

# Are we the last generation?

by Armin A. Wolff

*In any Bible study, do not just believe Armin Wolff or whoever, but be like the Bereans in Acts 17 -- read the scriptures carefully, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your understanding of God's word and come to your conclusion on this or any subject. Points raised as questions will hopefully create an incentive for you for further study on your own.*

Many people throughout history have expected the Lord Jesus to return to Earth in their lifetime. From certain passages in the New Testament it is quite evident that the early church, including some of the apostles believed this. Careful study of the end time prophecies in the Bible reveal a convergence of factors, that have not come together until the present generation.

God never does anything by surprise. He always tells what He is going to do through prophets. Since about 30% of God's word is future from the time it was written, the study of biblical prophecy should be a significant part of anyone's studies of the Bible. Writing history in advance, is a major way God authenticates his word, this collection of 66 books we call the Bible.

*Amos 3:7 For the Lord Jehovah will do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.*

When the Lord interacted with Abraham concerning what He was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah, He shared his plans with his servant and friend, Abraham. Many centuries earlier God also told Noah about the impending judgment of the flood.

*Genesis 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do,*

When he was here on earth in the person of Jesus Christ, that was no exception. His disciples specifically asked him about when he was coming again, as he promised. He gives the most extensive answer in Matthew 24, but also addresses the subject in Luke 21.

## • *Last Generation to see it all.*

Jesus indicates the last generation living before his coming would see all of his prophecies fulfilled.

*Luke 21:32 Truly I say to you, This generation shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled.*

When is "this generation" alive on Earth? We read in Psalms that when God builds up Israel will be the time when he shows up.

*Psalms 102:16-18 When Jehovah shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory. He will turn to the prayer of the forsaken and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for **the** generation to come; and **the** people who shall be created shall praise Jehovah.*

The phrase in verse 18, "the generation to come" is literally "the generation last". Notice that the definite article is used to refer to a specific generation and also for a certain people.

## • *What is a Generation?*

When considering this question we might first of all do well to remember that Jesus was not speaking Greek to His disciples but Hebrew. According to what are known as the fragments of Papias, the book of Matthew was first written in Hebrew and then later translated to Greek. Papias was one of the early Church Fathers who lived from 70 to 155 AD.

## • *Hebrew-Greek translation of the word "generation"*

Given that Jesus was speaking Hebrew, the word that we ought to be truly considering is the Hebrew word dor (דור), which underlies the Greek word genea (γενεα). The Greek Septuagint translates dor as genea. Dor is defined by Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon as "an age, generation of men, as if the period and circuit of the years of life." The 79 times that word dor (דור) is used in the Hebrew Bible, the word should be defined as the period of a person's life..

### • *Total lifespan*

While it is true that a new generation begins with the birth of one's offspring, that still does not negate the fact that the length of a particular generation is the total lifespan. The Hebrew or Greek word is not that different from their English equivalent.

*Exodus 1:6 And Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation.*

The verse clearly is not about people in Abraham's day or people in Moses' day. It was the people group of a particular time that died – that is a generation.

### • *One lifetime*

A human lifetime, according to scripture, is allotted 70 years and if a person is especially blessed, 80 years or maybe sometimes more. My mother made it to age 97. Thus anyone born around 1948 could certainly be part of the last generation at the end of which Jesus will come back. The current world average lifespan is 67.5 years. In spite of all the advances in modern medicine, the average human lifespan still is about that amount of time which God had written down in his word thousands of years ago.

*Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by strength they are fourscore years, yet their pride is labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

*Isaiah 23:15, At that time Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king's life.*

### • *The Fig Tree as a Sign of His Coming*

Jesus gave an important sign to look for concerning his coming: the fig tree. The sign of his coming and the end of the age is the fig tree:

*Matt 24:32-33 Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is still tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near. So you, likewise, when you see all these things, shall know that it is near, at the doors.*

Who or what does the fig tree symbolize? The answer to this question is unmistakably Israel. God clearly compares Israel with a fig tree.

*Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness. I saw your fathers as the first-fruit in*

*the fig tree at her first time. But they went to Baal-peor and set themselves apart to a shameful thing; and they became abominable like that which they loved.*

*Joel 1:6-7 For a nation has come up on My land, strong and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the jaw teeth of a lioness. He has laid My vine waste and splintered My fig tree. He has stripped it and cast it away; its branches grow white.*

God shows Jeremiah a vision of baskets of good figs and bad figs. Note that both the good and the bad are representative of Israel (Judah). The "good" are taken out of the land, that is, out of danger, and the "bad" are left to be judged. (*Jeremiah 24:2-8*)

Jesus continues the correlation of Israel with a fig tree during the final stage of His ministry. Jesus had been ministering in Israel for about three years when He gave this parable. Just like the illustration of God seeking good fruit from His vineyard and finding none (*Isaiah 5:1-7*), so too Jesus, had come in person expecting to find some good fruit and found little or none.

