

**THE SIGNS  
OF THE  
HEAVENS**

**BOOK III**

**BY**

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# **THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS**

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*Milo Edition*

***Dedication:***

*This book is dedicated to my Father, Edward, whose farsighted vision over the years has pointed out many celestial wonders to his family. His faithful labor, instruction, and consistent example has provided me with a positive appreciation of my Father who lives in the heavens above as well.*

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## Chapter 1

# The Fallen Star of the North

*“How thou art fallen from heaven O Lucifer, son of the morning! how thou art cut to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” Isaiah 14:12-15. (KJV)*

For centuries, this famous passage of Scripture has been applied to the fall of Satan from heaven. While it certainly fits the demise of the evil angel in many ways, the immediate context clearly identifies

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the subject as the king of Babylon. And so it was understood for centuries, until the time of the early church fathers, particularly by Jerome in the fourth century A.D., who applied it to Satan. Lucifer, the son of the morning, has been *directly* associated with the Devil ever since.

The real question that arises is: “What does this passage really mean?” Also, what did it mean to those who first read it? What did it mean to Isaiah, who wrote it? And how shall we understand it today?

Not all of these questions can be answered completely. However, some light on the question may be found in the study of astronomy.

In this book we are exploring extraordinary signs found in the heavens. For millennia people have gazed into the mysterious heavens, the perceived dwelling place of God. The starry heavens, the movements of the sun, moon, and planets, and other celestial phenomena have gained the interest of the watchers for thousands of years. Grand displays of supernatural wonder have occurred in the sky in the past, and every indication is that they will continue to occur again and again as the history of our planet nears its end.

Under consideration in this chapter is a “sign” that *began* in ancient times. Some signs are but of short duration, other signs last for greater lengths of time. This sign, is one that has been developing over the centuries and continues to this day.

So to return to the passage in Isaiah quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the question of its meaning remains. If one is to seek for a complete answer to this enigmatic passage from most commentators, he is likely to be disappointed. Interpreters make extensive

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comments about the personal pride exhibited in the passage, the recurrence of the word, “I,” and the similarity between the subject, Lucifer, and Satan, the fallen angel. But this does not explain several enigmas found in the passage. What particular celestial object is Lucifer likened to? What is the “mountain of the congregation?” What is meant by “the sides of the north?” Other questions remain as well.

### **Who or What was Lucifer?**

To begin with, the name, “Lucifer,” is really an invented name put here by translators. The Hebrew term is really, “the bright one,” i.e.: “luciferous.” The words “lucid,” and “illuminate” probably come from the same basic roots as this word. In this place it seems to be referring to some bright heavenly object known to the writer of this passage, and compared in symbolic fashion to the king of Babylon (ca. 800-900 B.C., or before).

Interpreters have considered several possibilities for this bright object. Some of the suggestions to the physical identity of “Lucifer; the bright one,” are as follows:

- The sun
- The moon
- A planet, such as the brightest planet, “Venus.”
- Certain bright stars such as Sirius, Vega, etc.
- No particular heavenly body at all
- Satan himself, no astronomical reference intended
- The North Star, Polaris

Most students of the passage will agree that some particular heavenly object is probably meant by the writer of Isaiah.

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Application of the symbol, in the context, can be made with the king of Babylon and by extension, Satan himself. But what is this particular “bright one,” in the passage, and how can we make primary sense out of what is said in these verses?

The sun, the moon, and the planets are indeed bright heavenly objects, and the ancients did indeed worship them. The kings of Babylon, Egypt, and scores of other nations claimed to be represented in them. However the claim that these heavenly objects (sun, moon, planets) are meant, becomes fatal on one fact alone. The bright object of Isaiah 14 is found in the “north.” The path of the ecliptic, that is, the path of the sun, moon, and planets, never reaches the north at all. The path of the ecliptic (to us in the Northern Hemisphere) begins in the southeast and makes an arc high across the southern sky and sinks into the southwestern horizon.

Only a few relatively famous stars shine in the northern sky. But these stars have always been considered important because of their northern position. Among the most important of these is the North Star.

Today, the North Star is Polaris, in the constellation, Ursa Minor, or as it is popularly known, the “Little Dipper.” The North Star is eminently important for many reasons, but especially for navigation. Mariners and explorers have depended on it for centuries for orientation and travel.

The most favorable aspect about the pole star is that it essentially remains in the same position, from night to night. It is always in the direction of true north, and is a benchmark for navigation and orientation. It is like the center of a pinwheel for us. It does not vary. All the other stars and constellations rotate around it, in our

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view, through the night. They seem to spin in a giant circle around this one stable spot in the heavens.

However, there is one other great phenomenon that needs to be understood regarding the pole star. While in our lifetimes, the North Star remains in its reliable position, it has not always been the “north star,” in the distant past.

Due to a phenomenon, known as “the precession of the equinoxes,” or “the recession of the pole star,” the position of our actual celestial “pole” changes over long periods of time. Scientist explain this continual slippage as being due to a “wobble” occurring at the northern pole of our earth.

However, the idea of a “wobble” is really misleading in a sense. The “wobble” is sometimes compared to a “top,” the popular toy that spins and “wobbles,” and collapses when it has completed its cycle. The fact is, that it would take the earth 27,000 years to complete just one “wobble.” The earth in its present form has never completed one wobble, nor will it before it is made over new. But the slippage of the North Pole to its present position is verified astronomical fact, and is important to our entire premise.

Approximately 5,000 years ago, early in this earth’s history, the North Star was not Polaris, as it is today. Instead it was near *Thuban*, a particular star found in an entirely different northern constellation than the present Ursa Minor. Sightings taken from the Egyptian pyramids verify that near the time that they were built, the North Star was closer to Thuban, than it is to the present Polaris. This is one way that such monuments as the pyramids can be roughly dated. However, most archaeologists make enormous and sometimes mistaken assumptions as to where the actual pole star

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was at the time the pyramids were built, and in typical fashion, tend to date them farther back than is necessary, and farther than the raw data available should allow.

Anciently speaking, Thuban, is a very interesting star. Its ancient name means, “the accursed.” Thuban is part of *tail* of one of the largest constellations in the heavens known as “Draco,” or better, “The Dragon.” The Dragon is composed a long line of meandering stars stretching across “a third of the stars of heaven.” The Dragon is an extremely ancient constellation, traceable in the records back thousands of years, possibly even to the times of Enoch, Seth, and Adam. It is to be equated with none other than the enemy of all mankind, the Dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan (Revelation 12), who with his tail has pulled down with him one third of the stars of God.

The Dragon is still found in the northern skies surrounding many of the stars of the north. However, the old North Star, is no longer at true north, but has significantly wandered from the center, as it were.

The ancient peoples have always considered the north as the place of God’s throne. Ancient writings speak of their supreme gods as ruling from the north. The reason why the home of God was placed in the north was because it was thought to be a place that was true, certain, and unchangeable. With God, “there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

In this same area of the heavens is the only constellation where God is pictured, in fashion sitting on a throne, and ruling the heavens. In the constellation Cepheus, the enthroned king, God (or Christ) is pictured as a victorious, crowned figure, a scepter in his hand.

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Cepheus, the king, is the supreme God of the universe who has been given all authority and power.

Before the time of the original Babylonian empire, Babel, *Thuban* was the “North Star.” In fact some think that astronomically, Thuban was the *precise* “north star” about six to seven thousand years ago. Because of the recession of the pole star, Thuban has since slipped from its place of security and regularity. By the time of Isaiah, and the Neo-Babylonian Empire (ca. 900 B.C. and forward), it was obvious that Thuban was most definitely no longer the pole star, and that the pole was moving toward its present location in Ursa Minor. Not only was “The Dragon” no longer at the center of things, but he was wandering farther and farther from the center and was in a tailspin (pardon the pun) around the heavens.

For many centuries now, Thuban, can be found, at certain times sitting just above the mountaintops in the direction of the north! Because the heavens revolve about the new center, near Polaris, the Dragon star spins around like the pointer on the hands of a clock. In the night the Dragon star can rise above the “heights of the clouds,” and can “sit upon the mountains of the north.” But eventually “it” sinks out of sight toward the western sea, or “the pit.” In some places and at some times it is now so far from the center that it almost disappears from sight. The “I” star has now become “it.”

### **The Mountain of Assembly**

The “mountain of assembly” is likened to Mt. Zion, the place where the faithful assemble to worship the true God (Psalm 48:1,2). The

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144,000 in Revelation are found assembled with the Lamb on Mt. Zion (Rev. 14:1). The Mountain of Assembly would be that place situated around God's throne in heaven.

Some commentators tell us that in Israel there were two "Mt. Zions." The best known was the temple mount on the north side of Jerusalem (Psalm 48:1,2). But the true throne of God was to be established on the highest of the mountains (Isaiah 2:2). The highest mountain in Israel, Mt. Hermon, was in the "far north" region of Israel. It was also referred to as "Mt. Zion," being "in the far north," as well. In symbol, this was the ultimate dwelling place of God, who would rule the earth from the highest heights.

From observers in Israel to the south, Thuban could often be seen "sitting" above Mt. Hermon, or the mountains of the north. This star that had once held a more exalted position was noticed as continually slipping toward an earthly grave.

What is particularly compelling about the star, Thuban, is that ancient records report that it was *once a very bright star*, perhaps one of the brightest in the entire heavens. Since then, it has decreased in brightness, until today; only on the darkest of nights can one readily find or identify it. What a lesson is taught in these tragic circumstances! What pitfalls are experienced by those who allow themselves to wander from God, who is the center of all that is good and right.

Herein then, is found a powerful sign of the heavens. Through the gradual shift in the heavens is found a parallel to the ultimate demise of Satan taught plainly in the Scriptures. Though once an exalted being, circulating about the very throne of God, he has fallen from his place "in the north." Through pride, rebellion, and deceit he has

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started a trend that can only end in death and destruction. All those who take his side do so in full view of the same peril and end. It seems this is in part what is meant by the mysterious passage in Isaiah. It becomes clearer by taking a look at the “Law of the Heavens.”

Ultimately, the Dragon who has been cast down will be completely destroyed. The King of Kings and Lord of Lord will reign supreme. Love and harmony will again pervade the universe. The fallen star of the north will fade away, as will all the stars of evil. But the righteous will “shine as the stars,” in the blessed kingdom of God.

## Chapter 2

# The Open Space in Orion

As one writer has put it:

“Of all the faraway objects in the night sky perhaps none have challenged the interest of Seventh-day Adventists as much as the great nebula in the constellation of Orion.”<sup>1</sup>

The constellation of Orion, and particularly the great nebula found in it has become a subject of interest and debate in recent years. But where did all the interest start? Interest in the constellation of Orion actually dates back for thousands of years. Ancient Near Eastern Cultures studied it and worshipped it. References to this constellation are made in probably the Bible’s oldest book, the book of Job and in the ancient book of Amos also:

Amos 5:8

*“Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion; and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with*

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<sup>1</sup> R.F. Cottrell, *Insight*, April, 1975.

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*night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is His name.”*

Job 9:9; 38:31

*“He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the South”*

*“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion?” NKJV*

Much of the interest among Seventh-day Adventists has been generated by statements made in vision by the prophet and writer Ellen G. White. In a vision in 1848 Ellen White made comments indicating that Jesus will come through this portion of the heavens at his second coming:

*“December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said “heaven,” in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said “earth” He meant earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. (EW 41.1)*



*Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space. I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and*

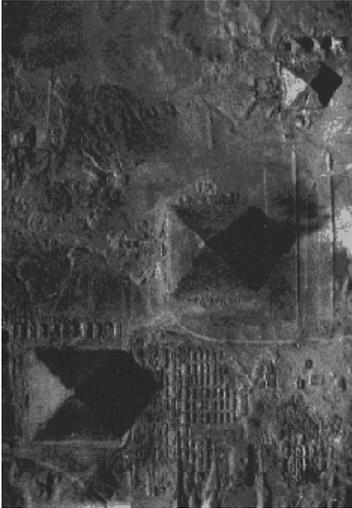
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*that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers of Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations. (41.2)*

### **What is Orion?**

Orion is a large and brilliant constellation in our winter sky. It is considered even by scientists to be the most brilliant and maybe most significant of all constellations.

Orion means “hunter.” From ancient times Orion was conceived of as a mighty hunter girded with a belt from which hangs a sword. He holds the skin of a lion (sometimes a curved shield) in his left hand, while his right hand holds an upraised club ready to strike the lion in his grasp or the onrushing bull called, Taurus. There is a large amount of heathen folklore written about Orion, but for the moment we shall not be preoccupied about this.



Orion was worshipped by the Egyptians. It has come to the attention of modern students of antiquity that great interest was taken in Egyptian monuments to get the attention of this favorite god. The three famous pyramids at Gizeh line up exactly with the three stars in Orion's belt. Other pyramids have been found at appropriate distances from Gizeh to mark in mirror

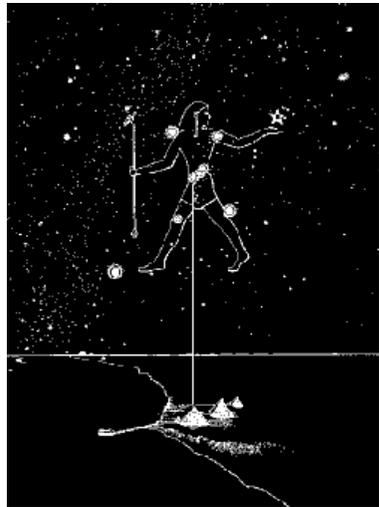
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like fashion the position of the other stars in Orion's shoulders and feet.

Some of the mysterious shafts in the great pyramids align themselves with where the three stars of the belt would have been thousands of years ago. While these alignments do not require dates as far back as are sometimes proposed, they do give a general age for these incredible monuments.

Orion too was early associated with the claims of the first Babylonian king, Nimrod, who claimed to be a mighty hunter. He was among the first to make claims of deity and to rise in revolt toward the true God of the Heavens.

Because of new interest in the subject of Christ's second coming in recent times the subject of Orion has again been brought to the forefront. A certain amount of "folklore" has been formed among expectant Christians about the constellation of Orion, especially since 1848 when Ellen White saw her vision about an "open space."



Science, however, in the intervening decades has taken steps to destroy any significance whatever to Ellen White's statements saying "it was a product of her times and reflects the myopic view of then current astronomers who could not know what we know today."

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Though this is certainly not a subject on which the second coming doctrine rides, nor is its understanding in any way essential to salvation, it is still very sensational and interesting. How might we understand the things that have been written and believed about this constellation for thousands of years?

### **What is the “Open Space?”**

Most have automatically assumed that the open space regarded by Ellen White is to be co-identified with the great nebula found in about the center of Orion’s belt. This assumption cannot be sustained, and never has been clearly verified, however.



The first significant sightings of the nebula in Orion came with the invention of the telescope in about the 1600’s. But still, little detail could be seen. The first photographs,

such as the above came in about 1883, thirty or more years after Ellen White’s vision. It is easy to see from these photographs how even astronomers likened the nebula’s appearance to a “hole in the heavens.”

“In the sword of Orion are three stars quite close together. In 1656, as I chanced to be viewing the middle one of these with the telescope, instead of a single star twelve showed themselves (a not uncommon occurrence). Three of these almost touched each other, and with four others shone through a nebula, (cont.) so that the space around them seemed far brighter than the rest of the heavens, which was entirely clear

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and appeared quite black, the effect being that of an opening in the sky through which a brighter region was visible.” -----Christian Huygens

The famous astronomer Herschel called it....

“a hole in the heavens”-----Sir William Herschel (1779)

Others report the phenomenon in various ways:

“As it were, an hyatus in the sky, affording a glimpse of a more luminous region beyond” -----Agnes M. Clerke, c.a. 1850.

The ardent early Adventist pioneer, Joseph Bates, a witness of the visions, and an astronomer himself added some theological perspective:

“From what part of Heaven will this glorious city appear? We answer, from where the flaming sword is ‘guarding the way of the tree of life,’ and the Cherubims are stationed. . . .

...the most remarkable of all the cloudy stars is that in the middle of Orion’s Sword, where seven stars...seem to shine through a cloud, very lucid in the middle, but faint and ill defined about the edges. It looks like a GAP in the sky, through which one may see (as it were) part of a much brighter region.”-----Joseph Bates

Others continued to make similar types of comments as the years continued:

“...the central region of the nebula is really the gigantic opening of a cavern leading into inconceivable depths....”

----Edgar Lucien Larkin, 1910

“...the mouth of a colossal cave----this yawning abyss is....

----Fannie Dickerson Chase, 1922

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Again, it is important to repeat that not all agree on what is meant by the term, “open space.” Attention has certainly been drawn to the great nebula, but Ellen White did not identify it as such.

A nebula is a mass of tenuous gas and dust in space. The present opinion of most scientists is that the nebula in Orion is not a “hole” in the heavens, but is rather a cloud, or nebula. Indeed, certain parts of the nebula are quite dark. Whether the light found in the nebula is shining through from a more distant region, or whether it is illuminated by adjacent stars, is an issue of scientific concern that continues. It does not seem to be impossible that these regions of light could be hiding the dwelling place of God. The Bible often says that God dwells in thick darkness, and in Old Testament times he “abode in a cloud.” What is really found in the great nebula will be of great interest for years, if not eons, to come. But until then the facts on record must remain as these:

- ❑ No particular “open space” is visible or ascertainable today. Prophetically it is particularly described as something that will occur in the “last days.”
- ❑ There are dark areas of gas and dust, and these could be “hiding” something.
- ❑ The nebula in Orion (in our “Milky Way System,” a little farther out) is probably not the center of the universe as thought by some in the past.
- ❑ Ellen White did not describe specifically where in the enormous Orion constellation the “open space” is.
- ❑ Lastly, there are plenty of open spaces in Orion, which seem to indicate the general absence of matter.

## **Exciting Features of Orion**

While certain matters regarding the “appearance” of features in Orion await further revelation, this does not in any way decrease the importance or the significance of this glorious constellation.

