more and more likely that someone is going to tinker with human cloning and various other kinds of genetic engineering. As this also seemed to be occurring in the times of Noah with a demonic infiltration of the human race and the rise of the Nephilim (human giants), it brings to mind the promise of Jesus that the end times will be like it was in the days of Noah.

I love the way the great theologian John Calvin put it in



his commentary on Matthew 24, “Be prepared to expect him every day, or rather every moment...as he has promised to return to us, we ought to hold ourselves prepared at every moment to receive him...today we must be alert to grasp the imminent return of Christ.”

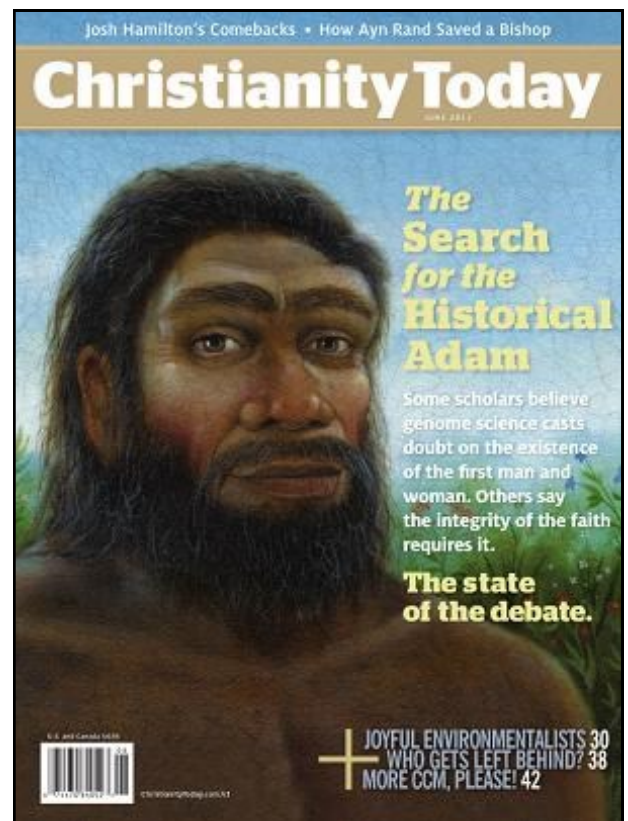
Global Sign # 5: A Uniformity in Global Religion.

We know a one-world religion is coming because Revelation 13:7 says, “*All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast.*”

Here’s what we’ve seen happening since 2009:

- 1) A movement toward liberalization in the Catholic church. The previous two popes, John Paul and Benedict, have been staunch conservatives. Then in 2012, Benedict abruptly resigned, the first pope to relinquish his office in almost 600 years. He was replaced by Pope Francis who seems to be taking the church in a more liberal direction, downplaying its position on moral issues. .
- 2) A movement toward apostasy in the evangelical church. In 2011, Rob Bell published his book *Love Wins*, which denied the existence of hell, and questioned the evangelical teaching that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Bell has since endorsed gay marriage. On all of these issues and many others the evangelical landscape has changed significantly during the last few years.
- 3) Biblical and theological confusion within evangelicalism. Where you can really see the struggle within evangelicalism is within the pages of *Christianity Today* magazine. In October 2011 their cover story was “The Search for the Historical Adam” which I found absolutely baffling. Do we really have to wonder if Adam actually existed? In the New Testament there are over 60 references to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, and every time Genesis is accepted as historically true. You see this same evolution of thought at CT over the issue of homosexuality. No wonder some are now calling the magazine *Christianity Astray*.
- 4) Surprisingly, even the Mormons are starting to moderate on some of their views, including the matter of defining marriage.

And yet, all of this should be not be a surprise. On the road to a one-world religion, there will have to be a liberalization among the Catholics, and apostasy among the evangelicals, and moderation among the Mormons.





Hollywood spent a fortune on the recent Noah movie, anticipating to cash in on the modern-day fascination with this important biblical figure. There were some things I really appreciated about the Noah movie, but one thing I didn't like was the way Noah's relationship with God was portrayed. The movie doesn't come close to capturing the warm and personal relationship that the Lord and Noah enjoyed. Just read through Genesis 6-9 and notice the amount of dialogue.

It was very important for Noah and his family to understand exactly what God was doing and why he was doing it. Noah was never surprised by evil in the world. Rather it motivated him to keep his heart soft and pure toward the Lord. Genesis 6:22 says that he obeyed "*all that God commanded him.*" He knew he could not succumb to the temptations that were all around him because his world was going down. He also knew that even though he was a preacher of righteousness (I Peter 3:7), not many would respond. But there was a remnant that did believe - his wife, his three sons, and their wives.

The great bishop and Reformed theologian J.C. Ryle put it like this, "When the end comes, it will find the earth in much the same state that it was when the flood came in the days of Noah." Ryle taught that moral and spiritual decline is "distinctly predicted" in the Bible, therefore we should not be surprised. Ryle taught, "The grand purpose of the present dispensation is to gather out of the world an elect people." (See David Larsen, *The Company of Hope*, 318ff).

Like Noah, we all need to be preachers of righteousness, teaching our children to be watchful and alert, just as Noah taught his children. Like Noah, we too must live for God in a very dark age for the Bible says, "*Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay: but my righteous one will live by faith.*" Hebrews 10:37-38. Will you do that?



The Israel Signs

In March of 2007, Dr. John MacArthur challenged his fellow pastors by saying this, “Let’s make our churches second coming churches! Let’s make our lives second coming lives.” He issued this challenge because being watchful for our Lord’s return changes lives and changes churches in four ways.

- 1) It purifies us, according to I John 3:3. Who wants to be caught in sin when Christ returns?
- 2) It encourages us according to I Thessalonians 4:18. And the last chapter of Revelation heralds the promise that when all is said and done, Jesus wins!
- 3) It creates reverence and awe in us. Who can read in Revelation 19 about the rider on a white horse with his name written in blood - King of Kings and Lord of Lords - and not be filled with awe?
- 4) It fills us with hope. “Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.” I Corinthians 15:51-52. That’s hope. For the Christian, the best is always yet to come!

