



# The Mystery of Zion—Israel's Final Days: A Timeline

An excerpt from the fourth chapter of the *Mystery of Zion – Israel and the Last Days*

by Lanny K. Cook, PhD Copyright © 2017

Israel's role in God's plan for the redemption of mankind has been in play from the moment the Creator of the universe made His initial covenant with Abraham—making an everlasting promise that Abraham would be the father of a great nation and that through him the world would be blessed (see Genesis 12:1–3). God has been intimately and divinely involved within the affairs of His chosen people through His covenant with Abraham, with Moses, with King David, and within the proclamations of His prophets. He has been involved in their affairs regardless of the invasions of conquering nations throughout Israel's history, in anticipation of the promise of the New Covenant, in spite of the 400 years of silence before the birth of Jesus, regardless of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, and even throughout the 2,000 year diaspora, or scattering, of the Jews. Even as the Church continues to share the gospel message of God's unconditional love provided through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,

God still has a plan, purpose, and promise for Israel and the Jewish people. He will not “rest” until His plan of redemption for humanity is complete!

According to the *Prophecy Study Bible*, “In Scripture, the expression ‘last days’ is an extremely broad one. For example, in Hebrews 1:1, 2, the author reveals ‘God . . . has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.’ Mankind, therefore has been living in the last days since the birth of Jesus the Messiah . . . we can say that the last days extend from the birth of Jesus until His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation.”<sup>i</sup> In Matthew, we are reminded of the prophetic proclamations regarding the messenger who would come to introduce the beginning of these days:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight’” (Matthew 3:1–3 NKJV).

The following pages provide a representation of scriptural citation and current evidence that confirm God’s continued plan and purpose for Israel and the Jewish people during the time known as the “last days” or the “end of the age.” The apostle Paul’s words in the book of Romans serves as a profound precursor to this section:

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. . . . Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! (Romans 11:1–2, 11–12 NIV).

Within the confines of this short synopsis, I will only be sharing a few key points regarding the final days as they relate to God’s plan for Israel. However, within the complete reading of *The Mystery of Zion* you can explore all of the associated topics as listed above regarding the timeline leading up to final stage of God’s plan for humanity. Here is a list of all the topics discussed in the fourth chapter of the book.

“Trodden Down by the Gentiles” \*  
A Nation Born in a Day! \*  
“Wars and Rumors of Wars” (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7)  
The Rapture of the Church \*

The Tribulation Begins—Security and Peace \*  
The Antichrist  
The Third Temple  
Israel Invaded by a Northern Coalition  
Tribulation Midweek—The Abomination of Desolation  
The Great Tribulation—Judgment, the Final Three-and-a-Half Years  
Israel’s Eyes Opened  
Christ’s Return—The Second Coming  
The Millennial Reign of Christ  
The Messiah Reigns on the Davidic Throne  
Tribulation Saints Enter the Millennial Reign  
Resurrected Saints Reign with Christ  
Israel Restored  
The Millennial Temple Built

For the sake of brevity within this review, I will merely share information regarding a few of these points in order to provide a glimpse of the prophetic timeline and associated topics presented within this chapter. Those topics are listed above with an \* (asterisk).

## **“Trodden Down by the Gentiles”**

Since AD 70 until the mid-twentieth century, the land known as Palestine lay dormant and barren. This so-called “Promised Land” was anything but a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 33:3 NIV). With the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem, Rome had put an end to the nation and seemingly to its people. It appeared that the Roman general Titus had even put an end to a civilization and, even more disturbing, an end to God’s promise. Hal Lindsey writes, “Jesus’ predictions regarding the nation restored to the land are extremely significant when we recall that He predicted a world-wide dispersion and complete destruction of the nation which would begin with the generation which crucified Him (Luke 21:22, 23; Matthew 23:36).”<sup>ii</sup> Sadly, the words of the prophet Micah would resonate across the desolate landscape of a once vibrant land like a haunting voice of judgment for thousands of years:

Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORD’s support and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.” Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets (Micah 3:11–12 NIV).

Apparently, the end had come for the nation, culture, and covenants of God that had been appointed to Abraham, Moses, and King David. For 1,900 years, this once-vibrant land lay

desolate as it was trodden down not by God’s chosen people but by the Gentiles—the untouchable, unrighteous enemies of the descendants of Abraham. It appeared the God of Abraham had finally pronounced final judgment on the people He had set apart for Himself. Their rejection of the prophesied Messiah had brought the wrath of God upon their land and their descendants.

