

4.2 SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Most of the “signs of the times” have been singularly addressed by previous sections of this thesis. Therefore, this section is provided to gather them all together in one place. This process should show the increasing number, frequency and intensity of these signs and “birth pains.” This should also hopefully show how close the Body of Christ may be to the “Blessed Hope” of the *Parousia* (the Rapture of the Church that precedes the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ) and encourage believers to once again raise up the standard of the Eschatological Gospel. The two chronologies addressed above will be used as starting points to highlight various overarching prophetic signs or timelines established by God in Genesis and Daniel. Next, those prophetic signs which have been fulfilled to date will be explored. Then, other specific Old Testament prophetic signs, related to these timelines that have been fulfilled, will be considered. Finally, the outline of the “birth pains” and signs addressed by Jesus Himself in the Apocalyptic Discourse (Matt 24; Mark 13 and Luke 17; 21), that have been fulfilled, are about to be fulfilled, or yet to be fulfilled, will be considered.

As alluded to in Section 1.1, and addressed at the beginning of Sections 1.3 and 2.2, it was a common understanding of the Early Church that God used the “Creation Week” in Genesis 1, coupled with the notion that “a day with the Lord is as a thousand years” (Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8), as a pattern for a chronology of humanity’s lease on earth as six thousand years. This then will lead up to the seventh day or sabbath rest of one thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom. This being the overarching premise of all the prophetic signs to come demanded a beginning point for the timeline. As addressed by Sections 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 above, theologians believe that the year AD 2009 translates to anywhere from the year 5769 to 6013 since the time when God created Adam and Eve. This thesis used Michael Rood’s newly discovered *Astronomically and*

Agriculturally Corrected Biblical Hebrew Calendar (2007) as the basis for saying the year AD 2009 translates to 6009-6010. The above two charts were constructed based on this premise.

This overarching timeline may then be broken down into the following subtimelines: 1) the seven Old Testament Feasts and their prophetic fulfillments; 2) Israel's timeline from Daniel 9 and 12, and Hosea 5-6; and 3) the Gentile's timeline from Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 10-11. All these subtimelines contain a "gap," that represents the "Church Age" or "Times of the Gentiles" (John 4:34-8; 21:22-3; Rev 2-3; Luke 21:24; Rom 11:25; and Rev 11:2). The Church Age/Times of the Gentiles begins with Jesus' ascension (Rapture) and ends with the corresponding Rapture of the Church (Body of Christ). These subtimelines will now be addressed one by one.

The seven Old Testament Feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks/Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, and Booths/Tabernacles), which are addressed in Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.3 above, were established by God in concert with the Mosaic Covenant (which included the sabbath day of rest to honor God for His creation and provision). They were to be annual, recurring, covenant Sabbaths in remembrance of His faithfulness, grace and provision to His people (Lev 23). Additionally, God instituted a "Sabbatical Year/Jubilee" concept (which marked off seven, seven-year cycles culminating with the fiftieth year being the Year of Jubilee) to remind His chosen people that the earth/land was His and that He made it (Lev 25).

Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Weeks/Pentecost occurred in the spring. Separated by approximately four months, Trumpets, Atonement and Booths/Tabernacles occurred in the fall. Of these seven feasts, God required the males of Israel to appear before Him at the Tabernacle (or later, the Temple) three times: Unleavened Bread, Weeks/Pentecost, and Booths/Tabernacles; at the beginning, middle and end of the year (Deut 16:16). In addition to

reminding Israel of their relationship/covenant with God, these feasts also served to prophetically foreshadow future events on God's timeline for His chosen people. The first three feasts were fulfilled by *Yeshua HaMashiach's* (Jesus Christ's) death, burial, and resurrection (Passover—Matt 26:2/John 19:14/1 Cor 5:7; Unleavened Bread—Mark 14:22/John 6:51/1 Cor 10:16; and Firstfruits—Mark 16:1-6/John 20:1, 19-23/1 Cor 15:20-3). The Feast of Weeks/Pentecost was fulfilled by the birth/empowerment of the Church, addressed in Acts 1:1-5; 2:1-4. This was then followed by the “gap” in the timelines (the Church Age/Times of the Gentiles). The Feast of Trumpets should be fulfilled at the end of the Church Age/Times of the Gentiles by the Rapture of the Church (Luke 21:36; 1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 4:1; 7:9-18; 12:5). Following this “Blessed Hope” of the Church (Body of Christ) remains the Feast of Atonement, which should be fulfilled when God judges humanity and the earth for their sins at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Matt 24:9-22; Rev 5-19) and the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles, which should be fulfilled during the millennial reign of King Jesus (Isa 9:6-7; Ezek 40-8; Joel 3:18-21; Zeph 3:8-20; Zach 14:4-21; Mic 4:1-5; Rev 20:2-4).