That's why we need to teach our children to be watchful. We need to teach them to be second coming Christians - always alert and ready. In the last chapter we looked at five global signs that have intensified since 2009.

In this chapter, we will examine five signs regarding Israel that have intensified and this is oh, so exciting. Why? Because the Bible teaches that God's promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled in that nation. I love to go to Israel because there is no land in the world like Israel, and no people in the world like the Jews. Israel is mentioned more than 2000 times in the Bible. God is called the God of Israel more than 200 times. 70% of the Bible is the story of Israel. And, as Pastor John MacArthur says, "The whole point of the story of Israel is to get to the ending. Get Israel right and you'll get eschatology right." (Eschatology is the study of the end times.)

Dr. David Larsen says, "The Jews are God's prophetic timepiece." The clock is ticking as the world hurtles toward midnight.

Israel Sign #1: An Explosion in Jewish Conversion.

Ezekiel 36:24-27 says, "*I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put in you.*"

When I first traveled to Israel in January of 1979 to take a class on the geography of Israel with Bethel College, our group asked to meet with some Messianic Jewish believers. We were promptly told, "There aren't any." Of course, they probably could have scrounged around and found a handful of Jewish believers, but there was no organized Messianic church or fellowship. In fact, author Joel Rosenberg estimates that there were less than 2000 Jewish believers in the whole world in 1967, the year he was born.

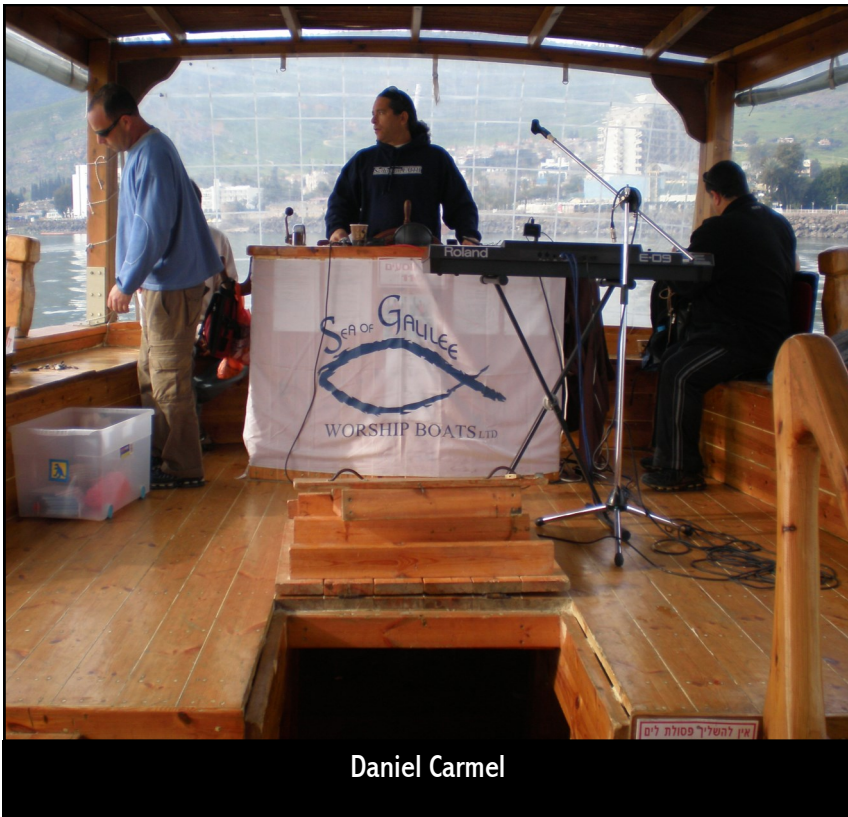
Today there are 15,000 in Israel alone, and at least 120 Messianic fellowships. A conservative estimate of the number of Jewish believers in the world is a half million. It could be well over a million.



Many Bible scholars were downplaying the return of Jews to Israel because the vast majority were unbelievers, but that has changed dramatically in the last decade. For the first time in history, the Jews are turning to Jesus in large numbers.

What a joy to welcome into the community of Christian leaders, such outstanding Jews such as Dr. Michael Brown, Sid Roth, Joel Rosenberg, and Rabbi Jonathan Cahn who wrote *The Harbinger*. This is a huge change from when I was a student in seminary, when prominent Jewish Christians were few and far between.

On the most recent trips that we've taken to Israel, our groups have been serenaded on the Sea of Galilee by Daniel Carmel, a man who was born to a Jewish Orthodox woman in 1964 and given up for adoption. Several years ago he started working on tour boats on the Sea of Galilee, and it was through the ministry of Christian



Daniel Carmel

pastors and Christian tourists that he came to know Yeshua as his personal Lord and Savior. The same was true of our Jewish tour guide, Irit, on our last trip (2013). She too came to know Yeshua through Christian tourists who loved on her and showed her Jesus. Our previous tour guide, Elin (2006, 2009), was a Norwegian prison guard. She led her husband (a Moroccan Jewish immigrant) to Jesus while he was imprisoned in Norway, and they subsequently got married and moved to Israel and began a family.

And so the Messianic community grows, and prophecy is fulfilled. In Ezekiel 37 God prophesies through his prophet Ezekiel that the dry bones will come together. Israel will become a nation. Ezekiel 37 teaches that the Lord will blow his spirit into them. The Jews will come to Yeshua, and that's what's happening right now.

Israel Sign # 2: An Acceleration of Jewish Immigration.