Through the centuries, the land was ruled by the Romans, the Byzantines, the Muslims, and even the Crusaders. Truly, it was a land trodden down by the Gentiles. Palestine was literally a no-man’s land. As Richard Booker writes, “When we study the history of the land, we see it only prospers when the Jews are living in it. After the Romans expelled the Jews from Israel in the first and second centuries of this era, the land progressively deteriorated. Since there was never a sovereign state in the land, nor was it the capital of any empire, Israel became a neglected wasteland.”<sup>iii</sup>

However, in God’s plans, by His Word, a wasteland can become fertile ground. From a barren desert, a garden can blossom and flourish. When it comes to God’s purpose, there is nothing that happens from a reactionary perspective or from mere coincidence. God was moving on the hearts of His chosen people. Grant R. Jeffrey notes, “During the 1880s, anti-Semitic persecution within Russia and Ukraine forced many Jews to flee to Palestine and North America. In 1896, Theodor Herzl wrote a pamphlet, *The Jewish State*, which aroused an intense longing to return to Zion among Jews living in exile.”<sup>iv</sup>

The Jews weren’t the only people who began to ponder the possibilities of migrating to the area known as Palestine. There were others. Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin state, “Many people in the West believe that the Palestinians had all lived in Palestine for centuries, until they were suddenly, and against their will, displaced during the 1948 Arab war to destroy Israel. In fact, many of these people had come to Palestine only a few years before Israel’s creation.”<sup>v</sup> The stage was being set and the plans were beginning to unfold for a miraculous return. In most cases, years before something significant happens, the Spirit of God begins to speak to the heart of His children—whispering, suggesting, urging, conjuring up hopes and dreams for something better . . . something divine. And so it was. In May 1948, something miraculous happened that had never happened before in the history of the world.

## **A Nation Born in a Day!**

Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children (Isaiah 66:8 NIV).

When the Spirit of God begins to move, things happen, but not always immediately. Often it is in a slow calculated fashion, but somehow, some way, all the pieces of the puzzle for Israel to become a nation began to fall into place. Some of those pieces involved seemingly unsurmountable obstacles, many of which could only be accomplished through agonizing pain and suffering. So it was with Israel. If the horrors and murderous atrocities of the Holocaust had never happened, it is unlikely the world have been willing, or even compassionate enough, to allow the creation of a renewed Jewish state. Perry Stone Jr. writes, “It was the holocaust that, I would argue, provoked the Jews of Europe and many others around the world to push for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. That this happened was nothing less than miraculous.”<sup>vi</sup>

The atrocities placed on the shoulders of the Hebrew people—along with millions of other “undesirables,” as they were labeled by the Nazis—were literally beyond human comprehension. In fact, it could be said that the children of Abraham’s Covenant had never experienced such horror since their origins. Even in Egyptian bondage, the conditions and treatment had to pale in comparison to the years of the Holocaust at the hands of Nazi, Germany. In Egypt, the Hebrew people faced hardship and bondage, but it wasn’t Pharaoh’s desire to annihilate a nation.

Perry Stone Jr. writes, “When they [Israelis in Egypt under Pharaoh] cried out to God, the Lord ‘remembered His covenant’ and began a plan for their release and return to the Promised Land (Exodus 2:24). A modern Pharaoh named Adolph Hitler instigated the violent persecution against the Jews of Europe. This cruel tyrant was the leader of the Third Reich, also known as the Nazi Party. Hitler demonically mesmerized the masses and initiated the final solution to rid the world of all Jews. During seven years of horror called the Holocaust, six million Jews perished in the death camps and torture chambers of the Nazis. The cries of Jews were heard in heaven, just as they were at the time of the Egyptian captivity. God brought both generations of Hebrews out of their bondage through a massive Exodus, and both generations witnessed the destruction of both Pharaohs and their armies. The Exodus from Egypt and the Exodus from Europe opened the door for a remnant of Jews to return to their promised homeland.”<sup>vii</sup>

Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, “Give them up!” and to the south, “Do not hold them back.” Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth (Isaiah 43:5–6 NIV).

