

Look Up! For The Day of Your Redemption Draws Near

– A talk given at a fireside called Forty Years of Light on the first day of the third month, 2023-

We have been commanded to not judge. And for the most part we take that to mean don't judge people badly, don't assign people to hell, don't say they're bad people. But I think it's equally true that we shouldn't judge people to be righteous, to judge any leader as having righteousness. Lots of mischief has come of that. But the Lord has given us or will give us a sign by which we may KNOW that He has judged His servant to have faithfully delivered the words the Lord gave him to deliver.

Let's talk about that sign. In Matthew 24 the disciples say, "Lord, tell us about the destruction of the temple and the end of the world. And tell us about the sign of your coming."

The answer is recorded as

"for as the light of the morning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, and covers the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. And as I said before, after the tribulation of those days, and the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven."

So that's what my talk is about, the sign of the Coming of the Son of Man. There is nothing new here but I am going to pull together in one talk all the sources in the scriptures and from the great teachers about this sign. And I hope to show from different angles in a way you've never seen before because I've never seen this done where all the sources were brought together.

I did a little research into what other Christians thought about this prophecy. There's not a lot of detail there in Matthew. In some ways it's like a sunrise and it covers the whole earth. There's just not a lot of details. I wondered what people thought.

Well, the Catholics have come up with a few ideas that... I don't believe. One of them is that the sign would be a display of the cross in the heavens. That was taught many centuries ago by the early church fathers and it's still taught today. Another thing that they believe is that once the sign occurs, at that moment, it all happens. Once the Lord comes at that moment the wicked are burned and the righteous caught up. Well, I don't believe that either.

Other Christians have come up with some interesting conclusions that are worth considering. And some of them, I don't know how they derive their ideas. One of them is the Lord's coming occurs after the sign. Now Joseph taught that but it's not here in Matthew. Another interesting conclusion is that the sign will be a new star. That's curious. I never heard that idea except from Denver in a post on his blog he wrote 10 years ago. And another interesting one worth considering is the idea that "The Sun shall be darkened" means total black-out. Quote, "there will be a total blackout with no light penetrating at all". That is a Christian idea. Interesting.

Since 2006 we have seen a lot of signs. We've seen signs of earth, fire, water and air in the form of quakes, forest fires, solar flares, tsunamis, floods, hurricanes and this year, atmospheric rivers.

We've seen signs in the sun, moon and stars in the form of a transit of Venus, blood moons, solar and lunar eclipses including the Great American Eclipse, Pt 1, the great conjunction of Dec 20, 2020 and an alignment of stars, planets, sun and moon in and around the constellation Virgo in fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 12 in 2017 & TODAY a conjunction of a descending Jupiter and a rising Venus in Pisces.

All these signs in such short order reminds me of the signs that occurred during Christ's first coming. Samuel on the wall prophesied that "5 years" from now there would be "A day and a night and a day as though it were one day". Then he gave the reason that it would be light at night, "Great lights in the heavens". And then the prophecy that "A new Star, such an one as have never have beheld"

Then 5 years later.

"...And it came to pass also that a new star did appear according to the word. And it came to pass that from this time forth there began to be lyings sent forth among the people by Satan to harden their hearts, to the intent that they might not believe in those signs and wonders which they had seen. But notwithstanding these lyings and deceivings, the more part of the people did believe and were converted unto the Lord."

Why would Satan want people to not believe in the signs?

Why are the signs given? What is their purpose?

Well, the Book of Mormon has an answer.

"and this to the intent that whosoever will believe might be saved, and that whosoever will not believe, a righteous judgment might come upon them." Helaman 5:13

Next time you're reading Helaman and 3rd Nephi take a look at what the text says about who lived and who died. And the writers tie it, more than anything else to who believed in the prophecy of Samuel. It's very interesting.

There are other reasons for signs. I believe some signs are only given to "the wise men". The New Testament story has nobody understanding the sign of the new star except the wise men. Not a soul, except the wise men.

Long ago Denver said, "you know the transit of Venus just happened and nobody even pays attention to this stuff." Well, is there anybody here who knows what the transit of Venus means? I don't think so. (Someone raises their hand). Oh, do we have a wise guy over here?

Okay, let's talk about Joseph Smith's ... We're going to look at the few times Joseph commented on the sign of the Coming of the Son of Man and see what we can glean from that. The first time was February 28th, 1843. There was an article in the paper. Mr. Redding said that he saw the sign and Joseph felt that he need to write the editor and here's what he said.