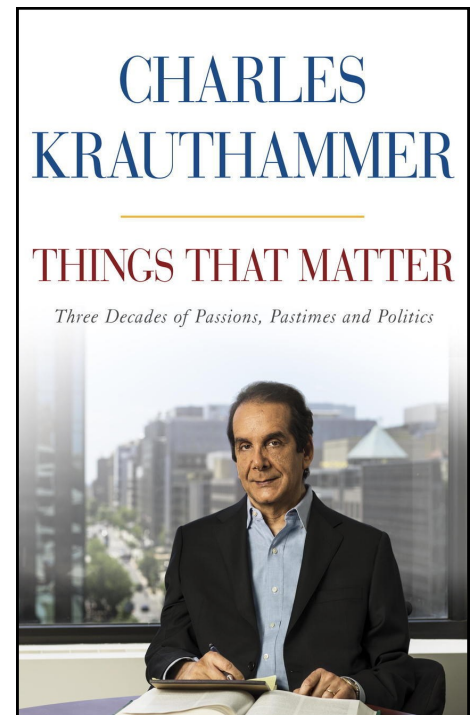
Ezekiel 37:21-22 goes on to say, *“I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all.”*

If you like Fox News, you know all about Charles Krauthammer, my favorite commentator. The only thing that could be better about Charles is if he were a believer. He is, however, a medical doctor by training, and an inspiring man who overcame a diving accident that left him a quadriplegic.

Krauthammer is also Jewish. He recently wrote a book that has consistently been #1 (or close to it) on the best seller charts. The name is *Things That Matter*. I found the book hard to put down, especially when he talks about his people, the Jewish people, and the nation of Israel.

Now, let me remind you that Charles is not a believer in Jesus. He is very much a secular Jew. But he knows and understands that the future of the Jewish people is entirely tied to the nation of Israel.

Krauthammer explains that 300 years ago, a third of all Jews lived in the Muslim world. Today there are only a few thousand. In 2009, I asked our guide in Egypt how many Jews there were in Egypt. He clearly did not want to answer the question, but finally acknowledged that there were only 40. 40 were left out of a community of Jews that once numbered over 90,000.





The Exodus, carrying post WW2 refugees to Israel



Jews arriving in Israel recently

A century ago, 80% of the world's Jews lived in Europe. Even in 1939, before World War 2, there were still 9 million Jews in Europe. After the war, there were 3 million. Hitler took care of the rest. It was a blow that the Jews still have not recovered from; there were 16 million Jews worldwide in 1939, and only 13 million today. Today 80% of Jews live in the U.S. or Israel, but that is changing fast. By 2050, Krauthammer says nearly all the Jews will be in Israel. This is because of a low birth rate in the US and because more and more Jews outside of Israel are assimilating into the Gentile culture.

Ironically, Krauthammer says, although Israel has one of the most powerful armies in the world, the Jewish people are more vulnerable than they ever have been. Hitler would have had to conquer the whole world to get rid of the Jews. Today, he would only have to conquer an area the size of Vermont to kill over half of them. By 2050, almost all of the world's Jews will be in one spot.

Israel Sign # 3: The Growing Cancer of Anti-Semitism.



A WW2
Concentration Camp

Deuteronomy 28:64-67 says, *“The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other... and among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot... your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and at evening you shall say, ‘If only it were morning!’ because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see.”*

If there has ever been a prophecy that has been fulfilled to the very letter, it is this one. History records that the Jews have been expelled from a total of 79 nations, including Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Russia, Morocco, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and many, many others.



Former Iranian President Ahmadinejad at the United Nations

Of the 690 United Nations Resolutions voted on before 1990, 429 were directed at Israel. The United Nations typically spends about 70% of its time blasting Israel in one way or another.

The biggest game-changer in the last five years has been the unwillingness of the U.S. and its allies to take a strong, decisive stand against Iranian nuclear weapons. Barring divine intervention, Iran will possess nuclear weapons sometime in the next five years.

Iran has switched presidents, but they haven't switched ideologies. They are as anti-Israel as they've ever been, and remain as committed as they have ever been to wiping Israel off the face of the earth.

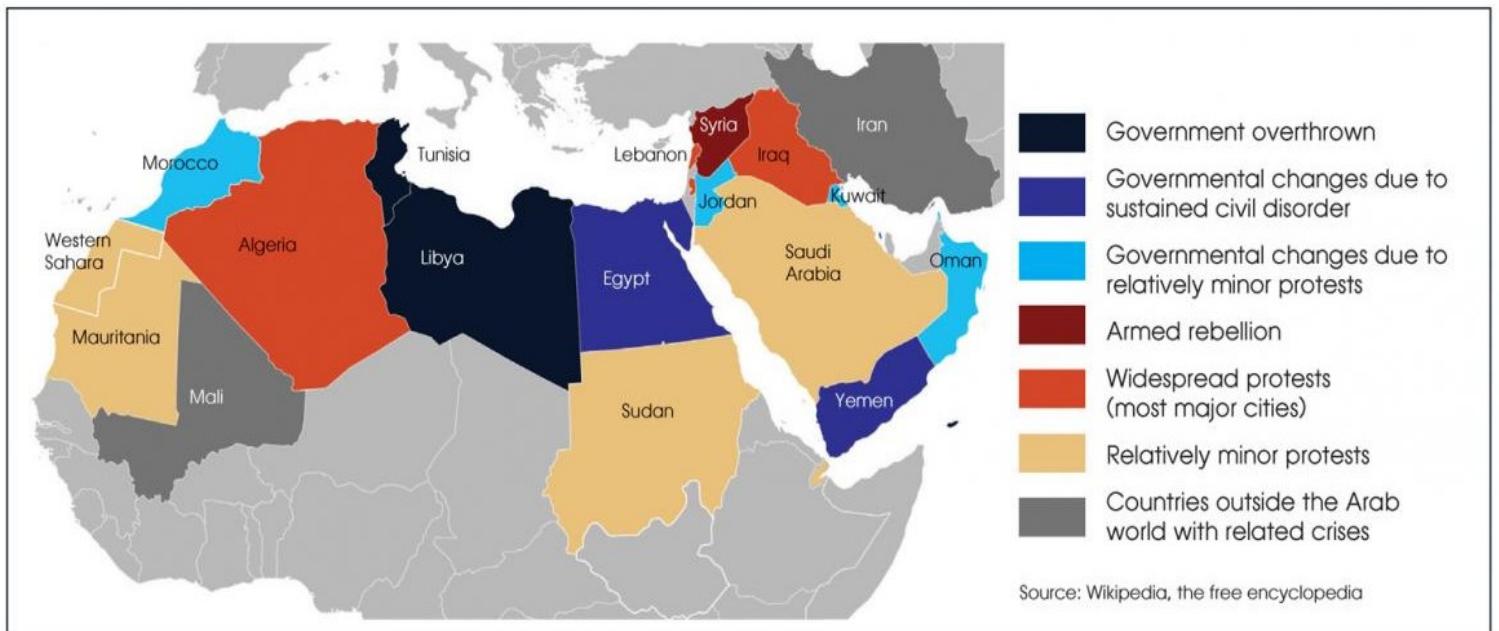
In 2009 we toured the nation of Egypt and climbed Mount Sinai in the Sinai peninsula. Today it is much more dangerous for a Christian tourist, especially an American tourist, to visit Egypt. The hostility is off the charts.