After nearly 1,900 years of being scattered to the ends of the earth, without a land to call their own, the children of Israel once again were able to return to their “Promised Land.”

Hal Lindsey, author of the *Late Great Planet Earth*, wrote the following regarding this amazing prophetic event: “The one event which many Bible students in the past overlooked was this prophetic sign: Israel had to be a nation again in the land of its forefathers. Israel a nation—a dream for so many years, was made a reality on 14 May 1948 when David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence announcing the establishment of a Jewish Nation to be known as the State of Israel. In 1949, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion said that Israel’s policy ‘consists of bringing all the Jews to Israel . . . we are still at the beginning.’”<sup>viii</sup>

Yet even with the enormity of this miracle from above, God wasn’t done fulfilling the prophecies of old regarding His covenants with Abraham and His promises to His chosen people. “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord” (Zephaniah 3:9 NKJV). Once again, the reality is that any people who are assimilated into other cultures will eventually, without a doubt, lose their identity as a nation as well as the distinctive traits of their culture. People who live in foreign cultures—especially for centuries—are eventually assimilated into their new environment. Few of their rituals or customs can survive.

However, this wasn’t the case for the Israelites. After 1,900 years of being cast into the various cultures of the world, even their native language—known as the “pure language”—was brought back to life. From a historical perspective, this is totally unheard of—it could only occur as part of God’s divine and sovereign plan for His people. Grant R. Jeffrey notes, “Even in the time of Christ, Hebrew was a dying language. It was used only by the scribes and priests for official religious purposes in the Temple. Almost everyone else used the Greek language, which had become the ‘international’ language of its day. Many conversations would be in Aramaic, a language the Jewish exiles adopted during their seventy years of captivity in Babylon. The revival of the ancient language of Hebrew in modern Israel is another miraculous and unprecedented fulfillment of prophecy in our day.”<sup>ix</sup> There could be no other logical explanation to this miraculous phenomenon outside of God’s divine appointment and plan for gathering the Jewish people back into their land.

One last piece of the puzzle needs to be mentioned here. When Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in AD 70, the governing body of Israel (the Sanhedrin) were also destroyed. Perry Stone Jr. comments, “One of the most dramatic (developments) to occur in the last few years is the re-emergence of a long defunct governing body called the Sanhedrin. In the Second Temple period, the Sanhedrin was essentially the Jewish Supreme Court. It was the most important judicial body in Jewish culture and it trumped all others, even though there were a number of municipal versions which consisted to twenty-three members, who typically were older sages, with one of them being the presiding ‘nasi’ or ‘prince.’ Oftentimes the ‘nasi’ was the High Priest, which was the case at the time of Christ’s suffering.”<sup>x</sup>

Once again, God was at work, moving in His way and in His time to bring all the pieces of the puzzle together, moving toward the precise moment when He was ready for His plan to unfold. Within the pieces of the puzzle, we can see the Holy Spirit at work, directing individuals and nations to go to the right or to the left, guiding their paths toward the fulfillment of prophecy, and, just as important, whispering guidance toward the ultimate redemption that only Christ can provide. Grant R. Jeffrey notes, “The modern day Sanhedrin was formally convened in Jerusalem on January 20, 2005. The court’s leader, Rabbi Yeshai Ba’avad, declared that the rabbinic body would meet monthly to issue religious legal rulings, saying, ‘This is the need of the generation and of the hour.’ The reconstituted Sanhedrin discussed several key ideas related to building the Third Temple, including the construction of an altar that would be used for the sacrifice of a lamb during a future Passover. Hundreds of priests from the tribe of Levi were authorized to begin training in the precise rituals of the ancient Temple sacrifices.”<sup>xi</sup>

It is evident that the rebirth of Israel is truly a prophecy that has unfolded before our eyes, and we continue to witness biblical prophecies from antiquity coming to pass today. With the continued regathering (or “Aliyah”) of Jews from around the world back to Israel, further evidence of the end times has been broadcast across the technological airwaves around the world. These nearly forgotten predictions regarding the Jewish people have found new life and profound significance as prophecy continues to unfold. Another prolific prediction recorded throughout many passages of the Bible has to do with Israel both directly and indirectly. These prophecies not only involve Israel but also the entire world.