Israel's timeline, as mentioned in Daniel 9:24-27; 12, and in Section 1.3.2 above, and confirmed by Hosea 5:14 – 6:3, consists of seventy weeks of years (70 x 7, or 490 years; from the “sabbatical year” concept). The purposes of these sabbath years were to: 1) finish the transgression (fulfilled at Messiah's First Coming); 2) make an end of sin (fulfilled at Messiah's First Coming); 3) make atonement for iniquity (fulfilled at Messiah's First Coming); 4) bring in everlasting righteousness (to be completely fulfilled at Messiah's Second Coming); 5) seal up vision and prophecy (to be fulfilled at Messiah's Second Coming); and 6) anoint the Most Holy Place (to be completely fulfilled at Messiah's Second Coming).

Of these 490 years, 483 years were to be from the decree issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until “Messiah the Prince is cut off.” This was literally fulfilled from the decree of Artaxerxes in 444-5 BC (Neh 2:1-10) to *Yeshua HaMashiach*’s death on the cross in AD 30/31 (factoring in the Gregorian calendar being off by four to six years and the transition from BC to AD). Next, “the prince who is to come” was to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple; this was fulfilled by the Roman legions in AD 70. Then, there remains the “gap” of the “Times of the Gentiles,” until “he” (Antichrist) will make a covenant with the many for the remaining week or seven years (to be fulfilled after the Times of the Gentiles come to a close and the Rapture of the Church occurs).

Interwoven in this Israeli timeline remains an interesting prophecy contained in Hosea 5:14 – 6:3. This prophecy speaks of the Jews being “torn away” from *Yahweh* and of Him “going away” and returning to His “place.” Next, it gives encouragement in verse 6:1: “Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us” (speaking of Messiah’s First Coming). Then, comes the interesting part of the prophecy, contained in verse 2 (and using the “day with the Lord = 1,000 years” analogy): “He will revive us after two days (two thousand years); He will raise us up on the third day (third 1,000 years) That we may live before Him.” Interpreting it this way from a prophetic perspective, addresses the two thousand years of the Times of the Gentiles/Church Age, followed by the Millennium. This prophetic scripture has also been interpreted to speak of Messiah’s being resurrected on the third day. It could have multiple fulfillments. However, contextually, it appears to be speaking of the nation of Israel and their relationship to *Yahweh*. Therefore, the first prophetic interpretation appears to be the more valid one.

The Gentiles' timeline, mentioned in Daniel 2 and 7 and Section 1.3.2 above, and more specifically broken down by Daniel 8, 10 and 11, is represented by Nebuchadnezzar's statue made of different materials and by the four beasts to arise out of the earth. Each metal (in decreasing order of value) and beast represents a kingdom that will rule over Israel. The "head of gold" and "lion with wings of an eagle" represent Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire (Dan 2:38; 7:4). The "breast and arms of silver," "bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth" and "ram with two horns" represent the Medio-Persian Empire (Dan 2:39; 5:28; 7:5; 8:3-4, 20). The "belly and thighs of bronze," "leopard with four wings like a bird and four heads," and "shaggy goat with a conspicuous horn broken off and replaced with four horns" represent the Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great broken into the four kingdoms of his four generals (Dan 2:39; 7:6; 8:5-8, 21-2; 10:20; 11:2-3). The "legs of iron" and "fourth beast which was terrifying, extremely strong, and had large iron teeth" represent the Roman Empire (Dan 2:40; 7:7, 23), which eventually was divided into the East (Constantinople) and West (Rome) by Constantine, who declared Christianity to be the religion of the Empire. Then, there remains the Church Age "gap."

This "gap" remains until the Rapture of the Church at its terminus and the rise of the antichrist. At that time, the fifth and final kingdom made up of "the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay" and "ten horns on the fourth beast," which represent a ten-nation confederacy from the confines of the Old Roman Empire, will arise, as addressed in Daniel 2:44; 7:7b-8, 24. Most dispensationalist theologians (including C. I. Scofield, Arno Gaebelein, J. Vernon McGee, Hal Lindsey, Jack Van Impe, Tim LaHaye, Pat Robertson, and Noah W. Hutchings) believe this to be ten nations from the European Economic Community/Union (old Common Market) (Kyle 1998:128-9). (See Section 1.3.2 above, Biederwolf 1985:202-204, 208 and Kyle 1998:126-129

for further documentation). However, recent studies by Deal and Church believe it to be an Arab/Moslem ten-nation confederacy based on those nations described as enemies of Israel and seeking to destroy it as a nation, as outlined by Psalm 83. These ten Old Testament nations (Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites/Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia/the Philistines, Tyre, and Assyria/Assur) make up parts of, or all, of the following modern Arab countries that surround Israel: Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, the Palestinians (PLO), Syria, Iran, and Turkey (Deal 1983; 1995:9-74; Church 1986:225-6). Most parts of these modern nations fall within the confines of the Old Roman Empire (www.roman-empire.net). And, all but Iran and Turkey are part of the Arab League (founded in 1945, whose explicit, first and foremost, goal is the destruction of Israel - en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League). In light of this study's information and the world events occurring in the Middle East, since the close of WWII, it appears that the ten-nation Arab Confederacy (from Psalm 83) is the more likely choice for fulfillment of Daniel's fifth kingdom made partly of iron and partly of clay.