*Luke 13:6-9 He also spoke this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard. And he came and sought fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down, why does it encumber the ground? And answering, he said to him, Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and throw manure. And if it bears fruit, well; and if not, then after that you shall cut it down.*

That Jesus had Israel in mind is confirmed at the end of the chapter when Jesus laments over Jerusalem because of their unwillingness to receive their Messiah and declares that their house is left desolate.

*Luke 13:34-35 Jerusalem! Jerusalem! the one killing the prophets, and stoning those having been sent to her; how often I desired to gather your children in the way a hen gathers her brood under the wings, and you did not desire it. Behold, your house is left to you desolate. And truly I say to you, You will not see Me until it*

come when you say, *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*

• *Jesus cursed the fig tree*

*Matthew 21:19 And seeing a fig tree in the way, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only. And He said to it, let no fruit grow on you forever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.*

Thus, just like His parable of the fig tree, He had come looking for fruit from the Jewish leadership for over three years, but finding none. They were like the barren fig tree with no fruit and so He then pronounced judgment on the worthless tree causing it to die immediately which symbolized the nation.

• *Israel destroyed*

Israel was mostly destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD and then again in 135 AD. After the second Jewish revolt they were warned not to return to Jerusalem upon the pain of death. They were then dispersed to the four corners of the earth – without a home-land for nearly 1900 years. Furthermore, the curse appears to apply to the land itself as well.

• *Dry and barren land*

Rabbi Menachem Kohen of Brooklyn discovered that the land of Israel “suffered an unprecedented, severe and inexplicable drought that lasted from the first century until the 20th – a period of 1,800 years. Journalist Joseph Farah, prompted by the research of Rabbi Kohen, later discovered that only after the Jews returned did the rain begin to come.

For 1,800 years, it hardly ever rained in Israel. This was the barren land discovered by Mark Twain. So-called “Palestine” was a wasteland – nobody lived there. There was no indigenous Arab population to speak of. It only came after the Jews came back. Beginning in A.D. 70 and lasting until the early 1900s the land was dry as a bone.

• *Israel re-born*

Then after those many years and just as Isaiah had foretold (Isaiah 66:8), Israel was born in one day on May 14, in 1948. For all the intervening centuries since the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, the Jews were scattered all over the empire and subsequently all over the planet. Scholars, some of them with more degrees than a thermometer, have been reading all the prophecies

concerning the rebirth of Israel. Most of them in the past applied these numerous prophecies about the return of Israel to the Church. Even today, in spite of the physical national presence of Israel in their God given homeland, many unbelieving so called Christian scholars still try to cut Israel as a nation out of the plan of God.

For most of the time since the Babylonian captivity, Israel has never been a sovereign nation for very long. Israel was under the thumb of Rome before Jesus Christ came to earth first time. After almost 20 centuries, in 1948, Israel indeed became a sovereign nation once more.

• *Focus today is on Israel*

The modern building up of Zion, the nation of Israel, their declaration of independence and statehood began on May 14, 1948. Until our modern times, many scholars throughout the centuries could not envision the prophecies concerning the return of the nation of Israel to their God given home-land be taken literally, but it really happened and is now history. *So then the last generation begins with the re-birth of the nation of Israel.*

• *Israel Sovereign over Jerusalem*

Long before Jesus ever walked on this earth, Jerusalem was being trampled upon by the Gentiles. Israel, although still in the land, was not sovereign over its affairs and the city of Jerusalem. Jesus said:

*Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the sword's edge. And shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the nations until the times of the nations is fulfilled.*

Jerusalem was under the political control of other nations until finally in June of 1967, that city once again came under the sovereign control of Israel. The city is and shall remain a thorn in the sides of the nations around the world, just as God foretold in his word.

*Zechariah 12:2-3 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the peoples all around, and it shall also be against Judah in the siege against Jerusalem. And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples. All who lift it shall be slashed, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.*

Jerusalem has never been the center of attention of the whole world until our time. What other city can be named, that has the attention of the UN and governments all around the world? Of what other city on earth can it be said that a zoning change and the building of a few apartments threatens world peace? Jews have been praying for the peace of Jerusalem for centuries and Christians are also admonished to. That prayer will only be fulfilled when Jesus comes and rules in Jerusalem, which will then be the physical capital city of the whole earth. The stage for that glorious coming is being set right in our time.