Over the last five years, the so-called Arab Spring has swept through the Islamic world, and on just about every occasion, the U.S. has been on the wrong side. We chose to support Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt over the moderate Mubarek, who had kept the peace with Israel for over 30 years. We chose to back down from confronting Assad in Syria even though he is a sworn enemy of Israel. We chose an exit strategy in Iraq that is allowing radicals to rebuild. And we are about to do the same thing in Afghanistan.

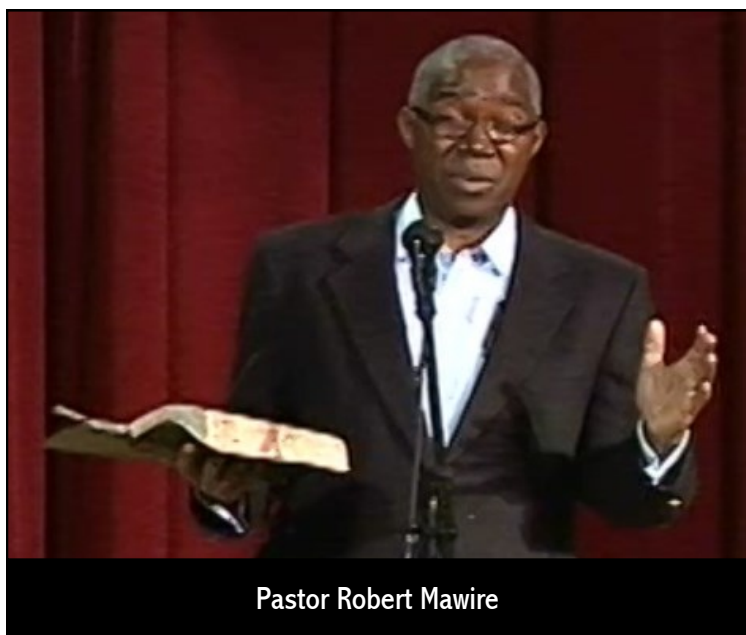
The Middle East is a much more dangerous place than it was in 2009. When you add in a resurgent Russia, you can see the Russian-Islamic coalition of Ezekiel 38 coming together with one target in their crosshairs, and that is the city of Jerusalem.

In the meantime, Israel is being pressured from every side to give up much of the little land that they do control.

Figure 1: Summary of Arab Spring regions



And God is raising up people to warn them not to go that direction. I love the story that is told in a book I read recently entitled *Holy Land Key: Unlocking End-Times Prophecy through the Lives of God's People in Israel*. It's written by a California pastor named Ray Bentley whose congregation adopted an Israeli city in the West Bank named Ariel.



Pastor Robert Mawire



Benjamin Netanyahu

Ray has an African pastor friend named Robert Mawire, who was given an audience with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in late 1998 when the Clinton administration was putting the screws to Israel to give up their land. Robert Mawire warned Netanyahu not to negotiate a land for peace treaty with the Palestinians or God would remove him. Netanyahu did so anyway, and six months later his government fell apart and he was out of office by July of 1999.

Two years later, when Netanyahu was in the U.S., Pastor Mawire met with him again. Netanyahu was now a private citizen. And Pastor Mawire said he had another prophecy for him. God would return him to office but he must not negotiate land for peace. History shows that disaster strikes any Israeli Prime Minister who does that. Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated back in 1995 after he negotiated a land for peace treaty the year before. In 2006 Prime Minister Sharon gave Gaza back to the Palestinians and he was in a coma six months later and just recently died early in 2014.

But here's what's interesting. In 2009, when I wrote my first booklet, Netanyahu came back to power as prime minister. Over the last year he's been negotiating with Secretary of State Kerry, and I was wondering what was going to happen. But apparently Netanyahu learned his lesson because the Israelis finally broke off negotiations in April.

Clearly this is a no-win situation for Israel because the cancer of anti-Semitism is everywhere. The Palestinians are raised on this visceral hatred of the Jews. As I finish this booklet, hundreds of rockets rain down on Israel from Gaza. When Israel responds, much of the world blames Israel. Anti-Semitism is everywhere - and it is stronger than ever.



Israel Sign # 4: The Blossoming of Israeli Prosperity.

Here's what Ezekiel 36:33-35 says about this:

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’”



This will see its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom under Christ. But look at what's happening right now. Whether it is agriculture, technology, or defense, Israel has become tremendously prosperous.

Israel's deserts bloom!



The Megiddo Valley - five crops per year!

Israel is known today as the “Bread Basket of the Middle East”. Some five crops per year can be produced out of the Megiddo Valley. And Israeli dairy cows are by far the most productive dairy cows in the world, 30% better than American cows.

