

## SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

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It begins with the appearance of a tiny nick on the western side of the Sun. At first, the eye detects no difference in the amount of sunlight, but, as the minutes tick by, you begin to sense a difference in the quality of the atmosphere. Before long, the brilliant orb is more than half covered. The sky is still bright at this point, but the blue is a little duller, and the landscape takes on a steely gray metallic cast.

Soon, the crescent sun appears a blazing white sliver—like a welder’s torch. The darkening sky continues to close in around what remains of the light, now swiftly engulfing it.

And then, all at once, where the Sun once stood, hangs an ominous black disk in the sky, outlined by the soft pearly white glow of the corona. The land is dark, but it is not the dark of night. As you gaze across the landscape at the horizon—beyond the shadow thrown by the eclipse—you discern an eerie twilight of orange and yellow. From this light beyond the darkness comes an inexorable sense of foreboding—and a feeling that time is limited.

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## SINCE DAYS OF OLD

**S**ince ancient times, man has wondered at the inspiring phenomenon known as the solar eclipse. In many cultures, it was believed that a solar eclipse was caused by a dragon, or demons, who were attacking and devouring the Sun. The Chinese also believed that lunar eclipses were caused by the same monsters.

Often these ancient cultures would devise rituals designed to frighten the great dragon away. These usually involved making lots of noise by banging pots, chanting, or shouting into the air!<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, modern man has a much better grasp of the actual mechanics behind the solar and lunar eclipse than most of his ancestors. Yet, in spite of this, or perhaps *because* of this, most take for granted the fact that these phenomena are in many ways as improbable as would be the actual devouring of the Sun by monsters! Indeed, the idea that a total solar eclipse is even possible seems to defy coincidence, or the notion of a random universe, as the combination of factors that conspire to bring about this wonder could not be more unlikely. These factors are, of course, grounded in the relative sizes and distances between the Sun, the Earth, and the Moon. During a total solar eclipse, the Moon, which appears from our perspective to be the same diameter as the Sun, effectively blots out this massive orb—no more, no less. They are a seemingly perfect match from our earthly vantage point. This is only possible because the Sun's distance from the Earth is roughly 400 times that of the Moon's distance from the Earth, and the Sun's diameter is about 400 times that of the Moon's diameter.<sup>2</sup>

Is this ratio of size and distance an accident of nature, or was it designed this way? And if so—for what purpose?

## THE HEAVENLY BODIES: MORE THAN JUST A LIGHT SOURCE

As any astronomer would attest, the solar eclipse has afforded

mankind the otherwise impossible opportunity to study the corona of the Sun and thus its mysterious properties. But more than this, the eclipse has enabled mankind to search the very secrets of the cosmos. For instance, Albert Einstein famously utilized this phenomenon as a means to prove his most important theory: On May 29, 1919, during a total solar eclipse, A.S. Eddington conducted the first empirical test of Einstein's theory of general relativity, which entailed the measurement of light by the Sun's gravitational field. Owing to the eclipse, Eddington was able to photograph the stars in the region surrounding the Sun. As per Einstein's theory, these stars should appear to have slightly shifted their position as their light is "curved" by the Sun's gravitational field. Eddington's experiment, needless to say, validated the theory, thereby radically altering our understanding of the Universe.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, it appears that God, being all too aware of man's inquisitive nature, has gone out of His way to create circumstances that allow for him to satisfy this curiosity. But aside from man's scientific endeavors, it seems the Lord also had other purposes in mind when He designed the Sun and the Moon: As we noted in chapter 2, the luminaries were meant to "divide the day from the night" and to be for "signs and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Genesis 1:14).

Now, it goes without saying that dividing the day from the night is critical, as is our ability to mark the turning seasons and years. But what of God's allusion to using the heavenly bodies as "signs?" Could it be that from the very beginning He has planned to tell us something via the Sun and the Moon?

## SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS: GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

In this chapter, we are going to explore the fascinating notion that God has, in the past, and is now, at present, using "signs" in the heavens to draw our attention to certain prophetically significant

dates and events. Before we dive into this topic, however, we need to first address a concern that many Christians harbor with respect to the concept of “signs in the heavens.” This general unease is no doubt largely due to the fact that most of us have been taught that celestial signs are somehow akin to astrology, or “Godless paganism.” What needs to be made clear, though, is that the type of signs we will be discussing here are in no way related to these occult practices. To the contrary, such signs are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible, particularly in regard to the end times. In fact, in Luke 21 Jesus tells us that in the last days, “there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the stars.” The Scriptures even speak of the Moon being “turned to blood” and the Sun being “darkened” or turned “black as sackcloth” as signals that the Day of the Lord is at hand (Joel 2:31, Revelation 6:12).

Moreover, the idea of God using heavenly signs to alert man to Christ’s impending arrival is certainly not without parallel, as He previously employed a particularly well-known celestial sign to signal the magi of Christ’s entrance into the world over two thousand years ago!\*

There are also other Scriptural indicators that reinforce the notion of signs in the heavens. These we find rooted in the very Hebrew words translated as “signs” and “seasons” in the Book of Genesis. For instance, the Hebrew word for “sign” is *oate*. *Oate* means “to come” and denotes a meaning related to something or *someone* who will come.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word translated as “season” is *mo’ed*, also translated as “feast,” which, as we recall, denotes an “*appointed time*,”

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\* The DVD feature entitled “The Star of Bethlehem” presented by Law Professor Rick Larson is a fascinating study of the actual celestial phenomena that resulted in the sighting of an unusual “star” above Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Using software designed for astronomers, he recreates the cosmic scenario at play during the time of Christ’s birth. The “star” was actually the result of a very rare conjunction of two planets (Venus and Jupiter) resulting in a visual effect that appeared to the naked eye as the brightest star ever seen.

thereby pointing to the Feasts of the Lord, which are also, of course, “appointed” times.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, even from the very beginning, when God spoke of the heavenly bodies as being “for signs and for seasons,” it seems He was letting us in on His plan, which apparently involves using the Sun and the Moon to signal the “appointed time” of one (Christ) who is “to come!”

## A SNAPSHOT OF THE HEAVENS IN THE LAST DAYS

So how does the Bible describe these solar and lunar signs of the last days? To get a feel for this coming period of darkness, let us take a look at some verses that speak of dramatic celestial phenomena occurring just prior to the Second Coming.

Our first example describes the opening of the “sixth seal” and a “great earthquake” that occurs in conjunction with the resurrection of the saints:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; *and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.*

—Revelation 6:12

Here, the Sun being turned “black as sackcloth” seems an obvious allusion to a total solar eclipse. Likewise, the Moon being turned to blood is an apt description of a total lunar eclipse, or “blood moon,” a phenomenon wherein the Moon takes on a deep reddish tone as it passes behind the Earth, escaping the direct light of the Sun.

This next verse speaks of the same timeframe—that of the resurrection, or rapture. In this powerful depiction, we note that the Sun and the Moon are “darkened,” seemingly referring to either a full or

partial eclipse, just before Jesus appears in the heavens and sends His angels out to gather the elect:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the *sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light*, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

—Matthew 24:29-31

The Old Testament Book of Joel, similar to Revelation, also speaks of the Moon being turned to blood:

*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

—Joel 2:31

This next verse from Isaiah speaks of the outpouring of God’s wrath, which, as noted previously, begins immediately after the resurrection, or rapture, of believers.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger...*the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

—Isaiah 13:9-10

Later, in chapter 24, Isaiah puts a slightly different spin on his description of the same event:

*Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,  
when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in  
Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.*

—Isaiah 24:23

The above sampling represents just a fraction of the biblical references to various solar and lunar phenomena in the last days. Other examples are found in Mark 13:24, Luke 21:25-27, Acts 2:20, 21 and Joel 3:14, 15.

