**Fifty Signs of the End-Times**

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 **Are We Living in the Last Days?**

Since Hal Lindsey’s Late Great Planet Earth book hit the bookshelves in the early 1980’s there has been an increased fascination with the topic of end-times prophecy. Several others have come out with similarly popular books since that time. Unfortunately, there have been some who have set actual dates as to when the rapture and/or the second coming was to occur. For example, 1988 was a year that many date-setters claimed was to be the year of the rapture. This was primarily because this was forty years after Israel was re-created as a nation. On October 20, 1991, a full-page add was featured in USA Today claiming that Jesus would return sometime in October 28, 1992. Many may remember that there were those who thought that the year A.D. 2000 would be the end of the world. Now, Dec. 22, 2012 is the most popular date for those who like to set dates for the end of the world. There are plenty of other suggested dates, however. Harold Camping, a well known preacher from California recently looked forward to judgment day; he was convinced that it would come on May 21, 2011 – he was wrong! What does the Bible state about the time of the second coming of the Messiah? "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” Matt 24:36 That quote from Jesus is quite clear… no one knows when Jesus will return in the air to rapture His Church… no one but God Himself! So, why this treatise then?

 There is a great difference between setting an actual date for the return of Jesus and a quest to gain an understanding of the likely time or season that He may very likely return. In fact, the Bible tells us that we should actually be looking for the signs of His return… and be prepared for His coming when it does happen. For example, Jesus spoke of His return in the gospels. He expects us to be on alert for the many signs of His imminent coming that He outlines in His Olivet Discourse.

 As it turns out, most of the signs given in the Bible concerning the end-times relate to the time of the Tribulation. Given that it is the belief espoused here that the rapture will occur just before the Tribulation begins, how can we use these events during the Tribulation to determine the times in which we *now* live? We certainly are not in the terrible time of God’s great wrath at this time. The answer relates to the manner in which God has always worked his providential care of this world since the time of Adam. All throughout history, God has rarely intervened to **change the course of history** in a **blatantly supernatural** way. I must define what I mean by these terms as I certainly believe that God has influenced and *changed the course of history* through His direct involvement many times (e.g. consider the plagues visited on Egypt, Jesus died on the cross to save those who would trust in Him, God used King Cyrus to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem, etc.).God has also acted, at times, in a *clearly supernatural* manner (He protected Shadrach, Meschak and Abednego from the fire, Jesus turned water into wine and walked on water, Moses parted the Red Sea, etc.). However, never do I recall God using His supernatural powers to *totally usurp the natural physical laws of His universe to transform a significant portion of land, sea or humanity*. Although He certainly does use His infinite power and knowledge to direct the events of this earth and mankind, He does it by using short episodes of blatant miracles (a few already mentioned above) and by influencing man to act according to His will in other cases. What *God does not* seem to ever do is to **over-ride Natural Laws** to effect **grand and long lasting changes** of earth’s topography or other aspects of nature. For example, it is doubtful that we will ever see thousands of people walking across the ocean on foot, a city have all of its buildings disappear overnight, or an entire lake turning into orange juice. God does not currently work that way on the large scale, nor has He in the past.

 Because of this, people can understand that if certain events are going to occur during the seven years of the Tribulation, and this time begins very soon after the rapture, one would expect the ground work for some of these Tribulation events to *begin* *before* *the rapture*. For just one example, if the Temple is spoken of as being used during the Tribulation, it is quite likely that the Jews would be at least planning on building it in the years leading up to the Rapture. This is not absolutely necessary as God is sovereign and can accomplish any non-contradictory task that He desires, but as we have just seen, it is highly unlikely that He would act in that manner – for example, have a Temple just pop into existence on the Temple Mount soon after the Rapture. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that there will be many signs leading up to the Rapture that relate directly to those events that are seen just after it occurs (since the Tribulation will quickly follow the Rapture of the Church). Interestingly, many of these signs have now come upon the world and will be discussed in some detail below.

 In this next section the many signs of the end-times, including both those noted in the Old and the New Testaments, will be given. Then, the evidence for these events having come to fruition in recent history will be discussed. I believe that it will become evident that there has never been a time in all world history where so many signs of the end-times have coalesced together as the times in which we currently live. I suggest that it is reasonably likely Jesus will rapture His saints within the next twenty-five years. Of course, it is possible that He could come for His Church within the next five seconds… i.e. His return is imminent… as has already been explained in the last section. Now, let us take a look at what the Bible says concerning the signs of the end.

 The following discussion of the “signs of the end-times” will be divided into three subject areas:

* Those prophecies related directly to the nation and people of Israel, God’s “chosen people”.
* End-time prophetic verses that relate to other nations and people of the world – coming from both the Old and New Testaments
* The Olivet Discourse, where the Lord Jesus detailed the events that the world would experience just prior to His second coming.

 One additional point should be made before beginning to list and discuss fifty signs of the end-times. Some of these signs are incredibly impressive and highly suggest that we are living in the times just before the coming of the Lord. There are some that are clearly consistent with the end-times but, standing alone, would not be enough to strongly convince most people that the Rapture is just around the corner. The point is that there are fifty of these signs all coming together at this time in history. Taken together, I believe, they lend great credence to the notion that Jesus is soon to come!

**Israel in the end-times:**

There is no more important and impressive series of fulfilled prophecy in all of eschatology than the amazing events that have befallen the nation of Israel in the last sixty-five years. In fact, the following events constitute the major reason that most Bible prophecy teachers are so convinced that the Rapture cannot be too far away. Let us now take a close look at many of the prophecies relating to Israel in the end-times and see just how those prophecies have already been fulfilled:

1. **Israel will become a nation once again:**

 The nation of Israel ceased to exist after the Assyrian defeat of its northern kingdom in 721 B.C. followed by the defeat of its southern kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. Since that time, the Jews have had no land to call their own. Over the centuries, in fact, the vast majority of their people had become dispersed (that was also predicted in the Old Testament) throughout the entire world. After the resounding defeat by the Romans in A.D. 70, they no longer had the Temple in which to worship and were effectively evacuated from Jerusalem by the victors. In A.D. 135, Emperor Hadrian of the Romans even abolished the names of Judea and Samaria, creating the new name of Palestine for the region in an attempt to blot any memory of the Jewish race. Jerusalem was renamed Aelia Capitolina for the same reason. However, that plan was not going to work as God had future plans for the Jews. On the other hand, it has caused many problems over the centuries, even today, as there are now a group of non-Jewish people who have adopted the name “Palestinians” to help them in their cause – which is, once again, to rid the world of the Jews. Let us see what the Bible says is the ultimate fate of the “promised land”…

 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and **he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of** **a valley; it was full of bones**. And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; **and indeed they were very dry**. **3** And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." **4** Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, **'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord**! **5** Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely **I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live**. **6** I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." ' " **7** So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. **8** Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. **9** Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "**Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live**." ' " **10** So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and **they lived**, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. **11** Then **He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.** They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' **12** Therefore prophesy and say to them, **'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.** **13** Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. **14** **I will put My Spirit in you**, and you shall live, and **I will place you in your own land.** Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.' " Ezek 37:2-14

 'For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. **12** As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will **I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered** on a cloudy and dark day. **13** And **I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land**; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. **14** I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. Ezek 34:11-14

 **the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,**' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.' " Jer 30:3

 'O Lord, save Your people, **The remnant of Israel!' 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth**, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there. Jer 31:7-8

 **At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home**. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes," says the Lord. Zeph 3:20

 These five verses detail God’s final re-gathering of the Jews from the four corners of the earth. There are many similar verses concerning God’s plan for Israel in the end-times. As the time of the end approaches, the Bible states that God will once again reunite His chosen people in the land of their fathers. After many centuries lying dormant, Israel will once again rise from the ashes. Actually, as Ezekiel suggests in his parable of the “dry bones”, Israel was “dead” for all that time – physically there was no nation at all and spiritually the people, as a whole, were out of harmony with God – they had rejected Him.

 Then, on May 15, 1948, Israel became a nation once again! This was quite a remarkable occurrence… in fact, it was totally unique in human history. Never before had a nation of people with its own specific identity been defeated and scattered throughout the world for such a long period of time (in this case it was for over two thousand years) only to come together as a nation again –as the rightful heirs to that nation. Yet, God said that it would happen, near the time of the return of His Son, and it has happened!

 During the last century, millions of Jews have migrated back to their rightful homeland from all over the earth. As Ezekiel has written, they came from the north (e.g. Russia), south (e.g. Africa), east (e.g. many different Muslim countries) and west (e.g. United States).

 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.” Matt 24:32

 This quote of Jesus comes from His Olivet Discourse immediately after telling His disciples about the signs of His coming. Some see this statement by the Lord Jesus as a general affirmation that His return will be quite imminent when certain events begin to happen on the earth. Many prophecy scholars interpret this verse in a more specific manner. People such as Grant Jeffrey believe that Jesus is using the fig tree as a symbol for Israel in this parable. It is typically used in just that way throughout the Scriptures. If that is the case here, Jesus is saying that soon after Israel once again becomes a nation and begins to grow and develop (i.e. the tender branch is putting out leaves), it is to be understood that Jesus will soon thereafter return to Rapture His Church into heaven.

 Mark Hitchcock, in his recent book, *The Amazing Claims of Bible Prophecy*, pointed out that noted preacher J.C. Ryle wrote in the mid-19th century how he was amazed how only the Jew was able to retain their national identity, even two thousand years after they were scattered throughout the entire world. None of the other dispersed peoples were able to claim this… only the Jew. Hitchcock went on to quote Dr. Randall Price, “The modern return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel has been called the “Miracle of the Mediterranean.” Such a return by a people group that had been scattered is unprecedented in history.”…. The mighty empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome all ravaged their land, took their people captive, and scattered them throughout the earth. Even after this, they suffered persecution, pogrom [i.e. organized massacre], and Holocaust in the lands to which they were exiled. Yet, all of these ancient kingdoms have returned to dust…. But the Jewish people whom they enslaved and tried to eradicate live free and have again become a strong nation.”

 Let me make one final point on this topic. Ezekiel noted in his vision of the “dry bones” that first these bones would come to life… this has happened. Next, this living body would soon receive the Spirit of God. That has not yet happened to any significant degree. However, during the Tribulation, God will indeed pour out His Spirit into this newly alive entity. The Jewish people, who have recently returned to Israel in droves, will then turn back to God through their newfound belief in Jesus. They will finally recognize Jesus as their true Messiah!

1. **Judah and Israel reunite:**

After Solomon died, the United Kingdom of Israel was divided. This resulted in a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom. The Southern Kingdom, which included Jerusalem, was called Judah and was composed primarily of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Most of the tribe of Levi also lived in the Southern Kingdom as their duties involved the Temple in Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom, named Israel, was composed of the remaining ten tribes. The Lord has promised to reunite all of the nation of Israel in the end-times…

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, **16** "As for you, son of man, **take a stick for yourself** and write on it: 'For **Judah** and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For **Joseph**, the **stick of Ephraim**, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' **17** Then **join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.** Ezek 37:15-17

'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely **I will take the stick of Joseph**, which is in the **hand of Ephraim**, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and **I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick,** and they will be one in My hand." ' Ezek 37:19

 Ezekiel prophesied concerning these two kingdoms that resulted after the death of King Solomon… Israel (*represented by the* *stick of Ephraim or Joseph*) and Judah. This prophecy came immediately after his prophecy concerning the restoring of the nation of Israel in the latter days.

 The Northern Kingdom (Israel) lasted only two hundred years before God allowed Assyria to conquer it and its people as punishment for their sins. Judah lasted somewhat longer, but eventually God brought the Babylonians in to teach them about the consequences of rejecting Him and His edicts. King Nebuchadnezzar defeated Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. He also brought many Jewish slaves back with him into captivity. Although there were many thousands of Jews who did return to their homeland many years later, most did not.

 However, God had no intention of letting His chosen people languish forever in foreign lands. He had made promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. God never breaks a promise. Therefore, not only have we seen God arrange human events to bring the Jews from all over the world back to their homeland, He has once again united the Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah! There certainly is no separation between the tribes in Israel today. All of the Jews live in relative harmony in Israel today.

1. **Jerusalem becomes part of Israel again:**

In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but **Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place**--Jerusalem. Zech 12:6

And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And **Jerusalem will be trampled** **by Gentiles** **until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled**. Luke 21:24

 In the first quote, Zechariah stated that in the end-times Jerusalem would be inhabited by the Jews once again. Therefore, it was certainly of prophetic interest that a major result of the famous “Six-Day war” in 1967 was the fact that Israel once again regained control of the city of Jerusalem. It is now that nation’s capital city.

 Luke noted that the Jews would not regain permanent control of Jerusalem until the time of the Gentiles was fulfilled. Given the situation today, the time of the Gentiles being “fulfilled” certainly would appear to be just over the horizon. Unfortunately, it is certainly still the case that today many nations continue to bicker about the rightful ownership of this city. This issue will not be totally resolved until the return of Jesus when He will defeat Satan and his forces in the Battle of Armageddon. Be that as it may, there is still no doubt that almost one million Jews live in their capital city, just as the prophet Zechariah said would occur at the end of days.

1. **Jerusalem will be fought over by many nations:** "Behold, **I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples**, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. **3** And it shall happen **in that day** that **I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples**; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. Zech 12:2-3

 **As the preceding verses show, the possession of Jerusalem would be at the center of international turmoil as the time for Christ’s return draws near (“in that day”). Zechariah was writing concerning the end-times when he wrote the words above. It is worth noting that, until these last sixty years, Jerusalem has certainly not been a “very heavy stone for all peoples”. When Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70, and then again was crushed in A.D. 135, it would not have been considered to be a “stone for all peoples”. There have been times in history that this city of God has been fought over, but only at this time in history can it truthfully be stated that Jerusalem has become a “cup of drunkenness” for much of the world. It is quite obvious that Jerusalem is the most fought over city in the world at this time. The world news reports on the conflict over Jerusalem almost daily.**

 The fate of Jerusalem, therefore, has gained the attention of the world. When Israel became a nation once again in May 1948 until 1967, the city of Jerusalem still remained divided. This great city has seen the use of barbed-wire fences, walls, etc. to divide it up between Jewish and Palestinian regions. During the twenty years from 1948-1967, the Jewish Quarter with its synagogues were destroyed. Graves and monuments were desecrated. It was not until the 1967 Six-Day War that Jerusalem and the Temple Mount were liberated. On June 7th, Israeli troops stood at the Western Wall and declared. “We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic era for the Jewish people, and I promise to the Christian world that what we are responsible for we will take care of.” (Rabbi Shlomo Goren)

 Unfortunately, on June 17, 1967, Israeli Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, a secular Jew, gave back control of the Temple Mount to the Supreme Muslim Council. Amazingly, this Israeli was quoted as saying, “We must view the Temple Mount as a historic site relating to past memory.” How could he forget the vast history of the Temple Mount that related to David, Solomon, and even God Himself! The top of the Temple Mount was given over to the Muslims to administer. Today no non-Muslim worship or archaeological activity is allowed on the Temple Mount.
As never before in history, Jerusalem is at the center of today's headlines. The city which grew up around the small walled-village captured by King David from the Jebusites three thousand years ago is the focal point of never-ending debate among the great superpowers. It is a fact that no other city in the world is fought over and discussed more than the “City of David”… Jerusalem. This has truly been the case throughout all history. Jerusalem has been fought over by armies of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans, Byzantines, Persians, Arabs, Crusaders, Mongols, the Turks, the British, and Jordan. Today the United States, the United Nations, Israel, and the Palestinian leadership are almost constantly working to figure out a peaceful way to divide up Jerusalem between Israel and the Muslim Palestinians. This is not going to happen ultimately.

 God states that this city is actually meant for Him! Jerusalem will be where His Son, Jesus, will reign during the Millennial Kingdom. It also becomes obvious after reading the prophecies of the latter days that Israel will retain possession once they have regained it… as they did in 1967. Of course, this is not to say that they will not have to fend off many aggressors over the years.

 Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu has boldly stated that he has no intention of giving control of any additional portion of Jerusalem to any other people or nation. There are strong rumors that the Pope wants to set up a Catholic World Headquarters there. The Muslim nations have no intention of allowing Jews to have any lasting control over what they perceive as one of their holiest cities. In other words, the Jews, Christians and Muslims all consider Jerusalem as very important to their religious heritage. A stalemate has been in existence for decades now. Eventually, the Scriptures tell us, enemy nations will come against Israel in war once again to decide the fate of Israel and its capital city. Given the course of political events and the many signs of the soon coming of Jesus, it would appear that this great time of Tribulation is not far off in the future.
 As we shall see, during the time of the Tribulation, this prophecy will become even more evident as nation after nation will turn their attention to Jerusalem with every intention of bringing it down. However, God will intervene and Israel will win this war. God will not let that great city fall the next time it faces destruction… assuming that we are in the end-times.

 It is very interesting, that seemingly miraculously, Israel was triumphant in the battles against their warring neighbors in 1948, 1967 and 1973. Logic would have strongly suggested that they should have lost every one of those wars… and easily! It really is a worthwhile experience to read about these wars to see the “hand” of God upon Israel as He providentially worked His wonders to direct the final outcome. Something like this will happen during the first war of the Tribulation (to be discussed in the last section). In another “sign of the end-times” to be discussed a little later, some amazing examples concerning a few of the supernatural miracles that God blessed Israel with during these previous wars will be described. God is going to protect Israel and Jerusalem in the coming years!

In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and **the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. 9** It shall be **in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.** Zech 12:8-9

1. **The ancient language of Hebrew returns:**

 The ancient Jews spoke the Hebrew language. However, even by the time of Christ, this language had ceased to exist in everyday usage. After the Assyrians defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C., the ten tribes of those Jews were scattered throughout the surrounding territories and beyond. Later, the Babylonians defeated Judah in 605 B.C., and took tens of thousands of their defeated foes as slaves and workers back to their own country. The remainder migrated off to places such as Egypt. In any event, virtually all of these “chosen people” had to adopt the language of their new homelands. Aramaic, and later, Greek, became the language of the masses. Only the Levite priests continued to use Hebrew (e.g. they felt this was important to use in their Temple ceremonies) by the time the second Temple was built. Five hundred years later, the language of the Jews, even those living in Israel, was either Aramaic, Greek, or Latin.

 Yet, God had plans for His chosen people to not only return to their allotted land, but also to once again speak in their old Hebrew language. Note what God stated through His prophet Zephaniah during the days of the building of the second Temple… "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him with one accord. Zeph 3:9

 Some prophecy scholars do not interpret this verse to mean a pure language in the sense that Jews would once again speak Hebrew. However, many modern prophecy teachers do believe that this is what was meant by the Holy Spirit who spoke through the prophet Zephaniah over 2,500 years ago. In any case, it is quite an incredible fact that after totally dying out of common usage for thousands of years, the original Hebrew language of Israel has returned as a spoken language for God’s “chosen people”, the Jews!

 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda is the man responsible for bringing back Hebrew as the language of the masses in Israel today. He stated in the late 19th century, "The [Hebrew language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) can live only if we revive the nation and return it to the fatherland." As a corollary, he also noted that a return to the use of their original language would be one stimulus to help bring Jews back from around the world to their common homeland. He was correct in this assumption.

