



# WHY THE HEAVENLY SIGNS?

**This awesome cosmic spectacle introduces the Day of the Lord. It will jolt mankind and bring it one step closer to knowing the beauty of God's enduring love.**

**BY TIMOTHY OOSTENDARP**

**A** PRIMARY THEME OF THE BOOK OF Revelation is the "Day of the Lord." The occurrences that will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ are recorded in Revelation 6. These natural phenomena, as men may tend to describe them, ARE ACTS OF GOD. God will use these catastrophic signs in the heavens to jolt mankind into recognizing His reality and AWESOME GODHEAD!

Revelation 6 gives us details of the first six seals. Jesus's Olivet prophecy in Matthew 24 unlocks the meaning of these seals. The last of these seals represent the heavenly signs (Matthew 24:29).

Imagine how these heavenly signs *could* happen. We come upon the scene just as the Great Tribulation is concluding: America, Britain and the Commonwealth countries have been conquered by the Holy Roman Empire, and those left alive have lived through 2½ years of misery as slaves in various coun-

tries around the globe. Children have been bartered, and great, unseemly horrors have been inflicted on the remnant of Israel.

This European empire rules most of the Middle East, North America, the British Isles, and other countries. It controls vast natural resources, along with cheap slave labor and the most important oil reserves on the globe. Merchants grow rich off this new and startlingly mighty European power. Russia, China and Japan have witnessed Europe decimate the nations of Israel and Judah. They can see Germany is close to controlling the world! For its part, Germany has become haughty and brazen.

To people in the world, it looks as if they have seen a global revolution—another epoch in the history of man! Little do they know that they are marching straight into the teeth of the Day of the Lord!

Then, suddenly, the world experiences a most vio-

lent and tremendous earthquake. The sheer ferocity, duration and scope of the quake smashes all records!

All around the world, hills and mountains rattle, and seas roar under its force! Great ships are foundered by the resulting tsunami; coastal regions, cities, towns and villages are swallowed by the sea. The force of the earthquake is so great, it's as if the center of the planet has exploded.

Men stagger, sway, jostle and fall; many, perhaps hundreds of thousands, die, as roofs, walls and other debris are flung around. Bodies are everywhere. Great buildings—man-made marvels of the modern world—sway and topple like cardboard boxes. Glass cascades from the sky, sewers belch their bile into the streets; gas lines rupture, setting cities ablaze. The sounds of emergency sirens, the cracking of steel and the din of confusion drown out shrieks and cries for help.

Just outside city limits a couple of farmers, who were working together when the mega earthquake struck, pick themselves up off the ground.

One of the farmhands hollers to the others. He waves his arm and points at the sky. Curious amazement rapidly turns to consternation, and then to dread as the sun becomes black and a curtain of darkness falls on the land. In the ominously black sky, the moon appears and begins to turn deep blood red.

Knots well up in their stomachs, and anxiety gnaws at their minds. Within minutes, the bloody moon and the stars are the only heavenly lights shedding light on Earth below.

Terror spreads around the world. Mankind has become numb to natural disasters, but these cosmic interruptions have never happened before! This is not an eclipse of the sun—this is different. This is unique. This is dreadfully frightening!

All over the Earth people watch as the visible stars begin to shake and rattle. Suddenly one star falls in a screaming fit of silvery dust, then another, and another, and then multiple hundreds begin to fall at one time, dropping out of the heavens!

This fearsome cosmic meteor shower has people diving into caves and scurrying for safety.

Surely, this is the end of the world!

The changes to the heavenly landscape are the most frightening, awe-inspiring and fearful event TO YET HAPPEN IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND!

After a short while, the last star falls out of view. The skies are black. The blood-red moon stands alone, staring fiercely at mankind.

#### HORRORS IN THE HEAVENS

What part do these heavenly signs play in God's mas-

ter plan for the salvation of humanity?

Spoken of in Revelation 6, as well as the Olivet prophecy and the book of Joel, they are prophesied to occur just after the Great Tribulation; they *introduce* the Day of the Lord. They are not to be confused with signs in the heavens during the Day of the Lord—the fourth trumpet of the seventh seal—that are prophesied to reshape much of the world's topography.

The three events of the heavenly signs are outlined in Revelation 6:12-16, and include an *opening*, *middle* and *closing act*. Through these three spectacular acts,

### THIS PROPHESED MEGA QUAKE MAY WELL BE TRANSNATIONAL, AFFECTING MANY COUNTRIES AND EXPERIENCED BY A MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S INHABITANTS.

God will unleash mind-splitting drama certain to capture the attention of mankind.

Revelation 6:12 introduces the first act: A MEGA EARTHQUAKE. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a GREAT earthquake...."

*Megas* is the Greek word for the English word translated "great." We should think of the English word MEGA. This earthquake will likely defy all records in terms of its breadth, scope, power and duration.

Earthquakes usually affect a certain region of a country, *never rattling whole nations or groups of nations*. This prophesied MEGA quake may well be TRANSNATIONAL, affecting many countries and experienced by a majority of the world's inhabitants. Certainly, this earthquake is prophesied to seize mankind's attention!

*Megas* can also mean "of number and quantity: numerous, large, abundant; ... used of intensity and its degrees ...; violent, mighty, strong" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*). A number of aftershocks may follow this TITANIC earthquake.

The middle act of the heavenly signs is the sun turning black, as if covered with sackcloth, and the moon turning deep blood red.

God does not give a time frame for the sequence of the heavenly signs, nor for the duration *between* each of these three events. Also, the Bible does not say how long it might take for the sun to stop giving its light or for the moon to turn deep blood red.