In the last few years Israel has become a world leader in desalination - removing the salt from ocean water to make it usable. When this technology is perfected, it will cause the remaining deserts to bloom. Even right now, Israel is the only country in the world to have more trees now than it had 100 years ago.

Israel’s town of Herzlia (located just outside of Tel Aviv) is known as the “Silicon Valley” of the Middle East. Israel has become a leader in high-tech industries.

Per capita, Israel has the highest number of university degrees, physicians, scientists, Ph.Ds, and scientific papers in the world.

Per capita, Israel has the highest number of home computers in the world. Israel developed the cell phone, voice mail technology, the first anti-virus software and the first Pentium chip technology. AOL instant messenger was developed in Israel.

Per capita, Israel publishes more books than any other nation. And they have the most museums and orchestras per capita in the world.



In just the last few years, huge natural gas reserves have been discovered off the coast of Israel in the Mediterranean which will soon turn the nation into a net exporter of natural gas. It will bring unheard of wealth into the country.

Over 50% of the world's diamonds pass through Israel where they are cut, polished, and sold.

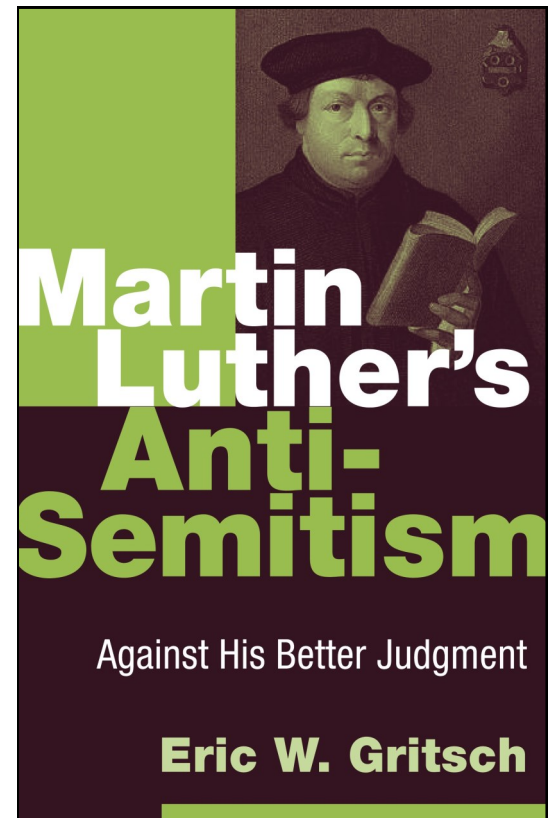
The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is widely acknowledged as the third or fourth most powerful military in the world.

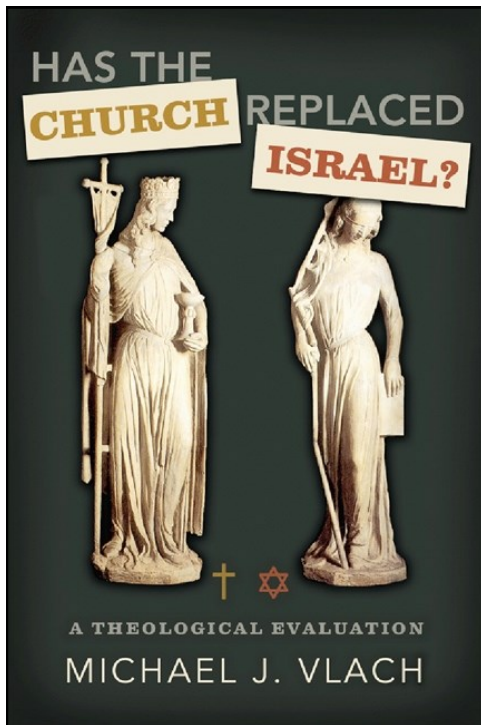
Prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. I could go on and on. This is why I love to visit Israel. In 2016 we will take another group over there. By nearly any measure, the nation of Israel is becoming like the Garden of Eden, all of which has rapidly accelerated in the last five years.

Israel Sign # 5: Growing Hostility From the Professing Church.

It is one of the tragic facts of history that those who have been most hateful toward the Jews have been professing Christians. *“The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other...and among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot... your life shall hang in doubt before you.”* Deuteronomy 28:64.

Who do you think made the following statement? “What shall we Christians do with...the Jews?...First, set fire to their synagogues or schools...I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed...If this does not help we must drive them out like mad dogs.” This statement, amazingly, was made by Martin Luther in 1543.





Hitler used to say that he just wanted to finish the job that Luther started. Michael Vlach, who teaches at John MacArthur’s seminary in California (The Master’s Seminary), has written a book about the theology that undergirded this mindset – replacement theology. This is the teaching that the church has replaced Israel. Vlach’s book is entitled *Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation*. It is also a historical evaluation as Vlach traces the impact of this ideology down through history.

And it’s still here today. In fact, it is increasing today as more and more church denominations are boycotting Israel. Here in the United States, all five of the major mainline denominations have debated or adopted policies intended to divest or boycott Israel. They are the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the Lutherans, and the United Church of Christ.

The World Council of Churches, claiming 560 million Christians in more than 110 countries, has been leading the charge, passing a resolution condemning Israel in 2010.

In Australia, the National Council of Churches voted last year to boycott Israel. In Europe most churches are supporting this. The Swedish Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Church of Scotland, the Church of England, and the British Methodist Church have been leading the charge on the boycott. South African churches are also now calling for a boycott, as has the United Church of Canada.



If you do an Internet search of “churches boycotting Israel” you will readily see that this movement has really accelerated over the last five years. The boycott movement has been Secretary of State John Kerry’s trump card as he has been prodding Israel to give up its land. He has promised that if they don’t sign a deal, there will be more and more boycotts until no one is willing to trade with Israel.