## **The Rapture of the Church**

These prophetic events that have been fulfilled during the past century lead God’s timetable to a point where the rapture of the Church could come at any moment. Of course, there are skeptics, along with “doomsday” enthusiasts, who provide vocal commentary both in agreement and in opposition to such a prophecy. But if biblical prophecy has any merit, we have no other option than to believe this event could happen at any moment within the next few years. Of course, there will never be agreement even within the confines of biblical scholars as to the exact time of this event. Many a sermon and many a dissertation, along with many personal convictions, have been focused on the possibilities as to the timing of this event.

There are those who believe in a Pre-tribulation rapture of the church. Some believe the Rapture will occur at the Midweek of the Tribulation. And then, of course, there are some who believe the Church will endure the Tribulation and won’t be raptured out until the end or after the Tribulation. It is not my intent to provide proof supporting or denying any of these belief

systems. Personally, I lean toward a Pre-tribulation Rapture, as numerous passages of Scripture state that Christians are not appointed to wrath (see Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

John F. Walvoord notes, “In 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11, Paul connected the Old Testament concept of the ‘day of the Lord’ to the rapture and second coming. Like a thief in the night, who comes without warning, the rapture will occur and the day of the Lord will begin. . . . The future period of God’s intervention in the world will begin at the rapture and will include the period of trouble preceding the second coming of Christ and the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth. The day of the Lord will also include the millennial kingdom. The entire period before and after the second coming of Christ will constitute a special divine intervention and rule of righteousness on the earth in the way that is not being experienced at the present age.”<sup>xii</sup>

What I am sure of is that only God knows the timeline, and whatever He chooses, I can trust it will be to His glory and purpose. Therefore, rather than speculate, it’s safe to just say that according to Scripture, there will be a Rapture and the Church will be taken out of this world. There are two main passages that cite this event—a miraculous event that brings an end to the “Church Age.” The first is found in Paul’s letter to the church in Corinth:

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:51–54 NIV).

This event will signal the end of the Church Age, or Age of Grace, and the end of the New Covenant of salvation that is offered freely to anyone who accepts it through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Ron Rhodes writes, “The rapture is a sign-less event that can occur at any moment. This is in contrast to the second coming of Christ, which is preceded by many events that transpire during the seven-year tribulation period (see Revelation 4–18).”<sup>xiii</sup> Clarence Larkin, in his book *Dispensational Truth* (which was written nearly a century earlier), speaks of this event as “the most startling ‘event’ of this Age and Dispensation.” He continues to share this thought: “On the morning of that glorious day the air will be filled with the ‘spirits’ of the ‘Dead in Christ,’ come back to earth to get their bodies, raised and glorified.”<sup>xiv</sup>

The second reference to the Rapture is found in Paul’s epistle to the church in Thessalonica:

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17 NIV).

Most of us are familiar with the popular *Left Behind* series of books. These books brought the reality of this event to the forefront of speculation for both Christians and non-Christians. While these books are based on the premise that the Church will be raptured, we can only guess as to the way it will exactly happen. It could happen just as described in the *Left Behind* series, where the Christians just suddenly vanish before the eyes of those left behind. Ron Rhodes, author of *The End Times in Chronological Order*, believes “this means that one generation of Christians will never pass through death’s door. They will be alive on earth in their mortal bodies, and suddenly, in an instant, they will be with Christ in their immortal bodies.”<sup>xv</sup> The thought of what might happen during the Rapture are literally mesmerizing to a lot of people, which is, of course, what made the *Left Behind* series such a popular hit. Clarence Larkin provides some interesting possibilities for us to consider regarding this event:

At first the whole thing will be a Mystery, until someone who had heard or read about the “Rapture of the Saints,” realizing what had happened will explain the situation. But one of the surprises of that day will be that so many professing Christians, and among them many ministers and Christian workers, will be left behind, while some who were not known to be Christians will be missing. The next day’s papers will be full of what happened the day before, and many of them will be swelled to twice their ordinary size by the pressure on their advertising columns for information as to missing ones, and for help to fill important vacancies and positions of trust. For a few days the excitement will be intense. Then the people will settle down to the inevitable. With the exception of a few who will repent and turn to God, the mass of the people will become more hardened and wicked than before, and some who lost loved ones will be embittered.<sup>xvi</sup>

Regardless of how any of this unfolds, there has been plenty of speculation and conjecture offered during the past hundred years or more concerning this promised event. It is even possible that there could be another explanation as to how this unprecedented event might transpire, especially in consideration of the following passage of Scripture:

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation (Hebrews 9:27–28 NKJV).