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Orion is acknowledged by nearly all as the greatest glory spot in all of the heavens. It has the richest history, and is the most brilliant. The nebula is described as “the most conspicuous and fascinating of all the nebulae.” Even agnostic scientists describe it as “funnel shaped,” and like “looking through an aperture in the heavens.”

Of fascinating significance are the names of this constellation and the principle stars found in it. In the ancient languages the star names, still used today, carry tremendous significance. These ancient names should interest the modern believer. They translate as follows:

- Orion: “He who comes forth as light, the brilliant, the swift”
  - Betelgeuse: “The Branch Coming”
  - Rigel: “The Foot that Crushes”
  - Bellatrix: “Swiftly Coming and Suddenly Destroying”
  - The Belt: Called “The Three Kings”
- J.A. Seiss, *The Gospel in the Stars*, p. 105

Says Isaiah 40:26:

*“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.”*

Orion is truly a “second coming” constellation. In many constellations the war with the enemy is pictured as ongoing. But in Orion, the battle with the enemy is presented as complete. The enemy is in the grasp of the mighty hunter. He is being trodden

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underfoot. A lake (or river) of fire is flowing out from beneath his feet. Orion is the bright, glorious prince who comes in swift and sudden fashion to rescue his people from the terrible Enemy of Souls.

### **Further Considerations:**

There are at least three more matters of intense interest that need to be considered when considering the constellation, Orion. These are the associations connected with this part of the heavens, and the unique position of this constellation in the sky.

One of the most famous of modern nebulae is the Horsehead Nebula also found in Orion. The nebula in one place has taken on what seems to be the appearance of an onrushing horse. This feature has developed in recent centuries. The shapes of horses seem to often appear in these particular clouds.

Anyone acquainted with the doctrine of Christ's coming knows that it is often associated with a swift horse. Horses were the fastest form of transportation known in biblical times, and horses represent not only swiftness, but also judgment. In one of the greatest second coming descriptions in all of the Bible, John the Revelator, turning toward heaven looks "and behold, a white horse" comes, carrying Christ, the rider who approaches the earth. With him are the armies of heaven (Revelation 19:11ff.). Horses represent the swift and sudden approach of Jesus from heaven, and it seems that this symbol is to be found in Orion, at the very time in history when Christ's coming is expected.

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### **The Sharp Sickle**

Another interesting symbol found in Orion is the combined appearance of the sword and belt of this heavenly figure. It is shaped like a sickle. The sickle is also a second coming symbol. In Revelation also, Jesus is seen coming, seated on a cloud “and in his hand a sharp sickle” (Revelation 14:14).

### **A Bi-polar Constellation**

Another final matter of interest is the position of Orion in the heavens. Some constellations, like the Big Dipper, are found in our northern skies, viewed only from the Northern Hemisphere. Because the Dipper is near the North Star it stays visible year round in the North. It is a circumpolar constellation.

Other constellations are farther “south” to us, and during some times of the year they are not seen for a season in the northern hemisphere but are more visible in the southern hemisphere. These are bi-polar constellations, and Orion is one of these. It is positioned on the celestial equator and at times is visible in each hemisphere, respectively.

That Orion should be chosen as the “second coming” constellation is rather interesting because astronomically it is the best choice. If Christ is to come in the East, he would need to be visible to both hemispheres, and should the world be positioned correctly at the time, this is essentially possible. Just about any other place in the heavens would be rather impossible.

While God can engineer anything he likes, and certainly things will be turned upside down when Jesus comes, it is still interesting that

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### The Heavenly Zion and Orion

God has revealed that it is through some part of the constellation Orion that Jesus will come, or at least approach this earth. Let us explore a little further why this would be an appropriate location in the heavens for this to occur.

Of particular interest is that we are told that the holy city, the New Jerusalem, will come down through the “open space” wherever that is, whether it is an open space in the clouds through which Orion is seen or whether there is a particular open space in Orion itself that is referred to.

Another famous name for Jerusalem is Zion. It is called, “Zion, the city of our God.” The word “Zion” has several associate meanings, especially when one considers on the basis of the phonetic sound of the word.

“Zion” sounds the same as the Hebrew letter and number “zayin.” “Zayin” is the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet and was also used as a number, the number “7.” In another book in this star series, *The Creator of the Heavens*, some of these aspects and associations are discussed in greater detail.

But what we must notice here is that the constellation Orion has within it the general configuration of the letter, “zayin” or the number, “7.” Even the outlying portion of the constellation presents the figure of a “Z,” the English/Arabic equivalent of the letter, “zayin;” and within any modern “Z” one can easily find the configuration of the number “7.”

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, ז "Zion"

The striking similarity between the formation in the center of Orion, and the ancient letter “zayin” is really quite amazing. The top bar of the “7” matches “The Three Kings, or Belt; *Alnitak*, *Alnilam*, and *Mintaka*, and the leg matches the dim stars coming down the sword of Orion that contain the great nebulae in its center.

Modern fonts vary some, but these cannot be the test in this issue. The fact is that the number “7” can be found even in the modern “Z,” and the letter “zayin” was the numerical “7” of the Hebrew Bible. Linguists have written entire works on the notion that many ancient languages probably built their alphabet from the constellations themselves, anyway, so it should be no surprise that alphabetical letters could be associated with certain constellations.

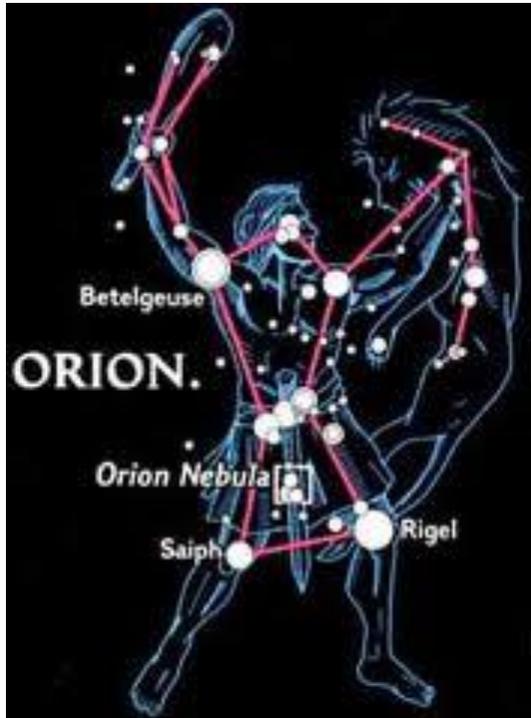
But it goes further. Says one source:

The meaning of Zayin--Zayin is a paradoxical word, since it means "weapon" or "sword," but derives from a root word that means "sustenance" or "nourishment." ....Since Zayin represents both the number 7 and a sword.....<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_One/Aleph-Bet/zayin.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/Aleph-Bet/zayin.html)

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Therefore, not only is there a relationship between Zion, the number 7, and what appears in the Orion complex, but we know that in Hebrew mysticism the word "zayin" has the meaning of a "sword!" Even to the ancients it looked like one, hanging from Orion's belt.

Consistently from the past and to even the present this line of stellar objects stringing down from the belt in Orion has been identified with a sword. It is called the "sword" of Orion, and in the exact middle position of this sword is the great nebula of Orion which has fascinated astronomers for centuries, and is no doubt the most

## *The Open Space in Orion*

famous of all nebulae. Angels with swords guarded the gate of paradise in the Edenic world. Why wouldn't a sword still guard the gate of heaven? This is a most interesting circumstance.

While we should be cautious not to make too much of this, even the most skeptical should admit that this confluence of circumstances does not seem to be merely accidental. Orion, the "second coming" constellation, associated in a number of ways with the heavenly realms, has associated with itself: the number 7 in several forms, the motif of "Zion," the city of God, a sword, and the grandest of all heavenly nebulae---"smack dab" in the middle of the entire complex, and exactly centered in the central number form as well.

## **The Bipolar Position of Orion and the Occidental Appearing of Christ**

Let us comment a little further on the idea given to Ellen White in vision that Jesus will appear to his waiting saints in **Orion** AND in the **east**. This is a fascinating astronomical prediction, unique as far as I know to Seventh-day Adventists, of which I, the author, am a loyal adherent.

Let us also make the assumption that if indeed this is the direction from which Christ will appear that it would happen in that part of the sky where it will be seen by as many people as possible. ("Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Revelation 1:7)

Remember also that Orion is a bi-polar constellation, and it is therefore a constellation that can be seen AT TIMES in both

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hemispheres. But only in certain months can it be seen by both, at the most extreme latitudes, at least.

So when is Orion in the East at nightfall and straddling, as it were, the celestial equator?

The time of the year that Orion makes this appearance is in the fall months of the year. It first appears in mid to late September, and then through the months that follow ascends in its position relative to the horizon across the sky. For those in northern latitudes, for instance, it traverses the southern sky and makes its brilliant march across the heavens in the deepest part of the night. But before long, as the months progress, it leaves its early evening extremely eastern orientation, and is positioned more toward the south and west by nightfall.

The writer Ellen White, in the book, *The Great Controversy*, makes the comment that "it is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people." (GC 636:2) I don't think this is meant to mean that the Second Coming of Jesus will happen and unfold in one mere minute or so, or even in just that very hour only. It will probably be ushered in by a series of signs over a much longer period of time, such as a daily enlarging cloud in the east, a star of hope, a rainbow, etc. etc. God will not have the grandest of all heavenly displays marking the event of His appearing be over in a matter of seconds, I'm sure.

But the chief revelation of Christ from heaven to this world, I believe, will happen at the most opportune time and under the best and ideal circumstances possible for what astronomy would demand. Therefore we can target a general time over which the center of

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Orion might be seen, "in the east," in the center of the hemispherical sky, and near local Midnight.

This probably should not be only when it appears upon the very horizon in equatorial latitudes, for millions would be unable to see it, especially in the more extreme northern and southern latitudes, and especially by those in mountainous locations. Many of God's people are pictured as retreating into these mountains to be protected during the most troublous times for this earth. God will not exclude them from these signs, signs particularly aimed at them to communicate hope and deliverance.

In the mountains where the author lives (Southern Oregon, U.S.A.) the horizons can often be blocked by up to 20 and 25 astronomical degrees, depending on one's location. The average may be 10-17 degrees, however, but it can vary significantly for others at other locations, depending on the landforms, latitudes, and which side of a mountain or whatever they are on. It seems viable that in many places the approaching regiment of heaven's armies needs to be at least 20 degrees ascendant in order to be seen by the most people at the same time in both latitudes.

If one places the glory cloud as much as 45 degrees ascendant, it then becomes no longer a circumstance that can be clearly defined as "in the east" because it is then between east and south, and without astronomical tools or instruments Orion's directional position could not be easily reckoned by the naked eye or at least by the natural judgment of the untrained observer. Therefore, Orion needs to be in an ideal position in a directly easterly direction, but high enough to be observed by the majority of people (in the 10/40 window), possible factoring in mountains and other obstructions as well. This would probably be best accomplished somewhere

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between 20-40 degrees ascendant, the average then being under 30 degrees. If it starts, though, as soon as reasonably possible, and then lasts through the night (it would be the same time for everyone the completely around the world as the world turns) it could reach the most ideal position, PERHAPS (!) at or near about 22.5 degrees, since this is exactly halfway between 0 and 45 degrees.

In the extreme northern latitudes (for instance, the same applies in a sense for the southern extremes); above 45 degrees, an object has to be quite high off the equatorial horizon to even be seen at all. For instance, in October, even at 45 degrees N, Orion never gets higher than 38 or 39 degrees at all. This therefore requires that the ideal position would be probably be somewhere above 20° at a latitude position of 45° in order for those at all the extremes to see it well at all.

Therefore, for interest, let us ask when all of these circumstances roughly come together: The center of Orion, in the east, on the celestial equator, at roughly 22.5 degrees ascendant, at midnight.

Again, the observer's position will make a difference. The author presently lives near the 45th parallel, a location a lot different than someone who lives on the Equator in Ecuador. So perhaps we should place ourselves in a central location, latitude wise, to get the best representative average location, thus ca. 22.5 degrees north or south, like Southern California (actually near 39°), or Texas, or Mexico. But we can experiment with several general latitudes to demonstrate the rough parameters.

In short, with all these things averaged, and factored together bring us to mid-October as the only time of year when these factors reach their most ideal configuration. The most likely target date might be

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around October 15-20 of a given year. This is very near the annual *Day of Atonement* time on the biblical calendar, if reckoned in the biblical way.

Below is a table of the general parameters of when the center of Orion can be viewed from different latitudes, between 0°, the horizon; to 45° ascendant.

| <b>Latitude</b> | <b>Beginning Date-0°</b> | <b>Ending Date-45°</b> | <b>Median Date</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| “0” Equator     | Sept. 14                 | Nov. 1                 | ca. Oct. 9,10      |
| “22.5” N        | Sept. 16                 | Nov. 9                 | ca. Oct. 10,11     |
| “45” N          | Sept. 23                 | Dec. 18*               | ca. Oct. 20        |
|                 |                          |                        |                    |

\*At 45° N the constellation only reaches a maximum ascension of about 38 to 39° at this time of the year. At the city of Salem, Oregon, that is situated on the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel, the center of Orion reaches a position of 22.5 (mid-mark of 45°) on October 22, at midnight, in the east.

Please don't run out and make an announcement that Jesus will come in mid-October of any given year. There have been too many “kooks” and “prognosticators” making such predictions and bringing incredible reproach upon the message of Jesus' coming. It is not our message to announce a date for the coming of Jesus, or even a time of the year. I don't think it ever will be our message to do that. What is important is not the date, but the fact that Jesus is coming. He knows best when that is to be, and when he wants it known he will write it across the sky with His very appearance.

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What I think is exciting about all of this, though, is that it makes sense, and exonerates our faith that the other things we have been told by reliable sources (I'm not one!) have the marks of being true. It adds additional evidence to the pool of knowledge that informs our overall faith system.

Astronomically, Jesus needs to come from the east, because it doesn't work well from any other direction! If any constellation must be associated astronomically with Christ's coming it must be Orion, for it is among the few that are bi-polar AND that situate themselves directly on the eastern horizon line. Orion actually centers itself on the "E" (for east) at the equator beginning around mid-September---the best possible position to be seen by both the northern and southern hemispheres.

Finally, it does so at a time of year that has been associated with the second appearing of Christ for millennia---and not so long ago by sincere Adventists. The types and symbols all point to the fact that we have not followed "cunningly devised fables" in teaching the approach of Christ to this earth. God has planned it for thousands of years, and it will take place exactly the way he prescribed it would, and his creation will be in exact sympathy with it when it happens---no doubt, whatsoever.

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Someday Jesus will come through Orion. It will be the great day of God Almighty. In this place in the heavens will be seen "the sign of the Son of man." The heavens themselves teach this astounding truth. It is the duty and privilege of every man and woman to prepare for that glorious day.

## Chapter 3

# The Dark Day

“THE DARK DAY”

Abraham Davenport

"Twas on a May-day of the far old year  
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell  
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring  
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,  
A horror of great darkness.  
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp  
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter  
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ  
Might look from the rent clouds, not as he looked  
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern  
As Justice and inexorable Law.  
Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts,  
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,  
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.  
'It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,'

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Some said; and then, as if with one accord,  
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.  
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice  
The intolerable hush. "This well may be  
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;  
But be it so or not, I only know  
My present duty, and my Lord's command  
To occupy till He come. So at the post  
Where He hast set me in His providence,  
I chose, for one, to meet Him face to face, --  
No faithless servant frightened from my task,  
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;  
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,  
Let God do His work, we will see to ours.  
Bring in the candles."<sup>3</sup>

And so wrote the poet John Greenleaf Whittier about the famous  
Dark Day of May 19, 1780.

The great dark day of May 19, 1780, is well attested to in history.  
Wrote one Samuel Williams:

*"In some places, the darkness was so great, that persons could not see to read common print in the open air, for several hours together: but I believe this was not generally the case. The extent of this darkness was very remarkable."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Greenleaf Whittier, "Abraham Davenport," in His "Complete Poetical Works" (Cambridge ed.; Boston: Houghton, 1894), p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Williams, "An Account of a Very Uncommon Darkness in the States of New England, May 19, 1780," in 'Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences: to the End of the Year 1783' (Boston: Adams and Nourse, 1785), Vol. 1, pp. 234, 235.

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Another reported:

*"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat 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, 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. Considering the small quantity of light that was transmitted by the clouds, by day, it is not surprising that, by night, a sufficient quantity of rays should not be able to penetrate the same strata, brought back the shifting of wind, to afford the most obscure prospect even of the best reflecting bodies."<sup>5</sup>*

Among the most famous citations related to the Dark Day were the remarks of statesman, Abraham Davenport, who felt it best to remain on duty in the Connecticut statehouse even if it were the judgment day:

*"The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkable day. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost. The legislature of Connecticut was then in session at Hartford. A very general opinion prevailed, that the day of judgment was at hand. The house of Representatives, being unable to transact their business, adjourned. A proposal to adjourn the Council was under consideration. When the opinion of Colonel [Abraham] Davenport was asked, he answered, 'I am*

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<sup>5</sup> Letter of Samuel Tenney (an eye-witness of Rowley, (Mass.?)), dated Exeter (NH?), Dec., 1785, in "Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society," Vo. 1, 1792 (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1792), pp. 97, 98.

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*against an adjournment. The day of judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause of an adjournment: if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles my be brought.*"<sup>6</sup>

The amazing Dark Day of 1780 is now considered by most to be a rather insignificant event, however. Great light is made of those who see in it any reference to a "sign of the end" of time, or a "supernatural" portent. Of course, these attitudes tend to be expressed by those who did not experience it.

Certain evidence exists that the Dark Day may have been caused by a combination of circumstances. Most believe that smoke was in the air as a result of forest and grass fires further in the frontier. This was combined with an unusually dark storm front that produced darkness over much of New England for much of the day and into the night. But again, these "official" explanations are generally offered by people living two hundred years after the event. This is also convenient.

