

MISTAKE 5

WE SHOULD NOT LOOK FOR ASTRONOMICAL SIGNS TO FULFILL BIBLE PROPHECY IN THIS PRESENT AGE

It has become popular today in some Christian circles to look for “signs in the heavens” for a fulfillment of specific predictions found in Scripture. Is this a correct way of interpreting the Bible? As we draw nearer to the coming of the Lord, are we to look for signs in the sky as a direct fulfillment of what Scripture predicts?

THERE ARE END-TIME FORECASTS OF SIGNS IN THE SKY

The Bible does indeed speak of certain signs in the heavens occurring at the time of the end of this age. In fact, the Old Testament lists images that will occur at the time of the end.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

For example, we read in the Book of Joel that the sun will be darkened and the moon will turn to blood in the last days:

I will produce portents both in the sky and on the earth—blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sunlight will be turned to darkness and the moon to the color of blood, before the day of the Lord comes— that great and terrible day! (Joel 2:30-31 NET).

THE GOSPELS

As we examine the gospels, we also find predictions of heavenly signs at the time of the coming of the Lord. Indeed, Jesus said the following would occur:

Immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:29-31 NET).

We read similar statements by Jesus in Mark 13:24–27 and in Luke 21:25-28.

SIGNS IN THE SKY ARE PROPHESED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

We also find examples of predicted signs in the sky in the Book of Revelation. They include the following:

STARS FALLING TO THE EARTH AND THE MOON TURNING INTO BLOOD

Then I looked when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, and a huge earthquake took place; the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became blood red; and the stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when shaken by a fierce wind (Revelation 6:12-13 NET).

BURNING FIRE FROM HEAVEN

Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain of burning fire was thrown into the sea. . . . Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star burning like a torch fell from the sky; it landed on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water (Revelation 8:8,10 NET).

THE DARKENING OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. And there was no light for a third of the day and for a third of the night likewise darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (Revelation 8:12 NET).

A GREAT SIGN IN HEAVEN

Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1 NET).

Clearly Scripture predicts that those living upon the earth will see signs in the sky at the time of the end of this age.

THE QUESTION IS: WHEN WILL THEY OCCUR?

From an examination of Scripture, there is no doubt whatsoever that heavenly signs will occur. However, this is not the question we are examining here.

It is not *whether* or not signs will appear, because they will. The issue that must be examined has to do with the *timing* of the signs. When, in God's program for time and eternity, should humans expect to see these signs in the sky? This is the real issue.

Mistakes have been made by those who believe that these heavenly signs will appear during the present age of the church. We will provide two illustrations.

REVELATION 12 WAS TO BE FULFILLED ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2017

There were a number of people who predicted that the "great sign" mentioned in Revelation 12:1-6 would be fulfilled on a precise date: September 23, 2017. The text reads as follows:

Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was screaming in labor pains, struggling to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadem crowns. Now the dragon's tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. So the woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule over all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was suddenly caught up to God and to his throne, and she fled into the wilderness where a place had been prepared for her by God, so she could be taken care of for 1,260 days (Revelation 12:1-6 NET).

Citing a unique astronomical event that was to take place on September 23, 2017, it was claimed that Revelation 12:1-6 would be fulfilled on that very day!

Obviously, it did not take place. What, then, were some of the problems with this prediction?

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

The problem of doing this, in the present age in which we live, is found in the context of Revelation 12. Earlier, Scripture speaks of three "woes" that are to come upon the earth in the future:

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As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!” (Revelation 8:13 NIV).

After the first woe was completed we read the following:

One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things (Revelation 9:12 NKJV).

There were still two “woes” to come.

Likewise, Scripture tells us that the second woe had also passed and the third woe was predicted to come soon thereafter:

The second woe has come and gone; the third is coming quickly (Revelation 11:14 NET).

THE CONTEXT OF REVELATION 12

We now move to the context of Revelation 12:1:

Then a great sign appeared in heaven (Revelation 12:1 NET).

The great sign in heaven appears *after* the aforementioned two woes have already taken place. In fact, it will come quickly after the second woe is completed.

Therefore, if we think about it logically, if the predicted first woe has not yet come to pass in our world, and neither has the second woe, then it is *not* possible that we are going to see the third woe before we see the other two!