"Mr. Redding thinks that he has seen the sign of the Son of Man. But I shall use my right, and declare that, notwithstanding Mr. Redding may have seen a wonderful appearance in the clouds one morning about sunrise (which is nothing very uncommon in the winter season) he

has not seen the sign of the Son of Man, as foretold by Jesus; neither has any man, nor will any man, until after the sun shall have been darkened and the moon bathed in blood; for the Lord hath not shown me any such sign; and as the prophet saith, so it must be—"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." (see Amos 3:7.) Therefore, hear this, O earth: The Lord will not come to reign over the righteous, in this world, in 1843, nor until everything for the Bridegroom is ready." (TPJS 280)

He spent quite a bit of time that year thinking about the Second Coming. He gave a talk on April 2nd or 3rd where he talked about Revelation 5. That's the chapter in which the Lord is called, "the Lion of Judah" and 3 days later April 6, 1843 he gave a talk that you're familiar with. Willard Richards was one of the scribes and he recorded. —

"There will be wars and rumors of wars, signs in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, the sun turned into darkness and the moon to blood, earthquakes in divers places, the seas heaving beyond their bounds; then will appear one grand sign of the Son of Man in heaven. But what will the world do? They will say it is a planet, a comet, &c. But the Son of Man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, which will be as the light of the morning cometh out of the east." TPJS p. 287

I have no reason to think this want an accurate recording of what Joseph said, but I would trust Willard Richards....on other things. A second scribe was James Burgess. I like his account much better and can find no reason to doubt James Burgess' account at least as much as Willard Richard's just because Richards' account was put in the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Many of you won't have heard this account. Burgess recorded that Joseph said...

"He (Joseph) says then shall they see the sign of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of Heaven. How are we to see it, Answer: As the lighting up of the morning or the dawning of the morning cometh from the east and Shineth unto the west— So also is the coming of the Son of Man. The dawning of the morning makes its appearance in the east and moves along gradually so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. It will be small at its first appearance and gradually becomes large until every eye shall see it. Shall the Saints understand it Oh yes, Paul says so. Shall the wicked understand Oh no they attribute it to a natural cause. They will probably suppose it is two great Comets coming in contact with each other. It will be small at first and will grow larger and larger until it will be all in a blaze so that every eye shall see it." (Words of Joseph Smith-April 6, 1843)

Here are the key points:

- It will be explained away as a natural phenomenon
- It will be explained away as a Comet or planet- Now let me ask you, couldn't the most junior boy scout with a cheap pair of binoculars and an astronomy merit badge tell the difference from a comet from a planet? There's a mystery here.
- Or 2 comets coming in contact-is he implying a light that gets suddenly brighter like two comets crashing into each other
- It enlarges over time
- It comes from the east to the west
- And every eye shall see it (eventually)

Before we go into Joseph's third comment I want to look at Doctrine and Covenants section 88:89-93 or Teachings and Commandments section 86: 18-19 and contrast and compare that with Luke 21 or NC Luke 12:25-27.

These 2 passages of scripture are in parallel. They've both come from the Lord. They are both his words and they contained the same information. The illumination comes when you look at the differences.

In verse 89-90 of the D&C earthquakes, thunderings, lightnings, tempests, and in Luke 25 "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth". That's a rough parallel. But the next verses are more similar, namely,

"waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds" compared with the Luke passage, "the sea and the waves roaring. You can start to see a clear parallel here.

Continuing, "And all things shall be in commotion and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear..." (D&C 88:91) compared with "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth".(NC Luke 12:26) These two passages are almost identical and are in parallel. So if there are differences they could be illustrative.

Then the next passage "And angels shall fly through the midst of heaven" saying some things in parallel with "for the powers of heaven shall be shaken".

Dog gone it!, if I had been a better student of the scriptures I would not have had to go to that lecture in Orem where Denver taught us that angels are the powers of heaven. I would have learned it from these passages of scriptures. But I had to be taught it even though it was right here for anyone with an eye to see it.

Finally, these passages end with "And then shall THEY see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (NC Luke 12:27)...see the Saviour in parallel with the D&C passage "And immediately there shall appear a great SIGN in heaven, and all people shall see IT together." (D&C 88:93)

Well, these aren't the same thing. The Lord's coming is not the same thing as the sign unless you understand what Joseph is saying, "the Son of Man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man". T&C 160 will help us understand that better.

Joseph's Smith's final commentary for 10 March, 1844 talk, the same talk as spirit of Messiah, Elijah and Elias. I was talking to...some friend in this room. He asked, "that rainbow prophecy, is that a real deal?" This is the best documented prophecy that Joseph ever made. There were 5 independent recorders of the talk and they are completely in sync with 1/2 of what they said. One scribe is Wilford Woodruff. His is the version that was put in The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

"I have asked of the Lord concerning His coming; and while asking the Lord, He gave a sign and said, 'In the days of Noah I set a bow in the heavens as a sign and token that in any year that the bow should be seen the Lord would not come; but there should be seed time and harvest during that year: (*That much all five agree on*) but whenever you see the bow withdrawn, (*the ending of that though changes from recorder to recorder*) it shall be a token

that there shall be famine, pestilence, and great distress among the nations, and that the coming of the Messiah is not far distant" (10 March 1844) TPJS, p.341).