What is important to recognize is that determining the cause of seemingly miraculous wonder in no way defeats the significance of certain events. What makes an event providentially important is dependant upon at least two factors: These are (1) the providential timing of the event, and (2) the way in which the event is perceived by those at the time. Many of God's miracles have "naturalistic" associations with them. When God divided the Red Sea, he used the

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<sup>6</sup> Timothy Dwight, quoted in "Connecticut Historical Collectons," compiled by John Warner Barber (2d ed.; New Haven: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1836), p. 403.

## *The Dark Day*

wind and probably other meteorological factors to accomplish it. The timing, however, is largely what constituted the miracle.

Even in some of Jesus' miracles he used temporal things to accomplish his design. He put clay on a blind man's eyes. He used a fish to provide the tax money. He didn't "create" the food for the five thousand, *ex nihilo*, but divided a small boy's lunch. None of these factors lessens the miracle. God has a right to use the tools of his own creation to accomplish his design. Skeptics in their generally foolish stupidity seem unable to recognize this.

The feeling experienced by many during the "Dark Day," was one of wonder and foreboding. Even educated legislators wondered if it were the Day of Judgment. The fact is, that while numerous natural explanations are offered today, nothing has ever been "proven" either way. The consensus at the time was that there was no clear explanation for what had happened.

It seems that reports made at the times speak of a thickening haze, the smell of smoke, nearby storms, and a layer of ash or soot that would indicate some validity to the fire and storm theory. And this is perfectly legitimate to recognize. But the skeptics and doubters have their own problems too, facts that are commonly and repeatedly overlooked.

The first concern is that for smoke to have come from forest fires in Canada or farther to the west, thus starting consequently even a week or two before this time, raises a puzzling question. The beginning of May is not a time for forest fires. Rarely do forest fires of this necessary magnitude occur when the grass is green, the forests are damp; especially in New England and Canada; extremely cold, damp, northern climates. The so-called reports of these fires is

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sketchy at best. No particular “out of control” fires were ever reported or documented.

The reference to the practice of settlers burning the clearings they have made in remote areas is inadequate as well. How many settlers would it take, with only a hand axe, to produce enough smoke to smother thousands of square miles and several states in impenetrable blackness? 1780 came toward the end of Revolutionary War, and there were only a very few settlers to be found in the West anyway.

While it is most likely true that the darkness was not exclusively “supernatural,” as it were, this does not negate the significance of the event. The fact remains even hundreds of years later that no “dark day” matches the depth, coverage, and effect of this particular day. We know of no day where state legislators have thought it was the judgment day because they could not see a piece of paper in front of their face and did not know why they couldn’t.

There are other dark days on record, usually coming in the summer months when fires occur. There will be many more dark days across the world in the future and especially in the final days leading up to the coming of Jesus. But it seems that the great Dark Day of May 19, 1780 had a purpose in God’s plan.

The signs listed in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 are listed in the same order as they occurred in history. This is no accident. Next, this day happened in the very cradle of the advent awakening, of modern times. It happened in the center of the first great civilization founded on the premise of civil and religious liberty. This too was no accident. And finally it was read by those who experienced it as a fulfillment of prophecy; at the very time it should have been expected. This is probably no accident either.

## *The Dark Day*

Those who wish to discredit the Dark Day of 1780 as a sign of the end tend to dismiss it on the ground that the darkness was only the result of a fire. But this very charge may actually validate the event in certain ways. The Bible speaks of the heavens at this time being black, “like sackcloth.” Sackcloth was made from black goat’s hair, and sackcloth is always associated with ashes (also black). In biblical times the current custom of mourning was carried on by the wearing of sackcloth and by pouring ashes, or soot over one’s head. The two practices were always associated together.

So what if some ashes fell from the sky as a result of a fire! Such a circumstance only fulfills the prophecy more accurately. The heavens indeed became as “sackcloth,” and “ashes!”

Further it must be said that the prophecy as given in Revelation, chapter 6, is not immediately followed by the actual coming of Christ. Indeed the people of the earth seem to suspect and believe at the time that the world is coming to an end, and call for the mountains and rocks; but Jesus does not come. The Revelation drama continues on with the call of the 144,000 in chapter 7. This is exactly what happened during the Dark Day, the Lisbon earthquake, and the meteor shower of 1833. Many people “wondered” if the Lord was coming. While they were mistaken, this is exactly how the prophecy describes it would be.

Therefore, while it may be unwise to zealously depend on these events alone for validity to the prophetic scheme, it is unwise to jettison them as totally insignificant. The Dark Day of May 19, 1780 is, no doubt, one of the signs of the end. It was a remarkable event, at the very least, even some two hundred years later is cited in the *Weather Almanac* as one of the most extraordinary days on

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record. The article, written by a meteorological Ph.D., is quoted in the following pages for those interested.

### **Weather Almanac for May 2004 NEW ENGLAND'S DARK DAY**

The abnormal darkening of daytime skies has often held fear and dread for humans and confusion among animals. There can be several causes for unexpected *dark days*: severe thunderstorms, solar eclipses, volcanic dust clouds and wildfire smoke and ash. Today, we are able to predict the exact moment of solar eclipses, and observation and communication networks keep us abreast of any severe storms, volcanic eruptions and wildfires. In 1780, however, this was not the case; information moved no faster than Paul Revere's ride. In May of that year, during a crucial time in the American Revolution, the skies over New England darkened, and no one knew why.

Though daytime skies for several days had been unusually coloured — a dirty yellow tinge with a reddish-hued sun — no one in New England was fully prepared for the darkness that descended over the region on the morning of 19 May. When an early descending darkness took hold around the noon hour, all life reacted. Birds began singing their evening songs, then went silent and disappeared from view; frogs began to peep. Chickens returned to their roosts, and cattle walked slowly back to their barns, thinking evening had descended. Human outdoor travel became difficult. Professor Daggett of New Haven, Connecticut reported: "The greatest darkness at least equal to what was commonly called candle-lighting in the evening. The appearance was indeed uncommon, and the cause unknown."

Opinions as to the cause of the darkness were mixed. Yale president Timothy Dwight observed: "It was the general opinion that the day of judgment was at hand." Many New Englanders abandoned their daily activities and congregated at hastily-convened religious services. Those with a more scientific viewpoint examined the sky and rain water that fell during the event to find a cause. In any case,

## ***The Dark Day***

the day would go down in history as "New England's Dark Day," "Black Friday" and even "The Wonderful Dark Day."

### **The Prelude**

From the many diaries available from the period, David Ludlum was able to reconstruct a general synoptic picture of the event and surrounding days over the American Northeast ("New England's Dark Day: 19 May 1780" *Weatherwise*, June 1972). The following summarizes his research:

For most of the preceding days of May, New England had been under the influence of cool temperatures and clear skies, indications of an anticyclonic influence with Canadian origins. Barometric records from Cambridge show high and steady pressure. In Salem, Massachusetts (records of Dr Edward Holyoke), the last rainfall had been observed on the 8th. Easterly winds on the 17th and 18th, indicate the high center now sat to the east. Several diaries reported a smoky aspect to the sky and a red hue to the sun for several hours after sunrise and before sunset.

The morning of the 19th dawned cloudy and cool at Salem, early morning temperature at 43°F (6.1°F). The barometer was falling and continued to do so until after 10 AM at Bradford MA. A southwest wind was blowing, indicating that eastern Massachusetts was in the warm sector of a low pressure-trough frontal system. Across portions of eastern New England, showers and thundershowers fell before noon. Clouds would prevail across the region for much of the day, giving a darkness to the day in general, but how much was water cloud and how much was something else — likely smoke particles as we shall see — we cannot fully determine.

### **The Event**

As the extraordinary darkness descended, those observing it wondered if it was a local phenomenon or more widespread. With no rapid communication networks in place, the only way to determine the extent

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of the darkening was through letters and newspapers from across the region. After the event, Professor Samuel Williams of Harvard College undertook the collection of such information from across the region. He was able to determine that notice of the darkness was taken as far south as northern New Jersey and New York City coastal waters, as far north as Portland, Maine and west into the Hudson Valley, but no mention came from Philadelphia or outlying Pennsylvania. (The New Jersey report came from George Washington's diary at Morristown.) Williams concluded the dark centre of the event was located around northeastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine.



**Site Map for New England Communities Mentioned in Text**

At Rupert, New York along the Vermont border, the sun rose greatly obscured and remained so until late morning. At the eastern extreme, at Barnstable MA on Cape Cod, the event began around 2 PM with peak obscurity around 5:30 PM. Thus, calculated Ludlum, the obscuring "cloud" took about seven and a half hours to move from Rupert to Barnstable, a distance of 180 miles (289 km) and thus advanced with a speed of 25 mph (40 km/h).

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At Harvard College, student Nathan Read recorded frequent observations of the darkness. His first remark that something was extraordinary came at 10:30 AM: "An uncommon degree of darkness comminied [commenced?] while increased pretty rapidly." At 11 AM, he noted: "Mr Wigglesworth not able to read in a large bible by a window." At 12:21 PM, he added: "Mr W. not able to read the running title of a large Bible. — Candles are in common use..."

For Read, the darkness peaked at 12:45 PM: "...not able to read to determine the time of day, by a china faced watch, in S.W. room having three windows." Shortly thereafter, the darkness abated from its depth so that by 1:10 PM, he commented: "Cocks have continued to crow as at day breaking." But the afternoon continued dark, "the same as common in a thick cloudy day."

The intensity of the darkness was described by many observers:

"In some places, the darkness was so great, that persons could not see to read common print in the open air.... The extent of this darkness was very remarkable." Prof. Samuel Williams, Cambridge MA.

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light.... A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes was equally invisible with the blackest velvet." Dr Samuel Tenney of Rowley, (MA?), letter dated from Exeter (NH?).

"By 12, I could not read anywhere in the house — we were forced to dine by candle light. It was awful and surprising." Rev. Ebenezer Parkham, Westborough, MA.

## THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS



**Artist's Rendition of Dark Day of 1780 from *Our First Century* by Richard M. Devens (1880)**

Prof. Daggett remarked the low-level clouds took "a strange yellowish and sometimes reddish appearance...an unusual yellowness in the atmosphere made clean silver nearly resemble the colour of brass." Nathan Read saw "a uniform cloud appeared of a cast compounded of a faint red, yellow & brown." Others remarked on the hue thrown on grass and foliage. "An uncommonly lovely verdure, a deepest green, verging on blue," observed Williams. Dr Samuel Tenney viewed "so enchanting a verdure as could not escape notice, even amidst the unusual gloom that surrounded the spectator."

Our biggest clue as to the cause of the darkness comes from the observations of Williams of the nature of the rain that had fallen on Cambridge. "The water...was found to have an uncommon appearance, being thick and dark and sooty...I examined a quantity of this matter; and in taste, colour and smell, it very plainly appeared to be nothing more than what the gentleman observed at Ipswich, — the black ash of burnt leaves, without any sulphureous, or other mixtures." In Ipswich MA, rainwater collected in tubs was covered by a black scum like ashes and gave a strong sooty smell, according to Reverend John Lathrop. Jeremy Belknap of Boston noted the air smelled like a "malt-house or coal-kiln" during the darkness.

### **Impacts**

Regardless of the true cause, the event brought concern to many, fearing the anger of God or demons. At Salem, it was reported "persons in the streets became melancholy and fear seized all. Prof. Daggett remarked "the inhabitants were

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thrown into a perhaps unnecessary consternation, as if the appearance were preternatural." In Stratham, New Hampshire, the darkness "caused great terror in the minds of abundance of people." In Ipswich Rev. Lathrop "found the people at the tavern nearby much agitated."

The most interesting reaction came from the Connecticut Legislature sitting at Harford. The general opinion of many legislators was that the day of judgment was at hand. In the House of Representatives, members being unable to transact their business adjourned, according to Timothy Dwight. A move to adjourn the Council was opposed by Colonel Abraham Davenport who purportedly rose in opposition. "I am against an adjournment. The day of judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause of an adjournment: if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I move that candles be brought, and we proceed to business." (Davenport has been immortalized for this stand in a poem "Abraham Davenport" by John Greenleaf Whittier.)

### **A Likely Cause**

Professor Williams reasoned that the cause of the darkness was due to an atmosphere highly charged with "vapours" which refracted, reflected, absorbed, and thus greatly weakened the incoming sunlight. He was close. The most plausible cause for those "vapours" was wildfire ash and particles based on both his and Lathrop's observations of the rainwater. The particulate burden likely came from forest fires burning in the wilderness to the north that was drawn into the synoptic circulation. (A poem, thought to have been written in 1780 but not published until 1833, suggested burning woods in New Hampshire "sent smoke up dense and smothering.")

There are local antecedents for such a source of particles affecting daylight. In September 1881, smoke from forest fires in Ontario and Michigan blanketed the Northeast with an eerie haze that reduced sunlight dramatically — though not as great as the Dark Day of 1780. Estimates at Harvard put the sunlight received that day at one tenth the level of an average cloudy day. Another event, "The Great Smoke Pall" of 1950 emanating from western Canada forest fires covered the region with a dense smoke cloud. And most recently during July 2002, dozens of forest fires raging across northern Quebec sent a thick smoky haze southward as far as Washington, DC. The smoke cloud prompted health advisories in Quebec, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

# THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

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THE WEATHER DOCTOR  
May 1, 2004

*The Weather Doctor's Weather Almanac: New England's Dark Day,*  
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## **Chapter 4**

# **The Glories of the Rainbow**

### **The Rainbow:**

The refraction of the sunlight by droplets of water which form the rainbow has fascinated men for ages. To the ancient Greeks the rainbow was a messenger of the gods. The Hindus regard the rainbow as symbolizing both war and peace. Scandinavians have considered it a bridge uniting heaven and earth.

The rainbow is another sign in the sky that gives continual testimony to the Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth.

The power of this beautiful symbol has been largely diminished by moderners because its cause can be scientifically explained. The magic is considered lost. Rainbows can be created with simple prisms that bend and diffuse the light particles that fall out in the

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color spectrum. Light that passes through clouds or mist, form the rainbows we see in the heavens.

But do science and knowledge really explain away the miracle of a rainbow?

The glorious spectrum of color that emanates from a powerful light source argues for a divine order and plan. When a prism breaks light into the color spectrum, and the rich colors array themselves on the wall or floor, one is inclined to gasp with wonder and amazement. The colors, when the energy source is adequate, are richer than could ever be produced in any artificial laboratory. With stunning beauty the rainbow of color has the power to affect the attitude and feelings of the beholder. More than once, as I have looked at the variety and richness of the color spectrum, my heart has been strangely warmed, and love and joy fills my inner being. Try if you might, and frown at a rainbow.

God could have made everything in black and white only. But his broad purposes have created the variant wavelengths of light to provide us with a profusion of distinct colors and combinations. In the color wheels can be found literally thousands of different colors. These colors match their counterparts in the entire creation in its multiplicity; in the birds, the fish, the flowers, the trees, and plants.

What is entertaining is to determine how many places the rainbow may be found. The color spectrum is not found only in the rainbow in the sky. It is found in many other things as well.

When one looks at a sunset on a clear evening all the colors of the rainbow may be detected if one looks carefully. Nearest the horizon will sometimes appear the purple and violet hues. Above this is

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found the blue, then various shades of green and pink and orange. Highest up the spectrum is completed by the return to the red/purple/blue tones blending into the blackness.

Careful viewing of mountain and desert scenes may reveal the entire spectrum as well. The rainbow effect may be seen most anywhere. I have seen it powerfully represented, while living in Alaska, in the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). I have seen it diving underwater in Hawaiian reefs. I have seen it in seashells. I've seen it in sand. I've seen it in precious stones. I've even seen it in the beveled glass mirror on our bedroom dresser. The most novel suggestion I have heard is the geologist who saw it in the order of the geological column. Indeed, perhaps, it is everywhere, at least, that light or creation may be found. In verity, *light* is the foundation of all creation (Gen. 1:3, John 1:1-9).

When viewed from an airplane, the rainbow can make a complete and perfect circle. Some looking down from the lip of a latent volcanic cone have gazed down through the mist and have seen the same phenomenon. In other settings the rainbow may appear almost flat across the horizon. Usually, however, it is seen as half a circle, a bow. This circumstance can only mean that God's promise while true and faithful, awaits its final and complete manifestation in the future.

Most important, however, is what is traditionally represented by the rainbow. When the first rainbow was first observed, God instructed Noah on how to understand this sign. Since then believers have said that the rainbow teaches that the world will never again be overwhelmed by a world-wide flood. This promise, while completely true, is only part of the meaning of the rainbow.

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More to the point, a rainbow is symbol of love and promise. It is a symbol of a covenant, a promise based on truth and high regard. Marriage is an example of a love covenant. When God sent Noah from the ark, he renewed his covenant with man, promising to love and protect him. Tradition says that the first rainbow was given to Noah and his family at the time of the Feast of Pentecost. Supposedly God renewed the covenant with Abraham on the very same holiday. He also renewed his covenant with Israel in the clouds at Sinai on the Day of Pentecost. There are other such covenant renewals indicated in the Scripture. Thus the rainbow signals that God is good on his promise, and that he loves his people with an everlasting love. He promises he will hold up his end of the bargain if they hold up theirs.

### *A Symbol of God's Covenant Love*

In the most direct terms the rainbow is simply meant to be an indication of God's love and favor. It is always seen when God renews his covenant blessings upon his people (Rev.4:1ff.). Whenever it is seen by man, it is to remind him that God is love and that he is true to his promises:

*"The Lord has said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. . . . And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." **In the rainbow above the throne is an everlasting testimony that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** Whenever the law is presented before the people, let the teacher of the truth point to the throne arched with the **rainbow of promise, the***

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*righteousness of Christ. The glory of the law is Christ; he came to magnify the law, and to make it honorable. Make it appear distinct that mercy and peace have met together in Christ, and righteousness and truth have embraced each other.”*

*“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the **union of the sunlight and the shower**, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the **combined power of mercy and justice**. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world's Redeemer, and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, "Thy gentleness hath made me great.”<sup>7</sup>*

*“A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a **symbol of God's mercy** encompassing the earth. When man by his great wickedness provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man's intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God's great mercy and compassion for erring man; also the rainbow above the throne and upon his head emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man.”<sup>8</sup>*

In effect then, John 3:16 is written on the layers of the rainbow. In the spectrum of colors is seen the work of salvation, in its truth and beauty. In the rainbow is seen faith and hope, truth and redemption, promise and royal reward. It should excite the faith of any believer every time he beholds this heavenly wonder. The purple reminds us

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<sup>7</sup> *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 12-13-92.

