

Sunday August 14th 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Two

1). Ge 1:14 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. [He made] the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

We had seen last week how on day 4 of the restoration of the ruined creation seen in Genesis Chapter 1 'God made two great lights' and 'set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth' – these 2 great lights of course being the sun and the moon.

a).But we had also seen that the light which would divide the day from the night was spoken into being on day 1 of the restoration - Ge 1:3 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

And that which we had particularly noted here is that night and day [evening and morning] took place before the sun and moon were made. And this transition from evening to morning continued to take place for another 2 days before the sun and moon were 'made' - Ge 1:8 *And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.*

Ge 1:13 *So the evening and the morning were the third day.*

b). What we learned from this is that the passage of night and day was not dependent upon the sun and moon, but was already taking place through the introduction of light on day 1. The sun and the moon then were made to be bearers of the light, or witnesses to the light from day 1, not the producers of it.

c). And we will remember from last week that the light on day 1 of the restoration of the ruined creation is the re-introduction of the glory of God that must be present if rulership anywhere in God's universe is to be in view – Ps 104:1 ¶ *Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. 3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, 4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.*

Mt 17:1 ¶ *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.*

d). So, if the sun and the moon are not necessary to the production of light to give us day and night, which from the evidence of scripture they are not, then why did God make them? Well if we read the appropriate verse the scripture tells us - Ge 1:14 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;*

They are then firstly physical markers by which the natural eye can follow the transition of night and day – we can see the physical sun set, marking the end of the day and we can see the physical sun rise marking the beginning of the day. And between these two points the physical moon shows the progress of the night.

e). And secondly, inseparably connected to their physical presence, they are for signs and seasons and for days and years. We will get back to signs in a moment – it is then the apparent physical movement of the sun and moon through the sky that God has given and used to mark the passing of time – 6 days and a 7th day, 6000 years and a 7th 1000 years – remembering that time,

as we understand it, is peculiar to God's restoration of a ruined creation whether the material creation or Man. And again it is the apparent movement of the sun that determines seasons - Ec 3:1 ¶ *To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:*

We are not just talking then about Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter per se, but in the passing of these seasons we find the time when seed is to be sown and the time when the harvest is to be gathered in – a profound cycle of events that speaks directly to our own spiritual experience - Mt 13:3 *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.....37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

Ga 6:8 *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

Here then from the physical world that surrounds us in each 24 hours throughout the year is a constant declaration of spiritual truth that we should not ignore – Ge 8:22 *"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."*

And we should also not ignore the truth that all things will not continue as there are doing in perpetuity; whether it be our own physical life, the present world system or the present heaven and earth. God's purpose set out in Genesis Chapter 1, declared with each sun rise, will be fulfilled, and inevitably we will all find ourselves within the scope of that fulfillment – but exactly what that looks like for each of us as always is dependent upon the choices we make to faithful obedience while we are in a season to choose.

f). Each sun rise not only declares the certainty of God's purpose but also tells us we are one day closer to it; we have one day less in our race of the faith, but another opportunity to be faithfully obedient as we see the day approaching - 2Pe 1:19 ¶ *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*

2). And so, let's get back to 'signs' – the sun, moon and stars are for 'signs' and as we had noted last week, signs are for the Jews alone - 1Co 1:22 *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;*

And this is something we can also demonstrate from 3 other signs given in scripture - Ge 17:9 *And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 "and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13 "He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.*

a). This of course is the sign of circumcision given to demonstrate the everlasting covenant made with the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob - Ro 9:7 *nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."*

And every Jewish male circumcised the 8th day bears the sign of the covenant, that which was promised to Abraham and his descendants concerning a land and an inheritance within the Theocracy; a sign that points to Israel's future beyond the Tribulation when the promises given to Abraham and his descendants will be fulfilled.

b). Ex 12:13 *'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Here then is a sign given through the blood from the death of the Passover lambs, an event that would secure Israel's deliverance from Egypt for the purpose of going to the land of promise within the Theocracy; a sign that points to the death and shed blood of The Passover Lamb – Joh 1:36 *And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"*

That will in that future day, beyond the Tribulation secure Israel's deliverance from the Gentile nations returning them to the land of promise to be at the head of the nations within the Theocracy.

c). Ex 31:16 *'Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'*"

And here we find the sign of the Sabbath, v17 giving us the inseparable connection with God's purpose seen in Genesis Chapter 1; a sign pointing to the coming 7th Day of rest which will be the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, when the Theocracy will once again be established on the earth with Israel in the land of promise, healed restored and forgiven, at the head of the nations.

d). As we might see then these 'signs' were given to Israel and all point to exactly the same thing and exactly the same time – Israel ruling in the Theocracy over the nations of the earth, fulfilling the promises given to Abraham, in the 7th Day.

e). This being the case the sun, moon and stars given as signs, would also be for Israel and would need to be pointing to the same thing as the other signs. Which of course is exactly what we saw last week as we saw the sun, moon and stars being used metaphorically rather than literally - Ge 37:9 *Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."*

Re 12:1 ¶ *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.*

In Genesis Chapter 37 we see the sun, moon and stars used as metaphors to depict Joseph ruling over his family; a sign that points to the day when Jesus will rule over the house of Israel – and that day is the 7th Day when the Theocracy will have been established with Israel in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

f). And Revelation Chapter 12 prophetically takes us in time to the Tribulation depicting Israel as a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head – and once again the sun, moon and stars are used metaphorically to show Israel in the place of rulership on the earth, being the preeminent ruling authority with all other authorities being subject to her; a sign that once more points to the Theocracy in the 7th Day and the fulfillment of God’s purpose for His chosen people.

g). All of this I think should be pretty clear.

