

Sunday August 21st 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Three

1). 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.*

a). As we had noted last time there are 8 specific 'signs' recorded in the Book of John that the Spirit of the Lord had singled out from amongst the 'many other signs' which 'Jesus did'. And we had also noted that there were other supernatural signs not only manifested by Jesus, but also the 12, and the 70 and all of these signs whether recorded in John or elsewhere are inseparable from the message that accompanied them - 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.*

b). And as we know the message, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand' was a message exclusively for the eternally saved generation of Jews alive at the Lord's first advent and the accompanying signs likewise were for this same generation. The signs then not only validated the message, but also provided the credentials of those who performed them - Joh 3:1 ¶ *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 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."*

c). And these supernatural signs were performed through the power of the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose as we see in John 20:31 from our beginning verses this morning - *that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

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.*

d). As we read the gospel accounts of the Lord's ministry we are aware of the quantity of 'signs' that the Lord performed, but in addition He had empowered firstly the 12 and then the 70 to do likewise as they preached the same message. Now the exact details of all that was done by the 12 and 70 are not recorded in the scriptures, but we do get an insight into the 70 here in Luke – Lu 10:17 ¶ *Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

But it would not be rocket science to work out just from the numbers of disciples performing these 'signs' that there were a very large number. And this is something we would want to take note of because prior to the Lord's first advent there is little record of individuals empowered to perform supernatural signs

2). The first time that God empowered an individual to perform supernatural signs can be found in Exodus - Ex 4:29 *Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.*

Here in Exodus we can see the 'signs' that Moses did in the sight of the people were his credentials, giving confirmation that God was with him and giving validation to the message of deliverance and promise that he came with – Ex 3:12 *So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."*

and not only Moses was empowered by the Lord to perform signs, but Aaron also - Ex 7:10 *So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.*

a). And the performance of these 'signs' had a very specific context – Israel's deliverance from Egypt so as to be established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob within the Theocracy. The signs themselves were a witness to God's purpose, a validation of His promises and the seal of authenticity upon His messenger. And so with this in mind note the commentary given in - De 6:22 *'and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. 23 'Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.*

b). What we cannot miss as we look at these is that the 'signs' relate exclusively to Israel, the land of promise in which they were to receive their inheritance and the Theocracy. This was true with respect to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt, a generation which we know perished in the wilderness without receiving their inheritance, despite the signs which they witnessed, and also true for the second generation following the demise of the first.

c). Jos 3:7 ¶ *And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.*

As God was with Moses, so He was with Joshua and once again we see supernatural signs worked through Joshua with respect to the second generation of Israel to come out of Egypt again with the land and the Theocracy in view - Jos 10:12 *Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.*

And here of course we see the sun and moon used literally to provide a sign.

d). Now the manifestation of supernatural signs in the days of Moses, Aaron and Joshua, as we can see, were all in relation to Israel and the Kingdom

– they all had to do with Israel being delivered from Egypt and established in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob within the Theocracy.

e). And this sets for us a first mention principle, establishing a pattern which can never change – any supernatural sign performed by an empowered individual must always have Israel, the land and the Kingdom [Theocracy] in view. Without these elements in place any supposed supernatural manifestation would be completely out of order.

f). After the days of Moses, Aaron and Joshua there is no record of any supernatural sign until the days of Elijah and Elisha, some 500 years beyond the establishment of the Theocracy.

g). Now as we know the continued disobedience of Israel during this time meant that the Theocracy never came close to that which God had intended for it. It reached its zenith during the days of David and then his son Solomon, but even this was far short of that which God had intended.

h). During the divided kingdom following the death of Solomon Israel began to go in a direction entirely opposite to that which God required and it was during these days that Elijah was empowered by God to call the nation to repentance, a ministry that was completed by Elisha.

i). 1Ki 18:17 ¶ Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" 18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. 19 "Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 ¶ And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word..... 36 And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