Considering the frequency of these references, it is obvious that God wishes to emphasize the fact that the Sun being darkened and the Moon being turned to blood are among the key signs that will precede the return of Jesus Christ. This, then, brings up an interesting question: Since a “sign” is by definition something perceived in *advance* to warn of something that is coming, presumably for the purpose of allowing one to prepare, how will believers be able to pre-identify the specific eclipses that the Bible speaks of as heralding Christ’s return? In other words, assuming that the end-times eclipses mentioned in Matthew, Joel, Revelation, and Isaiah are intended as forewarnings to the Church and are thus also part of the naturally occurring eclipse cycle (and therefore predictable), how might one distinguish the end-times eclipses from the multitude of “regular” eclipses that take place on a relatively frequent basis?

The possible answer to this question—and I do stress *possible*—may lie in a recent finding.

## AN INTRIGUING DISCOVERY

Our story begins with a remarkable discovery made in 2008. Intrigued by the numerous biblical references to solar and lunar phenomena in the last days, a pastor named Mark Biltz, who promotes and teaches the Hebraic roots of Christianity, decided to log on to a U.S. Government (NASA) website that provides precise tracking of

past and future eclipse events. Biltz, curious as to whether he would find any significant eclipse activity over the next several years, was not disappointed. The first thing he noticed was four total lunar eclipses, or “blood moons,” scheduled to occur, interestingly enough, during the Gregorian (Western) calendar years of 2014-15. The reason these particular eclipses caught Biltz’s attention was the dates on which they happen to fall.<sup>6</sup> Note the Gregorian and Hebrew calendar equivalents below:

April 15, 2014, or Nisan 14 (Passover)  
 October 8, 2014, or Tishrei 15 (Feast of Tabernacles)  
 April 4, 2015, or Nisan 14 (Passover)  
 September 28, 2015, or Tishrei 15 (Feast of Tabernacles)

Interestingly, the Gregorian dates of these particular eclipses seem unremarkable, as April 15, October 8, April 4, and September 28 hold no apparent significance, prophetic or otherwise. In observing the Hebrew calendar dates of these eclipses, however, something immediately stands out: They all fall on feast days, namely Passover and Tabernacles, in two successive years. Therefore, hidden to the casual observer, it is only by viewing these eclipse dates within the context of the Lord’s feast days or “appointed times,” as Biltz did, that we see this pattern emerge: Passover and Tabernacles in 2014, and then Passover and Tabernacles in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

Also worth noting, as we consider this (Passover-Tabernacles) pattern, is the seemingly significant fact that these are not just any feast days but the very *first* and the very *last* of the seven feasts. Thus, this series of blood moons essentially “bookends,” or forms a parenthesis around, the remaining feasts in both 2014 and 2015.<sup>8</sup>

## AN UNCOMMON EVENT

The phenomenon of four consecutive total lunar eclipses, or blood

moons, also known as a “lunar tetrad,” is very rare. There will only be seven such occurrences this century. What is more, instances of tetrads occurring *in conjunction with consecutive Passover-Tabernacles feast days*, as the ones Biltz discovered, are *extremely* rare. In fact, according to the NASA website, which tracks this data as far as a thousand years out, the Passover-Tabernacles tetrad in 2014-15 is the only one that will be taking place in the foreseeable future.<sup>9</sup>

Further highlighting the rarity of what we will call “feast tetrads,” a look back in history reveals that this phenomenon has occurred only three times over the last millennia or so: twice in the twentieth century and once in the late fifteenth century. Absolutely no tetrads occurred in the 1800s, the 1700s, or the 1600s. In the 1500s there were six, but none fell on consecutive Passover and Tabernacles feast observances.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, the fact that this (feast tetrad) phenomenon *did* occur twice just last century would seem, at least on the face of it, to undermine the uniqueness of such an event and therefore any significance that one might attach to the upcoming tetrad in 2014-15—until, that is, one takes a closer look at these past occurrences and notes something very curious.

