



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

There are events taking place all around the world that indicate that the coming of Christ is very near. Yet these signs go unrecognized by the world-loving masses, and even many in the churches. We are admonished to understand the events in order to make a proper preparation for them, and the things to come.

1. What was one of the reasons Christ reproved the Pharisees and Saducees?

Matt. 16:3 –

Note: He condemns their overlooking the signs they already had. They were seeking for the signs of the kingdom of God, when it was already among them. The Lord was in this place, and they knew it not. They had great plenty of signs; every miracle Christ wrought was a sign, for no man could do what He did unless God were with him. But this will not serve, they must have a sign of their own choosing. They despised those signs which relieved the necessity of the sick and sorrowful, and insisted upon some sign which gratify the curiosity of the proud.

2. What sign had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah by which Christ, at His first advent, might be known as the Messiah?

Isa. 7:14 –

For fulfillment see Matt. 1:22, 23

3. Where had the prophet said Christ should be born?

Micah 5:2 –

For fulfillment see Matt. 2:1

4. What prophet had foretold Christ's ride into Jerusalem?

Zech. 9:9 –

For fulfillment see Matt. 21:4, 5

5. What question did the disciples ask Christ concerning His second coming?

Matt. 24:3 –

6. How according to Luke did He answer this question?

Luke 21:25, 26 –

7. What, according to Matthew’s account, did Christ say were to be the signs in the sun, moon, and stars?

Matt. 24:29 –

8. In what language had some of the Old Testament prophets already foretold these signs?

Joel 2:30, 31 –

Joel 3:15 –

Isaiah 13:10 –

Amos 8:9 –

9. When were the sun and moon darkened?

May 19, 1780

Note: “The nineteenth of May, 1780 was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses. The birds were silent, and disappeared. The fowls retired to roost. It was the general opinion that the day of judgment was at hand. The legislature of Connecticut was in session at Hartford, but being unable to transact business, adjourned.” –President Dwight, in “Historical Collections.”

“In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o’clock in the morning, and continued until the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places... The true causes of this remarkable phenomenon are not known.” –Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, edition 1883, page 1604, in article “The Dark Day.”

Herschel, the great astronomer, says: “The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.”

The darkness was not caused by any eclipse of the sun by the moon, for the moon had full only the night before, and consequently was on the opposite side of the earth from the sun.

“The darkness of the following evening was probably as deep and dense as ever had been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light; it wanted only palpability to render it as extraordinary as that which overspread the land of Egypt in the days of Moses. If every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, it was thought the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper, held

within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.” –“our First Century,” by R.M. Devins, page 94.

The darkness of the night was as supernatural as that of the previous day, from the fact, as stated by Dr. Adams, that “the moon had full the day before.”

10. When was there a remarkable display of falling stars?

November 13, 1833

Note: The celebrated astronomer and meteorologist, Professor Olmsted, of Yale College, says: “Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history... The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth’s surface, from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance.”

“At Niagara the exhibition was especially brilliant, and probably no spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract.” –The American Encyclopedia, edition 1881, article “Meteor.”

Upon reading a statement that modern fireworks excel this greatest exhibition of shooting stars, Mr. Clarkson, father of the former editors of the paper from which the following quotation is made, and himself agricultural editor of it, said: “The writer of that sentence did not witness the glorious meteoric shower of November, 1833, when the display was so much superior to any artistic display of fireworks that neither language nor any element in nature can furnish comparisons. The comparison of the sheet-iron thunder of the theaters to the electric display of Providence when the heavens are all on fire, and the earth trembles, would be tolerable. But the awful grandeur of the display on the night of the thirteenth of November 1833, which made the stoutest heart stand in awe, and the most defiant infidel quake with fear, is never to be compared with the most brilliant fireworks. Those who witnessed the meteoric shower named saw the greatest display that man ever will see until the day that Peter speaks of when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The agricultural editor of the *Register* was out alone with a team and load of lumber all night on that never-to-be-forgotten night. And he cannot now consent to hear of human fireworks being superior to that most grand and sublime spectacle ever before or since beheld by man. Patent fireworks are no nearer this wonderful phenomenon than a lightning-bug is equal to the sun.” –Iowa State Register, July 12, 1889.

Fredrick A. Douglas, in his book “My Bondage and My Freedom,” page 186 says: “I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was struck with awe. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. It was not without the suggestion at the moment that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man: and in my state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the stars shall fall from heaven, and they were now falling.”

A single star appeared to the wise men, and directed them to the Saviour, at His first advent. Myriads of stars have announced the nearness of His second advent.

It will be seen that these signs produced the very impression that God evidently intended that they should,--that the day of judgment, Christ’s coming, and the end of the world are near at hand.

