

— Before the —
**SECOND
COMING**



RICHARD BRUNSON

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Paperback ISBN 13: 978-1-4621-4948-3

eBook ISBN 13: 978-1-4621-4949-0

Published by CFI, an imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc.

2373 W. 700 S., Suite 100, Springville, UT 84663

Distributed by Cedar Fort, Inc., www.cedarfort.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025935306

Cover design by Shawnda Craig

Cover design © 2024 Cedar Fort, Inc.

Edited and Typeset by Liz Kazandzhy

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed on acid-free paper

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PART I

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

1

STAKES OF ZION



WE KNOW OF MANY EVENTS THAT MUST OCCUR BEFORE THE SECOND COMING. But which of them will happen first? And which of them will happen last? One of the more difficult tasks when studying the Second Coming is determining the correct order in which these “signs of the times” are to occur. However, if we are able to place these future events in their proper order, we will be better prepared for what lies immediately ahead of us.

The purpose of this book is to give the reader a frame of reference regarding the timing of the Second Coming. While it is true that “no man knoweth” the day or hour of the Second Coming (Doctrine and Covenants 49:7), the Lord has nevertheless given us many signs to help us recognize when his coming is nigh: “And unto you it shall be given to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of Man” (Doctrine and Covenants 68:11).

This book will place each of these “signs of the times” in chronological order so that we may look for them as they are happening. We will begin with the first sign that has yet to be fulfilled and work our way through each of the future signs that we as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can expect to see before the Second Coming.

DETERMINING THE FIRST SIGN

When the Apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, the Lord revealed to him the entire 7,000-year period of the earth's existence. In the vision, John saw a scroll sealed with seven seals. The scroll represented the earth, and each seal represented one thousand years of the earth's temporal existence (see Doctrine and Covenants 77:6–7). When the first seal was opened, John saw the first thousand years of the earth's history; when the second seal was opened, he saw the second thousand years, and so on until all seven seals had been opened and shown to John.

We are currently living in the sixth seal. In other words, we are nearing the end of the earth's sixth thousand-year history.¹ Having this information allows us to study each event that is to occur at the end of the sixth seal and the beginning of the seventh seal—all of which must come to pass before the Second Coming (see Doctrine and Covenants 77:12–13).

In addition to John the Revelator, the prophet Nephi was also shown in vision many of these same future events. Nephi's record, however, contains the first half of this latter-day vision, while John's record focuses more on the second half (see 1 Nephi 14:18–30). It is therefore in Nephi's record where we begin our study.

UPON ALL THE FACE OF THE EARTH

After Nephi was shown in vision the events leading up to our day, including the discovery of America and the Restoration of the gospel (see 1 Nephi 13), his record states, "I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth" (1 Nephi 14:12).

As far as we can tell, this is the time period in which we are currently living. Much like Nephi, many of us have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the gospel message being spread "upon all the face of the earth" (1 Nephi 14:12). Remarkably, however, as much membership growth as our Church has experienced to date, all signs seem to indicate that there is still more to come. For example, the Prophet Joseph Smith stated, "The Standard of Truth has

been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear.”²

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated in 1978:

There are nations today to whom we have not gone. . . . But you can rest assured that we will fulfill the requirement of taking the gospel to those nations before the Second Coming of the Son of Man. . . .

I have no hesitancy whatever in saying that before the Lord comes, in all those nations we will have congregations that are stable, secure, devoted, and sound. We will have stakes of Zion. We will have people who have progressed in spiritual things to the point where they have received all of the blessings of the house of the Lord. That is the destiny.³

Of course, as the gospel message continues to spread throughout the earth in the latter days, Satan and his forces of evil will also continue to gain momentum in their efforts as well. Nephi wrote, “And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people” (1 Nephi 14:11). At this point in his vision, Nephi was then shown something that all Latter-day Saints living in our day should be cognizant of. We read, “I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 14:13).

What will this fight entail? Where and how will it be fought? And who will prevail? The answer to these questions and more will be the subject matter of our next chapter.

1. When this sixth thousand-year history comes to an end, the final thousand-year period known as the Millennium will begin (see Doctrine and Covenants 77:12).

2. *History of the Church*, 4:540. The Prophet Joseph Smith said on a second occasion that this Church will eventually “fill the world” (Wilford Woodruff, in Conference Report, Apr.1898, 57). Similarly, Wilford Woodruff said that “there is no ear but what has to be penetrated with the sound of the Gospel of Christ” (*Journal of Discourses*, 10:16).

3. Bruce R. McConkie, “All Are Alike Unto God” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 18, 1978), 2, speeches.byu.edu. See also Bruce R. McConkie, “New Revelation On Priesthood,” in *Priesthood* (Deseret Book, 1981), 126–137; Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.

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