

Sign of the Son of Man

predictions relating to the Jewish apocalypse of 70 A.D.

By Craig Paardekooper (2023)

This is an abbreviated version “Sign of the Son of Man” by Craig Paardekooper (2007)

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

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 –

Destruction of Temple in 586 B.C.	Destruction of Temple in 70 A.D.
Preceded by 40 years of warning from the Prophet Jeremiah	Preceded by 40 years during which Jesus and the disciples witnessed to the people so they might repent
Four years before the destruction the Spirit departs from the Temple	Four years before the destruction the Spirit departs from the Temple
This event is accompanied by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a vision of God's chariot in the sky - a radiance filling the Temple - departure via the East Gate 	This event was accompanied by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an apparition of heavenly armies seen by thousands - a radiance of the Temple - the East Gate opening of it's own accord
The destruction takes place on the 10 th day of the month of Av	The destruction takes place on the 10 th day of the month of Av

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”

THE OLIVETTE DISCOURSE

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.

*"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 its 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.^ε*

*"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."*

THE SECOND COMING

“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 unskillful, 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 at Pentecost, 53 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.

	66 A.D.	30 A.D.
8th Nisan In accordance with the Jewish custom, the Lord went up to Jerusalem upon the 8 th Nisan, "six days before the Passover."	Beginning of 8th Nisan At the 6 th hour of the night (12pm) the gates open At the 9 th hour (3am) light illuminates the Temple	End of 14th Nisan At the 6 th hour of the day (12am) a darkness covered the land At the 9 th hour (3pm) the darkness ended
	Heifer gives birth to the Lamb	Christ is the Passover Lamb born of a virgin
21st Iyyar (Jyar)	End of 21st Iyyar Heavenly host seen in the clouds (Jesus returns) just before sunset	Beginning of 28th Iyyar Ascension of Jesus into the clouds (Jesus departs)
7th Sivan The date of Pentecost	7th Sivan Spirit Departs	7th Sivan Spirit 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

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 the 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 –

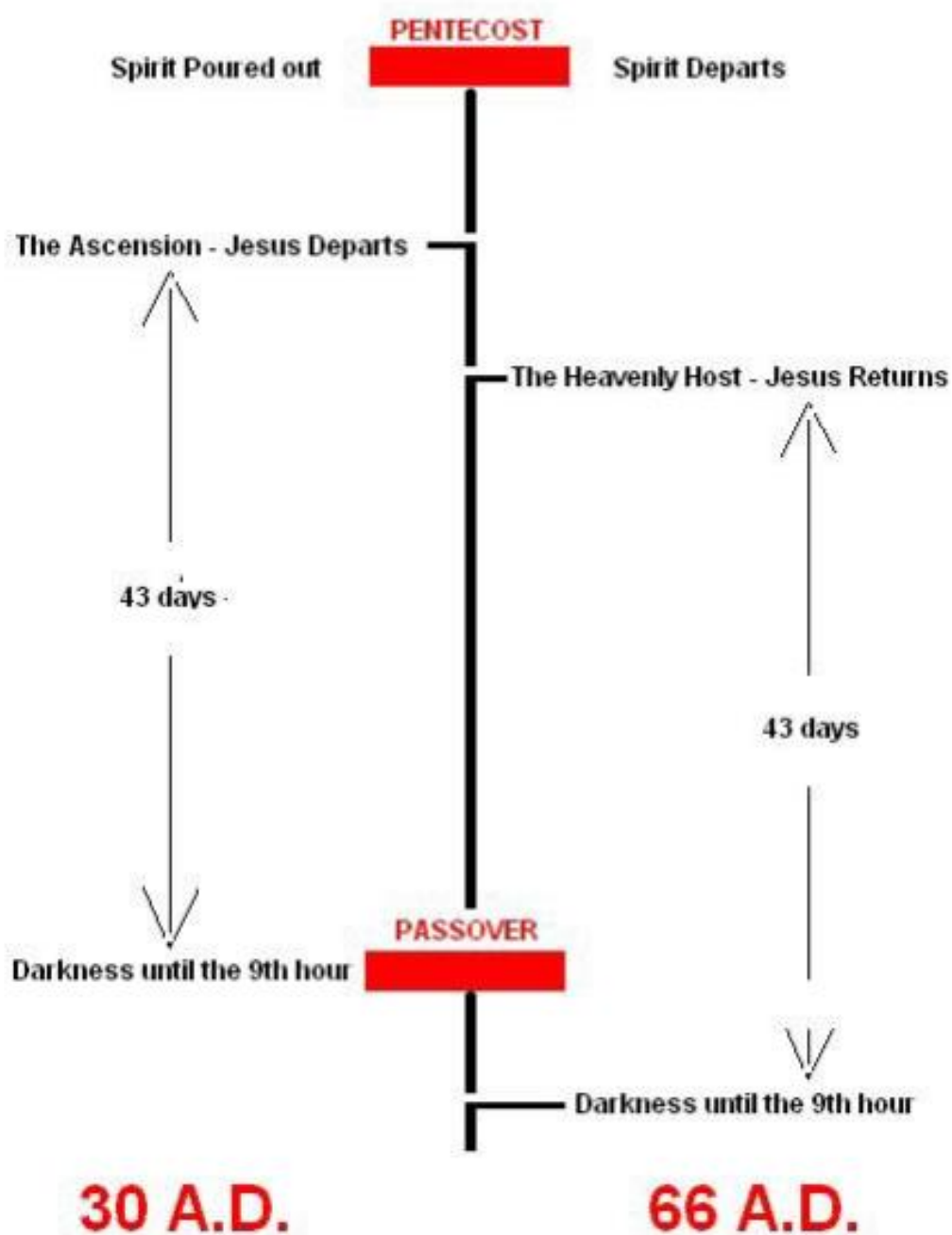
1. Passover festival
2. Supernatural darkness until the 9th hour, and supernatural light after the 9th hour
3. Virgin birth of a sacrificial lamb
4. Ascension vision (Jesus departs and Jesus returns)
5. Pentecost (Spirit arrives and Spirit departs)