So, Wilford Woodruff's version doesn't have the Lord's coming in the year that there isn't a rainbow just that it isn't too far down the road.

James Burgess account doesn't really help us.¹ Willard Richards account doesn't really help us.² His account is a real downer.

"when you see the bow cease, look out for a famine".

And John Solomon's account doesn't really help us³ but Franklin D. Richards, he has something that will help us here.

"A revelation: So long as we see the bow in the cloud, seed time & harvest shall continue but that year when the bow shall cease then shall come famine, wars &c after which **the sign of the son of man shall be seen in heaven.**" Franklin D Richards

That's what Joseph had to say. Denver has not ever said anything that I can find in writing on the Sign of the Coming of the Son of Man by that name.

So, it was a great time with you. Thank you. We can go home now. Wait a minute. (*From the audience*) "Hold on now!"

I have found some things that I believe that Denver has said that refer to the sign of the Coming of the Son of Man. We will have to see if you agree with knee. This is a bit interpretive.

The first one was to go over his talk in Las Vegas.⁴ He speaks about the throne of God in the North, almost like it was an aside. I will review his written version.

"The Throne of God is out there but is in a place that is hidden in the North. It will require the heavens to be rolled like a scroll before you finally see past the veils now in place. But by that time, if you are unprepared, it's too late. Because the glory will be such that you cannot abide it. When the Lord appears, preliminary to rolling together the heavenly scrolls, He will first appear in an unveiled opening (*or in the oral talk, in "a hole"*). The glory of God will be visible around and behind Him, along with concourses of angels."

¹ "as long as you see the rainbow stretching across the heavens there will be seed time and harvest and the son of Man will not come that year" --James Burgess

² The bow has been seen in the cloud & in that year that the bow is seen, seed time and harvest will be. But when the bow ceases to be seen, look out for a famine. --Willard Richards

³ While enquiring of the Lord concerning the End of time, it was made know to him by the Holy Spirit, that there should be prosperity, seed time and harvest every year in which the Rainbow was seen, for to that was Noah referred as a surety on this subject---But in the year when the Bow was not to be seen, would commence desolation, calamity and distress among the Nations, without seed time and harvest, ---John Solomon

⁴ A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit (given in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 25, 2014)

I believe this is the coming described in T&C 160 that begins the day of the Lord. You do not have to agree, but that's what I think.

If you were paying attention and most of you may not have been, Denver described **two comings**. Both are future to us.

--The 1st is " When the Lord appears, preliminary to rolling together the heavenly scrolls"
--And the 2nd is described here in D&C 88:95.

"the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled"

To whom is His face unveiled? To all the world-- which is why the wicked are burned by the brightness of His coming or as Denver said in his talk...

"But by that time, if you are unprepared, it's too late. Because the glory will be such that you cannot abide it."

Poof! I think that's where Denver said, "right as you immolate, 'I think I got a glimpse of Him'.

Then this verse...

"And the saints that are upon the earth, who are alive, shall be quickened and be caught up to meet him."

This is what other Christians call "the Rapture" and between these 2 comings a lot happens including multiple additional comings. Here's a verse that proves that. He shall come to the mount of Olives and to the isles of the sea *and isles there is plural* and to the great deep and to Zion.⁵ And all of that happens between those two comings in the Day of the Lord.

Okay, nobody has thrown tomatoes. That's a good SIGN which is the title for the next post, "A Sign".⁶

This post, March 03, 2013 is T&C 164. I'll read the whole thing.

"A SIGN--When the Seed of the Woman was born, a new star appeared in the heavens. In like manner, when the Lion of Judah returns, as with his first coming, there will be a new star seen. All the world will note its appearance and shall be troubled at its meaning. When it makes its appearance, you may know His return is soon upon the world." And then the statement, "You may also know by that sign that he has given to me the words I have faithfully taught as His servant."

⁵ ... for behold, he shall stand upon the mount of Olivet and upon the mighty ocean, even the great deep, and upon the islands of the sea, and upon the land of Zion. ... And he shall utter his voice out of Zion and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people T&C 58:3

⁶ A Sign, posted March 3, 2023

I believe this new star is the same thing as the sign of the Coming of the Son of Man and I have 5 things that make me think that.

- Both are lights in the sky
- Both are called signs
- Both precede his coming
- Everyone will see both and
- Both result in fear

If you'd rather believe there's a new star and separately a light that is called the Sign of His Coming, go right ahead. You're still my friends but that's not what I believe.

I have two other comments about this post.

First --We don't know when this prophecy was given except to say it was sometime before it was posted on 3/3/2013. The 1st day of the 3rd month, 2013 was precisely ten years ago, but it was posted two days after that.