## A COMMON THEME EMERGES

In taking a closer look at the past occurrences of feast tetrads, we at once notice something very peculiar indeed, which is the fact that they seem to be linked by what could be characterized as a common *theme*. More specifically, they have all occurred, strangely enough, in conjunction with what are arguably the defining moments in the history of Modern-day Israel. For instance, the most recent Passover-Tabernacles tetrad occurred in 1967-68—right after Israel fought the landmark Six Day War and recaptured Jerusalem. As we recall from chapter 4, the prophetic significance of this date is immense in that, according to Newton’s interpretation, it may very well have marked the predicted latter-days restoration of Jerusalem that would set the

prophetic clock ticking off the final forty-nine years to Christ's return!

The second most recent feast tetrad occurred in 1949-50 at the close of Israel's War of Independence, a battle that was fought to defend her triumphant rebirth as a state after nearly two thousand years of Jewish exile.<sup>11</sup> The significance of this event, needless to say, speaks for itself, as it is believed to be the fulfillment of the end-times re-gathering of Israel that was prophesied millennia ago in Deuteronomy (30:3-5) and Isaiah (66:8).\*

The only other Passover-Tabernacles tetrad to have occurred over the course of the last 1,100 years or so happened in 1493-94, right after Columbus "sailed the ocean blue" in 1492 and Spain expelled the Jews, resulting in a massive Jewish dispersion. This was indeed a pivotal moment in Jewish history, as Spain had been a second Jewish homeland for well over a thousand years. In fact, so deeply woven into the fabric of Spain are the Jews, it is acknowledged that the history of either cannot be fully studied without considering the influence of the other. (Please see endnote for comments on a possible connection to Columbus's voyage).<sup>12, 13</sup>

## COINCIDENCE—OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Having noted the rarity of tetrads, the *extreme* rarity of Passover-Tabernacles tetrads, and also the way in which each noted occurrence appears to be linked to pivotal events surrounding Israel's struggle for rebirth, survival, and ultimate restoration, it would seem the likelihood of all of this coming together as a result of sheer coincidence is near zero. And so we pose the obvious question: What might all of this mean? Or, more to the point, in light of the notion of God using

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\* At the close of the War of Independence in 1949, East Jerusalem fell to the Jordanians and was subsequently divided between the two countries via the Israel-TransJordan Armistice Agreement. Jerusalem would remain divided until the Jews recaptured the Eastern half of the city in the 1967 Six Day War.

the heavenly bodies as signs, what, if anything, could He be telling the Jews—and by extension the world—via the upcoming pattern of total lunar eclipses in 2014-15? Is it possible that these may have something to do with the lunar signs (Moon being turned to blood) that He has promised in the end times?

## THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

In speculating as to what the upcoming tetrad may portend, it is interesting to consider a passage familiar to most anyone who has studied end-times prophecy:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

—Mark 13:28-30

The popular interpretation of this passage, also known as “the Parable of the Fig Tree” holds that this current generation, the same one who witnessed the branch putting “forth leaves” (commonly interpreted as Israel’s end-times regathering) is the one that will be on earth to witness the return of Christ.\* Indeed, Jesus does not mince words in verse 30 when He says “this generation shall not pass, till *all these things* be done.”

Now, assuming that the popular interpretation of this verse is correct, which I believe it to be, and also that God is using these feast

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\* This interpretation is based on the notion that Israel is repeatedly associated with the fig tree in Scripture. Read all of mark 13 to see the full list of signs that Jesus says will be witnessed by the final generation.

tetrads to mark certain prophetic events, as He seems to be, the simple yet profoundly important question arises: If the Lord were to employ the *last* such foreseeable feast tetrad to highlight any prophetic event for the final generation, what would it be if not the Second Coming or some event closely related?\*

This, no doubt, is a question worth pondering at length, but let us set this 2014-15 lunar tetrad aside for the moment, as there is even more to consider.

## NOTABLE SOLAR ECLIPSES: SUN TURNED INTO DARKNESS

As intriguing as the blood moons in 2014-15 are, there is yet another dimension to Biltz's discovery. As we recall from the verses cited earlier, in addition to the Moon being turned to blood, the Scriptures repeatedly describe what would seem to be *solar* eclipses as heralding the return of Christ.