<sup>8</sup> *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3, p. 75:

## THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

of the royal destiny, the eternal life promised to the believer. The reddish hues remind us of the blood of Calvary and the love of God expressed for every believer. The green can remind us of the living faith that leads to eternal life.

The rainbow will be evident in the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation. The covenant is written there to make the promises of God permanent. The glorious symbol of God's everlasting covenant will appear in colorful array throughout all the realms of the heaven and earth.

When Jesus comes, God's faithful people, whether hidden in mountain retreats, or peering through prison bars will see another glorious manifestation of this rainbow of promise (*The Great Controversy*, p. 636 #0). They will know exactly what it means. It will mean that Jesus is coming and that he is renewing his covenant with the faithful. It will mean that they can look up for their redemption draweth nigh. Though the clouds be dark, and trouble abides on every hand, their Redeemer and Deliverer is near to fulfill his promise to his waiting remnant. Great will be the reward of those who rest in faith upon the God of mercy and truth.

## Chapter 5

# The Shaking of the Heavens

Again we visit a citation visited earlier in this volume that refers to a celestial sign in the heavens. In 1848 the writer Ellen White received a vision providing information regarding an expected aberration among the heavenly bodies:

*“December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said “heaven,” in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said “earth” He meant earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.... (EW 41.1)*

*I saw that the powers of earth are now being shaken and that events come in order. War, and rumors of war, sword, famine, pestilence are first to shake the powers of earth, then the voice of God will shake the sun, moon, and stars, and this earth also. I saw that the shaking of the powers of Europe is not, as some teach, the shaking of the powers of heaven, but it is the shaking of the angry nations.” (41.2)*

This concept of the shaking of the powers of heaven is not a unique or sensational idea conjured up by Ellen White, however. The

## THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

prediction that the powers of the heaven would be shaken comes from the serious words of Christ himself. Jesus told his disciples that "the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Matthew 24:29). This is perhaps the only unfulfilled prediction in all of Matthew 24, with the exception of the "sign of the coming of the Son of man." The context indicates that the shaking of the powers of heaven is one of the very last events to take place immediately before Jesus appears.

There is no use in making the same mistake as those in Ellen White's day, who taught that the shaking of the powers of heaven really refers to the shaking of temporal nations. Jesus uses the word "heaven," and he speaks of this event as if it is "real," and not "spiritual."

The powers of the heavens can mean nothing other than the principle luminaries in our sky. These are the sun, and moon, and perhaps the brightest stars and planets. But the objects that particularly dominate our sky are the sun and the moon. The inference is that at some time, they are to be "shaken."

When this might occur, exactly, will be further addressed later. One thing is for certain, however, is that it will occur near the very end of this earth's history, and probably in near context to the actual coming of Jesus. This will be a troublous time for this earth. And by the time Jesus appears we do know that all of nature, including the heavenly bodies, will have been turned out of its course (see *Great Controversy*, etc.). At about this general time, Jesus himself said, that "the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Matthew 24:29).

## *The Shaking of the Heavens*

The word "shaken" is in a way a misleading translation. The word earthquake, *seismos*, comes from the same word. In parallel it not only means "to shake," but has the force of, "to move." Thus an earthquake is described even in *Revelation* as the time when "every mountain and island **were moved out of their places**" (6:14). "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (16:20).

So in effect, Jesus was saying the powers of heaven would be moved out of their places as one of the signs of the end of time.

Events described as occurring during the final time of trouble demand astronomical consideration. These phenomena may last or be manifest over the course of several days or weeks. Of course God can accomplish anything he wishes, and as quickly as he wishes. Yet he usually uses natural means to accomplish his designs. Phenomena are predicted that make no sense today in our orderly world, but that will nevertheless happen just the same. Incredible anomalies will appear.

The writer, Ellen White, makes a curious statement that applies to this general time and would be preposterous for most anyone else to make. Yet she makes a confident and daring statement:

"The sun appeared at midnight and the moon stood still." (EW 34).

How could this possibly happen, one might ask? Now simply God has the divine ability to re-arrange the heavens if he wishes, or to make them only "appear" to be removed from their places. But God's signs are usually more than *hocus pocus*, or sleight of hand. His divinity and power are manifest in his unique ability to do things that are truly supernatural and worthy of his nature.

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Somehow, and likely prior to the time in which the sun appears at midnight and the moon stands still, a great celestial aberration will have to take place. The very forces of nature must be overturned over the lapse of time.

It is possible that there could be a shift of the earth's axis in store for this world at the end of time. Those who live in Alaska and other places of the north (or extreme south) know what being nearer the pole can do to the perceived length of a day or night. I personally remember people mowing their lawns near midnight in the summer. In winter the sun went down at 1:00 p.m.--- in the early afternoon. This circumstance can make many things seem to be out of equilibrium. But even this type of phenomenon may not fully answer all the requirements of the biblical prediction.

A personal theory of this author is that this phenomenon is related to those events described in the fourth trumpet/plague of Revelation (8:12), where the sun, moon, and stars fail to be seen for a third of the *time*, day and night. If, for instance, the rotation of the earth would somehow begin to gradually slow down it would soon fall out of sync with our twenty-four hour clocks. Soon part of the "day" would be dark, and part of the "night" would be day. In this case the sun could finally also appear through the clouds ca. the midnight hours. When the rotation of the earth finally ground to a halt, the sun and the moon would appear to stand still<sup>9</sup> as well. The whole course of nature would be out of course. Nothing would be in its proper place, and the powers of the heavens would indeed be "shaken," or "moved," to the perspective of an earthling.

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<sup>9</sup> Of course, this circumstance has actually happened before in history according to Joshua 10:12-14.

## *The Shaking of the Heavens*

Indeed, 1/3 of a day (ca. 4 hrs.), and 1/3 of a night (ca. 4 hrs.), somehow approximates the necessary calculation to cause the sun to appear in certain seasons, at about midnight.<sup>10</sup>

Would the stopping, slowing, or reversing of the earth's rotation also cause the streams to cease flowing, or for earthquakes to flourish? We don't fully know, and there may be several problems with even the best suggestions. All we can claim is that indeed the world will be in a mode of disequilibria. If the earth veered from its course it could also experience incredible trauma and perhaps anti-gravity. It would also be the source of incredible changes in temperature, climate, and most other equilibriums. Whatever the case, the God of universe can easily make it all happen, perhaps in a variety of ways.

In the Scripture the Day of the Lord is regularly associated with the earth and sky falling out of equilibrium. It is a day of darkness, clouds, smoke, and celestial aberrations. God will arise and “shake terribly the earth.”

Says the Lord in the book of Isaiah:

***“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.***

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<sup>10</sup> It may be that certain ones are right in teaching that the 1/3 dimming of the sun, moon and stars, is just that, a partial dimming. During the Dark Day of May 19, 1780, about a third of the day was effected followed by about a third of the night. If this is the case in Revelation 8 the prophecy may still be fulfilled according to this intention. But the events of the final days seem to surpass these characteristics.

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*For the stars of heaven and constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. . . .*

*Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*” Isaiah 13: 9,10, 13. (Context—“Fall of Babylon”).<sup>11</sup>

Some incredible things are yet to be seen on our planet before its final end. To some these may cause fear. I must admit, however, that these things are interesting to me, and in a proper sense I look forward to witnessing or experiencing them.

One reason is that I am anxious that the King of all the earth come and make things right on this earth. Another reason is that it is wonderful to witness the greatness of God’s power. Viewing the great displays of his power can give us confidence that he able to do above and more than we can ask or think. He is able to save to the uttermost those who put their trust in him. The signs of the heavens, when authored by the Most High, are signals of mercy and hope to the waiting believer.

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<sup>11</sup> There is also an interesting text found in the Old Testament book of Amos. Note what it says: “And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:” (vs. 8:9,KJV). Note that noon-setting of the sun in this eschatological passage is exactly twelve hours separated from the above mentioned midnight-“rising” of the sun; a perfect and complimentary correspondence.

## Chapter 6

# Signs of a Supernatural Character

*“Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.” Luke 21:11.*

In the year 1908 the authoress Ellen White wrote:

As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled.... **Fearful sights of a supernatural character** will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Maranatha, p. 210.

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Not all the signs in the heavens come as a result of the working of the Most High God. Especially in these last days of this world's history this particular fact is important to realize. Satan is the "Prince of the Power of the Air" (Eph 2:2), and is a supernatural being with supernatural powers. He is active not only in the earthly realms, but in the heavenly realms as well.

Because atheists and agnostics discount the existence of Satan and his hosts they are left in great perplexity toward the clear manifestations of Satan's power in the heavens. They seek scientific explanations for these things and cannot always determine their cause. Their only choice is to deny that such appearances and phenomena exist, or to reduce them to a hoax.

The total atheist is perhaps in a safer position (though still dangerous, of course), however, than the person who has a tendency to believe in the supernatural, yet refuses to acknowledge the work of Satan and his angels. This is the tenuous position taken by much of the world. They honor what they see with their eyes, and with what fascinates them as sensational and mysterious. Without the firm foundation of the Scriptures, that clearly provides the answer to these strange manifestations; and with no firm hold on the God, they are left to be tricked and manipulated by the powers of darkness. They are easy victims of Satan's designs.

Some of the great signs of the heavens in the final days of this world's history will have their source in Satanic and Spiritualistic agencies. Among these "signs of the heavens," are such things as "unidentified flying objects," or UFO's. Related are such phenomena as "alien visitation," or "alien-abductions," "light-phenomena," "crop circles," and mysterious and unique "cloud

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formations.” Ufology, or the studied interest in unidentified flying objects, has reached the level of a “craze” in the modern generation.

Reported sightings of UFO’s number in the millions. The number and nature of the sightings in history point to a phenomena far surpassing the common hoax. While no doubt a large number of the sightings are only mere reflections, deliberate hoaxes, military experiments, or imaginary or mistaken objects, the veracity associated with their occurrence is greater than many realize. Dana James Koenig provides a brief but informative profile of the history of unidentified flying objects:

"Surprisingly, UFO sightings go back as far as our historical records. Bright, glowing, mysterious, objects in the sky have been reported as far back as 90 B.C.

Even Columbus reported seeing a "flying ship" at the Bermuda Triangle on October 11, 1492.

On June 24, 1947, pilot Kenneth Arnold was flying over the Cascades near Mt. Rainer when he saw what he described as "flying saucers" skipping along the clouds like stones on a pond. This is where the term "flying saucer" came from. Usually this type of sighting would have been ridiculed but Arnold's good reputation forced the press to give the sighting serious attention.

Just a few days later on July 2, 1947 on a ranch near Roswell, NM, a flying disk apparently crashed. Small, greenish-white bodies and a strange foil-like substance were said to have been found around the wreckage.

The Army announced, at first, that it had the wreckage of a flying saucer in custody. A day later, however, they said it was just a weather balloon.

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In 1954 thousands of sightings were reported. Flying saucers were even sighted flying over the White House. There were so many that year that pilots were sighting 8-10 UFO's a night.

In 1963 astronomers at Mt. Palomar observatory reported seeing 260 UFO's flying across the moon. The number of sightings in 1963 was *well over a million*. Among those who saw the flying saucers were- 11 trained USAF observers; 6 trained USN observers; 4 trained USMC observers; 4 trained Army observers; 14 scientists and 40+ airline pilots. Could they all have been wrong?

### **The Abductee Phenomenon**

In 1961 Betty and Barney Hill lost 2 hours and 35 miles from their car trip in New England. It was reportedly discovered, under hypnosis, that they had been taken aboard an alien space craft and were probed medically and then returned to their car in a state of amnesia. They were the first known alien abductees.

In the 1980's Raymond Fowler and Whitley Streiber began investigating alien abductions. They discovered that more and more people were having abduction experiences.

Since the late 1980's reports of alien abduction have skyrocketed. The respected Harvard psychiatrist, Dr. John Mack, states that he believes that 4-5 million Americans believe that they have been abducted by aliens.

It seems as though UFO's are a real phenomenon. The sightings can't all be phony. After all, there have been millions of sightings and 5% of them (which is a lot) have been totally unexplainable."<sup>13</sup>

Unidentified flying objects have been seen most everywhere, though reports seem to proliferate mostly in North America. Hollywood

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<sup>13</sup> Dana James Koenig, "Another Alien Invasion?" Internet Source.

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has banked in on the craze creating numerous box office hits about close encounters with space aliens and a preoccupation with *Star Wars*, and many other-worldly dramas. Radio personalities, beginning with Orson Wells' "War of the Worlds" have contributed to the sensation. Art Bell, a radio talk show host has dedicated multiple hours each night to the discussion of the paranormal and UFOs and has been one of the most listened to hosts in history. According to some sources, the U.S. government has spent millions of tax dollars trying to contact aliens.<sup>14</sup>

Write the authors of the book, *Entertaining Spirits Unaware: The End-Time Occult Invasion*:

"During the last twenty-five years, UFOs have allegedly been sighted over nearly every major city worldwide, as well as over military bases and nuclear sites. From the rural backwoods to the main streets of our cities, sightings of unexplained phenomenon in the skies continue to mount. Entire city populations have witnessed UFO events that local governments could not explain, most notably a saucer-shaped UFO which hovered over downtown Mexico City in broad daylight, producing thousands of eyewitnesses in July of 1997. Pictures and video of that sighting were broadcast around the world. To this date, the much-reported event remains unexplained."<sup>15</sup>

Many famous personages have fueled the sensation caused by UFO's by reporting personal sightings or by testifying to their belief in their validity. By 1973 a poll indicated that fifteen million Americans had personally seen a UFO. In July, 2000, one informal investigation reports that internet web sites providing information on

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<sup>14</sup> Several citations are made to Eric Barger and David Benoit's book, *Entertaining Spirits Unaware: The End-Time Occult Invasion*, Hearthstone Publishing Ltd, 2000, chapter 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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UFOs calculated at about 428,405.<sup>16</sup> Interest in UFO's will probably continue, if not greatly increase, until the end of time. It is important that God's people understand the issues involved in all of these phenomena. It is not intellectually honest or wise to totally deny or to ignore them. They are signs in the heavens, that should be understood for what they really are, and explained as such to a confused world.

While the testimonials may be entirely convincing, the Christian must be aware that Satan's sophistry is to be manifest in such a nature as "to deceive the very elect." Therefore such reports should

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. "Until 1954, only ten thousand people claimed that they had seen a UFO. However, it was around this time that the number of sightings skyrocketed. On November 29, 1973, a Gallup poll reported that fifteen million Americans had personally seen UFOs. Senator Barry Goldwater believed he saw a UFO. Boxer Muhammed Ali and Prince Charles both say they saw UFOs. Actor William Shatner claims that his motorcycle stopped in the desert and UFOs led him to safety. Even former president Jimmy Carter claims to have seen a UFO. Christopher Columbus reportedly saw UFOs four hours before he discovered America in 1492. And then there was the highly publicized sighting that guitarist Jimi Hendrix believed he had at the Woodstock Pop Festival in 1968. However, we surmise in Hendrix's case that what he thought he saw was probably induced by the LSD he had taken! But what about the millions of others?"

"Perhaps for us the most impressive barometer of just how expansive the study and discussion of UFOs has become happened during the writing of this book (*Entertaining Spirits*). While researching, we went to the World Wide Web and entered the term "UFO" into the powerful Inktomi search engine, which gleans prospective web sites across the Internet according to any desired search term. The results were staggering. As of mid-July 2000, the Inktomi search engine, which supplies Yahoo, AOL, MSN, Canada.com, and other search engines and directories with data, recorded a whopping **428,405** Internet web sites with information on UFOs! And that is just a partial figure, for the technology used in search engines normally picks up only the sites where embedded keywords actually reflect the exact term being searched for, such as "UFO"! Truly, the phenomenal interest surrounding UFOs has reached uncanny proportions today."

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be measured in this light. One of the most famous cases in North America involves a man who went fishing one day by a certain river. He claims that he saw a spacecraft of incredible speed and mobility land just yards away from him. It was extremely hot, yet he approached it. Suddenly it took off, the exhaust or heat streaming from a grill-like covering or exhaust vent. He was severely burned on the chest and his wounds were verified by the famous Mayo Clinic, and are claimed to match the general pattern of the supposed grill-like vent.

But like so many of the stories, several inconsistencies appear. Why would one approach and venture to almost touch something so intensely hot that its heat could be felt a hundred or more yards away? Why did no one else see the same object? If the spaceship was so hot, why didn't it burn everything in sight around it? And who is say the entire experience was simply a journey in the man's own mind? The brain is a powerful enough agency to produce such experiences and even produce psycho-somatic reactions of significant magnitude. The easiest way for Satan to produce such incredible objects is not to manufacture them in reality, but to produce them through drugs, hypnosis, and illusions. Such conditions are often directly related to the testimony and presumed experience of many such subjects.

Another related phenomenon, crop circles, have captured the interest of millions. While not a sign in the sky, the heavens are believed to be the source of many of these strange patterns, for often no footprints or earthly evidence seems to remain at the scene. While simple crop circles have been successfully created by those seeking to prove that they are only a hoax, these same investigators have not been successful in recreating the more complex circles, especially,

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given the same circumstances and with the exact replication and thoroughness found in the “originals.”

Of notable interest is where these phenomena usually occur. Predominantly they are found in such places as the central and northern part of the British Isles. For centuries this part of the world was immersed in deep spiritualism and satanic ritual. One of the modern capitals of *Spiritism* is found in this vicinity. The Druids operated for centuries in these parts and introduced the world to witchcraft, the practices of Halloween, and the false worship of the heavens. Bone fires (bonfires) were lit to exorcise the spirits from the dead bones of men, or presumably to protect the departing spirits from other the evil powers. These regions are sacred to modern manifestations of Spiritualism; such as Wicca, Demonology, and the New Age. New Age thinking is everywhere linked with the paranormal, with *Spiritism*, and with UFOs. This is no idle charge or claim, but is easily verified, advertised to the world by New Age proponents themselves.

