

A Question of Timing

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We all pray daily for the Kingdom of God, frequently asking God to make the decision to end this age (Mt6:9b-10a, Mk13:32, At1:7b). However, **it is possible that the decision was made long ago**. The destruction of Jerusalem was prophesied in the **Book of Micah** over 100 years before it occurred (Mc3:12). We are at the end-time, and knowledge has increased (Dn12:4). We have a very full set of prophecies, from which we can learn (1Th5:20-21, 2Pt1:19). **A human life is too short to observe more than a small piece of the working out of the Plan of God** (Ps90:10, Jm4:13-14).

The Reign of Hezekiah: He was one of the best kings of Israel. He strove to liberate Israel from Assyrian vassalage (2Kg18:3-4a,5-7). Around 700BC, Hezekiah became ill, he prayed, and God restored him (2Kg20:1-2,5aβ). When Merodach-baladan sent envoys to Hezekiah, **Isaiah warned of the Babylonian captivity** (2Kg20:12-17, Is13:1,19, 14:22, 21:9b). **The final destruction of Assyria had also already been prophesied**; the destruction of Sennacherib's army presaged it; but, it would NOT occur for another 75 years, until 609BC (Is10:5,12,15-16, 37:5-7,21bβ,29,33-35a,36-38).

The Evil Reign of Manasseh and Josiah's Reform: Manasseh was one of the worst kings of Israel; he was a willing Assyrian vassal (Is59:2-3,7,15a, 2Chr33:9, Jr15:4). **Under Manasseh it would have seemed like evil had triumphed**: all the good of Hezekiah's reform was gone and the hope of freedom from Assyria was a distant memory. By the end of Manasseh's reign in 643BC, **Isaiah's prophecies**, which were so real and so clear some 60 years earlier, **would have seemed to have failed**. Just prior to the reign of **Josiah**, Manasseh's grandson, YHWH revived hope through the **Prophet Nahum** by again predicting the **destruction of Assyria** (Nahum 3:1,7,18-19). During the reign of **Josiah**, the **Prophet Zephaniah**, not only reiterated the destruction of Assyria, but also **revived Isaiah's warnings of punishment of Israel** (Zph1:4-6, 2:13). **Josiah's reform was a failure** because the majority of people only paid lip service (2Kg22:16a,17, 2Chr34:31a,32-33). The **Prophet Jeremiah's** greatest lament was that **the people refused to repent** (Jr5:2-3, 8:4b-6a).

The End of the Assyrian Empire: 609BC is the watershed of ancient history. At the **Battle of Haran**, the mighty Assyrian empire which had been on the scene since the Tower of Babel, was destroyed, removed, never to be revived. **Josiah made the same mistake as Hezekiah thinking it wise to support Babylon** (2Kg23:29). Egypt remained strong enough to establish control over the territory west of the Euphrates, including Israel. At the **Battle of Carchemish** 605BC, **Nebuchadnezzar**, son of Nabopolassar, was in charge – Egypt was utterly defeated (Jr46:2-6). At this point, it was clear that the fulfillment of the prophecies was fully underway; but, there remained many things yet to happen before the end. From 609-586BC, 23 years, there were four “bad kings”: Jehohaz (3 months), Jehoiakim (11 years), Jehoiachin (3 months), and Zedekiah (11 years). **In 597BC, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and captured Jerusalem.** Thousands of Israelites were taken captive to Babylon, including **Ezekiel**. This is the most important event of these years: from these captives, through Ezekiel, **God would prepare a remnant of True Worshipers to prepare for the First Advent.**

Where are We Today? The prophecies of the end of the Nation of Israel were simple and straight forward, but it took over a hundred years for them to play out – several generations came and went. **The Prophet Isaiah had a body of disciples, True Worshipers**, who understood the prophecies and looked for their fulfillment (Is8:16-17). Doubtless there were others in Israel who shared the hope and understood the prophecies – **by the time of Jeremiah there was no one** (Jr12:11). **God made the promise that at the end-time knowledge would increase** so that we can understand (Dn12:1-4). The increase of knowledge began with Herbert Armstrong identifying the **“beast power”** (Rv17:9-10). Then came the understanding that the **“second beast”** of Revelation corresponds to the **“little horn”** of Daniel, the **“church of Rome”**, specifically identified with the **“papacy”** (Rv13:11-12a,13a,14a,15, Dn7:7-8,19a,20-25). The **“putting down of three kings”** leaves seven kings which correspond to the **“seven heads”** of the **“first beast”** in Revelation.

What Has to Happen? The most obvious event is **official persecution of those refusing to worship the “first beast”** (Rv6:9-11, 13:1,2b,4a,7a,8a). When we become the official target of the “government” for refusal to worship the “first beast”, we will know the **Great Tribulation** is under way. Before that, **the “little horn” has to emerge with power.** It is a symbiotic relationship between political and religious with Satan the Devil at the bottom of it (Rv13:2,4,12,14, Lk4:6).

Faith in the Plan of God: Jesus implores us NOT to take our eyes off **the target** (Mt25:13, Lk21:34). World events will unfold as God intends, but far more important is **each person's relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ** (Cl4:2, 2Jh8, Jr2:13). As the prophecies unfold, those who trust in God's word will be delivered (1Th5:20-21, 2Pt1:19, Jr39:18). Ultimately, **our faith depends on knowing and trusting the Plan of God** (Eph1:4-5,7-10).

God gave Ancient Israel detailed prophecies of the working out of his Plan. Taking over 100 years, several generations came and went and the prophecies fell into disrepute, until at the end there were NO True Worshipers in Jerusalem. We are experiencing a similar phenomenon: **a human life is too short to observe more than a wee bit of the working out of the Plan of God.** God has given us a full slate of end-time prophecies and increased our knowledge to understand them: the purpose being to give us **faith in the Plan of God.** God adjures us to “watch” – primarily ourselves to ensure we **maintain a proper relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.** God has also given us what the people of Ancient Israel did NOT have – **the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Failure is NOT an option.**

The material is based on the paper “The Soon Coming Kingdom of God” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>.

The PowerPoint slides are located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>.