11. Have we reached the time when there is “distress of nations, with perplexity”? **Luke 21:25** – “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”

Every intelligent person knows that the world is in a state of unrest at the present time, and that men are troubled and perplexed at the outlook of present conditions throughout the civilized world. There have been and will be great frights in the sun, moon, and stars,

prodigies in the heavens, the sea and the waves will continue to roar, with terrible storms and tempests, such as has not been known, and above the ordinary working of natural causes. The effect of this shall be universal confusion and consternation upon the earth, *distress of nations with perplexity.*

12. Are men's hearts now "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth"? **Luke 21:26** – "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Everyone familiar with present-day conditions knows that this is the case. When the stock market hit an all time low, and the outcome for many looked dark, many took their own life for fear of the future. There are people today who are in constant fear of being killed; sinking under that which lies upon them, and yet still trembling for fear of worse and looking after those things which are coming upon the world. I have been told by some that they pray they are dead when the trouble begins because they don't want to go through it. When judgment begins at the house of God, it will not end there. It shall be as if the entire world were falling in pieces; and where can any be secure then? (Only in Christ). The powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the pillars of the earth cannot but tremble. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ¹¹Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹²Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"* **2 Peter 3:10-12**

13. What may be said of the "sea and the waves roaring"?

Great tidal waves, tsunami's, and storms at sea, with cyclones and tornadoes, and major earthquakes everywhere, and volcanoes now awakening, have become fearfully frequent, making men apprehensive of still greater calamities to come.

14. What, according to the prophecy of Daniel, was to characterize the time of the end?
Dan. 12:4 –

Note: The time of the end began in 1798. See Dan. 7:25; 11:35; 12:4, 9. Since 1798 there has been a most wonderful increase of all kinds of knowledge, both of scientific and religious. Men have been "running to and fro" through both the world and the Word of God. The prophecies of Daniel are now themselves understood. Since 1798 five great Bible and tract societies have been organized; namely, the London Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible

Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the International Tract Society, besides many smaller societies of the same kind. From these have gone forth to the world hundreds of millions of copies of the Bible, and countless pages of tracts and pamphlets, disseminating knowledge upon the truths of salvation. Besides these, millions of copies of religious papers are being circulated annually in the various countries of the world. Missions have been established in all parts of the world. All this and more has been accomplished since 1798.

Those that would have their knowledge increased must take pains, and must not sit still in slothfulness and bare wishes but run to and fro, and must make use of all the means of knowledge and improve all opportunities of getting their mistakes rectified, their doubts resolved, and their acquaintance with the things of God improved, to know more and to know better what they do know. And let us reason to hope that those things of God which are now dark and obscure will hereafter be made clear, and easy to be understood. Truth is the daughter of time. Scripture prophecies will be expounded by the accomplishment of them; therefore they are given, and for that explication they are reserved. Therefore they are told us beforehand, that when they do come to pass, we may believe. John 13:19.

15. What is predicted of the moral condition of the world in the last days?

2 Tim. 3:1-5 –

16. How did the apostle Peter say the message of the Lord's coming would be treated by some?

2 Peter 3:3, 4 – “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, ³And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

17. What will God's faithful servants be doing at this time?

Matt. 24:45 –

Note: They will be giving people *meat in due season*. This refers to the proclamation of the message based upon the signs which indicate the near approach of the Lord. The preaching of this message is what causes scoffers mockingly to ask, “Where is the promise of His coming?” So, the servant will be found at his work. At what hour soever His Master comes, he is found busy at the work of the day. Ministers should not leave empty spaces in their time, lest their Lord should come in one of those empty spaces. As with our good God, the end of one mercy is the beginning of another, so with a good man/woman, a good minister, the end of one duty is the beginning of another.

18. What are all admonished to do when these signs have appeared?

Matt. 24:44 – “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

19. How will Christ's coming overtake those evil servants who say in their hearts, “My Lord delayeth His coming”?

Matt. 24:50, 51 -

Note: The coat and character of wicked ministers or servants will not only **not** secure them from condemnation, but will greatly aggravate it. They can plead no exemption from Christ's jurisdiction, whatever they pretend to, in the church of Rome, from that of the civil magistrate; there is no benefit of clergy at Christ's bar.

The putting off the thoughts of Christ's coming will not put off His coming. Whatever fancy he deludes himself with, His Lord will come. The unbelief of man shall not make that great promise, or threatening of no effect. The coming of Christ will be a most dreadful surprise to secure and careless sinners, especially to wicked ministers. He shall come in a day when he looketh not for him. Those that have slighted the warnings of the word, and silenced those of their own consciences concerning the judgment to come, cannot expect any other warnings. These will be adjudged sufficient legal notice given, whether taken or not, and no unfairness can be charged of Christ, if he come suddenly. Behold, He has told us before.