

Matthew 24b: (See also Mark 13 and Luke 21)

Reading #420 Signs of the advent

As we continue with Christ's prophecy of the last day events, we find that He told His disciples that the last day Christians would see certain events before the second coming.

*****(Begin Quote)

Matthew 24:

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened,
and the moon shall not give her light,
and the stars shall fall from heaven,
and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
³⁰ 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.

***** (End Quote)

Rather than suddenly appearing without notice, our Saviour has told us that "after the tribulation" (that which precedes the second coming) there will be signs in space before His advent, which we cannot miss.

God says of that time:

***** (Begin Quote)

Joel 2:

¹ Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD comes, for it is nigh at hand; . . .

¹⁰ The earth shall quake before them [the persecuting army]; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: ¹¹ and THE LORD SHALL UTTER HIS VOICE before his [Satan's] army: for his camp is very great [most of the world is on his side]: for he is strong [eager] that executes his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

¹² Therefore also now, says the LORD [to His people], turn you even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning [as on the Day of Atonement]: ¹³ and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger,

and of great kindness, and repents Him of the evil [He is upset at what is happening].

(End Quote)

These signs did occur in the days of the first generation, and again after the great persecutions of the Papal era. There was a “dark day” in 1780 (See note 1 at end of the reading). The stars did appear to fall in the great meteor shower of November 13, 1833. (See note 2.) Those were for the history part of the prophecy (the 2,000 years since the cross), and heralded the advent near (even at the door), but they will also be repeated with even greater intensity for the last generation to witness.

Jesus said,

“So likewise you, when you shall see ALL these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say to you, This generation [the second advent one] shall not pass, till ALL these things be fulfilled”. Matthew 24:33-34.

In the last days, after the close of human probation and while the Son of God is preparing to leave heaven, the seven last plagues will begin to fall. As we have seen before, the first four of those plagues will not be universal, or no one would survive. But the last three, as the Son of man approaches the earth for the second advent, change character to become worldwide and sudden. One of them, the fifth, causes the sun to stop shining temporarily. “And the fifth angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon the seat of the beast; and his [Satan’s] kingdom [the whole world] was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds”. Revelation 16:10-11. A side effect of this absence of light will be that the clouds of heaven will disappear [they will freeze into clear ice].

(Begin Quote)

Revelation 6:

¹² And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal [of the book of history], and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; ¹³ and the stars of heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. ¹⁴ And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

(End Quote)

This “opening” will occur at the same time that the seventh plague angel releases his protective hold on the world. In the great earthquake, one such as never was before, the whole earth will be reeling to and fro, and because

there is no great light in the sky anymore, the stars in the black sky will appear to be falling every which way. “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great Voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done”. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great . . . And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found”. Revelation 16:17-20.

When the LORD said “heaven,” in giving the signs recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, He meant heaven, and when He said “earth” He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the 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. After that the sun will reappear.

So it is written:

***** (Begin Quote)

Hebrews 12:

²⁵ See that you refuse not Him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spoke on earth [they perished in the wilderness], much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaks from heaven.

²⁶ Whose voice then shook the earth [in the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai]: but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” [in giving the Ten Commandments again and announcing the return of Jesus].

[The promise:

“For thus says the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while [for a short time], and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come [Christ at His first advent]: and I will fill this house [the temple] with glory [by His presence], says the LORD of hosts”. Haggai 2:6-7. Paul is applying this promise to the second advent also.]

²⁷ And this word, “Yet [only] once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain [It was the end of their earthly world as it will be for ours.]. ²⁸ Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

***** (End Quote)

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring [because of the earth’s shaking]; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”. Luke 21:25-27.

What is “the sign of the Son of man” which precedes the advent of the LORD? (Verse 30) As we have just read, when the Son of man comes He appears to be sitting on a cloud. Revelation 14:14. It is this that the people will see at first. It will appear as a little black cloud in the distance slowly drawing nearer and nearer to the earth. After seeing (and feeling) the signs we have discussed, everyone on earth will find their eyes drawn to that cloud.

Lateral thought:

Before all this, one of Satan’s great deceptions in the last days will be to appear as Christ. Why? Christ has told us that there will be many false teachers in the last days, using great deceptions. Some of these will be fallen angels in the human forms of Peter, John and James etc. The apostle Paul wrote about them also. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works”. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

The greatest deception of all will be to make it appear that the second coming has already taken place. The true followers of God will not be misled for a moment for they know that the real Christ will not touch the earth at the advent, but will stand out in space waiting for His people to join Him there. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. But those who are willingly ignorant of the Bible will be easily fooled.