1. **The Ethiopian Jews will return prior to the return of Christ:**

 During the time of Solomon, a significant number of Jews migrated to Ethiopia with Prince Menelik, the son of Solomon born to the Queen of Sheba. Members of each of the twelve tribes of Israel accompanied him upon his return. Zephaniah, approximately 400 years later, prophesied that in the latter days, these Jews would return to Israel once again:

From beyond the rivers of **Ethiopia** My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. Zeph 3:10

 The prophet Isaiah had something to say about the Ethiopian contingent of the Diaspora as well. Of course, Ethiopia is south of Israel…

I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; **6** I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' **And to the *south*, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth--** Isaiah 43:5-6

Between 1989 to 1991, approximately 15,000 Ethiopian “Falasha” Jews were air-lifted home to Israel in a wonderful example of the coordinated efforts of several Jewish organizations and the Israeli government to rescue their fellow Jewish brothers and sisters from a possible holocaust (the government in Ethiopia was very unstable at that time) and return them to the home of their *forefathers*. Incredibly, this “Operation Solomon” was accomplished in only 36 hours using 34 planes! Operation Moses and Operation Joshua returned over 8,000 Ethiopian Jews in 1984/85 from Sudan over a period of several months. The point is that thousands of Jews from Ethiopia have recently been brought back to Israel as prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. God is bringing His chosen people from all parts of the globe in these latter days.

1. **God will bless the land of Israel with rain and other sources of water in the latter days:**

**I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19** I will plant in the wilderness the **cedar and the acacia tree**, The **myrtle** and the **oil** tree; I will set in the desert the **cypress** **tree** and the **pine** and the **box** **tree** together, **20** That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it. Isaiah 41:18-20

Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. **He sends you abundant showers**, both autumn and spring rains, as before. Joel 2:23

 In the verses above, the prophets Isaiah and Joel are writing of the latter days. God reveals that He will bless the land of Israel with rain that will change the topography of Israel in these end-times. The desert plains and the wilderness will no longer be arid. Instead, in some fashion, God states that water will appear once again as in Old Testament days. Not only that, but with water now available on the once arid land of Israel, trees will come back onto the land, and, as we shall see below, fruit, vegetables and grapes will now grow in abundance. It is interesting to note from the verses in Isaiah above, God is doing all of this, in part, so that the world will know what “the hand of the Lord has done”. In fact, the vast majority of the signs that will be presented in this section are given by God so that those who are watching expectantly will understand that the coming of the Lord is near.

 When the displaced Jews began their return in earnest in the last half of the 20th century, many brilliant agricultural engineers worked hard to develop the most sophisticated irrigation systems in the entire world. Drip-irrigation techniques have enabled them to use virtually every drop of water available. The outstanding fertilizer product from the Dead Sea has also allowed the Israeli farmer to once again turn that land into lush gardens.

 Over 240 million trees were planted in Israel during the 20th century. Israel is the only nation on earth that ended that century with more trees than it began. An active effort by the people in Israel and many people around the world who support them have teamed up to re-forest much of that land. Now there are scores of forested acres around that country. Dozens of types of trees now grow, including, the olive, almond, fig, date palm, pistachio, acacia, oak, pine and many, many more.

 Although it is still true that Israel could use more rainfall, this past century has noted a significant increase compared to the previous several centuries. Grant Jeffrey states in his book *Armageddon: Appointment With Destiny* that the average yearly rainfall has increased by over ten percent every decade over the last century. Due to the increased forestation, the outstanding irrigation advancements, and the increased rainfall, Israel is fast becoming the beautiful nation promised by God so many centuries ago. One might well assume from this that the end-time promised appearance of Jesus is just over the horizon.

1. **Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit:**  Isaiah 27:6

 In chapter twenty-seven of Isaiah as well as the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, the prophet Isaiah and Moses tell of the centuries that God’s judgment will turn the land of Israel into a virtual desert… no water to speak of and no agriculture. After the Romans brutally defeated the Jews in the war of 70 A.D., the army of Rome stripped the land of much of its trees and orchards. The “promised land” would be abandoned and it would become primarily a desert wasteland. It would continue in this pitiable condition for multiple centuries. Mark Twain wrote of his trip to Israel in the late 19th century… “There is no timber of any consequence.” “There was hardly a tree or shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soul, had almost deserted the country.” “A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action.” “Jerusalem is mournful and dreary and lifeless. I would not desire to live here.” “It is a hopeless, dreary, heartless land.”

 However, all of that has changed miraculously! As was just discussed, Israel has in this last century been blessed with more rainfall and has developed state-of-the-art irrigation techniques that are the envy of the world. Not only has it added a quarter million trees, but God has intervened to turn this land into a place of beauty in many other areas as noted below.

In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations. Ezek 38:8

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall **plant vineyards and drink wine from them**; **They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. 15** I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," Says the Lord your God. Amos 9:14-15

"But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and **yield your fruit** to My people Israel, for they are about to come. **9** For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. Ezek 36:8-9

'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. **34** The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. **35** 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**.' **36** Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. Ezek 36:33-36

 Israel is currently able to produce 95% of its own food requirements and has become a major exporter of vegetables, fruits and flowers to the rest of the world. Flowers (25%), vegetables and field crops (wheat and corn and sorghum) (45%) and fruit (25% including 10% citrus) comprise most of this list. The list of exported fruits (more than forty types) and vegetables is quite long. Cotton is also a major exported crop – nearly $125 million worth per year. Israel is one of the world’s largest flower producers and exporters, even exporting tulips to Amsterdam! The scientists in Israel have made great strides and are world leaders in research and development in modern agricultural techniques, soil enhancers, fertilizers and irrigation methods. Because of the greater quantity of rain and the excellent irrigation methods, now the Jewish farmer can plant more than one crop per year. This was not possible until the latter portion of this past century.

 In the same manner as God spoke through the prophet Isaiah concerning the increased water and forestation in the latter days, He also spoke through Ezekiel and said…

Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. Ezek 36:33-36

1. **Israel will once again, in the end-times, produce sweet wine in abundance:**

'Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. **18** **'In that day the mountains will drip new wine**, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. Joel 3:17-18

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; **The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it.** 14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; **They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;** They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. 15 I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," Says the Lord your God. Amos 9:13-15

 Since coming home to Israel in 1948, the Jewish people have made extraordinary progress in the development of their land. Remember, the land in that area was mostly desert in the hundreds of years before God brought His people back to the land promised to Abraham.

 Now, Israeli wine is produced by hundreds of wineries. A few of the larger companies produce over **ten million bottles per year**. In 2010 Israel wine exports will amount to $30 million produced by 150 wineries.

 The modern Israeli wine industry was founded by Baron [Edmond James de Rothschild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmond_James_de_Rothschild), owner of the [Bordeaux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bordeaux_%28wine%29) estate [Château Lafite-Rothschild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_Lafite-Rothschild). Today, Israeli winemaking takes place in five vine-growing regions: Galilee (including the [Golan Heights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights)), the [Judean Hills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judean_Hills), surrounding the city of [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem); [Shimshon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimshon) (Samson), located between the Judean Hills and the [Coastal Plain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_Plain); the [Negev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev), a [semi-arid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-arid) desert region, where [drip irrigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip_irrigation_%28wine%29) has made grape growing possible; and the [Sharon plain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharon_plain) near the [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) coast and just south of [Haifa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haifa), which is the largest grape growing area in Israel. In 2007, [Robert Parker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_M._Parker%2C_Jr.)'s [The Wine Advocate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wine_Advocate) awarded 14 Israeli wines its highest wine rating of "outstanding."

 Israel has emerged as an excellent producer of wine in the Mediterranean region. It exports much of what it produces, more to the United States than any other country. Along with the land being very suitable for the growing of excellent grapes, Israel is a world leader in the technological aspects of wine production. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Chardonnay are three of the more popular types of wine coming from Israel. Certainly, there is no doubt that the prophets Joel and Amos were correct when they made their end-times prophecies some 2,500 years ago. As Amos said, “The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.”

1. **God will provide birds of prey and wild animals to clean up the dead:**

The apocalyptic books of the Bible reference many wars that will arise just prior to the coming of the Lord. Ezekiel (chapters 38 and 39) wrote concerning a war that will precede Armageddon and wreck terrible damage and death upon the forces that invade Israel. Asaph, the Psalmist, also wrote of another fierce war that would result in much death and destruction (i.e. Psalm 83). Certainly, the war that will result in more death than all others will be the war of Armageddon. Due to the combination of massive manpower, powerful armaments and, most likely, nuclear destruction, millions of people will die on the battle fields of Israel. As God will be supernaturally protecting Israel, most of the dead will be enemy combatants. God wrote long ago of one method that He planned to use to clean up the battlefields…

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the **birds** that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, **18** that **you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.**" **19** And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. **21** And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And **all the birds were filled with their flesh**. Rev 19:17-21

You (Gog, present day Russia) shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; **I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.**  Ezek 39:4

thus says the Lord God, **'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field**: "Assemble yourselves and come; Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal Which I am sacrificing for you, **A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, That you may eat flesh and drink blood. 18 You shall eat the flesh of the mighty,** Ezek 39:17-18

**The Lord is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies**. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. For **the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in Edom. 7** And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat. **8** For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause. **9** Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch! **10** It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again. **11** **The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there.** God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation…….. **13** **Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for owls. 14** **Desert creatures will meet with hyenas, and wild goats will bleat to each other;** there the night creatures will also repose and find for themselves places of rest. **15** **The owl will nest there and lay eggs**, she will hatch them, and care for her young under the shadow of her wings; **there also the falcons will gather, each with its mate.** Isaiah 34:2,6-12,13-15

 In the verses from Revelation, Ezekiel, and Isaiah listed above, God is warning the nations that will come against Israel in the last days that it will certainly not end well for them. In fact, millions of Israel’s enemies will die in the battle of Armageddon which will take place at Megiddo. Jesus Christ Himself will defeat the forces of Satan at that time. Much will be learned concerning this in the last section of this treatise. As noted above, many more will die in the battles described in Ezekiel 38/39 and the 83rd Psalm. What preparations might God be making for these battlefields now? One should keep in mind that there probably will be a significant component of nuclear debris that will make this clean-up process very difficult and dangerous.

 Note, that there must be massive quantities of birds of prey in order to accomplish the cleaning up of the dead on that massive battlefield… at least in the manner God sees fit to “clean it up”, so to speak. That, in turn, brings us to the point of this “sign”… interestingly enough, the plains of Megiddo have the greatest population of this kind of bird in the entire world! Number one in the world! A coincidence? Maybe… or maybe not. Up to one billion birds of this ilk fly over Israel each spring. One to four billion migratory birds, many being raptors-carrion (eaters of dead flesh) fly over the land of Israel in the fall. Thirty-four species of these man-eating birds of prey visit or live in the area of Megiddo! Israel has turned the area of Megiddo into a preserve for these birds of prey, and they are flourishing. Tiny Israel is a land bridge: because Israel is connected to Egypt, birds don’t have to make the difficult journey over the Mediterranean. They fly by way of Israel… some stop off and stay there living in the preserves that have been set up in recent decades. These birds are apparently readying themselves for quite a feast to come.

 Along with the numerous birds of prey in the area of Megiddo, there are significant numbers of these birds and wild desert animals in the Petra and Bozrah region just below the Dead Sea as well. This area will be where many of the enemies of Israel fall in battle during the earlier wars of the Tribulation. The bottom line is that God in His providence has provided for an amazing quantity of *birds of prey* and *scavenger animals* in the exact areas that the Bible foretellswill one day be filled with fallen enemy forces. After the war detailed in Ezekiel, it will take seven years for the clean-up to be completed… probably taking so long due the utmost care that will be required after nuclear contamination. These birds and animals will be useful in this gruesome, yet necessary, activity.

1. **Jerusalem will be an un-walled city in the last days:**

You will say, 'I will go up against **a land of unwalled villages**; I will go to a peaceful **people, who dwell safely, all of them** **dwelling without walls**, and having neither bars nor gates'-- **12** to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. Ezek 38:11-12

**'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls** Zech 2:4

 Ezekiel and Zechariah both wrote of the time just prior to the return of Jesus when Jerusalem would once again be occupied by the Jews. The re-gathering by God would have resulted in a well populated city. The interesting thing, however, is that the city would no longer be protected by the walls that were so necessary in the times during which they lived. Although this prophecy must have seemed odd to those two great prophets, as they wrote it down, it has certainly come true today.

 Modern Jerusalem, as is true of virtually all modern cities, does not have a wall surrounding it for protection from foreign invaders. This certainly would not have been easy for a man to foresee when this prediction was made over 2500 years ago! Of course, a man did not predict this… it was a prophecy from God.

 In the days when this prophecy was written, all cities of any note were protected by fortified walls. This was true of Jerusalem. Remember, Nehemiah was allowed to return to his homeland for the express purpose of rebuilding the walls, as it was such a critically important item for the city’s defense. However, even though Ezekiel had just prophesied that Jerusalem was going to be attacked by many surrounding nations, he followed up that prophecy with the one about the city of Jerusalem not having any fortifying walls around its borders! Why in the world would they do that?! The answer today is obvious. Walls would be of no real value in this day of airplanes and missiles and artillery. Other methods of defense have long since replaced the city wall. God, of course, was privy to this knowledge…but, only God would have known about this twenty-five hundred years ago!

1. **The Eastern Gate will remain closed until the coming of Messiah:**

Then the man brought me back to the **outer gate of the sanctuary**, **the one facing east**, and it was shut. **2** **The Lord said to me, "This gate is to remain shut**. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered through it. **3** **The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the Lord. He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way."**  Ezek 44:1-3

 **When Jesus entered into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, He, almost assuredly, walked through the Eastern Gate. In A.D. 70, the Roman army totally destroyed the Temple and much of the city. This gate was certainly destroyed at that time. Most historians believe that the gate was rebuilt over the remnants of the earlier one in approximately A.D. 520. About one thousand years later (A.D. 1530), the Ottoman Turks sealed the gate shut to prevent the future prophesied entrance of the Messiah. Even a cemetery was placed in front of this sealed gate for the same purpose… to keep the Messiah from passing through the gate. It is the only one of the eleven gates to the city that has been sealed. Although the Muslim leader,** Suleiman, ordered the gate sealed in an attempt to prevent the fulfillment of prophecy, he instead, allowed for its fulfillment.

 **Ezekiel wrote that the Eastern Gate of the Temple would remain closed until the Messiah returns.  At Christ's Second Coming, he will enter Jerusalem through the now sealed Eastern Gate.  As one would expect, today, as predicted, the Eastern Gate remains sealed.**

 One day, the Messiah will land on the Mount of Olives, with all His saints, and walk down to and right through the Eastern Gate and into the Temple area. **What will happen with the cemetery is unknown… however, the Eastern Gate will remain closed only until the Messiah returns.**

1. **Israel will deny the true Messiah until the time of the Gentiles is completed:** Although it is certainly true that God has brought his chosen people back into the land of Israel and has granted them all of the blessings discussed in this section and many more, the Bible says that the nation of Israel will still not recognize Jesus as Messiah until the Church Age is over… after the Rapture. Of course, there will always be a remnant that know the truth, but God will not turn the nation, as a whole, towards the truth of His Son until the Tribulation period.

 It is common knowledge that the vast majority of Jews do not believe in Jesus as their Messiah, let alone **as** the Son of God, at this time. The Bible states that God will lead them back into the truth during and because of the events of the Tribulation. Of course, this will be after the completion of the time of the Gentiles and the Church Age in which we currently live. Jesus, Himself, told the Jews of His time that they would not see Him again until they, as a nation, would be willing to say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'*  Luke 13:35

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that **blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**. **26** And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: *"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,* *And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Isaiah 59:20)* Romans 11:25-26

1. **The returning Jews will have no king until Jesus reigns over His Millennial Kingdom:**

For the children of Israel shall abide many days **without king or prince**, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. **5** Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness **in the latter days**. Hosea 3:4-5

 **As with all of the Bible’s other prophecies, undoubtedly, this is also true. Not since Zedekiah was murdered by the Babylonians has either Judah or Israel been ruled by a king or prince. This was over 2500 years ago! Amazingly, not only is Israel no longer a theocracy, but today the Jewish state is governed by a democracy comprised of approximately thirty political parties. There are no plans to change this form of government. In fact, this democratic rule will not change until Jesus returns and sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth. As the verse from Hosea suggests, when the Jews return and seek their Lord God, they will regain both their God and their King. As the last verse says, this will occur “in the latter days.”**

1. **The Sanhedrin have been reestablished after over 1,500 years:**

On October 13, 2004, seventy-one rabbis were ordained into the newly formed Sanhedrin. This was quite a momentous occasion as this august ruling body had not been in existence for over 1,550 years! The original Sanhedrin court met for the first time when Moses selected seventy leaders to help him judge the people after they left Egypt…

The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. **17** I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone. Num 11:16-17

 Ezra reinstituted this ruling body after the Jews returned from Babylon. It continued until A.D. 453 when it met for the last time in Tiberias. Until 2004, Israel and the Jewish people were without this court to rule on important religious issues. However, since early 2005, this new Sanhedrin has met regularly to discuss things such as the building of the third Temple, the selection and training of Levitical priests for future positions in the Temple, and many other important religious topics. In recent years, they have worked to hire architects to develop plans for the future Temple and raise money for all necessary future religious projects. The most important of these projects is the building of the Temple and acquiring all of its associated furniture and utensils.

 The return of the Sanhedrin is very important in regards to the return of Jesus. **For the Temple to be rebuilt, and the many prophecies to be fulfilled related to this, the Sanhedrin must be in their proper spiritual and political leadership position.** Now that has been accomplished. The most important decisions on the Temple will be made by this body of rabbis. They have recently determined, interestingly, that the Temple can be built without removing the Muslim’s Dome of the Rock. This decision was made after careful study and consideration of the historical records. This is just one example of the type of decision that they are able to make that will affect future Jewish religious life in Israel.

1. **The Third Temple will exist during the Tribulation:**

Plans for the third Temple are well underway. As will be presented in many of the paragraphs that follow, much effort is being undertaken in preparation for the rebuilding of the Temple of God. It is abundantly clear through the reading of the Scriptures that the Temple will be standing and in use during the Tribulation. Note just a few of these verses…

"**Rise and measure the temple of God**, the altar, and those who worship there. **2** But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

Rev 11:1-2

"**On that day** I will raise up the Tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; Amos 9:11

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall **take away the daily sacrifices***,* and place there the abomination of desolation. Dan 11:31-32

Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day will not come unless** the falling away comes first, and **the man of sin is revealed**, the son of perdition, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that **he sits as God in the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thess 2:3-4

 There is absolutely no doubt that there will be a third Temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation Period that follows the Rapture. There are many verses that speak to this fact. For example, the books of *Daniel* and *The Revelation* note that half-way through the Tribulation period, the Temple of God will be desecrated by the Antichrist. Obviously, the Temple must be in place for this to occur. There are many other examples that could be given to show that the Temple will be in existence during that time. That being true, and knowing that the Tribulation most probably begins soon after the Rapture, it is likely that significant plans related to the rebuilding of the Temple would already be underway before Jesus comes for His saints in the air (i.e. the Rapture). As it turns out, the Israeli’s have spent a great amount of time and money preparing to build their next Temple and return to proper Temple worship as directed in their Scriptures.

 For at least twenty years, the Temple Institute has put forth much effort in planning for the building of the next Temple. Recent reports suggest that the plans are complete! All that awaits is the proper political situation to begin to erect what will become the third Temple… the Tribulation Temple. Most prophecy scholars believe that this situation will come very soon after the Antichrist comes onto the world scene and becomes the broker in arriving at a peace treaty between Israel and her enemies. While basking in his victory, and with the knowledge that he will one day take over the use of the Temple himself, he will allow the Jews to build their Temple. However, this peace will be a false peace, soon to come crashing down when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple just 3 ½ years later.

