

# **Hidden Treasures/ Living Truth Bible Studies**

## **BIBLE STUDY 28 PROPHECY AND THE LAST CHURCH**

**Introduction:** Because of the absence of prophecy during the long centuries of apostasy, many believed that it was a phenomenon of the past and not to be expected in modern times. Based on God's past dealing with men we can know that an event as significant as the second coming of Christ will be prefaced by special instructions for the people then living. We are not left to deduction alone in determining this, for the Bible confirms it.

**1. Of what did Christ warn His followers to beware of in the last days? Matthew 24:24**

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**(Note: In warning His followers about false prophets preceding His second coming, Jesus implied there would be true prophets at the end of time. Otherwise, He simply would have admonished them to disregard all prophets.)**

**2. What natural phenomenon did Jesus indicate would herald His return? Matthew 24:29, 30**

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**(Note: At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an increased interest in Bible truth. This interest became more intense because of these signs appearing in that time frame in history. The following paragraphs describe these events.)**

**On the morning of May 17, 1780, an unusual darkness fell on the northern part of the United States. It was described as follows:**

**The degree to which it arose was different in different places. In most parts of the country it was so great in the daytime that the people could not tell the hour by either watch or clock, nor dine, nor manage their domestic business without the light of candles. The birds, having sung their evening songs, disappeared and were silent...objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance, and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night. The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America, William R. Gordon, D.D., Vol. III, pg. 56, 57**

**Other descriptions of this event are as follows:**

**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 unto 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."

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. It wanted only of palpability to render it as extraordinary, as that which overspread the land of Egypt in the days of Moses...If every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes were equally invisible with the blackest velvet." Samuel Tenney of Exeter New Hampshire, Letter (1785) in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Part 12, Vol. 1 (1792 Ed.,) pp. 97, 98

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. (See John Barber, Connecticut Historical Collections (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 1836) p. 403

"Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, . . . stands the dark day of May 19, 1780,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England."--R. M. Devens, Our First Century, page 89

The intense darkness of the day was succeeded, an hour or two before evening, by a partially clear sky, and the sun appeared, though it was still obscured by the black, heavy mist. "After sundown, the clouds came again overhead, and

it grew dark very fast." "Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, when seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to the rays."--Isaiah Thomas, Massachusetts Spy; or, American Oracle of Liberty, vol. 10, No. 472 (May 25, 1780)

An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: "In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o'clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o'clock on a summer evening. . . .

"Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from their labor in the fields; the carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge, the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. 'What is coming?' queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things.

"Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn. . . . Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come. . . The Essex Antiquarian, April, 1899, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 53, 54

**Some years later, belief in the soon return of Christ was strengthened by an additional event that heralded His return. This is described as follows:**

On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the earth. North America bore the brunt of its pelting. From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax (Nova Scotia, Canada), until daylight with some difficulty put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs. History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century, Agnes M. Clerke, p.328

"The morning of November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1833," says an eyewitness, a Yale astronomer, "was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon of 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." Dennison Olmsted, The American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 25 (1834), pp. 363,364

Frederick Douglas, in reminiscing about his early days in slavery, says, "I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awe struck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky...I was not without the suggestion at the moment that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of Man; and in my then state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that 'the stars shall fall from heaven,' and they were now falling." Life and Times of Frederick Douglas (1941 Ed.), p. 117

**These signs were seen as the sure indication that the time of the end had come.**

### **3. What other phenomenon did Joel link with these events? Joel 2:28-31**

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(Note: As with any major work God does, there will also be counterfeits produced by Satan, including a false spirit regarding the gifts and the outpouring of the Spirit.)

### **4. What did Malachi prophesy would take place just prior to Jesus' return? Malachi 4:5, 6**

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(Note: While both of these prophecies were applied by Jesus and the apostles to events that took place at Jesus' first coming (Matthew 15:12; Acts 2:16-22), it is apparent in the prophecies themselves that the most complete fulfillment must be found just prior to the second advent. Just as Christ sent a messenger to prepare the way before His first advent, so a messenger would be sent before His second.)

