

GNITN
#366
Prophecy Insight:
Signs In The Heavens

The Sky's The Limit

When our daughter was younger she really wanted a telescope. We obliged her and the interest of looking into the heavens waned over time like so many young interests do. As good parents we always tried to help her navigate hobbies to help her see which ones would even become lifelong ones or even vocations. It's not a bad thing as a child that wants a firetruck can sometimes become a firefighter or if they want to study the sky and then become an astronaut. Our child also liked to read and is a really skilled author. While it may not always work out that way, oftentimes it does. And right now, a desire to study God's creation is also an intriguing way to hear Him communicate with us. It's not a new thing for students of the Bible as we read His words tell us things like this:

The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvelous display of his craftsmanship. 2 Day and night they keep on telling about God. 3-4 Without a sound or word, silent in the skies, their message reaches out to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens where God placed it. (Ps 19:1-4, TLB)

And also speaks like this:

Since earliest times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have known of his existence and great eternal power. So they will have no excuse when they stand before God at Judgment Day. (Rom 1:20, TLB)

And now we may have another time when God could be communicating with us through a cosmic event.

He Started Speaking From The Start

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. (Gen 1:14-15, NKJV)

All that was created was done so by God speaking. If we pause even a tiny bit, that fact can change our lives, Really, it can. And here we read that those lights in the sky are put there to also give us signs. Certainly a careful study of the heavens can provide a wealth of information. We even put a telescope in orbit around the earth to study creation and even the pictures they show us are spectacular. Astronomers tell us about black holes that pull in all manner of the heavens into it. And, although as Bible students we may disagree on some of the things "learned" from the Hubble telescope we do have to admit that there are some really important observations. And those pictures are a sight to behold. But going back to the verses we see a fascinating word when it tell us that the cosmos was put there for "signs." Here is how one [commentary](#), Matthew Poole's Commentary illustrates this word:

Let them be for signs; for the designation and distinction of times, as months, weeks; as also for the signification of the quality of the weather or season, by the manner of their rising and setting,

Mat 16:2; by their eclipses, conjunctions... And for the discovery of supernatural and miraculous effects; of which see Jos 10:13 Isa 38:8 Luk 21:25-26 Act 2:19-20.

It's that last part that should make us perk up. You see there is an element of prophecy involved. And if we are discerning, these events in the heavenlies will open up ways of communicating that many miss.

Following Stars Is Not New

Well, we see that God started communicating with us from the very start and when we pull back the veneer of how calculated and planned creation was in connection with history it is also astounding to realize that creation was put in motion to announce and guide the greatest story told, that of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Signs in the heavens are an integral part of that narrative as we see a star guiding shepherds and wisemen alike. And when we take a step back we have to understand that these movements of the stars were set in motion with great precision long before they had to be in the exact alignment when our Savior was born and lived and even died. The star that guided the wisemen had to be in place from the first day of creation. The eclipse that happened when Jesus died on the cross had to be put in motion as well at the start. The accuracy of all of these stellar occurrences is amazing and testify that God is indeed in control of all of creation. Here's what **Isaiah 40:26** tells us:

Lift up your eyes and see. Who has made these stars? It is the One Who leads them out by number. He calls them all by name. Because of the greatness of His strength, and because He is strong in power, not one of them is missing. (NLV)

God not only created them and put them in motion, He also knows their names. As an aside, He does the same for you and your life. I happily digress with that comment. Getting back on topic, one of the most talked about are when the sun is blotted out for a time when it should be shining brightly. We call these eclipses.

Eclipses Are Common Events

Really, they are. But it is when they happen and are seen when history takes note. As mentioned earlier, the darkening of the sun when Jesus was on the cross dying is even noted by secular writers as seen in an [article](#) from CBS News:

The Christian gospels say that the sky was darkened for hours after the crucifixion of Jesus, which historians viewed either as a miracle or a portent of dark times to come. Later historians used astronomy to pinpoint the death of Christ based on this eclipse mention. Some historians tie the crucifixion to a total solar eclipse lasting 1 minute and 59 seconds that occurred in the year 29 C.E.; others say a second total eclipse, blocking the sun for 4 minutes and 6 seconds, in 33 C.E., marked Jesus' death.

Other eclipses have happened at historical times, some causing events and others happening at the same time commemorating the events as seen in the same article:

In 763 B.C., the Assyrian empire, which occupied what is now Iraq, the sun was completely eclipsed for 5 minutes. Early records from the period mention the eclipse in the same passage as an insurrection in the city of Ashur, now known as Qal'at Sherqat (shown in the image) in Iraq, suggesting that the ancient people linked the two in their minds.

Later in the same editorial, the author mentions a more recent eclipse and it's scientific importance:

While the ancients viewed eclipses as signs of great acts of God, physicists viewed the 1919 solar eclipse as a triumph of science. During 1919's epic eclipse, in which the sun vanished for 6 minutes and 51 seconds, scientists measured the bending of light from the stars as they passed near the sun. The findings confirmed Einstein's theory of general relativity, which describes gravity as a warping of space-time.

Getting back to the Bible, we do know that eclipses are mentioned, although the actual word "eclipse" isn't used. Here is one:

On that day," says the Lord God, "I will make the sun go down at noon. I will make the earth dark in the daytime. (Amos 8:9, NLV)

A few others are seen here:

The stars of heaven and every group of stars will not give out their light. The sun will be dark when it comes up, and the moon will not give its light. (Isa 13:10, NLV)

And here:

When I destroy you, I will cover the heavens and make the stars dark. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. (Ezekiel 32:7-8, NLV)

The one many prophecy teachers point to are these, and for good reason:

The earth shakes in front of them. The heavens shake. The sun and the moon become dark, and the stars stop shining. (Joel 2:10, NLV)

The sun and moon become dark, and the stars stop shining. (Joel 3:15, NLV)

Peter, on the day of Pentecost would reference these verses from the book of **Joel** as well. Of course such signs in the heavens are seen in end time prophecy with this verse spoken by Jesus: *There will be special things to look for in the sun and moon and stars. The nations of the earth will be troubled and will not know what to do. They will be troubled at the angry sea and waves. (Luke 21:25, NLV)*

Eclipses can be another way God is speaking to us.

The Last Great Eclipse

We saw a lot of interest in an eclipse back in 2017 with what was dubbed the "Great American Total Solar Eclipse" which occurred on August 21st. Going back one more time to the CBS article, we read this:

This eclipse is particularly rare for its accessibility. The path of most total eclipses falls over water or unpopulated regions of the planet. The August event will go down as the first total solar eclipse whose path of totality stays completely in the United States since 1776, experts say, according the Space.com Total Solar Eclipse 2017 guide.

Fascinatingly, the other one was back in 1776. I recall that being an important year for our country. With the 2017 eclipse many Bible teachers saw significance in it with the course of it passing over cities named "Salem" which means peace in Hebrew. So many saw a lot in that eclipse with some going so deep I got lost in all of it. But in this, the information age it's not bad to take in many views of these signs in the heavens. God is speaking to us in the skies and we should be listening. But it is important to not stray far from the Bible in these examinations. I'm all for seeing things not normally detected, but I'm also wary of seeing Jesus in places He isn't at. In this case and at this time in our history, information isn't always our friend. Bad information can lead to poor counsel and then to bad doctrine. Here is one last verse to ponder:

If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of [a]the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him. (James 1:5, AMPC)

As another great eclipse shows up on April 8th of this year, let us ask God for wisdom from on high to decipher only the messages He intends us to and nothing more.