1. **Sacred Temple Vessels:**

Certainly, when the Jews once again are given the opportunity to use their Temple they will have all of the necessary Temple equipment, clothing, utensils and vessels described in the Old Testament. Intriguingly, artisans have been excitedly at work in fashioning all of these needed items for many years. The people of the Temple Institute have prepared almost one hundred sacred worship objects described in the Torah. These articles even include the linen garments for the Levite priests. Some of these items are quite expensive. For example, a menorah completed over a decade ago and just waiting for use in the Temple cost over $400,000 to complete. It consists of over ninety-two pounds of pure gold. Virtually everything is ready and waiting for service in the third Temple!

1. **Levitical Priesthood:**

 One other interesting aspect of the work of the Temple Institute is their recruiting and training of men for the priesthood. Of course, these men come from the tribe of Levi. Orthodox Jewish Bible colleges have trained over five hundred young men for this important position. All of the necessary training, including the preparation for playing of musical instruments, has been completed. These priests are only waiting for the right moment of opportunity and now stand ready to serve their God.

1. **Oil of Anointing:**

 The special oil required for Temple worship services was prepared by the priests using five specific ingredients. This oil was used to anoint the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant, and the High Priest. It will be needed for proper Temple worship in the future Temple(s).

And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. **26** With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; **27** the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; **28** the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. **29** You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. **30** And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. **31** And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. Ex 30:25-31

 This would appear to present a problem. Where would one find this oil so many years after Jerusalem and the Temple was razed to the ground? One of the ingredients, from a rare plant called “sweet cinnamon” was apparently lost forever some two thousand years ago. Substitutions would not due. Unfortunately, Roman soldiers burned down the only two groves in Israel where this plant was known to grow in A.D. 70! No one knows where or if it is still available today. Jewish scholars throughout history taught that the lack of the special and necessary “oil of anointing’ was going to make reinstituting Temple worship impossible… as the priests would not be able to anoint the Temple with the oil as commanded by God. Not only that, but Daniel prophesied that the Messiah would be anointed with the oil upon His return. Well, God could miraculously solve this problem. In fact, it appears that He did.

 In 1952, a now famous copper scroll was found in “Cave 8” at Qumran (one of the Dead Sea caves) during an archaeological “dig”. This scroll revealed information that then led other archaeologists to another cave, Cave 811 where a clay vessel containing a solidified gelatinous substance was discovered. It was buried three feet deep and wrapped in palm leaves. The hope was that this gel was the ancient “oil of anointing.” The actual oil prescribed by God had five specific ingredients that were noted in Exodus 30:23-26. These were myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia, and oil olive an hin. Incredibly, chemical analysis has shown this clay jar to contain the actual “oil of anointing”… 2,000 years old! Wow! Temple worship may now begin.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid **myrrh**, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of **fragrant cinnamon**, 250 shekels of **fragrant cane**, 500 shekels of **cassia**--all according to the sanctuary shekel--and **a hin of olive oil.**  Ex 30:22-24

1. **Ark of the Covenant:**

Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the Lord, "that they will say no more, **'The ark of the covenant of the Lord**.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. **17** At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts. **18** In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers. Jer 3:16-18

 The verses written by Jeremiah point out that after the Jews are settled in Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom, with Jesus Christ reigning from His throne, the Ark of the Covenant will no longer be needed. Therefore, it will no longer be something that any of the people think about or visit any longer. That verse, of course, suggests that prior to the onset of the Kingdom, the Ark was something that was on the mind of the people… and was used in their worship (they “visited” it). Given that the actual Ark of the Covenant as of this point in history has not been used for worship in the Temple for over 2500 years, it is very logical to conclude that it will be brought back into service during the Tribulation. It would certainly be odd if the Temple were rebuilt, the Levitical Priests returned to their proper duties, all of the Temple services were re-instituted… except for the most important of all, those services requiring the Ark of the Covenant. For all of these reasons, it is apparent that the Ark will be returned in time for use in the third Temple of God. It is interesting to review the recent evidence with respect to the current location of the famous Ark. Grant Jeffrey spendsa great deal of time reviewing this data in his book, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*.

 First of all, it is actually true that the Ark of the Covenant was pursued by the Axis Powers in the 1930s. Mussolini, in particular, wanted to find and possess this great Judeo-Christian artifact because of the powers that it was purported to have. Hitler also was intrigued by the possibilities that his evil mind was able to conjure up. This was the basis of the movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The reason that Mussolini went into Ethiopia is because that was the location that the Ark (or an exact duplicate) was taken to by the son of King Solomon through the Queen of Sheba. This fine looking son of Solomon and Sheba, Prince Menelik I, may have taken the actual Ark there for safe-keeping.

 Supposedly, Solomon ordered his craftsmen to build an exact replica of the actual Ark so that his beloved son could take it back with him to Ethiopia when he returned there as a young man. Many believe that Menelik, in fact, took the actual Ark in an effort to keep it safe from foreign invaders that he feared would take it from Israel after the death of his father. The unfortunate fact is that Solomon was being adversely influenced late in his life by pagan women. In any case, Menelik did return to Ethiopia with one of the two arks and took many Jews along with him. Of course, these Jews grew in number greatly through the centuries. They are now called the Falasha Jews… who returned in the 1990s as discussed earlier.

 Over the years, many people have reported that the Ark is in Ethiopia. Most of these people believe that it ended up in Aksum, a holy city in Ethiopia… in the Church of St. Mary. Grant Jeffrey goes into great detail about many varied reports over the last eighty years about the Ark being safely guarded in Ethiopia. For example, Prince Mengesha Seyoum, the governor-general of Ethiopia was interviewed on America television in 1990. He stated that the Ark was then safely hidden and protected in St Mary’s of Zion in Aksum. He even showed a secret underground passage where the Ark has been kept for all these centuries (~3,000 years). There is an elaborate system of tunnels that also was described in that interview. This is one of three current popular theories as to the whereabouts of the famous Ark of the Covenant. One other theory follows.

 There are many people who believe that the Ark that Menelik took with him was, in fact, a copy. The real Ark was left back in the Temple. Of course, the Temple no longer exists. However, many prophecy scholars say that the Ark was hidden underground in an extremely elaborate and deep tunnel system way back around the time of Solomon. The exact time that the Ark was hidden away is not known. Yet, there are Hebrew priests who have claimed to have actually ***seen*** the Ark of the Covenant under the Temple Mount carefully hidden away. On May 15, 1992, on the show “Ancient Secrets of the Bible”, Rabbi Yahuda Getz claimed to have seen the Ark under the Temple Mount in one of the tunnel chambers… but from about a fifty foot distance. Another man, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, was with him. They were afraid of violating proper scriptural procedure and did not immediately walk right up to it – one can understand this as others have dropped dead in their tracks for improper handling of the Ark. Before they had a better opportunity to examine these holy items of God, the Arabs broke through and into the tunnel structure from above and sealed the entire contents from further examination. Apparently, the items that were seen in the underground tunnels at that time will have to wait for another opportunity to be revealed.

 There is even one more story concerning the Ark and its current whereabouts. In this report, sources told Grant Jeffrey that an elite team of Israeli Special Forces flew into Ethiopia, carried the Ark out from its location beneath the Church of St. Mary, and then took it back to its current, secure location in Jerusalem. The real Ark, they say, is now back in Jerusalem awaiting the new Temple.

 In summary, the real Ark is either in an underground secure tunnel system in Ethiopia, underneath the Temple Mount in one of the many tunnel systems, or nearby the Temple Mount somewhere safe in Jerusalem… or somewhere else. Time will tell… but, many, if not most, prophecy scholars believe that it is in one of the three locations mentioned above. If not, God will reveal its location at the proper time.

1. **Blue Dye for the garments of the High Priest:**

"You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. Ex 28:31

 The high priest wore robes that were dyed with a very special and rare blue dye. More importantly, this blue dye came from a rare source. This dye was known as *tchelet*. Since the days of the Second Temple, the source of this dye has vanished. Jewish sources have written that it was going to be impossible to reinstitute proper Temple worship due to this serious problem – God requires that His instructions be followed and the High Priest’s robe needs to be colored with the appropriate blue dye.

 Fortunately, in the late 1990’s, Jewish divers discovered the hillazon snail in the Red Sea. Amazingly, this is what is required to make the blue dye! The Temple Institute has already made a fine supply of this requisite dye and used it to properly color the beautiful newly tailored robes. God’s providential intervention is always at work!

1. **A red heifer without blemish must be born and sacrificed to purify the temple in Israel:**

"This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a **red heifer without blemish**, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. **3** You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; **4** and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. **5** Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. **6** And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. **7** Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. **8** And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. **9** Then a man who is clean shall gather up **the ashes of the heifer**, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they **shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin** Num 19:2-9

**I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25**Then **I will sprinkle *clean water* on you, and you shall be clean**; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Ezek 36:24-25

 This is a very interesting sign. Ezekiel notes that the Israelites will be gathered together from all the nations into which they have been scattered, and then brought back into their promised land. Prior to their resumption of proper worship, they will need **proper ceremonial cleansing**… as will the new Temple that they will build for worship and meeting with God. Unfortunately, ashes of a “perfect” red heifer are needed for this ceremonial cleansing… and their whereabouts are currently unknown. In fact, the Copper Scroll that was found in 1952 stated that the last offering of the sacrifice of the red heifer was in A.D. 68. Two years later, Jerusalem was attacked by the Romans. Prior to this attack, priests were able to hide the ashes along with other important items and bury them for later use. However, as already noted, no one today knows their current location. Interestingly, directions are given in the scroll concerning where to look for the buried goods. Given the changes in terrain in the past two thousand years and the somewhat nebulous instructions, the directions have so far been too difficult to follow… of course, that may well change.

 Whatever the current situation may be, God, in the Old Testament Scriptures, states that certain rites of purification are required to dedicate the Temple of the Lord. Since a new Temple will be built prior to the mid-point of the coming Tribulation, it is obvious that whatever is needed for proper ceremonial cleansing must be available by that time. The Temple and the ancient stones on the Temple Mount (which have been defiled by blood over the centuries) both need to be cleansed via a specific ritual cleansing. A red heifer is needed. Moses Maimonides (the great Jewish rabbi and Torah scholar of the 12th century) believed that there were only nine red (spotless) heifers ever used in the making of the ashes. He said that the tenth one would come on the scene only when the Messiah was ready to appear.

 Therefore, if we are living in times that are close to the second coming of Christ, it would make good sense if the ashes of a spotless red heifer would soon come onto the scene. The people in the Jewish Temple Institute clearly understand the need for this special animal. In fact, since the 1990’s, several red cattle have been bred in hopes that one will be born without a blemish of any kind. There have been a couple of occasions where it looked like a perfect red heifer had been born… only to have a slight defect appear after aging for two to three years. In fact, Rabbi Reichman of the Institute had even certified one of these animals just a little while before it showed its color defect. Unfortunately, in an area that had been bruised, a few white hairs began to grow. At a ranch in Mt. Carmel, cattle continues to be bred, waiting for the necessary red heifer – the one born a pure red color and without one blemish. Certainly, God will produce the needed heifer whenever the time is right… it is possible that this animal is already alive today!

1. **In the last days, Israel will be surrounded by Arab enemy nations:**

 **The prophet Asaph who lived during the time of King David, wrote the Psalm that appears below. In it he told of the coming day when Israel would be surrounded by many enemy nations who would come against them from all sides. The prophet calls on God to help His “people” in the ensuing conflict. He asks God to pursue the enemy, frighten them, and shame them, so that these enemy forces might know without any question that their God was the Lord, Most High, over all of the earth.**

 **Certainly, it is true that Israel was surrounded by enemies as described by Asaph during the times that he wrote. There are many Bible commentators who view Psalm 83 (see below) as referencing only the times back in the Kingdom Age of Israel. Lately however, there are many prophecy scholars who see an eerie similarity between the nations that are mentioned in this Psalm and the nations that currently threaten Israel. Very possibly, as is true with so many of Old Testament prophecies, there was a true and proper fulfillment for this prophecy for the time not long after Asaph lived as well as a future fulfillment in the latter days.**

 **In any case, be it an impressive coincidence or prophecy, a fairly straight forward study of current events shows that the nations that Asaph wrote concerning will very likely be involved in a future conflict with Israel. The prophecy follows:**

Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, And do not be still, O God! **2** For behold, **Your enemies make a tumult**; And those who hate You have lifted up their head. **3** They have taken crafty counsel against **Your people**, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones. **4** **They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."** **5** For they have consulted together with one consent; **They form a confederacy against You**: **6** The tents of **Edom** **and the Ishmaelites**; **Moab** and **the Hagrites**; **7** **Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; 8 Assyria** also has joined with them; They have helped the **children of Lot**. Psalms 83:1-8

**So pursue them with Your tempest, And frighten them with Your storm. 16 Fill their faces with shame, That they may seek Your name, O Lord.** **17** Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; Yes, let them be put to shame and perish, **18** That they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth. Psalms 83:15-18

Here are the locations for each of the nations mentioned above:

* Edom and the Ishmaelites – located south and east of the Dead Sea
* Moab – located east of the Dead Sea
* Hagrites – located northeast of the Dead Sea (Lindsey says Saudi Arabia)
* Gebal – current day Lebanon
* Ammon – located east of the Dead Sea, just north of Moab
* Amalek – located southeast of Israel
* Philistia – located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea – south-central modern day Israel
* Tyre – located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Galilee
* Assyria – near modern day Syria – north of Israel
* In summary, the nations that today represent those ancient nations above are: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian territories within Israel.

Note that they surround the little country of Israel, excluding the fact that the west side of Israel is mostly bordered by the Mediterranean Sea.

 Certainly, each of these modern day countries have reason to want Israel defeated. There are certainly similarities between the nations listed here. If this Psalm does have prophetic significance, and this is debatable, it will be interesting to see the future interactions between all of the nations mentioned above. In any case, all of these nations have a long standing animous towards the Jews and their nation, Israel… just as Asaph noted so very long ago. God told them and the world through His Holy Word that Israel would be hated through the ages by other nations… and they certainly have been.

1. **Israel will remain invincible after it becomes a nation again until Jesus needs to come onto the scene at the Battle of Armageddon:**

 **Since 1948, Israel has been attacked in three major wars and six lesser wars, yet, despite being vastly outnumbered, they have destroyed all attacking foes. Some of the stories concerning those wars have shown to almost any open-minded thinker that God, supernaturally, had a significant hand in those victories.**

 **There is absolutely no evidence in Old or New Testament prophecies that Israel will be defeated once they have been gathered from the four corners of the earth by God. Instead, God will bring His chosen people back to Israel and provide them with all of the other blessings that are being described within these pages. At some point in the not too distant future, after the land of Israel (including Jerusalem) is in the possession of the Jews once again, the Messiah will return to earth. Until His return God will protect Israel from foreign invasion… “the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem”. He will “seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” There will finally come a war at the end of the Great Tribulation for which Jesus, Himself, will return to earth and will provide the victory for Israel over the forces of evil. Until that time, God will bring victory to Israel using amazing providential miracles. A few examples of these miracles will be given after the biblical verses that follow…**

In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place--Jerusalem. **7** "The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. **8** **In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David,** **and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. 9** It shall be in that day that **I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.** **10** "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Zech 12:6-10

**For behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'** " **4** Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. **5** "For thus says the Lord: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. **6** Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? **7** Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And **it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it**. Jer 30:3-7

Behold, **the day of the Lord is coming**, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. **3** Then **the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 4 And in that day (this speaks of Armageddon when Jesus will come to save Israel) His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two.**  Zech 14:1-4

 Israel has been involved in several wars since it became a nation once again in 1948. As the Bible prophesied, God has protected them from all foreign aggression ever since. A country of only seven million people as of 2009 (and, of course, markedly less in the 1950s and 1960s), Israel has been victorious in the 1948 War of Independence, 1956 Suez Crisis, the very amazing 1967 Six Day War, the War of Attrition (1968-1970), the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Lebanon War of 1982, and they were solely responsible for taking out the Iranian Nuclear program (bombed the Osirik Reactor) in June 1981. There was a stalemate of sorts a couple of years ago, but Israel has not lost a war since their reformation… and, the likelihood of that looks miniscule given what Zechariah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had to say 2,500 years ago. Since 1948, Israel has won three major wars and six smaller skirmishes against vastly great forces; although they were sometimes outnumbered by over 25 to 1!

 Although each one of the wars that Israel has fought since their independence in 1948 has had evidence of divine intervention, the six-day war is replete with multiple examples. However, all of the wars that Israel has been involved in over the past six decades have had their share of miraculous, Godly interventions. The following are just a few of the apparent miracles that occurred during the Six-Day War and the Yon Kippur War. An interesting example is also noted from a battle in 1958.

 In the well known war of 1967, a vastly inferior number of men with vastly inferior armaments ended up bringing victory to the forces of God. Even *Life Magazine* reported that "Israel's victory on five fronts in a short sixty hours, is absolutely astonishing". Here are some extraordinary events from that and other recent Israeli conflicts:

1. Egypt came at Israel from the southwest, Syria from the north and Jordan from the east. Estimates were that 465,000 troops, over 2,800 tanks, and approximately 800 aircraft were ready to attack on those three borders with Israel. The rabbis in Jerusalem were readying public parks to be used as cemeteries. The Soviet Union had poured $2 billion worth of arms into the Arab nations. Israel's enemies brought at least twice as many soldiers, three times as many tanks and four times as many airplanes to the battlefield. Yet, they lost!
2. Just a few days before the war began, new and inexperienced officers were placed in command of the majority of the Egyptian brigades.

On the morning of June 5, 1967, Israeli planes attacked the Egyptian planes while still on the ground and gained an incredible victory. Although the Israeli planes were spotted in plenty of time for the Egyptian planes to get up in the air and escape destruction, there was a “comedy of errors” in the ranks that resulted in no one giving the command for the Egyptian pilots to get their planes in the air. For just one example, late the previous night the commander in chief and many of his top officers were busy watching a belly dancer perform. This led to their not being available the next morning for the onset of some very important duty... as the war began!