Satan proliferates his prowess in the places and in the ways that will cause the most consternation and sensation. In countries where he is not feared or identified, he operates in ways that cloak his real purposes in mystery and seclusion. In countries where Christian practice and understanding is popular he modifies his purposes to exploit the demonic doctrines embraced in those districts. But it should be no mystery to the Christian that Satan and his angels are behind many of these supernatural visitations. They will increase in both number and variety as the time for this earth closes. Satan is preconditioning the world for further deception, or he is seeking to distract people's minds from the purposes of the true God of the Heavens.

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God acts openly and without disguise. He clearly predicts in the Scripture which signs are of him, and what those very signs are intended to mean. Satan, on the other hand, operates in disguise leaving the onlooker puzzled and without explanation.<sup>17</sup> He laughs when he hears agnostic “fools,” pretending to be wise scientists, give their flimsy explanations for the manifestations of his power.

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<sup>17</sup> “One would think that if aliens actually desired to make contact that we would have at least one rock-solid, irrefutable close encounter of the third kind, complete with credible eyewitnesses and proof to substantiate it beyond question, before the military could seal off the area and deny everything. If they actually wanted to make contact with us and really are of superior intelligence, wouldn’t you think that by now they would have figured out that the best way to do so is to actually appear and land in a populated area—not Roswell, New Mexico, or Sedona, Arizona? This rather diminishes the argument that New Agers have advanced, which states that aliens are here to teach us and help us stave off elimination as a race. As a New Age author or leader, wouldn’t it do wonders for your ego (and probably your checkbook as well), to believe that otherworldly beings have picked *you* out of the over five billion inhabitants of earth to communicate their still–secretive agenda to?”

We can deduce as well that if alien beings were casing earth for a possible takeover, they would have likely made their move by now. If they can come from other worlds, it stands to reason that their technology, and presumably their intelligence, could overpower us quicker than you can say, “Take me to your leader.” No, it appears that so far UFOs have purposely eluded mankind for the most part, being revealed only enough to let the mystique and speculation build to unprecedented heights.”

“It is our personal belief that the UFO/alien phenomenon is one hundred percent inspired and engineered by Satan. They are actually demonic materializations in a very well orchestrated plan to deceive mankind and condition him to accept the supernatural in the end days. Thus, any alien beings that have been sighted or communicated with are demonic in nature. In fact, we believe in the very real possibility that aliens/UFOs could play a defining role in either events surrounding the explanation of the Rapture of the church and/or the subsequent rise to power of the Antichrist. We are not alone in this belief. Some of the greatest Christian minds of this century, including Dr. Walter Martin, thought the same.”

Jay Allen Hynek, probably the world’s foremost expert on ufology, said: “I do not believe they are coming from another planet. I believe they are coming from a parallel reality.”

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Such men and women even attempt to detect spiritualistic activity with scientific instruments. No such method will really work. It is by the fruit, that a Christian is instructed to examine the work of the enemy, and by this method Satan's designs can be easily detected and diagnosed.

While many of these phenomena may simply be distortions or freaks of nature, or they might be hoaxes, or they are experiments conducted by military scientists, many of them have a supernatural signature. These relatively few inexplicable reports should not trouble the informed and sensible Christian. He knows from whence they come. They have been long expected, and are part of the ongoing deception perpetrated by the Evil One. Instead of puzzling incessantly, or devising grand theories or explanations, the confident Christian can see in these strange reports a sign of the times. He can look up, for his redemption draws nigh. He can trust to the God who controls the universe, and who guards his people from the one who is the real "alien intruder." They must not be distracted by Satan's machinations, but watch and be ready for the glorious manifestation of Christ across the entire heavens, a coming that cannot be counterfeited. Christ will not come in the desert, or in the secret places, or in the inner rooms. He will come so openly, that both wicked men and demons will flee to the mountains and rocks and hide. There will be no question, no mystery. It will have complete documentation. Everyone will know for certain.

## Chapter 7

# Seeing is Not Believing

### Celestial Signs of Satanic Origin

*“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of the heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.”* Jeremiah 10:2

*“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”* Matthew 24:23,24

### Marian Phenomena

The Marian phenomenon, which to the present day consists of tens of thousands of sightings, or apparitions of Mary, the mother of Christ, is clearly a deception on a massive scale. Careful students of the Bible know that each sighting of Mary is not authentic, for the

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Bible clearly teaches that the dead are dead, and that Mary the mother of Jesus is resting in her grave until the resurrection. Yet, the enormous numbers of sightings and the impact that the Marian movement is having in the world today demands consideration. Because many of these sightings are associated with phenomenon in the sky we are inclined to make a few comments relative to them.

This is why Jesus made specific statements of warning concerning various signs and manifestations that he knew were to come in the future. He warned:

*"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24: 23.*

Satan is active today in proliferating his forms of deception<sup>18</sup>, and many things appear in the heavens on which Christians need to obtain counsel. The design imbedded in these manifestations is a blatant attempt by Satanic forces to deceive God's very own people. Therefore it is paramount that Christians understand the nature of these phenomena.

### The History of the Marian Movement

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<sup>18</sup> "Satan's masterpiece of deception is popery; and while it has been demonstrated that a day of great intellectual darkness was favorable to Romanism, it will also be demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is also favorable to its power." *Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894.

"Spiritualism is the masterpiece of deception. It is Satan's most successful and fascinating delusion." *Signs of the Times*, August 26, 1889.

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The most important of all the appearances of Mary in recent times is that of her “supposed” appearance to three children on May 13, 1917 in Fatima, Portugal. While the Fatima visions are famous, most non-Catholic Christians are only vaguely aware of actually what happened during them.<sup>19</sup> While it is never recommended that one waste time scrutinizing delusive phenomenon, or to become fascinated with the Devil’s works, it is necessary to at least know what happened. Exposing a fraud can make one less likely to accept a similar danger in the future.

Following is a brief and borrowed summary of the various manifestations at Fatima, a small village in Portugal around and during the year 1917:

### **The Apparitions of Fatima**

The three shepherd witnesses to the apparitions at Fatima in 1917 were Lucie dos Santos (10 years old, born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1907), and her cousins François Marto (9 years old, born on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1908), and Jacinthe Marto (7 years old, born on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1910).

#### *The Background:*

In 1915, Lucie had already been approached, with 3 other little girls, and on 3 different occasions, by a kind of "angel" whiter

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<sup>19</sup> On October 13, 1917, a crowd of about 70,000 witnessed a remarkable phenomenon in the sky above Fatima. They claimed that a strange pale light like a silvery disc darted around the sky in all directions, illuminating the ground below with a pulsating rainbow of colors. Some thought the object was the sun itself, miraculously dislodged from its fixed position, which is how the event became known as "the dance of the sun." The spectacular sight was shared by all the thousands present, which included a number of religious skeptics and scientists.

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than snow, while they were watching over their sheep. In 1916, Fatima's "trio" again saw this "angel" three times. It seems that on all these occasions *all* the children saw the same phenomenon, something which confers a certain reality to it.

*Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 1917:* Lucie, François and Jacinthe saw an apparition of Mary above a small green oak-tree about a meter in height, at the heart of the Cova da Iria, a natural basin of about 500 meters in diameter. Nature, all around them, suddenly became silent, at least according to Lucie, who heard nothing except the Virgin. The Virgin asked the children to come back 5 times, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of each of the following months at midday. This first apparition revealed itself by a sudden flash followed by a vision of a woman dressed all in white, brighter than the sun.

*Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1917:* The children came accompanied by around fifty people. Lucie saw a bright flash and "communicated with a being" that the others present neither saw nor heard. Some of the assembled people did hear, on the other hand, a kind of humming, like that of a bee. All of those present saw the branches of the young tree bending at the place where the Virgin was thought to be standing. The group then heard an explosion "like the blast of a firework when you hear it going up in the distance" and all of them saw a little white cloud rise towards the east from the tree and fade away while the branches grouped together and bent over towards the same side.

*Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1917:* the children arrived accompanied by several thousand people. Lucie saw the apparition and talked with it. The sources for this information do not specify whether François and Jacinthe also saw and heard the Virgin, but those present did not see them talk to her. François indeed had already admitted that he could hear nothing at the time of the apparitions, and Jacinthe (usually called Jacinta), who was perhaps lacking in honesty on this point, was able to hear Lucie, after each apparition,

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explaining to François what the Virgin had said to her, which thus was able to allow her to provide a more or less similar account.

On that day the Virgin promised a great miracle "so that everybody believes", a promise which will indeed be kept, and therefore is real. The Virgin also revealed three secrets, two of

- ❑ The first was a vision of hell for non-repentant sinners, which corresponds to a recurrent theme of Catholic dogma.
- ❑ The second called for the conversion of Russia (This simplifies the theological content). Let us recall that the "October 1917" Russian revolution only took place on November 7th according to the western calendar, and therefore after the end of the apparitions of Fatima, even if the Tsar Nicholas II had been forced to abdicate as early as March 15th.
- ❑ The third secret, finally, was revealed in substance at Fatima on the 13th May 2000 in the presence of Pope John-Paul II, which put an end to the numerous and regrettable speculations about its content: much had been said about "the announcement of the end of the world, a great classic in the field of prophesies." Instead, and in reality, this third secret described the vision of a "bishop clothed in white" – calling to mind the Holy Father – passing, with other monks and nuns, through a ruined town filled with corpses. On arrival at the foot of a Cross erected on top of a mountain, the kneeling pope and his flock were massacred by a group of soldiers firing both bullets and arrows<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> The Pope recognized himself in this vision because it was on the *13<sup>th</sup> of May* 1981 that Communism had attempted to assassinate him through Ali Agca, even if, at the time, he was in St Peter's Square in Rome right in the middle of a crowd of sympathizers, in a context, let it be said, rather far removed from that of the vision.

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which were divulged in 1942:

*Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1917:* The children were being held by the local administrator who was worried about the problems they were causing for public order. The Virgin thus did not appear but the 18,000 or so people who gathered for the event did see different phenomena already met with: a flash, a clap of thunder, a small white cloud and a diminishing of brightness of the surrounding daylight. On that day, the sky was partially covered by cloud and coloured lights appeared on the clouds as well as "a luminous globe turning around on itself", according to one of the witnesses. Another witness pointed out that "the faces of all the people had all the colours of the rainbow: pink, red, blue... The trees did not seem to have branches and leaves, but only flowers; all seemed laden with flowers, and each leaf appeared to be a flower. It was as if the ground was covered by tiles of different colours. Their clothes too were all the colours of the rainbow".

*Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1917:* the children, now released, were again out on the pastures, at a place called Valinhos, with nobody else around except for the sheep they are guarding. The temperature then fell suddenly. Colored lights were again visible on the clouds, there was a bright flash and a figure dressed in white and gold appeared to them. The apparition then slowly rose off towards the east, accompanied by the "sound of a motor."

*Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 1917:* The ecclesiastical authorities, convinced of some trickery (for reasons not given by most sources), sent two investigating priests to the area who mingled with the crowd of 25 - 30,000 people who were then gathered there. Again a lessening in the amount of daylight was reported and there the sky took on a hue of golden yellow, which drew everyone to scan the sky and search for a "sign."

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Suddenly, many people raised their arms to point at a bright ball in the sky coming from the east – *the crowd cried*: "There She comes! There She comes!" – and which glided majestically into space and vanished, and *the crowd cried*: "She's vanished, She's vanished." Meanwhile, a luminous globe appeared on the little green oak tree and, already, the Virgin was speaking to Lucie. She confirmed that She would perform a great miracle in the following month. Then She returned the way She had come – and *the crowd cried*: "There She goes! There She goes!" The Lady supposedly departed in the shape of an easily visible luminous oval moving away in the direction of the sun, "calmly but with a certain speed", before disappearing. The witnesses were also able to observe a shower of "flowers" which vanished on contact with the ground, in reality something like white petals or snowflakes, round and shining, which descended slowly "in a formidable jet of supernatural light," as well as a mysterious smoke rising up to a height of 5 or 6 meters before suddenly disappearing.

*Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1917*: although it had been raining heavily since the previous night, 70,000 people turned up in the muddy conditions in order to be present at the miracle that had been foretold. The Portuguese historian Leopoldo Nunes remarks that "at the time of the great miracle, there were present some of the most illustrious men of Letters, Arts or Sciences of the day, almost all non-believers, who had come out of simple curiosity." Even the Minister for National Education was there.

As noon approached, Lucie recognized, by the customary flashes, the coming of the apparition, and she asked all those present to close their umbrellas, so that everybody could see the sky better. The message was passed among the crowd who complied in spite of the continuing drizzle. Lucie conversed with the Virgin and the latter then returned in the direction of the east. The rain then quickly stopped. Around the little seers could be observed "a column of cloud [smoke] fine and bluish, perfectly visible, and

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which dispersed suddenly. The same phenomenon took place 3 times, a bit like a warning to keep ready". Then "the clouds parted" allowing the sun to appear "at its zenith" in all its glory. This "sun" is described as "a sharply outlined disk", "a flat piece of dull silver", "having variations similar to the lustre of a pearl", "neither veiled nor indistinct", "which shone without hurting one's eyes", and nobody seems to have complained on that day that their eyes were hurting despite having stared at it for some considerable time. The clouds which covered the sky gave "the impression of passing *behind* the sun". The latter view included "two brief interruptions, during which the sun again sent out dazzling rays compelling the onlookers to turn their eyes away", as if a gap in the layer of clouds had twice permitted them to glimpse the "real" sun, with the supposition that the two disks were approximately one on top of the other.

For a period of about 10 minutes, the luminous disk behaved strangely, something which later came to be called the "dance of the sun". It suddenly started to turn around on itself like a disk of fire, it trembled, it made "*strange and sudden* movements", "it seem[ed] to come closer *as if it were at the same height as the clouds*." "At a certain moment it seem[ed] to come closer, threatening to fall on us," said one, and the crowd was seized with terror. Performing a zigzag motion, it seemed "to detach itself from the sky and, *red with blood*, advance towards the earth *threatening to crush us with its fiery mass*." "These were *terrifying seconds*" according to one witness who attempted to communicate the grandiose aspect of the scene. Then the star took up again "its strange waltz" while, at the same time, the color phenomena already met with on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of August appeared again: "the sun threw off beams of light, bestowing different colors on everything", the ground, the crowd, and the clouds.

### Commentary

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While the reports of the Fatima visions are indeed spectacular, it should become obvious through the examination of several indicators to clearly identify their demonic and false origin. This can be done most easily by reading the Catholic sources themselves, containing the very bias expected. Yet, it is quite accurate to accept these manifestations as “authentic” and as “real,” rather than try to explain them away as mere illusions. But the indications of their hellish origin can be clearly sought. Below are listed several considerations of significance:

1. According to the children's report, Mary gave them instructions to say the rosary daily and showed them a vision of hell and told them, that in order to save poor sinners God wants to establish, throughout the world, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In this simple circumstance can be found at least four grave errors:

- a. Mary cannot have appeared, for she rests in the grave according to the clear biblical teaching regarding the mortal state of the dead (Eccl. 9:5; Psalm 146:4; Psalm 115:17, etc.).
- b. That Mary should enjoin the children to say the rosary is in direct contradiction to her son, Jesus Christ, who taught men to pray unlike the heathen, and without using “vain repetitions” (Matthew 6:7).
- c. In the vision is found the odious teaching of hell, presented in a form consistent with the first manifestations of this pagan doctrine concocted and derived in the darkness of the Middle Ages. No geographical “place,” such as “Hell” exists. “Hell” is death, and the grave. The nefarious doctrine of Hell and Hellfire is another product of the Roman superstitions forced on the world by the Great Apostate.

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d. The exaltation of Mary, a ridiculous and blasphemous notion, is everywhere apparent in the Fatima visions. Any church that would openly devote itself to a mortal, sinful human being, and not the living Christ, is clearly suspect. How can one, if he be a true and genuine Christian, devote his prophetic mission to anything but Jesus Christ? Yet Pope Paul the Second clearly devoted his papal mission to Mary, who is given a key mediatorial role in the Catholic system. Such a doctrine is unbiblical, counter-Christian. It is a pseudo-dogma that rests on the impossible.<sup>21</sup>

2. The Fatima visions were set up by the appearances of a bright, angelic creature. These were followed by the six or seven subsequent visions. Books, such as *The Sun Danced at Fatima*<sup>22</sup> describe the visionary figures as “angels of light.” The second chapter of the fore-mentioned book is entitled, “The Lady All of Light.” While the true angels of God are “angels of light,” they do not disseminate such specious error in their announcements. The Bible in fact states that it is Satan, who successfully appears as an “angel of light.” “*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*” 2 Corinthians 11:14. To retranslate: “It is no genuine sign or miracle, it is Satan himself appearing as an angel of light.” It is no mystery then who is behind these manifestations in the heavens.

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<sup>21</sup> Saying the rosary replaces praying to the Father in heaven. "Mary" is referred to as the *Mediatrice*; yet, we know that the Bible teaches us, "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). "Mary" claims to be the refuge and ark, advocate and intercessor, and the mother of the church. There are even claims that "Mary" will place her "motherly seal" on all those who have consecrated themselves to her immaculate heart.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph A. Pelletier, A.A., *The Sun Danced at Fatima* (Garden City, New York: Image Books; A division of Doubleday & Company, 1983).

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3. While there were some remarkable predictions and signs in the Fatima visions, there are also to be found some inconsistencies.

In October of 1917, 50,000-70,000 people were present when the most significant sighting occurred in Fatima, which was accompanied by wonders in the sky and miracles. The message was that a chapel was to be built at the site. A prediction was also made that World War I would soon end. Another prediction that was fulfilled was that two of the children would soon die. Lucia, one of the three original children, was given a message for the pope. He was instructed that Russia could be saved if all of the bishops of the world would unite in making a consecration of Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart. But it was finally 1984, when a Catholic bishop secretly made a consecration of Russia, while in that country. Not long after this, the Communist empire was broken up and the way was opened for the "conversion" of Russia. But on reconsideration, none of the predictions could not have been known by Satan himself, or could not have been later fulfilled by Satan himself. The call for the consecration of Russia was instead actually followed by seventy of the darkest years of Russia's condition through all of history, under Communism. The predicted death of the children was inevitable anyway.