**5. What did the mighty angel of Revelation 10 have in His hand? Malachi 3:6**

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**6. What little book of the Bible had been closed until the “time of the end”?  
Daniel 12:4**

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**(Note: Daniel is the only book that had been closed and was thus to be opened in the last days.) > Daniel 12:9**

**7. What message did the angel proclaim from the book of Daniel after it was opened? Revelation 10:5-7**

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**(Note: The “time” referred to in these verses is prophetic time, not real, actual time. When the book of Daniel was opened at the conclusion of the 2300 day prophecy, prophetic time ceased and was no more.)**

**In the early nineteenth century, men discovered clear-cut prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation that pointed to the year 1844 as a time when God would begin a work of judgment of this world. And with this, through other Bible prophecies, they discovered the great truth that the second coming of Christ to this earth was near.**

**Revelation 12, 13 and 14 foretold a great final judgment-hour message before the end – the issue of the mark of the beast, and Daniel 7 clarified still more the issues involved. Daniel 8 and 9 dovetailed together to predict 1844 as the time when this judgment would begin. (Refer to previous Bible Study 13 for review purposes.)**

**As a result, from 1830 to 1844, dedicated Bible students around the world, often with no contact with one another, stood up and warned men of the nearness of the coming of Christ. It was generally thought that the end would come in or near 1844.**

**8. The prophecy referred to in Revelation 10 foretells of the rise of a people to whom God would speak by opening up the meaning of the prophecies of Daniel. These people, as mentioned above, believed that Jesus was coming soon, at a time revealed in the book of Daniel. Thus there would be “time no longer.” As they received (or ate) the message, how did it taste? Revelation 10:8, 9**

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**9. Although it was sweet as honey, what happened when it reached the belly?  
Revelation 10:10**

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**(Note: The message became bitter in the belly because Christ did not come as expected and those who had believed in the message were greatly disappointed. Some gave up their faith entirely; others incorrectly set new dates for Jesus' second coming. But some decided to investigate the Scripture to see where the error lay, and through the guidance of the Spirit of Prophecy, they discovered Biblical truths such as the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. It was from these seekers of truth that the Seventh-day Adventist church was formed.)**

**10. Who else had been bitterly disappointed because they had misunderstood the prophecies, and had expected Jesus to set up His earthly kingdom? Luke 24:17-21**

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**A special threefold message is given in Revelation 14 for those living in this final hour of earth's history – the hour of judgment: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made heaven and earth." (Revelation 14:7) These solemn messages of Revelation 14:6-12 warn against receiving the mark of the beast.**

**In view of such an end-time crisis as this, it is very understandable that the God of heaven would send special counsels in these last days – to us, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**

**11. As the Prophet John viewed God's remnant people at the end of time, what two characteristics were significant in identifying them as God's people? Revelation 12:17**

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**12. What is another New Testament term for the testimony of Jesus? Revelation 19:10; 1:1, 2**

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**13. For what reason was the spiritual gift of prophecy confirmed in the new Christian church? 1Corinthians 1:6-8**

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**(Note: It is by His prophets that Jesus corrects and instructs His people, effecting the restoration of His people to His own image in preparation for the day of His coming.)**

**14. The Greek word for “generation” (genea) “literally means those descended from a common ancestor” (Anedt and Gingrich’s Lexion) but it may mean the lifetime of a person, movement, or nation. It is the generation of God’s final movement, or church, that concerns prophecy. How long would this generation that God began at the time of these heavenly signs last? Matthew 24:32-34**

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**In vision the prophet John was shown Christ’s last church upon earth before His coming. To John was revealed the identifying characteristics of this church: they keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus – the spirit of prophecy. This dual sign of God’s last church is seen only in the Seventh-day Adventist Church – in keeping all of God’s law and having the spiritual gift of prophecy and keeping the words of those prophecies. Are you keeping the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus? If not, would you like to start doing so today?**

**MY RESPONSE TO CHRIST IS**

**YES**

**UNDECIDED**

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