Sadly, there have been some evangelical Christians also moving in this direction, especially those involved with the Christ at the Checkpoint Conferences held in the Palestinian territories each year. Tony Campolo, Lynne Hybels, Stephen Sizer, and Wheaton Professor Gary Burgh have all been identified with this movement.

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, “*I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*” Jesus is talking here about the final judgment – the judgment of the sheep and the goats, and he was speaking primarily to a Jewish audience. Although he may have wished to include the poor and needy, Jesus was addressing his people, the Jewish people. In the last judgment, one of the factors people will be judged on is their conduct toward the Jews.



On April 15, many of us had the opportunity to see a blood moon in the sky. It was a spectacular sight as revealed in a series of photos taken from 1:00 am until the full eclipse at 2:46 am.

As you have probably heard, there has been quite a buzz about whether this blood moon, the first of four that all occur on Jewish holidays in 2014 and 2015, has any prophetic significance. John Hagee wrote a book on this, but the scholar who has really done the leg work on this is a man by the name of Mark Biltz.





When Biltz started researching this phenomenon of the blood moon tetrads that all occur on Jewish holidays, he discovered this to be a rare occurrence, occurring only seven times since the crucifixion of Christ. The last time was during 1967-68, when Israel won the Six Day War and took control of the city of Jerusalem for the first time since the days of the Maccabees before Christ. And the tetrad before that was in 1949-1950 when Israel became a nation.

Going further back, Blitz found no blood moon tetrads in the 1800s or 1700s or 1600s, but in 1492, after the Jews were expelled from Spain in the Spanish Inquisition, four blood moons occurred. In 1493 and 1494 they occurred on the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles.

In fact, the Jewish American Hall of Fame claim that Christopher Columbus was a Jew. That is impossible to verify but we do know that it was Jewish money that primarily financed his expedition. And there were probably many Jews – Jews who were being forcibly expelled – on board the Nina and the Pinta and the Santa Maria, when they set sail in the fall of 1492.

Bottom line: There is a very good chance that Jews discovered America. Will there be another major event that happens during our current four blood moons? Only time will tell. Every time so far it has correlated with a significant event in Jewish history. All I can say for sure is to be watchful, as Jesus commanded. Keep your eyes on Israel and keep your heart close to Jesus so you are fully ready when he comes. Will you do that?

Year 2014-2015

			
Passover	Sukkot	Passover	Sukkot
4/15/14	10/08/14	4/4/15	9/28/15

Blood Moon Tetrad

Jesus, Lord of History

As the signs preceding the return of our Lord continue to intensify, at times you may find yourself overwhelmed with anxiety. At such moments, we must remind ourselves that Jesus is fully in charge of every second of history.

In the movie, *God's Not Dead*, freshman Josh Wheaton enrolls in Professor Jeffrey Radisson's intro Philosophy Class. Soon Josh is faced with a dilemma. Either he can deny his faith, or he can take on the professor in his own field of expertise.

So Josh takes up the challenge and demonstrates that Christianity is a reasonable faith based on a real God and a real Jesus.

In fact, this real Jesus always has been and always will be rooted in historical events that really happened.



In Revelation 1:17-18, Jesus said this, *“I am the First and Last. I am He who lives, and was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”*

In Revelation 22:13, Jesus said this, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”*

In these verses there are three titles that Jesus claimed, all of which are rooted in real historical events.

1. Jesus is the Alpha - Reigning Over the Beginning of History.

Jesus said, *“I am the Alpha...the First...the Beginning.”*

I can remember the first time I was taught about the fact that God is an eternal being. I could get my mind around the idea that God will live forever. But I had a hard time understanding that God always existed. That was beyond comprehension. And it was another step to think about the fact that Jesus always was.



What? You mean that Jesus existed before being born at Bethlehem? Yup, that's what Jesus is teaching about himself in Revelation 1. He is the Alpha, the Beginning, the First. This is repeatedly taught in Scripture – John 1:1 says, *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”* Hebrews 1:2, *“In these last days, (God) has spoken by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”*

What this tells us is that it was Jesus himself who created the universe. Now he did not have a human body at that time. He didn't receive his human body until Bethlehem. Rather he was a heavenly being.

In fact, several times, Jesus is referred to as the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. It was Jesus, in the guise of an angel, that appeared to Hagar. Hagar was Abraham's handmaiden with whom he had a son named Ishmael. In Genesis 16:8, Jesus, the Angel of the Lord, promised to protect her and bless her.

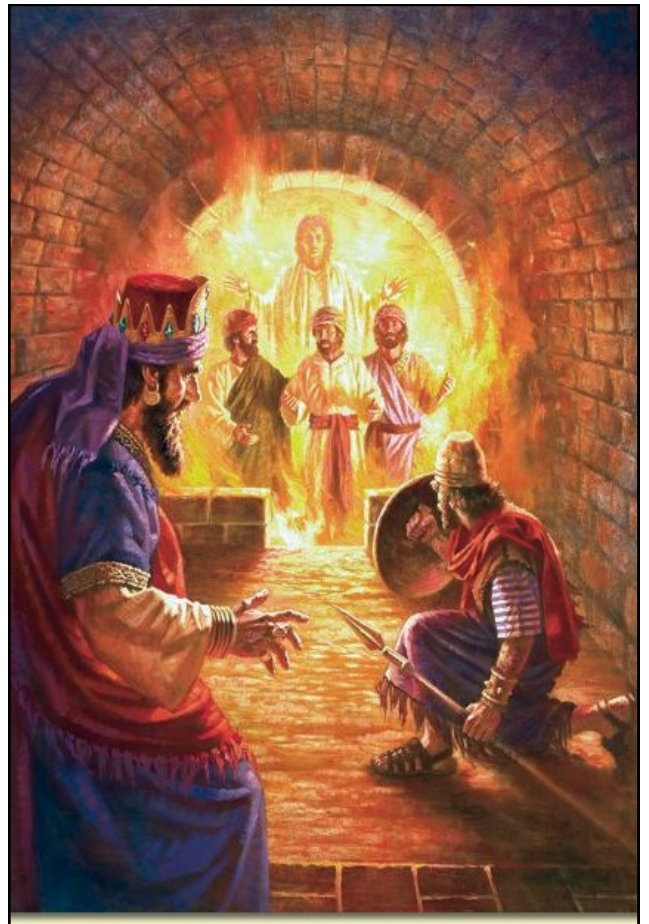
And it was Jesus who appeared to Abraham as one of three men in Genesis 18:1. He warned Abraham of Sodom's coming destruction. And it was Jesus, in the guise of an angel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus 3:2.