From my library:

***** (Begin Quote)

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. . . . The shout of triumph rings out upon the air, “Christ has come! Christ has come!” The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him. . . . In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious,

heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. . . . Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive.

(End Quote)

Lateral thought:

When the rejecters of His mercy see Him sitting on the cloud they will know that the one who walked on earth was an impostor. But their church leaders had assured them that he was the real thing, so now the veil is lifted from their eyes and they will turn on their former religious guides and vent their anger on them. We'll see more on this in later readings, but right now we have to stop and make room for some historical information.

Bye, Ron

Some of the comments in these readings are adapted from books in my library. No recognition is given because they are not intended as authorities, but are used because they express my understanding clearly. All the ideas expressed in these readings, right or wrong, are my own.

Some of these readings are available at http://www.geocities.com/weprotest.geo/BibleReadings/books_index.html

Note 1:

Some selections from my library:

(Begin Quote)

“Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, . . . stands the dark day of May 19, 1780,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England.”--*R. M. Devens, Our First Century, page 89.*

(End Quote)

(Begin Quote)

The poet Whittier thus speaks of this memorable day:--

“’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.”

May 19, 1780, stands in history as “The Dark Day.” Since the time of Moses, no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as given by the poet and the historian, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, recorded by the prophet Joel, twenty-five hundred years previous to their fulfillment: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.” [Joel 2:31.]

***** (End Quote)

<http://www.kimopress.com/whittier.htm>

John Greenleaf Whittier

Whittier was once considered a national treasure; his birthday was a holiday in many states, and his verse memorized by schoolchildren. Whittier's poetry is out of fashion today, but many of his poems on Quaker themes can still be read with pleasure and value, especially by Friends or those interested in Quaker faith and history.

***** (Begin Quote)

An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: “In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery [menacing], and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o'clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o'clock on a summer evening. . . . [This was not an eclipse, for that requires the moon to cover the sun, and usually lasts only a few minutes.]

“Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from their labor in the fields; the carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge, the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. 'What is coming?' queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things.

“Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn. . . . Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come. . . .

“Dr. Nathanael Whittaker, pastor of the Tabernacle church in Salem, held religious services in the meeting-house, and preached a sermon in which he maintained that the darkness was supernatural. Congregations came together in many other places. The texts for the extemporaneous sermons were invariably those that seemed to indicate that the darkness was consonant with Scriptural prophecy. . . . The darkness was most dense shortly after eleven o'clock.”--*The Essex Antiquarian*, April, 1899, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 53, 54.

***** (End Quote)

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~maessex/EssexAntiquarian/>

The Essex Antiquarian was a monthly publication from 1897 to 1904 and then a quarterly until its end in 1909. It was devoted to the biographies, genealogies, history and antiquities of Essex County, MA. [Massachusetts] The editor, Sidney Perley, was its main contributor and researcher.

From the final issue is this synopsis:

"During the thirteen years of its existence there have been published in *The Essex Antiquarian* genealogies of all families from Abbe to Brown; all gravestone inscriptions dated prior to the year 1800 in Amesbury, Andover, Beverly, Boxford, Bradford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Groveland, Hamilton, Haverhill and Ipswich; all wills proved in the county prior to June, 1666; the record of the Essex county Revolutionary soldiers and sailors alphabetically to Brown; abstracts of the old Norfolk records [sic] to 1675; Salem and Ipswich quarterly court records and files to 1659; and abstracts of all records in the first ten volumes of the Suffolk [sic] county registry of deeds relating to Essex county persons and property, where parties resided or property was located in Essex county, covering the period prior to 1678."

The demise of *The Essex Antiquarian* was not brought about due to lack of funding or public support. The publishers ended it because of the tremendous work load placed on Mr. Perley.

***** (Begin Quote)

“In most parts of the country it [the darkness] was so great in the daytime, that the people could not tell the hour by either watch or clock, nor dine, nor manage their domestic business, without the light of candles. . . . “The extent of this darkness was extraordinary. It was observed as far east as Falmouth. To the westward it reached to the farthest part of Connecticut, and to Albany. To the southward, it was observed along the seacoasts; and to the north as far

as the American settlements extend.”--*William Gordon, History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the U.S.A., vol. 3, p. 57.*

******(End Quote)*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gordon_%281763-1802%29

William Gordon ([April 12, 1763](#) - [May 8, 1802](#)) was a [United States Representative](#) from [New Hampshire](#). Born near [Boston, Massachusetts](#), he graduated from [Harvard College](#) in 1779, studied law, was admitted to the [bar](#) in 1787 and commenced practice in [Amherst, New Hampshire](#). He was appointed register of [probate](#) in 1793 and was a member of the [New Hampshire Senate](#) in 1794 and 1795. He was solicitor of [Hillsborough County](#) from 1794 to 1801, and was elected as a [Federalist](#) to the Fifth and Sixth Congresses and served from [March 4, 1797](#), until [June 12, 1800](#), when he resigned to accept the office of [New Hampshire Attorney General](#), which he held until his death.