In Daniel 8, this Gentile timeline has additional specific prophecies pertaining to the partitioning of the Grecian Empire after Alexander the Great's death (at a young age) into "four horns" by his top four generals. Then, "out of one of them came forth a rather small horn," representing "a king [who] will arise . . . in the latter period of their rule," who will desecrate "the holy place" (second Temple) and stop the "regular sacrifice . . . for 2,300 evenings and mornings." Then in Daniel 11, the "four horns" of Daniel 8 are further clarified to be "parceled out toward the four points of the compass" (north, east, south and west). The Northern Kingdom (the Seleucids of Syria) and the Southern Kingdom (the Ptolemies of Egypt) then engage in many battles and wars in a struggle for power. This ends with a Syrian king fulfilling the

prophecy in Daniel 8 about the “small horn.” This is further clarified to be when he sets “up the abomination of desolation” in the “sanctuary.” This specific prophecy was fulfilled by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) during his reign, 175-164 BC (most probably 171-165 BC). Then, the prophecy in *Daniel 11*, goes on to speak of “the end time” when one like Antiochus Epiphanes [emphasis added] will “enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall . . . But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver . . . he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many . . . And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end and no one will help him” (speaking of the antichrist, who will arise at the time of the ten-nation confederacy).

Continuing with Daniel 12, “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time” (the Great Tribulation). This Tribulation will last for 3 ½ years; “from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.” This is the same 3 ½ years spoken of in Dan 9:27, where it states, “in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice . . .”). *Daniel 12 also speaks of the resurrection of the Old Testament Saints (and possible Rapture)* [emphasis added]; “and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”

Next, those additional specific prophecies from the Old Testament that support these subtimelines will be explored. These prophecies are in addition to all the previously mentioned Old Testament prophecies about both the First and Second Comings of *Yeshua HaMashiach*, which were addressed in Sections 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.2.7, 1.3.1, and 1.3.3.1 above. Isaiah and

Jeremiah speak of the city of Babylon, which will “never [be] inhabited again”—Isa 13:19-22; Jer 50:39-40; 51:37-43 (Saddam Hussein tried to rebuild it in the 1980s/90s, but failed). Jeremiah 51:7 and Zechariah 5 speak of the “spirit of Babylon” or “Babylon the Harlot” (mentioned in Revelation 17 and 18 and indicative of the Babylonian Mysteries cult false religious spirit present throughout history until the end).

The following prophecies speak of the regathering or rebirth of the nation of Israel: Isaiah 66:7-8 (specifically addresses Israel being “born in a single day”—May 14, 1948); Amos 9:15 (Israel “will no more be uprooted from their Land”); Ezekiel 11:13-20; 20:33-44; 36 – 37 (Israel restored as “one nation again,” specifically 37:15-28); Hosea 3:4-5; and Isaiah 27:6 (Israel to “take root and blossom and fill the earth with fruit”). Isaiah 19:18-20 speaks of five Egyptian cities speaking Hebrew and there being a “sign” in Egypt (fulfilled in 1967 and the sign being the Great Pyramid of Giza).

Ezekiel, in his visions contained in 1:4-28 and 10:1-22, mentions the “Cherubim,” who equate to the “four living creatures” of Revelation 4. Zechariah 6:1-8 mentions the “four horsemen of the Apocalypse” from Revelation 6. Zechariah 4 mentions the “two olive trees that stand before the Lord,” which equate to the “two witnesses” of Revelation 11.

Section 1.3.3.2 above addresses the day of the Lord (*Yahweh*)/Jacob’s Trouble prophecies that speak of the “Tribulation.” However, the following citations deal specifically with the “Battle of Armageddon” (mentioned specifically by name in Rev 16:16), which will occur at the end of the Tribulation and just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus: Ezekiel 38-9; Micah 4:11-13; Zechariah 14:1-6, 12-15 (14:4 specifically states that “His feet” (“the Lord’s,” from verse 3) will physically “stand on the Mount of Olives”). Section 1.3.3.3 above addresses the millennial kingdom prophecies.

