Sign of the Son of Man

Prophecies made by Jesus Christ

By Craig Paardekooper 2007
The Gospel writers were not the only witnesses to the things that Jesus said and did. There were other witnesses too – the Jewish and Roman historians and the Jewish religious leaders – who mention Christ’s birth, mission and death.

However, these same historians and leaders also record a series of very strange events occurring during the 40 years after the resurrection. These strange events were recorded yet, at the time, they did not understand their meaning – they merely recorded them. With hindsight we find that these events form an amazing pattern….they were signs with a meaning….something that Christians regard with utmost importance…… they comprised the Sign of the Son of Man…

To understand the full import of these events, we must first take a look at the Old Testament. We will look at prophecies of the Messiah, and prophecies of the End of the Age found in the Old Testament.
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INTRODUCTION

Sections 1-3
look at –
1) prophecies of the Messiah, and
2) prophecies of the End of the Age.
3) Parallels from the Past

These prophecies were more than just verbal statements of what would come to pass; rather, they consisted in parallel events deliberately orchestrated to fore-shadow the future events, and played out many hundreds of years before hand. We discover that even the timing of these parallel events followed a deliberate pattern.

Section 4
looks at the phenomena surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ. Like his resurrection, Christ’s death was also accompanied by some incredible phenomena rarely mentioned or even alluded to in current literature. We take a close look at historical records of these phenomena from Christian and non-Christian sources.

Sections 5 – 7
look at events leading up to the final war and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Here I show how the prophecies of the End of the Age were fulfilled to completion.

An important contribution of this book is that it identifies the SEQUENCE of historical events that comprised the Sign of the Son of Man, THE SIGN that Jesus said would announce his return and the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

The final section
outlines conclusions and their implications for modern-day Christianity.

I believe that my work provides a clear overview of the revelations found in the Bible, and contributes significantly to our understanding of Christianity.
AN OVERVIEW OF JEWISH HISTORY

The history of Israel begins with the Exodus, which took place sometime between 1500-1450 B.C. when the Jews emerged from captivity in Egypt. The history of Israel ends with the total destruction of the Jewish nation in 70 A.D. at the hands of the Romans, when both Jerusalem and the Temple were leveled to the ground, and the Jewish people were removed from the Promised Land.

In between these two dates, there is a span of about 1500 years. This span of history is punctuated by one big event – the Babylonian Captivity – which started in 586 B.C. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and leveled both the city and the Temple to the ground. The Jews were removed from the Promised Land and taken as captives to Babylon. 70 years later they returned back to their homeland and rebuilt the Temple and the City. As we shall see, this event fore-shadows the final and complete destruction that was to take place in 70 A.D.
The major Prophets of the Old Testament were – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel. These prophets appear just prior to the Babylonian Captivity. In fact, the reason for their appearance was the impending doom of Israel.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ took place in 30 A.D., that is 40 years before the final destruction of Israel.
PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

The Prophet Isaiah
The Messiah of Israel was prophesied long before Jesus' time. The Old Testament contains many prophecies relating to the Messiah, but we find the clearest of these in the books of Isaiah and Daniel.

Chapter 1: The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah was the first of the so-called Major Prophets, and is widely regarded as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah began his ministry in 741 B.C., the year that King Uzziah died. (the Encyclopedia Britannica gives the year 742 B.C. as the year that Uzziah died; Wikipedia gives 741 B.C.)

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.” Isaiah 6 v 1

So Isaiah began to preach his message 770 years before the New Testament Gospel was preached. In fact he preached at least 200 years before even the Old Testament was complete. That’s why Isaiah’s book is so incredible - Isaiah not only left us with a prophecy of the Messiah, his entire book is a miniature version of the whole Bible. I will present the evidence for this below.

Could it be that Isaiah foresaw the Gospel, and the whole Bible in it's entirety? Was God guiding Isaiah's hand?

Isaiah’s Prophecy of the Messiah

The name "Isaiah" means "The Salvation of the Lord", which has the same meaning as the name “Jesus” - which means “The Lord saves”. And both left us a Gospel of salvation.

1. The Book of Isaiah divides into Old and New Testament Parts:

The Book of Isaiah is an interesting document. It consists of 66 chapters, just as our present day Bible has 66 books. And just as our present day Bible divides into the Old testament (with 39 books) and the New Testament (with 27 books), so also does the Book of Isaiah divide into 2 distinct parts, one of 39 chapters and the other of 27 chapters.

Chapters 1-39 of the Book of Isaiah are known as the “Book of Judgment”, and (like the 39 books of the Old Testament) are filled with judgment upon “immoral, idolatrous” men. Judah has sinned; the surrounding nations have sinned; the whole earth has sinned. Judgment must come, for God cannot allow such blatant sin to go unpunished forever.

The last 27 chapters of the Book of Isaiah (chapters 40-66) are known as the “Book of Comfort”. These 27 chapters (like the 27 books of the New Testament) declare a message of hope. The Messiah is coming as a Savior and a Sovereign to bear a cross and to wear a crown.

So in it’s structure, and thematic content, the 2 parts of the Book of Isaiah closely match the structure and themes of the whole Bible – it’s Old Testament and New Testament.
2. The Central Figure of the New Testament Part is Jesus Christ:
On close examination of the last 27 chapters of Isaiah (corresponding to the New Testament), we find something quite remarkable. These 27 chapters divide into three groups of 9 (3 groups of 3 x 3). Each of these groups is separated by the phrase "There is no rest for the wicked". The central group of 9 chapters deals with the Servant Messiah, and the central chapter within this central group is chapter 53. Chapter 53 of Isaiah describes the DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. So the central figure of Isaiah chapters 40-66 is the crucified Christ. In summary, chapters 40 to 66 (the last 27 chapters) of the Book of Isaiah correspond to the New Testament (the last 27 books of the Bible). We have seen that the theme of these chapters is salvation, and the central figure (found in the central chapter – chapter 53) is that of Christ crucified.

3. The Beginning of the Gospel of Isaiah Corresponds with the beginning of the New Testament:
Incredibly, the very text of chapter 40 of the Book of Isaiah corresponds to the text of the 40th book of the Bible, which is the first book of the New Testament.
a) John the Baptist

Chapter 40 v 3 of Isaiah reads

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way for the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

These words find a precise correspondence in the 40th Book of the Bible – the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew (40th Book) Chapter 3 reads –

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make his paths straight.”

These are the words spoken by John the Baptist who announced the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel.

b) Explicit reference to the word GOSPEL:

Richard McGough, on his website www.biblewheel.com, points out an even deeper level of connection. The connection between Isaiah 40 and the Gospel is made explicit in the text of Isaiah 40 v 9 –

“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

“Behold your God!” and “all flesh shall see” refer to the physical incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, who, becoming physical, was visible to all flesh.

This passage from Isaiah contains the FIRST OCCURRENCE in the Bible of the Hebrew word MAVESERET, meaning BRINGER OF GOOD TIDINGS. The Greek Septuagint version of Isaiah 40 v 9 translates “that bringest good tidings” into the word EVANGELIZEMONOS. This word is used in the New Testament, where it is translated as PREACH THE GOSPEL (Romans 9 v 18). It is from the root EVANGELIDZO from which we get the word EVANGELIZE. It is the root of the word translated GOSPEL throughout the New Testament.
So Isaiah chapter 40 uses the very words spoken by John the Baptist, the announcer of the Gospel, and introduces the word GOSPEL, just as The Book of Matthew (The 40th Book) starts with John the Baptist announcing the Gospel and is the first book of the New Testament (The Gospel). The phrases “Good Tidings” and "Good News” occur 6 times in the 27 chapters of Isaiah that correspond to the New Testament, and these phrases are completely absent from the 39 chapters of Isaiah that correspond to the 39 books of the Old Testament.

In summary:

We have a familiar series of events –

- Isaiah's name means "Salvation of God"; just as Jesus' name means "God Saves"
- Isaiah preached for 40 years before the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.; just as the Gospel was preached for 40 years before the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- Isaiah leaves us a Gospel of Salvation, which -
  - Has 27 chapters corresponding to the 27 books of the New Testament,
  - Has the central character of Christ crucified – in chapter 53 (the central chapter)
  - Introduces the word GOSPEL in chapter 40 corresponding to the 40th Book of the Bible, Matthew – which is the first book of the New Testament,
  - In chapter 40 Isaiah uses the very words spoken by John the Baptist – the announcer of the Gospel.
  - The last chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 66 uses the words “New Heavens and New Earth”, the very words found in the 66th book of the Bible and last book of the New Testament – the Book of Revelation

Isaiah 53, the central chapter of Isaiah's "New Testament" foretold that the Messiah would come as a suffering servant to suffer and die for the sins of many.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53

Many Jews were expecting a Messiah - the Messiah that Isaiah had spoken about. 770 years before the time of Christ, Isaiah had given the Jews a “Gospel in miniature”. His prophetic foresight of the Gospel was fulfilled 770 years later (from 741 B.C. till 30 A.D.) when the true Gospel was preached.

What is more remarkable still is that Isaiah preached his gospel during the 40 years prior to the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (from 741 B.C. till 701 B.C.). In the same way, Jesus' disciples would later
preach the Gospel for 40 years prior to the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (from 30 A.D till 70 A.D.). One ministry perfectly the other - in content, in duration, and in the final ending.

Even the time span between is curiously symbolic. In 701 B.C. Jerusalem experienced its first siege at the hands of the Assyrian army. However, it was spared from destruction by an “angel of the Lord”. Its final destruction came in 70 A.D. - 770 years later, at the hands of the Roman army. Peter had once asked Jesus -

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18v21.
PROPHECIES OF THE END OF THE AGE
Chapter 2 : The Sign of Jonah

Jesus - The Messiah

Jesus was born about 4 B.C. His origins were humble, for his family were not wealthy; they were just ordinary people who survived by working with their hands. He was born into the lower stratum of society - acquainted with poverty and suffering, and he followed in his father's trade as a carpenter. Then in 27 A.D., at the age of about 30, he felt the call to begin his ministry.

John the Baptist was preaching at that time. John shunned the comforts of town life; instead dwelling in the desert, moving from place to place, wild and free, unfettered by materialistic concerns. What sustained him was his mission - a deep conviction that he must prepare the way for the Messiah. His message was simple "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Turn from your sins and be cleansed. Be made whole and new. In the opinion of the common people, John was a prophet. His strength of conviction inspired them. He practiced what he preached, and he spoke with an urgency that made people stop and listen. Vast crowds assembled from the entire region of Judea and gathered at the river Jordan to hear him preach. John held out his hands to them and they stepped forward to be baptized - dipped in the clear cool waters, they rose with new hope of a life centered on goodness and holiness.

When Jesus arrived, John recognized him as the Messiah, and he knew his mission was complete; his task was done. He instructed his followers to follow Jesus instead. And when Herod, at the instigation of his wife, had John arrested, John did not resist, but resigned himself to his imprisonment and execution.

Demand for a Sign

The Zealots hoped that the Messiah would come as a conqueror to lead their nation to freedom from foreign rule. On the other hand, the religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees) believed the Messiah would be a law-giver like Moses - someone who would impose the strict letter of the law. However Jesus was neither; he preached love rather than conquest, and forgiveness rather than legalism. Consequently, many religious leaders rejected him, and the Zealots held anyone to be an enemy who would not fight at their side.

Jesus claimed to be more than a teacher of ethics. He claimed to me more than a social reformer. He even claimed to be more than a prophet. John the Baptist was a prophet, yet John had revered Jesus, and spoken of him with awe as if he were too holy to even touch. And Jesus’ claim to be Lord of the Sabbath, to be able to forgive sins, and to be the Judge of the dead suggested that he was somehow equal to God. This ignited much controversy. The ranks of the religious leaders were divided; some believed in Jesus, and others held him to be a false prophet and blasphemer. The unbelievers demanded that Jesus prove his claims by performing some incredible wonder or sign.

Here was Jesus' response -
“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Ninevah will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.” MATTHEW 12 v 39-41

The sign that Jesus spoke about was to be a very great miracle – a mighty sign to that generation. It would consist of the Son of Man being 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth, followed by the judgment and destruction of that generation. These events were to follow the pattern of the sign of Jonah.

Jonah’s Story

In order to understand the Sign of Jonah, we must turn to the Book of Jonah found in the Bible. Jonah (his name means "dove") was a prophet who lived during the reign of King Jeroboam II (793-753 BC), about 800 years before Jesus’ time. Here is a summary of the book of Jonah as it is found in the Bible.

Jonah was commanded by God to journey to the city of Ninevah, a city located in a foreign land, far beyond the boundaries of Israel. God was not pleased with the people of Ninevah, and Jonah was sent to preach to them, so that they might repent and be saved. However, Jonah was afraid. The Ninevites were not Jewish so why would they listen to him - wasn't it more likely he would be ridiculed and set upon - even killed. And anyway, Jonah believed that God’s grace was for the Jews alone - God’s special people. So he decided to go in the opposite direction. He boarded a small ship destined for Tarshish in the West, and set sail across the ocean. That night a great and violent storm arose, and threatened to sink the ship. The crew were terrified; they believed that their only hope was in prayer. So they prayed hard to their god, but Jonah remained silent. "Why don't you pray?" they asked. "Because I am the cause," he replied "I am running away from God. I am cursed. Cast me overboard, and the sea will become calm" The crew would not murder a passenger who had placed himself in their safe keeping, but the storm was unrelenting, and they believed they would all perish if they did nothing. Eventually, in a mood of desperation, they cast Jonah from the ship. With a plop, his body disappeared beneath the waters, and almost immediately an eerie quiet and calm settled over the sea.

As Jonah’s body sunk beneath the waves, it was swallowed by a whale and taken down into the Abyss. For 3 days and 3 nights Jonah lay in it's belly. Then, after the third night, the fish beached itself and vomited Jonah out. Jonah was back where he had started. God repeated his instructions. Jonah was to preach repentance to the Ninevites, and warn them that they had 40 days to repent or they would be destroyed. This time Jonah obeyed God and preached to them. The Ninevites repented and they were spared.

When we look at Jonah's story, two numbers stand out from this – a period of 3 followed by a period of 40. Just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish, so Jesus said that the Son of Man would be in the earth for that time.
However, it seems that the Sign of Jonah also refers to a Judgment. After Jonah’s 3 days in the whale, the Ninevites were given 40 days to repent. If they did not repent they were to face destruction. Similarly, when Jesus spoke of the Sign of Jonah, it seems he was referring to more than just his resurrection on the third day...he was also referring to a time of judgment…a time of judgment was at hand, and there would be a period of 40 “days” until that judgment.
Chapter 3 : Fulfillment of the Sign of Jonah

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

After Jesus’ execution, his body was placed in a tomb, where it remained for 3 days. However, on the third day, his body was gone. The Romans claimed that the disciples had stolen the body, but the disciples claimed that Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to them. In fact they claimed that Jesus continued to appear to them for 40 days.

“In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” Acts 1 v 1 - 3

At the end of the 40 days, Jesus appeared to them for the last time, then he ascended in the clouds to heaven, and angels appeared saying that He would return in the same way He had departed – that is – when He returned in judgment it would be on the clouds of heaven. In this sense, his ascension into heaven was a type of the Judgment that was to come.

“After he had said this he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”. Acts 1 v 9-23

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Sign of Jonah</th>
<th>Fulfillment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days.</td>
<td>• Jesus was “in the earth” for 3 days until He was resurrected</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jonah preached to the Ninevites for 40 days so that they would repent and avoid the judgment.</td>
<td>• Then over the next 40 days He appeared to His disciples. This 40 day period was a time of witness to the disciples so they would believe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• At the end of the 40 days, judgment was to come upon the Ninevites if they did not repent.</td>
<td>• At the end of the 40 days, Christ ascended into the clouds, and indicated that He would return in judgment in the same way (in the clouds)</td>
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</table>
There was a second and larger fulfillment of the Sign of Jonah. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus refers to the end of the Jewish Age, when their nation would be judged.

*Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" Jesus asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

*As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"*  
Matthew 24 v 1-3

Jesus then described all of the various signs that would immediately precede the End. The passage ends with these words -

*And from the fig tree learn a parable: When the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.  Matthew 24 v 32-34

Jesus specifically predicted that the final judgment upon the Jews and his return would occur within the lifetimes of some of those listening to him, that is, within 40 years. There are several references that confirm this -

"So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass until all these things be done."  
MARK 13

"So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand.  Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled."  
LUKE 21

"Amen, amen, I say to thee, When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. 21:19. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had said this, he saith to him: Follow me. 21:20. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? 21:21. Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? 21:22. Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me. 21:23. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? "  
JOHN 21

History records that from the resurrection of Jesus in 30 A.D., there was a forty year period until the final destruction of the Jerusalem, the Temple and the cities of Israel. So at the end of the forty years, judgment came upon the Jewish people.
In 66 A.D. the Romans began the systematic extermination of the towns and cities of Israel. In 70 A.D. they laid siege to Jerusalem and utterly destroyed it – any survivors being enslaved and deported to other parts of the Roman Empire.

One is struck by the coincidental timing of all this. Jesus gave the Jews the Sign of Jonah, and precisely 40 years later the nation was brought to an end……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fulfillment 2</th>
<th>Sign of Jonah</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Jesus’ ministry lasted for 3 years</td>
<td>Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Jesus’ disciples preached repentance for 40 years, preaching to Jews and Gentiles</td>
<td>Jonah preached repentance to the Ninevites for 40 days. Jonah is unique in preaching to the Gentile nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Towards the end of the 40 years a war began between the Romans and Jews, that led to the complete destruction of Israel in the 40th year</td>
<td>After 40 days, the Ninevites repented and were spared from destruction</td>
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Remember that at the time of Jesus’ ascension, the angels had said Jesus would return on the clouds, and he would return just prior to the judgment of the Jews

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”.

It should be noted that immediately prior to the war of extermination of the Jews, signs appeared in the skies over Palestine, witnessed by thousands. For example, there was the strange appearance of a cross-shaped star that hung over Jerusalem recorded by both Jewish and Roman historians.

These historians also record the appearance of a spectacular apparition on the eve of the War that was to lead to the destruction of the Jews. This was the apparition of a heavenly army amidst the clouds - which was seen throughout Judea by the entire population. The historians recount this event as if they could hardly believe it themselves. We will look at these accounts later on.

If these signs really occurred then it seems clear that the appearance of the star and the heavenly host proclaimed the return of Jesus and announced the beginning of judgment. Christians, who witnessed these signs, did see them as portents of the coming judgment, and they fled Jerusalem to the city of Pella in Transjordan. Soon, Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman armies, and a siege wall was erected so no one else could escape. The trap was shut, and destruction was assured…
PARALLELS FROM THE PAST

THE EXODUS
In this section we see how the major events in the history of Israel fore-shadowed the coming of the Messiah, and the End of the Age.

**Chapter 4 : The Exodus**

Israel begins with the Exodus. The Exodus took place sometime between 1500 and 1450 B.C. The nation of Israel was born out of this great event. So it is very curious that the birth of Israel should be accompanied by the very same signs that we have seen accompanied it's final destruction.

The Israelites had dwelt in Egypt for several generations, and their population had expanded greatly. However, during the time of Moses, the Israelites were regarded as an immigrant threat and there was strong ethnic opposition to them. They were treated as a slave class and were forbidden from worshipping their own God. Consequently, we are told, God sent 10 plagues upon the Egyptians as punishment. The ninth plague was a plague of darkness that lasted 3 days... The tenth plague was the death of every first born child in Egypt. Before this final plague, God instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a Passover lamb and put it's blood on their doorposts. The tenth plague would not affect any home protected by this blood.

Egypt was brought to it’s knees by these plagues, and the Pharaoh finally submitted to Moses demands, and allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt and worship their god. Moses led about 600,000 Israelites out of Egypt. However, the Bible tells us that because of their unbelief and unrepentant hearts, God did not allow the Israelites to enter the Promised Land immediately. Instead God caused them to dwell 40 years in the Wilderness. At the end of 40 years, the Israelites entered the Promised Land and drove out the native inhabitants.
Now, this story of the Exodus finds a strange parallel in the events following the crucifixion of Christ.

1. First, just as Moses sacrificed the Passover Lamb to avert the judgment of God, so Christ claimed to be the true Passover Lamb who dies for the sins of the world. Isaiah 53 makes it clear that the role of the Messiah would be to bear the sins of the people.

2. Secondly, in both cases the act of deliverance – the Passover sacrifice - was immediately preceded by a strange darkness that occurred during the daylight hours. The Passover of Moses was preceded by three days of darkness, and three hours of darkness preceded the Passover sacrifice of Christ. In the whole Bible these are the only two occurrences of darkness during the daytime. And the number “three” is associated with the duration of the darkness on both occasions.

3. From the time of Moses’ Passover until the Israelites entered the Promised Land there were 40 years. Similarly, from the time of Christ’s Passover sacrifice until the Jews were driven out from the Promised Land there were 40 years. One reflects the other. This seems rather coincidental.

4. After forty years, the Israelites entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. Joshua is the Hebrew version of the Greek name "Jesus". Both names mean "God Saves". Similarly, Jesus had told his disciples that he would be the one who would carry out the final judgment – and forty years after the crucifixion the Jews were removed from the Promised Land.

5. A fifth parallel is this. Israel celebrates “Hag Matan Torah” (The Feast of the Giving of the Law) on the day of Pentecost. Pious Jews keep vigil throughout the night at Pentecost, studying the Law, to be ready in the early hours of the day to celebrate the giving of the Law of Moses. Pentecost, or it’s alternate name “The Feast of Weeks” is associated with the birth of Israel and the giving of the Law. Thus, it is also called "The Feast of Revelation". The giving of the Law at Pentecost in the Old Testament is paralleled by the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost in the New Testament. The Law is the external code written on tablets of stone; the Spirit is the internal Law – when the Law is written on our hearts.

6. The Old Testament tells us that when Moses gave the Law to the Israelites, 3000 died for worshipping the Golden Calf. The New Testament tells us that when the disciples received the Spirit, 3000 were baptized into new life.

The New Testament draws a parallel between Christ and the Passover Lamb quite frequently. That’s what makes these patterns of reflection so strange – they are just what we might expect if Christ WAS the true Passover Lamb.
In summary,

1. Both 40 year periods begin with the same events – the Darkness and the Passover

2. Both 40 year periods end with the same events – the destruction and removal of the inhabitants of the Promised Land

3. During both 40 year periods the central event takes place after 50 days – the revelation of the Law, and the revelation of the Spirit.

4. In both cases the Judgment that came at the end of the 40 years was carried out by Joshua/Jesus.

5. These two 40 year periods occur at the very beginning and the very end of the history of Israel respectively.

The history of Israel begins and ends with these events. It is almost as if the entire nation had been purchased from death by the first Passover, and it's continued existence was only maintained because of this fact.
TIME LINE

DATE OF THE EXODUS AND DATE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

Exodus

30 A.D.
Christ

40 yrs

40 yrs

Exodus

40 yrs

- ENTER THE PROMISED LAND

- REMOVED FROM THE PROMISED LAND

 Darkness Passover

Pentecost Giving of the Law
3000 die for worshipping the golden calf

Gospel of Salvation through the Blood of Jesus is preached

Pentecost Giving of the Spirit
3000 born into new life
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exodus</th>
<th>Christ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mysterious darkness during daytime lasting 3 days</td>
<td>Mysterious darkness during daytime lasting 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifice of the Passover Lamb</td>
<td>Christ is the Passover Lamb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three days after the Passover, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and</td>
<td>Three days after the Passover Jesus was resurrected – the first fruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Israelites celebrated the Festival of First Fruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 50 days the Law is given, and 3000 die for worshipping the Golden</td>
<td>After 50 days the Spirit is given, and 3000 are born into new Life when</td>
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<tr>
<td>calf</td>
<td>they receive the Spirit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 9th Av is the day when the Jews are Judged by God (according to the</td>
<td>The 10th Av is the date when, in 70 A.D., the Jerusalem and it’s Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylonian Talmud), and made to dwell in the wilderness for 40 years</td>
<td>were finally destroyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 40 years in the Wilderness was a period of miraculous events for</td>
<td>The 40 years was a period of miraculous events for the purpose of</td>
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<tr>
<td>the purpose of creating belief and repentance.</td>
<td>creating belief and repentance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday for forty years there was Manna from Heaven, and water from</td>
<td>The Apostles witnessed with many miracles to all parts of the Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Rock. In addition there was healing</td>
<td>Empire. They spread the Word, and healed many people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 40 years the Israelites enter the Promised Land under the</td>
<td>After 40 years the Israelites are removed from the Promised Land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership of Joshua. Joshua is the Hebrew version of the Greek name</td>
<td>Jesus, (the Greek name for Joshua), claimed to be the one who would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Jesus&quot;</td>
<td>return to carry out this judgment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Many other writers have noticed the similarities between the events of the Exodus and the events surrounding Christ's life. The New Testament tells us explicitly that the Exodus Passover was a foreshadowing of Christ.

We have seen that the events surrounding the Exodus were prophetic, in that they foreshadowed the sequence of events during the time of Christ. It is as if God were using a pattern of events in history to spell out a prophecy; instead of giving the prophecy in words, God was acting out the prophecy on the stage of world events.

It should be noted that the final destruction of Jerusalem occurred on a specific day, the 10th day of the month of Av (as recorded by the historian Josephus) in 70 A.D. The significance of this date will become apparent shortly.
PARALLELS FROM THE PAST

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY
Chapter 5: The Babylonian Captivity

In the whole of Jewish history, as it is found in the Bible, there were only two occasions when the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were removed from the Promised Land – once in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians, and finally in 70 A.D by the Romans.

By strange coincidence, the destruction in 586 B.C. occurred on the same day as the destruction in 70 A.D. – this day was the 10th day of the month of Av.

The Bible tells us that for 40 years – from 626 B.C. till 586 B.C. - the prophet Jeremiah preached to the Jews, warning them of the destruction to come. (Jeremiah began to preach in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah king of Judah. Josiah’s reign began in 639 B.C., so the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign is 626 B.C. i.e., 40 years before the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.)

“The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.” JEREMIAH 1 v 2

So Jeremiah preached for FORTY YEARS, warning the Jews about the impending judgment, and the Temple was destroyed on the same day, 10th Av. This is surely a coincidence – both the First and Second Temples destroyed on the same day, and both events preceded by 40 years of warning - the Sign of Jonah again. In the New Testament we find Jesus comparing Himself with Jeremiah – lamenting over the coming destruction of Jerusalem. How strange it is that, like Jeremiah, there should be 40 years from the time of Jesus till the Temple was destroyed.

Signs That Preceded the End

One of the striking parallels between the events of 586 B.C., and those of 70 A.D. comprises a series of events that occurred four years before both of these dates – in 590 B.C. and 66 A.D. respectively.

April and May of 66 A.D. marked the beginning of hostilities between the Jews and the Romans – that would soon lead to war and the final destruction of the Jewish nation. The Roman historian Tacitus records these events.

“Various portents had occurred at this time, but so sunk in superstition are the Jews and so opposed to all religious practices that they think it wicked to avert the threatened evil by sacrifices or vows. Embattled armies were seen to meet in the sky with flashing arms, and the temple shone with sudden fire from heaven. The doors of the shrine suddenly opened, a supernatural voice was heard calling the gods out, and at once there began a mighty movement of departure. Few took alarm at all this. Most people held the belief that, according to the ancient priestly writings, this was the moment at which the East was fated to prevail; they would now start forth from Judaea and conquer the world.” TACITUS HISTORIES, Book 5, v 13
We can enumerate these events as follows –

1. A vision of armies in conflict in the sky, of glittering armor
2. A very bright light illuminating the Temple
3. The door of the Temple opening of its own accord
4. A superhuman voice declaring that the gods were departing, and in the same instant the rushing tumult of their departure.

The Jewish historian, Josephus also records these events.

Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it......Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner (22) [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the temple,] as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence."

JOSEPHUS Book VI, Chapter 5, Section 3  JEWISH WAR

The significance of these strange events becomes clear when we look at events that occurred in 590 B.C., 4 years before the destruction of the First Temple. In 590 B.C., the Prophet Ezekiel had a vision of God’s glory in the sky.

“an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light”

Scholars refer to Ezekiel’s vision as “the Chariot of God”, because Ezekiel perceived four creatures with four wheels,
“which moved with a sound like the sound of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army.”

Above the creatures was

“what looked like a throne of sapphire and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord”

This vision is recorded in Ezekiel chapter 1. Shortly afterwards Ezekiel had a vision of the departure of God’s glory, the Shekinah, from the Temple. He describes the Shekinah as illuminating the Temple.

“The cloud filled the Temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the Lord. The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks…”

Then the Holy Spirit departed from the Temple

“Then the glory of the Lord departed from over the threshold of the Temple and stopped above the cherubim…..They stopped at the entrance to the East Gate of the Lord’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.”

We see that the departure of the Spirit is associated with both the supernatural illumination of the Temple, and with the Eastern Gate. It is through the Eastern Gate that the Spirit departs.

So Ezekiel’s visions, that occurred 4 years before the destruction of the First Temple, bear a striking similarity to the events that took place in 66 A.D., four years before the destruction of the Second Temple.

1. in both cases there was a vision of chariots in the sky – a heavenly army
2. in both cases there was an illumination of the Temple
3. in both cases there was a departure of the Holy Spirit from the Temple
4. in both cases the departure was via the East Gate.

There is another intriguing point to make here. The Disciples of Christ had received the OUTPOURING of the Holy Spirit ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST. Josephus records the DEPARTURE of the Holy Spirit from the Temple on the very same day – the day of Pentecost. This coincidence suggests that the disciples really did receive the Spirit at Pentecost – just as surely as it departed at Pentecost from the Temple.
The disciples had heard the sound of rushing wind and they had seen tongues of fire. Ezekiel describes the sound as like “the sound of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army” and a radiance that filled the Temple. Josephus describes it as “a quaking” and “a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence.'”

So we see that the forty years from the time of Christ till the destruction of the Jews in 70 A.D. are paralleled by the events occurring during the 40 year ministry of Jeremiah until the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.

To recap the parallels –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destruction of Temple in 586 B.C.</th>
<th>Destruction of Temple in 70 A.D.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceded by 40 years of warning from the Prophet Jeremiah</td>
<td>Preceded by 40 years during which Jesus and the disciples witnessed to the people so they might repent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years before the destruction the Spirit departs from the Temple</td>
<td>Four years before the destruction the Spirit departs from the Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This event is accompanied by</td>
<td>This event was accompanied by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· a vision of God’s chariot in the sky</td>
<td>· an apparition of heavenly armies seen by thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· a radiance filling the Temple</td>
<td>· a radiance of the Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· departure via the East Gate</td>
<td>· the East Gate opening of it’s own accord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The destruction takes place on the 10th day of the month of Av</td>
<td>The destruction takes place on the 10th day of the month of Av</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words of Jesus, like a voice from the past, whisper in our minds

“…..But none will be given it except the sign of the Prophet Jonah”
3 DAYS IN THE EARTH
Chapter 7: The Crucifixion

Many of the Jews doubted Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, and demanded that he perform signs. Jesus replied that the only sign for his generation would be the Sign of Jonah – the Son of Man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

He was brought before the Jewish legal court – the Sanhedrin – and charged with blasphemy – being a deceiver of Israel, a false prophet and leading Israel astray. And in 30A.D, on the eve of the Passover, he was handed over to be executed by crucifixion.

Besides the testimony of the Gospels, his execution is recorded by Jews, Romans and Greeks of the time.

JEWISH HISTORIAN

"Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done."

Flavius Josephus, Antiquities, Book 20, ch. 9.

ROMAN HISTORIAN

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular."

Tacitus (A.D. c.55-A.D. c.117, Roman historian)

TALMUD

"On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!"