Interestingly enough, while exploring the NASA website, Biltz also spotted some noteworthy solar phenomena. These solar events likewise occur in the 2014-15 timeframe and, similar to the lunar eclipses, they each happen to fall on some very significant Hebrew calendar dates:

(Total solar eclipse) March 20, 2015, or Nisan 1

(Jewish New Year)

(Partial solar eclipse) September 13, 2015, or Tishrei 1

(Feast of Trumpets)

These two dates are noteworthy indeed. Nisan 1, also called the *biblical* "New Year," or *Rosh Chodashim*, marks the very beginning of the seven-month religious (feast) cycle. Historically, it was on Nisan 1

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\* Biltz, in his many interviews on the topic, has made it very clear that while he believes something prophetically significant is coming in the 2014-15 timeframe he absolutely does not "set dates" for the Second Coming.

at the first anniversary of the Exodus that Moses raised up the tabernacle (the precursor to the Temple in Jerusalem) for the first time and the “glory of the Lord” descended<sup>14</sup> (Exodus 40:17, 34).

The second solar eclipse, which occurs on Tishrei 1, marks the Feast of Trumpets. The Feast of Trumpets marks the beginning of the *civil* New Year. But more importantly, as we recall, this feast also foreshadows the resurrection, or rapture, and is thus believed to be the very feast at which Jesus will return in some future year to gather the saints!

Again, these two eclipses are notable, not only because of the significant Hebrew Calendar days on which they fall, but because they fall within the seemingly parenthetical “brackets” formed by the lunar tetrads in 2014-15. In other words, while it is not unheard of for a solar eclipse to take place on a particular holy day, it is perhaps unheard of for it to occur in conjunction with a lunar tetrad on consecutive Passover-Tabernacles observances.

Might these solar eclipses also be signs? As we ponder this, let us consider some additional observations made by Biltz.

## OTHER ECLIPSES

So far we have seen that several factors, including the jubilee cycles, Newton’s interpretation of Daniel’s “seventy weeks,” and certain rare eclipse phenomena all seem to be pointing us toward a very narrow timeframe, more specifically, the year 2015. In fact, whether coincidental or not, we even have a solar eclipse on the Feast of Trumpets, or “resurrection day” in 2015!

Certainly, the combination of the above is enough to send the minds of prophecy enthusiasts reeling, but it seems these revelations are not the “end” of it as it were. Having identified the 2015 timeframe as one of possible if not likely prophetic significance, it is interesting to note something that we touched on briefly in chapter 4: Based on popular interpretations of Daniel, many prophecy scholars

feel that the last “week” (or seven years) of the age will play out over the span of a sabbatical cycle. In light of this, it is interesting to note that seven years prior to 2015 a new sabbatical cycle happens to begin. It commences on Sept 29, 2008 and runs through September 22, 2015.<sup>15</sup>

Is it possible that this very sabbatical cycle could be the final “week” that so many are anticipating? Perhaps following this same line of reasoning, Biltz, further consulting the NASA website, found another obvious pattern of solar phenomena: During the years 2008, 2009, and 2010 there will be three separate total solar eclipses, each occurring on the *same* noteworthy Hebrew Calendar date. The Gregorian and Hebrew equivalents are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

August 1, 2008, or Av 1

July 22, 2009, or Av 1

July 11, 2010, or Av 1

Notably, Av 1 on the Hebrew calendar is an important day of mourning in Jewish culture. It is part of a larger three-week period of sorrow and lament that runs from Tammuz 17 (the day Jerusalem’s walls were breached by the Romans in 69 AD) and concludes on Av 9 (the date both Jewish Temples were destroyed). According to tradition, beginning on Av 1 the mourning intensifies and remains at a heightened state until the conclusion of what is called “the three weeks” on Av 9. During this period, Jews purposely deprive themselves of any and all comforts, instead choosing to reflect on the past tragedies that have befallen their ancestors.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly enough, the reason that Av 1 through Av 9 is reserved as a time of intensified mourning stems not just from the above-mentioned past tragedies associated with these dates but from the fact that the Jews believe Av 9 to be a day cursed by God. This curse is purportedly a consequence of something that took place much earlier than either of the destructions of Jerusalem: According to tradition, it was on the 9th of Av, over three thousand years ago,