2Ki 2:11 *Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 13 ¶ He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. 15 Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.*

As we have seen from our first mention principle the supernatural signs were to attest that the messenger had been sent by God, that the message he came with had to do with the Kingdom [Theocracy] and consequently the people of Israel were to heed his message, in this case to repent.

j). However, as we know the nation did not come to repentance having failed to heed the message, in effect rejecting the messenger and the supernatural signs that accompanied him, and consequently the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities eventually followed; the times of the Gentiles began and continue even to today with Israel separated from the land and the Theocracy.

k). And from the time of Elijah and Elisha until the advent of Messiah there is no record of supernatural signs at the hands of empowered individuals.

l). And so with Moses, Aaron and Joshua signs were performed for the purpose of Israel entering the land within the Theocracy and then when through Israel's centuries of disobedience the Theocracy was about to end supernatural signs were performed by Elijah and Elisha to call Israel back from the edge.

3). Isa 1:4 *Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward. 5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick,*

And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

These are familiar verses from Isaiah which we know to describe the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel, a condition that resulted in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, a condition still in place at the time of the Lord's first advent and still existing even today.

a). But Isaiah's prophecy does not stay focused on Israel's deplorable spiritual condition but looks to the time of Israel's future healing and restoration once again in the land within the Theocracy - Isa 2:1 ¶ *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Isa 4:2 ¶ *In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped. 3 And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.*

b). But Israel's healing, to bring fulfillment to Isaiah's prophecy would be dependent upon their fulfillment of the Lord's condition - Isa 1:19 *If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;*

They were/are to be willing and obedient, something that would/will only be possible through a complete change of mind, in effect through repentance -

Ho 6:1 ¶ *Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

c). And to call the nation to repentance with a view to healing and restoration God sent John the Baptist before the Lord - Mt 3:7 ¶ *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

d). That which we have looked at previously with respect to supernatural signs at the hands of empowered individuals concerned Israel and the earthly realm of the Kingdom, but as we know God's promise to Abraham and his descendants included the heavenly realm of the Kingdom as well – rulership over the earth from the heavens in the place of Satan and his angels and it is this rulership from the heavens over the earth that is the focus of Christ's earthly ministry and the context for the ministry of John the Baptist Joh 1:22 *Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"" as the prophet Isaiah said."*

And it is no coincidence that John quotes from Isaiah as it is Isaiah, as we have already seen, who not only detailed Israel's spiritual sickness, but also looked to the time of the nation's healing when *the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills;* This then is a reference that should not have been lost on Israel's religious leaders.

e). Israel's King was in the nation's midst and His forerunner was calling His people to repentance - Mt 3:1 ¶ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*

The rule from the heavens over the earth in the place of Satan was 'at hand' because the One anointed King was present amongst them - Heb 1:2 *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

If Israel would have repented of their centuries of unbelief and disobedience and received their King then Christ, with the Jews, would have taken the heavens from Satan and established the Theocracy. But as we know, this is not what happened - Mt 4:12 ¶ *Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Mt 13:14 *"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 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.'*

Mt 21:33 ¶ *"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying,*

'They will respect my son.' 38 *"But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'* 39 *"So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

f). In an unprecedented act of willful disobedience Israel crucified their King, pledging allegiance instead to the god of this age - Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

g). And as we know it is as a result of Israel's rejection of rulership from the heavens over the earth with their Messiah that the one new man in Christ is called into being to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected – the Kingdom of the Heavens.

h). And as we have also noted in past weeks a re-offer of rulership from the heavens over the earth was made by the 'Church' to that same eternally saved generation of Jews who had rejected and killed Messiah, again based upon national repentance - Ac 2:36 *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."* 37 ¶ *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* 38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

i). And it is within this context, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the Apostle John writes his gospel and presents 8 signs that the Jews might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God so as to have life in His name - Joh 1:1 ¶ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 ¶ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every*

man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

j). We will continue with this next time – if the Lord is willing.