

Are the Heavens Still Talking and Should We Be Listening?

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After viewing a DVD called "The Bethlehem Star" that was researched by Rick Larson, it left me with this question: Are the heavens still "talking" and should we be "listening?"

First of all, "The Bethlehem Star" showed a very convincing theory which unravels the mystery of the "star of Bethlehem." It showed what "star" the Magi were watching and what motivated them to follow it, leading them to find the Messiah—Jesus. It also goes on further to show what the signs in the heavens may have been at the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

An article that Ed Nelson at www.ed-nelson.com wrote called, "A Hebrew Word Study - Miraculous Signs" explains the biblical use of signs in this way:

Genesis 1:14

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;"

"and let them be for signs [‘othoth] and for ‘appointed times’ [mo’adim] and for days and years"

Observe the prepositional change from “in” to “for”. This line, too, is a statement of purpose, but its purpose requires intelligent observers—human beings. Angelic beings don’t need signs and “appointed times,” days and years. But people do. We need the promise that our lives on earth have eternal value, relate to God in a connected destiny and have long-term purpose. Moreover, we need to understand that like our physical origin is of the substance of the earth, so, too, our destiny, validated from the heavens, is of the earth.

Signs are expressions of the reign of God and, therefore, have momentum towards a future reality while offering, at least temporally, a momentary revelation through some form of pleasure, aid, relief, understanding, benefit or warning. They have these five elements in them: practicality, temporality, eternal value, a call to personal readiness and the bearing witness of God’s promise to act in our future. ¹

This makes it clear that signs in the heavens direct us to our Creator - a Sovereign God who has established all the signs and seasons. I was still confused with the heavens being signs, however, because it leads to the thought that they warn us of God's prophetic fulfillments. So I wondered: Should I be even looking? After all, I have faith in Jesus Christ now, as the following Bible passage says:

I Corinthians 1:20-24

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

This passage shows us that we need to believe in Christ's payment for sin and freedom from condemnation, but that it is a stumbling block to the Jews, for they were not satisfied with the signs that Jesus performed on earth to credit him being the King of Kings. Reinforcing this, Scripture further says:

Matthew 16:1-4

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away."

The Pharisees and Sadducees were opposed to each other in principles and in conduct; yet they joined against Christ. They desired a sign of their own choosing: to seek for signs of their own devising. They were of an adulterous generation, looking for a King who would perform supernatural powers to prove his worthiness and greatness, drawing attention to his power and authority and making him worthy of worship before all.

This is not how Jesus performed His signs, though. Instead, he acted as a servant, healing the sick and sorrowful, and bringing glory to his Father in heaven. The pride of the Pharisees and Sadducees despised such signs—it didn't show forth pride and grandeur to a rightful King—Jesus was not showing the type of signs fitting for a King! Thus they were blinded by their prideful heart and did not recognize Christ as the Messiah.

Matthew 12:38-41,

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You. But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

This passage tells that this evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign, but no sign will be given except one. The sign that will be given will be like the sign the Ninevites were given from Jonah who was swallowed up by a sea monster and spit up on the 3rd day. Then Jonah went to Nineveh and preached repentance and the Ninevites repented, and Jonah wasn't even the King.

So Jesus - who was far greater than Jonah - died and rose on the 3rd day also. He therefore performed this one amazing sign as a witness to His brethren—one that would bring repentance and salvation not just to the Jews, but to the whole world.

So, are we to be looking for a man to perform any signs now? No! The one kingly sign that this evil and adulterous generation was looking for already took place at Christ's resurrection from the dead.

With this as a guide, let's go back to the question: "Now that we have faith in Jesus Christ, should we be looking for signs in the heavens?" Well, the passages studied above suggest that we are not to look for signs being performed by a man who would be proving his "Kingship." This is a strong warning that will go unheeded because during the End Times, the Antichrist will do just that! The Antichrist's deception is the main warning that these passages speak of. But this does not rule out looking for the signs of Christ's Second Coming, which Jesus clearly taught. Let's examine the Bible further to see what it says about these prophetic signs in the heavens. In her book "The Language of God in the Universe,"² Messianic scholar Helena Lehman points to this Scripture to guide us about which signs God has made available for us to look for:

Psalm 19:1-5

For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

This amazing psalm says that the heavens pour out speech from day to day and reveal knowledge from night to night! This must mean they speak in a language for all peoples to understand, so the language being described here is a language of symbolism.