And notice: This is not a solar eclipse! That these events could be attributed to a lunar eclipse is also very unlikely. Mankind is accustomed to those events. BOTH THE SUN TURNING BLACK AND THE MOON TURNING BLOOD RED ARE STAGGERING, SUPERNATURAL MIRACLES!



Verses 13-14 describe the closing act of the heavenly signs: shooting stars that will make the starry heavens appear to crash earthward and the heaven appear like it has been rolled up like a scroll!

The stars will be “even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” Figs are nestled against a fig tree by a small length of connective tissue; in a raging wind, the figs shake and rattle at first and then are *violently* tossed.

The scene is one of cosmic dread! The visible stars will be violently removed from their galactic sockets!

On a clear night, the unaided eye can see upward of 2,000 stars. However, the darker the skies, the more stars can be seen. Imagine a *shower* of 2,000 or more stars! Silver cosmic contrails will bleed and drip from the heavens. The heavens will look like they are melting!

If there were any question of the first two acts being natural phenomena, the final act of the heavenly signs—this shock-and-awe show in the heavens—will have humanity buckling at the knees and crying out for the rocks to hide them from the face of the Almighty!

When the events of the sixth seal unfold, a mega earthquake will occur, the sun will turn black and the moon deep blood red, and the stars will be removed from their fixed heavenly positions and moved out of the visible spectrum! Only a blood-red moon will be visible to man. Earth will be in supernatural darkness, *with a blood-red moon foreshadowing the great bloodshed to come during the Day of the Lord!*

Yet despite these horrors in the heavens grabbing mankind’s attention, **THERE IS NO REPENTANCE AMONG THE VAST MAJORITY OF MANKIND!** They would rather live in caves in defiance of God (Revelation 6:15-16).

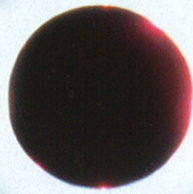
How hard is human nature!

#### SIGNS OF REPENTANCE

While these heavenly signs introduce the Day of the Lord, they also mark the sealing of the repentant Laodiceans and the repentance of physical Israel.

The heavenly signs will play a part in bringing spiritual and physical Israel to repentance!

Read Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:1-4. About these verses, Gerald Flurry writes in *Malachi’s Message*, “[T]he



Unlike a regular solar or lunar eclipse (left and right), the enormous earthquake, the violent shaking of the heavens, the falling of the stars, the blackening of the sun and the moon turning blood red **ALL AT THE SAME TIME**, are a frightening experience, never before witnessed by man!



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Bible indicates that during the Great Tribulation *all* the Laodiceans who will enter God's Kingdom must DIE for God.... These martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11 include the Laodiceans.... This is why the Laodiceans are *sealed* just *after* the Tribulation and before the Day of the Lord."

A companion passage to these verses is Joel 2:30-32. Speaking about these verses, Mr. Flurry writes: "In the context, we see that the terrible Day of the Lord has still not arrived. The time setting is the Tribulation *and the heavenly signs*. ... Two groups are delivered just before the Day of the Lord: Zion, or God's Laodicean Church, and Jerusalem, a type of the nations of Israel. THE HEAVENLY SIGNS, ADDED TO THE TRIBULATION, BRING SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL ISRAEL TO REPENTANCE" (*The Prophet Joel—Christ's Bride and the Day of the Lord*).

The awesome wonders on the Earth and in the heavens, added to the Great Tribulation, are going to produce such sweet and eternally rewarding repentance!

And there is more good news!

During the Great Tribulation, the innumerable multitude will have already begun to repent. Mr. Flurry writes in *Malachi's Message*: "The *great multitude* of Revelation 7:9, 13-14 includes all those who repent as a result of the Tribulation—people who were previously unconverted.... The great multitude consists of people who were never in the Church prior to the Tribulation."

This special group will be protected from the horrors to come in the Day of the Lord. They will see the great living drama unfold before them, and great praise and thanksgiving will be on their lips! (Revelation 19:6). **THEY KNOW GOD IS ABOUT TO REIGN OVER MEN!**

So while the heavenly signs portend great chaos, destruction and death, the repentance of the Laodiceans and the great multitude foreshadows the worldwide repentance about to take root in the wonderful World Tomorrow and typed by the Feast of

Tabernacles!

True godly repentance will occur among so many people from so many walks of life that the number is too large to count! (Revelation 7:9).

This points us to God's grand design in all these events.

Why does God allow all this chaos, destruction and death? Why does God manipulate the heavens to mankind's great consternation and terror? By no means is it because He enjoys frightening and punishing mankind!

HUMAN NATURE IS SO HARD-BOILED, IT TAKES CATASTROPHIC CHAOS, DESTRUCTION AND DEATH TO GET THEM TO FINALLY KNOW AND *SUBMIT* TO GOD.

True abundant living is unconditional surrender to God! God does not settle for half victories.

It is an immense shame on mankind that we have to receive such profound correction to finally come to know the GOD OF LOVE! But this also points us to the Day of Atonement and the need for humanity to be free from Satan's influence and broadcast.

2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, **BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE.**"

Hebrews 12:5-8 say that unless we yield to God and His correction, He will not accept us. Mankind can't escape how God deals with His creation! He does not change (Hebrews 13:8).

What love! What a dutiful Father!

Millions of years into the future, mankind won't even remember how God had to bring such a heavy hand against them. We'll all be living in blissful happiness, complete harmony, and perfect **AT-ONE-MENT** with God!

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

May that rest come soon!