Talmud
"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property."

Lucian (circa 120-after 180)

The Bible records mention that his death was accompanied by some unusual events and circumstances, witnessed by many people. In this chapter, we look at independent testimonies to these strange events -

The events can be listed as follows -

- Darkness during the daytime
- Not a bone broken
- Tearing of the Veil
- Destruction of the Sanhedrin

Three of the Gospels mention 3 hours of darkness preceded the death of Jesus as he lay nailed to the cross. The Gospel accounts read as follows:

Matthew 27:45 *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*

Mark 15:33 *And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.*

Luke 23:44-48 *And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*
If such a strange darkness occurred over "all the land", and over "all the earth", then we might expect records outside of the Bible to mention this event. At this time, many different peoples and nationalities lived in Israel -

- Romans
- Greeks
- Samaritans
- Egyptians
- Turks (people from Bithynia and Nicea)

ROMAN TESTIMONY
RECORDS OF TIBERIUS CAESAR

"Phlegon mentioned the eclipse which took place during the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus and no other (eclipse); it is clear that he did not know from his sources about any (similar) eclipse in previous times . . . and this is shown by the historical account of Tiberius Caesar." De. opif. mund. I121  Quoted from Origen – “Against Celsus”

Here, Origen is appealing to a record of this event written for the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar, who was Caesar at the time of Jesus’ ministry. This record must have been still in existence in Origen’s time, because Origen makes reference to it as vindicating his claims.

GREEK TESTIMONY
PHLEGON’S OLYMPIADS  (1st Century)

Phlegon was a Greek historian and astronomer who lived in the first century. There are two books credited to his name: “Chronicles” and the “Olympiads”. Little is known about Phlegon but he made reference to Christ. The first two quotes are unique to Origen and the last quote below is recorded by Origen and Philopon.

"Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his Chronicles, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events . . . but also testified that the result corresponded to His predictions."

"And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place . . . "

“That heathen author, in treating of the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, which is supposed to be the year in which our Lord was crucified, tells us “That the greatest eclipse of the Sun which was ever known happened then; for the day was so turned into night that the stars in the heavens were seen.”  Quoted from Origen “Against Celsus”
SAMARITAN TESTIMONY

THALLUS

Circa AD 52, Thallus wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Trojan War to his own time. This work itself has been lost and only fragments of it exist in the citations of others. One such scholar who knew and spoke of it was Julius Africanus, who wrote about AD 221...Africanus composed a five volume “History of the World” around AD 221. He was also a pagan convert to Christianity. His historical scholarship so impressed Roman Emperor Alexander Severus that Africanus was entrusted with the official responsibility of building the Emperor’s library at the Pantheon in Rome.

Africanus found a reference in the writings of Thallus that dealt with this cosmic report.

_On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun._ For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun? Let opinion pass however; let it carry the majority with it; and let this portent of the world be deemed an eclipse of the sun, like others a portent only to the eye. Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth—manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period._

*Quoted from Africanus*

_BITHYNIA (modern day Turkey)_

Eusebius

“Christ suffered this year, in which time _we find in other commentaries of the heathen_ these words: _‘There was a defection of the sun: Bithynia was shaken by an earthquake, and many houses fell down in the city of Nicea.’_” _Quoted from Eusebius_

Here Eusebius is quoting from commentaries of the heathen that were available in his time corroborating the event. Similarly, below Tertullian refers to the annals of his non-Christian adversaries as also corroborating the event

"At the moment of Christ’s death, the light departed from the sun, and the land was darkened at noonday, _which wonder is related in your own annals, and is preserved in your archives to this day._"
The Bible tells us that there were three hours of darkness which occurred while Jesus Christ hung on the cross. The time was from noon until 3:00 P.M.

According to the account in Luke, the darkness and the earthquake that ended it (Matthew 27:54) were so impressive that the centurion in charge of the crucifixion glorified God, and all the people showed signs of remorse and fear.

So, the darkness lasted until the ninth hour (3pm).

Traditionally, the Jews slaughtered the Passover Lamb on the day of Passover at the ninth hour, three hours after midday. For the previous 1,200 years, the priest had blown the Shophar (ram's horn) at 3:00 p.m. - the moment the lamb was sacrificed, and all the people would pause to contemplate the sacrifice for sins on behalf of the people of Israel. On Good Friday at 3:00, Jesus said, "It is finished". The sacrifice of the lamb of God was fulfilled at the hour that the symbolic animal sacrifice usually took place. At the same time, the veil of the Temple (a three-inch thick, several story high cloth that demarked the Holy of Holies) tore from top to bottom.

Josephus, the historian of Jesus' generation, confirms that the evening sacrifice was at the ninth hour (3 P.M.). When referring to the time Jerusalem was under siege by Pompey in the first century B.C., he writes: “Any one may hence learn how very great piety we exercise towards God and the observance of his laws, since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations by their fear during the siege, but did still twice each day, in the morning and about the ninth hour, offer their sacrifices on the altar” (Antiquities, 14, 4, 3).

This is also confirmed by Josephus when, in referring to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 69-70 A.D., he says: “So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour to the eleventh, found the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty six thousand five hundred” (Wars 6, 9, 3).

It is appropriate that the darkness should have lasted up until the Passover sacrifice, since during the Exodus there was a plague of darkness before the Passover sacrifice. Finally, it is appropriate that the darkness lasted 3 hours, since 3 days of darkness preceded the Mosaic Passover.

EGYPTIAN TESTIMONY (Dionysius the Areopagite)

Here is a final testimony to the strange darkness at the time of the crucifixion. It claims to be by Dionysius the Areopagite, first Bishop of Athens – 60 A.D. An eminent Athenian by birth, Dionysius converted to Christianity through the preaching of Paul up on Mar's Hill. Areopagus is Greek for Mars' Hill. Acts 17:34

“Howbeit certain men cleaved unto him (Paul), and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”

Though it’s date and authorship are disputed, it makes an interesting read. Dionysius first studied at Athens and was a member of the court of the Areopagus. He then travelled to
Helipolis in Egypt to study astronomy where he made very particular observations on the eclipse, which happened at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. He noted the time of this event, and on hearing the testimony of the Apostle Paul, he realized the connection and converted to Christianity. He is writing to Apollonius, his non-believing friend and companion. Apollonius was a Greek philosopher, who was with him at the time of the event. Here is part of a letter that Dionysius wrote to Apollonius.

"But, after the supernal light of the paternal glory of His own will sent the rays of His own splendour upon the darkness of your mind, at once He put into my inmost heart, that I should recall to your mind the whole counsel of God. How, for instance, when we were staying in Heliopolis (I was then about twenty-five, and your age was nearly the same as mine), on a certain sixth day, and about the sixth hour, the sun, to our great surprise, became obscured, through the moon passing over it, not because it is a god, but because a creature of God, when its very true light was setting, could not bear to shine. Then I earnestly asked thee, what thou, O man most wise, thought of it. Thou, then, gave such an answer as remained fixed in my mind, and that no oblivion, not even that of the image of death, ever allowed to escape. For, when the whole orb had been throughout darkened, by a black mist of darkness, and the sun's disk had begun again to be purged and to shine anew, then taking the table of Philip Aridaeus, and contemplating the orbs of heaven, we learned, what was otherwise well known, that an eclipse of the sun could not, at that time, occur. Next, we observed that the moon approached the sun from the east, and intercepted its rays, until it covered the whole; whereas, at other times, it used to approach from the west. Further also, we noted that when it had reached the extreme edge of the sun, and had covered the whole orb, that it then went back towards the east, although that was a time which called neither for the presence of the moon, nor for the conjunction of the sun. I therefore, O treasury of manifold learning, since I was incapable of understanding so great a mystery, thus addressed thee----"What thinkest thou of this thing, O Apollopheanes, mirror of learning?" "Of what mysteries do these unaccustomed portents appear to you to be indications?" Thou then, with inspired lips, rather than with speech of human voice, "These are, O excellent Dionysius," thou saidst, "changes of things divine." At last, when I had taken note of the day and year, and had perceived that, that time, by its testifying signs, agreed with that which Paul announced to me, once when I was hanging upon his lips, then I gave my hand to the truth, and extricated my feet from the meshes of error. Which truth, henceforth, I, with admiration, both preach and urge upon thee----which is life and way, and true light,----which lighteth every man coming into this world,----to which even thou at last, as truly wise, hast yielded........Say to him, however, "What do you affirm concerning the eclipse, which took place at the time of the saving Cross?" For both of us at that time, at Heliopolis, being present, and standing together, saw the moon approaching the sun, to our surprise (for it was not appointed time for conjunction); and again, from the ninth hour to the evening, supernaturally placed back again into a line opposite the sun. And remind him also of something further. For he knows that we saw, to our surprise, the contact itself beginning from the east, and going towards the edge of the sun's disc, then receding back, and again, both the contact and the re-clearing 22, not taking place from the same point, but from that diametrically opposite.”

If Dionysius’s testimony is historically accurate, then here we may have some explanation of the strange darkness. Dionysius observed an object, matching the size and shape of the Moon,
eclipse the Sun. However, this object was not the Moon. The Moon was on the opposite side of the Earth at the time, and solar eclipses do not last three hours - they last 7 minutes at most. Also, the object approached from an opposite direction to that from which the Moon would come, and then receded back the same way.

For the thousands of Jewish Pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, the sudden darkness must have been frightening – a portent of doom. It was no ordinary eclipse; the Sun was extinguished for 3 whole hours. As the minutes and hours went by people would have become increasingly fearful.

Can you imagine their relief when, at the ninth hour, the Priests blew the Shophar horn, the Passover sacrifices were made, and the sun immediately reappeared? It must have seemed that they had been saved from perpetual darkness by the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.

Something very large had come between the Earth and the Sun, blotting out light. It may have come very close to the earth. The Bible tells us that the darkness ended when Jesus died. At this moment the Passover sacrifice was made. Sin was paid for. At this moment (the ninth hour), the object receded and light returned. Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, coinciding with the recession of the object, may have spared us all from an imminent Judgment Day.

Not a Bone Broken

When a person was crucified, the usual Roman practice was to break their legs after a few days to cause suffocation. However, when the Romans came to break Jesus’ legs, they discovered that Jesus had already died.

This fulfils a Mosaic Law that no bone in the Passover Sacrifice be broken.

\[\text{Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop and put it to his mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing his head, He gave up his spirit. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw him already dead, and did not break His legs. [John 19]}\]

The Tearing of The Veil

The end of the darkness coincided with both Jesus’ death and the beginning of an earthquake which affected much of the surrounding country, destroying many cities. This earthquake caused the Temple veil to be torn, and broke open many tombs.

"On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down."
“There was a defection of the sun : Bithynia was shaken by an earthquake, and many houses fell down in the city of Nicea.” Quoted from Africanus

The Temple Veil was 4 inches in thickness and took 300 priests to carry; this veil was torn in half, from top to bottom by a force that must have been cataclysmic. No human hand could do this. According to rabbinic accounts, the thick temple veil was so strong that two teams of oxen pulling from opposite directions could not have torn it. An earthquake, however, would have been powerful enough to cause the tear.

The significance of the tearing of the veil is this.

Only priests could enter the temple sanctuary. The sanctuary had two rooms: an outer chamber, called the "Holy Place," and separated from it by a thick curtain or veil, an inner room, the "Holy of Holies." Worshippers could enter neither; they came no further than the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard. Only the Aaronic priests entered the temple, where they ministered in the holy place on behalf of the people. The Holy of Holies (the inner chamber), was separated from the Holy Place by a thick curtain or veil, and was the place of God’s special presence. Only the high priest could go behind the veil, and that but once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, Leviticus 16:2,34; Hebrews 9:7

So, it is very curious that at the point of Jesus’ death the veil should be torn. That which separated God from Man was removed.

Could the early Christians have invented the story of the tearing of the veil? This is unlikely since such an event would have been widely known, and a false account easy to refute.

Judgment Upon the Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin had dragged Jesus into their hall of judgment – the Hall of Hewn Stones. There they had passed judgment upon him, and handed him over to the Romans.

But God is just, and at the time of the Crucifixion God passed judgment against the Sanhedrin. Here is what the Jews themselves recorded in their Talmud.

“This is as much as we have to say in regard to the time and name, and that the Sanhedrin ceased about forty years previous to the destruction of the Temple”

Forty years before the destruction of the Temple coincides approximately with the year of the crucifixion. What caused the Sanhedrin to “cease”.

Forty years before, the Sanhedrin were exiled from their place and settled in shops
BABYLONIAN TALMUD

So, about the time of the crucifixion, the Sanhedrin were exiled from the Temple. This must have been soon after the crucifixion of Christ.
Forty years before the Temple was destroyed, the Sanhedrin was exiled from the chamber of the Temple to a store. And R. Itz’hak b. Abudimi explained that it means that from that time the Sanhedrin did not try cases of capital punishment….Hence we see that during forty years of his life there were no cases of capital punishment in the court of the Sanhedrin

Itz’hak’s explanation is not correct since the Sanhedrin lost the ability to try cases of capital punishment with the arrival of the first procurator from Rome in about 6 A.D.

The Sanhedrin had always held court in the Hall of Hewn Stones, which was situated in the Temple next to the Altar of Burn Offerings. But in 30 A.D. something happened to cause the Sanhedrin to be exiled from the Temple. It is certain that this was not a voluntary move on their part, nor was it forced upon them by the Jewish people. One can only surmise that some physical event happened that drove them out. Then why use the word “exile” which suggests punishment. It seems that the Sanhedrin themselves interpreted this event as the hand of God.

The earthquake that attended the crucifixion may have been the cause of their exile. We know that the earthquake caused extensive damage throughout the country, and most likely was the cause of the tearing of the veil in the Temple. Is it so hard to imagine that it also caused structural damage that made the abode of the Sanhedrin unsafe?

It seems appropriate that the place of judgment should be destroyed at the very moment that Christ’s atoning sacrifice brought forgiveness to the world. We learn from the Gospels that the religious authorities had turned God’s Temple into a market place, trading justice for profit, so it is poetic justice that the Sanhedrin was forced out of the Temple, and took up residence in shops.

It seems that the trial of Jesus was possibly the last trial that the Sanhedrin held in the Temple. They were exiled soon after; no longer welcome in God’s house.

So, Jesus' death occurred with synchronistic timing - coinciding as it did with -

1. the moment of the Passover Sacrifice.
2. the end of a period of supernatural darkness
3. the beginning of an earthquake that
   1. tore the Temple veil
   2. destroyed the Hall of Hewn Stones

We might add - his atoning sacrifice seems to have coincided with the recession of an object - an object large enough to blot out the light of the Sun. We might refer to this as a “near collision”. Could it be that the atoning sacrifice coincided with the near destruction of our world???

In the words of Pontius Pilate written in “The Report of Pilate the Governor, Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ; Which was Sent to Augustus Caesar, in Rome.”
Now when he was crucified, there was darkness over all the world, and the sun was obscured for half a day, and the stars appeared, but no luster was seen in them; and the moon lost its brightness, as though tinged with blood; and the world of the departed was swallowed up; so that the very sanctuary of the temple, as they call it, did not appear to the Jews themselves as their fall, but they perceived a chasm in the earth, and the rolling successive thunders.

These circumstances, though strange, prove nothing on their own. However, they are suggestive that Jesus somehow fulfilled the old Jewish system. In the time of Moses, three days of darkness had preceded the Passover sacrifice; here we find three hours of darkness preceding Jesus' sacrifice. In the time of Moses, the first Tabernacle was set up in the desert, with the Temple veil separating the Holy of Holies; here we find the Temple veil removed. Moses introduced the Law; now the place of Judgment was thrown down. It was not hard to see in these events signs of the culmination of the Jewish way of things. Signs of the last days....
Chapter 8 Destroy this Temple

The Sign of Jonah is related to another statement that Jesus made concerning the Temple. Jesus claimed that if they destroyed the Temple, he would raise it again in 3 days -

*Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "*
*Matthew 26:60-62*

*and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"
*Matthew 27:39-41*

*"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.' "*
*Mark 14:57-59*

*Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days,*
*Mark 15:28-30*

*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."
*John 2:18-20*

This is interesting, because here Jesus is identifying himself with the Temple. We might therefore expect that his death would be accompanied by the destruction of the Temple. So it comes as a great coincidence that a large earthquake occurred the moment Jesus died, and this earthquake did severe damage to the Temple - tearing the veil, and making parts of the Temple too dangerous to inhabit. This is quite a coincidence considering that Jesus claimed to be the true Temple.