### First coming of Messiah

Through the prophet Daniel God tells us the exact date when Messiah the King would appear in Israel as King. (Daniel 9:25-26)

*25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going out of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem, to Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in times of affliction.*

*26 And after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the people of the ruler who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. And the end of it shall be with the flood, and ruins are determined, until the end shall be war.*

When someone says to you that World War II ended six decades plus about eight years ago, you would be able to figure out from that information how many days that comes to. In Hebrew there is a similar grouping of seven years, weeks of years. The numbers given in Daniel are split up into a group of  $62 \times 7 = 434$  years and a group of  $7 \times 7 = 49$  years, which adds up to 483 years.  $434 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days per year}$  according to the Babylonian calendar comes to 156,240 days.  $49 \text{ years} \times 360 = 17640$  days, which together comes to 173,880 days.

#### • Order to rebuild Jerusalem

There were 4 decrees issued concerning the return of the Jews to their homeland. Three of them are chronicled in the book of Ezra and concern the rebuilding of the temple. However, they were not given the authority to be independent and were not allowed to rebuild the fortifications and their

military at this time. This gave rise to physical and spiritual frustration and no real progress toward the goal of restoring the city and nation to its former status. The book of Nehemiah chronicles much of this frustrating time.

Notice a detail in v25; it mentions not the temple, but the city itself with its streets and the wall are to be rebuilt. Nehemiah succeeds in getting the permission that allows the re-building of the city, and especially the means of defense thereof.

According to Daniel, the count starts from the day the decree or command is given to rebuild Jerusalem and specifically its wall. When this command was given is recorded in the book of Nehemiah.

*Nehemiah 2:1 And it happened in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, wine was before him. And I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence before.*

#### • Mathematical prophecy

From archeology we know that the date the decree was given was on March 14 445 BC. (The Coming Prince by Robert Anderson)  $7 \times 69 \times 360 = 173880$  days comes to 476 years and 21 days in our calendar. So if we go forward this amount of time we come to the 10th of Nisan, which we now celebrate as Palm Sunday, the day Jesus declared himself as King, riding on a donkey into Jerusalem.

The prophet Zechariah predicted the precise circumstances of the event

*Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes to you. He is righteous and victorious, meek and riding on an ass, even on a colt, the son of an ass.*

and Daniel had given us the exact day of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

#### • Jerusalem and Temple destroyed

Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. When Jesus' disciples proudly called attention to the beauty of the Temple, Jesus told them:

*Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, There*

*shall not be left here one stone on another that shall not be thrown down.*

This was literally and graphically fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Romans came and totally wiped that city from the face of the earth. The Roman soldiers, being extremely angry, against orders set fire to the Temple. The interior of the Temple was clad in wood overlaid by gold. The heat of the fire melted the gold, which ran between the cracks of the stones, because the Temple stones were fitted without mortar. To get the gold out, the temple was torn apart so that literally not one stone remained on top of another. The Jews in Jerusalem were scattered into the far-flung Roman Empire. Later, in 135 A.D. because of another Jewish revolt, the remaining Jews in Israel were driven out of their land, sternly warned not to ever return there again on pain of death. To expunge the Jewish memory of the land, the Romans renamed it "Palestine".

### **Double fulfilled prophecy**

Prophecy can have a two-fold fulfillment. The angel Gabriel told Daniel of two things that the Messiah will accomplish. First he will deal with sin and second He will bring in everlasting righteousness.

*Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are decreed as to your people and as to your holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*

The first part was accomplished at the cross, but the second part is still future to us. Jesus came the first time to Bethlehem in order to save humanity, but he will come the second time to Jerusalem as King of kings to rule over Israel and from there over the whole earth. Prophecy in the Bible isn't always chronological or contiguous in time. Here in Daniel 9, in a single verse, we have a prophecy that apparently spans centuries.

#### **• Peter applies end-time prophecy to his time**

Likewise, Peter applies the prophecy in Joel in his sermon to the day of Pentecost, even though the book of Joel is primarily about the restoration of

Israel at the glorious appearing of Messiah. So this is a dual prophecy.

*Acts 2:16-21 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And in those days I will pour out My Spirit upon My slaves and My slave women, and they shall prophesy. And I will give wonders in the heaven above, and miracles on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and glorious Day of the Lord. And it shall be that everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

As a witness to the crucifixion Peter had experienced this strange darkness, which must have been something other than a solar eclipse, because those only last for a few minutes.