1. The most striking aspects of godly intervention revolved around multiple angelic sightings by both Israeli and Arab forces. In each instance, these angels helped the Israeli army to victory. Remember, there were multiple reports from various sources and at various times. These were really angels!
2. An example from the 1950’s of an angelic intervention: The Israeli soldier, Gershon Salomon, a member of the IDF in 1958, was involved in a battle on the Golan Heights against the Syrian Army. After being run over by an enemy tank, the Syrian soldiers advanced toward him to “finish him off”. Suddenly, they ran away. Why? **At a later date, Syrians soldiers reported to United Nations officers that they had seen thousands of angels around Salomon and had, therefore, fled in haste.  At this same time that the Syrians were running away, Gershon heard the voice of God speaking to him. God was not yet finished with him. In fact, he became convinced that God wanted him to devote the remainder of his life to work on the Temple Mount. Salomon became the leader of the Temple Mount Faithful organization.**
3. After evaluating the many reports that he heard from all combatants that he interviewed and seeing for himself the course of the six-day war, the military correspondent for the secular Haaretz Newspaper summed it up with the report: “*Even a non-religious person must admit this war was fought with help from heaven.*”
4. Col. Uri Banari gave an interesting account of the Israeli conquest of Shechem. Although the total story is more involved, the essence is that thousands of Arabs mistook advancing Israeli troops for their own allies. The Israeli army just walked in while their enemy welcomed them by waving white handkerchiefs! The enemy crowds cheered their entrance! At one point, finally, a shot was fired in the air by one of the Jewish soldiers because an Arab guard refused to disarm. The Arabs ran for cover, followed this with the raising of the white flag of surrender, and that battle was over… although it cannot really be called a battle. Later, it came out that the Arab forces there had mistaken the Israeli army for an allied Iraq force. Once again, God’s providential care came to the aid of Israel. It surely can be easy when God does the fighting.
5. At one point, an Egyptian truck mounted with machine guns approached two lone soldiers, each with a rifle and a few bullets. Having been caught unaware, these two young Israelis waited for the worst. They knew their time had come to die, so they aimed their guns and prepared to go down fighting. The truck stopped. No shots rang out. They slowly approached the truck. Still no shots. When they arrived at a point where they could see into the truck, eighteen enemy soldiers were looking out at them in fear for their own lives. Quickly, the Israeli soldiers yelled out, “Hands up!” That did it. The Arabs gave up immediately. The two lone Jewish men walked the enemy men back to their base. On the way, one of them asked why the eighteen men did not simply blast away at the two Jews with their guns and or the machine guns. Amazingly, the answer was, “I don’t know. My arms froze – they became paralyzed. My whole body was paralyzed, and I don’t know why.” That same Israeli soldier replied later when questioned, “How can one say that God didn’t help us?”
6. The Six-Day War resulted in an incredibly unlikely series of events leading up to an impressive victory for Israel. Israeli forces fought hard and courageously. However, it was so apparent to the officers at West Point that there was no way that Israel should have won that war on its own merits, that they will not even study that war in their classes concerning the tactics and strategy of war. In other words, given that an army cannot typically plan on God intervening so blatantly and frequently to bring it victory, the faculty at West Point felt it a waste of their time to study the tactics of that particular war. One of their generals said that what concerns West Point is the study of tactics and strategy, not miracles. That is quite a revealing statement!
7. Yom Kippur War: At one point in this 1973 war, an Israeli soldier took captive a column of Egyptian soldiers (as did Sgt. York in WWI), and led them to his fellow soldiers and captivity. When asked why he allowed a lone soldier to capture his entire group of men, the Egyptian responded with surprise, ”One soldier?  There were thousands of them.” He reported seeing all of these Jewish soldiers from a distance. As he approached, eventually all but the one Israeli soldier disappeared. However, the Egyptian column surrendered in fear of their lives. Of course, the Israeli soldier was mystified, as he was not privy to the surrounding army of angels provided by God. God has promised that Israel will not again be defeated and lose their nation, ”No evil shall befall you,nor shall any plague come near your dwelling, For He shallgive his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.” Psalm 91:10-11
8. Yom Kippur War: Commander David Yinni, was preparing to retreat from the Syrian army, when he realized that he and his men were trapped in the middle of a minefield.  He quickly ordered his men to hit the dirt and by crawling carefully, and using their bayonets, to clear the mines. They had to dig over two feet deep and then carefully disengage each encountered mine. The slightest mistake, and they would be blown up.  They had to finish clearing the mines in order to escape the oncoming Syrian force. The morning was approaching quickly. This was a painstaking job and it was taking far too long to finish in time. **One of his men prayed. Suddenly, a windstorm came upon them out of nowhere.  It was so strong that it lifted up their tanks and rocked them.** By the time the storm moved on, it had literally blown 30 inches of topsoil off.  That was seemingly impossible, yet it happened! The Israeli soldiers could then see every single mine, walk between them and quickly make their escape. God once again had saved His people.

 In conclusion, God has His hand on Israel and will continue to protect this nation throughout these end-times and into the Tribulation. Plenty of other nations will try to drive Israel into the sea, but none will succeed. Many a miracle will be sent by God, as necessary, to defend that little country of promise. It will be interesting to watch in the years to come.

1. **Jerusalem rebuilt in nine specific directions:**

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that the city (Jerusalem) shall be built for the Lord **from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate**. **39** The surveyor's line shall again **extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath**. **40** And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and **all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east,** shall be holy to the Lord. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever." Jer 31:38-40

 Jeremiah certainly was very specific about how the Holy City of Jerusalem was going to be rebuilt in the last days. God gave him the specific order in which the various sections of the Holy City would be built. The terminology is foreign to the reader of this modern time on earth. However, there are Jewish historians who have been able to show just how, once again, another of God’s prophecies has been fulfilled literally and completely.

 George Davis wrote concerning this prophecy in his book *Fulfilled Prophecies That Prove the Bible*. A Jerusalem professor, Peter Stoner, also wrote in his book *Science Speaks: An Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidences* that the odds of rebuilding the city in the manner and order written by Jeremiah was 1 in 80 billion. I believe that Dr. Stoner went a little overboard in his assessment as he was trying to prove his point that only God could forecast something like this… and have it come true so literally. On the other hand, Jeremiah’s prophecy was quite specific and multifaceted on this matter of how Jerusalem was going to be rebuilt and, according to several Jewish historians, it absolutely has come true.

1. **Israel will become a nation with many natural resources in the latter days:**

The coming war prophesied in Ezekiel will bring Russia, Iran and many Arab nations against Israel. It is easy to understand why all of these nations will want to come against Israel… except for possibly Russia. Every one of the nations mentioned by Ezekiel has an inherent and long-standing hatred for the Jews… and they want to see them annihilated. However, Russia will want something more. Many prophecy scholars believe that they will be coming to defeat Israel because they will want to receive a bounty. In fact, this is what Ezekiel says… 'Thus says the Lord God: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: **11** You will say, 'I will go up against a **land of unwalled villages**; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'-- **12** **to take plunder and to take booty**, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and **against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land**. Ezek 38:10-12

 It is certainly true that Israel has turned their nation into a land rich in agricultural products in these last sixty years. Israel, as we have seen, is doing extremely well in many areas of production. However, it is still true that most countries are still typically interested in two items more than any others when it comes to the natural resources of other countries, i.e. energy products (e.g. oil and gas) and minerals. That begs the question… how is Israel doing with respect to these items? The answer will surprise many.

 Everyone knows that the Arab countries currently have a monopoly on oil. The top five countries in oil production are Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates. The U.S. ranks eleventh. What about Israel? As it turns out, there are people who have actually taken the Old Testament Scriptures to heart and formed companies to search for oil and natural gas based on what is written there. They have done this because these Scriptures seem to strongly suggest that much natural bounty from the earth and sea will be discovered as the world approaches the end-times.

 Beginning in the 1990s, there have been companies formed to search for oil and natural gas in Israel and the adjoining Mediterranean Sea. Joel Rosenberg, a writer of best-selling books on eschatology, wondered about just this topic while writing his recent book, *Epicenter*. He also happens to be an insider with respect to Israel as he used to work for their current Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Joel devoted an entire chapter of his book to show how recent discoveries of both oil and natural gas have excited many people who now believe that great discoveries lie just around the corner.

And of Joseph he said: "Blessed of the Lord is his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and **the deep lying beneath**, **14** With **the precious fruits of the sun**, With the precious produce of the months, **15** **With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, 16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness** Deut 33:13-16 (these verses may very well point to energy products from the earth and sea)

 Many scholars, including a Russian Jewish geophysicist and oil man named Tovia Luskin, believes these verses point to oil and/or natural gas lying beneath the surface in the land God gave to Israel. John Brown has joined forces with him as they now have a company searching Israel for these products. Gene Soltero, an MIT trained petroleum engineer, is another oil man now doing the same thing. He is the CEO of Zion Oil, the company founded by John Brown. These people, and many others, are putting their money and time where their beliefs lie…

 Rosenberg listed some of the Bible verses that have excited these oil men:

1. Genesis 49:25 From the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, **blessings of the deep that lies beneath**…
2. Deuteronomy 33:13-16 (see above)
3. Deuteronomy 33:19 for they will **draw out the abundance of the seas, and the hidden treasures of the sand.**
4. Deuteronomy 33:24 More blessed than sons is Asher; may he be favored by his brothers, and **may he dip his foot in oil**.
5. Deuteronomy 32:12-13 The Lord alone guided him……. and He made him **suck honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock.**
6. Isaiah 45:3 **I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places**, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

 Since all of these oil and Bible believing men have begun to look for oil and natural gas, some really positive results are beginning to materialize. Take a look at this headline from a U.S. Department of the Interior report only a few months ago:

*U.S. GOVERNMENT REPORT: ISRAEL HAS* ***122 TRILLION CUBIC FEET OF NATURAL GAS****OFFSHORE (they also reported in this one area* ***1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil****)*

 There have been several other sites on land that have revealed many millions of recoverable barrels of oil as well. The Israeli newspaper, *Ynet News*, reported that the recent finds of oil and gas should soon allow Israel to become an exporter of oil! This was confirmed in an article in late December, 2010 noted below:

 A Wall Street Journal headline reported… “BIG GAS FIND SPARKS A FRENZY IN ISRAEL”. The largest natural gas reserve that has so far been discovered in Israel is worth approximately $95 billion. More than 16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas has been discovered off the Haifa shore in a joint U.S.-Israeli drilling operation. The French press reported that Israel has found such great quantities of oil and natural gas in this past decade, with much more to come, that they can become an exporter! They are quickly catching up to their Arab neighbors with respect to these incredibly valuable energy commodities.
 Not only does Israel show evidence of soon being a major player in the energy field, they also are producing in several other areas. They have become a big producer in technology. Bill Gates (the Microsoft billionaire) has been quoted as saying that “Israel is like part of Silicon Valley.” Wall Street tycoon, Warren Buffet, recently invested 4 billion in a *metal working company*. Israel is a leader in *microchip production, industrial oils, diamonds, fertilizers, many minerals*, etc. The Dead Sea is source of great wealth to Israel. *Magnesium Chloride, Sodium Chloride, Calcium Chloride, Potassium Chloride and Magnesium Bromide* are all available in great quantities from this sea… **estimates range into the trillions of dollars**. Israel is ranked far ahead of Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon in gross domestic product. Benjamin Netanyahu recently stated, “**In ten years, Israel could be one of the ten richest countries in the world**.” No wonder that one day soon Russia will join forces with Iran and other Arab states in an attempt to take over the land of Israel… but, God will not allow it!

1. **Israel would be partitioned by other nations.**

 **The prophet Joel wrote about almost exclusively about the last days. He noted that God would bring His people back to their “promised land.” He also said that the Gentile “nations” would divide up that land. This has been a top priority for the United Nations since Israel's statehood (i.e. since May 1948).  Currently, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Gaza, have been divided up into Jewish and Palestinian settlements. The United Nations wants Israel to give up even more land! Apparently, it is not enough that they have to face daily missile attacks originating from Gaza – beginning almost immediately after they relinquished that land for peace. Virtually all foreign nations also want Israel to divide up Jerusalem as well. Hopefully, Israel will have learned their lesson after what has happened due to their ceding of Gaza to the Palestinians. There has never been any “land for peace” offer that has brought any lasting peace for Israel… usually, not even for a matter of weeks! As the saying goes, “fool me once, shame on you… fool me twice, shame on me.” Hopefully, Israel leadership will not forget this.**

"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, **2** I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there **On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations;** **They have also divided up My land.** Joel 3:1-2

1. **The ancient city of Petra will exist and become the refuge for fleeing Jews (from the forces of the Antichrist) during the Great Tribulation:**

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like *sheep of the fold* (“sheep of the fold” is the Hebrew name for the city of Bozrah/Petra). Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of so many people. Micah 2:12

when you see the *'abomination of desolation,'* spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), **16** then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains** (Petra).   Matt 24:15-17

Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**. Rev 12:6

In 1994, a treaty was signed between Israel and Jordan. Jordan then joined Egypt as only the second Arab nation to normalize relations with Israel. Since that time, there has been a resurgence of travel into that ancient and beautiful “rock” city of Petra. Following the agreements, Israel and Jordan opened their borders. Several border-crossings were erected, allowing tourists, merchants and workers to travel between the two countries. In fact, it is now a top tourist destination. Israeli tourists have started to visit Jordan, many to see the "Red Rock" of [Petra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petra) - a stone-carved [Nabatean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabatean) city which has fascinated tourists for many years. Most tourist trips to Israel that originate in the United States include Petra as one of their stops.

 Given this recent normalization of relations between Israel and Jordan, it certainly will make it much easier for the frightened Jews of the Tribulation to flee to their old standby Petra. It is an excellent hiding place southeast of Jerusalem that is filled with carved out mountains already to use as hiding places and living quarters as they wait for the coming of the Messiah during the final 3 ½ years of the seven year Tribulation. I suggest that the 1994 treaty is just one more evidence of God’s providential care in the world to prepare for the re-entry of His Son, Jesus.

**Summation of Prophecies Related to the Nation and People of Israel:**

God gave the world many signs to herald the Second Coming of His Son, the Messiah. He spoke of these signs in the Old and New Testaments as He wanted the Church always to be looking for this wonderful event. In recent decades, dozens of these signs have come to fruition, especially those signs that concern the “chosen people”, Israel and the Jews.

 In May, 1948, Israel became a nation once again… this was an unprecedented event. Their twelve tribes once again united, Jews were brought back from all over the globe. Even the national language of Hebrew was reborn! Jerusalem soon became their capital once again. All of these events were the fulfillment of prophecy.

 God foretold of the days when He would once again bless Israel in many ways: rain to change the deserts to lush vineyards, orchards and forests. These things have come to pass. Flowers and vegetables have become plentiful and profitable. God said that in the latter days, great natural resources would be discovered in the land and under the sea. They certainly have been, just in the last ten years. The Temple would be rebuilt and be ready for His return. The Levitical priesthood must be ready, the instruments of worship need be ready for use, the oil of anointing and all things required for Temple worship should be ready for the Messiah’s return. All of these things have already come to pass in just the last several decades!

 God also warned that Israel and their capital city would be fought over by other nations in the last days. Yet, God would supernaturally protect them and they would not be defeated in battle. Many examples were given in support of this prophecy.

 They would not be led by a king in these latter days. No, not until the Messiah returned would they be a monarchy again. However, Israel would resist turning to this Messiah, King until the Tribulation. Then, “all Israel will be saved” by Him. In fact, Jesus will come at the conclusion of the Tribulation, walk through the currently sealed Eastern Gate, and rescue Israel at the battle of Armageddon. Far more importantly, Jesus will save them eternally after they turn to them in faith as the true sacrificial Lamb of God. So, God has already given the world so many signs of His Son’s soon return. In fact, He gave us even more…

**The End-Time Signs seen in the world and in the “Gentile nations”:**

1. **Revival of Roman Empire:**

The Old Testament book, *Daniel*, describes in some detail the fact that in the end of days the Roman Empire will revive, become powerful, and then be quickly and decisively defeated by the coming of the Lord Jesus. Prior to the Roman Empire coming into power, there were three other kingdoms that had conquered and ruled the middle-eastern world, including Israel and the holy city of Jerusalem. God foretold this series of events to Daniel in the following manner:

**“**You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. **32** The **head of the statue was made of pure gold**, its **chest and arms of silver**, its **belly and thighs of bronze**, **33** **its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. 34** **While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but *not by human hands*. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces** at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. "This was the dream, and **now we will interpret it to the king**. **37** You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; **38** in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. **You are that head of gold**. **39** "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. **40** Finally, there will be a **fourth kingdom, strong as iron--**for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. **41** Just as you saw that **the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. 42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle.** **43** **And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.** Dan 2:31-43

 These verses from chapter 2 show that the fourth world kingdom to come onto the scene (the Roman Empire) will eventually become divided into ten parts (represented by the ten toes). When in this form, it will be a mixture of strong and weak parts (e.g. these could be ten nations or ten divisions of a larger entity)… and will not stay united. As will be seen later in the book of *The Revelation*, there will come a time when Jesus Himself will come to earth to defeat this federation just before He sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth. Chapter 7 goes into more detail on this same topic…

Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. **3** Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. **4** "The first was like a **lion**, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it. **5** "And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a **bear**. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' **6** "After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a **leopard**. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. **7** "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was **a fourth beast--terrifying and frightening and very powerful**. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left**. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. 8 "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one**, **which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.**  Dan 7:2-8

 We see that in verse 7 and 8 above, that **the final form of the Roman Empire will have one individual (a little horn) which will rise up to uproot three of the original ten horns** (i.e. there will be ten “divisions” of the kingdom in the latter days) and take over as leader. Note that the Bible shows that this “horn” will have the characteristics of a man… in fact, he will be a man, the Antichrist. This “Little Horn” will take on the whole world for a time and be very successful for a season. He will eventually wage war against Christians (the saints). Ultimately, the Messiah will return to earth to defeat this Antichrist in the terrible battle of Armageddon, followed by the setting up His Millennial Kingdom!

I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell--the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. **21** As I watched, **this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.**  Dan 7:20-22

 In summary, the *Book of Daniel,* in chapters 2 and 7,carefully outlines the description by the prophet Daniel of a very important dream of King Nebuchadnezzar and a vision that God gave to Daniel, himself. Both of these miraculous events resulted in amazing prophecies concerning the various world powers that would come on the scene extending over several thousand years of world history. The book of *Daniel* foretold the fact that at some point in the future, the fourth world power, the Roman Empire, would reconstitute and be ruled by one very powerful Anti-Christian leader… the Antichrist.

 It is the opinion of every prophecy scholar that holds to the premillennial tribulation view, that the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, will be reborn in the latter days. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel’s own vision is interpreted as follows:

1. The first kingdom – (head of fine gold = the **lion**) --- represents Babylon
2. The second kingdom – (chest and arms of silver = **bear**) --- represents the Medes & Persians
3. The third kingdom – (thighs of bronze = **leopard**) --- represents Greece and their various leaders
4. The fourth kingdom – (legs of iron = ***beast***) --- represents Rome

The *fourth kingdom revived* --- represents the Roman Empire revived with ten divisions, eventually giving its power to a very charismatic world leader, the Antichrist (certainly, this type of event is not that unusual in history… note how the charismatic Adolph Hitler rapidly rose to power in Nazi Germany)

 The fourth kingdom is described as having two legs. These two legs represent the two divisions of the Roman Empire. Rome was divided for centuries into the western and eastern divisions – the west had its capital in Rome, the east with its capital in Istanbul. Eventually, these two legs would “grow” into ten toes, being a mixture of iron and clay – a mixture of strong and weak. In these latter days, since the nation of Israel has been re-established, there has been evidence of the coming together of the many nations of the old Roman Empire which will now be discussed. We know that there has to be a revival of the Roman Empire because the first one never had a ten nation confederacy and it certainly was never suddenly crushed by the Messiah.

 The important question to be asked is what, if any, evidence is there that the Roman Empire is beginning to come back into power? For so many centuries, it has been non-existent.

 We have already mentioned in some detail many of the amazing prophecies that have been fulfilled relating to the re-gathering of the nation of Israel. After Christ died and ascended back into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father, the Church Age began. The prophecy often referred to as **the seventy “seve**ns” (Daniel 9:20-27) gives detailed information concerning **the future dealings of God with His “chosen people**”. In these verses, the actual time that Christ would come into Jerusalem for His final appearance and crucifixion is actually given. In fact, this concludes the first sixty-nine of the seventy periods of seven years. After the death and resurrection of Jesus came the current time in which we live, the Church Age. During this period (the Church Age), there is a “break” in the counting of the seventy “sevens”. This “break” relates to the fact that God is now dealing almost exclusively with the Church, not with Israel. The final seven year period is known as the Tribulation period and will come at the conclusion of this Church Age.