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.



In Israel, each new day began at sunset with 12 hours of night, followed by 12 hours of day. On the following page I have marked the occurrence of each event with a red line.

The diagram illustrates the uncanny parallel occurrences between the events comprising the passion of Christ in 30 A.D., and the events immediately preceding the 7 year war of the Jews with the Romans, that began in 66 A.D. One is the mirror image and reversal of the other.

The patterning of the events is around "arrival" and "departure", around "light" and "darkness", around "night" and "day". It's an extraordinary pattern.

Jesus ARRIVED in Jerusalem on 8 th Nisan	Jesus DEPARTED from Jerusalem on 14 th Nisan
66 A.D. RETURN	30 A.D. PASSION
On 8 th Nisan at the 9 th hour super-natural LIGHT illuminates the Temple	On the 14 th Nisan until the 9 th hour there is supernatural DARKNESS
43 days later, on the 21 st Iyyar, a heavenly army ARRIVED in the clouds	43 days later, on the 28 th Iyyar, Jesus DEPARTED in the clouds
At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit DEPARTED from the Temple	At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit ARRIVED / was poured out upon the disciples
4 years later, the Temple was destroyed	40 years later, the Temple was destroyed

The duration of time between the illumination of the temple and the arrival of the heavenly host is 43 days which is also highly significant - 3 days in the belly of the earth - then 40 days until judgement - mirroring the sign of Jonah – and mirroring the precise timing of the events of the Passion.

The first set of events - the supernatural light and supernatural darkness- relate to the Passion - to the arrival and departure of Jesus from Jerusalem. The second set of events - the departure on the clouds and arrival on the clouds - relate to the judgement . In both cases the cloud events take place 43 days after the Passion events. 3 days in the belly of the whale then 40 days preaching repentance .

Finally we have the arrival and departure of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost - in one case the pouring out of the Spirit upon the disciples and in another case the departure of the spirit from the Temple, 4 years before the final destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