It is possible that those “who are still alive and are left” will experience their “appointment to die once” before their feet leave the ground. They will immediately obtain their new resurrected body, shedding the old shell of a body for the world to see that something tragic has just occurred. Who knows—this question is open for debate. What is certain is that the Church will be raptured from this earth. Both the living and the dead will meet Jesus in the clouds on that great and glorious morning.

Many biblical scholars believe the Rapture will be the earth-shattering event that will initiate the beginning of the Tribulation. There are many theories and much speculation about how this will occur, and multitudes of texts have been written about this particular piece of prophecy. This one topic could provide enough material for an entire dissertation in itself. However, one consideration that seems to have strong merit regarding this event has to do with the lack of reference to the Church in any of the passages related to the Tribulation. As Ron Rhodes observes in *The End Times in Chronological Order*:

In keeping with the idea that the church will be raptured before this time of tribulation begins, no Old Testament passage on the tribulation mentions the church (Deuteronomy 4:29–30; Jeremiah 30:4–11; Daniel 8:24–27; 12:1–2). Likewise, no New Testament passage on the tribulation mentions the church (Matthew 13:30, 39–42, 48–50; 24:15–31; 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10; 5:4–9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–11; Revelation 4–18). The church’s complete absence would seem to indicate that it is not on earth during the tribulation. Further, a pretribulational rapture best explains the massive apostasy that engulfs the world following the removal of “the restrainer”—apparently the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:3–7). The Holy Spirit indwells all believers (John 14:16; 1 Corinthians 3:17), so He will essentially be removed when the church is raptured, thus making possible the eruption of apostasy. Still further, Scripture assures us that the church is not appointed to wrath (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).<sup>xvii</sup>

If Clarence Larkin’s dispensational studies are accurate, it would also be safe to assume the Tribulation cannot begin until the end of the Church Age, which happens when the Church is caught away in the clouds with Jesus. Within this realm of thinking, it would be safe to also assume this would allow the Jews to once again be God’s representative people to the world. Ron Rhodes believes the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2:7–8 “indicates that the lawless one (the antichrist) cannot be revealed until the one who restrains is taken out of the way.”<sup>xviii</sup> This may also indicate the Church will be raptured out immediately preceding the Tribulation. However, while it is worthy to mention the Tribulation in regard to this end-times discussion, it is not to be a distraction to the topic regarding Israel’s role during these days. Once again, regardless of

what triggers the arrival of this life-altering event, we can be sure that Israel will play a major role within this divine appointment of the seven years of Tribulation.

## **The Tribulation Begins—Security and Peace**

According to the *Prophecy Study Bible*, there are four purposes for the Tribulation. Several of these purposes directly involve Israel, while two of them impact Israel in more indirect means or in a residual manner. “The first is to bring Israel into a place where they will recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah (Matthew 23:37–39; Ezekiel 20:33–38). The second purpose is to judge the Gentile nations for their efforts to exterminate the nation of Israel and their abuse of the Gentile people (Genesis 12:3). The third purpose is to allow a Christ-rejecting world to personally experience the sorrow and suffering created by the evil empire administered by Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet. The fourth purpose of the Tribulation is God’s wrath poured out on all who rejected the gospel.”<sup>xix</sup>

About the times and the seasons: Brothers, you do not need anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. When they say, “Peace and security,” then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains come on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in the dark, for this day to overtake you like a thief. For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. . . . For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him (1 Thessalonians 5:1–5, 9–10 HCSB).

Much has been written about the end times or the future apocalyptic predictions for the end of the world. There is even speculation that the Mayan calendar points to the assumption that the world will come to an end at a certain time. So, the apocalyptic nature of Tribulation prophecy has been a foundational premise for much political, societal, and doctrinal discussions and debate, and it has also provided the impetus for many movies, books, video games, and even nightmares. Allen M. Barber notes, “Scofield believed the Day of the Lord covers the period from the tribulation and the reign of Christ on David’s throne to the Great White Throne judgment and the ushering in of the new heavens and earth.”<sup>xx</sup> There is an old adage that always comes to mind when I think about the complexity of the Tribulation: “It will come in like a lamb, but go out like a lion.” Actually, the implications of such an analogy are quite profound as it relates to God’s plan, the Sacrificial Lamb of God, and His return as the Lion of Judah!