that the Hebrew spies who searched out the Promised Land (then known as Canaan) brought back an “evil report,” relating that the land God had promised them was already inhabited by “men of a great stature” who in their sight were much stronger than they (Numbers 13:32). Thus, the Israelites demonstrated their lack of faith in God’s promise and would therefore continue to roam the wilderness for forty years before inheriting the Land.

Incidentally, for those who are skeptical of the idea of a “curse,” let us briefly note some of the events that have transpired on the 9th of Av since this infamous rejection of the Land:<sup>18</sup>

- Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first Jewish Temple on the 9th of Av.
- Exactly six hundred years later, the Romans destroyed the second Jewish Temple on the 9th of Av.
- All Jews were forced out of England in 1290 on the 9th of Av.
- All Jews were forced out of Spain in 1492 on the 9th of Av.
- World War I started on the 9th of Av. (This war, referred to as the “parent” war to World War II, gave rise to widespread anti-Semitism throughout Europe and helped to shape Hitler’s attitude toward the Jews).
- Hitler’s proclamation to kill the Jews came on the 9th of Av.
- The disastrous 2005 evacuation of the Gaza strip occurred at sundown on the 9th of Av.

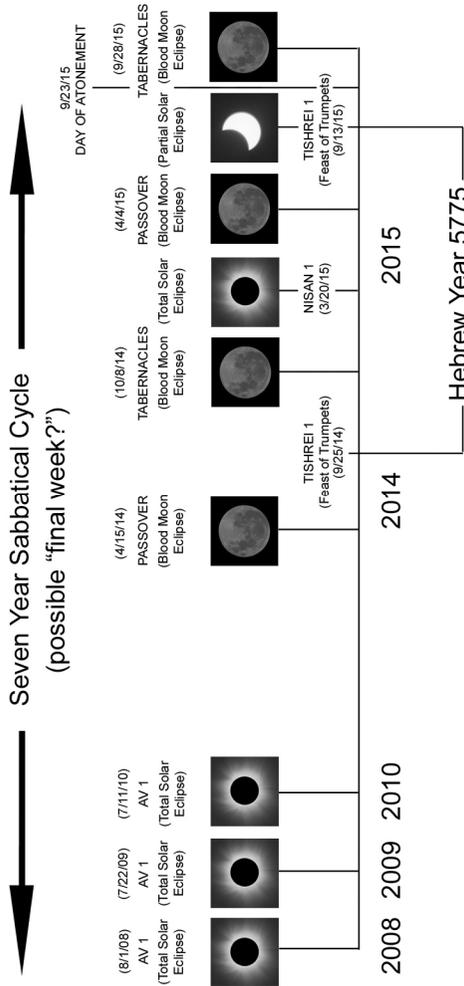
Needless to say, coincidence does not seem sufficient to account for the calamitous events that have befallen the Jews on the 9th of Av. Having noted this, we should reiterate that the eclipses Biltz noted do not actually fall on the 9th of Av, but rather on Av 1, the day that marks the *beginning* of the intensified period of mourning that culminates in an all day fast and time of lament on Av 9.