*Luke 23:44-45 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 torn in the middle.*

Evidently, the prophecy of Amos was fulfilled the day Jesus was crucified. The sun disappeared at noon on that day and an eclipse of the moon caused the moon to rise blood red. That is why Peter applied the prophecy to his time.

*Amos 8:9 And it shall be in that day, says the Lord Jehovah, I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the light of day.*

The book of Amos concludes with an ironclad promise of God, that after Israel returns in the end, Israel is here to stay. Jesus, in his prophecies concerning his second coming, also referred to sun and moon failing to shine and other celestial phenomena. So this kind of thing will happen again.

*Matthew 24:29 And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*

• *Two predictions separated by much time*

One of the most striking of these near-far prophecies is in Isaiah. Jesus, by the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet tell us of history in advance, separated by a large period of time.

*Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,*

*Isaiah 61:2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,*

• *Jesus quotes this, but not all of it*

Jesus tells his hearers that "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." but notice he doesn't quote all of it, but leaves out the part about the day of vengeance because that part is yet to come at or just before His second coming.

*Luke 4:16-20 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him,*

Thus it is evident from Scripture, that prophecies can have dual fulfillments.

### **The re-building of Jerusalem**

After the destruction of Jerusalem, various attempts to rebuild the city were made throughout the ages. Even though in 690 A.D., the Dome of the Rock was built there, the city itself, together with its wall, remained a heap of ruins. Attempts at re-building were all somehow, amazingly thwarted until the days of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire existed from the years 1300 A.D. to 1918 A.D. A person by the name of Sultan Suleiman the

Magnificent reigned between 1520 A.D. and 1566 A.D, which was the longest rule of any Ottoman Empire ruler. Although a Muslim himself, unlike his modern radical Muslim counterparts, he loved the Jewish people and Jerusalem. This is highly unusual, because the Koran values a Jewish man only one third of a faithful Muslim. Muslims later cemented shut the eastern gate (Golden Gate) in the wall of Jerusalem to try to thwart the entrance of the Jewish Messiah.

• *Decree given to once again rebuild Jerusalem*

Suleiman issued a decree in 1536 A.D.\*<sup>1</sup> to rebuild the wall and city of Jerusalem. However, nobody has been able to determine the exact date of this decree. It appears to have been lost in history. We know from inscription thereon, that the fountains were being built by and during 1536 & 1537 AD. These fountains supplied the necessary water to the workers rebuilding the wall and the city. We know the wall was definitely under construction in late 1538 as the first of the gates, the Damascus Gate was being built then. Construction of the whole project was completed in 1541/1542 A.D. The old city of Jerusalem, complete with its wall still exists today.

In Daniel 9, the 69 "Weeks" (or periods of 7 years) from the command to build the Wall unto the coming of Messiah is broken down into 62 + 7 "Weeks." Why this particular division of the total time? Let's do a little math using the Babylonian year of 360 days.  $62 \times 7 \times 360 = 156240$  days.  $7 \times 7 \times 360 = 17640$  days. Total = 173880 days. If we add 156240 days to the year 1539, the year when the Damascus gate was completed, we come to the year 1967 when Israel took control of Jerusalem. If we add the final 17640 days to 6JUN1967, (day Jerusalem was taken in the 6 day war) we arrive at the 22SEP2015.

The prophecy's application to the end of construction date 1542 A.D. would put it late in the year 2018 to early 2019. Is there a correspondence between the seven-year duration of the construction and the seven years of the 70th week of Daniel? Of course it cannot be asserted dogmatically that these dates foreshadow the coming of the Lord Jesus, but something of prophetic importance is likely to take place in this time-frame.

## Signs in the Heavens

In connection with the prophecies of His return, the Lord said that the Sun, Moon and stars are to be for signs. Consider Solar and Lunar eclipses. These come and go with clockwork regularity. The word “coincidence” is not in God's vocabulary.

### • *Four full lunar eclipses in a row*

Something that is already rare astronomically is for 4 full Lunar eclipses to occur in succession. Usually, many partial eclipses occur between the times of total Lunar eclipses. For 4 totals to occur in a row is remarkable astronomically. However, even more remarkable is for such a tetrad of eclipses to occur on Jewish feast days.

### • *Once the last century, once this century*

This event only occurs once in this present century, namely in 2014-2015. Such a tetrad only occurred once in the last century. Those occasions were in 1967 and 1968 when 4 total Lunar eclipses occurred in succession on Passover April 24th 1967, and Tabernacles October 18th 1967; then Passover April 13th 1968, and Tabernacles October 6th 1968. Is it a “coincidence” that the only tetrad of Lunar eclipses in the 20th century surrounded the return of the Old City of Jerusalem to Jewish control on 7th June 1967? There were no tetrads in the 1800's or the 1700's or the 1600's.