Next, the New Testament “signs of the times” will be explored. The primary and overarching “sign” from the New Testament has been the outline of the Church Age; broken into seven periods based on the names of the churches described in Revelation 2 and 3, broken down as follows: 1) Ephesus—the Birth of the Church to the destruction of the Jerusalem/the Temple and the Apostolic Fathers—approximately AD 100; 2) Smyrna—Period of Persecution—AD 100 to approximately AD 313; 3) Pergamum—Rise of Heresies and Controversies—AD 313 to approximately AD 500; 4) Thyatira—First Pope/Rise of Islam/Church Split (East and West)—AD 500 to approximately AD 1054; 5) Sardis—Rise of Moslem Latin Avveroism, Scholasticism, Monasticism, Crusades, Middle Ages—AD 1054 to approximately AD 1517; 6) Philadelphia—Protestant Reformation, Bible type-printed and translated, Revivals, Great Awakenings, Missionaries—AD 1517 to approximately AD 1960; and 7) Laodicea—Lukewarm, rich, with no need of anything (but really wretched, poor, blind, and naked), Love grows cold, Falling away, deceiving spirits (Jude 11-13, 18-19; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev 3:20), last period before the end of the Church Age and Jesus, who is standing at the door, returns for His Body—1960 to the Rapture of the Church (This breakdown of the Periods of the Church Age is a compilation of the following theologians on the matter: Darby 1950:561-3; Scofield 1945:1332-4; Hains n.d.:11; Lindsay 1961:17-8; Johnson 1978:15-6; and Gregg 1997:62-3). Then, there remains the Apocalyptic Discourse of Jesus.

The first prophetic sign mentioned by Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God) in Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, and primarily Luke 21:5-6, 20-24, signaling the beginning of the Last Days and the “Times of the Gentiles,” was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (fulfilled some forty years later, in AD 70). Next, Jesus spoke of the persecution of the Early Church in Luke 21:12-19, which started under Nero (in AD 64) and lasted until Constantine (in AD 313).

Jesus then spoke of the following signs that would be like “the beginning of birth pangs,” which would increase in frequency and intensity until the time of birth (Matt 24:4-8): 1) “false Christs” who would come and “mislead many” (this started in the Early Church, shortly after Jesus’ ascension, has continued through Church Age, has dramatically increased since 1948, and will conclude with Antichrist—of which the false proclamation of Lord Maitreya in 1982 was the first attempt of Satan to bring him to the forefront); 2) “wars and rumors of wars” (they have happened with increased frequency—especially the “rumors of wars” part, since the end of WWII, the second “war to end all wars,” followed by the Six Day War in 1967, the *Yom Kippur* War in 1973, the First Gulf War in 1990-91, and the Second Gulf War in 2003—and will continue until the Battle of Armageddon); 3) “nation against nation” and “kingdom against kingdom” (again, this has happened with increased frequency since WWII, not just in war, but financially, politically and socially—prime examples are the fall of Communism and the “Iron Curtain,” and the resulting realignment/renaming of nations in Europe and Asia and Africa) and the solidifying of the Arab League against Israel as a nation; and 4) “famines and earthquakes in various places” (again, increasing in frequency and intensity since recorded history in the thirteenth century, especially with the exponential world population increase/recent natural disasters that often accompany earthquakes; such as droughts, floods, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and hurricanes).

After these have occurred, Jesus said in verses 9-10, “they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And many will fall away and will deliver up one another” (this happened initially during the persecution of the Early Church, was repeated in extreme measure to the Jews (God’s chosen people) during the “Holocaust” of WWII, and recently in the era of Postmodernism, has begun to happen to

Christianity (especially related to “on account of My name”). Next, Jesus said in verses 10-11: “And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold” (again, this has exponentially increased starting with the proliferation of cults and cultic personalities in the 1950s-60s and leading to the postmodern, selfish era of New Ageism/Radical Islamism).

Then Jesus said in Luke 21:25, “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (in 1982, all planets in the earth’s solar system aligned on the same side of the sun, which coincided with the eleven-year sunspot cycle; holes in the ozone layer have increased UV rays from the sun; in 1986, Haley’s Comet returned with other comets, Meteor showers and increased UFO sightings; and the recent tsunamis, hurricanes and terrorist attacks of the twenty-first century).

The final sign mentioned by Jesus that will occur before the appearance of the antichrist, “Abomination of Desolation” and the Great Tribulation is mentioned in Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come” (*It is important to note that the Eschatological Gospel of the Kingdom being preached in the whole world for a witness is the last sign to be fulfilled before the end*) [emphasis added]. According to many missions’ organizations, approximately 99% of the world’s nations have heard the Eschatological Gospel of Both Comings (Joshua Project 2007). According to Wycliffe Bible Translators, approximately 96% of the world has the Bible translated into their language, or it is in the process of being translated. Their vision, as an

organization, is to have the task completed by the year 2025 (Wycliffe 2006). This then remains the final “sign of the times” as the world approaches the end of the Last Days and the completion of the Times of the Gentiles/the Church Age.