 This Tribulation period will immediately precede the onset of the Millennial Kingdom and will be the time that God uses to bring His “chosen people” back into harmony with Him… Israel will finally understand that Jesus is the actual Messiah. Also, the Bible tells us that God will send His Son, Jesus, at the conclusion of this Great Tribulation to defeat the Antichrist at the Battle of Armageddon. Given that the Antichrist will be the leader of the revived Roman Empire, and he will come onto the world scene very soon after the Rapture, we certainly would expect to see at least some signs of a revival of this Empire if we are living in the latter days. As it turns out, we do.

 Let’s take a look at what has been going on over the last half-century. Of course, we know that Israel became a nation once again in 1948. Jerusalem became part of Israel in 1967. The clock began ticking with these events. One certainly would expect to see some action relating to the re-gathering together of the components of the Roman Empire. The western portion of the Empire had fallen apart in 476 A.D. The eastern part (the Byzantine Empire) in 1453 A.D. Obviously, neither of these two portions of the previous empire was crushed by Jesus.

 David Jeremiah noted in his recent book, *What In The World Is Going On*, that Winston Churchill said the path to European peace and prosperity required that, “We must build a United States of Europe.” (p.58) After several smaller steps towards this re-unification, on March 25, 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by six European nations to create the European Economic Community – the Common Market. These nations were France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Interestingly, this treaty was signed in Rome! The United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark joined in 1973, Greece was added in 1981, and Portugal and Spain joined in 1986. This added up to twelve nations at that time. Then the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and resulted, eventually, in the removal of the economic borders between the community of European nations. The *euro* was introduced in 2002. By 2007, the European Union had added more countries to bring its total to twenty-seven! Intriguingly, Israel is not being allowed to join this union due to its supposed human rights violations from its “occupation” of Gaza, the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. There are those who have stated that Israel would be allowed entrance if they would sign the appropriate peace treaty in the future.

 The leadership of this now very large and powerful union currently rotates every six months between the various member nations. There is a change planned in the near future to elect the president to 30 month terms. As is quite obvious, over the past fifty years there has been a very impressive coming together of the nations that represent those countries and lands that used to make up the old Roman Empire. In other words, we have seen the *revival of the old Roman Empire*. The European Union is now very big and wields much power, especially economic.

 Just as Daniel’s prophecy foretold, however, this current “empire” (i.e. the European Union) does appear to be a combination of iron and clay. The E. U. certainly has much power economically, politically, and even militarily, but there are problems with several weak member states, and significant racial, cultural and religious tensions within the Union. Greece, for example, just recently had to be rescued out of bankruptcy! Ireland also is struggling financially. There is a significant amount of tension between the Muslims and Christians within these nation-states.

 Most prophecy scholars believe that the world is on the precipice of a coming world government that will be ruled by one impressive, charismatic man coming out of this European Union… the future Antichrist. Just prior to this occurring, the European Union will have been re-structured in some fashion to contain ten divisions. In fact, there have already been discussions of doing this among the member nations of the Union. Out of this conglomerate of nations will come the Antichrist. He will at first be welcomed as the answer to the world’s growing problems. He will bring temporary peace to Israel and the world. But then, literally, all of hell’s demons will break loose onto the world’s scene and bring great destruction onto Jerusalem, Israel and new believers in Christ. A showdown will soon come as the end of the Great Tribulation is approached. All of this will be reviewed in great detail in the last section of this treatise.

 The point to be remembered is that there is significant evidence showing that the European nations have already come together in great numbers (twenty-seven nations) to form what could – for the purposes of understanding Bible prophecy - be reasonably referred to as the revived Roman Empire. We are living in the latter days.

1. **One World Government:**

He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And **he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.** **8** All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. Rev 13:7-8

 According to the Bible, in the last days the world will be governed by one central government. At that time, all people will, in essence, come under the leadership, and hence, the control, of one person… the leader of that world government. The Bible refers to the ultimate and final world leader as the Antichrist. When this individual first comes on the world scene, he will be looked upon as a very charismatic and very competent leader. He will be followed because of his ability to bring the world together. Almost assuredly, the world will have been undergoing a time of marked unrest… if not chaos. This Antichrist will be capable of uniting the nations who had previously been at enmity with one another.

 Interestingly, even in the 1960’s the idea of a New World Order was broached in some writings. On Jan 17, 1961, Dwight Eisenhower warned the people of the United States of a possible coming New World Order. However, in general, during those years this idea was considered by most people to be more of a conspiracy theory by certain Christians who spoke and wrote about it due to their conception of the end-times. Now, things have changed markedly. No longer is the idea of a New World Order an idea of only the fringe… i.e. of the so-called “crackpot” Christians. Today and for some time now, there have been many noteworthy people who have proposed this form of government for the world.

 For example, George H. W. Bush spoke about it during his term in office. On March 6, 1991, he told the nation after the first Gulf War, “we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a **new world order**. In the words of Winston Churchill, a ‘world order’ in which ‘the principles of justice and fair play ... protect the weak against the strong ...’ A world where the United Nations, freed from cold war stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations.”

 This was followed later by former President Bill Clinton who on Sept 6, 2006 while speaking at the Kennedy Center, agreed with former President Bush’s comments on the New World Order and then added “I think it is important that every American have a world view.” President Obama frequently talks about this future world government… in fact, there are current world leaders who would like to see him in the role of the leader! Former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, said that in the next four years we will see the beginning of a New International Order. In an interview in 2007, Kissinger said that “there was a need for a New World Order.” He stated, when asked about the opportunities awaiting Barak Obama as President, that with Obama’s charisma “a New World Order can be created.” He added that this current economic crisis was an opportunity to do that very thing. Gordon Brown, England’s Prime Minister, is a great proponent of the New World Order. On May 17, 2007 he said, “A New World is emerging, it is a New World Order that is significantly different with radically new challenges for the future.” The point of all of these quotes is to show just how much the idea of a New World Order has captured the imagination of the top world leaders. They want it, and they are working toward it every day.

 So what would be the end result of this New World Order? It would consist of a world central bank, one global currency, and world energy control. Several people have already pointed out that a crisis (economic or military or political) would very likely be the final catalyst for bringing this New World Order into existence. For example, Henry Morgenthau, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, stated that “Nations will be forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for a financial bailout, but only under the condition that borrowers abandon their national sovereignty.” In recent years, many of the world’s nations were at the very brink of doing this.

 In recent years there has been much activity in the United Nations to try to chip away at national sovereignty. Recommendations have been made to assess a sales charge on all arms deals, international trade, international money transfers, international air and sea travel. There are those who have proposed an international income tax on all the people in the world. Now, these are only suggestions by certain U.N. organizations. In the future, these things may actually be implemented.

 Some see the future of the United Nations moving toward a system like that of the European Union. Unfortunately, if that were to occur, our current capability to have a reasonable say in our national government would suffer greatly. The people of Europe have little to do with the running of the EU. The European Parliament has no significant power when compared to the *unelected* European Commission. This commission is made up of twenty-one selected (not elected) individuals. That is also where the power lies. Once a nation has lost its sovereignty, for whatever reason, they are not likely to get it back. The future New World Order will invest its power, almost assuredly, in the hands of an unelected group of people or one charismatic individual. The Bible tells us that at some time in the future, the entire world will be under the control of one man… the Antichrist. This is also consistent with where our leaders want to take us… although, they certainly have no plans to put the actual Antichrist in control. It will just work out that way.

 It is an interesting fact that President George W. Bush in 2005 signed a formal agreement to join the United States with Mexico and Canada in a North American Union. Lou Dobbs reported this on his show on CNN in 2006 as he was horrified that our government would merge our national interests with Mexico and Canada without so much as one word of debate in the halls of Congress. This agreement has the capability to turn our three countries into something resembling the European Union. This may well be one more step to the globalization of America… North and Central America at the very least.

 At some point in the coming years, it is likely that a world crisis (most likely economic, similar to the recent one, but worse) will lead our nation and many others to turn to the idea of a New World Order for the salvation of our countries… or at least, what our leaders believe will be their political and economic salvation. Just remember how quickly our leaders voted to spend trillions of dollars in their attempt to right the economy in the fall of 2008. The general public had no say in the process whatsoever. One day, something like this will happen again, but on a very much bigger level, both with respect to money and numbers of nations. Chaotic world conditions will demand a great leader… or at least someone who appears to be one.

 Once the leader of this New World Order assumes control, he will have access to modern technology to exercise that control. The ability to control the population will be greatly enhanced by the use of a micro-chip linked to a “global computer.” The late anchorman, Peter Jennings, told of more than 100 Mexican Law Officers who had microchips implanted in their arms for testing of this program. These RFID (radio frequency id) chips can be scanned. A person’s location can be tracked via satellite. The VeriChip corporation recently purchased Steel Vault. They now call themselves Positive Chip. They have linked individual’s health care information, via Health Link, to their credit information. This is the first time that chips have been suggested for use to track a person’s economic status along with their health status.

 Everything is in place for a one world government to come into being. As people such as Hiliary Clinton and Rahm Emanuel have just recently implied, all that it may take will be one more crisis to tip the scales just enough so that our country will join with others in forming this New World Order. There are already many world leaders who literally are asking for it!

1. **There will be a major conflict between Russia, Iran and several of the nations surrounding Israel:**

Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, **2** "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of **Magog**, the prince of **Rosh**, **Meshech**, and **Tubal**, and prophesy against him, **3** and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. **4** **I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out**, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. **5** **Persia**, **Ethiopia**, and **Libya** are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; **6** **Gomer** and all its troops; the **house of Togarmah** from the far north and all its troops--many people are with you. **7** "Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. **8** After many days you will be visited. **In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel**, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. **9** **You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.**" **10** 'Thus says the Lord God: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: **11** You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; **I will go to a peaceful people**, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'-- **12** **to take plunder and to take booty**, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. Ezek 38:1-12

You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be **in** **the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me,** when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." **17** Thus says the Lord God: "Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them? **18** "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord God, "that **My fury will show in My face**. Ezek 38:16-18

 The verses above were written down by the prophet Ezekiel almost 2,600 years ago. He wrote concerning the end times on this earth just before the Tribulation would begin. In the previous chapter (Ezekiel 37), the prophet had written about the return of the Jewish people to Israel using the “word picture” of bones and sinews coming together to depict the nation of Israel’s rebirth in the latter days. In this next chapter, he warned of the gathering of a coalition of many nations that would come against Israel in war. Interestingly, God pointed out that He would ultimately be behind this war (“**I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out”**) as He was going to use this war for His glory and to bring Israel back to where they belonged… trusting in God and knowing that Jesus was their true Messiah.

 There has been much written in the past several decades concerning this future war by prophecy teachers, in particular concerning the alignment of nations that would make up the coalition against Israel. Today, the evaluation of that topic proves very interesting indeed. Joel Rosenberg has recently written a best-seller titled, *The Ezekiel Option* in which he took the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and turned it into an exciting novel… Joel received good reviews for his writing prowess. His non-fiction book, *Epicenter*, may even be more interesting as it goes into factual details showing how much of the middle-east political situation is shaping up to suggest that the war predicted in this 38th chapter of Ezekiel could be just around the corner. It is interesting to read about how the writing of Rosenberg’s book developed. For example, when he first began to write a book on the end-times, he wondered about the fact that Iraq was not mentioned in these verses in Ezekiel. At the time, Saddam Hussein was still in his ignominious glory, a powerful figure in the region, and with a marked hatred of Israel… it was very difficult to imagine a war involving many of the Arab nations, Russia, etc., but excluding Iraq. It was going to be difficult, he thought, to write a believable book without involving Iraq in this future Russia/Iran/Arab war. Then came September 11, 2001. A few years later, and Iraq is a fledgling democracy and ally of the United States! Now, the setting described in Ezekiel 38 has just about all come together.

 Now, let us take a look at the nations that will come against Israel… and lose:

* Magog – Russia (Gog is the ruler of Magog and leader of the invasion)
* Rosh – modern day Russian people
* Meshech, Tubal and Gomer – all are parts of modern day Turkey
* Persia – Iran
* Cush – Northern Sudan
* Put – Northern Libya

 Ed Hinson and Tim LaHaye say that this prophecy is “most likely a prophecy of a “Russian” led invasion of Israel.” Which parts of “Russia” may be a matter of debate, but Russia’s involvement in this invasion is clearly indicated. The reason quote marks are placed around Russia is that these men are not sure which parts of the former Soviet Union and current day Russia correspond to the Rosh and Magog of 2,500 years ago. With all of the other nations noted, Israel will be attacked by a massive enemy contingent. All of these nations are currently either very anti-Israel or moving in that direction quickly. For example, in November 2002, Turkey elected a pro-Islamic party to govern the country. All of the other nations listed above have been anti-Semitic for a long time. As we also know, Iraq is now a democracy, and Afghanistan is being kept at bay by the United States. Thus, all of the nations that are predicted to come against Israel make good sense, even today. All of those nations not mentioned or noted to stay out of the fray also make sense. All is ready, all is in place, awaiting God’s unknowable, perfect timing.

 Without God’s support, victory in this war would be impossible. However, God will ensure that Israel will win this war. The possible timing of this latter day war will be discussed in the fourth and final section of this treatise. Suffice it to say here that most scholars believe this battle will come sometime before the Battle of Armageddon.

1. **Babylon – the great city is overthrown, never to be inhabited again**

**Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms**, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, **will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.** **20 She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there**, no shepherd will rest his flocks there. **21** But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. **22** Hyenas will howl in her strongholds, jackals in her luxurious palaces. Isaiah 13:19-22

A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." Rev 14:8

'Woe! Woe, O great city, **O Babylon, city of power**! In one hour your doom has come!'
"**The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more**-- Rev 18:10-11

She will be the least of the nations-- a wilderness, a dry land, a desert. **13** Because of the Lord's anger she will not be inhabited but will be completely desolate. All who pass Babylon will be horrified and scoff because of all her wounds. Jer 50:12-13 (NIV)

**The Lord will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land**. **3** **On the day the Lord gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, 4 you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:** How the oppressor has come to an end! Isaiah 14:1,3-4

 In Zechariah 5, the prophet has a vision of a basket with a woman in it (the woman is said to represent wickedness). The angel told Zechariah that he was taking the basket… "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place." Zech 5:11

 [This vision came when Zechariah was speaking about what would happen during the Tribulation. More details concerning this will be given in the final section of this book. The main point here is just that Babylon will have been rebuilt before or during the time of the Tribulation. Otherwise, none of these verses would make sense. The city has to be there in order for it to be rendered desolate… or for the merchants to mourn over their lack of cargoes, etc].

 The preceding prophetic statements in *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah,* and *The Revelation*, show that there will be a time where Babylon will be overthrown by God **never** to rise again. In fact, this once great city will not be inhabited in any way down through the ages after this final destruction. Although Babylon lost the war to the Media-Persians, it has yet to experience the sudden obliteration of its city as described in the above verses. As a matter of fact, the seven gardens that were so famous still existed in some form in 25 B.C. when Strabo, a famous geographer, visited and wrote about that city. It was still a city of some note during the early Church Age. Even in A.D. 1100, it was significant enough to have two Mosques in it and was even enlarged soon thereafter. Today, there are several small villages and some newer buildings in the area that was where the ancient city stood. Interestingly, in recent years, there has been a concerted effort to restore Babylon to its former glory… or, close to it.

 Saddam Hussein was intent on rebuilding Babylon to its former glory. He gave it a good start before his death in the early part of this century. The current government of Iraq wants to restore Babylon because of its rich heritage. They realize that it could become a great city and tourist attraction once again. The Future Babylon Project is now underway. The United States has already contributed to its budget. Iraq is also receiving help from the World Monuments Fund and the U.S. Embassy. Given the massive oil money available to Iraq, the continued stabilization of their nascent government and the fact that the people there want to rebuild their most famous landmark as soon as reasonably possible, it may not be long before Babylon is again an elegant, majestic city - ready to welcome tourists. That is certainly a reasonable interpretation of the Bible verses above.

 It should be noted, before leaving this topic, that there are some scholars who interpret some of these verses using the word Babylon to mean something quite different than the literal city of Babylon. They have a precedent for this as well in that during the apostolic times sometimes the word “Babylon” was used to mean the city of Rome. However, a literal interpretation of the Bible certainly does say that Babylon will be re-built in the end-times.

1. **World-wide (Global) communication will exist at the end-time:**

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. **9** **Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies** three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. **10** And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Rev 11:8-10

 In the verses above, the dead bodies of two prophets during the end-times will be seen by all of the world in an instant of time. That possibility did not exist until the advent of satellite television. Now, of course, it has become commonplace to broadcast important images completely around the world. Events such as the Super Bowl, World Cup Soccer, royal marriages, etc. are broadcast to every television set around the globe. During his vision of the Tribulation, John saw that the incredibly important deaths of these two prophets will be similarly broadcast around the world. Fifty years ago, this was not possible. Today, it is easily accomplished via satellite television or over the internet. This is a significant sign of the end-times as this capability has only been available for a couple of decades.

1. **Preparations for the Mark of the Beast and a cashless financial system:**

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to **receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,** **17** and that **no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast**, or the number of his name. **18** Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate **the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: his number is 666.** Rev 13:16-18

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then **I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.** And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. Rev 20:4-5

 As these verses state, there will be coming a time, during the Great Tribulation, that people will have to choose between taking the “Mark of the Beast” and rejecting Jesus, or staying true to Christ and thereby likely dying a martyr’s death. The False Prophet will command all humanity to receive this “mark” as a mark of allegiance to the Antichrist… and, therefore, also to Satan, the god of the Antichrist. One might ask how can anyone come up with a reasonable way to place a mark on so many billions of people? Secondly, what would be the point of doing it? Let’s take a look at the answer to these two questions and see why this is just one more sign of the soon coming of the Lord.

* Why would someone want to mark the body of a person? Quite obviously, if a mechanism could be found that could unmistakably identify all people “instantly” and without the use of ID cards or similar items that can be copied or stolen, etc., this technique would be of significant value to a government that wants to exact complete control over its populace. By doing this, the government could control virtually anything it wanted, such as the following: buying and selling, coming and going, etc. There is no better way to do this than to place that “mark” of identity on or within each person’s body. Obviously, this form of identification would be almost foolproof.

 As will be shown in another “sign of the end-times”, the world will be moving toward a global, and cashless society in those times. Financial transactions will typically not involve cash… if cash remains at all. Instead, via scanning the person, the necessary information will be obtained to enable any appropriate debit or deposit of “money” from or into their bank account. This transaction will be completed instantaneously. In some ways, this sounds great. However, there are terrible potential consequences if one despotic leader or tyrannical government controls all of these transactions!

* How can this type of transaction be done in an effective and reasonable manner? Until recent years, there simply was no way that any government could exact such massive control over their populace. Lately, however, this ability has been realized in the form of miniature computer microchips. These chips have the capability to store massive quantities of information on every person. Complete financial, legal, biometric, and medical records are just some of the items that would be accessible to anyone who scans the chip. These chips are actually smaller than a grain of rice and contain more than five megabytes worth of information… plenty to contain all relevant information that any government might require to exercise control over their citizenry. Microchips have been designed to store a permanent, non-modifiable, identification number. Card scanners even now can access the implanted sensors in the chips and send information anywhere in the world instantaneously. Global positioning systems will be able to track every person. Every year, the capabilities of these chips become more conducive to their universal use by the coming Antichrist. They are already good enough to serve his evil purpose!