Gordon was one of the managers appointed by the House of Representatives in 1798 to conduct the [impeachment](#) proceedings against [William Blount](#), a [U.S. Senator](#) from Tennessee. Gordon died in Boston in 1802; interment was in Amherst Cemetery.

Try this URL for one of his books.

http://books.google.com/books?id=fmzeQjLyNMkC&dq=William+Gordon+History+Independence&pg=PP14&ots=3owkODZ2GD&sig=xUcTp_Mlz62SWti4Ud8J92_Y5s0&prev=http://www.google.com/search%3Fsourceid%3Dnavclient-ff%26ie%3DUTF-8%26rlz%3D1B2RNFA_en_NZ211%26q%3DWilliam%2BGordon%2BHistory%2BIndependence&sa=X&oi=print&ct=result&cd=1

******(Begin Quote)*

The intense darkness of the day was succeeded, an hour or two before evening, by a partially clear sky, and the sun appeared, though it was still obscured by the black, heavy mist. “After sundown, the clouds came again overhead, and it grew dark very fast.”

“Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, when seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to the rays.”--*Isaiah Thomas, Massachusetts Spy; or, American Oracle of Liberty, vol. 10, No. 472 (May 25, 1780).*

******(End Quote)*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah_Thomas

Isaiah Thomas ([January 8, 1749](#) - [April 4, 1831](#)), was an [American newspaper publisher](#) and author. He was active in the American Revolution and performed the first public reading of the [Declaration of Independence](#) in [Worcester, Massachusetts](#). . . .

The Massachusetts Spy (1770-1802)

He issued in Boston the [Massachusetts Spy](#) three times each week, then (under his sole ownership) as a semi-weekly, and beginning in [1771](#), as a weekly which soon espoused the Whig cause and which the government tried to suppress.

*****[\(Begin Quote\)](#)

Said an eyewitness of the scene: "I could not help conceiving at the time, that 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."--*Letter by Dr. Samuel Tenney, of Exeter, New Hampshire, December, 1785 (in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 1792, 1st series, vol. 1, p. 97).*

Though at nine o'clock that night the moon rose to the full, "it had not the least effect to dispel the deathlike shadows." After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood.

*****[\(End Quote\)](#)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Tenney

Samuel Tenney ([November 27, 1748](#) - [February 6, 1816](#)) was a [United States Representative](#) from [New Hampshire](#). Born in [Byfield, Massachusetts](#), he attended [Dummer Academy](#) there and graduated from [Harvard College](#) in 1772. He taught school in [Andover, Massachusetts](#) and studied medicine, beginning practice in [Exeter, New Hampshire](#). He was a surgeon in the [Revolutionary War](#), and returned to Exeter at the close of the war and continued the practice of his profession. he was a delegate to the [State constitutional convention](#) in 1788 and a judge of [probate](#) for [Rockingham County](#) from 1793 to 1800.

Tenney was elected as a [Federalist](#) to the Sixth Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of [William Gordon](#); he was reelected to the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Congresses and served from [December 8, 1800](#), to [March 3, 1807](#). While in the House, he was chairman of the Committee on Revisal and Unfinished Business (Eighth and Ninth Congresses). He pursued

literary, historical, and scientific studies and died in Exeter in 1816; interment was in the Old Cemetery.

Note 2:

***** (Begin Quote)

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 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.*

***** (End Quote)

http://ia331342.us.archive.org/load_djvu_applet.cgi?file=3/items/ourfirstcenturyb00deverich/ourfirstcenturyb00deverich.djvu

The above URL will take you to the article which contains the statements by R. M. Devens. It requires entering the number '335' (without the quotation marks) to access the page, and waiting some time for its appearance.

This was the start of the Leonid meteor showers.

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/11/1118_021118_leonids.html

The Leonid meteor showers occur every year in mid-November, but some years are far better than others. Astronomers say the next truly spectacular display after tonight won't occur until 2098 or 2131. In ordinary years, sky gazers watching a meteor shower might see about ten meteors per hour. This year [2002], however, scientists expect a full-fledged meteor storm.

Astronomers at the European Space Agency (ESA) are predicting that Europeans might see 3,000 per hour. Night owls in North America can expect to see a few hundred an hour, estimate astronomers at NASA.

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P. S. These historical signs appeared in the United States of America because that was the centre of God's church at that time.