### • *Solar eclipses in on the action*

Total Solar eclipses are similarly rare. It is even rarer for there to be two total Solar eclipses in one year. In 1967, there were two, namely on 9th May and 2nd November. Does anyone think this convergence is by “chance”? Events in the heavens and especially in Jewish history definitely appear to be linked.

### • *Re-building Jerusalem's wall*

It is of exceptional rarity for total Solar eclipses to occur every year or so. That has only occurred consistently in the 1500's. The occasions were January 3rd and December 24th 1535; December 13th 1536; April 28th 1538; April 18th 1539; April 7th 1540; August 11th, 1542. These Solar events were complimented by 4 total Lunar eclipses in a row on 24th May and 17th November 1537, plus 12th March and 5th September 1541. There were no partial lunar eclipses, such as there usually are

in between these four total eclipses. That was the period of time during which the old city wall of Jerusalem was being rebuilt.

### • *Near future events*

The only tetrad of total Lunar eclipses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are on Passover April 15th 2014, followed by Tabernacles October 8th 2014; then Passover April 4th 2015 with Tabernacles 28th September 2015. It is not only the moon, but also the sun that gets into the act here. The first total Solar eclipse being 1st Nisan March 20th 2015, and Rosh Hashanah September 14th 2015. So there is a culmination of significant astronomical events in September 2015 with a total Solar eclipse at Rosh Hashanah just a few days before the key day of Atonement September 23rd, and followed a few days after by a total Lunar eclipse at the Feast of Tabernacles. Something of prophetic importance is likely to happen to Israel and perhaps the whole world during this timeframe.

### • *A Jewish prophet in our time?*

In January 2006 a Jewish Rabbi in Israel by the name of Yitzchak Kaduri passed away at the age of 108 years. He was greatly revered in Israel and over 200,000 people showed up in Jerusalem at his funeral. He had left behind a sealed envelope with instructions that it was not to be opened until one year after his passing. In the same year that Kaduri died, Ariel Sharon, then Prime Minister of Israel was suddenly cut down and rendered comatose from a stroke. A year later, in 2007 when Kaduri's note was opened, there in Hebrew Kaduri had written that the Lord Jesus had appeared to him and revealed himself. Kaduri wrote in Hebrew that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah and that he will come back after Sharon dies. Sharon had lain in a coma for about eight years and did die on January 11, 2014. How does this fit together with the eclipses on Jewish feast days? I suppose we will have to wait and find out!

### • *Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

The year 2018 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the existence of the modern state of Israel. Is that a coincidence? Does anything in the kingdom of God happen by chance? As He freed them after the 70 years of captivity in Babylon, will God free Israel from the present shackles of secularism and national unbelief and bring them to freedom in the

glorious kingdom of the Messiah? This timing cannot be dogmatically asserted, but we know from Scripture that when Jesus comes back to the earth again, all of Israel will be saved.

*Rom 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

Israel will come to a national repentance for having rejected and slain their Messiah. They will be exceedingly sorrowful upon seeing Jesus and realizing the magnitude of their crime against Him.

*Zechariah 13:6 And one shall say to him, What are these wounds in your hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

*Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour on the house of David, and on the people of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers. And they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be bitter over Him, as the bitterness over the first-born.*

When he hung upon the cross he asked the Father to forgive them. God will certainly forgive and heal them when they realize what they have done and they repented as a nation for that deed with great sorrow in their heart.

#### • *Israel being forsaken*

Turkey had a relatively good relationship with Israel until recently, but they are turning against them along with the rest of the Muslim world. The last friend that Israel has in the world is the USA, but now the current government of president Obama is also increasingly forsaking that little nation and siding with their enemies. By the time Jesus comes back, Israel will not have a single friend in the world.

#### • *Every Jew back in Israel*

In spite of the Jews having come back steadily to Israel since 1948, the fact is, that today still a majority of Jews are scattered in other countries. There are about as many Jews living in the United States, as in Israel. There is still a sizable number of Jews in Europe. Yet God tells us in his Word, that there will not be a single Jew left anywhere on

earth except in Israel. Even the USA will join the countries that have expelled Jews, including those who are now American citizens.