In addition to the doctrinal error inherent in the manifestations, certain claims and details do not ring true. Some believe these visions were a fulfillment of Revelation 12, and the prophetic woman "clothed with the sun." If this is true, where was the moon under the woman's feet, and the twelve stars also mentioned in the vision? And, of course, the woman of Revelation is a corporate symbol for the "faithful" and "persecuted" church of all time and not Mary specifically anyway.

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The years since have seen many renewed calls for the adoration of Mary and declarations by the Catholic Church that these apparitions were supernatural. Feasts have been instituted and a basilica built at Fatima (to make the vision come true), and the world, not just Russia, has been repeatedly consecrated to the “immaculate heart.” The Marian phenomena is modernly seen in visions, appearances, weeping statues, bleeding icons, cures, signs in the heavens, and messages received by the uneducated for both popes and presidents. Sightings continue to occur around the world. These are claimed, by believers, to fulfill the words of Joel, that God’s spirit will be poured out upon all flesh.

However, it is these particular types of manifestation that we are warned against. If such things happen, God’s people are warned by Jesus himself not to believe them. That is, they are not to believe that they are all genuine manifestations from God.

### **Papal Devotion to the Marian Movement**

On the anniversary of the first Fatima apparition, on May 13, 1981, Pope John Paul II was shot. He felt that he was saved by Mary, because, at the moment the gun was fired, he leaned toward a child who was carrying a picture of Our Lady of Fatima, and the shot, which was intended to be fatal, only wounded him. And so began his devotion to the Marian movement. During his recovery he exhaustively examined documents and questioned living witnesses and participants connected with Fatima.

According to the Catholic scholar, Malachi Martin, the Pope John Paul II claimed that he received a vision from heaven giving him “the great design of God for the New World order.”<sup>23</sup> Also, he said,

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<sup>23</sup> *The Keys of This Blood*, p. 48.

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that in this vision, Mary told him he had been spared for a special mission to bring peace to the world. Under conviction that the messages of Fatima were not for a distant time, but that they had an immediate timetable, the pope began to carry out a program of world travel and redoubled his political efforts to prepare the world for the New World Order, with the Church of Rome as its supreme ruler. To show his devotion to "the virgin," he wore an inscription on the side of his robe, in Latin, stating, "Mary, I'm all yours," and had an M for Mary on his coat of arms. According to Catholic sources, Pope John Paul II was waiting for the greatest of all apparitions when "Mary" would declare, from heaven, the day and the hour of Jesus' coming.<sup>24</sup> "Mary," he claimed, is to someday appear as a woman clothed with the sun giving birth to a child who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Such signs in the heavens can be fully anticipated, and carefully marked for what they are, frauds of gigantic proportions. It is important to be aware of these things, and to be able to judge them accordingly if they do in some way seem to occur.

There have been several predictions made by "Mary," in different locations and at different times, that relate to the time when this event will happen. Lucia (Lucie, the woman who saw many of the Fatima apparitions) was told that she would be alive to see the culmination of all these things. Also apparitions have said that the Pope John Paul II would be the last (The pope has passed and Lucia is now very old, maybe even passed by now). However, some of the predictions made by these apparitions have already failed to occur.

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<sup>24</sup> It is God who has told us that He Himself will declare the time of Jesus' return in glory. "The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming." *The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

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When She appeared on this Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1917, the Virgin told Lucie that the war would finish *today* (*WWI*), which Lucie immediately announced to the jubilant crowd. Paradoxically, and without wishing to show ill will, the fact that this prophecy turned out to be false, as the disappointed public must rapidly have realized, pleads rather in favor of its origin having been genuinely tied to a hallucinatory vision. In order to rectify this prophetic blunder, the legend would later replace the word "today" by the word "soon" in the mouth of the Virgin.

As we have already pointed out, François and Jacinta, who were actually tough and healthy children of a mountainous region, were to die a few years after these events. We do not know the exact circumstances of their death but we cannot exclude the idea that they later boasted of having noticed some suspicious details or ended up doubting the reality of the miracle of Fatima. Certain of the claims of the children have been subsequently covered up or deleted because they would cause considerable embarrassment to the Church. Indeed when the events first happened, the church leadership eagerly sought to debunk them as false.

It has been said that the children were infected by a bout of Spanish flu, which would not have been so surprising for François (who died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1919 nearly 11 years old) but which is more so in the case of Jacinthe (who died on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1920 when she was nearly 10) because this fatal epidemic, which killed approximately 1 person in a 100 in France as elsewhere in the world in the course of the Autumn of 1918 and January of 1919, does not appear to have extended beyond 1919. Jacinthe's flu apparently degenerated afterwards into a form of purulent pleurisy. Canon Formigao wrote later about these premature deaths: "The general opinion among people was that the whole family of the visionaries

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of Fatima and the visionaries themselves were condemned to disappear within a short space of time." And, indeed, Lucie's parents also died quickly. From 1921, the orphaned adolescent was kept in hiding, illegally and with a false name, in various religious establishments, up to her coming of age and the pronouncement of her first vows in 1928.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1930, after a long inquiry, the Catholic Church officially recognized the authenticity of the apparitions at Fatima. In 1942, our Lady of Fatima was crowned "Queen of Portugal and of the world" by Pope Pius 12<sup>th</sup>. The latter, who held his position up until his death in 1958, had been "honoured" many times by the UFO phenomenon. In 1950, he saw the sun "dance" several times in the sky from the gardens of the Vatican, and then, at the time of the great wave of sightings in 1954, he saw 2 divine apparitions "similar to those of Fatima" [DMFF98 p. 485-486].

In this same year of 1954, thousands of witnesses were able to observe, from the end of October to the beginning of November, several tens of luminous points flying over Rome, grouped in a V-shape or a diamond-shape and even an "enormous Saint Andrew's cross" (✕) after two V-shapes comprising some twenty UFOs, coming from the east and west respectively, having joined together above the Vatican.

This aerial show was followed by the falling of a fine, thread-like substance evocative of "**angel's hair**" and which evaporated after a few hours, making any scientific analysis impossible.

One thing that can be determined from all of these phenomena is that every possible form and fiction will be manifest on heaven and on earth before Jesus comes. The variety and frequency will no

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doubt only increase, attempts by the Evil One to work quickly and desperately to deceive in the waning moments of his probation. He knows that he has but a short time.

Another indicator of the work of Satan in the Fatima debacle is the “quality of inspiration” demonstrated in the so called “three secrets” of Fatima. The revelation of the third secret was keenly anticipated for 83 years. It was released in the year 2,000, and is anything but earthshaking or valuable. Anyone is now free to measure whether the revelation manifested is of a “high and noble spiritual quality,” or if it is of a “degraded and barbaric quality.” Below is shared the contents of the third “secret,” in this author’s opinion, a most “pathetic” claim at inspiration:

### **The third part of the secret revealed at the Cova da Iria-Fatima, on 13 July 1917:**

“I write in obedience to you, my God, who command me to do so through his Excellency the Bishop of Leiria and through your Most Holy Mother and mine.

*After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: ‘Penance, Penance, Penance!’. And we saw in an immense light that is God: ‘something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it’ a Bishop dressed in White ‘we had the impression that it was the Holy Father’. Other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a cork-tree with the bark; before reaching there*

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*the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels each with a crystal aspersorium in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God."*

Tuy-3-1-1944".<sup>25</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

The various Marian appearances and apparitions that have been seen in mid-air or in other forms, or the many mysterious signs that have appeared since 1917 are in most cases the miracle working power of demons, seeking to prepare modern minds for the almost overmastering delusions of the last and final days of earth. Unless these heavenly or secret signs are clearly marked or foretold in the Scriptures or the inspired writings of the true prophets of God, they should be either ignored or taken as false manifestations. Though a woman should appear in the sky that purports to fulfill the prophecy of Revelation 12, or though great signs and miracles be witnessed by thousands, Christians cannot be assured that these are signs from the heaven of heavens. All of the genuine signs should come with scriptural permission, or they should accord with the biblical doctrines of truth and righteousness. If they do not, they are most certainly the work of the enemy, who works with all deceivableness and unrighteousness. They should not be believed. Jesus himself

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<sup>25</sup> From: [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents)

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declared, "Do not believe it." If the Christian happens to be wrong in following Jesus' own words, then certainly Jesus will make it plain to him, for he is merely attempting to do as Christ asked him to do. But if it is truly the work of Satan, who claims to be Christ, and Christians have willingly believed the delusion despite the warnings of Christ himself, they could be found deceived, lost, and without excuse. It is a perilous, yet simple choice.

Many such signs are yet to appear to the multitudes of earth as the end approaches. Do not be surprised by them. God knows about them, and he will reward the deceptive agents and their adherents in his own perfect way, in his own perfect time. The waiting "Adventist," or any who sincerely await the coming of the Lord, will be known by the Lord, and watched with loving care. The faithful will be caught up together with the faithful, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall he ever be with the Lord. Their undeniable and easily witnessed translation will be the proof of the authenticity of their faith. Their election will be made sure by the king of the heavens, who knows the heart of every sincere believer.

God through his son Jesus Christ is the verifier of the true and the righteous. Not Mary, not the Roman pontiff, not the great apostle, not the prophet, not the priest or revered minister, is the source of exoneration. And most certainly truth is not to be expected through the workings of the Master Deceiver, Satan. Nor is it the spectacular sign, wonder, or miracle that determines or verifies truth. No. The author and finisher of the faith is none other than the living Word of God, Jesus, the Savior. He, and he only, is the one to believe.

## Chapter 8

# The Star of Bethlehem

The subject of the star that marked the birth of Jesus is a large subject. Many sensational theories have been offered about what the “star” was. Was it a planetary conjunction, a miraculous light, a genuine star, or something else?

How it is to be understood, astronomically, is not a matter of supreme importance. But as a heavenly sign it is most notable. Certainly it was one of the greatest signs to ever grace the dome of the heavens. While it is always unwise to largely insist on any particular understanding, it is profitable and interesting to examine the subject.

In the books, *The Clock of the Heavens*, and *The Torah of the Heavens*, the timing and celestial significance of the star signs at Christ’s birth are examined more particularly. These things will not be repeated in full here. What is to be accomplished in this chapter is to look more closely at the phenomenon of the star itself.

To begin with, what was the star? Few will have the patience to visit all the arguments available for the various explanations

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commonly given. Let it suffice to say, that if it was simply a planetary conjunction, the Gospel description is quite unsatisfactory. The wise men we are told “followed” this star. It appeared “over” where the young child abode. Planets don’t really take this position or behave in the way the star is described as behaving. While there were incredibly significant astronomical movements at the time, these more likely only contributed to the significance of the actual star of Bethlehem.

Some have suggested that the star was a supernova or some variable star that flared up at times, or varied in its luminosity. Others suggest that it was an unusual nebula or cloud of light. Further, others relate it to a comet or some similar phenomenon.

While these naturalistic explanations may be very believable, it is most likely that the star came as a result of direct supernatural superintendence. The star marking the coming of the Son of God to this earth could not be left to a cosmic accident. While God uses the forces of nature, and they are totally under his guidance and control, God could have formulated, according to his prophetic design, whatever type of display was necessary to mark the incarnation of his son. Yet the appearance of the miraculous star was no doubt a supernatural event. Says the inspired pen of one writer:

*“ . . . A luminous star appeared, and lingered in the sky. It was not a fixed star nor a planet, and the phenomenon excited the keenest interest. That star was a distant company of shining angels, but of this the wise men were ignorant.” --Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 60*

This explanation agrees with the reports of tradition that the star of Bethlehem was not a conjunction of planets and that it’s duration was limited and that it finally vanished from sight. Writers indicate

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that this star appeared in Coma, the first decan<sup>26</sup> of Virgo (the Virgin). Coma is the precise sign and symbol of the mother and the child appearing in the zodiacs of all ancient peoples.

That the star should appear in Coma, part of the constellation Virgo is appropriate and arguable for many reasons:

- The first reason is that Coma is an ancient star picture known in all cultures, of a virgin woman, holding an infant son.
- The second reason is that the star names themselves are related to the promised coming of the “Branch,” the “Seed of the Woman.”
- A third argument is found in the reports of tradition.
- The fourth argument is the astronomical position of the constellation Coma in the sky.

Coma, means, “the desired one,” or the one “longed for.” This constellation speaks then of the “desire of ages,” a promised son who would come. What is truly amazing is that in some zodiacs, the child has a name. According to some sources, the Persian version of the son’s name is “Ihesu,” unmistakably similar to the Greek name, Jesus.

The prophecy concerning the appearance of a star marking the coming of the Lawgiver of Israel was predicted specifically during

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<sup>26</sup> A “decan” is one of three divisions in a given principal zodiacal sign. Amounting to about ten astronomical degrees, there were thirty-six of these in the ancient zodiac; three for each of the twelve major signs. *Virgo*, for example, has associated with it 1) *Coma*; 2) *Centaurus*; 3) *Bootes*.

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wilderness wanderings of Israel. In the prophecy of Balaam it was predicted that at a time later removed from that present moment a star would appear:

*“I shall see him, but not now:  
I shall behold him, but not nigh:  
There shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter shall rise  
out of Israel.”* Numbers 24:17

The tradition about this star is traceable also to Daniel, the Hebrew prophet of the east, who himself was a Chaldean and an sacred astrologer. An easy connection can be made between Daniel and the religions of the wise men of the east, who also were astrologers and teachers from the eastern regions.

Writes E. Raymond Capt:

“According to the Persian historian, Abulfaragius (1226-1286 A.D.), Zoroaster, of Zerdusht (the Persian) was a pupil of Daniel the Prophet. Zoroaster was given the prophecy that a new star would appear when He, whom Daniel foretold, should be born.....this new star was to appear in the sign of the Virgin. Tradition says it was in the constellation Coma in which “the star of Bethlehem” appeared.” *The Glory of the Stars*, p.36.

When this star first appeared and how long it was visible cannot now be verified with certainty. But tradition has some very interesting things to say about it, and it may be that it was visible longer than many now suppose. It was also very bright at times, but finally faded from sight:

“Now it is a matter of record that a new an peculiar star did make its appearance in the first Decan of Virgo in the period immediately preceding Christ’s birth, and that it was so bright as to be visible even in the daytime. Ignatius says it “sparkled brilliantly above all the stars.”

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The same continued in the sky during the whole period of Christ's lifetime, and for a time thereafter. Hipparchus, about one hundred and twenty-five years before Christ, observed it as a new star, and was led by it to draw up his catalogue of the stars. Ptolemy, about one hundred and fifty years after Christ refers to it as having been observed by Hipparchus, but as having become so faint as hardly to be any longer discernable. The Chinese records also make mention of this new bright star at a time corresponding to the period of our Saviour's birth. Since the time of Ptolemy we have no record of any observation of it. This star was in Coma, the sign of the infant accompanying Virgo, and it marked the very head of the infant."<sup>27</sup>

Whether this star is the same as the company of shining angels mentioned earlier we cannot say. It could be that the appearance of angelic hosts is what caused the star to vary in brightness, especially around the times most important to the prophetic appearance of Jesus himself. At any rate, this star in Coma seems to have providentially appeared at the right time in history to testify to the coming of the son of the Virgin to this earth.

In other places we have documented the position of the sun, moon and planets at the estimated time of Jesus' birth (1 Virgo, September 11, 3 B.C.). These heavenly bodies were at this time positioned in exact order as prescribed in Revelation 12:1-2. This date works out to be Rosh Hashanah, the civil New Year, the first day of the seventh month, the day when new kings took office. Several other phenomena occurred during this same time period which were truly remarkable.

Contrary to the popular celebrations of Christmas, however, the Magi did not appear at the stable of baby Jesus on the night of Jesus' birth. They arrived at a later time, for the appearance of the

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<sup>27</sup> J.A. Seiss, *The Gospel in the Stars*, p. 161, 162.

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Christmas star is what sent them on their journey. When they did arrive at the “house” where Jesus was they found Jesus, not as an infant, but as a “young child,” a distinctly different Greek term. King Herod later sought to destroy the children up to two years of age, inferring that he had to widen the parameters according to the knowledge he had of the actual time of the child’s birth. The wise men may have arrived as much later as a year and a half.

Another matter of interest is that if the star were in Coma, what this might have meant for the Magi. If they arrived about a year and three months after the actual birth of Jesus, the star in Coma would have been directly above them. How directly is the matter of particular interest.

A traditional report comes down to modern times about this circumstance. The tradition is that after the wise men left Herod in Jerusalem they journeyed the short distance to Bethlehem. On the way they stopped, or camped at a well, perhaps in the suburb of the village. Upon looking down the deep well with its perpendicular sides they were amazed to see the reflection of the star overhead. The pinpoint accuracy of this method, used for centuries by the Egyptians and others, placed them at the exact locale needed and as indicated by the star that had reappeared to them!

This circumstance is quite possible, in that Coma, unlike the major constellation Virgo, of which it is a part, can assume this very position. It is higher in the sky, and as it parades across the heavens at night could enter a zone vertically consistent with this story. In fact according to the calculations made by some, and tested by this

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writer, this circumstance might best be configured on December 25, 2 B.C.<sup>28</sup> No one needs help on the significance of December 25.

We cannot say if this is how the Magi “followed” the star or not. Whatever the explanation, this miraculous star turned out to be everything God predicted it would be. It marked the arrival of the Son of God to this earth, to bring peace and salvation to all mankind. The wise men saw “His star” in the East, and came to worship Him.

In a final note it is of supreme interest to this writer to know that a glorious star will mark both the first and the second Advents of our Lord. Says the prophetic writer, Ellen White:

“Through a rift in the clouds there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God’s law.”  
GC 638.

This star does not shine at midnight hour for the Magi, but at the midnight hour for the faithful who anticipate and await the second coming of Christ. It is a star of hope, the star of deliverance, the bright and morning star of salvation. What a wonderful star, it too, will be!