What is more, from 30 A.D. onwards, the Temple was never the same again. Something fundamental had changed.....
**Signs in the Temple**

Following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE), the Jewish people began writing two versions of Jewish thought, religious history and commentary. One was written in Palestine and became known as the Jerusalem Talmud. The other was written in Babylon and was known as the Babylonian Talmud.

In these Talmuds we find records of some strange happenings that occurred in the Jerusalem Temple during the 40 years from 30 A.D. till 70 A.D. The Babylonian Talmud reads as follows -

"The rabbis taught: Forty years before the Temple was destroyed, the lot never came into the right hand, the red wool did not become white, the western light did not burn, and the gates of the Temple opened by themselves, till the time that R. Johanan b. Zakkai rebuked them, saying: "Temple, Temple, why alarmist thou us? We know that thou are destined to be destroyed. For of thee hath prophesied Zachariah ben Iddo (Zech 11v1): “Open they doors, O Lebanon, and fire shall eat thy cedars.”"

**BABYLONIAN TALMUD**

The Jerusalem Talmud also records these signs -

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open" (Jacob Neusner, The Yerushalmi, p.156-157). [the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE]

Something had changed about the Temple – it was no longer a friendly place. Doors opened of their own accord, lights went out, and when they drew the Lot it always came up bad...The rabbis and priests felt uneasy, even scared. "Temple, Temple, why alarmest thou us?"

There are 4 phenomena mentioned here.

1. the lot never came into the right hand
2. the western light kept going out
3. the gates of the Temple opened by themselves
4. the red wool did not turn white

These phenomena didn't just occur once. Every day the western light went out for forty years! Every year the lot came up bad for forty years! It was the consistency and regularity of these events that scared the priests.

Let us take a closer look at these phenomena, to see if they hold a meaning.
The Lot:

On the day of atonement, the high priest would reach his hand into a box called the lottery and would pull out a stone, there being a white stone which had written upon it, ‘for the Lord’ and a black stone which said, ‘for Azazel’. Then the high priest would offer a goat upon the altar as a sacrifice for the Lord and lay his hands upon the second goat (scapegoat) upon which he would place the sins of the people. For centuries, when the high priest reached into the lottery box, it sometimes fell on ‘for the Lord’ and sometimes fell on “for Azazel”. However from 30 A.D. onwards, every year it fell on ‘for Azazel.’ That continued to happen for the next 40 years. The Jews believed that when the Lot was “for the Lord” it was a positive sign meaning that God’s blessing was upon them and that He had accepted their sacrifice, but when ‘for Azazel’ came up, they took this to mean God’s displeasure upon the priesthood and Israel.

Why did the priest keep picking the black stone instead of the white? Was this a sign of God's rejection of the sacrifices? Could this be related to the claim of Jesus that sacrifices were no longer necessary because the Messiah had come to bear our sins upon the cross?

As each year passed, and the lot continued to come out black, the Jews became increasingly aware of the anomaly. A great consternation came upon them, a dreadful fear that God was no longer accepting their sacrifices and a feeling of impending doom. A sickening belief arose that the animal sacrifices no longer covered their sins – that they remained un-forgiven, unclean, doomed to an inevitable judgment.

The Western Light:

The second unusual sign was concerning the Candlestick or Menorah in the Temple. The Jews had always believed that God’s presence dwelt in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies. As a sign that this was so, God’s Shekinah, the Light of His Presence, shone in the Temple. This light was preserved in the light of the Menorah – a 7 branched candlestick that was never allowed to go out. The Talmuds record that after 30 A.D. every night for 40 years the Menorah would not stay lit. No matter what the priests did to try to keep it alight, it would not stay lit. This scared the priests because they took it as a sign that God had abandoned them.

The Door of the Temple:

The door of the Temple opened by itself. As the quote from the Talmud above shows, the Rabbis interpreted this sign as a portent of the coming destruction of the Temple. They saw it as meaning that the security of the Temple was breached.

The Red Wool:
The fourth sign concerned a crimson strap. A red thread was placed around the neck of the sacrificial animals and on the temple door. When the animals were sacrificed, this red thread on the temple door would sometimes turn white, and other times it would remain red...But after 30 A.D. it never turned white again for forty years until the Temple was destroyed.

**The Interpretation of these 4 signs:**

Consider how all these things suggest the total abandonment of the Temple - the veil is torn in two, sacrifice is rejected, the eternal flame is extinguished, and the gates are breached.

After 30 A.D. the Temple that remained was torn and broken, hollow, devoid of spirit and ineffective. It's physical structure lingered on, yet it's spirit had gone.

It is certainly quite a coincidence that these signs, especially the Lot, should commence in 30 A.D., the year in which Jesus said "If you destroy this Temple I will raise it again in 3 days."
Chapter 9 The Resurrection

Following the crucifixion of Christ, his followers fled in fear of suffering a similar fate. They disowned Christ and distanced themselves from Him. They were saddened and confused, and very fearful of what would happen to them.

So what turned these followers into a group of people willing to die for their beliefs? The Bible gives the reason – the disciples claimed that on the third day Christ rose from the dead and appeared to them.

Were the disciples right to believe Jesus had risen from the dead? The Gospels record 12 post resurrection appearances. These take place over a 40 day period which ends with the ascension of Christ into heaven. Here we have the sign of Jonah again. Jonah was three days in the fish, then preached repentance for 40 days. Jesus was “in the earth” for three days, then appeared to his disciples for 40 days that they might believe and repent.

| POST- RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF THE LORD During the 40 days until the Ascension |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Very Early 1st Day. | Mary Magdalene | Mark 16:9; John 20:16 -18 |
| 2. Early 1st Day. | The Women | Matthew 28:5 – 10 |
| 4. Late Afternoon | The Two on the Road to Emmaus | Luke 24:31 |
| 6. 1 week later | The Eleven | John 20:26 |
| 7. Exact time unknown | The seven by the Sea of Galilee | John 21:1 |
| 8. Exact time unknown | The 500 brethren | 1 Corinthians 15:6 |
| 9. Exact time unknown | Half-brother James, now the family head. | 1 Corinthians 15:7 |
| 10. Exact time unknown | The Eleven in Galilee | Matthew 28:16-17 |
| 11. Exact time unknown | The Eleven in Jerusalem | Mark 16:14 -15 |
Where the Disciples Lying?

It is unlikely that the disciples were deliberately lying about their beliefs, because many of them suffered persecution and death for those very beliefs. It is generally accepted that the disciples were sincere.

1. There were many witnesses:
The most notable of these witnesses were the twelve Apostles plus 4 others, Stephen, Paul, Barnabas, and Luke, all of whom suffered beatings, persecutions, and executions without ever changing their testimony concerning the resurrection. But these were not the only witnesses.

It is likely that there were hundreds if not thousands of eye witnesses to the activities, and eventual execution and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus did have quite a following, and it was his popularity with the masses that aroused the indignation of the authorities. He was a very public figure.

2. All of these men suffered, tortures, beatings, stoning, and terrible executions without ever revoking their testimony to spare themselves these tortures or to escape these terrible deaths:
Would a group of sixteen men all suffer as these men did and hold out even in the face of certain death, just to perpetuate something they knew to be a lie? Even if these men conspired together to spread such a lie, would every one of them have gone to his death for this lie? Any one of them could have saved his life and escaped torture by simply recanting their testimony and proclaiming that they had made it all up. It does seem unlikely that these men would have suffered all these things without at least one of them admitting that it was all a fabrication - to spare his life and suffering. It should be remembered that these men suffered torture and death in different countries at different times, with little chance of any of the others learning if they had denied their testimony. Under these circumstances it seems unlikely that each and every one of these sixteen men would have endured to the end for the sake of a lie?

3. Their own lives were changed by their beliefs:
The disciples gave up all the security, comfort and status of a settled life. Instead they embarked upon a life of evangelism. They were forbidden to accept money, so their only sustenance was the food people gave to them. In addition to these financial and economic hardships, their way of life was centred on a commitment to honesty, righteousness and a devotion to virtue – which was certainly a life change, in contrast to the worldliness around them.
The personal transformations within their own lives were considerable. Peter and his brother Andrew, the sons of Jona, left their father and their livelihood to follow Jesus. Peter was a bold, rash, impetuous man, who later became the foundation of the Church. John, son of Zebedee, who was later referred to as the apostle of love, was the author of the book of revelation. James, the son of Zebedee, was highly regarded for his integrity and the outstanding example that he set for others. Matthew a publican (tax collector) became one of the inner-circle, one of the twelve apostles. All of these men gave up everything to follow Jesus. Later, they became eye witnesses to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and of His teachings. And they all endured beatings, scourging, and horrible deaths for their testimonies.

Then we have Paul (Saul of Tarsus) a Pharisee. A highly educated young man, he studied under Gamaliel a doctor of Jewish law, the most revered teacher of his day. Paul was born of Jewish parents, but was also a Roman citizen. Paul, while still using the name Saul, vigorously persecuted the church and any one following the teachings of Jesus including men, women, and children. He was responsible for having many put in prison and some put to death, and was present at the stoning of Stephen. He was on his way to Damascus to persecute and arrest Christians, when he claims to have encountered the resurrected Christ. His life changed completely. He became the hardest working of all the apostles, the apostle to the gentiles. He suffered more severe persecution than any other apostle. He was stoned and left for dead on more than one occasion, he was scourged on several occasions, he was beaten, he was arrested and put in prison on at least two occasions, and he was ship wrecked….and it was Paul who established most of the churches in the Gentile countries.

Could all of these men have given up everything to live a nomadic life and spread a lie? To suffer as they did, to preach and to testify to a lie?

Here are excerpts from Fox’s Book of Martyrs

**I. St. Stephen**

*St. Stephen suffered the next in order. His death was occasioned by the faithful manner in which he preached the Gospel to the betrayers and murderers of Christ. To such a degree of madness were they excited, that they cast him out of the city and stoned him to death. The time when he suffered is generally supposed to have been at the passover which succeeded to that of our Lord's crucifixion, and to the era of his ascension, in the following spring.*

*Upon this a great persecution was raised against all who professed their belief in Christ as the Messiah, or as a prophet. We are immediately told by St. Luke, that "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem;" and that "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."*
About two thousand Christians, with Nicanor, one of the seven deacons, suffered martyrdom during the "persecution that arose about Stephen."

II. James the Great
The next martyr we meet with, according to St. Luke, in the History of the Apsotles' Acts, was James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John, and a relative of our Lord; for his mother Salome was cousin-german to the Virgin Mary. It was not until ten years after the death of Stephen that the second martyrdom took place; for no sooner had Herod Agrippa been appointed governor of Judea, than, with a view to ingratiate himself with them, he raised a sharp persecution against the Christians, and determined to make an effectual blow, by striking at their leaders. The account given us by an eminent primitive writer, Clemens Alexandrinus, ought not to be overlooked; that, as James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was brought to repent of his conduct by the apostle’s extraordinary courage and undauntedness, and fell down at his feet to request his pardon, professing himself a Christian, and resolving that James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone. Hence they were both beheaded at the same time. Thus did the first apostolic martyr cheerfully and resolutely receive that cup, which he had told our Savior he was ready to drink. Timon and Parmenas suffered martyrdom about the same time; the one at Philippi, and the other in Macedonia. These events took place A.D. 44.

III. Philip
Was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the name of "disciple." He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54.

IV. Matthew
Whose occupation was that of a toll-gatherer, was born at Nazareth. He wrote his gospel in Hebrew, which was afterwards translated into Greek by James the Less. The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60.

V. James the Less
Is supposed by some to have been the brother of our Lord, by a former wife of Joseph. This is very doubtful, and accords too much with the Catholic superstition, that Mary never had any other children except our Savior. He was elected to the oversight of the churches of Jerusalem; and was the author of the Epistle ascribed to James in the sacred canon. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller’s club.

VI. Matthias
Of whom less is known than of most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.
VII. Andrew

Was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's Cross.

VIII. St. Mark

Was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He is supposed to have been converted to Christianity by Peter, whom he served as an amanuensis, and under whose inspection he wrote his Gospel in the Greek language. Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, at the great solemnity of Serapis their idol, ending his life under their merciless hands.

IX. Peter

Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

X. Paul

Paul, the apostle, who before was called Saul, after his great travail and unspeakable labors in promoting the Gospel of Christ, suffered also in this first persecution under Nero. Abdias, declareth that under his execution Nero sent two of his esquires, Ferega and Parthemius, to bring him word of his death. They, coming to Paul instructing the people, desired him to pray for them, that they might believe; who told them that shortly after they should believe and be baptised at His sepulcher. This done, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers made, gave his neck to the sword.

XI. Jude

The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72.

XII. Bartholomew

Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient idolaters.
XIII. Thomas  
*Called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.*

XIV. Luke  
The evangelist, was the author of the Gospel which goes under his name. He travelled with Paul through various countries, and is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree, by the idolatrous priests of Greece.

XV. Simon  
*Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74.*

XVI. John  
The "beloved disciple," was brother to James the Great. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.

XVII. Barnabas  
Was of Cyprus, but of Jewish descent, his death is supposed to have taken place about A.D. 73.

And yet, notwithstanding all these continual persecutions and horrible punishments, the Church daily increased, deeply rooted in the doctrine of the apostles and of men apostolical, and watered plentiously with the blood of saints.

One should consider that honesty and truth were virtues that these people held close to heart. They preached virtue and lived exemplary lives of poverty, humility and chastity. They shared all their worldly possessions in common. Thus, not only were they willing to die for their beliefs - but those very beliefs included a commitment to honesty and righteousness and a daily practice of those virtues.

In summary, based on –

1. Their willingness to die for their beliefs  
2. Their commitment to honesty and virtue  
3. The transformation that their beliefs effected in their own lives,
we may conclude with a fair degree of certainty that the disciples were sincere in their beliefs. They were speaking what they perceived to be the truth.

**Were the Disciples Deceived?**

The disciples claimed to be EYE-WITNESSES to the post-resurrection appearances of Christ, a person they had known intimately for over 3 years. So if they were deceived, they must have deceived themselves? Self deception is where an experience is generated by our own minds rather than by an outside reality.

However, there were many witnesses, and self-deception is less likely as more people witness the same event. In early Israel, Moses established a law of witnesses, namely: “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (See Deut. 17:6.) There must be agreement between two or more independent witnesses.

However, Jesus adopted the principle that twelve witnesses are necessary for a judgment. In Luke 9 v 1-6, the Twelve were sent out to witness to Israel. Jesus promised that these twelve would sit upon thrones judging the Twelve Tribes (Luke 22v28-30). The Twelve Tribes must have 12 witnesses.

English Common Law, upon which our own laws are based, requires twelve witnesses to the fact and twelve jurors to the fact.

We find that many of the post resurrection appearances were before eleven or twelve witnesses. We might conclude that multiple appearances before such a group constitutes a reliable “jury” – perhaps reliable enough to satisfy a modern court.

Not only were there 12 primary witnesses (the 12 Apostles), but Jesus appeared to them 12 times after the Resurrection. And Jesus appeared to them 12 times over 40 days.

**Forty Days**

The Talmud records that Jesus’ accusers had asked for witnesses to come forward for 40 days prior to the crucifixion.

*For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf."