Lastly, we note that, just as we found with the lunar eclipses, the Gregorian dates of these solar events are seemingly random, while the Hebrew dates reveal a clear pattern in that all three instances take

place on a particular day, a day that, again, according to Jewish tradition, marks the beginning of a time of sorrow.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now, to help us put all of what has been described thus far into perspective, let us take a moment to study the chart below, in which all of the various solar and lunar phenomena have been laid out in order of sequence:



## DECODING THE MEANINGS

In observing the full array of solar and lunar activity that is occurring over the course of the current sabbatical cycle, there is, again, no denying what seems to be an obvious, even seemingly *purposeful*, correlation between certain Jewish holy days and various eclipse phenomena. At this point, then, in our continuing efforts to make sense of these “signs,” perhaps it will be further enlightening to consider a piece of the puzzle that has thus far gone unnoted, which is the belief that according to Jewish tradition solar and lunar eclipses hold different meanings. These meanings are detailed in the Talmud, as excerpted here:

“Our Rabbis taught, when the sun is in eclipse, it is a bad omen for the whole world. This may be illustrated by a parable. To what can this be compared? To a human being who made a banquet for his servants and put up for them a lamp. When he became wroth with them he said to his servant, ‘Take away the lamp from them, and let them sit in the dark’. It was taught: R. Meir said, whenever the luminaries [moon] are in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel since they are inured to blows. This may be compared to a school teacher who comes to school with a strap in his hand. Who becomes apprehensive? He who is accustomed to be daily punished. Our Rabbis taught, When the sun is in eclipse it is a bad omen for idolaters; when the moon is in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel, since Israel reckons by the moon and idolaters by the sun...”

—Succah 29a

According to ancient rabbinical teachings, since the “idolater,” or non-Jewish, world used a calendar based on the Sun (such as our Gregorian calendar), the *solar* eclipse was considered to be a bad omen for them. For Jews, however, whose calendar was based prim-

arily on the Moon, the *lunar* eclipse was considered an evil omen.

## BLOOD MOON BODES BAD

In light of the Talmudic understanding of blood moons, namely their ominous portent, it is particularly interesting to take a second look at the three aforementioned blood moon tetrads that occurred in 1493-94, 1949-50, and 1967-68. In considering the events linked to these blood moons (Jewish expulsion from Spain and subsequent dispersion, Jewish War for Independence, and the Six Day War), we note that all three have been recorded in the annals of history as times of great peril, or, as the Talmud might put it, times at which “the strap” was brought to Israel. Thus, we see that just as the earlier proposed Jubilee occurrences of chapter 3 seem to fall in line with aptly themed events surrounding Israel (namely the two liberations of Jerusalem), so do the historical Passover-Tabernacles tetrads noted here seem to occur in tandem with times of great peril for the Jews. These correlations, then, seem to corroborate the traditional Talmudic understanding of the blood moon eclipse and what it means for Israel.

Of course, this Talmudic understanding of the blood moon also opens up the question of what exactly the 2014-15 lunar tetrads may be telling us about the nature of *forthcoming* events related to Israel. If these two series of blood moons, for instance, are indeed signaling the return of Christ or perhaps the accompanying periods of “tribulation” and/or “wrath,” it goes without saying that the theme of “blood moon bodes bad” for Israel is still seemingly in effect, thereby further bolstering all that has been proposed here.

Now, setting aside the possible meaning of the upcoming blood moons for a moment, let us consider the Av 1 *solar* eclipses of 2008, 2009, and 2010. In light of the Talmudic understanding of what this type of sign portends for the world at large, can any similar type of correlation be drawn between these occurrences and world events?

## THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2008: JUST THE BEGINNING?

At the time of this writing, two of the three aforementioned Av 1 eclipses have already occurred. The first eclipse, which was seen from northeastern North America, most of Europe, and Asia took place on August 1, 2008. The current sabbatical cycle that runs from 2008 to 2015 commenced the following month, on September 29. With these dates in mind, and considering the traditionally ominous portent of the solar eclipse for “gentile” nations, it is remarkable to reflect on the now infamous events related to the global economy that began to unfold at precisely this time. For those whose memories—in addition to their 401Ks—have failed them, it all began with the bankruptcy of global financial services firm, Lehman Brothers, in early September of 2008. The crisis, which had apparently been building for months, almost immediately entered into an acute phase, marked by failures of prominent American and European banks. This same month, the Dow Jones Industrial average suffered one of its top ten most dramatic plunges since its inception in May of 1896, prompting world renowned billionaire investor William Buffet to describe the sudden turmoil in the financial markets as an “economic Pearl Harbor.”<sup>19, 20</sup> As soon as early October, experts had acknowledged that “global recession” was imminent. They were, of course, correct.