 As the verses above from the 13th chapter of *The* *Revelation* note, there will come a time that the number of the Beast (666) will be inserted into the hand or forehead of every person… if that individual wants the opportunity to buy or sell things, such as food. Without this implantation, life would obviously be very difficult for all and impossible for many. For those who reject this mark, God tells them in chapter 20 of *The Revelation* that many will be martyred for their stand for Christ. Importantly, all those who do stand for Christ, whether they are martyred or die in some other way (while hiding out from the Antichrist) during the Tribulation, upon their death, will be ushered into heaven to live and reign with Christ. Unfortunately, those who do take the “mark” will be, in essence, pledging allegiance to the Antichrist and, thereby, rejecting Jesus. Their eternity is sealed, and it is the same eternity as that of Satan and the Antichrist… an eternal life in hell.

1. **A 200,000,000 man army will march against Israel at some point during the Tribulation:**

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, **14** saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." Now **the number of the army** of the horsemen was **two hundred million**; I heard the number of them. Rev 9:13,14,16

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that **the way of the kings from the east might be prepared**. Rev 16:12

 Here we see that during the Great Tribulation a vast army of 200 million men (demons) will march against Israel. Certainly, this was not going to happen during the time of Christ as there were no armies even approaching that size. Historians say that there were less than 450 million people in the entire world at that time. In days gone by, people often would interpret this verse (and many others as we have noted before) figuratively. For example, maybe this meant just a very large fighting force.

 Today, however, it looks far more likely that God actually did mean that 200 million men would come against Israel from the east in the last days. China and North Korea can easily amass that many men.

 It is also very interesting that the government of Red China has spent enormous sums of money to build a highway across Asia that heads directly toward Israel. Grant Jeffrey states that no foreigners are allowed near this road. This highway is now complete. This highway was built at a great cost of lives and money. The question remains at to what use it will be put. The book of *The Revelation* may have the answer.

1. **Knowledge and travel will increase at an extraordinary pace and quantity:**

 God gave his prophet Daniel, over 2,500 years ago, an amazing series of prophecies. Many of these prophecies concerned the end-times… the days leading up to the Tribulation and the return of the Messiah. God also made it clear that Daniel was not going to understand all of the prophetic word that he had just been given. Much of it would not become clear until the very time it was about to unfold… the end-times.

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; **many shall run to and fro**, and **knowledge shall increase**." Dan 12:4

"Go yourway*,* Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Dan 12:9

 These verses seem to point to two main things concerning the time just prior to the Tribulation; there will be a significant increase in the speed of travel and the **amount of knowledge** available and, in fact, obtained by mankind will be increased. It is so very obvious just how quickly people can travel from one place to another around the world today. From the first man, Adam, up until the beginning of the 20th century there was not very much change in the speed of travel. Basically, the horse set the pace for all of those years. Twenty to thirty miles per hour was the speed limit that man has lived with forever… until the last hundred years or so. Now, with the advent of race cars, the airplane, and especially space travel, this “pseudo barrier” has been totally abolished… just as God foretold.

 Also, in an extraordinary manner, human knowledge has exploded in recent decades. For centuries, the amount of knowledge available to man increased very slowly. At times, it actually went down… for example, in the Dark Ages. However, in the past 150 years, the quantity and quality of knowledge has increased significantly. There have been so many ways that people have tried to quantify this fact. It has been said that the sum total of human knowledge now doubles every 20 months! Maybe a better grasp on this concept can be attained if one just thinks about how much more knowledge we all have as one considers some of the following items compared to what was available in 1850:

* The workings of the cell (DNA, proteins, amino acids, mitochondria, etc.)
* The ability to cure many human diseases – totally new knowledge of bacteria, viruses, antibiodics, chemotherapy, etc.
* Knowledge to build airplanes, satellites, cars
* Television, phones, computers!!!
* The internet – fast and effective spread of human knowledge – also, consider the massive amount of information that is available through the internet. It really is amazing!

 These are just a few of the many modern developments that demonstrate the vast increase in knowledge in recent times… certainly consistent with the prophecies of Daniel.

 Let me make just one last point on this issue. It is said that 80% percent of the world's total knowledge has come forth in the last ten years and that 90% percent of all the scientists who have ever lived are alive today. Others who study this subject say that ***knowledge*** is ***doubling*** every 22 months!

1. **Euphrates Dries up:**

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river **Euphrates**, and **its water was dried up**, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. Rev 16:12

 The Euphrates River has always been a very important river, especially in biblical times. The Apostle John saw, in his vision from God in *The Revelation*, that this great river would be dried up in the end-times in order to allow for the massive army from the kings of the east to travel into the Middle East for their war against Israel. This river has always been a virtual impassable barrier in the past. Of course, God could accomplish this task instantly should He desire. However, as noted earlier, He typically seems to act in a more providential way through seemingly “natural” means. That brings us to a recent development related to the building of dams by Turkey. A massive dam, called the Ataturk Dam, was completed in 1990. It is the fifth largest dam on earth and can hold back the great Euphrates River, allowing for the passage of an army of men from the “east”. It is one mile long and 600 feet high.

 A recent article in the New York Times is also of interest. The front page of the July 13th, 2009 edition had the following headline, “Iraq Suffers as the Euphrates River Dwindles.” It is interesting to note that even this newspaper mentioned the prophetical significance in the article. “The shrinking of the Euphrates, a river so crucial to the birth of civilization that the Book of Revelation prophesied its drying up as a sign of the end times, has decimated farms along its banks, has left fishermen impoverished and has depleted riverside towns as farmers flee to the cities looking for work.”

 Whether the course of nature itself causes the drying up or whether the Ataturk Dam accomplishes the ultimate “drying up”, for the first time in history, the Euphrates now can be crossed by a large army. Of course, these types of events are just what one would expect to happen just prior to the coming of the Messiah.

1. **Jesus will appear to people in dreams and visions:**

**I will pour out my Spirit on all people.** **Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.** **29** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. Joel 2:28-29

 It is a very interesting phenomenon that is seen to be happening in the Middle East concerning religion in these last days. As the quote from the prophet Joel points out above, God, through His Holy Spirit, will intervene in the lives of many individuals to demonstrate His reality and true identity in a mighty way. The Holy Spirit will be “poured out” by God in the time just before Christ returns.

 As should be no surprise in the politically correct world in which we live, there are many pseudo-intellectuals among the liberal media and in the government that have concluded that Christianity is losing the battle for the minds and souls of the people of the Middle East. Wrong. Unfortunately, it is true that because of the fear of death, most people do tend to practice the Muslim religion into which they have been born. To do otherwise, requires great courage because for a Muslim to deny his faith, may result in his death! Amazingly, although that is true, there still are record numbers of Muslims turning to the one true Savior, Jesus Christ in that part of the world… and every other part of the world as well. Let us take a closer look at the facts.

 First of all, note some of the nonsense that is being propagated by the liberal press and media. Joel Rosenberg, a Messianic Jewish scholar who writes many best-selling books on the topic of the end-times, noted in his bestseller, *Epicenter*:

* Author Charles Sennott recently wrote a book in which he made the claim that Christianity was now about to die out in the land in which it began.
* The liberal public television network, NPR, talked of the “dwindling number of Christians in the Middle East.”
* The Denver Post in writing about the Christian community wrote that “in 50 years they may well be extinct.”
* Sam Huntington, who wrote “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order”, “In the long run… Mohammed wins out.”

The problem with all of these claims and many, many more like them, is that they are simply not true. Although the religion of Islam is growing in numbers at a fast pace, Christianity is growing much faster. This will be analyzed later in this book in more detail. Secondly, it is absolutely true that the religion of Islam gains the vast majority of their adherents simply via birth … to turn to another religion, as already mentioned above, is fraught with extreme danger. Even so, as will be shown, amazing numbers of Muslims are still turning to Jesus as He is making it so very clear that He is the way, and the truth and the life… and that no one comes to the Father, except through [Him]! John 14:6

 Let me list just a few of the examples of Muslims turning to Christianity from Rosenberg’s book, *Epicenter*:

* In Egypt, 10,000 new believers worship in a “garbage village” every weekend. The *Jesus* Film sold 600,000 copies in the year 2000 alone. Approximately 1.5 million copies of the Bible are sold yearly in one of many formats. These are not given away, but purchased. This means that people are very interested in learning the truth about the Lord Jesus.
* Up to 40,000 people have given their hearts to Jesus in recent years in Morocco alone.
* In Algeria, the nearly 100,000 new Christians have alerted the Islamic clerics. Laws have been passed in an attempt to terrorize those teaching about Jesus. Christians face up to five years in prison for sharing their faith… yet, Christianity persistently continues to grow in the face of this deadly opposition!
* In the Sudan, the most amazing story of turning to Christ is seen. More than one million Sudanese have become Christians since 2000! The more they are tortured and killed by the radical Muslims, the more they turn to Christ. The Muslims clerics are horrified, but they cannot quell this growing faith in Jesus.
* In a live interview in 2001, Sheikh Ahmad Al Qataani said in an interview on Aljazeera television that six million Muslims convert to Christianity each year. This is not a religion that is dying out in the Muslim controlled nations.
* Since September 11, 2001, the known numbers of Christians in Afghanistan has grown from 17 people to over 10,000 believers. This is in spite of severe persecution.
* Many other examples of Christian converts in Central Asia could be noted
* Since Saddam Hussein’s fall there have been at least 5,000 Iraqi people who identify themselves as Christians. Tens of thousands more are secret Christians who are understandably afraid of “coming out” openly to the general community about their new faith in Christ.
* In Iran, more people have come to Christ in the last 20 years than in the previous 1400 years! In 1979, there were only 500 known Muslim converts to Jesus. At this time, one Iranian minister told Joel Rosenberg that he believes that there are more than one million Iranians who believe in Christ as their Savior.

 So, as these examples clearly demonstrate, there are very significant numbers of formerly Muslim people who are now converting to Christianity. That begs the question… why now? Certainly some of the credit must go to the evangelistic efforts now being brought to the regions involved. This includes missionaries, television, Bibles, and films on Jesus. Also, as so many in Sudan have said, the stark contrast in the religion and God of Islam versus the religion and God of Christianity has enlightened many people to the truth of Christianity. Intriguingly, and amazingly, it seems that the main reason that many people are converting to Christianity is that Jesus is personally inviting them… literally!!!

 To quote Rosenberg, “What is bringing these Iranians to Christ is dreams and visions of Jesus, just as in Iraq, though in much larger numbers.” There are scores of examples given on many different web sites of Muslims receiving dreams and visions from Jesus that has resulted in their conversion to Christianity. It is interesting to note that when one searches the internet for reports of Christians seeing visions of Allah or Mohammad there are no reports to view. On the other hand, when doing the search for Muslims seeing visions of Christ, there are **hundreds** of sites to visit. Personal testimonies of innumerable former Muslims who came to believe in Jesus as their Savior because He came to them in visions or dreams can be seen on various YouTube sites and read about on scores of other web sites. Incredible! There are literally hundreds of examples of these incredible encounters with the living Savior. In fact, a recent Muslim survey revealed that **42%** of Muslims convert to Christianity primarily due to Jesus appearing to them via dreams or visions. Other surveys reveal similar statistics. It will be worthwhile to review some of these testimonies to understand the general idea of what is causing this influx of Christianity to that region of the world:

* Christine Darg, author of *The Jesus Visions: Signs and Wonders in the Muslim World* states that “He is going into the Muslim world and revealing, particularly, the last 24 hours of His life - how He died on the cross, which Islam does not teach - how He was raised from the dead, which Islam also does not teach – and how He is the Son of God, risen in power." "We receive lots of letters about people who have had dreams about the Lord, visions, even miracles.”
* The dreams and visions seem to fall into one of two main categories. In what many are calling a “preparatory dream”, Jesus typically appears in a white robe to confirm His true identity and that He is the only way to heaven. The second type of encounter revolves around Jesus empowering the new convert in the face of persecution. Jesus emboldens the new believer to trust in Him for all of their needs in spite of and through any persecution that may come.
* Another type of encounter that has been noted is neither a dream or a vision, but often referred to as an “encounter” in these reports. For example, there was one Egyptian Muslim who was reading in Luke where the Holy Spirit landed upon Jesus at the Jordan. As he was reading the words, “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased”, a wind broke into his room and an audible voice spoke these words, "I am Jesus Christ, whom you hate. I am the Lord whom you are looking for." The man recalls that he "wept and wept, accepting Jesus from that time."
* Joel Rosenberg recalls another impressive encounter that a group of Iranian Muslims recently had with Jesus. When the steering wheel of the car of two Christian men carrying a carful of Bibles inexplicably jammed while driving down a mountain road in Iran, the driver had to slam on the brakes of the car to avoid crashing. When the men regained their composure they heard an old man knocking on their car window. He asked them if they had the books. “What books?” was the reply. “The books Jesus sent me down here to get,” answered the old man. As it turns out, recently Jesus had come to everyone in his village with the same dream to tell them to follow Him. This was followed by another dream in which Jesus told him to go down to that road at that time to pick up the “books” that would explain all about what it meant to follow Him. Well, now they had their Bibles! That is quite a story… hard to believe, even. However, it is absolutely true and there are scores more stories like this that are reported in many books and on so many internet sites.
* Since this is really not the place to continue with example after example of these incredible visions and dreams, let me suggest just a search on google of the phrase, *Muslim dreams and visions of Jesus.* Then get ready to potentially spend a few days listening, watching, and reading many fascinating testimonies of Muslim encounters with Jesus.

**Summation of Prophecies Relating to World-Wide Events:**

Not only did God foretell many prophetic end-time events relating specifically to His “chosen people”, but He also spoke of many end-time events that would affect the entire world and the gentile nations therein. Daniel was given a vision of a one-world government that would arise out of the old Roman Empire. As the time of Christ’s return neared, a world-wide economic and political system would come into existence. At some point, charismatic world leader would come onto the world scene and assume a position of world leadership. This leader is the Antichrist. Both of these world systems are taking shape even now: the European Union has become a world economic force already. Not only that, but there is an almost incessant call by many world leaders for a New World Order. Given the terrible condition of the current world economy, including that of the United States, it would not take much additional economic collapse for the nations of the world to turn to a world economic system as well as a New World Order of government. The Bible tells us that is exactly what will happen as the world moves into the Tribulation.

 God also told of a future day when Russia would team with Iran and invade Israel. This war is on the horizon even now. Russia and Iran are currently involved **in making mutual** treaties… and only a very naive person would not suspect Iran’s interest to revolve around its obtaining nuclear weapons technology. Other wars have also been prophesied in the Old Testament and we can see these future events begin to unfold as we look at the 200 million man army of Communist China, the current capability for the drying up of the Euphrates River, and the rebuilding of Babylon. Most everyone understands the prophetic significance of the current “cashless society”, the capability to give anyone and everyone a mark under their skin for identity purposes, and the massive increased knowledge explosion in recent decades. Everything, including travel and the spreading of the gospel, is moving so incredibly fast these days. All of these things were foretold in the Bible to be signs of the end-times.

 I believe that the most amazing fulfilled end-time prophecy to be that noted by the prophet, Joel. He said that in the end-times the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh… old and young. The true stories of how Jesus is coming in dreams and visions to thousands of Muslims, resulting in their conversion, is an incredible sign that His coming is very near. Even with all of these prophecies being fulfilled, Jesus, Himself, gave us many more in His Olivet Discourse…

**The Olivet Discourse:**

 Jesus’ own words in His Sermon on the Mount of Olives just before He went to the cross give the most complete information concerning the world scene just before He comes back to the earth to rescue the world from Satan and his demons.

 **Signs of His Coming**

 Watch out that no one deceives you. **5** **For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ, ‘and will deceive many.** **6** **You will hear of wars and rumors of wars**, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **7** **Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.** **8** **All these are the beginning of birth pains**. **9** **“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13** but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. **14** **And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.** 15 **“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.** **17** Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. **18** Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. **19** How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! **20** Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. **21** For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. **22** If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. **23** At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. **24** For **false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.** **25** See, I have told you ahead of time. **26** “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. **27** For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **28** Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. **29** “Immediately after the distress of those days
“’the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’
**30** “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. **31** And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. **32** **“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** **35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

 **The Coming of the Son of Man**

 **36** “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **37** **As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** **38** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; **39** and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. **40** Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. **41** Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. **42** “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. **43** But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** So you also must be ready, because **the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him**. **45** “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? **46** It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. **47** I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **48** But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ **49** and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. **50** **The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of**. **51** He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt 24:4-51

 Let us now take a look at some of these signs that Jesus said would be coming to fruition in the latter days and see how these days we live in compare:

1. **There will be a marked increase in people claiming to be the Messiah:**

**For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ, ‘and will deceive many.** For there shall arise **false Christs**, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Mathew 24:5,24

 It is true that there have been people who have claimed to be the Messiah since the time when Jesus said those words on the Mount of Olives. The first known false messiah was a man named Simon Bar Cochba, a Jewish rebel commander who led a revolt of the Jews against the Romans in 132 A.D. Many Jews joined into the battle against Rome as they thought that Cochba was the actual Messiah… the kind of messiah that they had wanted… a warrior. Things worked out poorly for these Jews, to say the least. The Roman Emperor, Hadrian crushed the rebellion, killing 500,000 Jewish soldiers and three million Jews throughout the rest of the Roman world. Over the following centuries, an occasional false messiah would arise, attract a following, then die. The history books suggest that about one false messiah has appeared each century… at least those that have made enough of an impression to have made it into the books. Then came the 20th century. Things have changed dramatically!

 As Jesus said in the verses above, in the end-times there will be ***many*** coming claiming to be the Messiah (Christ). As we shall see, the number of people who have recently come on the scene with this type of claim is unprecedented. Why is that so?

 The times in which we live make it very advantageous for certain charismatic individuals to convince others that they are God… or, more easily, the Messiah. There are obvious financial benefits to having people believe this lie. In some cases, the prestige and power garnered from taking this kind of this power trip can be very hard to resist. Up until the latter part of the 20th century, it was very difficult to spread a messianic message to large numbers of people. Until there was television, this basically had to be done through face to face preaching. Possibly the use of books and radio was able help a little as well… but only to a fairly small degree. However, this all took a lot of time and effort and money. These are three things that most charlatans do not care to spend.

 However, now that television has become a big part of our culture, many more devious men (and even women) are all too willing to delve into this medium to spread their false messianic message. A very charismatic man or woman may well be able to convince the ignorant and naïve people of the world that they are actually watching the true Messiah via their home television set… or within the walls of a large auditorium. Typically, the message is accompanied by impressive “bells and whistles” that “hook” these lost and searching souls before they realize what happened.

 Of course, these are just a few of the logistical and practical reasons for the increased number of messiah claims in these times. It also is happening because of the spiritual environment we live in… the falling away from the Christian faith of much of the world, the increase in false religions including the New Age belief system that is becoming increasingly popular. Certainly there are a myriad of causes for this increase in false messiahs. Whatever the cause in any particular case, let me mention just a dozen or so of the more infamous characters to come on the world scene in the past couple of decades… and this will only scratch the surface:

**Sun Myung Moon (Unification Church)** – He came into prominence in the 1970s. He still has a following as he claims God sent him to earth as the Messiah to complete the job Jesus started.

**Charles Manson:** Claiming to be Messiah, this crazed man led many into his web of deceit and was responsible for the cruel deaths of many (at times he claimed to be Satan as well).