The definition of a "symbol" is: "something used for or regarded as representing something else; a material object representing something, often something immaterial; emblem, token, or sign." The definition of "symbolism" is: "the practice of representing things by symbols. The defining of "symbol" and "symbolism" makes Genesis 1:14 more clear: "...lights in the expanse of the heavens... let them be for signs."

Wow! A story is being told in the heavens which brings forth the Glory of the Lord—a story of God's plan for His Creation and being told "*through all the earth.*"

Psalm 148:3

Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light!

How can the sun, moon, and stars praise God without a voice? They must do so through signs (symbols) giving spiritual meaning of praise.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this silent communication as well:

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes-his eternal power and divine nature-have been understood and observed by what he made, so that people are without excuse.

According to Daniel 12:3, the heavens must be like a minister, speaking the true knowledge of God forever and ever; and likewise, we shall be "shining" forth spiritual truth of righteousness in our words and our deeds forever and ever.

Daniel 12:3

Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

So this brings me to the question: Are the heavens still talking and should we be listening?

I believe that the only answer must be "Yes!"

Life's Application

Let's look at Scriptures that explain what signs we should be looking for so that we can apply them to our lives:

I Thessalonians 5:2-6

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

1. So, the Bible warns us to stay awake! We need to be awakened, and have all our spiritual senses about us. Now, let's examine where we need to look for these signs:

Luke 21:25

There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Matthew 24:24, 29-31

(24) For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect... (29) But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

2. Above, Jesus first warns us of false Christs or false prophets that will show great signs and wonders on Earth. Isn't it ironic that the Pharisees and Sadducees and our evil and adulterous generous will get what they want—someone showing the signs of a god-like king who appears to be worthy of drawing attention upon himself and forcing people to worship him! These are the signs in which we are not to be seeking—just like the passages earlier were revealing. We should be done looking for great and wondrous signs performed by any man. The Messiah has already arrived and there is no other—Jesus Christ - who was resurrected from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God - is our one and only Messiah!

3. But look in this same passage as it notes the sign in the heavens concerning the sun, the moon, and the stars. Jesus says, "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars," He says

that there will be signs in the heavens that we will be able to see which obviously means we should be taking heed of these signs!

Challenge

1. Should we be taking a closer note of what the celestial bodies are doing just like the Magi did?
2. How did the Magi react to the message in the sky?

The Magi treated them like signals. They probably were watching for many years, and were ready at any time for the arrival of the Messiah. They probably didn't wait until the last minute to get the gifts; they probably had the 3 gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in their possession already, just waiting for the time to deliver them to the King. The star must have done several significant things to alert the Magi that this was the time. When it did, the Magi took action and went off following this star, which led them to Jesus—the Messiah.

I want to reinforce that no one will know the day and hour that Christ will take us away in the Rapture. Only the Father in heaven knows. The signs in heaven can only give us warnings as to when to be ready. They do not rule our life; they instead prompt us to be ready!

Matthew 24:36-42

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

James 5:7-8

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

In 2009, we are seeing a lot of prophetic End Time events developing and unfolding before our eyes. We should be alerted to these and be watchful. We can't be totally sure of God's timing, but God gave us information in the Bible concerning what we should be watching for. Doesn't this include the heavens? If not, why would Jesus say that: "there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars?" Shouldn't we be like the Magi, watching diligently and being ready for Christ's return at any time?

¹ "A Hebrew Word Study - Miraculous Signs," www.Ed-Nelson.com

² For Further Study: look for the Language of God book series at Helena Lehman's Pillar of Enoch Ministry web site: www.pillar-of-enoch.com