Now, as if providing a post-mortem defense of himself, we find that after his death, Jesus provided evidence of his resurrection for 40 days.
Traditionally, 40 days was a period of “trial” during which witnesses could come forward and provide their evidence. Jesus was tested in the desert for 40 days, and the nation of Israel had spent 40 years in the wilderness being tested by God. Other examples abound. Consider the repeated use of the number "40" in the Bible:

- It rained "40" days during the flood (Genesis 7.4).
- Moses spent "40" years in the land of Midian before being commissioned by God to bring his people out of Egypt (Exodus 3).
- Moses spent "40" days on Mt. Sinai obtaining the Law while the people turned back to their former Egyptian gods (Exodus 24.18).
- The Twelve Tribes spied out the Promised Land for "40" days before refusing to enter (Numbers 13.25).
- They were then required to wander in the wilderness for a total of "40" years (Numbers 14.33).
- Goliath taunted Israel for "40" days before his defeat by David (1 Samuel 17.16).
- Jonah preached to Nineveh for "40" days before they repented (Jonah 3.4).
- Jesus spent "40" days in the Judean wilderness before being tested by Satan (Matthew 4.1-2).
- Jesus spent "40" days on earth following His resurrection, presenting Himself and speaking things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1.3).

With these examples, it's not difficult to ascribe a contextual association with the use of the number "40", for it seems always to be used in connection with some kind of trial or testing relevant to the particular event in view.

So it seems appropriate that Jesus witnessed to his disciples for 40 days prior to His Ascension, and the disciples witnessed to the nation of Israel for 40 years prior to its destruction.

**Did these appearances serve a special purpose?**

His individual appearances to the early church leaders signified the special commission given to these people, all of whom were to walk the way of crucifixion, suffering greatly for their beliefs, even dying. His appearances seem to have served a special purpose - to show that no matter how much suffering they were to endure, there was a great reward for them beyond death itself.

Finally, at the end of the 40 days, Jesus appeared to the disciples for the last time, then he ascended to the clouds in heaven, and angels appeared saying that He would return in the same way He had departed – that is – when He returned in judgment it would be on the clouds of heaven. In this sense, his ascension into heaven was a type of the Judgment that was to come.
“After he had said this he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”. Acts 1 v 9-23
SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

The Pale Horse of Death by William Blake
Chapter 10  Signs of the End of the Age

On the 8th Nisan, 6 days before the Passover, and 6 days before his crucifixion, Jesus took the 12 disciples aside and said to them -

“We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life.”

Jesus traveled down to Jerusalem, knowing full well that he was going to his death.

He knew that the religious leaders wanted to execute him. Only a month ago they had issued a judgment that Jesus was to be put to death by stoning, and anyone knowing anything in his defense should come forward. Of course, those who did come forward might suffer a similar fate.

Even so, on approaching Jerusalem, Jesus became sad for his enemies, because he foresaw the fate of the city –

"If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Notice the two predictions he makes here – that a siege wall would be built around Jerusalem hemming it in on every side, and every stone in Jerusalem would be removed from its place. We will see how these prophecies were fulfilled later on.

When he entered Jerusalem he made his way to the Temple. There, he drove out the people who were buying and selling in the Temple courts, this action emphasizing the fact that the Temple system had become corrupt. Once the clatter and din of money making was gone, the voice of the needy could be heard, and many blind and lame came to him and he healed them. This astonished and delighted the common folk, but the religious leaders were indignant.

The next day Jesus returned to the Temple and began to teach. Nearly everything he taught that day was a warning about the judgment to come – the Parable of the Tenants, and the Parable of the Wedding Banquet. Jesus was warning the people of what would happen if they rejected and murdered him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” Jesus asked.

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and He will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

“Therefore,”, Jesus replied, “I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce it’s fruit.”
However, the malice of the Pharisees and teachers of the law was unrelenting. They wanted to find accusations against him, so they tried to trap him with words, looking for excuses to have him arrested. Jesus’ responded.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!”...”You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation."

Then Jesus left the Temple. He was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its fine buildings.

“What do you see all these things,” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth that not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

(Here Jesus is repeating the prophecy he made earlier about every stone being removed from it’s place.)

That evening, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately.

“Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

So what was Jesus’ answer? When was Jerusalem to be surrounded by a siege wall and every stone thrown down?

Jesus began to describe the signs that would precede his return and the “End of the Age”. He described these signs in what has become known as "The Olivette Discourse" found in Matthew 24, Luke 19 and Luke 21. Here is the discourse in full with the signs highlighted.

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For 1) many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,'[a] and will deceive many. You will hear of 2) 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. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be 3) famines and 4) earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

"Then you 5) will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of 6) the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And 7) this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."
Jesus then went into more depth, describing what would happen at the very end...

"So when you see 8) standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 9) then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 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. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.

Jesus’ warnings, here, have a breathless urgency, as if speaking of imminent events – events that the audience had to be warned about for their own sakes.

"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. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, 10) there the vultures will gather.

"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."

"At that time 11) 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. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and 12) they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

"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. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 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."

After listing the signs, Jesus said - "this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened". In the pages that follow, I will demonstrate that all these things did indeed happen before Jesus' generation passed away. All the signs mentioned in the Olivette Discourse were fulfilled during the 40 year period from 30 A.D. till 70 A.D. just as Jesus said they would be.
1) False Prophets

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,'[a] and will deceive many

Several false prophets appeared between the time of Jesus' death and the destruction of Jerusalem.

- Less than a year after Jesus' ascension, Dositheus the Samaritan appeared, claiming to be the Messiah prophesied by Moses; he had a disciple named Simon Magus who deluded the multitudes into a belief that he, himself, was the "GREAT POWER OF GOD."
- Then, about three years afterwards another Samaritan impostor appeared, and declared that he would show the people the sacred utensils, said to have been deposited by Moses in mount Gerizim. Induced by the idea that their Messiah had now come, an armed multitude assembled under him, but Pilate speedily defeated them, and slew their chief.
- While Cuspius Fadus was procurator in Judea, another deceiver arose, named Theudas. [4] This man actually succeeded in persuading many Jews to take their belongings and follow him to the Jordan, assuring them, that the river would divide at his command. Fadus, however, pursued them and slew many, including the impostor himself, whose head was cut off and carried to Jerusalem.
- Under the government of Felix, deceivers rose up daily in Judea, persuading the people to follow them into the wilderness, assuring them that they would see signs and wonders performed by the ALMIGHTY. Felix captured many of these imposters and put them to death.
- About this period (A.D. 55) arose Felix the celebrated Egyptian impostor, who collected thirty-thousand followers, and persuaded them to accompany him to the Mount of Olives, telling, them that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down at his command, the Roman garrison would be captured, and the Jews would gain control of the city. The Roman governor, however, believing this to be the beginning of a revolt, immediately attacked them, killing four hundred and dispersed the rest; but the Egyptian escaped.
- In the time of Porcius Festus (A.D.60), another distinguished impostor seduced the people, by promising them deliverance from the Roman yoke, if they would follow him into the wilderness; but Festus sent out an armed force which speedily destroyed both the deceiver and his followers.

So several false prophets did appear. They deceived the people and led many to their death.

2) Wars and Rumours 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. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Wars were very frequent during this period. Josephus wrote a history covering this period, and it was a very bloody time.
• About three years after the death of Christ, a war broke out between Herod and Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea. This was kingdom rising against kingdom.

• About this time, the emperor Caligula, ordered his statue to be placed in the temple of Jerusalem, and the Jews refused to obey him. The whole nation was so anxious and fearful of war, that they neglected even to till their lands! The storm, however, blew over.

• About this period a great plague broke out in Babylon, and many Jews left departed from Babylon to Seleucia. However, the Greeks and Syrians of Seleucia rose up against the Jews, and put to death over 5,000! "The extent of this slaughter (says Josephus) had no parallel in any former period of their history."

• Again, about five years after this massacre, there arose a confrontation between the Jews at Perea, and the Philadelphians, respecting the limits of a city called Mia. Many Jews were slain in Mia. This was nation rising up against nation.

• Four year afterwards, under Cumanus, a Roman soldier insulted Jews within the precincts of the temple, which they violently resented; but, upon the approach of the Romans in great force, the Jews were so terrified, and so disorderly in their flight, that about ten thousand Jews were trodden to death in the streets. This, again, was nation rising up against nation.

• Four years more had not elapsed, before the Jews made war against the Samaritans, and ravaged their country. The people of Samaria had murdered a Galilean, who was going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and the Jews revenged it.

• At Caesarea, the Jews were in confrontation with the Syrians for the government of the city. An appeal was made, but it was decreed that the government belonged to the Syrians. This event laid the foundation of a cruel conflict between the two nations. The Jews were deeply disappointed and inflamed by jealousy. So they rose against the Syrians, who successfully repelled them. In the city of Caesarea alone about twenty thousand Jews were slain. The flame, however, was not now quenched; it spread its destructive rage wherever the Jew and Syrians dwelt together in the same place: throughout every city, town, and village, mutual animosity and slaughter prevailed. At Damascus, Tyre, Ascalon, Gadara, and Scythopolis, the carnage was dreadful. At Damascus ten thousand Jews were slain in one hour, and at Scythopolis thirteen thousand were slain in one night. At Alexandria the Jews, aggrieved by the oppressions of the Romans, rose against them; but the Romans, gaining the ascendancy, and slew fifty thousand persons, sparing neither infants nor the aged. And after this, at the siege of Jopata, not less than forty thousand Jews perished.

• While these destructive contests prevailed in the East, the western parts of the Roman empire were rent by the conflicts between the emperors Galba, Otho, and Vertellis. All three of these emperors together with Nero, their immediate predecessor, died a violent death, within the short space of eighteen months.

• Finally, in 66 A.D. the whole nation of the Jews took up arms against the Romans and provoked that final war which, in a few years, was to lead to the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.
3) Famines

Jesus predicted "famines" also.

- Of these the main one was that which Agabus foretold would happen in the days of Claudius, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. It began in the fourth year of his reign, and lasted a long time. It extended through Greece, and even into Italy, but was felt most severely in Judea, and especially at Jerusalem, where many died of starvation. This famine is recorded by Josephus, who relates that "an assaron of corn was sold for five drachmae" (i.e. about 3 1/2 pints for 3s. 3d.) It is also noted by Eusebius and Orosius. To alleviate this terrible calamity, Helena, queen of Adiabena, who was in Jerusalem at the time, ordered large supplies of grain to be sent from Alexandria; and Izates, her son, consigned vast sums to the governors of Jerusalem, to be used for the relief of the worst off. The Gentile Christian converts residing in foreign countries, also sent, at the suggestion of St. Paul, generous contributions, to relieve the distresses of their Jewish brethren. (I Corin. xvi. 3.)

- Dion Cassius relates that there was also a famine in the first year of Claudius which prevailed at Rome, and in other parts of Italy; and, in the eleventh year of the same emperor, there was another, mentioned by Eusebius.

To these may be added the starvation that afflicted the inhabitants of several of the cities of Galilee and Judea, while they were under siege, previous to the siege of Jerusalem.

4) EarthQuakes

There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

There occurred several earthquakes within the forty years of this prophecy, and, as our SAVIOUR predicted, in divers places.

- In the reign of Claudius there was one at Rome, and another at Apamea in Syria, where many of the Jews resided. The earthquake at the latter place was so destructive, that the emperor, in order to relieve the distresses of the inhabitants, remitted its tribute for five years. Both these earthquakes are recorded by Tacitus. There was one also, in the same reign in Crete. This is mentioned by Philostratus, in his Life of Apollonius, who says, that 'there were others at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and Samos; Jews having settled in all these places.'

- In the reign of Nero there was an earthquake at Laodicea. Tacitus records this also. It is likewise mentioned by Eusebius and Orosius, who add that Hieropolis and Colose, as well as Laodicea, were overthrown by an earthquake. There was also one in Campania in this reign (of this both Tacitus and Seneca speak ;) and another at Rome in the reign of Galba, recorded by Suetonius.

- A short time before the siege of Jerusalem commenced in 70 A.D., the Idumeans were driven out of Jerusalem by the Jews. The Idumeans were encamped outside the city. "A heavy storm (says Josephus) burst on them during the night, violent winds arose, accompanied with the most excessive rains, with constant lightnings, the most tremendous thunderings, and with dreadful roarings of earthquakes. It seemed (continues he) as if the system of the world had
been confounded for the destruction of mankind; and one might well conjecture that these were signs of no common events.

5) Persecution of the Disciples

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. 10At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The next prediction of Jesus related to the persecutions of the disciples:

"They shall lay their hands on you (said he), and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake:" Luke xxi. 12. "and they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten:" Mark xiii. 9. "and some of You shall they CAUSE TO BE PUT TO DEATH." Luke xxi. 16.

In the very infancy of the Christian church, these unmerited and unprovoked cruelties began to be inflicted.

Jesus, and John the Baptist were put to death; the Apostles Peter and John were first imprisoned, and then, together with the other Apostles, were scourged before the Jewish council; Stephen was stoned to death; Herod Agrippa beheaded James the brother of John, and again imprisoned Peter, planning to put him to death also.

St. Paul had to plead before the Jewish council at Jerusalem, and before Felix the Roman governor.

Two years afterwards Paul was brought before the tribunal of Festus (who had succeeded Felix in the government,) king Agrippa the younger being present. Paul was also brought with Silas before the rulers at Philippi, where both of them were scourged and imprisoned Paul was likewise imprisoned two years in Judea, and afterwards twice at Rome, each time for the space of two years. He 'was scourged by the Jews five times, three times beaten with rods. Lastly, he pleaded before the emperor Nero at Rome; .

Paul himself, before his conversion, was a active in persecuting the early church. St. Luke relates of him that "he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and persecuting men and women, putting them in prison; when they were put to death he spoke against them; he punished them in every synagogue, and even persecuted them in foreign cities and to this agree his own declarations. (Vide Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Gal. i. 23.)

At length, about two years before the Jewish war, the first general persecution commenced at the instigation of the emperor Nero, " who," says Tacitus, "inflicted upon the Christians punishments exquisitely painful;" multitudes suffered a cruel martyrdom, amidst derision and insults, including the Apostles St Peter and St. Paul.
Jesus continues "And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Matt. xxiv. 9. The hatred from which these persecutions sprang, was not provoked on the part of the Christians by a resistance to established authority, or by any violations of law, but was the consequence of their sustaining the name, and imitating the character of their Jesus. "It was a war," says Tertullian, "against the very name: to be a Christian was of itself crime enough." This is seen in a letter of Pliny written to Trajan: "I asked them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it, I asked them a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment, and those who persevered I commanded to be led away to death." It is added, "Of all nations." Whatever animosity or dissensions might subsist between the Gentiles and the Jews on other points, they were at all times ready to unite and co-operate in the persecution of the Christians.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another." Matt. xxiv. 10. Concerning this fact, the following testimony of Tacitus is interesting. Speaking of the persecutions of the Christians under Nero, to which we have just alluded, he adds "several were seized, who confessed, and by their discovery a great multitude of others were convicted and barbarously executed."

6) Massive Increase in Wickedness and Lawlessness

During the 3 years prior to the final destruction of Jerusalem, there was a MASSIVE increase in lawlessness and wickedness. A state of anarchy prevailed both within Jerusalem, and in the surrounding countryside. Everywhere was overrun by marauding gangs. Jerusalem, itself was divided into several warring factions – that acted without any moral or rational constraints.

Thousands of ordinary Jews were plundered, abused and put to death, not by foreign enemies, but by their own people. Carcasses lay in heaps on all the public roads: pity was gone, and with it, all respect for authority. Every part of Judea was scourged and laid waste by bands of robbers and murderers, who plundered the towns and slew the inhabitants, sparing neither women nor children. Simon, son of Gioras, was the commander of one of these robber bands, numbering about 40,000 men.

7) The Gospel Preached in the Whole World

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

The Epistles of St. Paul are addressed to the Christians at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica; and those of Peter to those dwelling in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. This is evidence of the spread of Christianity. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, informs them that

'their faith was spoken of throughout the world;'

and in the Epistle to the Colossians he observes that
the "Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven."

Clement, who was a fellow-labourer with the Apostle, relates of him that

"he taught the whole world righteousness, travelling from the East westward to the borders of the ocean."

