

The Great Controversy Series

26 Signs of Christ's Second Coming

When we began this sermon series, we began with Matthew 24. In that chapter of the Bible, Jesus foretold important events concerning His people from His own time until the end of the world. Next, He pointed out the time of the great tribulation. We saw how first pagan Rome and then papal Rome persecuted Christ's true followers. We investigated the time of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798. Concerning this time Jesus said:

First, Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. This event happened in A.D. 70. Later,

Matthew 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.²² "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Jesus continued by saying:

Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.³⁰ "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus is coming again! He will not come as little baby, later to be scorned, rejected and crucified. He will come with power and great glory. All the tribes of the earth will mourn. Why will they mourn? Because while they honor Jesus with their words, in spirit and truth they reject Him. While they say, "Jesus is a prophet" they deny His salvation work on the cross. While they say, "God, God" they are trampling His law. When Jesus comes, those people will not be ready. Jesus' glory will destroy them.

But Jesus did not leave us clueless about the time of His second coming. Immediately after the great tribulation there would be signs that show His coming is soon. The sun would be darkened, and the moon would not give its light; the stars would fall from heaven. When would these happen? We will talk about these today.

The prophet John announced the first great sign that would happen before Jesus comes. Here are John's words:

Revelation 6:12-17 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free

man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The first sign would be a great earthquake. Before the sun would darken, the moon appear red and the stars fall, there would be a great earthquake. Jesus said that the signs in the sun, moon and stars would happen immediately after the great tribulation. We know that the 1260 years of papal supremacy ended in the year 1798. But Jesus had said, "But for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." Twenty five years before 1798 persecution of God's people had almost completely ended. Therefore we expect the great earthquake that John spoke of before 1773. Did such an earthquake happen at that time? It did.

November 1, 1755 in Lisbon Portugal there was a massive earthquake and ensuing tsunami. It happened on All Saints Day and many were in church. Seismologist estimate that the quake was between 8.5 and 9 on a Richter scale. There were 230,000 residents at the time and between 10,000 and 100,000 died making it one of the deadliest quakes in history. Eighty five percent of the buildings were destroyed. The shock waves were felt in England, France, Italy, Holland and Switzerland. Even in Sweden and Norway some 1800 miles away there were reports of movement. There were fires as well which lasted a week. It was the most spectacular earthquake of earlier times. Eighty-five percent of the buildings were destroyed. Shockwaves were felt in England, France, Italy, Holland and Switzerland. In Sweden and Norway even, some 2880 kilometers away, there were reports of movement. There were also fires that lasted a week destroying what the earthquake did not.

The ensuing tsunami was more than 6 meters high. Many cities were inundated. Never had there been an earthquake like that up to that time. People were shocked and they thought about God and the end of the world.

The first great sign occurred. According to Jesus, just after the great tribulation there would be signs in the sun, moon and stars. Did something like that happen? It did.

On May 19, 1780 the sun was darkened and the ay appeared red. An eyewitness wrote the following:

The observations from the first coming on of the darkness, to four o'clock, P.M. were made by several gentlemen of liberal education at the house of the Rev. Mr. Cutler, of *Ipswich-Hamlet* [Massachusetts]. There are some things worth noticing before and after this time. The Hemisphere for several days had been greatly obscured with smoak and vapour, so that the Sun and Moon appeared unusually red. On Thursday afternoon and in the evening, a thick cloud lay along at the south and south-west, the wind small. Friday morning early the Sun appeared red, as it had done for several days before, the wind about south-west, a light breeze, and the clouds from the south-west came over between

eight and nine o'clock, the Sun was quite shut in, and it began to shower, the clouds continuing to rise from the south-west and thicken from the thickness of the clouds, and the confusion which attended their motions, we expected a violent gust of wind and rain; the wind however, near the earth, continued small, and it rained but little. About eleven o'clock the darkness was such as to demand our attention, and put us upon making observations.

At half past eleven, in a room with three windows, 24 panes each, all open towards the south-east and south, large print could not be read by persons of good eyes. About twelve o'clock the windows being still open, a candle cast a shade so well defined on the wall, as that profiles were taken with as much ease they could have been in the night. About one o'clock a glin of light which had continued 'till this time in the east, shut in, and the darkness was greater than it had been for any time before. Between one and two o'clock, the wind from the west freshened a little, and a glin appeared in that quarter. We dined about two the windows all open, and two candles burning on the table. In the time of the greatest darkness some of the dunghill fowls went to their roost. Cocks crowed in answer to one another as they commonly do in the night: Woodcocks, which are night birds, whistled as the do *only* in the dark: Frogs peeped – In short, there was the appearance of midnight at noonday. About three o'clock the light in the west increased, the motion of the clouds more quick, their colour higher and more brassy than at any time before: There appeared to be quick flashes or coruscations, not unlike the Aurora Borealis.

Source: Letter from "Viator," dated May 22, in the Boston Gazette and the Country Journal, May 29, 1780. [p. 4].

From the time of Moses up to that time, such a thick, widespread and long-lasting darkness had not been seen. It happened just in time as Jesus said.

While Melek and I were in the States, one time we observed falling stars. For about one hour, every 5 minutes or so there was a falling star. We watched the sky with great expectation and excitement. It was enjoyable to watch such a rare event. In about an hour there were perhaps 12 falling stars.

But on November 13, 1833 in the United States, in one hour an estimated 60,000 falling stars were observed. Can you imagine that? Every minute there would be 1000 falling stars in the sky. Amazing! A real attention-getting event! This was the largest falling star event in history.

When did these events happen? After the great tribulation, just as Jesus said.

What did the prophet Joel say, perhaps 600 years before Jesus, nearly 2400 years before May 19, 1780?

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

Some people trying to attack these ideas say to me, “Why did these signs happen mostly in the United States? Why didn’t they happen in our country?” Let’s think together. When Jesus came to this world the first time why did a special sign only appear to the philosophers from the east? Why did the star which showed the way only appear to the philosophers? Why did angels show the place where Jesus was only to a few shepherds? Why was it not shown to the priests and scribes and important people? Because those proud people who trusted to themselves were not studying the Scriptures to learn how and when Christ would come. They were not ready. They were chasing after money and fame.

In a similar way, in most places in the world there were very few people who could understand or even want to know about the signs in the sun, moon and stars. Even in America, unfortunately, piety was in a fallen state. There were few people who were searching the Scriptures regarding Jesus’ second coming. In general, religious leaders had turned to formalism. True faith was rare. But some people were searching for truth. To give an shocking message, the Lord passed by important people, leaders and those who trusted to their own attainments and intelligence and chose humble people who were searching for truth. We will talk about this next time.

Jesus is coming again. The proofs that I took from the Bible are serious. Joel, prophecying perhaps 600 years before Christ, Jesus Himself and John who wrote some 65 years after Jesus, all described events that would happen hundreds of years later. What can you say about these things? Are you taking them seriously? Are you studying the Scriptures to see for yourself it what I am saying is true? Jesus is coming again. Are you ready?