*Ezekiel 39:27-28 when I have brought them again from the peoples, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God who exiled them among the nations. But I have gathered them to their own land, and **have not left any of them there.***

#### • *A remnant cries out to God*

After they have **all** returned, most of them will die there in Israel, but a believing remnant will remain. This remnant of Israel will cry out in desperation at the end of the Tribulation for the return of the Messiah, which he will answer at that time. *Psalm 102:17*

Jesus came the first time to save, but he comes the second time to reign over the whole world from Israel. We are given a sure date, which was perfectly fulfilled for the first time he came to Israel. We are not given the day or hour of his return for His Church, but are we given the exact date or at least a very narrow range of dates when Jesus comes back to Israel?

#### • *Believers in Jesus escape*

About 37 years before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., Jesus warned his disciples and the others who believe, to flee out of Jerusalem and Judea into the mountains. When the Roman armies under Titus Vespasian laid siege to Jerusalem, no one could enter or leave that city. Seemingly, it was too late for the Christians or anybody else to escape. History records that a message came from Rome for Titus to hurry back home with his army, to avert a possible coup. Therefore, the Roman Army broke off the siege and headed toward the Mediterranean seashore where the ships that had brought them were anchored. When they arrived, another message came from Rome, that everything was under control and no help was needed.

*Luke 21:20-21 And when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that its destruction has come. And let those in Judea flee to the mountains. And those in its midst, let*



*them go out. And those in the open spaces, let them not go into her.*

After the Romans lifted their siege, the believing Jews in Jerusalem all escaped and fled to the mountains east of Jerusalem, along with other believers in the countryside outside of Jerusalem. The Romans soon returned and resumed their siege of the city and ensured the death or enslavement of all unbelieving inhabitants thereof. There was not a single Christian believer in Jerusalem after the Romans marched in. Jesus knows how to protect his own from judgment.

#### • *1260 Days*

In the last days also, yet future to us, believing Jews are told by Jesus to flee into the mountains when they see the abomination of desolation Daniel prophesies about. (Matt 24) This is the day when the Antichrist demands to be worshiped in the rebuilt Jewish Temple. The believing Jewish remnant will be taken care of in the mountain wilderness for 1260 days, at the end of which Jesus will return to Jerusalem to finish off the antichrist and his troops at the Battle of Armageddon. (Revelation 12) Therefore exactly 1260 days will elapse from the day of the event the Bible calls the abomination of desolation, until Jesus Christ returns to Jerusalem.

#### • *Mountains east of Jerusalem*

The only mountains that could conceivably shelter fleeing refugees from Jerusalem are to the east in the country now known as Jordan, but known as Edom and Moab in biblical times.

#### • *Fleeing Jewish Believers*

There Jewish believers will find shelter and desperately cry for the Lord Jesus to save them from sure destruction. The Lord will hear this cry after the powerful military machine of Israel is utterly defeated by the armies of earth. Yeshua, and He alone, will fight for and with His people, just as we read in the days of old. He tells us about this:

*Isaiah 63:1-3 Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone;*

*from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing.*

#### • *Why Jordan as a refuge?*

Abdullah II bin al-Hussein OIH (Arabic: عبد الملك الحسين بن التانين, al-Malik 'Abdullāh at-tānī bin al-Ḥusayn; born 30 January 1962) is the reigning King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. His Majesty King Abdullah II is the 43rd generation direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad". (Jordan embassy.ro. Retrieved 29 September 2010.)

#### • *Anti-Christ a Muslim?*

Looking at the rise of Islam today, it is quite possible that the Anti-Christ will be a Muslim or closely allied with Islam. Islam teaches that at the end of time and in a season of great chaos someone they call the Mahdi will come to bring peace in the name of Allah. As a Moslem he is almost certain not to extend his dictatorial reach over a direct descendent of the prophet Mohammed. Thus the relatively small number of Jewish believers in Messiah will be protected from being killed by the Anti-Christ.

#### • *Religious hypocrites*

The Jewish religious leaders were always looking for a sign. Jesus called them hypocrites, because they were able to look at the sky to predict the weather, but were unwilling to apply the prophecies in Daniel, Psalms, Zechariah and other prophets of God to the time they were living in.

*Matthew 16:1-3 The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him. And they asked Him that He would show them a sign from Heaven. He answered and said to them, When it is evening, you say, Fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, Foul weather today; for the sky is red and gloomy. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot see the signs of the times!*

Jesus clearly expected the religious leaders of his day to understand Daniel's prophecy, among many others, and watch it being fulfilled before their eyes, to the day.