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<sup>28</sup> Of course, it all depends on what part of the night the Magi would have looked into the well, and how accurate to the hour astronomy can calculate. According to one astronomy program used by the author it would have taken this position at about 4:00 A.M. on Dec. 25. At any rate, the only time of the year that Coma is at a pure, perpendicular zenith is in the early to late winter months, December being roughly the middle of this time period.

## Chapter 9

# The Day the Sun Stood Still

Probably the most significant sign to ever appear in the heavens came when the sun and moon took a stationary position in the sky during the days of Joshua. Of course, there are those who refuse to believe that the story of the “sun standing still” is referring to a factual event. Indeed there will always be those who will not believe anything, even their own shadow. Then there are people who will believe most anything. But since this story occurs in the Bible in historical form, and because the Bible teaches that the Creator God is capable of such things, we should be inclined to believe that some unusual phenomenon did actually occur.

There is absolutely no need whatsoever to get sidetracked on whether or not the sun itself actually stood still, or whether it was the earth. Some object to the biblical description as being unscientific. The laws established by Copernicus show that the earth in fact rotates around the sun, contrary to the Old World opinion, that reigned for thousands of years, that the sun revolved around the earth. The Bible simply reports what “appeared” to have happened. The integrity of the Bible should not be impeached by

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how it is stated. Today we still use the same terminology when we say that the sun “comes up,” or “goes down.” We call it “sunrise,” and “sunset,” when in fact technically, it is not the case. The same latitude should be offered the ancient writers who simply observed and reported what they saw.

The story found in the biblical book of Joshua reports that when Israel was invading Canaan, and were in a particularly strategic battle with their enemies, they ran out of time in securing their victory. God in his providence lengthened the daylight about the space of an entire day so that Joshua and his troops could complete their mission. Apparently both the sun and the moon remained still and unmoved upon the horizon for several hours.

How God accomplished this supernatural wonder is not known. Because we cannot explain the phenomenon scientifically in no way invalidates it. It only shows that it is God that controls the heavens, and that a God of a supreme nature is required to accomplish such things. He can do these wonders with ease, and when it is necessary he does marvelous things to protect and honor his people.

The miracle in the days of Joshua may have been accomplished in one of several ways. First, God may have made it to only “appear” that the sun was standing still. Or he might have frozen the rotation of the earth, and also rectified at the same time the disturbances this would have caused. Or he might have caused the earth to tilt on its axis, or wobble momentarily, creating the circumstance of a longer day. Whatever the cause, the world must have been astir about this phenomenon. It would have occurred to their reason that the gods that they trusted and worshipped, the sun and moon, actually helped Israel rather than helping them. Obviously, Israel’s God was the God of all gods.

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While the miracle of the sun standing still is true, it is probably a mistake to rely on some of the popular stories circulating about that claim to prove the event astronomically, however. The most popular story, claims to have come from space program engineers or from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. This story has surfaced several times in recent years. Unfortunately, it lacks credibility and cannot be verified, for we have no verifiable fixed dates before Joshua's time in history to use as a benchmarks for calculation. Below is one of the popular versions of the story:

“Did you know that the space program is busy proving that what has been called “myth” in the Bible is true? Mr. Harold Hill, President of the Curtis Engine Company in Baltimore Maryland, and a consultant in the space program, relates the following development: I think one of the most amazing things that God has for us today happened recently to our astronauts and space scientists at Green Belt, Maryland. They were checking the position of the sun, moon, and planets out in space where they would be, 100 years and 1000 years from now. We have to know this so we won't send a satellite up and have it bump into something later on in its orbits. We have to lay out the orbits in terms of the life of the satellite, and where the planets will be, so the whole thing will not bog down. They ran the computer measurement back and forth over the centuries and it came to a halt. The computer stopped and put up a red signal, which meant that there was something wrong either with the information fed into it, or with the results as compared to the standards.

They called in the service department to check it out and they said “what's wrong?” Well they found there is a day missing in space, in elapsed time. They scratched their heads and tore their hair. There was no answer. Finally, a Christian man on the team said, “You know, one time I was in Sunday school and they talked about the sun standing still.” While they didn't believe him, they didn't have an answer either, so they said “Show us.” He got a Bible and went back to the book of Joshua where they found a pretty ridiculous statement for any one with “common sense.” There they found the Lord saying to Joshua, “Fear them not, I have delivered them into thy hand; there shall not a man of them stand

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before thee.” Joshua was concerned because he was surrounded by the enemy and if darkness fell they would overpower them. (check references below.) So Joshua asked the Lord to make the sun stand still! That’s right-”The sun stood still and the moon stayed-and hasted not to go down about a whole day!”

They checked the computers going back into the time it was written and found it was close but not close enough. The elapsed time that was missing back in Joshua’s day was 23 hours and 20 minutes-not a whole day. They read the Bible and there it was “about (approximately) a day.” These little words in the Bible are important, but they were still in trouble, because if you cannot account for 40 minutes you’ll still be in trouble, 1,000 years from now. Forty minutes had to be found because it can be multiplied many times over in orbits.

As the Christian employee thought about it, he remembered somewhere in the Bible where it said the sun went BACKWARDS. The scientists told him he was out of his mind, but they got out the Book and read these words in 2 Kings: Hezekiah, on his death-bed, was visited by the prophet Isaiah who told him that he was not going to die. Hezekiah asked for a sign as proof. Isaiah said, “Do you want the sun to go ahead 10 degrees?” Hezekiah said “It is nothing for the sun to go ahead 10 degrees, but let the shadow return backward 10 degrees.” Isaiah spoke to the Lord and the Lord brought the shadow ten degrees BACKWARD! Ten degrees is exactly 40 minutes! Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes in Joshua, plus 40 minutes in Second Kings make the missing day in the universe! Isn’t it amazing?! Our God is rubbing their noses in His Truth!

References: Joshua 10:8, 12, 13; 2 Kings 20:9-11

As noted previously, there is no definite way to check such claims when no dates are fixed in history before this date. The claims that were made beginning in the 1960’s have been traced back to their original sources. Efforts have been made unsuccessfully to trace it to the Space Administration itself. While NASA has made numerous astronomical calculations to safely fly their spacecrafts, they have no record of any such story. The original author of the story never

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worked among the actual employees making the scientific reckonings. The story has been essentially debunked.

The possibility still exists, however, that the “lost day” of Joshua does manifest itself chronologically. In the companion book, *The Clock of the Heavens*, certain assumptions are made in regard to the possible date of the Exodus, which occurred in history a little more than forty years previous to the conquest of Canaan. According to these calculations a one-day adjustment is required to bring harmony to the data that is known about the timing of the Exodus. If this assumption could be ultimately proven, then we would have a reference point to which we could scientifically ascertain whether a “missing day” is required of the historical record. But we cannot be certain of these things at this point. It is useful to gather evidence and weigh it accordingly, but it is unwise to make absolute determinations about such ancient dates with the limited information that we have.

Apparently the Bible is not alone in giving credence to the story of the sun standing still. The factuality of the event may have corroboration in the ancient records. This, of course, should not be surprising, for many people would have witnessed this phenomenon:

It is reported by historians that records of the Chinese during the reign of Emperor Yeo, who lived at the same time as Joshua, report "a long day." Also, Herodotus, a Greek historian, wrote that an account of "a long day" appears in records of Egyptian priests. Others cite records of Mexicans of the sun standing still for an entire day in a year denoted as "Seven Rabbits," which is the same year in which Joshua defeated the Philistines

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and conquered Palestine. Additionally, the historical lore of the Aztecs, Peruvians, and Babylonians speak of a "day of twice natural length."<sup>29</sup>

Though we cannot know exactly how God accomplished this astronomical feat, we can believe that he is big enough to do it. The Bible repeatedly tells us that God is the ruler of the heavens. Several times God claims to be the one who "laid out the heavens," or "spread it out as a curtain." The entire universe is in his control. God is the center of all universal activity. It all obeys him, and he orders it as he will.

This is what is so exciting about this particular story. It shows just how powerful God is. It is a testimony to his might and his strength. The heavens declare his glory and his worth (literally, his "weight"). He can do all things. Because he is the God who orchestrates the untold numbers of all the heavenly objects, he is able to do whatever we ask in faith, and whatever falls within the pleasure of his will. He is a God big enough to rule his universe. He is always able to help those who come to him in living faith. He is ready to rescue his beloved saints from all trouble. He is the awesome and powerful God of all the heavens.

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<sup>29</sup> (**Bible-Science Newsletter**, *Daily Reading Magazine* - Supplement, Vol. VIII - No. 5, May 1978, Caldwell, Idaho.) See also Immanuel Velikovsky's "Worlds in Collision."

## Chapter 10

# Fire From Heaven

*“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.”* Revelation 13:13,14 first part.

The verse quoted above comes from that part of Revelation that describes the final deceptions that will fall on the earth just before Jesus comes. Great miracles will be seen that appear to be sent by God, and instigated to exonerate those who demand them.

The second, or lamb-like beast of the Revelation 13 is clearly shown in other places to be fulfilled in the Protestant movements that have particularly proliferated in the United States of America. It is these movements and this national power that will cause other nations and peoples to join them in making an image, or in performing an act of imitation to the first beast of Revelation 13, the Roman Catholic Communion.

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Miracles and Signs are biblically synonymous. This Scripture foretells a time when the powers of the earth will be instrumental in performing signs of incredible power. The purpose of the signs is not innocent, however. They will enhance the power of these entities and aid them in deceiving those that dwell on the earth. It is predicted that these signs may even happen in the heavens, or in the sky. This is a powerful warning.

The ability to call down fire from heaven recalls the sign performed by one of the greatest of the prophets of God, Elijah. On Mt. Carmel, Israel was tested on whether they would worship Baal, the sun god, or Jehovah, the true God of Israel. The priests of Baal and Astarte were unable to call down fire upon their sacrifice, but Elijah was rewarded with a signal display of God's power, bring fire from heaven and burning up the sacrifice and the water that had been poured upon it. This event was so powerful that it brought a revival upon the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 18).

The fire from heaven in Elijah's day was intended to show that only Jehovah was the true God. Only God could perform such a feat. The work of the true prophet, Elijah, was exonerated in this act of God.

However, the fire that comes from heaven in the last days is attributed to another source and is recorded in the way it is for a good reason. The reason is that Satan and his forces now possess such incredible power, that if God allows, they are able to perform such feats also. It is important for Christians to realize that in the last days the power to work miracles does not necessarily mean it is from God. False prophets, who have the power to do such miracles, will often use them instead to deceive and overcome. The signs

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may, of course, appear to be effective for great good, but caution should be exercised when reading these signs. If they do not bear the divine credentials they need to be exposed as frauds, no matter how powerful they might seem.

Will fire literally come down from heaven? We cannot know if this merely is an example of how far things could go, or if it will really come to this. But it can be certain that Satan will press the limits in his last great deception. He may not be able to counterfeit the actual coming of Christ across the entire heavens. But he will go as far as he can, doing signs in the sky and in all ways that while pretending to be only from God, are instead being used to exploit others for the sake of evil.

For millennia lightning from heaven was considered a direct sign from God. The Bible uses the lightning to illustrate God's power and considers it one of the weapons of his arsenal. In many of the Psalms the clouds are considered God's "bow" and the lightning bolts are considered his "arrows." The Greeks and the Romans particularly associated lightning storms with the power of the Supreme God, in their eyes Zeus or Jupiter. Jupiter is often pictured with a lightning bolt in his hand.

Indeed God does have power over nature, but Satan is allowed at times to exhibit his power in the destructive forces of nature. Satan wishes to exploit the natural evidences of God's power and use them for his own purposes. This will especially be true in the last moments of history.

Some reason that "fire from heaven" is a reference to nuclear, or "star wars" technology, and this may be part of what is intended in these statements. Certainly the United States of America has this

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power, and was first to develop it. Nuclear arms were known at one time to have been of sufficient quantity to blow up this earth at least 16 times. Other nations have developed nuclear armaments, and the earth is indeed on one vast powder keg, awaiting whatever is next.

But the book of *Revelation* would not just be about the nuclear arms race. The focus is upon the religious movements found across our planet and how they will affect the special people of God in the last days. The book of *Revelation* is given for the purpose of informing the people of God about the things that are to take place upon the earth and to prepare them to meet their God. Therefore the “fire from heaven” also signifies a spiritual warning about the deceptive miracles that will be perpetrated on the earth by those powers in league with Satan.

In Revelation 13, the beast powers are given at least two major manifestations, both of which identify them, and which show both their secular and their religious side. The second beast has political aspirations, and in its NATIONAL phase has been able to dominate the world as a dragon, even though it claims to be a lamb. This, of course, best refers to the United States of America.

But the RELIGIOUS phase of the second beast is best identified in the movements of Protestants in America, that are gradually giving in to the sophistries and errors of the first beast. These apostate forms of religion will be used by Satan to enact times and laws that are not really approved by God. Their purposes will seem to be validated by the signs they are able to perform, even “Christ-like” or “Lamb-like” ones. But this is all part of the deception. They will perform even Elijah-like miracles, and the world will give them worship and respect as a result.

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But these signs, designed to deceive even the elect, should not be endorsed by the true remnant of God, especially when they do not bear the fruit of righteousness. The focus of God's people should not be on these signs, but on the Word of God, that plainly exposes the frauds perpetrated by false Christendom. While they can believe that the miracles are real, they must not accept them as evidence to turn to false belief. They should hold out for the genuine evidences found in God's signs, and for the genuine manifestation of Christ from heaven.

## Chapter 11

# Comets, Meteors, and Asteroids

### Comets

One of the most sensational of all heavenly displays are passing comets. Comets are phenomena that pass our earth at regular times. However these visits can be separated by hundreds, even thousands of years. Some comets have shorter orbits, like Halley's comet which cycles about every seventy years.

Comets are thought to be enormous balls of rock and ice that are in the process of decomposition. They usually leave a tail of debris behind them. Some are quite spectacular. Comets have always been associated with the announcement of some important event. In ancient times they were watched with fear and trepidation, or in anticipation of some change in the order of the world. While comets may be heaven sent signals of some kind, more often than not their

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purpose has been tragically misinterpreted by many. Such was tragically the case of the comet Hale-Bopp in 1996-1997.

Comet Hale-Bopp was discovered on July 23, 1995, by two independent observers, Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp. Thus the comet has a dual name. The comet came largely as a surprise to the scientific world, first being noticed by relative amateurs. The comet made a significant impact in the news, and was one of the more brilliant comets viewed in recent decades. New Age observers, and certain bands or cults took great spiritual interest in the comet as well.

Katherine Ramsland, an investigative writer for Court TV wrote:

“Then in November and December of 1996, a comet called Hale-Bopp made a big splash, not just for Heaven's Gate but for the entire New Age community and beyond. Its last visit had been in 2200 BC, which was viewed then as a harbinger for the arrival of a great teacher, or Peacemaker, who would visit many different civilizations around the world to deliver a sacred doctrine. He would bring purification and save true believers from the tribulations of the end times.”<sup>30</sup>

Encyclopedias report the tragic end of the “Heaven’s Gate” cult, a cult that was obsessed with the comet phenomenon, and with other extreme and spiritualistic views. Most of the group members, including both men and women, were otherwise intelligent and successful, including a Duke University religion professor, and several computer experts:

“Heaven’s gate was the name of cult led by Marshall Applewhite, whose end, coinciding with the appearance of the Hale-Bopp comet, created a sensation in the United States in 1997. Applewhite convinced 39

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<sup>30</sup> “All about the Heaven’s Gate cult,” Katherine Ramsland, Court TV crimelibrary

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followers to commit suicide so that their souls could take a ride on a spaceship that they thought was hiding behind the comet. In preparation for their suicide, male members of the cult underwent castration and drank citrus juices to ritually cleanse their body of impurities. In the wake of the cult's suicide, some attributed the cult's ability to attract new members on the growth of the Internet. The 39 bodies were found on March 26, 1997."

The cult members were covered in purple blankets, wearing new "Nike" sneakers. Each victim was dressed in black, and had in \$5.75 in their pocket.<sup>31</sup> The \$5.75 was symbolic for the cost of an entry ticket to heaven, and the shoes worn were probably related to the manufacturer's promotional logo, "Just do it." The hopes of the cult failed to materialize, however. No one took the money for the tickets. They all simply died a tragic suicidal death, which

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<sup>31</sup> Some of these sources included the possible association with writings from Mark Twain. Don Lattin, religious writer for the San Francisco Chronicle April 6, 1997, came up with this discovery. As you recall each member of Heaven's Gate had a 5 dollar bill, and three quarters in their pockets. Why? Twain was very cynical about religion, and once wrote that,

"The fare to get to heaven on the tail of a comet was \$5.75."

Interestingly, Halley's comet appeared in 1835, the year Twain was born, and appeared again in 1910, the year he died. Twain wrote of Halley's comet in 1909:

"It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's comet. The almighty has said, no doubt: 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.'"

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ironically may have negated the possibility of finally finding true Grace and entering heaven.

Before the mass suicide the group had been fascinated with the report that something “ring-like” could be seen in the wake of the comet that resembled a spaceship. This was welcomed by those who believed that the keepers of “heaven’s gate” were coming to pick them up. The delusion had already been built over some time by Applewhite (through “message” meetings and the internet) and his followers that the opportunity to reach heaven might be gained by transferring their souls to this spaceship when it made its nearest pass to earth (March 21, the equinox).

The tragic results of holding an errant dualistic view of man, that separates the body and soul, is seen in this incident. This erroneous doctrine, held by even the majority of Christendom leads to untold harm and incredible tragedy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. On the Web page, Applewhite posted six key points, paraphrased as:

- I and my partner are from the Evolutionary Level Above Human and we took over two human bodies in their forties, which had been tagged at birth as vehicles for our use.
- We brought a crew of students to Earth with us from the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Many of us arrived in staged crashes of spaceships and authorities confiscated some of our bodies.
- Others came before us to tag our bodies with special chips.
- Before our human incarnation, we were briefed by older beings with details about how to take over the human vehicle.
- The Kingdom of God is genderless, multiplying through metamorphosis, and its inhabitants have free will.