**Yahweh Ben Yahweh:** He claimed to be the black Messiah as he told his followers that blacks were the only true Jews. God and the apostles were also black. At one time, at least 12,000 people followed him… and, at times, were willing to kill white people for him (he reportedly was responsible for killing dozens over the years). Whites were characterized as “white devils.”

**Laszlo Toth:** This “messiah”ran up to Michelangelo’s “Pieta”, hammered it in many places while yelling “I am Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.”

**Wayne Bent:** God anointed him as Messiah in July, 2000. He spent most of his time as Messiah in New Mexico as a polygamist.

**Iesu Matayoshi**: Iesu is a Japanese man who claims to be the Messiah who someday will rule over the world.

**David Koresh** – David is quite infamous. Recall that in 1993, his Branch Davidian religious group was caught in a stand-off with the U.S. government. This eventually led to eighty of his followers dying in a fiery death in Texas.

**David Icke:** David isa former soccer player from England who claims to be the Messiah and lectures all around the world about the New World Order… and makes a lot of money.

 **Jose Miranda**: While based in Miami, he claims to be both Jesus and the Antichrist. He plays both sides of the fence.

**Maitreya:** He is the great spiritual teacher for our age that has been expected to arrive any time now by people such as Benjamin Crème. He is supposed to just suddenly appear at places all over the world. Crème had set up television interviews for this “Messiah” in the past, but Maitreya wasn’t able to make his appointed interview… maybe next time.

**Rael:** This guy is aformer journalist and race car driver… now a self-proclaimed Messiah

**Mahdi:** This isa Muslim Messiah who will come at the end times

**Jim Jones**: In 1978, he had 913 of his followers commit suicide by drinking poisonous kool-aid. That is where we now get expressions such “don’t drink the kool-aid.”

**Marshal Applewhite** **and Bonnie Nettles:** Heaven’s Gate New Age Cult came to an end in 1997 when thirty-nine followers committed suicide in order to leave this world on a spaceship that was hiding behind the Hale-Bopp comet. At least, that was the plan. Prior to this, many of the males were castrated.

 There are many more people who could have been added to this list. The point is that there have been many false messiahs in recent decades… far more than at any other time in history. There are a variety of reasons for this, many noted earlier. The bottom line is that Jesus said that this increase in false messiahs will occur just prior to His return. The Rapture should not be very far away…

1. **There will be an explosion of False Prophets:**

**Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.**

 Along with the markedly increased amount of false messiahs in the world today, there are multitudes of false teachers and prophets as well. In fact, due to television, and the money available to charlatans via that medium, there are more coming along every year. Note that this is just what Jesus said would happen in the end-times.

 Of course, there have always been a certain amount of false prophets and teachers. The Apostle Paul frequently warned the readers of his letters (in the Pauline epistles) that they beware of the Judiaizers. Another problem in those days was the false doctrine of Gnosticism. In both of these cases, simply put, the gospel of Jesus Christ was perverted. The gospel is certainly not a difficult thing to understand; on the other hand, there are literally scores of religions, many even claiming to be Christian, that do not preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ. That situation has certainly increased in recent times. Let us take a look.

 Until the mid-20th century, all religions tended to spread their message in essentially the same manner. There were local churches, missionaries, and, in many religions, there were evangelists. Most all religions had some form of “holy book” that they could share with interested individuals. Most often, the belief in a particular religion was passed down from one generation to the next within families. Times have really changed.

 Over the last sixty years, television has changed the face of many things in the world, including religion. It has become possible in recent years to reach virtually the entire world with any given message (including religious messages) via television and the internet. This has helped spread the true message of Christ to hundreds of millions. Unfortunately, these electronic mediums have also opened up the world to false prophets and their teachings. Some of these men and women have sacrificed the truth of Jesus and His gospel for their own financial gain… many have become truly wealthy by perverting the Word and soliciting financial donations from all kinds of people – often those folks who can least afford it - and these gains have been very lucrative for many of these charlatans.

 Some of these false prophets like to spread what has come to be known as the “*name it, claim it, gospel*” or the “*health and wealth doctrine*”. This is defined by Wikipedia as “believers have a right to the blessings of health and wealth and that they can obtain these blessings through positive confessions of faith and the 'sowing of seeds' through the faithful payments of tithes and offerings." Teachers using this false doctrine have convinced, at least for a while, tens of millions of people. This is very unfortunate for many reasons. Certainly, many people give these idiots much of their hard earned money – in hopes that God will give them more money in return. At other times, those that have been duped give money in order that they may be healed by God. Unfortunately, Jesus never promised His followers anything of this sort… this is just one of the sick, false doctrines that has become so very popular in these latter days.

 One other completely false doctrine that is perpetuated by people such as Oprah Winfrey is that there is more than one way to get to heaven. On many occasions, the television magnate has said that there are many ways other than the Christian way to get to heaven. On her television show she said, “There couldn’t possibly be just one way” to an audience member who stated that Jesus said that He was the only Way. She went on to say, “I am a Christian who believes that there are many more paths to God other than Christianity.” Certainly, Jesus disagreed with her. In John 14:6, Jesus said to His disciples after Thomas had specifically asked Him how to get to heaven,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Winfrey went on to say that Jesus came to show us “Look, I am going to live in the human body and I am going to show you how it’s done.” She said absolutely nothing about His sacrificial death on the cross… the cross, and its incredible importance, means nothing to these false prophets.

 Eckhart Tolle, a New Age leader and mentor of sorts to Winfrey, has the same kind of belief system. Unfortunately, there are many in the world today that are perverting the gospel in similar ways… yet, like Oprah, they claim to be Christian!

 In addition to the New Age folks and those pushing the “health and wealth” doctrine, there are many other false prophets. These include many claiming to be Christian, such as the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christian Science adherents. Scientology, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are also religions claiming that only they have the answer. All of them are false religions.

 The question for any person comes down to which one of these multiple religious choices is the correct one? As I reviewed in some detail in the first section of this treatise, only Christianity has the evidence firmly on its side! As we continue on the path toward the Rapture, these false doctrines and false teachers will only continue to grow.

1. **Worldwide Apostate Church (i.e. there will be a falling away from the Church):**

Let no man deceive you by any means: **for that day (the Day of the Lord) shall not come, except there come a falling away first,** and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” 2 Thess. 2:3

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that **in the latter times some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”I Tim. 4:1&2.

At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each otherMatt. 24:10

 The United States clearly was founded on Christian principals. All through the early documents of our nation, our Christian God was referenced as the foundation of the constitution of the United States of America. People such as John Adams, George Washington, Samuel Adams, John Quincy Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln and scores of others have written and given speeches extolling the necessity of building our nation on Jesus Christ and the Bible. Note the quotes from many of these men in the first section of this treatise. For those who want to pursue this further, take a look at just one of many web sites that show the primacy of the Christian faith in the founding of our nation noted below: [http://www.eadshome.com/QuotesoftheFounders.htm]

 During the 19th century, there were great Christian evangelists and preachers in England and the United States such as D.L. Moody and Charles Spurgeon. Throughout the 20th century, men such as Billy Sunday and Billy Graham have brought the Christian message to millions of people around the world. As discussed elsewhere in this section, there are more people coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in recent years than at any other time in history. However, the paradox is that there has also been a falling away from the true Christian message in those nations that had at one time been the stalwarts of the Church. Nations such as those in the European Union and the United States have fallen victim to secular humanism. This “religion” positions man as his own god… so to speak. This has been defined as “*the* *doctrine emphasizing a person's capacity for self-realization through reason; rejects religion and the supernatural*”; another definition is “*a religious worldview based on atheism, naturalism, evolution, and ethical relativism.”*

Thisapostasy began over fifty years ago, but really gained significance in the 1960s after our country legislated God out of our schools. Soon thereafter, abortion was legitimatized and legalized (1973). Homosexuality was deemed to be a totally reasonable and honorable lifestyle beginning in the early 1970s. Now, judges have taken to legislating from the bench to make homosexual marriage legal and available in more and more states. Christianity has been marginalized all throughout Europe and the United States as people, including many clergy, have embraced secular humanism as their religion. This has led to the popular religions of the day as evidenced most clearly by Oprah Winfrey. Recently, she has emerged as a leader in the New Age religion of our time. Claiming to be a Christian, she denies the cross of Jesus and the necessity of believing and trusting in Him for salvation. As was mentioned above, Oprah has clearly contradicted the words of Jesus when He said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6). Oprah has stated often that there are many ways to heaven… not just through Jesus Christ. Both Jesus and Oprah cannot be correct.

 Secular Humanism has replaced Christianity as the ruling belief system in the United States, Canada, and European nations. Much of the world that used to be at the forefront of Christianity has succumbed to apostasy. That is what Jesus and Paul told us would happen before our Savior would return. It is also true that millions are coming to Christ in these last days. An intriguing paradox, but one prophesied two thousand years ago.

1. **Wars and Rumors of Wars:**

 **You will hear of wars and rumors of wars**, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **7** **Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.** Matt. 24:6,7

The 20th century showed a dramatic increase in the number and scope of war in the world. Of course, there have been two world wars. The Red Cross estimates that over 100 million people have died in armed conflict since 1901. In 1993, there were twenty-nine major wars fought.

 War has been, unfortunately, a common event all through the ages. However, since WW II there has been a war somewhere on this earth at all times… usually more than one. Sixty million people died in WWII alone.

 However, the most terrible aspect of modern warfare is the possibility of total annihilation of great numbers of people… even, the entire planet if enough nuclear bombs are exploded! Biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction have also made a big impact on the world, beginning primarily in WWI. They have made a big comeback in recent years and pose a major threat to the world today.

 The nations of the world have armed forces with literally hundreds of millions of soldiers, ready to go to war at any time. Grant Jeffrey noted in his *Armageddon: Appointment With Destiny* (p. 233) that almost fifty percent of the world’s scientists are working on weapon-related research. Forty percent of all scientific funding goes to arms research. China is expanding its army at an incredible rate. They are also selling more tanks and other armaments to Africa than all western countries combined as they can produce these arms at a fast pace and cheaper than the western countries. Not only is Africa joining in this arms race, but the Arab countries are buying great quantities of weapon systems as well. Iraq has purchased a significant amount of fire power from Russia in recent years, including much nuclear material and information. Muslim Arab nations are now a threat to stability in Europe. Very, very, soon, Iran will have the nuclear bomb. The United States has sold large quantities of arms to Israel as well as many Arab nations. Israel has developed many of her own weapons as well. Many are weapons of mass destruction, and are in the possession of numerous countries, some of whom are very likely to use them without much thought of the ultimate consequences. Jeffrey stated that there was “one military weapon and the equivalent of four thousand pounds of explosives for every man, woman, and child worldwide.” (ibid, p. 235) Keep in mind that there are over six billion people! Even if he is off in his calculation by a factor of ten, this is still an amazing quantity of destructive power… much of it in the possession of people who are certainly less than emotionally stable… and that is using terminology that is being very kind.

 To give an idea of the power of modern weapons, only one Trident missile can launch from 10,000 miles away and detonate within 100 yards of the target. The explosive power carried on just one submarine is greater than all of the fire power delivered during WWII… by both sides combined! Over one trillion dollars is spent on armaments each year worldwide. Newly developed *Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) Weapons* can paralyze a nation such as the United States for up to three months. Computers, businesses, television, cell phones, most other communications, railways, airports and any other power generated system would shut down immediately. Experts say that it would take months or even years to return the power to normal in the United States. The United States economy would be devastated and its military would take a serious blow. Terrorist groups could get the capability to launce this form of weapon from North Korea, China, Russia or Iran (soon to have it) either directly or by theft. The weapon could be delivered by a Scud missile from a ship in the shipping lanes off the coast of the United States. Scud missiles are available in the weapons market for about $100,000.

 The biggest concern about future wars on earth relates to the massive increase in devastating power of the weapons currently available for use by so many nations and individuals. **This fact is one of the major reasons I believe that the coming of Jesus cannot be far in the future**. Why? **There has never been the development of a weapon system that has not eventually been used in some manner and by some one.** The United States used the Atomic Bomb in WWII. Chemical weapons have been used many times now… in WWI, by Iraq against the Kurds and Iran. Someone or some people used biological weapons against the United States (anthrax) immediately after 9/11/2001. There are other examples that could be given as well. The point is **that someone, probably a rogue terrorist, will someday use a nuclear bomb against some nation**. Maybe more than one. **This may well trigger a massive nuclear response.** Likely, without the intervention of the Messiah at that time or very soon after, the world would come to an end. However, **the Bible does tell us that Jesus will intervene and put a stop to all of the destruction… and lead us in to the Millennial Kingdom of peace!**

1. **Famines:** There will be **famines** and earthquakes in various places…Matt. 24:7

 Certainly, there have been people who have gone hungry in every generation of the historical record. However, there is no denying that the current world hunger situation throughout the world is very grave. Just taking a look at recent United Nations reports shows the massive problem of famine in many nations. In just the last year, the United Nations has stated that **one billion** people suffer from hunger! This is an increase of over 100 million hungry people over the last couple of years, primarily due to the financial crisis in which the world now finds itself. Food aid is at a twenty year low. The director general of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said that the level of hunger poses a “serious risk” to world peace and security. Almost 20% of the world goes to bed hungry every night! If one adds those in the sub-Saharan Africa with those in the Asia-Pacific region, almost one billion people are undernourished. Kostas Stamoulis, the director of the FAO, notes that “it is the first time in human history that we have so many hungry people in the world.” The head of the World Food Programme (WFP), Josette Sheeran, says the world may be reaching a point where the global system can no longer cope with the massive numbers of malnourished people.

 Places such as Darfur, Ethiopia and Somalia are in critical need of food resources… yet, nowhere near enough is coming. An estimated 3.2 million people, 42% of the population, in Somalia are malnourished. One is six children are considered acutely malnourished (requiring specialist care) and are in danger for their lives every day according to the FAO.

 There is no reason to expect that these things will become any better. Deserts are increasing at a rate of 15 million acres per year. Tens of billions of tons of topsoil are being lost yearly as well. Forests are being cut down at an alarming rate. Coupled with the population growth (over 225,000 people added per day), the diminished food supply is a disaster that shows all signs of only growing much worse.

 A closer look at the rate of population growth is in order. From Adam until Jesus, the population grew from one to 300,000 people. From Jesus until the beginning of WWI it grew to 2 billion people. In 1962, the population reached 3 billion; 5 billion in 1980; 6 billion in 2000; 7 billion today. Take a look at the graph below:

One of the many things that Jesus stated concerning the time just before His return was the fact that so many people would be suffering from famine. Certainly, famine is unfortunately a very serious and ever increasing problem in our world today.

1. **Pestilence:**

And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and **pestilences.**  Luke 21:11

 The increase in famine in the world has just been discussed, and the amazing increase in the number and severity of earthquakes will be noted below. Jesus also told his audience just before His crucifixion that the world would see a very serious problem of *pestilence* during the time of the Tribulation. Webster’s dictionary defines pestilence as “a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating.” There have always been serious infectious diseases in the world. However, the world today has reason to be very concerned that a devastating problem with severe, even lethal, contagious diseases may be just around the corner. Let us take a look at this problem in the world today.

 Probably the best example of how quickly an infectious disease can appear on the scene yielding devastation and death is seen in the viral agent commonly referred to as AIDS. This terrible disease came onto the world scene in the very late 1970’s and began its inexorable wrecking of havoc on the populace immediately. It took three to four years to identify the culpable viral agent… and decades to reach a point where there is some hope for those who get infected… if they are treated early enough and indefinitely. Even given the current treatment, an estimated 22.4 million adults and children in sub-Saharan Africa are currently infected with HIV. 1.4 million Africans died from AIDS in 2008. 14.1 million children have lost one or both parents to the AIDS virus. 1.8 million children have the virus themselves! In 2008, an estimated 33 million people between the ages of 15 and 49 are reported as being infected with the virus. Approximately 300,000 children die each year with this disease. There is still no cure for this disease over thirty years since it came onto the world scene. This is just one example of a *new* infectious disease in our world. There are many others.

 Tuberculosis has now mutated to become a much more virulent organism. Malaria has done the same. Dysentary kills millions of people around the world as well.

Avian influenza (H5N1) continues to cause deaths worldwide. One third of the cases in Egypt prove fatal. This is a scary disease.

 Malaria kills three million people yearly! It is one of the worst infectious diseases on the planet today. Tuberculosis has also made a comeback and potentially could become a serious killer again. The problem is that a drug resistant strain has come onto the scene. Only time will tell how this will spread among the populace. *Many other infectious diseases are mounting a terrible comeback at this time. For many years it looked as if drug therapy would wipe out these killers. Unfortunately, these bacteria and viruses have the capability of mutating and becoming even more potent killers… and many have already done so.* One of many examples is MRSA, Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus. This has become the scourge of hospitals around the nation in recent decades as it is often hospital acquired and very, very difficult to eradicate. It can be deadly.

 One other important point is that so many infectious agents are also now switching over from their typical animal (non-human) host and becoming infectious to humans (such as the AIDS virus). Here are just a few that have made this jump in recent years: Ebola, West Nile, Lyme Disease, SARS, bird flu, and swine flu. Newsweek Magazine stated that ***there have been thirty new contagious diseases come onto the world scene since the mid-1970s causing combined tens of millions of deaths***! That is what is so worrisome about the H5N1 influenza. All it would take would be for a ***deadly*** infectious agent, such as HIV or H5N1… or any such agent, viral or bacterial… to come onto the scene as so many already have lately PLUS be **as easy to spread as the common cold**. Imagine the devastation that this would wreck upon the world. These types of infections have begun to appear in recent decades. All it will take is the “perfect storm” of an infectious agent to devastate multiple hundreds of millions in very short order… and there really is little, if anything, we can do about it. The Associated Press in 2006 reported that “Humans risk being overrun by diseases from the animal world, according to researchers who have documented thirty-eight illnesses that have made that jump over the last twenty-five years.” Of course, the AIDS virus has been the most destructive plague the world has ever seen! The biggest recent worry is noted in a recent article in *National Geographic* (Oct. 2005), where they reported that deaths from a widespread bird flu pandemic could range from “7.4 million to an apocalyptic 180 million to 360 million.” A really big problem today is the ever increasing global travel that allows for infectious agents to travel from one continent to another in a matter of hours! If any one of the many influenza viruses ever again becomes extremely virulent, mass death will certainly quickly result. Consider that in 2009 that one in six Americans became infected with the Swine flu. What if that had been extremely deadly?!

 Grant Jeffrey includes in his discussion of the increase in pestilence in the last days the ever increasing problem that comes from the introduction of chemicals into the earth and atmosphere. Although the statistics may well be influenced by political bias, it is certainly not a good thing when the Toxic Substance Strategy Committee reported to the President of the United States in 1980 that 90% of cancer is caused by the introduction of toxic chemicals into our environment.

 Jesus tells us in His Olivet Discourse that in the days leading up to His return, the world will be experiencing an increase in this type of problem. During the Great Tribulation, the increase in pestilence in our world will become a devastating killer.

1. **Earthquakes:**

There will be famines and **earthquakes** in various places.  All these are the beginning of birth pains. Matt 24:7-8

 It is quite incredible to look at the statistics concerning the increase in large earthquakes during recent years. The chart below will show the marked increase seen over the last ten years of earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.0 or greater on the Richter Scale. It is important to point out that this magnitude earthquake has been tracked for over a century so that there is no doubt that the world is seeing a huge increase in recent years.