*Luke 19:41-42 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on **this day** what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes.*

On that very day, Palm Sunday, he wept over Jerusalem, because its leaders had hardened their heart toward their Messiah and therefore failed to recognize what the prophets Daniel and Zechariah had written concerning this occasion. Just as God had prophetically determined the specific day when Jesus rode as king into Jerusalem, does he do so again when Jesus comes to earth as King of kings for the second time? It appears that He does.

### **The date and day he comes for His Church, the bride**

Like the religious leaders of His day, is the main body of the religious Christian establishment also unwilling to discern the times we are living in? Before he comes to Israel the second time, He will come to rescue His Church, before the most terrible time ever, comes upon this planet.

#### **• Jesus comes in clouds**

When he does, he will not touch the ground, but be in the clouds of the air, from where he will call all believers who have the Holy Spirit to himself. He tells his disciples that it is possible **escape** the terrible time he describes.

*Luke 21:36 Watch therefore, praying in every season that you may be counted worthy to **escape** all these things which shall occur, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

Jesus tells his followers from what they may escape and where they will escape to. The “what” is from all the terrible things he was telling them about and “to” is to stand before the Son of Man. Therefore, if you as a Christian get accused of being an escapist by believing this, joyfully agree.

#### **•No one knows the day or hour**

There can be no date setting for the time when Jesus comes for his Church, as so many have attempted. In regard to the timing of this, Jesus tells us specifically that we know neither the day nor the hour, but only the season.

*Mat 25:13 Therefore watch, for you do not know either the day or the hour in which the Son of Man comes.*

#### **• Business as usual**

*Luke 17:26-30 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it also shall be in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all. So also as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the day Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from the heaven and destroyed them all. Even so it shall be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*

The majority of earths inhabitants will be going about their business as usual, when suddenly the judgment of God strikes. There was no escape for those who were outside the ark nor for those who were in Sodom when that place was incinerated. After all believers in Jesus Christ have left the Earth for the safety of heaven, God will judge the earth and its inhabitants. Some of the details of these judgments are chronicled in the book of Revelation chapters 6-19.

*Luke 17:34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed, the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two shall be grinding together, one will be taken, and the other left. Two shall be in the field, one will be taken, and the other left.*

This event will take place all over the earth in an instant. In some places it will be night, in some places it will be morning and in other places it will be the middle of the workday. All who belong to the true Church of Jesus Christ, all believers filled with the Holy Spirit, will be instantly transformed from dwelling in a mortal body to living in an immortal body just like the body that clothed Jesus after his resurrection. The trumpet call of God will sound, but only the transformed ones will be able to obey God's call to meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds.

I believe the process of transformation of believers will follow the pattern set by the transformation of Jesus' battered and brutalized body. Just as Jesus

was still physically here on earth for a short time before he ascended into heaven, so it is likely that transformed, glorified believers will also be here at least long enough to safely stop their car they may be driving at the time. Just as the glorified Jesus still ministered to those he loved, so his transformed followers may also be given a last-minute opportunity to warn those loved ones who failed to believe unto salvation.

#### • *Jewish weddings*

The ancient Jewish wedding practices also can be instructive here. The bridegroom would go off to his father's house to build an addition where the young couple would consummate their marriage and subsequently live. The bride did not know the exact day when this and other preparations for the wedding were completed. She did however have a general idea of the season when the bridegroom might come for her.

#### • *The full crew of a ship*

A good biblical reason why the day when the Lord comes for His church is unknown, is because it is not predicated on a specific date, but a specific number.

*Rom 11:25 For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, lest you should be wise within yourselves; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations has come in.*

In common everyday Greek usage in those days, the word translated “fullness” or in some translations “full number” was also used in a nautical sense for the full complement of the crew of a ship, which if it was not satisfied, a ship could not legally sail. If the captain of a ship wanted to sail, but was short of crew, he would often go to or send someone to the pubs and “Shanghai” one or more drunks who would wake up the next morning aboard the ship 20 miles or more out at sea. The Greek word translated as “come in” is used for the idea of a ship arriving in this destination. We use that expression also. “When my ship comes in, I’ll have it made.” So, when the crew of the good ship Grace, the church of Jesus Christ, is complete, then the church will depart this earthly shore for its heavenly destination. Only God knows what that number is and when it will be filled.

#### • *Pregnant women*

Jesus also likened the time of His second coming for His children to a pregnant woman. We can predict the approximate time when the baby is due, but not exactly the day and hour. The exact moment of the birth is still a surprise even to today's modern medicine.