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The “spaceship in the tail of the comet theory” gained popularity on the radio show hosted by Art Bell, a facilitator of discussions on paranormal activity. When the object in the tail of the comet turned out to be a hoax, the leader of Heaven’s Gate was undaunted, claiming that it had been revealed to him that the comet itself was the “sign” they had been looking for.<sup>33</sup> On March 21, the first fifteen drank a poisonous mixture, followed by the second fifteen, hours later. The final seven came next, including the last two, two women. Police investigators found a morbid situation on March 26 in mansion rented by the cult. The 39 bodies were laid out in their bunks in orderly fashion. At least two other people, one the husband of one of the suicide victims, gave up their lives in a similar fashion sometime later.

It can be expected that events of a similar nature will happen in the future. Comets may return, and strange wonders will occur in the heavens. This is why these events should be carefully considered by everyone for their import and meaning. The most tragic results come as a result of ignoring the plain statements of Scripture that warns the world of these perilous deceptions and strategies. When

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. “One amateur astronomer said that a ringed object was following the comet, which was four times the size of Earth and which had thrown the comet off its course several times. It was even said that the Vatican was looking for some sign in the heavens, since this would be the last comet of the millennium. It supposedly signaled the final three years of Satan's reign on earth and would usher in a more enlightened age.

Dr. Courtney Brown, claiming to be adept at “remote viewing,” or seeing things that occurred far away, told radio host Art Bell that he was in possession of photographs of the comet. They clearly showed an object in its wake and this object had all the appearances of an alien craft. In fact, Brown said he’d “looked” inside and had seen alien life forms. This claim drew many expectant listeners who wanted to see the photos, including members of Heaven’s Gate.

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the Bible doctrines are ignored for the fanciful delusions marketed by the enemy of souls, sure and certain tragedy will be the result. The watchword should be, if the Bible doesn't clearly teach it, be wary of it, and do not believe it. Heaven's genuine gate will be made abundantly plain to all at the proper time. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Heaven's gate already stands open for all who simply believe in Christ.

### Meteors

Since I am certainly not an expert on meteors the following article is quoted for its information:

"Meteorites (the pieces that make it to Earth) were long ago thought to be cast down as gifts from angels. Others thought the gods were displaying their anger. As late as the 17th century, many believed they fell from thunderstorms (they were nicknamed "thunderstones"). Many scientists were skeptical that stones could fall from the clouds *or* the heavens, and often they simply didn't believe the accounts of people who claimed to have seen such things.

In 1807, a fireball exploded over Connecticut, and several meteorites rained down. By then the first handful of asteroids had been discovered, and a new theory emerged suggesting meteorites were broken bits off asteroids or other planets. (A theory that still holds.)

One of the most significant meteorite events in recent history destroyed hundreds of square miles of forest in Siberia on June 30, 1908. Across hundreds of miles, witnesses of the Tunguska event

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saw a ball of fire streak through the sky, suggesting the meteor entered the atmosphere at an oblique angle. It exploded, sending out hot winds and loud noises and shook the ground enough to break windows in nearby villages. Small particles blown into the atmosphere lit the night sky for several days. No meteorite was ever found, and for years many scientists thought the devastation was caused by a comet. Now, the prevailing theory holds that a meteor exploded just above the surface.



The largest meteorite recovered in the United States fell in a wheat field in southern Nebraska in 1948. Witnesses saw a giant fireball in the afternoon that some said was brighter than the sun. The meteorite was found buried 10 feet deep in the ground. It weighed 2,360 pounds.

The most famous meteorite crater in the United States is misnamed Meteor Crater. It's in Arizona, and it's huge. The rim rises 150 feet from the surrounding plain, and the hole is 600 feet deep and nearly a mile wide. It was the first crater that was proved to be caused by a meteorite impact.”

# THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

## Meteors and Meteor Showers

“Meteoroids are tiny particles, (about the size of a grain of sand), that are usually the residue from comets (a big exception being the Geminids, which is produced from asteroid fragments. If a meteoroid encounters the Earth's upper atmosphere, it vaporizes in an event called a meteor. If the object is large enough and survives to hit the ground, then it is referred to as a meteorite.”

Comets are little more than dirty ice-balls which orbit the Sun. As the Sun heats a comet, the ices vaporize into gas. As the gas escapes, the dirt tags along. If one has ever seen a comet, or a photograph of a comet, you will notice the comet's tail pointing away from the Sun. This is the solar wind pushing the comet's gas and dust away from the Sun. The remaining residue of dust and small dirt particles will remain in nearly the same orbit as the parent comet for years, leaving a trail of dust. Meteor showers are produced when the Earth's orbit comes across streams of these very small particles, sometimes in spectacular fashion. For instance in 1966, some observers saw 40 meteors per second from the Leonid meteor storm. The Leonid meteor storms of 1799 and 1833 were even more impressive. The most famous artist conception (shown above) of the 1833 Leonid meteor storm shows thousands of meteors raining down as a terrified public looks on in the United States. The intensity of a meteor shower depends on how large and dense the comet's dust trail is. If the trail is spread out and loosely compact, then the meteor shower will likely result in just a few

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meteors seen per hour over a couple of weeks. However if the dust trail is small and dense, then the resulting meteor shower may result in hundreds, or perhaps even thousands of meteors burning up in just minutes. If this scenario happens, that the meteor shower is referred to as a meteor storm.

One of the greatest signs of Christ's coming in recent memory was the great meteor shower of 1833. While many modern proponents tend to minimize the power and effect of this display, it should be noted that no meteor shower in history has been known to be as magnificent. It is the opinion of this writer that it was a "historical" fulfillment of the great prophecy of Jesus. Jesus predicted that:

*"The stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heavens shall be shaken."* Matt. 24:29.

Reports one writer:

In 1833, . . . the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus, "The stars shall fall from heaven." And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God, "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfilment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; 'the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion! No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another.'" "Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds. . . . Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell

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toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion. . . . The display, as described in Professor Silliman's Journal, was seen all over North America. . . . From two o'clock until broad daylight, . . . an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens."--R. M. Devens, *American Progress*; or, *The Great Events of the Greatest Century*, ch. 28, pars. 1-5. . . . {Mar 151.1}

### Asteroids

Another sign that may come from the heavens to earth someday is the impact of an asteroid. Asteroids are large meteoric objects that are passing through space. The third trumpet of Revelation infers that such an event may be literally expected. Such a possibility is not considered remote, by even scientists. In fact there is considerable evidence that this earth has received such gigantic impacts before. While God has largely protected this planet during its history, the day will come when he will remove his protection.

God's people should never fear this circumstance, however. If God has protected the righteous for thousands of years, he can do it at the close of time. However, counsel exists that great destruction is to fall upon the particularly wicked cities of this earth. It is wise for all God's people to locate themselves and their families outside these cities. While they must interact with the people of these cities, they should not find continual residence in them, so that they can be spared the doom of some of these concentrations of evil and godlessness. If they carefully regard the counsel given, they will be warned at the proper time from entering into the destruction that will be falling about them.

## *Comets, Meteors, and Asteroids*

**The following description was shared with the author from the family collections of some of his former church members John and Esther Carlock of Canyonville, Oregon. It is included for interest:**

### **The Falling of the Stars in 1833 as seen by Abraham Willard Carlock**

“The Old Democrat”----Taken from the Grandfather of the Publisher.

These unexplained meteorological phenomena of the heavens occurred at 2 A.M. November 13, 1833. Our grandfather had left his home near Carlock, Illinois, two days before on a trip to the Pekin Mill, leaving behind Grandmother Mary Goodpasture Carlock, Uncle John Goodpasture Carlock then six years old, and the writer’s father, Madison P. Carlock, then four years old. These two lads were sleeping in a “trundle bed” when their mother awakened them and opened the cabin door that they might see the wonderful shooting stars. Grandfather Abraham W. Carlock, who was stopping at the Inn in Pekin while his grain was being ground into flour, believed he was the first to note the blazing meteors.

In describing the magnificent, fiery spectacle to his children he said that “the brilliant light in the heavens enabled one to see very small objects on the floor without the aid of any other light. The meteors and rockets seemed to start a little southeast of the zenith and proceed to the northwest at a great rapidity and at angles varying from 35 to 65 degrees; then they fell as thick as snowflakes. There was no let-up in the magnitude of this magnificent spectacle until the approaching rays of the morning sun put an end to the grandeur and the beauty of the display.”

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A number of people remained over night at the Inn, including a minister who searched from the Bible, in the Book of Revelation, scripture thought to foretell of this event. No one of this party felt any fear that the world was coming to an end, for it was quickly demonstrated that these wonders were harmless. However, in some parts of the State, terrorized people knelt in prayer and asked their Heavenly Father for protection. At the Inn, passages were read from the Bible and discussed. Different opinions were expressed, but using the vision employed in the Apocalypse, as set forth in the Revelation of the opening of the Sixth Seal, "the stars of Heaven fell unto the Earth even as the fig tree casteth her untimely figs upon the ground when shaken of a mighty wind."

The stars were of three kinds: the straightforward shooter---at an angle of 35 degrees; blazing meteors and sparkling balls of fire; and like appearances that seemed to be fixed in the firmament. The meteors were gorgeous hues ranging from a white furnace heat to a fiery red, with intermingling colors of yellow, orange, green and blue. The oblong shapes seemed to reflect the seven colors of the rainbow.

The point from which they emanated was in Constellation Leo, and they fell apparently as thick as snowflakes in winter. It was a display of "fire works" of the most imposing grandeur, filling the entire vault of the sky with myriads of fire balls resembling sky-rockets, undefinable and indescribably beautiful luminous bodies and phosphoric effects.

High up in the sky were occasionally seen spheres of fire, which trembled for a few seconds and then shot in vertical lines to the earth. Some would apparently flicker out and disappear from sight at a point twenty-five to one hundred feet from the earth. Some astronomers have argued that these supposed distances were optical illusions. Our grandfather and other observers of this remarkable, heavenly display examined, on the coming of daylight, the ground for evidences of the "falling stars," and a brownish, ashen substance in small particles was generally found. Of all the meteorological events in history, this display in 1833 appears to be the

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greatest, and it is the theory of some that the earth was passing through the tail of a comet, though this connection is not free from attack. After grandfather loaded his meal and flour, he returned to his home to find that his wife and boys had also witnessed this remarkable spectacle of the heavens.----History of the Carlock Family---accompanied by a pen sketch of a small log cabin entitled, "Abraham Willard Carlock's Log Cabin." He is shown talking with his guest and friend, Abraham Lincoln" (not included in this book).

## Chapter 12

# The Sign of the Son of Man

*“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.” Matthew 24:30*

The most exciting of all heavenly displays will be those that accompany the literal coming of Jesus from heaven. It is expected that soon, every eye will see the Jesus returning on the clouds of heaven to rescue his faithful loved ones from the perils of this dying planet.

Many signs will occur in the last vestige of time for this earth. It is an observation of keen interest, I believe, to relate the nature of these signs with all the signs of the heavens that have occurred in the past. Two aspects come to our immediate attention. The first is that all the signs of the past in themselves, one way or another, symbolically have pointed to the last and final day of this earth. The second observation is: **It appears that every sign that has previously**

## *The Sign of the Son of Man*

**been seen over this earth's history, will indeed be *repeated* in the grandest of all displays at the end of time!**

It is like a typical fireworks display. For several minutes there might be seen single or smaller explosions of different kinds. But at the very end of the session is usually found a grand finale, that includes similar displays to what has gone before, but that culminates sensationally, climactically, and with colorful variety.

Of the phenomena that we have considered in previous chapters, notice how many are repeated in the last great drama:

- A star will shine in brilliance, much like the one that welcomed Jesus at his first coming.
- A precious rainbow of the covenant will place itself over those waiting for Christ to come, much as the rainbow of promise was once given to the faithful Noah as a sign of favor and deliverance. (A rainbow also accompanies Christ when he comes.)
- The sun, and the moon, and the stars will be clothed in blackness, as transpired in the early Advent awakening, at the cross of Christ, and in Egypt during the plagues.
- The sun and moon will stand still as it did in the days of Joshua. The powers of the heavens will be shaken out of their places.
- The earth will be accosted by supernatural wonders, by meteoric balls of fire from heaven, by various heavenly signs and portents as have been often reported in history.
- Christ will be seen, coming on the clouds of heaven, coming through Orion, the constellation known for centuries as the “second-coming constellation.”

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The heavens will continue to testify, as it has for centuries, to the advent of the great day of God, who comes to reign.

Elijah after his signal victory on Carmel waited on its summit for a promise that God would provide the promised rain. The land had endured three and a half years of severe drought. After God's order, Elijah prayed for rain to reward Israel's new covenant with the true God (1 Kings 18).

But the "patient endurance" of Elijah was tested. *Seven* times Elijah sent his servant to look toward the Sea to determine whether or not the necessary weather for rain was developing, as it should. Nothing was seen. But on the seventh attempt, the sign was finally seen. It was only a small cloud at first, about the size of a man's hand. But it soon grew until Palestine was inundated with a soaking, driving rain that lavishly poured itself out upon the troubled land.

What is the "Sign of the Son of man?" It is described in similar fashion to the experience of Elijah:

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Savior and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 640, 641. The reader must read the entire description in the book *The Great Controversy* to appreciate the order of the heavenly signs that will be given in the last moments of history. The words there expressed have no match and need no improvement. No attempt will be made in this chapter to do so. It is recommended that at least the chapter "God's People Delivered" be studied.

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Clouds are another sign of the heavens. Unfortunately very few people have thought about what God is saying through the clouds. Most pass them off as simply pockets of condensed moisture. While we see clouds almost everyday, they are a phenomena of the sky that are intended in part to daily testify to the second coming of Christ. They “fly” through the heavens, moving across the sky. They are a symbol of the heavens and of the purposes and blessings of the God of the universe.

Clouds are God’s special agents and tools. He used them to help Israel as they passed through the Red Sea. He overshadowed and protected Israel in the wilderness with a cloud. This cloud gave them shade, and we are told even provided rain and moisture for forty years. It led them from place to place, and stood over the tabernacle to remind them of God’s heavenly presence. Clouds have been instrumental in providing providential cover in modern times from the crossing of the Delaware by Washington, to the miracle of Dunkirk in World War II.

Clouds are always present in the biblical descriptions of the second coming. Revelation teaches that Jesus will come “with clouds and every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7). Jesus told those who were about to crucify him that thereafter, they would “see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven and in great glory” (Matthew 26:64). When he ascended to heaven, a “cloud received him out their sight.” The angels indicated to the disciples that Jesus would come again in “like manner” as they had seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). In Revelation 14 Jesus, the Son of man, is seen, coming and seated upon a cloud. A cloud accompanies the vision of Revelation 10, which narrates the events leading up to the great advent movement that proclaimed that Jesus was coming again.

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Clouds represent the presence of heavenly beings, and especially the coming of Christ.

Clouds are formed out of millions of tiny droplets of water, so multitudinous and so proliferate that they cannot be reduced to numbers. Clouds are often equated with the numberless legions of angels that surround God's throne, that fly through the heavens, and are the servants of heaven. When Jesus comes he will come with clouds made up of the heavenly hosts that can either shield or display God's glory as he commands. The cloud that is the sign of the Son of man will be a cloud of such surpassing glory that it cannot be described, either now, or when it will be seen. It will be the greatest of all heavenly signs ever displayed, and will not ever be counterfeited or surpassed in its quality. What a wonderful sight it will be for the saints bound for the heavenly courts!

Elijah saw his cloud form in the west (cf. Luke 12:54), for this is where the natural weather clouds usually came from. But the sign of the Son of man is most unusual, for it approaches from the east, a circumstance probably almost never heard of to the inhabitants of Palestine. As the world is wrapped in darkness, the natural clouds will be "rolled back, as a scroll," and there will be seen approaching from the East, the direction of Orion<sup>35</sup>, a small cloud. This cloud will soon become a phenomenon of indescribable glory. Every living person will recognize it, some with remorse, but some with joyous anticipation. It will be the great day of God. It will most certainly come. Though many doubt today, they certainly will not be

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<sup>35</sup> In normal terms, astronomically, this would be in the late fall months, when Orion appears in the south-east at about midnight. Of course too many things will be altered or aberrant on this earth at the time to make any certain prediction. The actual time of the coming cannot be known.

## *The Sign of the Son of Man*

able to doubt then; when this wonderful sign is seen. What a day that will be!

### **Series Conclusion:**

“The heavens declare the glory of God.” They are his spokesmen. Only God can comprehend their vastness, or order their movements. The heavens are God’s creation, fulfilling the purposes for which they were created. They are a wonderful law, a revelation of God’s character and purpose. They are a precise clock, marking the times and seasons of his grand design. They are a glorious backdrop, upon which God advertises his signs and his purposes. They are indications of God’s incredible glory and power.

Every living person is invited to lift up his eyes on high and see who has created these wonderful things. They can find in the heavens evidence not only for a powerful Creator and Sustainer, but also evidence for a Savior and Lord. The God of the heavens is also the God of the heart. Since he is able to control the universe, he is well able to order our personal lives. Indeed he offers to do so. It is in the best interest of man to cooperate in God’s glorious plan. They should “fear God and give glory to him.” They should “worship Him who made the *heavens*, and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water.” May the whole universe, animate and inanimate, therefore shout forth his glorious praise!

## THE SIGNS OF THE HEAVENS

This is the third book of several books on the sacred significances to be found in the heavens. Also available is book one: *The Torah of the Heavens*, a primer on the ancient meaning of the biblical zodiac; and book two: *The Clock of the Heavens*, a book discussing the incredible timing of the celestial movements that seem to correlate with biblical events. A fourth book, *The Creator of the Heavens* examines astronomical evidences for creationism. The final book, *The Planisphere of the Heavens*, provides stellar maps for the constellations in the sky and examines the positions of the stars, their names and their meanings.

Additional books are available at [www.lulu.com/sbehrmann](http://www.lulu.com/sbehrmann)