Departure of the Spirit

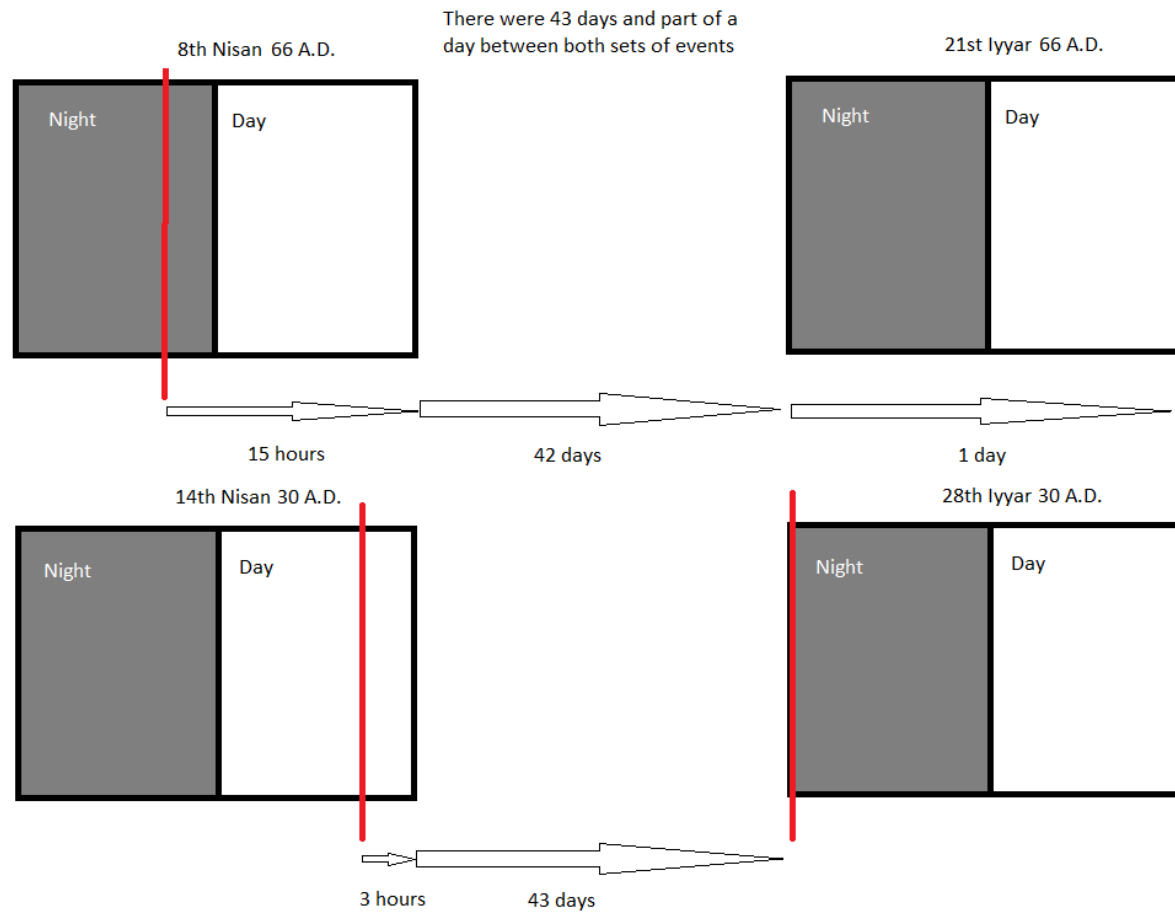
Christians may find it unfamiliar that the Holy Spirit departed. The departure of the spirit here is elaborated more in Ezekiel where , in 590 B.C. , the Spirit also departed from the Temple, again 4 years before it's destruction in 586 B.C. Then too we find the same series of events -opening of the Eastern Gate and the illumination of the Temple - accompanied by a vision of the chariot of God in the sky. And there too, the destruction of the Temple followed on the same date - 10th Av.

In Ezekiel, the destruction of the Temple occurs after 430 years of apostasy. Ezekiel was commanded to lie on his side for 430 days to represent each year of apostasy.

Sign of Jonah

When the Pharisees had asked Jesus for a sign to show he was sent from God, he replied that the only sign given would be the Sign of Jonah - just as Jonah was 3 days in the belly of a whale, so would the Son of Man be three days in the earth - and just as Jonah then preached to the Ninevites for 40 days to avert judgement, so would there be a period of 40 until judgement fell.

The ministry of Christ lasted 3 years, and the final judgement upon Israel was 40 years after the Passion. The whole thing is one integrated reflective pattern.



8th Nisan
Jesus arrived in Jerusalem

On 8th Nisan darkness was turned to supernatural light
Occurred at the 9th hour of the night.

On 21st Iyyar Jesus returned on the clouds
Occurred just before sunset

Pentecost 66 A.D.
Holy Spirit departs

14th Nisan
Jesus departed Jerusalem

On 14th Nisan light was turned to supernatural darkness
Occurred until the 9th hour of the day

On 28th Iyyar Jesus departed on the clouds
Occurred just after sunset

Pentecost 30 A.D.
Holy Spirit poured out

The Passover Week

The Passover Week begins on the 8th Nisan, and lasts until the 15th Nisan.

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.

A 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 its 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 fulfillment of all that has been written.”

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

“before sunset, 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. It

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."

"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"

SEIGE OF JERUSALEM

"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.

Out side 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 its 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.

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, where-as 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.

FULFILLMENT

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.

Jesus returned in judgement for Israel. Will he also return for the Gentiles (us)?

SPECIFIC PROPHECIES

"What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

WITHIN 40 YEARS	"I tell you the truth, this generation ^[6] will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 35Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"	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.
AT THE PASSOVER	"Let not them that are in the countries enter into Jerusalem." Luke xxi. 21	It will be at the time of the Passover, when all the surrounding countries enter into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover
HEAVENLY ARMY	"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	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.
EXODUS OF CHRISTIANS	. 31And 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.	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.
JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY ARMIES	"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 fulfillment of all that has been written."	In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. These armies turned it into a desolation.
JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY A SIEGE WALL	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 "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side." Luke xix. 43.	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.
EVERY STONE OF JERUSALEM WAS REMOVED OUT OF IT'S PLACE.	. 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."	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.

SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

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 30A.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 30A.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 30A.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.