To better understand the Mystery of Zion and Israel's Final Days requires an awareness of the basic events of the Tribulation. There are several pivotal events associated within this seven-year period and several key considerations specifically outlined in the Scriptures. First and foremost is the necessity for Israel to once again have its rightful place among the recognized nations of the world. Hal Lindsey, in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, lists this stipulation at the top of his requirements that must be in place before the Tribulation begins: "The general time of this seven-year period couldn't begin until the Jewish people re-established their nation in their ancient homeland of Palestine."<sup>xxi</sup>

The Bible details the exact moment when the Tribulation will begin the countdown to its seven-year duration: when the Antichrist signs a seven-year covenant with Israel. This event is recorded in Daniel 9:27, which states, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (NIV). Once the Antichrist signs this covenant with Israel, the time clock to the seven-year countdown of the Tribulation begins. Ron Rhodes states, "The final 'week' of seven years will begin for Israel when the antichrist confirms a seven-year covenant (Daniel 9:27). The signing of this peace pact will signal the beginning of the tribulation period. It will begin the seven-year countdown to the second coming of Christ, which follows the tribulation period."<sup>xxii</sup>

## **The Prophetic Clock Continues to Tick**

Now that we have reviewed a small portion of the prophetic timeline associated with the end times, it's time to once again return to the Mystery of Zion in order to complete our study. To do this, we will look at the passage of Scripture that most scholars recognize as the one that foretells Israel's rebirth of a nation. This event literally started the clock ticking down toward the end of the age—the events just outlined in this chapter:

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. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Matthew 24:32–35 NIV).

Before continuing on, it's essential to remember the event that will trigger the remainder of the unfulfilled prophecy—an event that has already occurred, which is the rebirth of the nation of Israel in modern times. Jesus' words in Matthew 24:32–35 are significant, as they serve as the precursor to nearly all the end-time prophecies contained in the Bible. The

fulfillment of this prophecy is monumental. Not only does it provide evidence that the Bible is reliable, but it also provides epic details into the plans of God, all the while serving as a reliable witness to God's everlasting covenant.

God in all His sovereignty could never go back on His word! The trigger to the Mystery of Zion has already been pulled! And so, it appears that the Day of the Lord is drawing nigh and could dawn at any moment!

- 
- i *Prophecy Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1997), p. xv.
- ii Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), p. 53.
- iii Richard Booker, *Why Christians Should Support Israel* (Woodlands, TX: Sounds of the Trumpet, 2001), p. 17.
- iv Grant R. Jeffrey, *The New Temple and the Second Coming* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2007), p. 169.
- v Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews?* (New York: Touchstone, 2003), p. 167.
- vi Perry Stone Jr., *Unusual Prophecies Being Fulfilled*, book 6 (Cleveland, TN: Voice of Evangelism Ministries, 2009), p. 24.
- vii Perry Stone Jr., *Unlocking Secrets in the Second Coming Scrolls* (Cleveland, TN: Voice of Evangelism, 2004), p. 145.
- viii Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 43.
- ix Jeffrey, *The New Temple and the Second Coming*, pp. 163–164.
- x Stone Jr., *Unusual Prophecies Being Fulfilled*, p. 90.
- xi Jeffrey, *The New Temple and the Second Coming*, p. 107.
- xii John F. Walvoord, *End Times Prophecy* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2016), pp. 70–71.
- xiii Ron Rhodes, *The End Times in Chronological Order* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2012), p. 48.
- xiv Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth* (Philadelphia, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Est., 1918), p. 13.
- xv Rhodes, *The End Times in Chronological Order*, p. 41.
- xvi Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, p. 13.
- xvii Rhodes, *The End Times in Chronological Order*, p. 43.
- xviii *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- xix *Prophecy Study Bible: New King James Version*, p. 1182.
- xx Allen M. Barber, *The Day of the Lord* (Mustang, OK: Tate Publishing, 2011), p. 36.
- xxi Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 42.
- xxii Rhodes, *The End Times in Chronological Order*, p. 88.