Add to this Revelation 11, the second woe, tells us of the appearance of two witnesses who will arrive upon the earth and proclaim the message of Jesus Christ for three and one half years. After which, they will be put to death by the Final Antichrist who has, at that time, arrived on the scene.

Their bodies will lie unburied in the city of Jerusalem. Three and one half days later they will rise from the dead in full view of the entire world! After this, a great earthquake will take place in Jerusalem, destroying part of the city, and the Ark of Covenant will then be seen in heaven.

Do we really need to tell anyone that these events have not happened yet? However, Revelation 12:1-6, and its “great sign,” appears *after* all these things have taken place.

Indeed, if we look at the predicted events that are to take place before the “great sign” in Revelation 12, it will become obvious that none of them has yet occurred. Therefore, it is unbiblical to look for this sign before any of the other events take place.

We could also add to this that the heavenly phenomena associated with Revelation 12 will occur at an unknown time in the future. The date of September 23, 2017 was a time when a “known” astronomical phenomenon took place! In other words, the date could be determined ahead of time.

PROBLEMS GALORE WITH THE IDEA OF BLOOD MOONS

Another example of incorrectly claiming that “heavenly signs” would fulfill Bible prophecy can be found in the so-called “blood moons” that occurred in 2015.

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Basically, this series of “blood moons” were supposed to have hailed the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. His Second Coming, or some other last days event, was supposed to coincide with these “blood moons,” or eclipses. They were given the name blood moons because of the reddish tinge that an eclipse would have on a heavenly object.

This fulfillment of Bible prophecy was supposed to occur during the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles in 2015. Obviously, it too failed.

There were a host of problems concerning this theory of the blood moons. We will merely cite a few of them.

PROBLEM 1 OTHER PHENOMENA IS CONNECTED WITH THE MOON TURNING TO BLOOD

One of the biggest problems with the idea of blood moons is what the Scripture says will also occur when the moon turns into blood:

Then I saw him open the sixth seal. A violent earthquake occurred; the sun turned black like sackcloth made of hair; the entire moon became like blood; the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; the sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place. (Revelation 6:12-14 CSB).

Notice the moon turning into blood is merely part of the celestial phenomena. The sun will turn black and stars will fall from the sky. Obviously none of this happened in 2015 when the so called “blood moons” appeared.

PROBLEM 2 THE TIMING OF THE BLOOD MOON

This moon turning into blood occurs during the final seven year period before the coming of Christ. It is also known as the “time of Jacob’s trouble” or the “seventieth week of Daniel.” It does NOT occur previous to it.

Therefore, to claim that the blood moons that appeared in 2015 are to be viewed a sign of the end is just plain wrong. The final seven-year period has not yet begun!

PROBLEM 3 NOBODY KNOWS THE DAY OR THE HOUR

A third problem is that these blood moons were to arrive at a certain date. However, Jesus said nobody knows the day or the hour of his return:

But as for that day and hour no one knows it—not even the angels in heaven—except the Father alone (Matthew 24:36 NET)

Yet, these so called “blood moons” were an astronomical phenomenon that took place on a known date. What kind of supernatural sign takes place at a time when everyone is expecting it to happen?

PROBLEM 4 THERE IS ONLY ONE BLOOD MOON

Finally, the moon only turns into blood once! Biblically, there is no such thing as blood moons. There is only one time that the moon will turn blood-like: not *many* times!

These are just a few of the many problems that are associated with the attempt to make “blood moons” as a sign of the end.

THE CONTEXT OF THESE HEAVENLY SIGNS IS THE TIME OF THE END

The main problem with any prediction about heavenly phenomena being a biblical sign, is a misunderstanding of the timing of these prophesied events.

Indeed, these events take place during the last seven years before the Lord returns. The period known as the “70th week of Daniel,” the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” or the “Great Tribulation,” begins with a certain covenant, or agreement, made by the coming Antichrist with the nation of Israel:

The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him (Daniel 9:27 NLT).

Since this has not happened yet, none of the heavenly phenomena attributed to that period, could not, by definition, have happened yet!

Therefore, we can conclude that all future predictions about specific signs in the sky will be incorrect. By definition, they cannot occur until this final seven year period begins.

Consequently, in our present age, we should not be looking for signs in the sky in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Indeed, it is a mistake to do so!