 In the last five years, there has been 79 magnitude 7+ earthquakes, showing that the pace continues to increase (e.g. there have been 37 in the last two years alone which was far more in two years than any individual decade of the last century)! The earth had seen seven major earthquakes in the first ten weeks of 2011 alone. There have been three “Great” (> 9.0 on the Richter scale) earthquakes in the past eleven years (normally there is only one per twenty years). Six of the ten largest earthquakes on record have occurred since Israel became a nation again (1948). Three of these were in the past six years! Note also that the graph above demonstrates that these devastating earthquakes have increased an astounding seven-fold in the last decade compared to every previous decade of the 20th century. This recent significant upsurge in the number of earthquakes is quite a blatant sign of the likely soon coming of Jesus.

 As has become quite obvious in the last decade, terribly destructive tsunamis often accompany these huge earthquakes. Two of the most destructive tsunamis in history have occurred in the past seven years (Indonesia – 2004: Japan – 2011).

1. **There will be an increase in those martyred for their faith in Jesus:**

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. Matt. 24:9

 In the two thousand years of the Church Age, approximately 70 million faithful Christians have given their lives because of their faith in Jesus. Sixty-five percent of these martyrs died within the last one hundred years! This is quite an intriguing fact. While there are so many in the world today who like to think that we are working our way to an idyllic New World Order, nothing could be further from the truth.

 Places such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nazi Germany, Turkey, India, Nigeria, East Timor, Cuba, many of the former Soviet Republics, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries have contributed significantly to the quantity of these terrible murders of the saints during the past century. The virtual genocidal martyrdom in Rwanda and Burundi in the 1990s produced more martyrs than at any other time period in history. An average of 160,000 Christians are martyred yearly since 1990 according to Antonio Socci, an Italian journalist who has studied this subject extensively! In today’s world, places such as Nigeria, Algeria, the Sudan, and Pakistan are major contributors to this number.

 Socci also noted that Communism and Muslim Fundamentalism are the greatest fuels for this persecution of Christians in the modern world. Lately, this has been most severe in the Sudan.

 Although it is difficult to believe for those Christians who live in relative religious peace in the United States, but millions of their brothers and sisters around the world suffer greatly, even unto torture and death. As the Bible prophesied, as the end times approached, there would be a great turning against the Church in the world resulting in an increase in the persecution against those in the Church. Although this persecution is already very bad, it will get even worse after the Rapture for anyone who chooses to follow Jesus Christ. However, God forbid if any other decision is made by those who are left behind.

1. **The love of most people will grow cold:**

**Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.** Matt. 24:12

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. 2 Tim 3:1-5

This prophecy made by Jesus is a very difficult one to quantify. In fact, almost impossible to do so. On the other hand, if one just thinks about these statements by Jesus and Paul and then takes a moment to reflect on the times in which we live, I believe that it will not be hard to recognize that wickedness is increasing around our nation and world… and, as these verses state, this has been the result of the fact that the natural love many people should be expected to have for one another (especially their own spouse and children) has “grown cold.”

 Let us take a look at just a few things as representative examples:

1. **Abortions:** This is certainly one of the more significant sins taking place in the world today that suggests strongly that we are living in the last days. It is difficult to believe that our Lord will allow this horrific murder to continue unabated. And, it looks like the only way for it to stop is for Jesus to stop it Himself.

 Just take a look at the number of abortions that take place every year. The amazing number of cases per year is 42,000,000! An incredible 42 million lives are snuffed out each year in the world; approximately 115,000 each day. This cannot be something that God will tolerate much longer. It is ridiculous that our Congress cannot pass a law to make even horrific partial-birth abortions illegal. In these cases, babies that are obviously viable are ripped apart while their head remains inside their mother’s womb… if they were allowed to come out of the womb first, then this killing would be deemed first degree murder. Because of our absurd laws, if the infant is killed while its head is still inside the mother, it is not technically murder. Unbelievable! How can so many people be so ***icy cold*** in our world today? Approximately, 95% of all abortions are performed because the birth of that particular baby is stated to be “inconvenient” by the mother.

1. **Murder:** Even murder is now done at a rate and for reasons that show the deterioration of our society. For example, there are thousands of prisoners being murdered every year in China (and other countries such as India) just to harvest their organs for use in other people… a kidney may bring a fee of $10,000! As discussed in another area in this section, millions of people are murdered each year for all sorts of absurd and hateful reasons – such as what is euphemistically called “ethnic cleansing”. Another recent addition to the list of murders committed is the “suicide bomber”. Muslim extremists have convinced many thousands of their countrymen and women that it is a wonderful idea to bomb themselves and others to expedite their trip to heaven and help Islam take the world over for Allah. One final point… virtually every day one can read about some heinous murder that happens in most every reasonably sized city in America. No longer do most of these murders shock people… because today these murders are so commonplace.
2. **Homosexuality:** Of course, homosexuality has always been an issue… including in biblical times. What we see happening in our world today is *the acceptance of this deviant sexual practice as normal.* This was not the case until the early 1970s. Before that time, homosexuality was always considered as a pathology and treated as such. Although I have no problem with those people who say that people are either born with homosexual tendencies or heterosexual tendencies (this may be true in some, or even, many cases), I differ with their conclusion. The Bible says that engaging in homosexual acts is a sin. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that it is fine to engage in homosexual acts… as long as the person was born with those tendencies. In the same way that it is also a sin to engage in fornication (including sex before marriage or adultery), even if there is a natural urge or tendency to do so, it is a sin to practice homosexuality. There may also be a natural tendency to lie and cheat for many if not all people – yet, these things are sins. Therefore, the fact that a person may be born to desire a person of the same sex, is not an excuse to act on this desire. It would still be a sin. God says we are not to sin.
3. **Sexual immorality:** It is quite apparent to everyone over the age of sixty that sexual immorality in the United States has rocketed upward beginning in the 1960s. This is also true in Europe and Great Britain. In fact, in our world today, sexual immorality is typically accepted as normal behavior… and not looked upon as a sin. God sees it as a sin… just as He sees homosexuality as a sin.
4. **Angry, brutal people:** More than 2.7 million children are abused each year in the United States alone. Twelve percent of women are raped in the United States at some point during their lives. Hundreds of thousands of children are abused each year across the world. Most of these cases go unreported!

 White slave trading is another horrific example of the depths to which so many have sunk in our increasingly amoral world in this age. Places such as Thailand, Japan, Israel, Belgium, Germany, Turkey and the United States are common destinations for these human “slaves”. The major source countries of these women slaves are Thailand, China, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Estimates are that over 100,000 people have been sold into this horribly degrading form of slavery.

1. **Childhood Pornography and Prostitution:** The use of children in the heinous acts of prostitution and pornography by evil adults in the world today is incredible and hard to believe. For example, in India, approximately 1.2 million children are forced into prostitution. In fact, about 40% of all prostitutes in that nation are children. That is the same percentage estimate given by the authorities in Thailand. In so many parts of the world, child prostitution is tolerated by the authorities! The thought is that if a child is over the age of twelve, and if the child does not file a complaint, no crime has been committed. There has been the development of a child sex industry in recent decades. Sex tourists pay to travel to certain countries in order to engage in all sorts of sordid sex acts with children. Of course, this type of activity is amazingly heinous and filled with all manner of mental and physical consequences for these children. Thailand, Cambodia, India, Brazil, and Mexico are the top countries in providing this horrific immoral activity to perverts around the world.

 In summary, the main point here is that over the last 40-50 years, the morality of people in the United States and in most of the world has eroded significantly. The immoral activities in our world today have escalated to levels that are certainly shocking to anyone who has even reasonable moral standards. However, many of the people in our world today have become hardened to sin and immoral activities. They have become “lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God.” That is why very little is being done to rectify most of these terrible problems. This is what we would expect if we are living in the latter days. Jesus will be coming to correct this situation soon.

1. **Rise of Anti-Semitism: You will be hated by all nations because of me** Matt. 24:9Today, Israel and the Jewish people face unparalleled hatred from other nations

 and people of the world. This hatred of God’s “chosen people” was predicted

 thousands of years ago in the Scriptures.

 It is important to keep in mind that Israel and its people were really not looked at any differently by the other nations of the world before the time of Christ. Sure they were involved in wars with other nations such as Assyria and Babylon. Later, they had to struggle against the Greeks and Romans. However, there was no particular hatred from any country against the people of Israel simply because of their origin (with the exception of those people who were the descendents of Ishmael and Esau, for example, the Edomites coming from the progeny of Esau). After the time of Jesus, however, anti-Semitism began to rise. The Romans expelled the Jews from their land in A.D. 70, as they trampled the city of Jerusalem and completely destroyed the Temple. In A.D. 135, Hadrian continued the persecution when he murdered hundreds of thousands more Jews and even renamed their homeland, Palestine.

 Later, with the naming of Christianity as the state religion of Rome, some early Christian fathers came out against the Jewish people. St. Augustine wrote that they were a “wicked sect” and should be banished because of their evil. Others called them Christ killers because of the role of some Jews in the crucifixion of Christ. In Norwich, England in 1140 A.D., a superstitious priest and an insane monk charged a local Jewish man with killing a Christian child in order to procure Christian blood for the preparation of matzo bread for a Jewish holiday. This false and absurd charge begat even further attacks against the Jewish people. The Crusaders and the Muslims also trained their sights on the “chosen people” of God. Jews were even blamed for instigating the Black Death by poisoning wells… even though they were dying just like so many others. Even Martin Luther was an anti-Semite as he wrote a treatise entitled, “Of Jews and Their Lies” in which he said that their synagogues should be set on fire. All through the ages since the death of Jesus, Jews have been targeted for the rage of many people.

 Incredibly, a book published in the late 19th century, *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism* by Wilhelm Marr, postulated that Jews were genetically different than Germans and therefore could never be assimilated into the German race. It is interesting that during the late 19th century in Austria, so many Jews rose to the top of many preferred professions such as law and medicine. Others were jealous of them and sought to punish the Jews. Hitler was a youth at this time, and he also learned to hate the Jews. This, of course, led to the zenith of anti-Semitism when so many people went along with Hitler as he carried out the Holocaust of six million Jews. He could not have done it without so many people and countries looking the other way.

 Anti-Semitism still runs rampant in the world today. A recent survey in Spain revealed that one in three Spaniards is anti-Semitic. One in three Germans in another recent survey were also found to be anti-Semitic. Sweden reported a 57% increase in anti-Semitic crimes last year in their country with 250 crimes against Jews being committed (i.e. simply because the person was a Jew)! Scotland reported that this type of crime increased by 300%. In Canada, anti-Semitic incidents reached record levels in recent years. The point is that all over the world anti-Semitism is prevalent, and is gaining more ground every year.

 Just think about the reaction to the world community to the situation between Israel and the Palestinians. Personally, I find the reaction incredible. Literally every nation other than the United States (and sometimes England, Canada and Australia) either is silent concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, or they take the side of Palestine. Israel is constantly being castigated by the United Nations. In my review of over 225 resolutions by the United Nations that related to the current situation between the Palestinians and Israel, I could find no resolution that condemned any action by the Palestinians – not for any of their suicide bombings, the incessant attacks from Gaza as bombs land on Israel almost daily (even though Israel gave up Gaza so this would not happen), and so many other breaches of previously agreed-upon ceasefires. On the other hand, Israel was “condemned” by scores of resolutions by the United Nations. The whole thing might be looked at as an absurd practical joke were it not so terribly serious and deadly. There does not seem to be any reasonable logical explanation for the consensus of world opinion against Israel in all of this. I suggest that this “upside down” viewpoint must be Satanically inspired.

 One fact that seems to be ignored by all of the nations of the world is the attitude of the Palestinians with respect to Israel. For example, the Justice Minister, Freih Abu Medein, came out with the following edict in 1997, “The death penalty will be imposed on anyone who is convicted of selling one inch of land to Israel.” In fact, Arab men have been killed for doing just that. This did not elicit any significant outcry from the United Nations or any other individual nation. It seems that it does not matter how the Jews are treated. Nothing at all, including terrible hate speech, suicide bombings, daily missile attacks from Gaza, etc.,…. i.e. nothing at all seems enough to bring the world community to the defense of Israel and the Jews even though they inhabit just a fraction of their biblically promised land.

 The simple fact is that the Jews are hated by many people in the world today. God said that they would be and they are. They are His “chosen people”, but God has obviously allowed them time to see how they do without His guidance and help. The answer is quite obvious. God will bring even more judgment upon them during the Great Tribulation – in order to bring them back to Him. God will indeed bring the Jews back into His “fold” during that time. They will finally recognize Jesus as the Messiah and God will lead them to victory as will be shown in the last section of this treatise.

 One more point should be made clear. God has always said that those that bless Israel will be, in turn, blessed. However, those who curse Israel……. they will be cursed! All nations, including the United States and those who live therein, should take care to heed these words!

1. **Kingdom Preached to the Entire World:**

**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.** Matt 24:14

"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth. Isaiah 45:22

 Jesus told His audience on the Mount of Olives just a couple days before His crucifixion that just before His return to earth the gospel would have been preached throughout the entire world… “as a testimony to all nations”. Of course, the “good news” of Jesus’ wonderful sacrificial death was only locally known in the decades following His death. Even after the spread of Christianity throughout the majority of the Roman Empire, the most of the remainder of the world remained totally unaware of the person and work of the Son of God. Before this message was spread further, the Dark Ages came upon civilization. Almost a thousand years went by before the Renaissance once again gave hope to the world. With the invention of the printing press, the Bible was made available to many more people.

 Over these last several hundred years, dedicated missionaries and Bible translators have continued to spread the gospel to every continent. However, it has only been since the invention of satellite television and the internet that the gospel of Jesus Christ has truly been preached into the entire world… every continent, every nation has now been reached by the gospel message of our Lord in our day. Let us take a look at some recent data.

 Grant Jeffrey points out in his book, *Armageddon: Appointment With Destiny,* that almost **fifty percent of Africans** have become born-again Christians within the last century. Given that only three percent were Christian at the onset of the twentieth century, it is amazing how things have changed in our time. **Indonesia** gives another example of the growth of Christianity in recent times. Although mostly Muslim, **twenty percent** have recently accepted Christ as Savior! **Russia now has over one hundred million Christians**. **Koreans** had rejected Christ almost without exception as World War II began. Now **fifty percent are believers**. As has been pointed out in an earlier *sign*, **Muslims are turning to Christ is surprisingly vast numbers** in the past couple of decades.

 **China may be the greatest example of this end-time coming to faith in Christ**. In 1950, after over 100 years of continuous missionary intervention, there were only 1 million Christians in all of China. Quite a price was paid by many for trusting in Jesus. For over one hundred years there have been tens of thousands of Christian martyrs in China. For example, in the infamous Boxer Rebellion, around the turn of the 20th century, 188 foreign missionaries and more than 32,000 faithful Chinese believers were butchered simply because they were Christians. However, even though the penalty for following Christ in that communist country is still very severe (tens of thousands of Christians have been martyred under their communist rule), **approximately 125,000,000 have turned their lives over to Jesus in recent decades.** Most of this has had to take place in the underground Church. These people are intensely craving the Word of our Lord and are willing to risk their very lives just to hear the gospel and to learn how to live for the Lord.

 Jeffrey also noted that the Lausanne Statistics Task Force on Evangelism revealed even more impressive details on the growth and spread of the gospel in recent years:

* In 1430, one percent of the world was Christian
* In 1790, two percent called themselves Christians
* In 1940, three percent of people were Christian
* In 1997, ten percent were Christian – and it has risen even faster over the last decade

 In other words, it took 510 years to increase from one to three percent, but only 57 years to go from three to ten percent! In total numbers, this may be even more impressive. In 1934 there were 40 million evangelical Christians. Today there are approximately 650 million!

 Religious broadcasters are today broadcasting to every language group throughout the world. Wycliffe translators have translated the Bible into 3,850 languages reaching over 98% of the world’s population. The gospel of John has been translated into virtually every human dialect in the world.

 The number of people becoming new Christians each day is estimated (in a detailed study by researchers from *World Christian Encyclopedia)* to be 125,000!!! In this past decade, there is a net gain of approximately 42,000,000 Christians every year on this earth. With the ever increasing rate of evangelization, **estimates are that one billion more people will become Christians in the next decade.** **Evangelical Christianity is growing at the fastest rate of all.**

 Although Islam is increasing rapidly in the world today, studies show that Christianity is increasing at almost twice their rate! Why? For one thing, there are more than eighty thousand missionaries currently spreading the gospel throughout the world. Extremely importantly, the message concerning the Christian God is true! For another, as Muslims emigrate away from their home countries and become “westernized”, they are finally able to hear the logical arguments behind the Christian message… without the fear of being beheaded. The most amazing reason is that Jesus is appearing to significant numbers of Muslim people in dreams and visions to assure them that He is the only "way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Because of this, many million Muslims have recently accepted the gospel message.

 Jesus said that the end would come when His gospel message was preached throughout the world… that time is certainly at hand.

1. **Doomsday Weapons and the melting of the elements:**

Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand: **2** A day of darkness and gloominess, A **day of clouds and thick darkness**, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains…… A **fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness;** Surely nothing shall escape them. Joel 2:1-3

 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. **22** And **unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved.**  Matt 24:21-22

But the **day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night, in which **the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat**; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. **11** Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **12** looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which **the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat**? 2 Peter 3:10-12

 The description given here by Peter is a pretty good way of describing the melting of the elements via the effects of a nuclear holocaust. Indeed, the earth will be on fire and everything in the path of the massive blast will melt with incredible heat. Things will dissolve. Matter will melt. The prophet Joel gives us another glimpse of the destruction left behind after a nuclear blast.

 The energy produced by a nuclear explosion is millions of times more powerful per gram than conventional explosives. The temperatures reached are in the tens of millions of degrees. When there is a surrounding material such as air, rock, or water, the radiation rapidly heats it to an equilibrium temperature (i.e. the same temperature as within the bomb). This causes vaporization of surrounding material resulting in its rapid expansion and a massive shockwave. The effects are devastating and difficult to imagine. Indeed, “the elements actually will melt with fervent heat!” This is what the Bible tells us will happen just before Jesus Christ comes again.

Jesus told us in His Olivet Discourse that unless He came and shortened the time of this terrible Great Tribulation, all of humanity would be destroyed. Thankfully, He will come and usher all Christianity into the Kingdom!

**Conclusion:**

There are so many things happening today in the world that suggest that it is very likely Jesus will soon return. The Bible gives the reader many different signs so that people can know when the time is close at hand for His Second Coming. Although Jesus is clear about the fact that no one will know the day or hour of His return, He is also clear that people should be aware of the *season* of His return.

 In his address on Mount Olivet, Jesus spoke on the topic of His Second Coming. He told His listeners that the world would deteriorate into very perilous times as that day approached. Jesus noted that many alive in those days would experience terrible famine, pestilence, earthquakes, and wars. Although the gospel would finally be spread throughout the entire world, there would also be a marked increase in apostasy. False Messiahs and False Prophets would spread Satan’s lies to all those who would listen. Yet, millions would die for their love of Jesus. All of these signs are here in the world today.

 We have just reviewed in some detail fifty different “signs of the times” that suggest strongly that we are indeed living in that *season*… the last days. We live in a world filled with ever increasing numbers of hateful nations and terrorist men and women. Many are soon to be armed with nuclear weapons. It unfortunately seems very likely that some crazed and/or demonically possessed individual will one day use them. That could start a chain reaction that might very well lead to a nuclear holocaust. However, Jesus simply will not allow that to happen. He will literally come on His white horse to save the world and His saints within it. Those who have accepted Him as their Savior will be riding along with Him as He returns to the Mount of Olives on that glorious day known as His Second Coming!