We know from Jesus’ discourse in Matthew 24, that before he comes to Earth again, there will be a time of trouble called the great tribulation, such as there has never been nor ever will be again. According to prophecies in the book of Revelation and Daniel, this time will be two periods of 3 ½ years for a total of seven years. It is interesting that Jesus ministered on earth for 3 ½ years and the final time of wrath, the last half of the tribulation is also 3 ½ years. Is it that God, being always just, is giving Satan the opportunity to “minister” also for 3 ½ years?

#### • *Rapture in Old Testament*

Here we also read of a resurrection, of God's people being hidden until the judgment is passed. Note that it also mentions rooms for the people of God (John 14) as well as a shut door.

*Isaiah 26:19-21 Your dead ones shall live, together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of lights, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter into your rooms and shut your doors around you; hide for a little moment, until the fury has passed by. For behold, Jehovah comes out of His place to punish the people of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall reveal her blood, and shall no more cover her dead.*

Jesus is the head and his Church is the body, which will rise. Also note the parallels between 1Thess 4:13-18 and these verses in Isaiah.

#### **Conclusion**

Throughout history, ever since Jesus’ time, people have been predicting his return date, often setting exact dates. However, the number of prophetic factors coming together all at once have never been as numerous and specific as they are today.

- The generation that was alive at the time modern Israel came into existence is about to come to the end of their normal human life span.
- The allotted time according to Daniel's prophecy from the decree for second rebuilding of the wall and streets of Jerusalem has almost expired.
- The 70 years of Israel's captivity to secularism and unbelief will come to a sudden end a short time before the return of Jesus when God by miraculous means rescues a remnant from that little nation from certain destruction. The fulfillment of Psalm 83, Isaiah 17 and Ezekiel 38 & 39 are very near. Given the events in Syria and the threat of its dictator to attack Israel if foreigners attempt to depose him as they did to Kaddafi of Liberia. Since the Russians have firmly decided to help Assad stay in power, and the US is in the process of deciding to help the rebels trying to depose Assad, a confrontation between the US and Russia is possible.
- Israel is being increasingly isolated without even a single friendly government any the longer. After the events predicted in Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, the fury of the Islamic nations will fulfill Ezekiel 38 & 39. All the lands of the ancient nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39 are occupied by Islamists today. The anger of all nations against the Jews will rise to a fever pitch, causing the expulsion of all Jews from all nations. They will be hunted down to be deported to Israel. (*Jeremiah 16:16*) There will not be a single Jew left anywhere except in Israel. (*Ezekiel 39:27-28*) After the war as outlined in Ezekiel, all nations, including Israel itself will realize that Almighty God is fighting on behalf of Israel. This will cause Israel to turn to God and worship him as they did in former times. In order to do this they will need a Temple which will then be built.
- The ultimate organized opposition to God and his people Israel, will be from the world government headed by the antichrist, the man of sin. Noises of a single government with a religious system for the whole world are getting louder and louder every day. The sick economies of the world could soon be replaced by a single world government issuing digital, electronic cashless fiat money. The enormous computing and digital data storage capacity necessary to track every single financial

transaction on earth is mostly in place, having been built by the NSA and other intelligence agencies in other countries such as Britain.

- In late 2011, the world population reached 7 billion. In Bible numbers, the number 7 signifies completion or fullness. This is especially evident in the book of Revelation, but is also sprinkled throughout the rest of the Bible. Does this mean that the world population is now full and the end of human history as we have known it has come?
- Weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear and chemical as well as biological, make it possible for the first time in history to fulfill Zechariah 14:12 and 14:15. Other than sickness from a gross overdose of nuclear radiation, there is and never was a disease which affects both humans and animals alike with the symptoms listed in the ancient prophecy.
- Unique, specific signs in the heavens, such as special combinations of lunar and solar eclipses on Jewish feast days, have occurred and are about to occur again in our generation.

The probability of all these events converging upon a single time of history by chance is close to zero. His blood-washed, redeemed people of the believing Church are eligible to escape entirely from this time (*Rev3:10*) of unprecedented trouble. Therefore Jesus **could** come for his Church anytime between today and the day before a seven year peace treaty is signed with Israel. After all these years since the Oslo agreements, the peace process with the Palestinians may be starting to get off dead center, as Israel makes concessions.

- Christians must be ready all the time. In the midst of all this figuring and prophecy, the main thing is to heed what the apostle John tells us in 1 John 3:3. I suppose we shall soon see! He told His disciples to be always ready for this blessed event. Yes Jesus, come quickly! Are you ready?

\*1 [http://www.setterfield.org/Jerusalem\\_Wall.html](http://www.setterfield.org/Jerusalem_Wall.html)