Jesus again took on the appearance of a man when he joined Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3:25. He protected them and gave them a great victory over the wicked king Nebuchadnezzar who had thrown them into the furnace.

In Joshua 5:13, Jesus appeared as a mighty Commander of an army, promising Joshua victory at Jericho in Joshua 5:13. And it was Jesus who appeared as an angel to Gideon in Judges 6:12 and promised him victory over the Midianites.

Once you start to study it, Jesus is all over the Old Testament. Throughout 2013-2014, I preached through the Gospel of John, and was struck by the fact that Jesus refers to himself 24 times in John's Gospel as the "I am" ("*I am the bread of life*", "*I am the good shepherd*", "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*"). Seven times he simply calls himself by the name "*I am*".

You know why that's important? Because "I am" is the name of Yahweh in the Old Testament. Jesus is the Yahweh of the OT, which is by far the most common name and most personal name for God. It is used over 6,800 times. Elohim is the second most common Hebrew name for God, used 2500 times, and there is Adonai and several other names that God uses.



It is interesting that Jesus especially identifies with the name Yahweh, but all these names for God are used of the triune God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – the three in one. In fact, one of the clearest places where you can see this is in Genesis 1:26 where God says, "*Let us make man in our image.*" Plural pronouns are used here.

And yet, even though Jesus created and sustained the world, and even though we find him comforting and caring for his people throughout the OT, the Bible also describes him as a stumbling stone.

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve chose to rebel against their Creator, Yahweh or Jesus. Many of their descendants continued to rebel against Yahweh. Isaiah 8:14 says of Jesus, *“He will become... a rock of stumbling...they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”*

No matter how much God pours out blessing, there will always be some who rebel against him. Make no mistake about it. This didn't happen by chance. God knew this was going to happen and God ordained that this was going to happen. You know why? Ephesians 2:7 gives this reason. *“So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*



In other words, it is only through a recognition of our sinful condition that we can fully understand and appreciate the riches of God's amazing grace. This brings us to the second title that Jesus claimed.

2. Jesus is the Living One: Reigning Over the Climax of History.

In Revelation 1:17-18, Jesus says, *“I am the first and last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”*

History came to a climax 2000 years ago when Jesus entered into the realm of time, space, and matter that we inhabit. He took on human flesh and was born in a stable in Bethlehem. The Magi brought him gold because he was a king, incense because he was deity, and myrrh because he was destined to die. The gift of myrrh was a prophecy of his death as myrrh was used to embalm bodies.



You know why he had to die? He had to die to redeem us. The dictionary defines “redeem” this way, “to free from captivity by payment of a ransom.”

The prophet Isaiah said this of Jesus, *“He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* Isaiah 53:5-6.

The ransom Jesus paid was his own blood. Isaiah also says this of Jesus, *“It was the will of the Lord to crush him...he poured out his soul to death.”* Isaiah 53:10,12.



On April 3, 33 AD, at approximately 3 pm, Jesus, the Son of God, died. There was an earthquake that afternoon along with an unusual period of darkness. That evening there was a blood moon. All of creation seemed to weep, as the Son of God took his last breath. (See the DVD *The Star of Bethlehem* by Frederick Larson for a poignant depiction of this event.)

As they placed his body in a rich man's tomb, as prophesied in Scripture, I believe that Jesus, in spirit form, visited Hades and proclaimed his victory over the forces of darkness, and then he emptied out Paradise and brought all of the Old Testament saints into glory, into the very presence of God the Father in heaven.

I Peter 4:18 says, "*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.*" Ephesians 4:8 says, "*When he ascended on high he led a host of captives.*"

Notice at this time that Jesus is dead in the flesh and alive in the spirit. But that was only for a very short time, because at dawn on April 5, 33 AD, at a tomb just outside the city walls of Jerusalem, the resurrection power of Jesus Christ caused another great earthquake that rolled the stone from the tomb and knocked several soldiers unconscious. The spirit of Jesus rejoined his emaciated body and it came to life, a strong, vibrant, and wholesome body that will never, ever, die again. As Jesus himself said, "*I am the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore and I have the keys of death and Hades.*"





Jesus was given all power and authority over death and hell. He and he alone makes the determination of who will die and how they will die and where and when they will die. And he alone will decide our eternal fate – whether we spend eternity in heaven or in hell. He was given that authority over you and over me and over every human being who has ever lived or will live.

Does it matter whether the resurrection really happened? Would it make any difference if the resurrection proves to be fictional? Well, here is how the Bible answers that question. I Corinthians 15:17 says, *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ (those who’ve already died) have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*

Then, in the next verse, the Bible gives us an astounding promise, *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”* We have one and only one reason for having any hope of rising from the dead and living eternally, and that is because Jesus rose from the dead first, and is alive forevermore. This brings us to the third title Jesus claims.

3. Jesus is the Omega - Reigning over the End of History.

In the last chapter in the Bible, Jesus makes this astounding claim for himself, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”* Revelation 22:13.

This verse expresses Christ’s infinity, Christ’s eternity, and Christ’s boundless life that transcends all limitations. This verse describes the completeness of Christ, the timelessness of Christ, and the sovereign authority of Christ.