Eusebius says that

"the Apostles preached the Gospel in all the world, and that some of them passed beyond the bounds of the ocean, and visited the Britannic isles:" as says Theodoret also.

"It appears," says Bishop Newton, "from the writers of the history of the church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem the Gospel was not only preached in the Near East, Greece, and Italy, but was likewise propagated as far northward as Scythia, as far southward as Ethiopia, as far eastward as Parthia and India, as far westward as Spain and Britain."

And Tacitus asserts that the Christian religion, which arose in Judea, spread over many parts of the world, and extended to Rome itself, where the number of Christians, as early as the time of Nero, amounted to "a vast multitude," so much so that their numbers excited the jealousy of the government.

"this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened"

History agrees that all of the 7 signs listed below occurred before Jesus’ generation passed away.

- False prophets
- Wars and rumours of war
- Famines
- Earthquakes
- Persecution of the Apostles
- An increase in wickedness
- The spread of the Gospel throughout the known world.

But what about the remaining signs that Jesus described - numbered 8 to 12?

- The abomination of desolation
- People fleeing to the mountains
- The gathering of vultures
- The Sign of the Son of Man in the Clouds
- The gathering of the elect out of the tribulation

In the next chapter we will examine an intriguing discovery
SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN
Chapter 11 The Sign of the Son of Man

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”

Jesus’ first Coming, His birth, had been attended by a number of signs. He was conceived, so we are told, by a virgin, Mary, and there was a star which shone over Bethlehem, and a heavenly host appeared to the shepherds proclaiming “Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

What is interesting is that just prior to the destruction that came upon the Jews in 70 A.D., the Jewish historian Josephus records a series of similar, though not identical, signs. These signs occurred in 66 A.D., immediately prior to the war which was to lead to the Jew’s destruction. Josephus records the following –

“3. Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them.

Thus there was a star (20) resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year.

Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus, (21)[Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskilful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it.

At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.

Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner (22) [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them.
Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.

Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the temple,] as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence."

But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, (23) began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did not he either say any thing for himself, or any thing peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him, Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words? he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And just as he added at the last, "Woe, woe to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages he gave up the ghost.
Signs of the Second Coming?

Over Jerusalem appeared a star shaped like a sword (or cross). A Star hanging over Jerusalem immediately brings to mind the story of Christ’s birth.

Josephus then tells us that during that Passover Festival a heifer gave birth to a lamb. The priests would sacrifice a heifer to purify themselves before entering the Temple. A heifer is a cow that has never given birth before. Hence a heifer is “virgin”. Now a heifer is a different species to a lamb. So for a heifer to give birth to a lamb is miraculous. This event brings to mind the Virgin Birth, Mary giving birth to Jesus.

Then on the 21st of the month Jyar (37 days after Passover) before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. A Heavenly Host.

So all three signs that announced the first Coming of Christ, occurred again 4 years before the destruction of the Jews. Christ had said he would return in judgment. Where these signs announcing his Second Coming?

Signs of Judgment?

The Sign of Jonah indicated that if the people did not repent then after a period of forty, judgment would come, and Jesus had said that He would return to carry out that judgment.

And Jesus had clearly said that the judgment would occur within the lifetimes (generation) of some of those listening to him.

24:32. And from the fig tree learn a parable: When the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. 24:33. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. 24:34. Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.MATTHEW 24

13:29. So you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is very nigh, even at the doors. 13:30. Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass until all these things be done.MARK 13

21:31. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. 21:32. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. LUKE 21

The heavenly army was a sign of judgment. The soldiers were seen to surround the JEWISH cities. In fact the Gospels tell us repeatedly that the appearance of a heavenly army in the clouds would be the sign of Christ’s return and the judgment of Israel.

“and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”
The departure of the Spirit was also a sign of judgment. The Spirit had departed four years before the First Temple fell, so its departure in 66 A.D. was a parallel sign that the Second Temple would also fall within 4 years.

The appearance of the sword-shaped star over Jerusalem speaks for itself. The sword is a symbol of execution and of the Cross upon which Jesus was judged. It also resembles the Tav symbol, the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which signals finality.

All these signs appeared in April and May of 66 A.D and marked the beginning of hostilities between the Jews and the Romans. Now began tribulation.

May 66 A.D., marked the beginning of the Jewish War which lasted 7 years. The war was provoked by the constant brutality of the local Roman rulers. The Jews revolted, and by the 15th July that year, the Jews had recaptured Jerusalem from all Roman control. In September of 66 A.D. Cestius Gallus arrived at the walls of Jerusalem with 40,000 Roman soldiers and laid siege to the city. However, he did not recapture it. He withdrew without reason, and on the 8th November the Jews pursued and routed his army. This embarrassing defeat could not be ignored by Rome since it would encourage all other vassal states to rebel. So Nero ordered the complete and utter destruction of the Jews, their cities and their Temple. Thus, beginning with the Roman brutality in May of 66 A.D., the events of that year were to lead to the Jews’ destruction.

A Pattern in the Sequence

The sequence and timing of the signs described by Josephus is worthy of note.

- First there was the sword shaped star.
- Then on 8th Nisan at the 6th hour, the Eastern Gate of the Temple opened of it’s own accord
- Then on the 8th Nisan, at the ninth hour, the Temple was illuminated
- Then during the festival the heifer gave birth to a lamb
- Then 37 days after the Passover sacrifice, the Heavenly host was seen in the clouds.
- Then 37 days after the Passover sacrifice, the Spirit departed from the Temple

It is tempting to ask whether the sequence of these odd events bear any relationship to the Passion of Christ.

- Jesus presented himself at the Temple as Pascal Lamb, born of the virgin.
- He was crucified, and from the 6th hour until the 9th hour there was darkness over all the land. At the ninth hour Jesus died; his sacrifice was complete. At this moment the darkness ended, and light began to shine again.
- Forty days after His resurrection (43 days after Passover) He ascended to the clouds, and angels announced that He would return the same way.
- Then 10 days later, at Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out.
As mentioned before, it is curious that the Spirit should depart from the Temple on the same day (Pentecost) that it was poured out on the disciples.

It is also curious that both Pentecost events should be preceded by an “Ascension” type event. In one case there was the appearance of a heavenly army in the clouds, and in the other case there was the ascension of Jesus into the clouds; both occurring between the time of the Passover and the Pentecost event. Jesus had said that he would return on the clouds - the same way as he had departed. Both his departure and return seem timed to coincide with the arrival and departure of the Holy Spirit respectively.

The Ascension in 30 A.D. took place at the beginning of the 28th Iyyar, and Jesus had been crucified at the end of the 14th Nisan. At the time of his crucifixion there was darkness from the 6th hour till the ninth hour. (Jewish days began and ended at 6pm sunset). So 43 days before the Ascension there was a supernatural darkness until the ninth hour.

Similarly, in 66 A.D. the heavenly host appeared at the end of the 21st Iyyar, just before sunset, and 43 days earlier - at the beginning of the 8th Nisan – there was darkness until the 9th hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8th Nisan</th>
<th>66 A.D.</th>
<th>30 A.D.</th>
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<tr>
<td>In accordance with the Jewish custom, the Lord went up to Jerusalem upon the 8th Nisan, “six days before the Passover.”</td>
<td>Beginning of 8th Nisan, At the 6th hour of the night (12pm) the gates open</td>
<td>End of 14th Nisan, At the 6th hour of the day (12am) a darkness covered the land</td>
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<td></td>
<td>At the 9th hour (3am) light illuminates the Temple</td>
<td>At the 9th hour (3pm) the darkness ended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heifer gives birth to the Lamb</td>
<td>Christ is the Passover Lamb born of a virgin</td>
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<tr>
<th>21st Iyyar (Jyar)</th>
<th>7th Sivan (Jyar)</th>
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<tr>
<td>End of 21st Iyyar</td>
<td>The date of Pentecost</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heavenly host seen in the clouds (Jesus returns) just before sunset</td>
<td>Spirit Departs</td>
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<th>7th Sivan (Jyar)</th>
<th>7th Sivan (Jyar)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of 28th Iyyar</td>
<td>Spirit poured out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascension of Jesus into the clouds (Jesus departs)</td>
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Perhaps we could summarize this rather striking pattern thus,

30 A.D.

- Supernatural darkness ends at ninth hour of the day on 14th Nisan
- From 9th hour of the day on 14th till just after sunset on 28th = 43 days + part of a day
- Ascension into clouds on 28th Iyyar
- At Pentecost the Spirit is poured out

66 A.D.

- Supernatural light at ninth hour of the night on 8th Nisan
- From 9th hour of the night on the 8th till just before sunset of the 21st = 43 days + part of a day
- Return on the clouds on 21st Iyyar (just before sunset)
- At Pentecost the Spirit departs from the Temple

One might add that it is very curious that during BOTH of these Passovers, a “sacrificial lamb born of a virgin” was “presented” in the Temple….

So the sequence, in both cases, is –

1. Passover festival
2. Supernatural darkness until the 9th hour, and supernatural light after the 9th hour
3. Virgin birth of a sacrificial lamb
4. Ascension vision (Jesus departs and Jesus returns)
5. Pentecost (Spirit arrives and Spirit departs)

Jesus told his disciples that he must depart before the Holy Spirit could be poured out. Conversely, upon his return, the Holy Spirit departed. This is exactly what we find. –

1. His Ascension to the clouds was immediately followed by Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out on the disciples,
2. His Return on the clouds was immediately followed by Pentecost when the Spirit departed from the Temple.

The events in 66 A.D. are like an action replay of the events in 30 A.D. except everything is in reverse.
A Comparison of Events in 30 A.D. and 66 A.D.

- **PENTECOST**
  - Spirit Poured out
  - Spirit Departs
- **PASSOVER**
  - Darkness until the 9th hour

**30 A.D.**
- The Ascension - Jesus Departs
- 43 days
- Darkness until the 9th hour

**66 A.D.**
- The Heavenly Host - Jesus Returns
- 43 days
Ezekiel’s Sign

As we have just seen - in 66 A.D., 4 years before the destruction of the Second Temple, a vision occurred – namely the Sign of the Son of Man; a vision of God’s glory in the clouds.

You will recall from Chapter 5, that a similar vision occurred in 590 B.C., 4 years before the destruction of the First Temple. This was the Vision of Ezekiel. You will recall that this too was a vision of God’s Glory in the clouds. A parallel vision occurring at a parallel time.

In fact, just to recap the parallels between the events in 66 A.D. and 590 B.C. –

- On both occasions the Temple is illuminated by a radiance
- On both occasions there is a vision of the Lord enthroned in glory in the clouds
- On both occasions the Spirit departs from the Temple
- Both visions occur 4 years before the destruction of the Temple
- In both cases the destruction of the Temple takes place ON THE SAME DAY!

It seems that what Ezekiel saw in 590 B.C. was also the Sign of the Son of Man. The two events were meant to parallel one another. Curiously, the phrase “Son of Man” occurs 93 times in the book of Ezekiel, more than 5 times the number of occurrences found in any other book of the Bible. His book truly is the book of the Son of Man. When Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man, he had in mind primarily the words of Ezekiel, and the Sign of the Son of Man was to be the same sign that Ezekiel had witnessed.

So the Sign of the Son of Man has occurred more than once. Josephus recorded the events of 66 A.D. without realizing the connection or drawing any of these implications.
Chapter 12 The Sign for Christians to Flee

The majority of Jews saw the signs as meaning that a leader was to come who would liberate their nation from the Romans. However, with hindsight, Jews such as Josephus interpreted the signs as indicating the commencement of judgment upon their nation. Neither Josephus nor the Midrash attach any Christian meaning to the nature of these signs or their timing. And, at the time, Josephus did not see these signs as any reason to flee Jerusalem from any coming Tribulation – because he stayed and only narrowly escaped with his own life by hiding in a coffin and being carried out. As Tacitus, the Roman historian reports –

“Few people placed any sinister interpretation upon this. The majority were convinced that the ancient scriptures of their priests alluded to the present as the very time when the Orient would triumph and from Judea would go forth men destined to rule the world.”

The Christian Response:

Jesus had taught the Christians that the judgment would occur within their generation, and He had told them to be observant for the signs of the end of the Age.

The appearance of the heavenly host in 66 A.D. would have reminded Christians of the sign of the Son of Man that Jesus had spoken about.

Jesus had also told them that when they saw Jerusalem encircled with armies, they were to flee to the countryside.

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that it’s desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written.”

Curiously, this precisely describes the sign recorded by Josephus and Tacitus –

“before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.”

A few months later this became a physical reality when, in September of 66 A.D. Cestius Gallus actually besieged Jerusalem with an army of 40,000 soldiers. This was a clear sign to any remaining Christians to flee.

Miraculously, Cestius then withdrew without any cause, allowing the Christians to escape.

Eusebius tells us that 66 A.D. was the time Christians began to leave the region because of the command of Christ, and they went to a city called Pella on the east side of the Jordan River. There, they and the Apostles obtained safety from the holocaust that soon enflamed Jerusalem and Judea.
is said by Eusebius that not one Christian was killed in the destruction of Jerusalem. By 69 A.D. the Jerusalem church was gone entirely, gathered out of the tribulation by the Lord’s word.

“…for when Christians in Jerusalem and Judea saw the ruin coming on, they all retired to a town called Pella, on the other side of the Jordan, where they were safe, so that of the thousands that perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, there was not so much as one Christian.”

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“When Jerusalem was attacked in A.D. 66-70, the Christians followed the council of their Lord, leaving Jerusalem for Pella, east of the Jordan”

“Regarding the prophecies of Jesus: “Nevertheless some of them were precise enough to assure the survival of the Jerusalem church, in that it took warning and fled to Pella in Transjordan before the Roman ring of steel had tightened around the doomed city in 70 A.D.”

Here we see a sense in which Jesus actually did save believers. By His word they were literally saved from destruction. He was literally the SAVIOUR of the Jews, because those who believed His words fled from Jerusalem and were spared.

“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. 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”
THE FINAL CONFLICT
Chapter 13 The Final Conflict

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,'[b] spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. 22If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

After the defeat of Cestius, the Emperor Nero decided to go to war against the Jews. He appointed Vespasian (whose son was Titus) and gave him an army of 60,000 men. In 67 A.D. Vespasian marched into Judea, where he spent 15 months destroying all the towns - killing more than 150,000 inhabitants including children and the aged.

Vespasian’s campaign began in Galilee. Here Jesus had called his first disciples to be 'fishers of men'. A Roman battle now took place in which Titus attacked a band of Jewish rebels led by a leader coincidentally named Jesus. The rebels fell into the water and those who were not killed by arrows "attempted to swim to their enemies, but the Romans cut off either their heads or their hands" (Jewish War III, 10) and the rebels were then pulled out of the water like fish.

Next, Vespasian marched against Gadara. At Gadara Jesus had driven out a legion of demons into a herd of 2,000 swine who had then rushed into the lake and drowned. Now Vespasian fought against the rebels at Gadara. The leader of the rebels was a man named John (by coincidence, also the name of Jesus’ closest apostle). The Romans struck fear into the rebels, and the rebels rushed around in confusion like madmen, as if they were possessed. The Romans then drove about 2000 of them over the cliff into the water where they drowned.

At the coastal city of Joppa, the Jews fled onto their ships before Vespasian arrived. However an immense storm arose, and followed the Jews out to sea - dashing vessel against vessel, and against the rocks, in the most tremendous manner. Many were drowned, others crushed by the broken ships, others killed themselves, and those who reached the shore were slain by the Romans. 4,200 dead bodies were strewn along the coast. Not a single Jew survived. Such events were suggested by Jesus, when he said,

"There shall be distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring." Luke xxi. 25.

