

Highways To Happiness

ten toes of the image. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome have come and gone. Daniel said that God would set up His kingdom on this earth in the days of the ten toes. In other words, Christ is to return to this earth as He promised. No one knows the day or hour of His return, but God has given us many signs in the Bible telling when His coming is near.

It has been estimated that there were about fifty signs given in the Scriptures foretelling the coming of the Messiah as a babe in Bethlehem and the significance of His coming. But the generation in which we live has more than five times fifty signs showing the certainty, the manner, and the approximate time of His Second Coming. Several of the dozen or more great lines of prophecy have found startling fulfillment right in our own troubled times. Happy is he who heeds these reminders that God's Word is true and puts his full trust in the divine wisdom which makes its plan so clear to men.

29. More Signs

AN ATTORNEY appeared before the court and asked that a certain case be dismissed because it was impossible for his client to be present. The judge wanted to be sure that there was some good reason for dismissal, and asked the attorney whether he had just reason for making such an unusual request.

"Yes, your honor," the attorney replied. "I have several good reasons why my client cannot appear before the court. First of all, he is dead. The second reason, your honor -" Here the judge stopped him. "That is sufficient reason," he said.

In previous chapters we have given sufficient evidence that we are nearing the end of time, that Jesus is coming back to the earth again. But there are many more signs, of which we can briefly mention only a few.

One day on the Mount of Olives the disciples asked Jesus to tell them some of the signs of His coming and of the end of the world, and His response to their query is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Matthew. Here is a remarkable prophecy revealing the social and political events to take place as signs that His return is near.

In verse 7 He said, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places." The last century has witnessed the greatest wars of all time, two of them involving the whole world. Famines, pestilence, and earthquakes have been startlingly on the increase.

In the twenty-ninth verse He mentioned the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars as signs of His return. We have but to consult historical records for the notable fulfillment of this prophecy.

The one outstanding Dark Day of history was May 19, 1780, and the great meteoric shower known as the falling of the stars took place on November 13, 1833. You will be interested in the contemporary account of these unusual happenings, or were they only happenings? They were foretold by Jesus, and they came as He predicted.

"Timothy Dwight, president of Yale, remembered that 'a very general opinion prevailed, that the day of judgment was at hand. The [Connecticut] House of Representatives, being unable to transact their business, adjourned,' but the Council lighted candles, preferring, as a member said, to be found at work if the judgment were approaching.'" -"Bible Readings" (1949), page 311.

"The remarkable Dark Day of May 19, 1780, is described by Samuel Williams of Harvard. The professor relates that the obscuration approached with the clouds from the southwest 'between the hours of ten and eleven a.m., and continued until the middle of the next night,' varying in degree and duration in different localities. In some places 'persons could not see to read common print in the open air, for several hours,' although 'this was not generally the case.' 'Candles were lighted up in the houses;-the birds having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent;-the fowls retired to roost;-the cocks were crowing all around, as at break of day;-objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance; and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night.' " -Id. page 310.

Man could find no reason for such darkness. The only reason we can think of is that Jesus said that there would be a time of darkness in the last days. The falling of the stars was as unusual and unexplainable as the Dark Day. There were no known natural causes or reasons for such a meter shower. It was a sign hung in the heavens to tell mankind that the world was nearing the close of time. Prof. Denison

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Olmsted, of Yale College, in writing about this unusual occurrence, said:

“The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded.... Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class.” American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 5 (1834), pages 363, 364.

If you care to read more about this greatest meteoric shower since time began, you will find much about it in our public libraries. It happened more than a century ago, a sign of the approaching end of all things.

There are other signs mentioned in Matthew 24. Perhaps we should mention one more, as found in the fourteenth verse. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

The great missions movement of giving the gospel to all the world began late in the eighteenth century, and today the good news of salvation is being preached in almost every corner of the globe. Thousands of missionaries are under appointment every year; and millions of pounds' worth of religious books, papers, and tracts are being circulated in hundreds of languages. The Bible is now printed in more than one thousand languages and dialects, and for a few pence a whole Bible or portions of the Scriptures may be obtained almost anywhere. If anyone cannot afford to buy one, it is furnished free by the Bible societies. Truly the gospel is being preached to practically all the world today.

After enumerating these many signs in Matthew 24, Jesus said to His disciples, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it [His coming] is near, even at the doors.”

A very accurate word picture of our times was written by the Apostle Paul hundreds of years ago. It is found in Second Timothy, the third chapter, verses one to five: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despising of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” This surely needs no comment. Only God could have given in advance such an accurate description of our day! These conditions, you will notice in verse one, were to prevail in the last days.

The Apostle James tells us of unusual labor conditions which would exist in the time when the “coming of the Lord draws nigh.” “Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is rotted; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold ‘ the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.” James 5: 1-8.

Labor troubles are on the increase, strikes are common, and the conflict between employer and employed grows more acute. The laboring man feels he has been dealt with unjustly, that the rich man, the capitalist, is making unfair profits and is hoarding up his riches. The world is lining itself up in two great camps, capital and labor. The rich seem to be getting richer and the poor poorer. For a hundred years we have been on a mad quest for gold. It was discovered in California in 1849; and in the past century at the cost of suffering, peril, hardship, and the sacrifice of even life itself we have been searching for and digging the precious metal. Today we have put most of it back in the earth again, buried in huge, well-fortified vaults far beneath the ground at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It is estimated that one half of the nation's gold reserve is in this repository.

The Savior told us that no one would know the exact time of His return, so we cannot tell the day or the hour, or even the year of His coming. But He has left us so many signs that tell us with certainty that we are living in the time of the end, that He is soon to return to the earth to take His people to Himself. That time need not come upon any of us as a “thief in the night,” or “unawares,” for He has given us plenty

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of warning. May each of us be ready when He does return, for it will mean citizenship in a wonderful kingdom of glory that will exceed the fondest dreams of human happiness.