This verse settles once and for all that Jesus is not a created being as the Mormons teach. He is not merely a great prophet as the Muslims teach. He isn't just a great moral teacher as Thomas Jefferson taught.

He is God the Son, the second person of the eternal Trinity. He came to save his people from their sins. Jesus is like the ark in which Noah and his family were saved in the book of Genesis. Jesus is like the Passover Lamb in the book of Exodus, whose blood was applied to the Israelite's doorposts, causing the death angel to pass over them. Jesus is like the kinsman redeemer in the book of Ruth. Ruth is allowed to take refuge in the protection of Boaz who redeems her and makes her his wife.

Jesus is the Omega who will consummate all of history when he returns to the earth. I Corinthians 15:51-54 puts it like this, *"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed...Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Adding even more suspense is this stunning promise from I Thessalonians 4:15-18, *"We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, encourage one another with these words."*



Why are we to encourage each other? Because Jesus has promised to restore all things that were destroyed by the fall of man into sin. Romans 8:19 says, *"The creation waits with eager longing."* Why? Romans 8:21 says, *"The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves...groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."*

In the next life, Jesus is going to give us brand spanking new bodies – strong, vibrant, and eternal. And he has also promised to restore all things.

In the first three chapters of Genesis, we have the tragic account of paradise lost. This beautiful creation that Jesus brought into existence in six days is suddenly and tragically marred by the sin of Adam and Eve.



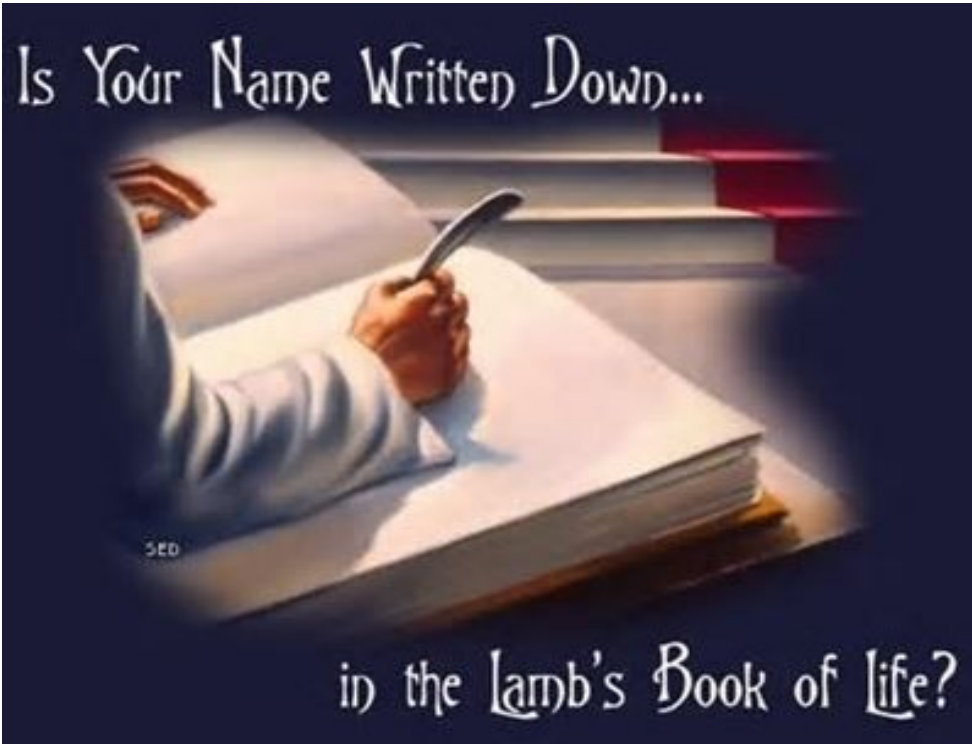
Creation Groans



Peaceful New World

But praise God, it's not going to stay like that. In the last three chapters of Revelation, we have the glorious account of paradise regained. Everything that is lost in the original creation is restored. We see the tree of life again, as well as abundant rivers and fruit and light and vegetation. God says, *"Behold I am making all things new."* Revelation 21:5.

Besides the tree of life you also have the book of life, with the names written down of everyone who will be granted entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Revelation 20:15 says, *"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*



So the most important question in the whole wide world has to be, "How do I get my name written in the Lamb's book of life?"

There's only one way – it's through faith, in Jesus Christ, as your Savior and Lord. It's embracing him in a wholehearted commitment. It is making him the preeminent one in your life, the focal point of all your hopes and dreams. It involves repenting of your sin. You must forsake your sin and cling to Christ.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23



Jesus put it very simply like this, *“If any man would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”* It’s going to be the most difficult thing you’ve ever done and it’s going to be the most rewarding thing you’ve ever done all at the same time. Difficult because it will involve self-denial and suffering. Rewarding because it will fill you with purpose in life, and blessing for the next hundred trillion years.

I want to challenge you to come to Jesus today, the one who is alive forevermore – the Alpha, the Omega, the Living One. And let me remind you that there is an urgency that you come now. Three times in the last chapter of the Bible Jesus makes the statement, *“Behold, I am coming soon!”* He did this to underscore the brevity and uncertainty of life. You see, there are two things you don’t know – when you will die and when Christ will return. Either of them could happen to you before you hit the pillow tonight. So...

Come to Jesus today – Your Creator, Your Redeemer and Your Coming King. Come to him!



Denny Johnson has served as Senior Pastor at Annandale Evangelical Free Church in Annandale, Minnesota since 1992. Prior to that he served as pastor at another Evangelical Free church near Elk River, Minnesota for nine years. Denny graduated from Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1980 with a B.A. in Political Science Summa Cum Laude. He also has an M.Div. Magna Cum Laude from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1983. Denny and his wife, Sue, have four daughters.

Acknowledgements: A sincere thanks to my co-worker, Cindy Kloepfner, for her superb work on the layout of this booklet, and to Carol Gesler and Janelle Mosley for their editing.