Second --"the Seed of the Woman" is a reference to the star Spica in the constellation Virgo (which is where the new star was seen according to some) & the Lion of Judah MAY point to the constellation Leo which is only visible in the Winter and Spring, most prominent in late March and April. Spring is the time of Christ's first advent in this world, the time of his coming to the New World one year later & my preferred time for His coming to the other tribes that he referred to in 3rd Nephi. April 6th is thought to be the day of his birth by many and I won't speculate beyond that.

Finally is Denver's Feb 13, 2003 vision. This is T&C 160. Not only was this date the day of the vision recorded in T&C 160 BUT it was the day the Lord first appeared to Denver. We know that because of this statement:

"I accepted the invitation to speak here because the time has come to testify of the things shown me by the Lord in His first appearance of the night of February 12th-13th of 2003. I saw His return in glory and recorded what He revealed."

I'll read part of this.

"On the 13th of February 2003 I saw the Lord coming in His glory. At first a sign appeared in the heavens, a light emanating from a single point and turning first this way and that. (*You all have my email. If you know what that means, please let me know*) All the world saw it, and men debated over its meaning. At length the light turned upon us and within it was the Lord..."

Who is "us"? We're going to figure that out. It was certainly he and his wife but there is no reason to think it was only those two. This is after all the coming of the Lord in glory that begins the day of the Lord. I'll try to answer that question from the scriptures a bit later.

"And when we saw that it was the Lord we rejoiced"... "for the long awaited day of the Lord had come."

Well, is this the sign of Matthew 24? I believe so. It is...

-A light

-All see it

- People debate over its meaning just like Joseph said

-“At length” means there is a period of time between the beginning of the sign first appears and the time the Lord appears in His glory just like Joseph said.

The light caused some to fear. Why would a comet or a planet cause people want to have the mountains fall on them. It doesn't make sense. If you are looking through clear skies and the youngest Boy Scout can differentiate a comet from a planet then why would this light cause such fear that people would want to die. It's an important question. I'm not able to answer it but we might play around with some ideas.

Denver gives the answer as “they could not look upon a just and holy Being without being racked with torment...” but they don't see the Lord coming in his glory. If you see the Lord coming in his glory and you are unprepared you are destroyed by the brightness of his coming. Yet they are so terrified by the sign that they want to die. Interesting question!

What do you need for a rainbow? You need..

1-rain

2-Sunshinethe Kindy

3-You need to be standing with the sun to your back and the rain in front of you. The sun needs to be less than 42 degrees above the horizon.

That's all you need for a rainbow. So, which of those 3 things is missing? Is it no observers? Is it no rain? Or is it “the sun shall be darkened”. If the sun were darkened, could you differentiate a comet from a planet? If in the midst of darkness you saw a brilliant light and you knew you had taught falsely would you want the mountains to fall on you? No answers here, just questions.

Why this topic at this time? Why did we do this topic today? And the answer is found in NC Luke

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then Look Up and lift up your heads for the day of your redemption draws near.”

That's why, the day of our redemption draws near. That's why this topic at this time.

Continuing that verse, “and then shall they see the Son of Man coming with power and great glory”. Who's the “they” in that verse. Who does that pronoun “they” refer to. Answer: It is those described right before who look Up and lift up (their) heads for the day of (their) redemption. I certainly pray that's all of us.

- — Christ will return in this generation⁷
- — A grand sign will occur prior to His Coming which all the world sees
- — Once the sign occurs the sign will persist
- — The light of the sign grows over time
- — The sign will accompany his return
- — Christ will come as the sign of his coming
- — He will appear within the light of the glory of the throne of God that comes through an opening in the veils that separate this world from the throne of God
- — We don't need to be surprised by this sign nor to fear it.

We have been taught and we have been given all this great light. “And this to the intent that whoso will believe might be saved”. Let's believe and be saved. All of us. Let's cast away our doubts and believe. ““and that whosoever will not believe, a righteous judgment might come upon them.”

Lastly, the final sentence from the Answer to Prayer for Covenant,

“Be comforted, be of good cheer, rejoice, and look up, for I am with you who remember me (*which is the reason for our fireside tonight*), and all those who watch for me, always, even unto the end. (Teachings and Commandments, Section 157:66)

McKay Platt

⁷ Mankind is approaching the moment in which the Lord is about to return (see Matthew 11). All of the signs that He speaks of will occur in one single generation, and the signs have begun to appear. This means those now alive are living within a generation in which a great deal is to occur. As it was in the days of Noah, so is it about to be — on the one hand, dreadful things are coming; but it also means that prophets are again going to be among man, people with messages that come from the Lord. (500th Year Reformation Talk One, 9, Los Angeles, CA, Sept. 21, 2017, emphasis mine.) See also “Signs of the Times” in the Glossary of Terms