Vespasian proceeded as far as Jericho, then returned to Caesarea in order to prepare for his assault upon Jerusalem. However, he received intelligence of Nero's death, and he decided to suspend his plans until he received further orders. This gave the Jews a respite that lasted about 2 years.
Beelzebub Divided Against Beelzebub

Jesus had performed miracles in Jerusalem and the religious leaders had accused him of doing so through the power of the Devil. “By Beelzebub he drives out Beelzebub”. However, Jesus had retorted that a city divided against itself will fall – and if Beelzebub is driving out Beelzebub then he has fallen already. In the light of these statements the fate of Jerusalem seems ironic. Just prior to the arrival of Vespasian, Jerusalem did indeed become divided against itself; it was torn between several warring factions and parties, and the city descended into self destructive civil war. The contending parties acted without any moral or rational constraint – as if possessed.

In the heart of the city two factions contended for power, and raged against each other with destructive animosity. One of these factions (The Idumeans), having been excluded from the city, entered it by force during the night. Thirsty for blood, and inflamed by revenge, they spared neither old nor young; by morning 8,500 dead bodies lay in the streets. They plundered every house, and having found the chief priests Anius and Jesus, not only slew them, but, abused their bodies, and threw their remains outside. They slaughtered the common people as unfeelingly as if they were animals. The nobles were first imprisoned, then scourged, and when they refused to join the Idumean party, they were killed. 12,000 of the Upper classes died in this manner; nor did any one dare to shed a tear, or utter a groan through fear of a similar fate. Death was the penalty for even the lightest accusation, nor did any of the poor escape. Those who fled were intercepted and slain: their carcasses lay in heaps on all the public roads: pity was gone, and with it, all respect for authority, both human and divine.

Outside the city there was also mayhem. Every part of Judea was scourged and laid waste by bands of robbers and murderers, who plundered the towns and slew the inhabitants, sparing neither women nor children. Simon, son of Gioras, was the commander of one of these robber bands, leading a small army of 40,000 men. With some difficulty he managed to enter Jerusalem, forming a third faction - and civil discord blazed out again, with still more destructive fury. These three factions, rendered frantic by drunkenness, rage, and desperation, trampling on heaps of the slain, fought against each other with brutal savageness and madness. Even those who brought sacrifices to the temple were murdered. The dead bodies of priests and worshippers, both natives and foreigners were heaped together, and a lake of blood stagnated in the sacred courts. John of Gischala, who headed one of the factions, burnt storehouses full of provisions; and Simon, leader of an opposing faction reciprocated by doing the same. So they destroyed their own food supplies. It was truly a case of Beelzebub divided against Beelzebub.

Surrounded by Armies

At this critical and alarming juncture, intelligence arrived that the Roman army was approaching the city. The Jews were petrified with astonishment and fear; there was no time for counsel, no hope of pacification, no means of flight: all was wild disorder and perplexity: nothing was to be heard but "the confused noise of the warrior," nothing to be seen but garments rolled in blood," nothing to be expected from the Romans but vengeance. A ceaseless cry of combatants was heard day and night, and yet the lamentations of mourners were still more dreadful. The worry and terror which people felt, caused many inhabitants to hope that the Romans might come and deliver them. This was the
condition of Jerusalem when Titus and his army arrived, and encamped outside the city. But they did not come to deliver the people:

“When ye see (he had said to his disciples) the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, [11] and Jerusalem surrounded by armies (or camps,) then let those who are in the midst of Jerusalem depart, and let not those who are in the country enter into her," for "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Matt. xxiv. 15, 21 ; Luke xxi. 20, 1-11.

Jesus’ prophecy combines the abomination of desolation with the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies. These armies, were those of the Romans, who now surrounded the city, and the abomination of desolation was the image of the Roman God, which the armies carried on their standards.

From the time of the Babylonian captivity, idolatry had been held as an abomination by the Jews. This national aversion was manifested even against the images of the gods and emperors which the Roman armies carried in their standards. The Jews regarded these images as an abomination. Both Pilate and afterwards Vitellius avoided marching their forces through Judea for this very reason. However Jesus added -

"Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Matt. xxiv. 28.

The eagle was the image on the Roman standards, and the Jewish state at this time could be compared to a carcass. The scepter of Judah, i.e. its civil and political authority, the life of its religion, and the glory of its temple, were departed. It was morally and judicially dead.

The abomination of desolation was literally the image that would bring desolation to the Jewish Nation.

At the Passover

The day on which Titus encompassed Jerusalem, was the feast of the Passover; the same day upon which the Jews crucified their Messiah! Every year multitudes would come from all the surrounding country, and from distant parts, to keep this festival. So Jesus’ warning was appropriate when he said

"Let not them that are in the countries enter into Jerusalem." Luke xxi. 21.

Jesus knew that the end would come at Passover.

So the city was crowded with Jewish strangers and foreigners from all parts, as if the whole nation was shut up in one prison. With the arrival of the Roman army, the Jews united and rushed furiously out of the city, repelling the tenth legion. This event caused a short suspension of hostilities and gave an opportunity for some of the Jews to escape through the open gates. This success inspired the Jews with confidence, and they resolved to defend their city to the end; but it did not prevent the renewal of the civil disorder within the city. The faction under the leadership of Eleazer disbanded and its members joined up under the two other leaders John and Simon. This led to a major
confrontation between these two bands resulting in death, plunder, and fire: the middle part of the city was burnt, and it's wretched inhabitants put at the mercy of the contending parties.

Mary's Baby

At length the Romans gained possession of two of the three walls which defended the city, and fear once more united the factions. Scarcely had the factions stopped fighting each other when famine made its appearance. For some time famine had been silently approaching, and many of the peaceful and the poor had already perished from hunger. With this new calamity the madness of the factions resumed, and the city became even more wretched than before. Impelled by the cravings of hunger, they snatched the food out of each other's hands, and many ate grain that had not been prepared. Tortures were inflicted for the discovery of a handful of food; women forced food from their husbands, and children from their fathers, and even mothers from their infants. Children wasted away in their mothers arms. Jesus had said

woe to "them that should give suck in those days." (Matt. xxiv. 19.)

Meanwhile the horrors of famine escalated. Hunger compelled people to eat their belts, their sandals, the skins of their shields, dried grass, and even the excrement from cattle. In the depth of this extremity, a Jewess of noble family, Miriam daughter of Eleazer, urged by the intolerable cravings of hunger, slew her small child, and cooked it; she had actually eaten one half, when soldiers, attracted by the smell of food, found her. They threatened to kill her unless she surrendered the food to them. She immediately produced the remains of her son, which froze them with horror. The whole city was shocked by this incident.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck." Luke xxiii. 29.

Jerusalem Crucified

This dreadful famine eventually forced thousands of Jews out of the city into the enemy's camp, where the Romans crucified them in such numbers, that, as Josephus relates, space was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the captives. In addition, it was discovered that some of the Jews had swallowed gold. Impelled by greed for this gold, the Arabs and Syrians, who were part of the Roman army, ripped open two thousand deserters in one night. Titus, touched by these calamities, appealed to the Jews in person. He entreated them to surrender, but they answered him with insults and curses.
The Siege Wall

41As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Exasperated by their obstinacy and insolence, Titus resolved to surround the city with a siege wall, (a trench 39 furlongs in circumference and strengthened with 13 towers,) which the soldiers managed to build in three days.

So Jesus' prediction was fulfilled -

“your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side”

As no supplies could enter the walls at all, the famine increased greatly. The tops of houses, and the recesses of the city, were covered with the carcasses of women, children, and old men. The young men appeared like ghosts in the public places, and fell down lifeless in the streets. The dead were too numerous to be buried, and many died whilst trying to bury their brethren. The public calamity was too great for lamentation. A black and deadly night, spread over the city with silence. But even such a scene could not restrain the robbers; they spoiled the tombs, and stripped the dead of their grave-clothes, with unfeeling, wild laughter. They tried the edges of their swords on their carcasses, and even on some who were still breathing; while Simon Goras chose this sad and awful time to demonstrate his cruelty by executing the High Priest Matthias, and his three sons, whom he accused with the crime of being Roman supporters. The father, in consideration of him having opened the city gates to Simon, begged that he might be executed before his children; but the unmerciful tyrant gave orders that he should be killed last.

One might pause briefly here to notice the strange parody of events being played out.-

- The two leaders of the Apostles were named Simon and John; the leaders of the rebels were also named Simon and John.
- Mary ate her baby; at the Last Supper, Jesus, son of Mary, said “Take, eat of my flesh”
- Jerusalem was crucified; Jesus was nailed to a cross
- Jerusalem was cut off from the world in 3 days (it took three days to surround Jerusalem with a wall); Jesus was cut off from the living for 3 days

As one reads the accounts one does sense a strange fate unrolling. Is it possible that the holocaust that the Romans inflicted upon the Jews reflected what they had done to their Messiah?
Chapter 14 The Day of Vengeance

While famine continued to spread its destructive rage through the city, the Romans eventually succeeded in demolishing part of the inner wall. They captured the great tower of Antonia and advanced towards the Temple. Titus, in the war council, had given orders to preserve the Temple as an ornament to the empire, and as a monument of his success. However, a Roman soldier, disregarded Titus' command, climbed on the shoulders of another, and threw a flaming brand into the golden window of the Temple, which instantly set the building on fire. The Jews, anxious above all things to save the sacred building, rushed in to extinguish the flames. Titus, hoping to extinguish the fire, rushed to the spot in his chariot, bringing with him his senior officers and legions; he waved his hand and raised his voice, commanding his soldiers to extinguish the fire, but so great was the noise and confusion that no attention was paid even to him. Instead of extinguishing the flames, the soldiers spread them wider and wider. The soldiers rushed furiously upon the Jews, slaying some with the sword, trampling others under their feet, or crushing them to death against the walls. Many were suffocated by the smoke. The poor and sick were slaughtered without mercy. Multitudes of the dead and dying were heaped around the altar, where they had fled for protection, while the steps that led from the altar into the outer court were completely covered with their blood.

Finding it impossible to restrain his soldiers, Titus surveyed those parts of the Temple which were still untouched by the fire. The fire had not yet reached the inner Temple, which Titus entered, and viewed with silent admiration. Struck with the magnificence of its architecture, and the beauty of its decorations, he redoubled his efforts to stop the progress of the flames. He appealed to his soldiers to exert their full effort to drive back the fire, and he appointed a centurion of the guards to punish them if they disregarded him again: but it was in vain. The delirious rage of the soldiers knew no bounds. Eager for plunder and for slaughter, they were deaf to the commands and threats of their General. Even while he was trying to preserve the sanctuary, one of the soldiers was actually employed in setting fire to the door- posts, which caused the fire to become widespread. Titus and his officers were forced to withdraw. The Romans, provoked to the highest pitch against the Jews, seized every person whom they could find, and, without any regard for sex, age or status, first plundered and then slew them. The old and the young, the common people and the priests, those who surrendered and those who resisted, were all put to death. Meanwhile the Temple continued burning, until at length the flames completely enveloped the whole building. The flames were so intense that the lofty hill on which the Temple stood appeared as one large body of fire.

The Temple was reduced to no more than a heap of ruins; and the Roman army, in triumph, came and set up their standards against the remains of the eastern gate. With sacrifices of thanksgiving, they proclaimed the imperial majesty of Titus, and celebrated their victory.
The 10th Av

The First Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. on the 10th day of the fifth month according to the Prophet Jeremiah –

“On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army under the commander of the imperial guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem.”

JEREMIAH 52 v 12

The Second Book of Kings gives a slightly different date for the destruction –

“On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army under the commander of the imperial guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem.”

2 KINGS 25 v 8-10

This is an identical quote to Jeremiah, so one must have copied from the other. We know that Jeremiah was eye-witness to the events, whereas 2 Kings is an abbreviated version of the history of every king that reigned in Israel. So we should take Jeremiah’s date as the most reliable.

Now let us see on what date the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Here are the records of the Jewish historian Josephus

“5. So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous, [Ab,] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon; although these flames took their rise from the Jews themselves, and were occasioned by them; for upon Titus's retiring, the seditious lay still for a little while, and then attacked the Romans again, when those that guarded the holy house fought with those that quenched the fire that was burning the inner [court of the] temple; but these Romans put the Jews to flight, and proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered any thing to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it.” JOSEPHUS JEWISH WARS
Here Josephus records that after Titus’s army had entered Jerusalem, Titus retired to the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day. However, upon Titus’s retiring, the Jews who were guarding the Temple decided to attack the Roman’s who were trying to quench the fire that was burning in the Inner Court of the Temple. The Roman’s put these Jews to flight, and chased them back into the Temple, at which moment one of the soldiers, in a rage, threw a piece of burning timber through a window, and the Temple began to burn. The flames spread quickly. Josephus says that this took place on the tenth day of the month of Av – that is the precise day upon which the First Temple was destroyed.

It should be noted that Titus had no intention of destroying the Temple at all; so it is quite a coincidence that the Temple should be destroyed on the same day that it had previously been destroyed by the Babylonians.

**Every Stone Overturned**

Josephus opens book 7 with these words:

"Now, as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder... Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminence... and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison... but for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited."

Jerusalem and the Temple (with their walls) were leveled to the ground — to such an extent that even their foundation stones were uprooted and overturned. No stone remained on top another, just as Jesus said would happen.

As evidence of this, we have the eyewitness accounts of both Josephus and Titus (the Roman general who conducted the war against the Jews) describing the utter ruin and thorough destruction of Jerusalem. Both Josephus and Titus state that if they had not been in Jerusalem during the war and personally seen the demolition that took place, they would not have believed that there was once a city in the area. But they were eyewitnesses to its utter ruin. It is significant that Josephus used the exact words of Jesus’ prophecy to describe the uprooted condition of even the foundation stones that constituted Jewish Jerusalem. He said:

"It [Jerusalem] was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited."

Not a foundation stone was in place from all the buildings in Jerusalem, including the stones of the Temple. It is significant that Jesus said the same thing as Josephus. Jesus said that Jerusalem was to be "laid even with the ground."
Josephus explained the reason why every stone was overturned in the city (including those that made up the very foundations). The Jews were accustomed to hide their gold and other valuables in the walls of their homes. The Temple itself was also the treasury of the Jewish nation. When the fires consumed the whole of the Temple and City, the gold melted and descended into the cracks and crevices of the stone foundations. In order to recover this melted gold, the Tenth Legion had the Jewish captives uproot every stone of the Temple and the whole of the City. So much gold was discovered in this fashion that the price of the metal in the Roman Empire fell to half of its pre-war value. This action of looking for gold by overturning the stones (including all foundation stones) left Jerusalem looking like a vast quarry of dislodged and uprooted stones in a state of unrecognized shambles.
PROLOGUE

In 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed the Temple and brought the Jewish Age to an end. The End of the Age had come. Since that time the Jews have had no Temple and no sacrificial system.

However the Jews have attempted to rebuild the Temple on several occasions since, and all attempts have failed. The nearest they came to actually rebuilding it was during the reign of the Roman Emperor – Julian the Apostate.

Flavius Claudius Iulianus (Julian the Apostate) was a Roman Emperor (361–363) of the Constantinian dynasty. He was the last pagan Roman Emperor, and tried to promote the Roman religious traditions of earlier centuries as a means of slowing the spread of Christianity.

In 363, Julian, on his way to engage Persia, stopped at the ruins of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. In keeping with his effort to foster religions other than Christianity, Julian ordered the Temple rebuilt. Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan historian, wrote this about the effort:

"Julian thought to rebuild at an extravagant expense the proud Temple once at Jerusalem, and committed this task to Alypius of Antioch. Alypius set vigorously to work, and was seconded by the governor of the province; when fearful balls of fire, breaking out near the foundations, continued their attacks, till the workmen, after repeated scorchings, could approach no more"

“The project of rebuilding the temple was aborted because each time the workers were trying to build the temple, using the existing substructure, they were burned by terrible flames that were coming from inside the earth and an earthquake negated what work was made and he gave up the attempt."

One year later, Julian died in battle against the Persians.

So, the only time that the Jews ever made a concerted effort to rebuild the Temple, they were “attacked” by “fearful balls of fire”. What does this tell us?

Could it be that God has written a line under the Jewish Age. As we have seen, that Age was brought to an end, and there is an indication that God himself was instrumental in this. Christians would argue that a Temple and sacrificial system are no longer necessary because Christ died for our sins once for all time, and to reinstitute the sacrificial system would be to negate the work of Christ.