3). Let’s continue with the subject of ‘signs’ - Mt 12:38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

These verses we might remember follow the Lord healing a demon possessed man who was both blind and mute and we see the scribes and Pharisees requesting a sign beyond that which they had just seen. In consequence the Lord tells them that no other sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

a). Our Lord’s earthly ministry is marked by ‘signs’ that He performed in the presence of the people - Joh 2:23 ¶ *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.*

And these ‘signs’ as we have already established were for the Jews and were inseparable from the message brought to the Jews by their King –

Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

b). And within this context the Apostle John has something very interesting to say - Joh 20:30 *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

Within John's gospel we will find 8 specific signs that 'Jesus did' which have been singled out from the 'many other signs', which of course would beg the question, 'Why these particular 8 signs?' - a question that we will answer during the course of our study.

c). But before we go there let's establish some significant things that we can learn from the verses from John Chapter 20.

d). Firstly, let's remember that 'signs' are for the Jews and the signs recorded in John's gospel are for a specific purpose, that 'you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God', with a view to having 'life in His name'. So who are those referred to as 'you', the ones who are to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Well the use of signs gives it to us - they are the Jews. Therefore that said in John 20:30-31 has nothing to do with eternal salvation for the Gentiles, but is all about having 'life' in the age to come for eternally saved Jews.

e). Which would have to place the writing of John's gospel within the period of time covered by the Book of Acts when the re-offer of the Kingdom was being made by the Church to that same generation of eternally saved Jews who were alive at Lord's first advent. And this is something that we need to keep in mind when we read John's gospel.

f). With this in mind let's remember what we find in Peter's message to these same Jews on the day of Pentecost - Ac 2:22 *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—*

This is essentially the same as we find in the verses from John Chapter 20.

g). But let's note something about signs - the word is often used in conjunction with 'wonders' and 'miracles' which could lead us to think that signs, wonders and miracles are 3 separate things. However, given the nature of the Greek language the words 'wonder' and 'miracle' describe the 'sign' - The sign is a 'wonder' because it is something out of the ordinary, and it is a 'miracle' because it is brought about through supernatural power.

h). And in this we find the marked difference between the signs given to Israel that we have looked at today - the sign of circumcision, the sign of the blood and the sign of the Sabbath - these are signs given by God to the Jews, not worked by God through another.

i). We would also find a great many manifestations of God's supernatural power, such as in the burning bush that was not consumed and the 3 Hebrews in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. But these are examples of supernatural power coming directly from God Himself. What is unique about the Lord's first advent is that individuals, apart from the Lord Himself, the 12 the 20 and the 70 were all empowered to work supernatural signs –
Mt 10:6 *"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

and this of course carried over to the Apostles and those in the Church during the Acts period as the re-offer of the Kingdom was made - Ac 3:6 *Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God.*

j). And again, as we see these supernatural signs in the Book of Acts, because of all that we have previously seen, we know for certain that both Israel and the Kingdom must be in the picture, remove either of these two, Israel or the Kingdom and supernatural signs such as those recorded in John's gospel and the Book of Acts cannot take place.

k). And really this is very easy to see by comparing scripture – look what is said concerning Paul in Acts - Ac 19:11 *Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Now the re-offer of the Kingdom found it's terminal point at the conclusion of the Book of Acts - Ac 28:25 *So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and*

turn, So that I should heal them." 28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

And beyond this point, the same Paul that God had given extraordinary supernatural power records this - 2Ti 4:20 *Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.*

There is only one reason why Trophimus was left sick in Miletus by Paul and that is that supernatural signs of physical healing could not take place now because the salvation of God [the salvation of the soul] had been sent to the Gentiles – the Kingdom would still be in view, now being offered to the one new man in Christ, but Israel was no longer in the picture and without both Israel and the Kingdom in view supernatural signs at the hands of an empowered individual would be completely out of place – even if we are talking about the Apostle Paul.

1). However, once the Lord has completed His work of calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name and, in the antitype of Rebekah and Ruth, the Bride has been identified at Christ's Judgment Seat God's attention will once again turn to Israel and the coming Kingdom during the fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week, the final 7 years of the previous dispensation, that which we know as the Tribulation. And because during this time Israel is in view and the Kingdom is in view we would expect to see supernatural signs once again through the hands of those empowered to perform them - Re 11:3 ¶ *"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.*

And as always with supernatural signs, the signs are the credentials of those performing them giving authenticity to the message that they bring – Joh 3:2 *This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

Mr 16:20 *And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*

And to give us further confirmation of what we see here we can take this back to a first mention principle seen in Exodus.

m). But this will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.