Then, one year later, the second Av 1 eclipse (Gregorian date July 22, 2009), which was seen from East Asia, Indonesia, and the South Pacific was followed by an unprecedented string of natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific. An October 1 press release from the UN sponsored UNEASCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) read, “It is almost unprecedented for any region to experience so many disasters over such a short period of time. Since last Saturday, 26 September, Typhoon Ketsana hit the Philippines, a tsunami struck Samoa, American Samoa, and Tonga, and two

massive earthquakes hit the Indonesian island of Sumatra.”<sup>21</sup>

Having noted the uncanniness of all of this, let me make clear that while it is interesting to consider how things have played out thus far, I would not go so far as to suggest that each of these eclipses is somehow signaling a separate round of disasters targeted at specific geographic regions. It is nonetheless indisputable that, whether coincidental or not, the first two of the three (2008-2010) solar eclipses have certainly lived up to their Talmudic reputation in regard to heralding trouble for the world at large, both in the specific and also in the broader sense.

Might these Av 1 eclipses, then, have been intended as a series of warning shots to the gentile or “idolater” nations that the world is entering into an unparalleled time of sorrow and judgment?

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As we bring to a close this chapter, wherein we have noted some very intriguing solar and lunar phenomena, let us take a moment to summarize and reemphasize a few points that highlight the truly remarkable nature of these “signs” in the heavens.

Firstly, tetrads that occur in the pattern that Biltz found, falling on consecutive Passover and Tabernacles feasts, are extremely rare, so rare, in fact, that it has happened only three times during the course of the last millennia or so. Remarkably, in each of these three noted cases, the tetrads have occurred in tandem with events in which the Jews were faced with persecution or the sword, just as, according to the Talmud, blood moons would traditionally indicate.

This brings us to the upcoming lunar tetrad and the accompanying solar eclipses in 2014-15: What types of events, if any, might accompany these occurrences? In considering this question, we should recall that God has gone to great lengths in Scripture to underscore

the fact that the Sun being turned to darkness and the Moon being turned to blood will be among the chief signs that herald Christ's return. Could the upcoming eclipses, then, be *the* eclipses—the ones that the Bible says will occur just before the Second Coming? This, for now, is of course unknowable, but considering the days on which these particular eclipses fall, it is difficult to imagine a configuration of solar and lunar activity that could more aptly signal such an event.

Whatever the case may be, if the historical occurrences of feast tetrads are any indicator, it appears that something *major* (possibly a time of great peril) lies just over the horizon for Israel. For those who harbor doubts, I would encourage flipping back to the diagram on page 120 to reexamine the pattern of solar and lunar activity occurring during this sabbatical cycle. The fact is, beyond 2014-15, this configuration of celestial phenomena will not be seen again by this generation or any other for at least a thousand years. Thus, in the context of solar and lunar signs heralding the Day of the Lord, one could argue that it would make no sense that any generation other than the current one is destined to witness the Second Coming of Christ—and, by all indications, perhaps soon.

This leads to my final point, which is simply this: God has from the beginning chosen to reveal things to man, affording him an “expected end.” From His promise in Genesis to use the Sun and the Moon for “signs” to mark His “appointed times,” to His disclosing to Daniel the length of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, to warning Noah and his family to board the Ark seven days before the Flood began. It is my belief therefore that the Lord takes no pleasure in our uncertainty, nor does He wish to catch His Church unawares, or sleeping, at His return. In fact, according to the Bible, in that day He desires that all be found watching and in a state of knowingness.

And so we pose the ultimate question that arises from all that has been discussed in this chapter: Are these solar and lunar signs, discovered, curiously enough, just *seven* years prior to their culmination,

a final wakeup call for those who will heed the sound of the alarm?

In closing, as we ponder the answer to this vital question, we are wise to take heed of Mark's most timely admonition:

What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'

—Mark 13:37