Perhaps the Temple can never be rebuilt. Only time will tell.
CONCLUSIONS

1. God behind history

In this short book we have seen how the prophecies made by Jesus Christ about the End of the Age were fulfilled with some accuracy during the 40 years that followed his death and resurrection. There is a good fit between prophecy and event.

2. The Second Coming

The disciples asked Jesus -
“what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”
Jesus replied with a list of signs, then added –
“Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.”
Matthew 24 v 32-34.”.

So it seems abundantly clear that the Second Coming has already happened. It happened during Jesus’ generation, just as Jesus said it would.

History agrees. By 70 A.D. -

- All the signs that Jesus had spoken about in the Olivette Discourse had come to pass.
- An apparition of a heavenly army - corresponding somewhat with the expected Sign of the Son of Man – was witnessed throughout Palestine and recorded by both Josephus and Tacitus. As a consequence, Christians fled Jerusalem to the city of Pella.
- Then Jerusalem was surrounded by armies and a siege wall built around it.
- Finally Jerusalem was completely destroyed – not one stone being left upon another.

And all this within 40 years, exactly in accordance with Jesus’ prophecy – and with the Sign of Jonah.

So Jesus has returned already…….. I can hardly imagine a more momentous conclusion!!

Where does that leave modern day Christianity? I am not sure. Certainly, the implications and reverberations for Christendom are significant. All I know is that we are now living in a new age (Post Second Coming), and have been living in that age for 2000 years. The theologians must work out the ramifications.

3. God of Love

We often hear that the New Testament portrays God as a God of Love, in contrast to the Old Testament where God is a God of justice and retribution.
However, in this book we have seen that the events during the 40 years until 70 A.D. parallel the Old Testament Exodus events; one reflects the other. In BOTH cases God saved and then 40 years later God JUDGED. Salvation and JUDGMENT appeared hand-in-hand. The New Testament God is the same as the Old Testament God, after all.

These conclusions are as new to me as they may be to you. I did not go seeking them; they found me. I adhere to the truth – whatever it may turn out to be.
### SPECIFIC PROPHECIES

#### “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within 40 Years</th>
<th>“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”</th>
<th>Here Jesus predicts that His return and the End of the Age will take place within the life times of some of those listening to Him.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the Passover</td>
<td>“Let not them that are in the countries enter into Jerusalem.” Luke xxi. 21</td>
<td>It will be at the time of the Passover, when all the surrounding countries enter into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavenly Army</td>
<td>&quot;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.&quot;</td>
<td>In 66 A.D. an apparition of a heavenly army appeared in the skies over Judea, and this event was recorded by both Jewish and Roman historians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus of Christians</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Christians recognized this sign as the Sign of the Son of Man, and began to depart from Jerusalem, to a city called Pella, on the east side of the Jordan, where they obtained refuge from the holocaust that was to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Surrounded by Armies</td>
<td>“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that it’s desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written.”</td>
<td>In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. These armies turned it into a desolation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Surrounded by a Siege Wall</td>
<td>43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. &quot;Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side.” Luke xix. 43.</td>
<td>In 70 A.D., the Roman army built a siege wall around Jerusalem. It completely encircled Jerusalem and was as high as the walls of Jerusalem themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Stone of Jerusalem Was Removed Out of It’s Place.</td>
<td>. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”  “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”</td>
<td>When the Romans set fire to Jerusalem, all the gold that was stored in the Temple and buildings melted and ran between the stones. For years afterwards, the Roman soldiers were employed in removing the stones. So much gold was found that the price of gold fell to half it’s previous value in the Roman empire. Jerusalem was reduced to a quarry of rubble – with barely any evidence that a city had once stood there.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It cannot be emphasized enough that the series of bizarre signs that occurred in 66 A.D. were a mirror image of the signs that took place during the passion of Christ in 30 A.D.

The signs that accompanied His Departure (death, and resurrection) were mirrored in the signs that accompanied His Return.

- In 30 A.D., the day was turned to darkness from the 6th hour till the ninth hour. (14th Nisan) In 66 A.D., the night was turned to day at the ninth hour. Furthermore, supernatural occurrences began at the 6th hour. (8th Nisan)

- In 30 A.D., 43 days after the mysterious darkness, Jesus ascended to heaven on the clouds and announced that he would return in the same way. (28th Iyyar) In 66 A.D., 43 days after the mysterious light, an apparition of a heavenly army appeared in the clouds over Palestine. (21st Iyyar)

- In 30 A.D., on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, the Holy Spirit was poured out In 66 A.D., on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, the Holy Spirit departed from the Temple.

Everything that took place in 66 A.D. was a mirror image and a reversal of what took place in 30 A.D. The signs that announced Jesus’ departure, also announced His Return.

What have we stumbled across, in the records of Josephus and Tacitus – I propose it is nothing less than the Sign of the Son of Man.

So there are TWO testaments to the passion of Christ; one is found in the Gospels, and the other is the testament of the non-Christian Jews; one is the mirror image and reversal of the other.

The significance of this find can hardly be stated in words.

And consider the timing of these signs. The signs in 66 A.D. occurred immediately before the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies, the building of a siege wall, and the utter destruction of Jerusalem – just as Jesus had said that His Return would immediately precede these very things.
The particular breakdown of the Old Testament into 39 books becomes especially interesting when this organization is coupled with certain other facts mentioned in various places in the Bible. Of course, the "fortuitous" division of the book of Isaiah into the first 39 chapters that emphasizes God's judgment, followed by 27 chapters that emphasizes God's Grace, follows this same general organization. Now notice the following intriguing corollary to this organization.

Consider the repeated use of the number "40" in the Bible:

- It rained "40" days during the flood (Genesis 7.4).
- Moses spent "40" years in the land of Midian before being commissioned by God to bring his people out of Egypt (Exodus 3).
- Moses spent "40" days on Mt. Sinai obtaining the Law while the people turned back to their former Egyptian gods (Exodus 24.18).
- The Twelve Tribes spied out the promised Land for "40" days before refusing to enter (Numbers 13.25).
- They were then required to wander in the wilderness for a total of "40" years (Numbers 14.33).
- Goliath taunted Israel for "40" days before his defeat by David (1 Samuel 17.16).
- Jonah preached to Nineveh for "40" days before they repented (Jonah 3.4).
- Jesus spent "40" days in the Judean wilderness before being tested by Satan (Matthew 4.1-2).
- Jesus spent "40" days on earth following His resurrection, presenting Himself and speaking things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1.3).

With these examples, it's not difficult to ascribe a contextual association with the use of the number "40", for it seems always to be used in connection with some kind of trial or testing relevant to the particular event in view.

That being the case, it is striking that the topical arrangement of the Bible, dividing the Old Testament into 39 books and the new onto 27 books, causes the Gospel of Matthew to be the "40th" book in the Bible. Since the very organization of the Bible has prophetic overtones, it should not be surprising to find that Matthew is intended primarily for Israel for the following reasons.
• Only Matthew's Gospel contains a genealogy beginning with Abraham who was the progenitor of Israel, and focuses on the kings of Judah to show that Jesus had the legal qualifications to be a king, and could therefore fulfill the prophecy given to king David that his throne would be established forever (II Samuel 7.16; Isaiah 9.6-7).

• Only in Matthew's Gospel was Jesus worshipped by rulers, thereby certifying His ultimate authority as King of the Jews (Matthew 2.1-2).

• Only in Matthew's Gospel did Jesus describe His earthly rule at the time of the regeneration to be King over the 12 Tribes of Israel (Matthew 19.28).

• Only in Matthew's Gospel at the occasion of the Sermon on the Mount did Jesus address the details of the Old Testament Law given to Israel, not only expounding it with authority but also showing that He came to fulfill its provisions (Matthew 5-7).

• Only Matthew's Gospel has the largest number of links with Old Testament prophecies showing how Jesus completely fulfilled the stipulations for the promised Messiah.

• Only Matthew's Gospel refers to the "Kingdom of Heaven", understood by Old Testament terminology to define the coming of the King from Heaven to set up a Kingdom on this earth with Heaven's standard (Daniel 7.27).

• Only in Matthew's Gospel are Jesus' disciples directed to go first to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10.5-7).

• Only Matthew's Gospel contains parables and similes so worded that they apply most directly to Israel, e.g. (Matthew 13.44, 13.45-46, 13.51-52, 21.28-32).

Consequently, the Gospel of Matthew appealed to a Jewish audience who were well schooled in the details of the Law, Messianic genealogies, prophecies to identify His coming as King, and Old Testament warnings against rejecting Him, so this Gospel properly became the book of "testing" for first century Israel in general, and the Jews in particular. After all, it was only right and proper that God should come to the Jews first, challenging them with the message of Good News, for they were His Chosen People, the ones responsible for the writing of the Old Testament, and the ones most knowledgeable concerning God's Redemptive Plan. Thus we see that at least in this respect, the topical organization chosen for the Bible is very consistent with these facts.
APPENDIX D

FORTY SIGNS

Forty Signs

When the Jews asked for a sign, Jesus offered the Sign of Jonah. Nevertheless, Jesus did provide signs for the Jews. It may be just a coincidence, but the New Testament records about forty miracles performed by Jesus, and about forty parables spoken by him. The Sign of Jonah again.

40 Miracles Recorded in the Gospels

1. Cure of two blind men (Matt 9:27-31)
2. Piece of money in the fish's mouth (Matt 17:24-27)
3. The deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:31-37)
4. The blind man of Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
5. Jesus passes unseen through the crowd (Luke 4:28-30)
6. The miraculous draught of fishes (Luke 5:4-11)
7. The raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-18)
8. The woman with the spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11-17)
9. The man with the dropsy (Luke 14:1-6)
10. The ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19)
13. Cure of nobleman's son, Capernaum (John 4:46-54)
15. Man born blind cured (John 9:1-7)
16. Lazarus raised from the dead (John 11:38-44)
17. Draught of fishes (John 21:1-14)
18. Syrophoenician woman's daughter cured (Matt 15:28; Mark 7:24)
19. Four thousand fed (Matt 15:32; Mark 8:1)
20. Fig tree blasted (Matt 21:18; Mark 11:12)
21. Centurion's servant healed (Matt 8:5; Luke 7:1)
22. Blind and dumb demoniac cured (Matt 12:22; Luke 11:14)
23. Demoniac cured in synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1:23; Luke 4:33)
24. Peter's wife's mother cured (Matt 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38)
25. The tempest stilled (Matt 8:23; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:22)
26. Demoniacs of Gadara cured (Matt 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26)
27. Leper healed (Matt 8:2; Mark 1:40; Luke 5:12)
28. Jairus's daughter raised (Matt 9:23; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:41)
29. Woman's issue of blood cured (Matt 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43)
30. Man sick of the palsy cured (Matt 9:2; Mark 2:3; Luke 5:18)
31. Man's withered hand cured (Matt 12:10; Mark 3:1; Luke 6:6)
32. A lunatic child cured (Matt 17:14; Mark 9:14; Luke 9:37)
33. Two blind men cured (Matt 20:29; Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35)
34. Jesus walks on the sea (Matt 14:25; Mark 6:48; John 6:15)
35. Jesus feeds 5,000 "in a desert place" (Matt 14:15; Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10; John 6:1-14)
36. The conception of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35)
37. Star of Bethlehem
38. The transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8)
39. The resurrection (John 21:1-14)
40. The ascension (Luke 2:42-51)

Here is a list of the parables spoken by Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lamp on a Stand</td>
<td>5.14-15</td>
<td>4.21-22</td>
<td>8.16-17; 11.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Wise and Foolish Builders</td>
<td>7.24-27</td>
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<td>6.47-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. New Cloth on an Old Garment</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>5.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. New Wine in Old Wineskins</td>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>5.37-38</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Sower</td>
<td>13.3-8</td>
<td>4.3-8</td>
<td>8.5-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Mustard Seed</td>
<td>13.31-32</td>
<td>4.30-32</td>
<td>13.18-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Leaven</td>
<td>13.33</td>
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<td>13.20-21</td>
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<td>9. Hidden Treasure</td>
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<td>13.44</td>
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<td>10. Pearl of Great Price</td>
<td>13.45-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Fish in the Net</td>
<td>13.47-50</td>
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<td>12. Lost Sheep</td>
<td>18.12-14</td>
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<td>15.4-7</td>
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<td>13. Unmerciful Servant</td>
<td>18.23-35</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Workers in the Vineyard</td>
<td>20.1-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Two Sons</td>
<td>21.28-32</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. The Wedding Banquet</td>
<td>22.2-14</td>
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<td>18. Fig Tree</td>
<td>24.32-34</td>
<td>13.28-30</td>
<td>21.29-32</td>
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<td>19. The Thief</td>
<td>24.43</td>
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<td>12.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Absent Householder</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.32-37</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Talents (Mt); Minas (Lk)</td>
<td>25.14-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.11-27</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Sheep and Goats</td>
<td>25.31-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Growing Seed</td>
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<td>4.26-29</td>
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<td>25. Moneylender and Two Debtors</td>
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<td>7.41-43</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Good Samaritan</td>
<td>10.30-37</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Friend at Midnight</td>
<td>11.5-8</td>
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<td>28. Rich Fool</td>
<td>12.16-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Watchful Servants</td>
<td>12.35-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Faithful Servant</td>
<td>12.42-48</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Barren Fig Tree</td>
<td>13.6-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Places of Honor at a Wedding</td>
<td>14.7-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Great Banquet</td>
<td>14.16-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Counting the Cost</td>
<td>14.28-33</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. Lost Coin</td>
<td>15.8-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. Lost Son</td>
<td>15.11-32</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Shrewd Manager</td>
<td>16.1-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Unworthy Servants</td>
<td>17.7-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Persistent Widow</td>
<td>18.1-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>41. Pharisee and the Tax Collector</td>
<td>18.9-14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Though the exact number of miracles and parables recorded in the gospels does vary slightly depending on how they are defined, it seems a coincidence that the total number in both cases should approximate to 40.
A search of the entire Talmud for the phrase “forty years” reveals that this phrase occurs 16 times in reference to a historical event of national significance -

- 4 instances refer to the Exodus
- 1 instance refers to the reign of King David
- 2 instances refer to the time of Simeon the Righteous
- 5 instances refer to the strange phenomena that occurred during the 40 years before the destruction of the Temple
- 4 instances refer to the reign of the Messiah

So it is quite curious that when we look at the ENTIRE Talmud, the two periods most associated with 40 years happen to be -

1. The Forty years after the Exodus Passover
2. The Forty years after the Crucifixion of Christ.

It so happens that these two periods mark the beginning and end of Jewish history, and as if to complete the symmetry, Christians regard the crucifixion of Christ as the true Passover.
AUTHOR’S BACKGROUND

My search began with questions -

- Was life created by an Intelligence or intelligences, or was life the product of chance?
- Is there any meaning to life in a world that is a product of chance and accident?
- Can there be anything of true value worth striving for – or does all our striving count for nothing – just the posturing and hot air of creatures born out of an accidental collision of atoms?
- Is there anything of real value, or is beauty, love and justice merely wishful thinking, the imposition of our own desperate desires upon an unfeeling world?
- Do we have a soul, or are we just material bodies with a fleeting existence, destined to fade into nothing?

Questions such as these plunged me into a crisis. I decided that my main priority was to find some answers. So it was that in 1980 I began a quest to find out the truth about religion. Most of my spare time was spent researching in the libraries and universities of my home town, Birmingham, UK. It was a long and inspiring journey that was to span over 2 decades.

This journey led me into a study of several fields –

- the philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and ethics
- the science of origins, encompassing cosmology, radioactive dating, the fossil record, evolution, biology, genetics, design and teleology in nature
- ancient history, mythology, anthropology, socio-biology
- bible prophecy

Many new things were uncovered. It was the inspiration from those discoveries that kept me going.

I have few formal qualifications, except a degree in Psychology BSc, and a good education in philosophy.

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